

Lawn & Landscape

Accessorize
Your Mower

Crack Through
Drought


Explore
Our Second
Annual
Tree Care
Guide

Ian McCarthy,
Caledonian
Stonework &
Landscape Services

Covering
the **CAPE**

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Terry Pommett,
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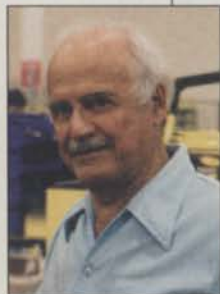
Lawn & Landscape

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SPECIAL Features:

Lawn & Landscape Online Launches Redesigned Site

In its continuing efforts to be the leading green industry Web presence, *Lawn & Landscape Online* unveiled its redesigned site, more effectively serving as the portal to the professional lawn and landscape industry. Brand-new features and updated sections allow users to access a variety of industry information quickly and efficiently, while popular tools, such as the message board and issue archives, remain familiar favorites. Log on today and check out *Lawn & Landscape Online's* new look!



Extra! Extra!

Visit *Lawn & Landscape Online* for more info on this issue's articles:

- Caledonian Cover Profile
- Pacific Landscape Management
- Reading Pesticide Labels
- Mower Attachments
- Tree Care Guide

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Don't miss original features, like our industry news and new products e-newsletters, found only on *Lawn & Landscape Online!*

Lawn & Landscape

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USE READER SERVICE #40

Beware of Big Boxes

There has been an interesting conversation going on at the *Lawn & Landscape* Online Message Boards pertaining to the role of "Big Box Stores," such as Home Depot and Lowe's, in the landscape industry. The consensus seems to be that these companies are great retailers, but they don't know anything about providing services like landscaping, so there's no real reason for contractors to fear them.

I disagree 100 percent.

Lowe's and Home Depot, in particular, are huge corporations that have one master—their stock price. If the stock falls, so does the company. And there's one key way to keep the stock climbing and the company healthy—grow. When you have more than 1,400 stores, as Home Depot does, opening new stores in growth markets gets to be nearly impossible. So, how does a company in this situation keep growing? International markets don't carry the same DIY characteristics as the U.S., so mass merchandisers now have to figure out how to increase the revenue generated by each store.

That would be easy to do if there were home improvement products you couldn't find inside the walls of Home Depot or Lowe's, but that's not the case. Doesn't offering service seem like a logical extension then?

If you can go into a Home Depot, buy flooring for your kitchen and have it installed by a subcontractor hired by Home Depot, why can't the same happen with a landscape?

And don't tell me that this won't work because landscapes have to be designed, whereas the new floor simply goes where the old one was. If that was

a real obstacle then you wouldn't see dozens of kitchen and bathroom arrangements set up, ready for tweaking and installation in these stores.

I'll be honest—I don't see a reason why this can't work, and I'm not alone. TruGreen spent this spring and summer providing lawn care and landscape services to consumers through Home Depot stores in a trial program, and while the initiative was cancelled in July, sales were strong enough for ServiceMaster CEO Jon Ward to tell investors, "We're convinced there's a future in the retail channel for ServiceMaster."

The key to these stores entering this industry successfully is what they want to do. If they try to actually do the work, they're making a huge mistake. But why can't someone walk into a Lowe's store and purchase mowing services? The reality is that most consumers don't see landscape services as anything other than a commodity anyway, especially maintenance and lawn care, and the big box stores have names homeowners clearly trust.

Bob Nardelli thinks this model can work as well. Why does his opinion matter? Because he's Home Depot's CEO. He told *Fortune* magazine that, "Do-it-yourself is shifting to do-it-for-me." He wants to boost a stock that has slid about 40 percent this year alone, and he sees Home Depot's new At-Home Services initiative as the way to do this, calling it a \$10-billion market five years from now.

Ultimately, whether or not what some other company does matters to your business is up to you and your employees. This is a message you've heard before, but that's because it rings so true. If you identify a market to target, price your work intelligently and provide quality service, you'll be fine. But if you wander off from those keys to success, you may find yourself swallowed up by a big box store looking for easy growth opportunities. ■

"Do-it-yourself is shifting to do-it-for-me." — Bob Nardelli,
CEO of Home Depot



Bob West

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In The Office

Preventing Workplace Violence

Nobody likes to think about it, yet violence is a fact of our business lives. From hotheaded employees who throw tantrums to devastating shoot-outs, the threat of violence in the workplace is real. The possibility of such incidents has encouraged employers to implement and enforce policies addressing violence and weapons on work premises.

What can employers do to help reduce the costs and potential tragedies related to violence in the workplace? Although it cannot be completely eliminated, there are important precautionary measures that reduce the risk of workplace violence:

Establish a "zero tolerance" policy toward violence. The Wild West died a long time ago, so include a complete ban against firearms or weapons anywhere on company property (in-

cluding company or private vehicles). Prohibit hitting, shoving, threatening or harassing employees. Require and encourage employees to report suspicious behavior.

Implement anti-harassment, grievance, and security policies. Ensure these policies are updated periodically and provide multiple channels for reporting inappropriate behavior. Include a statement prohibiting retaliation against employees who report such behavior.

Carefully examine and improve your hiring practices. Look for clues on applications that suggest potentially violent behavior. If a candidate writes "Absolutely hated my boss" under the "reason for leaving" section of your application, dig deeper. Create interview questions that help reveal patterns of anger, threats or hostility. For example, you could include carefully constructed questions about guns and weapons.

Conduct criminal background checks. Especially in the lawn care industry, employers should conduct criminal background checks on potential employees. Additionally, your application for employment should ask about any criminal convictions (not arrests).

If a candidate indicates that he or she has been convicted of a crime, ask about it. You have the right to use job-related criminal information to make an employment decision. (Note: Most convictions are job-related!)

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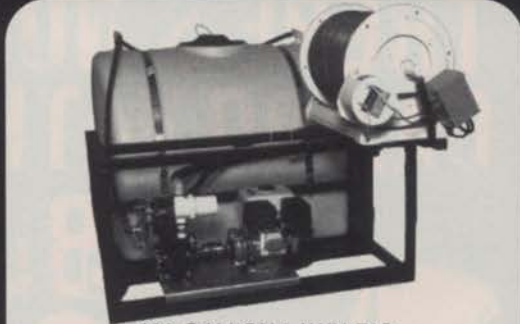
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Consider pre-employment personality profiling or other testing. Some profiles can identify dominant or aggressive behaviors and tendencies. (Verify the profile or pre-employment test is legal and non-discriminatory.)

Conduct in-depth reference checks. No excuses here. Take the time to contact former employers. Many states have regulations that protect employers who provide truthful, accurate reference information. Make an effort to obtain and document reference information.

Train employees to recognize the warning signs of aggressive, violent behavior and to deal effectively with conflict. Don't just train managers - include all employees. By noticing radical changes in an individual's behavior, employees can help prevent conflicts from escalating into violent or aggressive acts.

Review your termination procedures to ensure separations are handled in a dignified way. Provide post-termination counseling, if necessary, to help potentially violent individuals feel they were cared for while employed.

If you terminate a potentially violent employee, take proper precautions. If necessary, increase the security around your building

for a period of time after the termination. Also, seek advice before providing a reference for an employee who was terminated for threatening or violent behavior. If the individual is hired elsewhere and is involved in an act of violence, you may be at risk for not providing information that would have stopped the individual from being hired.

Examine your culture. If your culture encourages behavior like yelling or screaming at each other, you could be inviting a problem. As people move through the stages of aggression (which often start with rising tempers), they begin to lose their judgment. A loss in judgment can lead to a crisis. Don't accept unprofessional, abusive behavior.

Consider ADA. In some situations, a potentially violent employee may be classified as "disabled" under the American With Disabilities Act. The disability would fall under "mental impairments" and may call for a "reason-

able accommodation," which could include time off for counseling, a leave of absence, or some other accommodation.

Develop crisis procedures for responding to workplace violence. Every business should have a plan in place to address a crisis. It should include the chain of command to notify in case of an emergency, how employees can protect themselves, and where they can turn for help when violence becomes a reality.

Although the focus should always be on training and prevention efforts, every employer should be prepared for violence. Don't assume it won't occur because, unfortunately, this problem is not going to disappear. **LL**



The author is president of Seawright & Associates, Inc., an H.R. management consulting firm located in Winter Park, Fla. She can be reached via e-mail at jpilleggi@seawright.com or at 407/645-2433.

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IN THE BUDGET

The Great Outdoors

When Americans want to enhance their homes, they focus on the outdoors.

And why not? In a recent Gallup research project, homebuyers revealed they think landscaping adds 14.87 percent to a home's selling price. In another survey, *Money* magazine reported that landscaping as a home-improvement project has a recovery value of 100 to 200 percent if it is well done and harmonizes with nearby foliage. This compares to a kitchen overhaul recovery value of 75 to 125 percent or a bathroom redesign of 80 to 120 percent, the magazine pointed out.

Real estate agents agree. Ninety-five percent of the members of the Society of Real Estate Appraisers concur that landscaping adds to the dollar value of real estate, while 99 percent said that landscaping enhances a property's "sales appeal," increasing the actual speed of the sale.

When it comes to specific areas, water features and decks top the list of enhancement projects Americans desire, followed by pools and patios. Gardens and porches round out Americans' want list.

POINT/COUNTERPOINT

Front-mount vs. Mid-mount Mowers

Regardless of the issue at hand, there are always at least two opinions. So Lawn & Landscape invited two mower manufacturers to share their thoughts about the benefits of front-mount vs. mid-mount mower designs.

Bob Walker, president, Walker Manufacturing, Fort Collins, Colo., is obviously committed to front-mount machines, as that's his company's focus. Meanwhile, Dane Scag, who founded Bobcat Manufacturing, Scag Power Equipment and Great Dane Power Equipment, has made mowers in all shapes and sizes. Today, he's a clear proponent of mid-mount machines.

Obviously, neither of these two manufacturers is right or wrong. Depending on your perspective and applications, you'll find reasons to agree or disagree with both. And this debate will hopefully serve as a resource when you buy your next mower.

IN FAVOR OF: FRONT-MOUNT RIDING MOWERS.



Bob Walker

The front-mount arrangement has operating benefits due to better weight distribution than the mid-mount design. The front-mount has less weight on the front wheels and more weight concentrated on the drive wheels, offering better traction and handling. Steering response is more crisp and precise and there is less of a tendency to scuff the turf with tight turns (drive wheels slipping).

Another significant handling difference and safety concern is going downhill. The front-mount balance maintains traction, steering and braking going downhill while the mid-mount tends to shift weight away from the drive tires, potentially causing loss of steering and braking.

The front-mount design also offers a smoother, higher quality cut in two ways. The mower deck and tractor move independently, allowing the deck to "float" and follow contour, while the mid-mount deck is more rigidly suspended from the tractor frame. Secondly, less weight on the front deck wheels of a front-mount do not mash the grass before cutting like the heavily loaded front wheels on the mid-mount.

Next, mounting the mower deck in front of the tractor offers a lower profile so the deck has more "reach" for trim-

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IN FAVOR OF: MID-MOUNT MOWERS

There certainly are some benefits to using a front-mount mower, but I think the average contractor will be better off using a mid-mount design for a number of reasons.

For starters, front-mount units are longer, which means they take up more trailer space. That may require contractors to purchase larger trailers or possibly even send two trucks and trailers to a property to get all of their mowers to the job.

Next, try to trim around a tree with a front-mount mower. You can't do it well even with a zero-turn machine because the turning axis (the imaginary point around which the mower turns while making a true zero turn) is too far to the rear of the deck. The closer the mowing deck is to the turning axis, the easier it is to make a circle, and this is the key to mid-mount mowers. The closest you can get to making a circle with a front-mount mower is to create a teardrop pattern, so that means you'll have to make two passes around the tree to mow it adequately.

The argument for a front-mount deck in this situation is that you always have the work out in front of you and you'll be able to get under tree limbs more easily. But how important is accessing areas under tree limbs vs. maximizing productivity?

(continued on page 17)

Environmental ENHANCEMENTS

Home enhancements Americans would add if they could pick one:

Element	% of Americans
Water feature/pond	16%
Deck	16%
Pool	15%
Patio	11%

Source: The Taunton Press/USA Today
Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association

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Market Trends

BOB WALKER (continued from page 14)

ming. Also, the operator seating position behind the deck gives excellent visibility for close-in handling and trimming. By contrast, the mid-mount design does not allow the same favorable trimming geometry.

If grass collection capability is needed, the front-mount configuration offers better geometry for mounting the grass catcher on the tractor instead of hanging on the back of the mid-mount. With the mid-mount, the extra weight and bulk of the grass catcher significantly compromises the machine's balance and handling.

Versatility of attachments is inherent to the front-mount tractor design. The front-mount platform is ideal for mounting other attachments and quickly interchange different sizes and styles of mower decks. The balance and traction of the front-mount works better for attachments than the mid-mount layout.

Lastly, deck maintenance and cleaning on the front-mount is easy with the "industry standard" tilt-up feature. Access to the mid-mount deck is not that convenient. — Bob Walker

Calendar of Events

TO ENSURE

that your meeting date is published, send an announcement at least 12 weeks in advance to *Lawn & Landscape Calendar*, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44113.

AUG. 16 Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association Annual Field Day, Gloucester, Va. Contact: 540/382-0943.

AUG. 16-18 Texas Nursery & Landscape Association 2002 Nursery/Landscape Expo, Houston, Texas. Contact 800/880-0343.

AUG. 17 CLT Exterior Exam, Joliet, Ill. Contact: 630/472-2851.

AUG. 18-22 American Society of Landscape Architects Expo, San Jose, Calif. Contact: 888/999-ASLA.

AUG. 22 CLT Exterior Exam, Wooster, Ohio. Contact: 330/287-0100.

AUG. 22-24 2002 Farwest Show, Portland, Ore. Contact: 800/342-6401.

AUG. 24 CLT Exterior Exam, Mich. Contact: 248/646-4992.

AUG. 25 New York State Turf Association Annual University of Rhode Island Field Trip, Kingston, R.I. Contact: 914/948-6468.

AUG. 28 Interior/Exterior CLP and CLT Interior Exam, San Francisco, Calif. Contact: 800/395-2522.

AUG. 28-30 CalScape Expo, San Francisco, Calif. Contact: 707/462-2276.

SEPT. 5 Kentucky Nursery & Landscape Association Annual Summer Outing, Clermont, Ky. Contact: 502/848-0055.

SEPT. 10 Clemson University Turfgrass Field Day, Clemson, S.C. Contact: 864/656-2545.

SEPT. 12-13 Southwest Horticultural Trade Show & Conference, Phoenix, Ariz. Contact: 480/966-1610.

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SEPT. 12-15 American Nursery & Landscape Association Landscape Distribution Tour, Atlanta, Ga. Contact: 202/789-2900.

SEPT. 18 Nursery and Landscape Field Day of the Virginia Tech's Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact: 757/363-3906.

SEPT. 18-20 23rd CanWest Hort Show, Vancouver, B.C. Contact: 604/574-7772.

SEPT. 19 Lawn & Landscape/Snow Business Snow Management Seminar, Detroit, Mich. Contact: 800/456-0707.

SEPT. 19-21 Florida Nursery & Allied Trade Show, Orlando Fla. Contact: 800/375-3642.

SEPT. 20-21 CLT Exterior Exam, Milton, Ontario, Canada. Contact: 905/875-1805.

SEPT. 21 Lawn & Landscape/Snow Business Snow Management Seminar, Chicago, Ill. Contact: 800/456-0707.

SEPT. 21 CLT Exterior Exam, Mequon Wis., and Spokane, Wash. Contact: 800/933-9522 (Mequon), 425/385-3333 (Spokane).

SEPT. 24 University of California, Riverside Cooperative Extension Turfgrass and Landscape Management Field Day, Riverside, Calif. Contact: 909/787-3320.

SEPT. 26 Lawn & Landscape/Snow Business Snow Management Seminar, Philadelphia, Pa. Contact: 800/456-0707.

SEPT. 28 Lawn & Landscape/Snow Business Snow Management Seminar, Boston, Mass. Contact: 800/456-0707.

SEPT. 28 CLT Exterior Exam, Boise, Idaho, White Plains, N.Y., and New Brunswick, N.J. (written) Contact: 800/462-4679 (Boise), 914/788-9704 (White Plains), 201/703-3600 (New Brunswick).

DANE SCAG (continued from page 14)

Landscape designs today are getting more and more complicated with trees, beds and so forth. That means operators have to do more trim work and be able to make a series of tight turns on many properties. Mid-mount mowers do this better than any other type of mower.

Another factor contributing to mid-mount mowers' productivity is their faster ground speed compared to front-mount mowers. On a mid-mount mower, the front wheels carry quite a bit of weight. By comparison, front-mount mowers carry less weight, so the deck on a front-mount mower is more likely to bounce as you mow faster, unless the ground is particularly smooth.

If you're doing long stretches of straight mowing, such as along a highway or on a football field, a front-mount mower offers better visibility. And front-mount mowers generally take attachments better than mid-mount mowers. But if maneuverability matters, and it does if your mowers work six or seven hours a day, then mid-mount mowers are the best choice. — Dane Scag

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USE READER SERVICE #14

Market Trends

(continued from page 17)

OPEI NEWS

2002 Show Results Mixed

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Next year represents the 20th year of the International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo. But exhibitors at this year's edition openly questioned the show's future amid disappointing attendance and a shrinking trade show. As a result, the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), which runs the show in conjunction with Sellers Expositions, has increased its efforts to strengthen the show under the leadership of Bill Harley, OPEI president and chief executive officer.

Attendance at the 2002 show was 21,579, which was comparable to last year's turnout of 21,100. Landscape contractor attendance climbed about 6 percent while the dealer/distributor attendance dropped 7 percent.

Harley termed the show a "solid success," given the overall economic climate.

(continued on page 22)

Mattingly's MESSAGE

EDITOR'S NOTE: Every month, industry consultant Jack Mattingly offers suggestions on key tasks for contractors to focus on. Here are his August thoughts.

I would estimate that the average true profit of most companies I work with is around 9 percent. I know of companies with \$4 million in volume producing 25 percent net profit and many companies of all sizes producing double-digit profits. If you are a contractor doing residential or commercial work in the maintenance and/or installation arena, and you are not making approximately 10 percent profit while at the same time paying yourself well, you could be ignoring labor costs.

As you look at successful companies you find one common ingredient – they watch their labor hours like hawks. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- Do you have budgeted man-hours for projects and do you share them with foremen?
- Do you have a budget for the amount of unproductive time, i.e. fueling, etc.?
- Do you provide each foreman the budgeted non-productive hours?
- Do you track and report weekly the non-productive hours?
- Do you budget, track and report the amount of overtime hours weekly?
- Do you provide some type of incentive for meeting the budgeted hours?

If you answered "yes" to all of the above and are not making great profits, then you probably have an estimating or pricing problem. For those of you who are making money and not doing all of the above, I suggest that you manage labor to increase your profit percentage. Labor is the single biggest expense on your income statement.

Jack Mattingly is a green industry consultant with Mattingly Consulting and can be reached at www.mattinglyconsulting.com or 770/517-9476.

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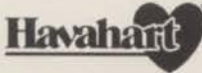
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USE READER SERVICE #47

Market Trends

(continued from page 20)

Still, paid exhibit space dropped about 10 percent as key manufacturers, such as Encore and LESCO, pulled out of the show. Meanwhile, a number of exhibitors talked about downsizing their booth for 2003, if they exhibit at all. None of these companies wanted to comment about their future show plans publicly, they generally questioned the show's value.

Most of the unhappy exhibitors' concerns centered on old gripes – the show remains in the same location year after year and fails to attract new attendees. OPEI hired a veteran

(continued on page 24)

People

LESCO hired **Jeffrey Rutherford** as senior vice president, chief financial officer, **Bruce Thorn** as senior vice president, logistics and operations, and **Steven Cochran** as senior vice president, marketing and strategic sourcing.



Bayer Environmental Science appointed **Daniel Carrothers** to head of U.S. green industry business and **Nicholas Hamon** to head of development and technical services.



Daniel Carrothers (top), Nicholas Hamon

Emily Thompson joined Symbiot Business Group as national sales manager, developing contract opportunities for the Symbiot Landscape Network.

Valley Crest promoted **J. Wickham Zimmerman** to branch manager for the themed construction group in Orange County; **Ed Mauser-Claassen** to branch manager, Valley Crest Orlando; **Patrick Luzier** to branch manager, Valley Crest Atlanta; and **Peter Hunn** to branch manager, Valley Crest North Carolina.

Mike Robinson has stepped down as president of Seed Research of Oregon to become Director of International Sales and Marketing.

Becker Underwood named **Brian Buckallew** product manager for its distribution sales business unit.

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USE READER SERVICE #16

Market Trends

(continued from page 22)

trade show consultant to conduct surveys and focus groups with attendees and exhibitors at this year's show.

"About 79 percent of the attendees said they would recommend the show as a 'must attend,'" Harley reported, adding that he's confident in the show's future. "Yes, we've got some problems, but they're problems that we can solve."

Ultimately, the show's future hangs on its ability to sell exhibit space, and OPEI Secretary/Treasurer Dave Zerfoss from Husqvarna expects the exhibitor count to climb in 2003. "I think you'll see a number of credible manufacturers return to the show," he reported, noting that OPEI absorbed the Portable Power Equipment Manufacturers Association this year, but too late for those hand-held equipment suppliers to exhibit. "We also continue seeing new equipment, such as construction machines, and I think that will continue, which is positive since that equipment requires more floor space."

Warren Sellers, president of Sellers Expositions, said that the 173,000 square feet of paid exhibit space at this year's show is down about 15 percent from the show's all-time high of more than 200,000 square feet. "Hopefully, we've bottomed out," he added.



Contractors test out equipment at OPEI.
Photo: Lawn & Landscape Staff



L&L Book Report

The Richest Man in Babylon

by George Clason

Reported by Mark Himmelreich, owner,
Bill's Nursery, Littlestown, Pa.

George Clason's *The Richest Man in Babylon* is a collection of interrelated short stories revolving around the basic principles of financial health and wealth.

I suggest that anyone reading this book turn to the last chapter first. It puts a sense of reality into the whole book and once you understand the phenomenal characteristics of the prosperous, ancient city of Babylon, which existed thousands of years before the Egyptians built their pyramids, you will see how the simple teachings of each chapter are relevant to your company.

In my case, it highlighted the importance of finding a balance to achieve personal prosperity. My father and I have been to many business liquidations where every dollar from decades of profits was spent on the acquisition of "shiny new equipment," now worth only pennies. I cannot stress enough the application of the minimalist approach to business management. By blending limited equipment ownership with leasing, back-charged rentals, subcontracting and the use of temporary laborers, we both significantly improved our personal portfolios instead of the size of our equipment storage yard.

The stories in this 160-page book illustrate the importance of this minimalist approach, which I was also able to apply in my own business. As a business owner, I'm sure you have heard the expression, "Pay yourself first." This book will give you an insightful plan to fulfill your dreams of financial freedom.

IN THE NEWS

Toro, Clip Partner

LOUISVILLE - "Contractors' biggest headaches are the billing, routing and estimating parts of business," maintained Randy Harris, marketing manager, Toro, Bloomington, Minn. "Toro can't effect that or help contractors in that area, but Clip can."

As a result, more companies are trying to address these business education needs, as Toro did with its unique partnership with Clip, Ijamsville, Md.

According to the exclusive agreement, Toro's 700-plus Five Star dealers will distribute free software demos to contractors.

Harris thinks this gives these dealers an advantage because they can be their clients' true "partners" in business, he pointed out. "They already offer the equipment, parts and service, and now we help them offer something on the other side of the business," he said. "The dealers are excited because as contractors learn how to run their businesses better, they will grow, profit and buy more equipment - it's a win-win situation."

"If dealers show they can be a resource for contractors, then contractors won't go anywhere else for their purchases," added Dave Tucker, Clip president.

(continued on page 26)

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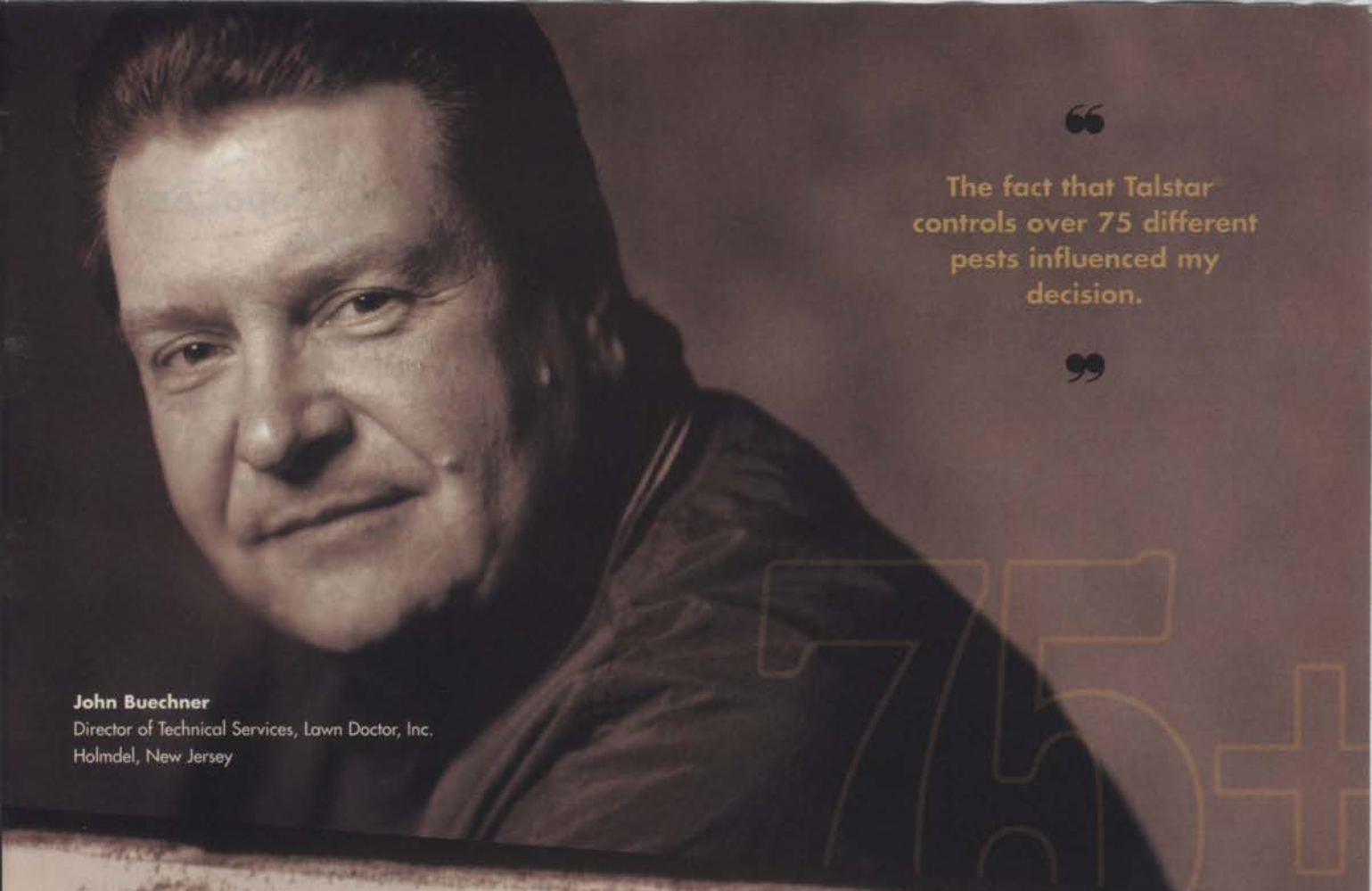
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John Buechner
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USE READER SERVICE #50

Market Trends

(continued from page 24)

IN THE NEWS

TruGreen, Home Depot End Marketing Venture

ServiceMaster and Home Depot are two publicly traded companies that must always grow to thrive. These massive firms joined forces at the outset of 2002 with hopes of identifying a way each could help the other drive revenue. Apparently, that plan failed.

The companies announced the end of their test program, which featured kiosks touting ServiceMaster's lawn care, landscape, pest control and other home-oriented services in 28 Home Depot stores in three cities: Orlando, Memphis and Sacramento.

This news came at the same time that ServiceMaster announced its new deal with Internet portal Yahoo!, where customers can schedule and purchase home services through the newly created Home Service Center on Yahoo! Real Estate, but no one will comment on how this new strategy influenced the Home Depot arrangement.

Without divulging specifics, the companies said the program yielded positive results but still failed to meet expectations.

"We have learned a tremendous amount about our potential and existing customers from exploring this retail channel," related Ernest Mrozek, ServiceMaster's president and chief operating officer. "We believe that select retail channels remain a strategic fit for ServiceMaster, and we will continue to explore other in-store marketing opportunities with a variety of partners in the future."

Meanwhile, Home Depot also noted that it still sees home services as a growth opportunity, and it will continue to seek strategic partners in that area. The services they offered "are still viable candidates for Home Depot to look at," possibly with other providers, noted Home Depot spokesman Don Harrison. Home Depot stores already offer a range of home services through its At-Home Services brand, such as installing cabinets, flooring and windows.

"We continue to believe that home services represents a great opportunity," said Frank Blake, Executive Vice President, Business Development and Corporate Operations for Home Depot. "That's why pilot programs are so effective. They allow you to explore new ideas. If a program doesn't meet expectations, the partners still benefit from the experience, which can be applied to the next similar venture. In the area of home services, Home Depot will continue to develop strategic partnership opportunities."

At presstime, ServiceMaster's stock was trading at \$11.50 a share, compared with its 52-week high of \$15.50 a share, which it enjoyed in May.

On the WEB

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Market Trends

Association NEWS

The Landscape Contractors Association (LCA), Md.-D.C.-Va., is pleased to announce that *Landscape Specification Guidelines*, 5th Edition, is now available in Spanish. The 114-page book includes sections on landscape installation, landscape maintenance, seeding and sodding, soils, tree preservation, nontidal wetland planting, interior landscape installation and maintenance, and irrigation. Order forms can be found under publications on the LCA website: <http://www.lcamddcva.org>.

The **International Landscape Technician Council** presented Peter Dervin, executive director of the Washington Association of Landscape Professionals, a service award for the development of the Advanced Endorsement in Horticultural Management for the nationally recognized ALCA Certified Landscape Technician program.

At its annual business meeting, the **Texas Nursery & Landscape Association** granted honorary lifetime membership status to four individuals: George Wechsler of Wolfe Nursery, Sam Cotner of Texas A&M University, Frank Milsap of Richland College and Charlie Hall of Texas A&M University.

The following individuals were recently inducted into the **Wisconsin Landscape Federation Hall of Fame**: Marshall Scheibe, Bliss Nicholson, Dave Damitz and Matthew Stano.

RESIDENTIAL MARKET NEWS

Housing Affordability Rises

WASHINGTON – Favorable financing conditions and higher incomes helped make it considerably easier for American families to afford homeownership in this year's first quarter compared to the same period one year ago, according to the National Association of Home Builders' Housing Opportunity Index (HOI).

"Nearly 65 percent of all new and existing homes sold in this country in January through March were affordable to families earning the national median income of \$54,400," said Gary Garczynski, NAHB president and a builder/developer from Woodbridge, Va. "That's up substantially from 56.9 percent in last year's first quarter, and up a notch from the 64.1 percent of homes affordable at the end of 2001."

"Clearly, this improvement opened the door to homeownership for thousands more Americans, boosting housing's contribution to Gross Domestic Product at a crucial time for the nation's economy," Garczynski noted. "Every home that is sold generates thousands of dollars in home-related purchases during the first year of ownership."

The HOI is a measure of the percentage of new and existing homes sold that a family earning the median income can afford to buy. The latest index, with a reading of 64.8, was based on an analysis of more than 580,000 completed home sales in 191 metro markets nationwide. This was up from a 64.1 reading in last year's final quarter and from a 56.9 reading in the first quarter of 2001. LL

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Nursery Market Report

SUMMER PLANTINGS

Beat the Heat

The dog days of summer have arrived, complete with heat and humidity. As a result, many annual flowers that thrived in May and June may be looking a little wilted by now.

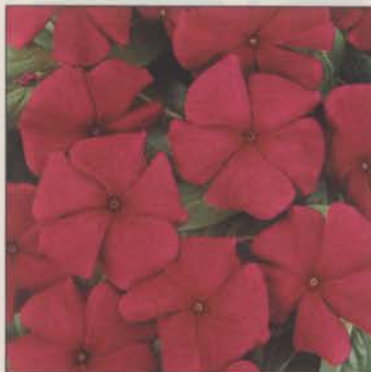
When air temperatures exceed 86F, many plants begin to suffer. Flower buds may wither, leaves may droop and become more attractive to insects, chlorophyll may disappear so leaves appear white or brown, and roots may cease growing, according to Marc Cathey, president emeritus of the American Horticultural Society (AHS), Alexandria, Va.

Selecting heat-tolerant plants is the best way to ensure the summer landscape looks fresh through the whole season. The following selections can take the summer heat and humidity, growing particularly well in AHS heat zones 9 to 12.

Abelmoschus moschatus, or annual hibiscus. Hardy to U.S. Department of Agriculture zones 10 to 11, this plant is covered in blooms all season and can grow into a knee-high hedge.

Celosia plumosa, or plumed celosia. Versatile in color, size and shape, this plant features long-lasting flowers and is hardy to USDA zone 9.

Daybreak
Orange
Cream
gazania,
featuring
splashes of
citrus
coloring,
adapts well
to heat.
Photo:
PanAmerican
Seed



The magenta flowers of hardy *Vinca* 'Big Ruby' contrast with dark foliage for visual impact. Photo: PanAmerican Seed

Dyssodia tenuiloba, or Dahlberg daisy. Appropriate for AHS zones 1 to 11, this plant grows well as a low ground cover, producing many yellow

flowers with a soft lemon fragrance. This plant thrives in heat, drought and coastal conditions, but do not overfertilize.

Gazania. Hardy through USDA zones 8 to 11 and AHS heat zones 3 to 12, this multicolor, daisy-like flower blooms year round. Excellent as a low border, flowers close up at night and open again in the morning sun. *Gazania* grows well in sunny, dry locations and tolerates wind and coastal conditions.

Nierembergia, or cupflower. Profuse white flowers, hardy to USDA zones 6 to 9, are suitable as a low ground cover or in flower boxes.

Ornamental pepper. Appropriate as a low-maintenance border for walkways, this showy fruit, hardy to USDA zones 6 to 9, features bright orange and yellow peppers.

Basil. A vigorous grower in heat, basil likes organically enriched soil and is perennial in zones 6 to 9. Some have purple flowers and foliage.

Portulaca grandiflora, or moss rose. Hardy in USDA zone 11 and heat zones 1 to 12, this colorful carpet ground cover holds its flowers throughout the day. It actually prefers poor, dry, unfertilized soil.

Rudbeckia, or black-eyed Susan. Hardy through USDA zones 4 to 9 and heat zones 2 to 9, this plant grows well in sun to light shade and likes moist, well-drained soil with organic matter.

Salvia, or mealycup. Hardy through USDA zones 4 to 10 and heat zones 1 to 12, few plants take heat better. Blue-flowered varieties are now joined by white and scarlet flowering. The plant grows well in sandy soil in sun to partial shade.


Torenia fournieri, or wishbone flower. Available in several colors, this plant offers excellent coverage for walkways, borders and confined areas. It adapts to full sun or partial shade but needs regular watering and is hardy to USDA zones 1 to 11.

Vinca. Prolific, bright-colored flowers contrast with dark, glossy foliage for visual impact. *Vinca* performs well in raised beds, when not overwatered, and is hardy to USDA zones 6 to 9.

Fancy-leaved caladium. These large-leaved plants come in pink, rose, white and bicolor. Preferring shade, some varieties can be grown in pots and are hardy to USDA zones 9 to 11.

Other heat-loving plants to try are coleus, cosmos, verbena, melampodium and *Zinnia angustifolia*. — Ali Cybulski

The author is Contributing Editor of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine and can be reached at acybulski@gie.net.



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USE READER SERVICE #18

Minding Your

Business



Merrier with More?

Growing your client base shouldn't resemble a game of duck-duck-goose – an unpredictable, unmeasured, tag-you're-it sport. Contractors who want to widen their client ring need a strategy, more like a precisely executed game of chess.

"If you go after work on a hit-or-miss basis, you may have to take a look at reinvesting in equipment and adding more capital to your business, and if you aren't in the position to do that you will want to think twice about growth," advised Paul Wolbert, franchise development, U.S. Lawns, Orlando, Fla.

In other words, unorganized growth can send a company running around the circle, chasing after accounts. "What kind of customers do you want in your portfolio?" Wolbert asked. "You go through different phases. When you first start cutting grass, you might go anywhere, but then you start getting more specific with what you want to do."

An internal inventory can help contractors gauge which customers fit their company profile – and how many of them the business can add and still operate efficiently and profitably. "The very first thing is to make



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Minding Your Business

sure the company knows its numbers," stressed Rick Carver, president, Carver's Lawn & Landscape, New Castle, Del. "A lot of contractors get hungry – it's addicting – and they get in a constant mode of adding on to their customer base. But how many times can you mow that lawn without getting a complaint and losing a customer?"

First, figure out if your current customer base is pleased, Carver advised. Then, think about your capital: Can your employees manage more properties? Do you have the staff to field more phone calls? Do you have the time to schedule more work? Do you have the equipment to dedicate to new accounts?

If you deliver quality service and still have room to grow, then perhaps the good words of current clients will pass your company name onto prospective customers, like in Stacey Werner's case.

The owner of Portland, Ore.-based Tryon Creek Landscape sampled various marketing methods – from Yellow Pages to a Web site to direct mail. But none was as successful as simply delivering a job well done.

"We're going back to the basics, which is to do a good job, have great customer service and follow up with clients – all that leads to referrals," he said. "If you're not getting referrals it doesn't matter what other marketing you are doing. If you do something well, the word spreads a little. If you do something bad, it spreads ten-fold."

Sounds simple enough, but how can contractors "do it right" the first time? Company logos on vehicles, clean uniforms and a professional attitude go a long way, Wolbert mentioned. "Let the people out there know you are proud of what you are doing," he said. "One franchisee told me about a customer that approached them at the bank drive-thru while they were servicing the property. The woman said she had been going to the bank for years, and she sees the company there every Tuesday making the property look good. The customer wouldn't have known who to talk

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Check this story online for tips to grow your client base.

to if the company didn't have the name on the side of the truck."

Contractors can simply ask current customers for referrals, or they can nab the neighbors' business with a little creativity. Carver gives coffee mugs with sample-size bags of java to his clients' neighbors. A note attached reads, "This is courtesy of your neighbor so-and-so," he said. "You know you are at least making an impact." **LL**

The author is Managing Editor – Special Projects for Lawn & Landscape magazine and can be reached at khamphshire@lawandlandscape.com.

Want to know how other contractors handle a particular business challenge? Ask us, and we'll find out. Send ideas for "Minding Your Business" topics to khamphshire@lawandlandscape.com or via fax at 216/961-0364.



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On

Paper



Headache-Free Holidays

Plantscape, Pittsburgh, Pa., is a company that knows a thing or two about planning ahead. As preparation for the holiday decoration season begins for this interior/exterior company, the sales and installation staffs are already one step ahead of the competition, thanks to the company's paperwork system.

Dave O'Connor, Plantscape's director of business development, explained how a simple cover sheet for holiday takedowns saved a great deal of time when the next decoration season came around.

On the initial set-up of a new job, salespeople would fill out a client sheet for customer information, services ordered, project dates and projected man-hours, he said. The client information and projected man-hours for takedown would then be recorded to the takedown form.

Then, each crew member's actual hours are totaled and compared to the projected takedown hours.

"When the sheet was filed away into a client folder, we could pull it out next season to determine a better estimate of man-hours," O'Connor stated. "Not only that, but we'd know what crew members worked on this project so that in the next year, we could get a familiar crew out there."

O'Connor pointed out that the bottom portion of the five-year-old form is a project inventory. A space to keep track of trees and decoration boxes taken in and out ensures all supplies are accounted for in concluded projects. Missing, damaged and aging items are recorded to plan ordering and budgeting when the project resumes the next season.

"We can pull out a client's file in summer and see what is missing or what is damaged before we even need it," O'Connor explained.

Another benefit, he added, is the ability to keep track of where items are stored.

Although it may someday be replaced, O'Connor said the form has worked well.

"I think the crew members liked how it

was a quick summary of the entire client's package," O'Connor noted. "That way they didn't have to read all of the paperwork to find the information they needed."

And who doesn't like saving a little bit of time around the holidays? — Mandy Jenkins

The author is a contributing editor to Lawn & Landscape magazine and can be reached at mjenkins@lawnandlandscape.com.

TAKEDOWN COVER SHEET

CLIENT: _____ CREW LEADER: _____
ADDRESS: _____ SALESPERSON: _____

DATE TO BE REMOVED: _____ RX# _____
PROJECTED MAN HOURS: _____
TOTAL ACTUAL MAN HOURS: _____

CREW:	START TIME:	END TIME:	TRAVEL TIME:	TOTAL TIME:
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

TOTAL # TREES: _____ MISC: _____
Multi-Construction Trees: _____
TOTAL # BOXES: _____
Wreath Boxes: _____
Misc. Boxes: _____

ITEMS MISSING: _____

ITEMS DAMAGED: _____

ITEMS NEEDING REFURBISHING: _____

RENTAL ITEMS REMOVED: YES NO

OTHER NOTES: _____

If to be stored on client's property, client agrees that all material is received in good condition.
CLIENT'S NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DATE: _____ COMPLETED MAN HOURS: _____ SIGNED: _____



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by Bob West

CALEDONIAN STONEMARK & LANDSCAPE SERVICES

HEADQUARTERS: Cape Cod, Mass.

FOUNDED: 1996

BRANCHES: Nantucket Island, Mass.

2001 REVENUE: \$1.5 million

2002 PROJECTED REVENUE: \$2 million

SERVICE MIX: 55 percent of the company's sales comes from landscape construction, while 20 percent are from maintenance, 10 percent from lawn care, and 5 percent each from irrigation, pest control and trees and shrubs

CLIENT MIX: 85 percent residential, 10 percent commercial and 5 percent government

EMPLOYEES: 12 year round, 22 seasonal

EQUIPMENT: 10 trimmers, 6 blowers, 20 edgers, 20 pruners, 6 chainsaws, 2 brushcutters, 10 hedge trimmers, 7 maintenance vehicles, 2 walk-behind mowers and 3 riding mowers

THE PHILOSOPHY

MISSION STATEMENT: Create and maintain beautiful landscapes, build trust with our clients and the community, and continually improve ourselves and our company.

KEY CHALLENGES: Managing clients and the 30-plus employees separated by 35 miles of ocean, finding and retaining quality leadership, and navigating the company toward controlled growth.

THE OWNER IAN MCCARTHY

McCarthy and two partners bought Nantucket Reserve in 1996. He bought out the partners in 2000 to form Caledonian Stonework & Landscape Services.

Ian McCarthy wasn't supposed to own a landscape business. He was supposed to help find someone else to own it. In 1996, the owner of what was then Nantucket Reserve decided to sell, and he enlisted the help of his accountant to value the business. That accountant was McCarthy.

When a deal to sell the \$350,000 business fell through at the last minute, the owner asked McCarthy if he knew anyone interested in the business for \$50,000. McCarthy and two of his accounting firm coworkers jumped at the opportunity. None of the three had any landscape experience, and McCarthy describes those early days as "a joke," adding that they were forced to learn as they went along.

Still, the landscaping experience satisfied the entrepreneur in McCarthy in ways bookkeeping couldn't, and he immersed himself in learning what he needed to know to make the business work. Ultimately, he found that the right mix of hiring the right people and sound business practices created a venture anyone would want to own.

THE COST OF EDUCATION. The company's sales slid by about 20 percent during that first year to \$285,000, but that was the price of learning for McCarthy and his partners. "We didn't know what we were doing," he noted, adding that the landscape business was still a part-time effort for the group. "We'd do a cleanup on one property, and then we'd send that crew to fertilize another yard and follow that by mowing another yard. We had no concept of routing and such."

The company showed modest growth in 1997, but the key event in its history occurred in 1998 when it started working with a Scottish mason. "We started pushing stonework, and suddenly we were in the landscape construction business," McCarthy recalled.

At the time, the company was working on Nantucket Island, but McCarthy spent a lot of time on nearby Cape Cod, and he saw great potential there. So, in January 2000, he started pursuing customers "on the Cape." "Nantucket is a small island, and there are larger homes on Cape

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At a
Glance

Cover the CZ



*Ian
McCarthy
built a
company
that offers
multiple
services
to a
growing
customer
base on
Cape Cod.*

*Caledonian Stone-
work & Landscape
Services President
Ian McCarthy (left)
and Paul Iverson,
the company's
construction super-
visor, steer the business
toward slow and
steady growth.
Photo: Terry Pommett*

ring
APE

Cod," he reasoned. "We sent mailings with color pictures to the architects and builders, and we had about \$1 million in contracts lined up without laying a stone."

Unfortunately, what seemed like a breakthrough was nearly a breaking point for the company, as too much work came too fast. "We were still a by-the-seat-of-our-pants

operation without a local manager or shop," McCarthy said. "It's a 35-mile commute by plane from Nantucket to Cape Cod, and we would fly over while sending the trucks on a ferry, and we had a couple of employees living in hotels. In July of that year, I shut the operation down because of the stress."

McCarthy decided to refocus his efforts

on Nantucket, where he grew both the maintenance and construction business. Still, McCarthy held firm to his vision for expanding onto Cape Cod. So when a call for a stone stairway installation came from a Cape Cod homeowner who didn't realize the firm had closed its operation there, McCarthy went to meet with him. "I was able to upsell her from a \$4,000 project to a \$22,000 project, and it went smoothly," he said. "That got us a referral that led to a \$40,000 project, and we were back doing walls on Cape Cod, only this time it was more organized and our employees knew what they were doing."

Buoyed by this success, McCarthy was ready to ramp up the company's presence on Cape Cod. But his partners weren't. McCarthy explained that the pair preferred a more conservative approach to growing the business. Ultimately, he bought them out. "I went against everyone's advice," he noted. "People told me [Cape Cod] would be too much to manage and there was no reason to expand when we were growing on Nantucket, but this was the vision I had."

Finding himself at a crossroads, McCarthy enlisted the help of industry consultant Marty Grunder of The Winner's Circle, Miamisburg, Ohio. "I wanted to use him because I wanted to understand how he can always be so far from his business and keep it working," McCarthy noted. "I thought that if I could do what he does, I'd be set."

Like his previous partners, Grunder cautioned the one-time accountant about expansion, but he believed McCarthy's plan could work if he had a permanent shop and a full-time manager in both locations. McCarthy hired the employees quickly, but finding a suitable shop was more challenging. Instead, he bought a small landscape maintenance firm on Cape Cod by using that contractor's prepayments he had already received from clients for the upcoming year's work as the down payment. This deal provided him with a 1-acre office and property at a key intersection and an easy way to boost the company's maintenance work in the new market.

As spring 2001 broke, business was good in both locations for McCarthy. But launching a construction business presents challenges, such as keeping employees consistently busy. McCarthy made sure his employees stayed productive by having them create a 200-foot-long, 5-foot-high wall in

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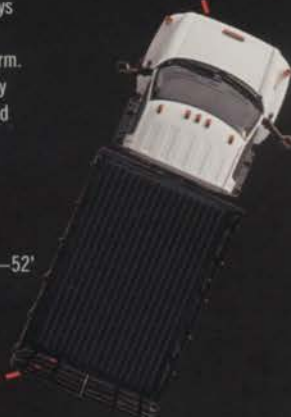
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front of his Cape Cod office in between jobs. Little did he realize what a marketing tool that wall would become. "We get two to three bid requests each week because of that wall," he related.

By the end of last year, the business had added about \$600,000 in revenue to its books, or 70 percent growth, to reach the \$1.7-million mark. "That sort of growth is almost a no-no because it can be so difficult to handle, but we were fortunate enough to do a lot of high-end work because of our market," McCarthy explained. "That let us do the dollar volume on relatively few jobs."

ONE FOR ALL. McCarthy, still just 32 years old, continues to rely on his business background, regularly formulating a business plan and outlining his future goals. During some planning last winter, he saw a problem—the company had too many names. What started out as Nantucket Reserve Landscaping was known as Fairwinds on Cape

Cod (the name of the acquired company) and also Caledonian when doing stonework. "Customers didn't know who we were," he acknowledged. Thus, Caledonian Stonework & Landscape Services was born.

Properly named and sufficiently growing, McCarthy knew he had other challenges to address. For starters, he needed help. Ninety-hour weeks weren't uncommon for him last year, but he refused to repeat that experience. So he hired a business manager, an office secretary and a landscape designer/salesperson this winter. These new hires boosted the company's overhead dramatically, but McCarthy views these moves as investments in Caledonian's future.

"Now that we have the designer, the construction foreman can stay in the field and manage the work instead of leaving jobs to meet with potential clients," he pointed out.

Still, adding these employees drives the company's costs skyward, and McCarthy also wants to hire a controller. But McCarthy's

continuing education helps him see how he can afford these additional hires. "This winter I really went through our numbers and our budgets, and I realized that our problem was we had too many unproductive hours," he asserted. "It wasn't the cost of equipment or the overhead. If you're billing out \$45 an hour and your labor burden is \$18 an hour, then you should have gross margins in excess of 50 percent. If that's not the case, then you're probably spread too thin, you're too disorganized and you're paying for too many hours that you're not billing."

"I brought in more employees to show the builders that we were the biggest, so I had to right size that," he continued, adding that he eliminated seven field positions this year. "We've done more volume this year, making our overhead increase minimal."

SERVICES GALORE. A high-end clientele equals service consumers. While Nan-

(continued on page 40)

For many landscape professionals, consultants seem to be little more than high-priced theorists. But Ian McCarthy, president, Caledonian Stonework & Landscape Services, Nantucket, Mass., sees them as investments. In addition to attending various industry conferences, McCarthy has hired Vander Kooi & Associates, The Winner's Circle and COMPASS Systems in the last few years.

"Initially, going to these conferences was good because we were getting exposed to ideas that weren't getting to us in Nantucket and we were talking to people we could learn from," he noted. "I felt like this business was a long-term proposition, so if we could learn one or two things from each event then it was worthwhile."

Bringing in consultants takes the issue to another level, however, with some costing as much as \$2,500 per day. That didn't faze McCarthy. "I literally look at consultants as an investment," he maintained. "If a consultant costs me \$5,000 for two days, my alternative is saving that money. Maybe I can get a 5 percent return off of it, which is \$250 a year. But if a consultant can teach me one idea that can save me or make me \$10,000 a year, then it's money well spent."

McCarthy recognizes that few contractors share this belief, especially smaller firms. "I think that other companies think they have all the answers already," he remarked. "This can be an ego business. Everyone is concerned about gross volume, who has the biggest dump truck or the newest mower. It's hard for people to admit they don't know everything. Because I don't have a background in this industry, I know I don't know everything so I'm happy to have people help me." — **Bob West**

The Consultant Question

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Cover Story

(continued from page 37)

tucket and Cape Cod aren't huge markets, they certainly offer thousands of affluent potential customers. Combined, the two communities have more than 220,000 residents during peak season. So a key to McCarthy's strategy is to maximize revenue per customer by offering multiple services. In 1998, McCarthy purchased a window cleaning company, and last year his wife started a residential cleaning business. While McCarthy strived to get all of the businesses working together, he quickly identified one key to successfully operating such different services – dedicated management.

"Each of the services is a separate business with its own employees and legal entities," he said, adding that cross-selling services can work. "I wouldn't hire a contractor to clean my house, so Caledonian can't market that service. But when we're maintaining someone's landscape we can offer them 10 percent off their first cleaning service if they go through our cleaning company."

Four years after buying the window cleaning operation, it's annual sales have grown from \$40,000 to nearly \$250,000.

Still, the managers make the model work. "If you don't have good people to manage each business part, it's a waste of time," McCarthy said, adding that creative incentive plans help managers see the bigger picture. "I incentivize my window cleaners by paying them a percentage of the work they do. The same is true with my landscape designer who is on salary plus commission. I want to make them into mini-owners."

Spending time reviewing historical numbers helped McCarthy see the value to this approach. "We haven't perfected our bonus system for landscape crews yet. Last year they were rewarded for working slower because they got overtime sooner, and that's counterproductive for us," he maintained.

ISLAND HOPPING. With a renewed focus on managing the business efficiently,

McCarthy has identified the next key moves for Caledonian. "In the next three years, I'd like to have the Nantucket and Cape Cod branches be more independent," he shared, adding that he spends three days a week in Nantucket since the lack of a formal office there means the operation needs more attention. "Our office is on the Cape, and we've still got some employees flying to work each day. That's an expense we could avoid by putting an office in both places."

Ultimately, he envisions a \$4-million company with revenue evenly split between the two locales. "If I could get the operation systematized like a McDonald's, then I might start another location," he related. "I want to iron out the kinks and choose key people to start up a new location with the added benefit of what we already know." **LL**

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine and can be reached at bwest@lawnandlandscape.com.

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119140	Tree, D	Maple, Spiree	20				40.00	Open
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FIRST Look

by Kristen Hampshire

Bob Grover and the Pacific Landscape Management partners are opening doors in the Portland commercial market.

Entrepreneurial spirit never nagged at Bob Grover like a dull, day-long headache or shook him from a sound sleep. It never distracted him like the blinking red light on an answering machine.

"I was not someone that necessarily ever had this aching desire to be an entrepreneur or to have my own company," admitted the president of Pacific Landscape Management, a one-year-old, full-service commercial operation based in Hillsboro, Ore. "I think there are some great companies in this industry with great management positions for people, and I don't believe that owning your own business has to be the ultimate goal."

Don't be mistaken – Grover certainly had the spirit, he just never considered channeling his enthusiasm into something to call his own.

Though Grover had never worked outside the industry, starting with his first high school job at the nursery across the street from his parents' home, he was happy simply working in it. He earned a horticulture degree from Oregon State University in Corvallis, and went to work for Northwest Landscape Industries – a \$16-million landscape operation with significant marketshare in Portland. He moved up through the ranks in 15 years, eventually serving as vice president of the landscape management division. He was content.

Then, TruGreen bought Northwest in 1998 – the first in its acquisition spree. Grover spent more than two years



Grover might surprise clients with bags of oranges, Reeses Peanut Butter Cups – orange momentos to increase company visibility in a competitive market. Photo: Pacific Landscape

overseeing eight branches as regional manager for Oregon and Washington, and initially enjoyed his expanded responsibilities. Corporate change lagged at first while the landscape giant continued consolidating companies across the country, so things weren't all that different.

But once policy kicked in, Grover winced at the loss of local decision-making control and tired of the frequent travel. "I didn't feel as enriched and plugged into the company once it became a national organization," he remarked. "I got into the industry because I loved plants and I flourished because I loved people. [At TruGreen] I sat behind a desk, I sat on a plane, I didn't get to see employees or customers. It wasn't fun to get up in the morning anymore."

Grover left TruGreen in September of 2000 and spent the following five months mentally regrouping. Then, he felt a little bit of an ache – caught a glimpse of that blinking red light – and he shook hands with his two partners and long-time Northwest colleagues Ron Knesal and Elias Godinez in January 2001.

(continued on page 44)

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Rochester, NY Area.....	Sept. 10	Missoula, MT Area	Sept. 25	Greenville, SC Area	Oct. 16
Boston, MA Area	Sept. 10	Des Moines, IA Area	Sept. 25	Albuquerque, NM Area.....	Oct. 16
NY/NJ/PA Tri-State Area		Lincoln, NE Area	Sept. 26	Montgomery, AL Area.....	Oct. 18
(Warwick, NY).....	Sept. 12	Salt Lake City, UT Area	Sept. 27	Phoenix, AZ Area	Oct. 18
Hartford, CT Area	Sept. 12	Kansas City/Topeka, KS Area.....	Sept. 27	Orlando, FL Area	Oct. 21
Long Island, NY Area	Sept. 13	Philadelphia, PA Area.....	Sept. 30	Atlanta, GA Area.....	Oct. 21
Danbury, CT Area	Sept. 13	Boise, ID Area.....	Sept. 30	Tampa, FL Area	Oct. 22
Chatham, Ontario,		Selinsgrove, PA Area	Oct. 1	Gladewater, TX Area	Oct. 23
Canada Area	Sept. 16	Baltimore/Washington DC Area	Oct. 2	Naples, FL Area.....	Oct. 24
Cincinnati, OH Area.....	Sept. 16	Portland, OR Area	Oct. 2	Miami, FL Area.....	Oct. 25
Milwaukee, WI Area	Sept. 16	Seattle, WA Area	Oct. 3	Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX Area.....	Oct. 25
Detroit, MI Area	Sept. 17	Savannah, GA Area	Oct. 4	San Diego, CA Area.....	Oct. 28
Columbus, OH Area.....	Sept. 17	Vancouver, BC Canada Area	Oct. 4	Austin, TX Area	Oct. 28
Green Bay, WI Area	Sept. 18	Memphis, TN Area	Oct. 7	Los Angeles, CA Area.....	Oct. 30
Traverse City, MI Area	Sept. 19	Indianapolis, IN Area	Oct. 7	San Antonio, TX Area.....	Oct. 30
Cleveland, OH Area	Sept. 19	Tulsa, OK Area	Oct. 9	Fresno, CA Area	Nov. 1
Grand Rapids, MI Area.....	Sept. 20	Louisville, KY Area	Oct. 9	Houston, TX Area	Nov. 1
Pittsburgh, PA Area	Sept. 20	St. Louis, MO Area	Oct. 11	Santa Cruz, CA Area.....	Nov. 4
Madison, WI Area.....	Sept. 20	Nashville, TN Area	Oct. 11	Sacramento, CA Area.....	Nov. 6
Minneapolis, MN Area.....	Sept. 23	Raleigh-Durham, NC Area	Oct. 14	Reno, NV Area	Nov. 8

NOTE: The actual Build-A-Pond Day site may be approximately 50 miles from the major city listed. Each participant will be notified at least 4 weeks prior to the scheduled date of the seminar.

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First Look

(continued from page 42)



Partners Ron Knesal and Elias Godínez (left to right) provide operations and training expertise. Photo: Pacific Landscape

DOING IT DIFFERENTLY. Grover doesn't want Pacific to reach gargantuan proportions—he's not looking to recreate the size or structure of his former employer. This might contradict Pacific Landscape's first year success, with \$650,000 in revenues and projections to defeat the \$1.5-million mark in 2002. But Grover and his two partners know their size and owner-client communication carves a niche in an area where TruGreen consumes 40 to 50 percent of the "Class A" commercial market.

"I don't know that we want to be a huge company," he mused. "One of the things we offer is being different by being a smaller- to medium-sized company. We are going to have to be careful in making sure that we don't change who we are in the name of growth."

Who is Pacific Landscape? A full-time staff of 20 along with 10 seasonal employees — 90 percent Hispanic — who comprise eight maintenance crews and three renovation crews. An irrigation technician and mechanic support the staff and a satellite office in nearby Vancouver, Wash., allows dedicated crews to reach clients quickly. "I think people thought I was crazy that we're not even a year old and we already have a satellite location," Grover admitted. "But it's amazing what response time means to a customer, and if we have someone 10 minutes away, they are blown away by our ability to get there fast."

Grover surrendered some control when he launched the satellite location this year — entrusting another long-time colleague, Mike Rice — but he recognized that branching out was the company's key to reaching the Portland metropolitan market.

Back at the office, Grover handles the sales and turns over the clients to Knesal, who serves as the

(continued on page 46)

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First Look

(continued from page 44)

operations manager and is "probably the best maintenance customer manager that I've ever met," Grover said. Godinez takes care of training, coaching new employees in the field during the day and conducting "night classes" at 5 p.m. two nights a week, where 90 percent of the employees voluntarily study to earn certification like applicators' licenses or learn irrigation repair basics.

"What we have to offer is our experience in the industry and market, and what makes us so different is that we are locally owned and managed by the owners," Grover stated.

And since Pacific targets many of the same customers its larger competitor goes after, building this rapport is important - and so is developing brand recognition. "I know a lot of the customers, and that is a barrier to entry for most new companies," he identified. "There is a period of time that it takes you to establish yourself, and we had a fairly short period of getting up to speed because people were familiar with us."

A one-year non-compete agreement after parting with TruGreen kept Pacific Landscape from approaching these clients, however. So when that contract expired, the company painted the market orange with a clever marketing campaign. "My school colors were orange and black, so our trucks are orange and our uniforms are orange," Grover explained. "When our non-compete agreement ran out, we took bags of oranges with little stickers with our logo on them to major property management companies in Portland. That was our first marketing gimmick to reacquaint ourselves with the marketplace we couldn't talk to for a year."

And it worked. Now the company continues its orange marketing streak by handing out Reeses Peanut Butter Cups, orange Halloween candy - anything and everything orange. "We have 12 trucks on the road, and I already hear people say, 'You're the guys in the orange trucks,'" Grover noted.

MAKING SENSE. Since service is the core of Pacific's philosophy, Grover recognized this deficit in his former employer and captured its importance in Pacific's mission: "The phrase we like to use is, 'If you do things right, the money will follow,'" he said.

But Grover realizes that making financial strides helps his company offer optimum service to its customers. "I feel like being at

First Look

\$1.5 million, we are at the first stages of critical mass where we can justify supporting the basic specialties that we need to have to be that full-service operator."

Generating "critical mass" presents an issue many small business owners confront when growing their businesses: cash flow. Grover's goal was to be cash flow positive in the company's second year, but conservative capital spending and healthy sales allowed Pacific Landscape to reach this goal in six months. Many owners make the mistake of "dwindling their capital to feed their operations," which is risky business, he warned.

Grover and his partners approached capital expenditures like a tight-rope act, walking carefully as not to upset the company's financial balance. While he knows the office space is a little cramped, purchasing a new facility didn't seem logical over opening a new location in Vancouver where he could reach more customers – more sales. And he realizes he and his partners take on a hefty workload, but hiring another manager to oversee renovation projects is a long-term financial decision, he explained.

Even as the company farms out more responsibility to its employees and hires new managers, Grover doesn't see himself stepping out of his sales role. "That is part of what our market niche is – being served by the owner," he defined. "I know when I walk into a customer's office and I say, 'This is my company and you have my personal commitment,' that is very effective."

Ask Grover for a snapshot of Pacific Landscape in five years and he'll tell you one is not yet developed. Opportunity, he said, will shape the organization's landscape in coming years.

For now, Grover and his Pacific partners are quite satisfied, coming up on their second birthday. "We are happy doing what we're doing," Grover said matter-of-factly. "We're growing opportunistically." ■

The author is Managing Editor – Special Projects for Lawn & Landscape magazine and can be

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Check this article online for insight on Pacific Landscape's training program and some education tips to try.

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Mower Attachments

by Kristin Mohn

Imagine, for a moment, your car without its accessories. The cruise control and four-wheel drive? Gone. The high-tech stereo system with subwoofer? Non-existent. Air conditioning? Start rolling down your windows. Without accessories, the car becomes a shell of its former self – still delivering its basic functions, but missing a beat in terms of efficiency.

Consumers purchase vehicle add-on functions such as cruise control, stereos and air conditioning because a journey with controlled speed, good tunes and comfortable temperatures is much more effective than one with speeding tickets, boredom and overheating. True, none of these features are mandatory, but they help the driver get the job done in a more productive fashion.

In the same vein, mower attachments allow landscape contractors to perform better in the field. By simply sliding or snapping on an attachment,

Without the right add-on features, a mower is only half as effective. Attachments allow contractors to expand their options and offer more services to their customers.

contractors avoid overwhelming financial investments and save time – both leading to a more efficient work day. And, attachments such as snow plows – the proverbial four-wheel drive of lawn mowers – allow contractors to expand their service offerings year-round. When labor and finances are tight, as they often are, mower attachments exist as must-have landscape accessories. “The biggest benefit to an attachment user is the fact that you can use the mower all year long – all 365 days,” said Celeste Policastro, product manager, Woods Equipment, Oregon, Ill.

THE EXTRA ADVANTAGE. Clearly, just as a convertible can be customized for open-air drives in the summer and enclosed, heated rides in the winter, attachments enable contractors to improve their mower versatility. Even when the snow lies 6 inches
(continued on page 52)

Broom attachments like this one enable contractors to offer spring and fall clean-up as add-on services.

Photo: Walker

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Mower Attachments

(continued from page 50)

thick on the ground in mid-January, mower accessories such as snow plows bring dormant mowers out of hiding, stated Jim Hilburn, national service manager, Dixie Chopper, Coatesville, Ind. "The advantage of the snow plow lies here: In the off months of cutting grass, the contractor can still use the equipment," he said. Companies can then

pull in additional revenue by plowing sidewalks or driveways – without the large-scale investment in a full-size plow, he added.

Of course, attachment options exist in other seasons, particularly with spring and fall cleanup, pointed out Bob Walker, president, Walker Manufacturing, Fort Collins, Colo. "There's a time of year when the main

thing you're doing with your mower is mowing," he noted. "But during other times of the year, rather than allowing the mower to just sit there, it can easily be configured to seasonal work for fall and spring cleanup."

For example, dethatcher and rotary broom attachments freshen the turf as it recovers from winter dormancy, so contractors who use these accessories can offer the spring cleanup as a profitable add-on service, he continued. "Spring dethatchers are very effective tools for especially vertical-type grasses," Walker identified, adding that aeration can be folded into spring cleanup services with an aerator attachment.

"And, if you also have a rotary broom, it can be used to sweep hard surfaces such as walking paths or sidewalks, sweeping where ice control, gravel or sand were put down in the winter," he continued. "That material has a way of working itself into the turf and the rotary broom easily cleans that up."

Some attachments, such as collection systems, are purely customer-driven, since many clients dislike the appearance of clippings on their freshly-cut lawns, Hilburn said. "It's advantageous for contractors to be able to offer removal and get into markets they wouldn't ordinarily be able to," he said. Other attachments cater solely to contractors' needs for efficiency and heightened productivity on the job, he continued.

(continued on page 69)

legendary performance

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Still wondering if attachments are right for your business? Celeste Policastro, product manager, Woods Equipment, Oregon, Ill., outlined five justifications for contractors' purchase of mower accessories:

1. Increased productivity
2. Improved operator comfort
3. More reliability
4. Equipment versatility
5. Heightened cut quality

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AUGUST 2002

TREE Care GUIDE

- Tree Fertilization: In the Zone **T3**
- Major Tree Menaces **T6**
- Stomp Out Stumps **T9**
- Fashionable Foliage **T12**
- Tree Care Buyers' Guide **T14**

BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

Done properly, soil injection is the best way contractors can get fertilizer directly to a tree's roots, without having to lose the product to turf roots and soil particles. Photos: The Care of Trees

In THE Zone

Contractors can ensure healthy, long-lasting trees by conducting regular examinations and following proper tree fertilization techniques.

Vitamins provide the body with a boost of daily nutrients.

But each person, based on specific needs, requires a different set of vitamins—a child may take children's vitamins, for instance, or someone who's active may take vitamins for an energetic lifestyle.

"We take vitamins with baseline levels of nutrients to make sure we're covering all the bases, but our bodies use only the materials we need," pointed out Rex Bastian, vice president of field education and development, The Care of Trees, Wheeling, Ill. "However, we wouldn't have to take a vitamin supplement if we watched what we ate."

One could compare a human's vitamin intake to tree fertilization. Not all trees need fertilization, and those that do will take what they need from what's available. But, since trees can't tell contractors how they're feeling, contractors should conduct thorough examinations of soil texture, pH, nutrient levels and tree species, age and health before determining trees' fertilization needs.

"Just because you put it in the ground doesn't mean the tree can use it to its advantage or that it will solve all of the tree's problems," Bastian said. "Fertilization is much more than that—it's complex, yet it is only one piece of a bigger picture."

FERTILIZATION FACTS. Examining trees' natural growth processes helps contractors determine fertilization requirements. "Trees drop their leaves in fall and those leaves break down over the course of an entire season or several years in a slow-release form," Bastian explained, adding that this is how trees receive nutrients naturally.

However, most ornamental trees live outside of their natural environment, whether in a client's landscape or lining a suburban street, so their surroundings may not provide the proper nutrients available for them to remain healthy, pointed out Kevin Allen, operations manager, Pro Care Lawn & Tree Care Services, Meridian, Idaho. "We typically have to fertilize trees because a landscape designer has installed trees that just don't belong in our area or a homeowner has put them in a stressful environment," he said. "I almost never fertilize a tree that is native and properly installed because it almost never needs it."





Bartlett Tree Care Experts also fertilizes urban trees annually due to lost nutrients. "The leaves and fallen twigs removed from the site affect nutrient cycling – we found that an average 2 to 3 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year is removed through the raking away of these leaves and twigs," explained Tom Smiley, arboriculture research, Bartlett Tree Research Lab, and adjunct professor, Clemson University, Charlotte, N.C. "We're trying to make up for that loss. You can look for symptoms of nutrient deficiency, such as pale green foliage, to help determine if these nutrients are being lost."

Soil injection is the fertilization method contractors use most because this is the best way to get a measured dose of nutrients directly to tree roots without passing through turf roots and soil particle filters, commented Wes Culwell, arborist and hor-

ticulturist, Green Lawn & Trees, Fort Worth, Texas. This is particularly important with phosphorus, which is a key element in root production and has difficulty moving vertically through soil, Culwell said.

Contractors can find most tree feeder roots in the top 12 to 18 soil inches, with support and stabilizing roots found deeper, Culwell remarked. "Therefore, feeding at levels much deeper than 8 inches risks the possibility of bypassing many of the feeder roots with the fertilizer," he said.

Soil injection, formerly called deep root feeding, has evolved over the years because of the realization that the bulk of tree roots that benefit from fertilization lay close to the surface, Smiley said. "This process puts the fertilizer close to the fine roots where the majority of absorption takes place," he said.

Fertilization's advantages are on a site-by-site basis – the result can be increased growth, vitality and plant health, depending on the tree's condition, soil compaction level and the fertilizer used, Bastian said. Contractors should evaluate each tree separately. An old tree, for instance, should be treated differently than a young tree, even though the raw materials they work with are the same. "Ask yourself, 'Would you take an 80-year-old person and put them in football training?' No. It's the same with trees," he said. "Another example is a tree in a parking lot. You may not want to fertilize it too much to force growth. Instead, you may want to keep it pruned back so it doesn't produce as much foliage and use a mild fertilizer to make sure it doesn't run short of things it needs, but yet you've still manipulated its growth rate so it doesn't get out of control."

ALL ABOUT APPLICATION. Contractors should apply fertilizer to a tree's entire root system, which generally radiates from the trunk past the drip line, pointed out Patricia Thomson, certified arborist, Kelly's Tree Care, Toronto, Canada. "Usually, contractors can expect to find the majority of the nonwoody roots close to the drip line," she said. "A grid pattern of fertilizer holes should be created over this rooting area at 2½-foot intervals."

Culwell recommends soil injections begin about one-third of the way out to the

tree's drip line from the trunk. Injections should continue around the tree and radiate out to a few feet past the drip line, with injections made 30 to 36 inches apart, he said. "The amount of nutrients to provide should be determined and pump flow and pressure should be calibrated to deliver proper distribution of nutrients," he said.

And don't forget that a large number of fine roots rest close to the trunk, Smiley said. "People used to avoid the area close to the tree," he explained. "The old tale was that the fine roots were out at the drip line, and there are some there, but we're finding that a higher density of fine roots are halfway to the drip line and closer. When you fertilize, get as close as you can to the trunk without injuring the buttress roots."

Fertilizer recommendations, which are frequently based on trunk diameter inches, are made in pounds or gallons of fertilizer per diameter inch, Culwell explained. Recommendations also are made on the number of square feet in the growing areas of the tree's branch spread, he added. "In this method, trees growing in a restricted root zone, such as in a parking lot, would require less fertilizer than a tree of equal trunk diameter growing in an area with no root zone restrictions," he said.

Soil texture and pH also can affect how much, what kind and how often contractors should fertilize a tree. "Clay soils will retain nutrients longer with slow nutrient movement through the soil, while sandy soils will only retain nutrients for a short time before quickly leaching through the soil," Culwell said.

According to Thomson, research suggests fertilizing trees with 1 to 4 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. "The hydraulic sprayer needs to be calibrated so that enough liquid is applied per hole to obtain this level of nitrogen and the tree is not over or under fertilized," she said.

Of course, this job also takes the proper piece of equipment – a pump that will put out about 150 pounds per square inch, Smiley advised. And calibrating the equipment before doing the job is crucial. "You need to know how long it takes to put out a given quantity of solution," he said. "We usually test that by putting the soil injector in a bucket and turning it on for a certain amount of time to see how much product comes out."

TREE FERTILIZATION

The injector also needs to have a means of regulating the soil depth a contractor intends to reach. "Typically, you should try not to put it in the ground lower than 8 inches because, from our research, we know that if you start at 8 inches, you'll end up 2 inches shallower where the majority of the roots are – between 4 and 6 inches deep," Smiley said. "You end up shallower because after the pressure pushes the material out, it always moves horizontally and then the pressure pushes it up."

In addition to a pump and soil probe, fertilizer is another ingredient needed to provide trees with nutrients, and various types of fertilizer will act differently. "There's natural organic, fast-release inorganic, slow-release man-made organic – a zillion different kinds," Bastian pointed out. "We know that fast-release inorganic doesn't last more than two to four weeks before it's converted to leachable forms – especially the nitrogen – and lost in the system. They all work differently, so the process will change based on what you use. If you use a fast-release form, you know you'll have to pay more attention to timing since it lasts less time than a slow-release fertilizer."

"A fertilizer should be chosen that has nitrogen in slow-release form, otherwise the available nitrogen may be quickly leached from the soil prior to pickup by the tree," Thomson added. "Products that we use have two- to three-year expected release times and we suggest that people wait that interval before fertilizing again."

Smiley advised that contractors use fertilizer that is at least 50 percent water-insoluble nitrogen because it lasts longer.

"You can use this type of fertilizer any time of year except in severe drought or if the ground is frozen," he said. "With soluble fertilizer, there's less of a time window and the greatest degree of nutrient uptake is during the growing season."

Contractors must be mindful of tree age and nitrogen content in the fertilizer as well. "Young trees that are established and vigorously growing can take advantage of high nitrogen rates," Bastian explained, "while older, mature trees shouldn't be heavily fertilized. But this doesn't mean you can't use a fertilizer high in nitrogen – you just have to use a lower rate."

Contractors also should be careful if they detect insect or disease problems before fertilization, Smiley warned. "Fertilizing at this time can increase the pest population," he said. "If a tree has sucking insects like aphids, for instance, we may want to treat the insect at the same time we fertilize or fertilize after we treat the insect."



Soil health, such as texture and pH, can affect how contractors fertilize trees.

Photo: The Care of Trees

TIMING TACTICS. Fertilization is best done when soil temperatures are optimal for root growth and adequate moisture is readily available, Thomson remarked.

This typically occurs in the spring and the fall when turf and shrubs are dormant and less likely to absorb the fertilizer before the tree gets it, Culwell said. "Also, the tree roots are actively absorbing and storing nutrients in preparation for the spring flush of growth," he said. "Fertilization should be done when the soil temperature is 40 degrees or above. Roots are not active at lesser temperatures."

And contractors can apply water-insoluble nitrogen fertilizer at any time of

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Check this story online for other tree fertilization mistakes to avoid.

year because it lasts, so "if you apply it in spring, it's still there in the fall and vice-versa," Bastian explained.

However, contractors must be cautious when it comes to young trees. "They can be fed lightly throughout the growing season, being cautious of hot temperatures, whereas feeding a large, established tree even once a year may be too much," Culwell suggested.

"Fertilization should not be done when the plant is in stress or in the process of hardening off for winter, as this may force plant growth and cause damage from frost and freeze," added Tim Doppel, president, Atwood Lawn Care, Sterling Heights, Mich.

Two common mistakes used when choosing fertilizer are using a turf grade fertilizer for trees – "not all fertilizers are meant to treat underground roots," Doppel said – and using a fertilizer with high salt content. "It is very important to use a low-salt fertilizer that is meant for trees, otherwise root damage can occur," he added.

Smiley agreed. "A high salt index – not sodium chloride, but salts that make up the fertilizer – can draw water away from the roots and actually burn the trunk," he said.

And fertilizing a tree won't get a contractor anywhere if other problems are present, which is why contractors must conduct thorough tree checkups. "It happens with people too – they get a lot of tests and treatments, but their health still declines," Bastian explained, adding that for further recommendations contractors can look at the American National Standards Institute's A300 standards on tree fertilization at www.ansi.org. "Trees are the same way. Sometimes no matter what you do, they still decline. You have to make a judgment and decision that is your best and know what kind of results to expect. The only way you can do that is by making sure you check out all aspects of the tree's health before you fertilize." **LL**

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

The International Society of Arboriculture developed companion publications (Best Management Practices) to aid in the interpretation and implementation of ANSI A300 standards. Included in this packet is a *Tree Fertilization* publication. The full text can be ordered at www2.champaign.isa-arbor.com/welcome.html or by calling 217/355-9516.



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USE READER SERVICE #155

COMPILED BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

These tree insects and diseases have bored, chewed and sucked their way onto many contractors' most wanted lists. Here, we identify their notable characteristics.

Major MENACES

BARK BEETLES

Notable Characteristics: Once a pioneer beetle has found a suitable host, it bores in and begins to release a chemical that attracts mates.

Once inside the tree, mating occurs in a mating or nuptial chamber, and the females chew through the inner bark making long tunnels called galleries. Females construct their egg galleries in the inner bark tissue of the tree.

Wanted For: The most destructive members of the bark beetle family (Scolytidae) can kill trees, but most bark beetles live and reproduce in weakened or dead trees. In the United States, tree-killing bark beetles are responsible for 60 percent of all tree deaths.

Last Seen: There are more than 6,000 species of bark beetles worldwide. Most bark beetles feed and reproduce in a single species of tree.



Photo: J.J. Mangan

Information provided by: The Michigan Entomological Society

BRONZE BIRCH BORER

Notable Characteristics: The bronze birch borer is a small, slender beetle, less than 1/2-inch long. The larval stage feeds just under the bark of birch trees. Newly hatched larvae are 1/16-inch long while mature larvae may be 3/4- to 1 1/4-inch long and 3/8-inch wide.

Wanted For: Initial damage is usually discovered when the top part of a birch tree suddenly wilts and dies. This happens when a larva girdles one of the upper branches. Heavy attacks and continued reinfestation results in most of the branches dying from the top down. Eventually the trunk is girdled and the entire tree dies.

Last Seen: This native North American insect occurs on birch from Newfoundland to British Columbia and south to West Virginia, Ohio, Colorado, Idaho and Oregon.



Photo: Bayer

Information provided by: David Shelton, entomologist, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

GYPSY MOTH

Notable Characteristics: The gypsy moth is known to feed on the foliage of hundreds of species of North American plants, but is most common on oaks and aspen.

Wanted For: When densities of gypsy moth populations reach very high levels, trees may become completely defoliated. Several successive years of defoliation may ultimately result in tree mortality.

Last Seen: The gypsy moth is an example of an experiment gone horribly wrong. The moth was brought to the United States in 1869 in a failed attempt to start a silkworm industry. Escaping soon after, the gypsy moth has become, over the past century, a major pest in the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada.



Photo: USDA Agricultural Research Service

Information provided by: The USDA Forest Service and Michigan's Gypsy Moth Education Program, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID

Notable Characteristics: An aphid-like insect, hemlock woolly adelgids can be observed at the base of individual Easter or Carolina hemlock needles, covering themselves with fluffy white, cottony wax, resembling cotton swab tips.

Wanted For: These insects feed on sap and inject toxic saliva into new twig growth. Damage first appears as needle discoloration, followed by premature needle drop, branch desiccation and loss of vigor. Gradual limb dieback, beginning at the bottom of the tree, occurs in two years. Eventual tree death occurs in four to eight years. **Last Seen:** Although originally introduced into the U.S. (Oregon) from Asia, it has since spread throughout the East to Virginia, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts, killing trees from New England to North Carolina.



Photo: J.J. Mangan

Information provided by: Deborah Smith-Fole, extension agent agricultural pest management, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, New Brunswick, N.J.

LERP PSYLLID

Notable Characteristics: These psyllids form a lerp, which is a secretory structure produced by the nymphs from honeydew as a protective cover.

Wanted For: The psyllids, small insects that suck sap from leaves, are, like the eucalyptus, native to Australia. They cause leaf damage and drop, which may stress trees and make them susceptible to fatal attack by other insects. Psyllids also produce a sticky substance called honeydew that drops to the ground on sidewalks and cars.

Last Seen: The red gum lerp psyllid, a new pest on California's red gum eucalyptus trees, was discovered in 1998 in Los Angeles County, and has currently spread through much of the state.



Photo: Bayer

Information provided by: Donald Daddison, University of California, Berkeley, Calif.

SCALES

Notable Characteristics: Scales are broken into two categories: soft scales, which secrete an attached, thin, waxy layer over themselves that cannot be separated from their bodies; and hard scales, which use shed skins and wax that is unattached to their bodies to form a hard cover.

Wanted For: Scales cause damage by removing vital plant fluids from their hosts using their sucking mouthparts. Leaf and needle stunting and yellowing, twig and branch dieback and plant death are possible in numbers.

Last Seen: Scales are inconspicuous pests of many evergreen and deciduous plants. They can occur on leaves, twigs, branches or trunks. Their small size and general lack of mobility makes them difficult to notice by the casual observer.



Photo: Bayer

Information provided by: University of Minnesota Extension Service

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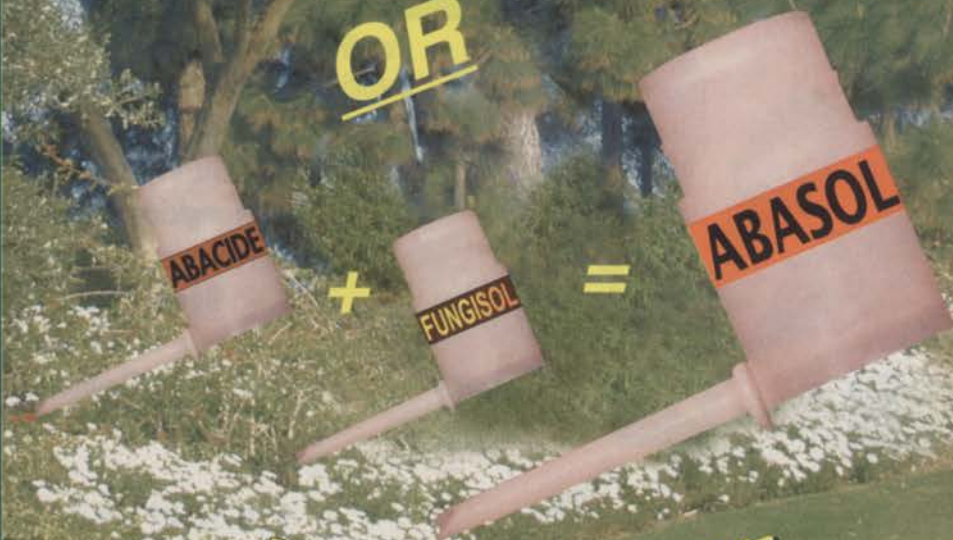
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BACTERIAL LEAF SCORCH

Notable Characteristics: These bacteria are small, do not form a spore, have a thick, rippled cell wall, and do not grow on conventional bacteriological media.

Wanted For: Leaf scorch, sometimes called marginal leaf burn, describes the death of tissue along leaf edges. This symptom develops when sufficient water needed by the plant cells does not reach the leaf margin cells. This can occur: 1) if there is insufficient moisture in the soil, 2) weather conditions are such that water is lost too quickly to be replaced adequately, 3) roots have been killed by plant pathogens, excavation, compaction or other factors, or 4) fungi or bacteria invade and plug the water-conducting vessels in the plant.

Last Seen: This bacteria has been associated with leaf scorch on oak, elm, sycamore, mulberry, red maple and sweetgum.



Photo: J. Menger

OAK WILT

Notable Characteristics: Symptoms in recently infected trees include the following: browning from the leaf tips to the leaf bases, wilting leaves, defoliation and vascular sap discoloration. Fungal mats develop beneath the bark by the following spring and serve as sources of infection for transmission by picnic beetles to healthy trees, thus completing the cycle.

Wanted For: Once a red oak becomes infected with the oak wilt fungus, it usually dies within several months. Once established in a tree, the oak wilt fungus becomes systemic within the tree. Hence, neighboring trees, which happen to be root grafted to the diseased trees are at risk.

Last Seen: Oak wilt can be found in areas where oaks grow.



Photo: Rainbow Treecare Scientific Advancements

DUTCH ELM DISEASE (DED)

Notable Characteristics: DED symptoms include leaves that wilt and then turn yellow and brown. If the fungus enters the tree through roots grafted to infected trees, symptoms begin in the lower crown on the side nearest the graft and then the entire crown. If infection begins in the upper crown, symptoms appear at the end of an individual branch and progress downward in the crown.

Wanted For: DED symptoms are the result of a fungus infecting a tree's vascular system. Infection results in clogged vascular tissues, lack of water movement and visual symptoms as the tree wilts and dies.

Last Seen: At one time, the American elm was considered to be an ideal street tree. Then DED began devastating the elm population.



Photo: Rainbow Treecare Scientific Advancements

SYCAMORE ANTHRACNOSE

Notable Characteristics: Anthracnose is a group of fungal pathogens that cause dark, sunken lesions on leaves, stems or fruits. The sycamore anthracnose fungi attack sycamore trees early in the spring, causing a rapid wilt of newly emerging leaves. Larger leaves develop a brown growth along the main veins. Infected leaves often curl and eventually fall.

Wanted For: Anthracnose is a destructive fungal disease that disfigures and defoliates shade trees, such as sycamore, white oak, elm, dogwood and maple. Besides being unsightly, the disease increases a tree's susceptibility to additional destructive agents.

Last Seen: Anthracnose is common in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic area where it causes sycamore blighting from mid-May through June.



Photo: J. Menger

Information provided by: Gary Monahan, plant pathologist, The Pennsylvania State University Extension, University Park, Pa.

Information provided by: David Roberts, Michigan State University Extension, East Lansing, Mich.

Information provided by: Rainbow Treecare Scientific Advancements, the Colorado State University Extension, Fort Collins, Colo., and the University of Oklahoma Extension

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STUMP GRINDING

BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

Self-propelled and tow-behind stump-grinding units can cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$40,000, depending on equipment size and horsepower. Photo: Vermeer



Stomp OUT

Stumps

While driving down any suburban street, contractors may notice tree stumps. They stick out like fashion don'ts – bulky, unattractive sore spots requiring cover. Some clients even mask them with flowers or use them as short tables for lawn décor, figuring they'll just blend in.

But the fact is that most of these stumps are nuisances, hindering clients' landscape layouts. For this reason, stumps provide contractors with a profitable add-on service since the biggest cost in stump grinding is machinery, and labor is minimal since it is a one-man operation with little clean up.

However, like every add-on service, stump grinding also has its challenges. Contractors venturing into this niche have to explore all of their options to ensure success.

CLEAR UP CLUTTER. First of all, to clarify the terminology, stump grinding isn't stump removal. "Stump grinding is chipping away at the stump to a level somewhere below grade or below ground level – it leaves the roots in tact but removes the surface material up to 1 foot below ground," explained Ronald Grimstad, chief engineer, CE Attachments, Cedarburg, Wis. "Then sod is typically laid over this spot and the job is done. Stump removal, on the other hand, is extracting a

large amount of the tree's root system using heavy excavating equipment and ending up with a hole the size of the family car. Both require backfill and cover-up, one just requires much more than the other."

With stump grinding, tree roots deep in the ground won't regenerate and can be covered up with turf – as if the stump were never there. Clients prefer stump grinding over removal because the landscape needs less site repairs after job completion, said Evan Saylor, president, Hurst Landscaping, Richland, Pa. Clients tend to get these terms confused, which is an issue Saylor uses to his advantage to gain jobs. "A lot of people think the job is so expensive, so the trick is to drive around looking for stumps," he said. "Once you find one, stick a survey flag on the stump and put a sticker with the estimated price for the stump in it and your number. That works very well in building clients."

The level to which a stump must be removed below ground typically extends from 6 to 30 inches, depending on

Stump grinding can be a profitable service for contractors who know how to price jobs accordingly.



Stump-grinding attachments are made for skid-steer loaders and cost between \$5,000 to \$7,300.

Photo: CE Attachments

STUMP GRINDING

the size of the tree, and twice the diameter of the stump, Saylor compared. For instance, a 25-inch-caliper stump will require grinding an approximate 50-inch diameter because a stump's main roots extend outward underground, Saylor explained. "Think of a tree stump like a tooth – the roots go down a little and then out to the sides," he pointed out. "The roots close to

WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN

After grinding a stump, small wood chips are left. Most clients keep the chips and contractors prefer it that way, said Evan Saylor, president, Hurst Landscaping, Richland, Pa.

"We will raise our prices from \$2 to \$6 per caliper inch of stump if we have to carry away the chips as a way to get clients to keep them," Saylor said. "It costs too much for us to carry a truckload of chips away and dump them at the day's end. Grinding 1 inch takes 30 seconds and a 60-inch stump takes one-half hour. Then loading chips is 30 to 45 minutes – that's a waste of time and takes longer than the actual job. If clients want it, they have to pay for it."

Contractors should remind clients that chips should not be used to mulch beds without a fertilizer because they need nitrogen to deteriorate without stealing nitrogen from the plants, Saylor advised. – *Nicole Wisniewski*

the surface always need to be removed to ensure the tree won't come back, but most of the time the tree is dead before this process anyway. Still, it's good to get rid of the roots at the surface because you don't want insects coming in and boring into the wood, infesting the area."

Since some of the larger tree care contractors prefer subcontracting stump removal work to doing it themselves due to the size and expense of lugging around additional equipment for the work, smaller companies are starting to specialize in this niche market, according to Mark Rieckhoff, environmental product specialist, Vermeer Manufacturing Co., Pella, Iowa. One example is Galin Haaven, owner, Haaven's Stump Removal, Center City, Minn., who recognized this trend while working at a tree care company and started his own stump grinding business to fill the void. He picked up work subcontracting with larger tree companies and then quickly built new business because of a Dutch Elm Disease outbreak in Minneapolis. "We picked up contracts to grind stumps after the trees were removed," he said, adding that he brings a self-propelled unit with him to bid on residential jobs. "About 95 percent of the time, I do the job at the same time – this saves me a trip."

Pricing work accordingly can make or break stump grinding's profitability. In Wisconsin, Grimstad said contractors charge a \$50 minimum and \$1 to \$4 per caliper inch at the widest spot, including the area underground where the roots extend (for example, 25-inch caliper tree will need a 50-inch diameter area cleaned out). In Pennsylvania, Saylor charges a \$55 minimum and then \$3 per caliper inch at the stump's widest spot, so a 30-inch total stump would cost \$90.

MACHINE MATTERS. Contractors doing this work have a variety of equipment choices – tow-behind units, self-propelled

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units and stump grinding attachments for skid-steer loaders. A contractor's choice is based on tree size, work amount and desired speed.

"A towable unit is better situated for wide open access to stumps, whereas a self-propelled unit is for areas with tighter access," Rieckhoff said. "Towables won't get through 36-inch backyard gates, but self-propelled units will."

Attachments come in handy for contractors who already have a skid-steer loader and want to add stump grinding without buying a separate machine, Grimstad said.

Stump grinding attachments cost between \$5,000 to \$7,300, Grimstad estimated, while self-propelled and tow-behind units cost from \$10,000 up to \$40,000, depending on size and horsepower, Rieckhoff said.

If contractors want to try out this work or don't have as many stumps to remove, they also can rent this equipment at a lesser cost before making a serious investment. A half-day rental for a stump grinding attachment can cost about \$100, Grimstad said.

Since these machines work hard and require regular maintenance, some rental stores notice that small- to medium-sized firms rent machines more often than buy them. "We believe that it comes down to them not wanting to do the maintenance and bear the costs of employing mechanics," commented Brad Coverdale, regional manager, NationsRent, central and southern Indiana. "By shifting the upfront purchase price and maintenance to a store like us, they have a greater sense of certainty about the daily cost of their operation."

All in all, stump grinding can make a fine service addition to any business. "It's a good service and can be profitable, but you have to learn the machine and educate yourself and your customers on it," Saylor said. "There's certainly a trick to the trade." **U**

The author is Managing Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine and can be reached at nwisniewski@lawnandlandscape.com.

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Check this story online for tips maintaining stump grinding equipment.

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USE READER SERVICE #160

BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

Need some inspiration for your next design? Check out the latest tree trends piquing contractors' interests.

Hook up with the right tree and it can be a joyful partnership—one filled with years of cooling shade, delicate spring blossoms and vivid fall color.

And that's just what this year's tree trends offer—certain principles, if you will, that add definition to a landscape—be they natural, functional, horticultural, architectural, philosophical or aesthetic, and maybe more than one at the same time.

Here, growers share the top tree trends designers and consumers currently fancy and point out which ones will endure beyond the current growing season.

SOMETIMES, SMALLER IS BETTER. Ah, the pleasures of having a tree that understands boundaries. No more tangles with power lines, no more straying into the skies and neighbors' yards, no more dwarfing houses. Instead, diminutive trees grace landscapes, not overwhelm them. Some soften the corners of a house and make it seem larger, while others provide year-round interest with colorful bark, flowers, leaves or fruit.

Because the average building lot is getting smaller, one of the biggest trends now is toward smaller trees to fit the shrinking landscape, pointed out Martin Hanni, grower, Monrovia, Dayton, Ore. "They are running out of land to build, so instead of a 10,000-square-foot lot, they have a 7,500-square-foot lot—there is less room for a garden," he said. "Dwarf trees have a much smaller footprint, so instead of a 60-foot ash tree, people are looking for trees that mature at 30 feet."

Clients' desire for low-maintenance foundation plants is another reason dwarf varieties like *Malus*, which is a genus of about 25 species of small, hardy, deciduous trees that grow to less than 50 feet with soft, toothed leaves, masses of white flower clusters and red, yellow or green edible apples, are on the rise, added Mark Brinsky, sales manager, Moon Nurseries, Chesapeake City, Md. "They want foundation plants that add interest, but they also want them to stay small and require little maintenance."

According to Brinsky, dwarf trees have many shape options—from rounded to oval to pyramidal—and color ranges—from medium green foliage with white flowers in summer to fall colors ranging in oranges, reds and yellows. Despite their shrunken size, dwarf trees can offer weeping forms as well as provide year-round interest, Hanni added.

HE LOVES ME, HE LOVES ME NOT. Not every fashion trend sticks. Take a look at bellbottoms or beehive hairdos, for



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Check this story online for a list of recommended trees for various areas.

"This is really gaining in popularity – we have been sold out since last fall of red maple and sugar maple, two classic shade trees," he said. Red maple is native from Newfoundland to Florida, west to Minnesota and Texas, can grow to 120 feet and has three- to five-lobed leaves that turn brilliant scarlet in the fall. Sugar maple is native to the United States and Canada east of the Rocky Mountains, can grow to 130 feet and has five-lobed, hand-shaped leaves that turn shades of gold, orange, scarlet or crimson in the fall.

Also, clients are searching for energy-savers, and strategically planted shade trees can do the trick. "If you plant a shade tree in the southwest corner of a house, the roof will be shaded in the summer time and cut down on clients' air conditioning bills," he said. "With electricity rates continually going up, this has become more important to clients."

A LITTLE RESISTANCE. In addition to the main show stealers, certain trees, like the little black dress, will never go out of style.

With drought lasting for more than three years in some areas, drought-resistant varieties will continue to sell. "But, a tree is only drought-resistant once it's established, so it has to grow for a year or two and get good roots down before it can be drought-resistant," Hanni pointed out, stressing that contractors must communicate this to clients.

Also, old favorites, like crabapples and dogwoods, are back on the scene in disease-resistant selections, Hanni said.

And, low-maintenance varieties will never drop in sales due to clients' increasingly busy lives, Hanni mentioned.

While nurseries always offer recommendations, they tend to base production needs on the trends contractors set, Brinsky said. "Landscape architects and designers," he said, "are always trying out new varieties and making a statement." **LL**

The author is Managing Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine and can be reached at nwisniewski@lawnandlandscape.com.

instance. Some things just lose their flair faster than expected. Like these hot topics, once everyone embraces the style, someone always wants to step off of the bandwagon and show originality.

The landscape market's bellbottom of late is flowering plum, cherry and weeping cherry trees, Brinsky said. "Due to the popularity of these plants a few years ago, the

market is now flooded with them," he explained. "A couple of years ago, everyone wanted them, so growers increased production of them and now people are getting bored with them."

With fashion, sometimes the reason a trend booms is because a popular movie star sports the style, but with trees, Mother Nature is the V.I.P. who pushes certain plants in and out of the limelight. The reason flowering plum, cherry and weeping cherry trees became trendy is because they bloomed during the hot selling season, which is typically spring for garden centers, Brinsky said. However, this year, spring was late, so when garden centers picked up business, summer-flowering trees were blooming in June and July – stealing the scene while their usually showy spring counterparts took a backseat to sales.

"Sometimes weather greatly affects a certain tree's popularity – and now it's the summer-flowering series," Brinsky said, listing a couple: *Styrax*, which is a genus of about 100 species of tender trees that grow to 30 feet, have roundish-oval leaves and drooping white, fragrant flower clusters, and include species that are native to both the East and West Coasts; and *Magnolia*, a genus of 85 or more species of deciduous trees native to Asia and the Americas with alternate, often leathery leaves, large solitary white, pink, purple or yellow showy fragrant flowers and a cone-like fruit with shiny red or orange seeds.

Though spring was once the hot time for flowering trees, summer interest has become vital, Hanni observed, pointing out two of his favorite, hardier varieties of *Lagerstroemia* Crape Myrtles, which are perfect for zones 6 through 9: 'Pecos' that grows to 8 feet tall and shows pink summer flowers, and 'Zuni' that grows to 9 feet tall and shows dark lavender summer flowers. Both varieties offer attractive peeling bark and resist mildew, Hanni added.

GOTTA WEAR SHADE. In the hot summer months, clients are always looking to escape to a shady spot even for a brief moment to hide from the sun. But in newer developments, builders are constructing homes in basic farmland, so more clients are asking contractors to install some shady aspects into their landscapes, Brinsky said.



Summer-flowering Magnolia (above and left) produces large, showy, white, fragrant flowers; leathery leaves and cone-like fruit.

Photos: Moon Nurseries

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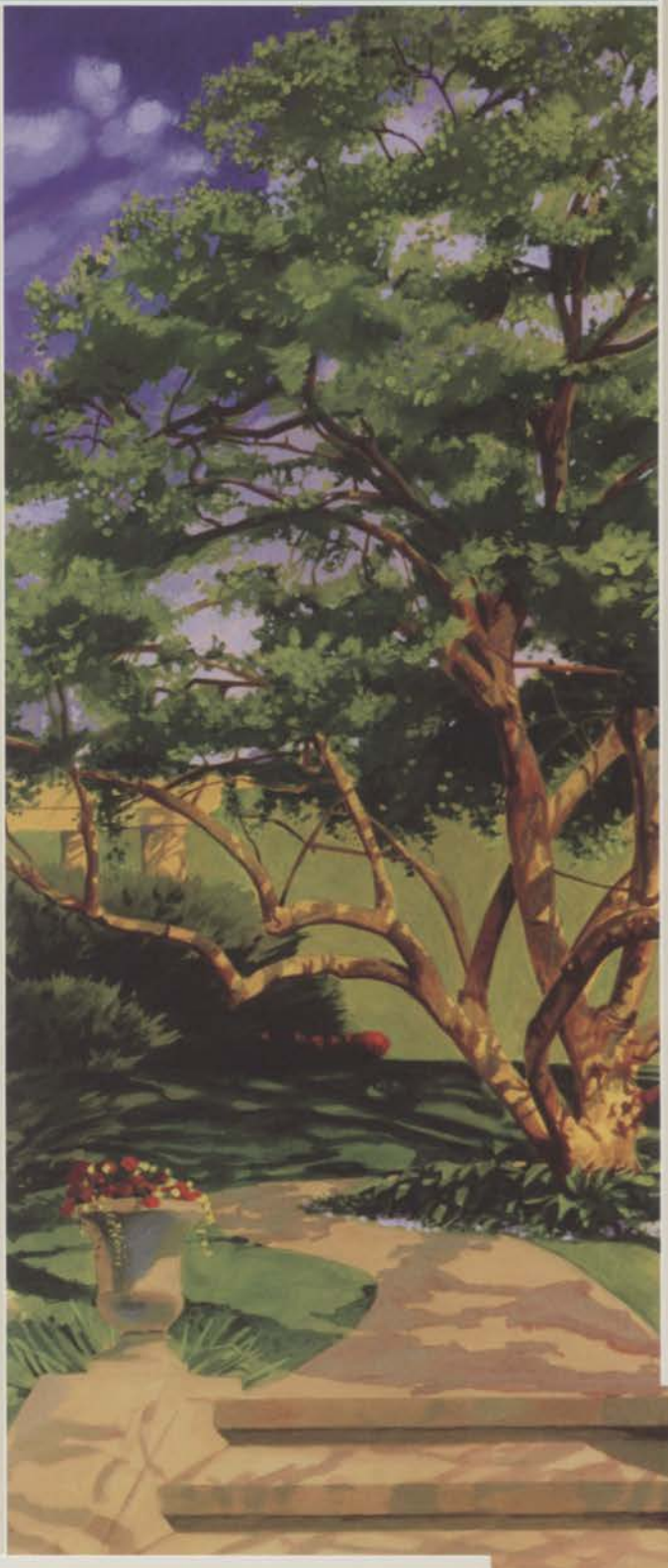
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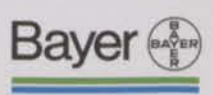
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Leaf spot Septoria	2-4 oz/100 gal	7- to 14-day intervals until the threat of disease is over
Rust Gymnosporangium Phragmidium	2-4 oz/100 gal	7- to 14-day intervals until the threat of disease is over
Scab Cladosporium	2-4 oz/100 gal	7- to 14-day intervals until the threat of disease is over
Scab Venturia inaequalis	2-4 oz/100 gal	7- to 14-day intervals until the threat of disease is over
Downey mildew Peronospora	1-2 oz/100 gal	7- to 14-day intervals until the threat of disease is over
Powdery mildew Erysiphe Microsphaera Oidium Podosphaera Sphaerotheca	1-2 oz/100 gal	7- to 14-day intervals until the threat of disease is over

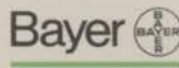
COMPASS Fungicide is classified as a Reduced Risk compound by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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(continued from page 52)

Mower attachments also assist contractors with jobs that normally require larger, more expensive equipment, such as skid-steer loaders, Policastro explained. Attachments like dozer blades help contractors offer irrigation services and other landscape construction services without the overwhelming investment, she said. "We have a photo of some contractors in Florida who were grading an area," she noted. "That 60-inch blade did the work of a skid-steer loader in 15 minutes and filled in all those holes."

Part of the attachment appeal lies in better organization when sending employees out for the day, noted Jim Doring, product manager, JRCO, Minneapolis, Minn. "The advantage is saving space on the vehicle or trailer because they don't have as many individual pieces of equipment," he related.

Policastro agreed. "The trend is to send one guy to the job with all the equipment that person needs for the job: the mower, the grader, the trencher, the post hole digger, etc.," she said. "The operator would be hauling around a lot of equipment and several different power units, but this way you have the mower and several attachments."

However, the cost savings posed by mower attachments appeals to contractors looking to enhance their financial statements—especially when budgeting labor, Policastro said. "Before, a lot of contractors would have to get the cheapest labor they could find," she said. "But with attachments, they can invest more in labor."

And, for smaller companies that cannot justify a large construction equipment purchase like a skid-steer loader, attachments help them specialize services without tightening their purse strings, Doring said, noting that many attachments fall in the reasonable \$1,500 to \$3,000 price range. "Rather than investing in very expensive, single-use pieces of equipment, we try to find uses for the equipment they have already purchased," he remarked.

Further, since universal attachments can be used on many different types of equipment, their versatility justifies a higher price tag, while attachments designed specifically for one manufacturer's mower are less expensive and usually packaged with the mower itself. For example, Walker said his dethatcher attachment costs \$200, while the dozer blade comes in at \$400.

New equipment investments drive production, and if that can be done economically, the contractor wins on both fronts, Walker pointed out. Yet, if the contractor's business demands call for the larger equipment, mower attachments might not live up to the company's service standards. "If you have the wrong tool, you spend a lot of

money keeping it working or not getting the productivity you want out of it," he said. "You don't want to use a 1-pound hammer where you need a 10-pound hammer."

INCREASE YOUR OPTIONS. The easy-on, easy-off characteristics of most mower attachments further position them as an at-



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Mower Attachments

tractive way to make the basic mower more resourceful. Some attachments, such as collection systems, can be mounted in the spring and then left on all season, Policastro said. Others that must come on and off the machine usually do so easily, Hilburn added.

Installation varies from manufacturer to manufacturer, especially if the attachments are designed specifically for mowers under the same brand. Universal attachment manufacturers such as JRCO offer front-mounting equipment that, once installed on the front of any mower, can accommodate a JRCO attachment, Doring stated. "There's some modification of the universal mount to fit, depending on if you're dealing with a 36- or 72-inch mower, but once attached, all of our front-mount equipment attaches to the universal mount," he said.

Some accessories feature sockets or receptacles that then slide on "arms" located on the mower deck and lock in place, Walker related. "You can literally change from mow-

ing to snowblowing in just a few minutes," he said. Once the attachment locks in with the drive shaft on the mower, the attachment is then powered by the mower itself.

Manufacturers such as Walker maintain that custom-built accessories alleviate any discrepancies in speed between manufacturers and provide contractors with the best fit available. And, some manufacturers find greater success in packaging attachments and mowers together, making it easier for dealers to buy equipment and contractors to specify what they need, Policastro maintained. "We try to offer equipment combinations that make sense for the job," she said.

However, Policastro insisted that whether attachments are universal or specifically designed for the mower, contractors can rest easy that their crews will be able to easily install attachments and use them to their full capacity without a great deal of training. "If you have an operator who knows the power unit and the system, they know

lawnandlandscape.com



Check out this story online to learn more about mower attachments maintenance.

that machine, its driving characteristics and how to control it," she listed.

Accessories may not be necessary, but they allow for a smoother ride, whether they're for cars or landscape equipment. When the name of the game is efficient service, lower costs and the ability to concentrate on labor and productivity, accessorizing simply makes sense, Doring said. "What contractors are trying to do is find a better way to do their job," he said. "Attachments help them simplify their job, get a better return on their investment and get the job done faster." **LL**

The author is Assistant Editor—Internet of Lawn & Landscape magazine and can be reached at knohn@lawnandlandscape.com.

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Melinda Crocket and
Sandy Wells

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and whys of
pesticide labeling.

This label is one
of thousands
produced annually
for lawn care use.
Label: Dow
AgroSciences

Label LINK GO

The information on pesticide labels is often described as the most expensive words in literature. Why? The research, development and registration procedures behind the label frequently cost the manufacturer six to 10 years and \$10 to \$20 million.

Before a label is approved, its wording is reviewed by several people in the Registration Division of the Office of Pesticide Programs in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). No other type of product is more thoroughly tested before use.

LABELS & LABELING. Whenever a lawn care operator (LCO) purchases a pesticide, he or she receives written instructions on how to use it. This information is referred to as the label, or labeling – two similar words with different meanings.

The label is the information printed on or attached to the container of pesticides. It does the following:

- To the manufacturer, the label is a license to sell.
- To the state or federal government, the label is a way to control the distribution, storage, sale, use and disposal of the product.
- To the LCO, the label is the main source of facts on how to use the product correctly and legally.
- To users, the label is a way to describe safety measures. Labeling is all the information the end user receives from



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Inert Ingredients 98.5%
Total Ingredients 100.0%

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CAUTION PRECAUCION

Si usted no entiende la etiqueta, busque a alguien para que se la explique a usted en detalle. (If you do not understand the label, find someone to explain it to you in detail.)

Precautionary Statements

Hazard to Humans and Domestic Animals

Causes Moderate Eye Irritation • Harmful if Absorbed Through Skin

Avoid contact with skin, eyes or clothing.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

WPS USES: Applicators and other handlers who handle this pesticide for any use covered by the Worker Protection Standards (40 CFR part 170) -
• Long pants
• Water shoes or boots
• Long pants

Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning/maintaining PPE. If no such instructions for washables, use detergent and hot water. Keep and wash PPE separately from other laundry.

When handlers use closed systems, enclosed cabs, or aircraft in a manner that meets the requirements listed in the Worker Protection Standards (WPS) for agricultural pesticides (40 CFR 170.340) (4-6), the WPS PPE requirements may be reduced or modified as specified in the WPS.

NON-WPS USES: Applicators and other handlers who handle this pesticide for any use NOT covered by the Worker Protection Standards (40 CFR part 170) - in general, only agricultural plant uses are covered by the WPS - must wear:

- Shirt and pants
- Gloves
- Shoes plus socks

User Safety Recommendations

Users should:
• Wash hands before eating, drinking, chewing gum, using tobacco or using the toilet.
• Remove clothing immediately if pesticide gets inside. Then wash thoroughly and put on clean clothing.

First Aid

If in eyes: Hold eye open and rinse slowly and gently with water for 15-20 minutes. Remove contact lenses, if present, after the first 5 minutes, then continue rinsing eye. Call a poison control center or doctor for treatment advice.
If on skin or clothing: Take off contaminated clothing. Rinse skin immediately with plenty of water for 15-20 minutes. Call a poison control center or doctor for treatment advice.

Have the product container or label with you when calling a poison control center or doctor, or going for treatment. You may contact 1-800-992-6666 for emergency medical treatment information.

Environmental Hazards

For terrestrial uses, do not apply directly to water or to areas where surface water is present or to intertidal areas below the mean high water mark. Do not contaminate water when cleaning equipment or disposing of equipment washwaters.

This chemical has the properties and characteristics associated with chemicals detected in groundwater. The use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination.

Notice: Read the entire label. Use only according to label directions. Before using this product, read Warranty Disclaimer, Inherent Risks are Unacceptable, return of once unopened.

In case of emergency endangering health or the environment involving this product, call 1-800-992-6666. If you wish to obtain additional product information, visit our web site at www.dowagro.com.

Agricultural Chemical. Do not stir or store with food, feed, or clothing.

the company or its agent about the product. Labeling includes the label on the product and the brochures, fliers and information accompanying the product or handed out by the dealer.

WHY READ AND FOLLOW THE LABEL? The most important time spent in pest control is the time spent reading the label. A pesticide is registered for use on specific sites for control of specific pests. The pesticide application is more likely to be successful in controlling the insect, weed or plant disease if the directions are read and followed. Following label instructions decreases possibilities for accidents.

Amendments to the 1972 Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) make it illegal to use any registered pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its labeling. People found guilty of misuse may be subject to fines, imprisonment or both. These amendments have elevated the status of the pesticide label to that of a legal document.

LABEL CONTENTS. A pesticide label *must* contain certain information, including:

Trade (brand) name – Each pesticide manufacturer has a trade (brand) name for its product. If more than one company

(continued on page 74)

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Bob Reeds
Blue Horizon Lawn Sprinklers, Inc.

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USE READER SERVICE #25

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Pesticide Labels

(continued from page 72)

markets the same product, there may be several trade names for a pesticide.

Common and chemical names – In addition to a trade name, most pesticides have an official common name. It is an agreed-upon name for the product's active ingredient. A pesticide sold under several trade names will always have the same common name.

The chemical name indicates the chemical composition of the active ingredient. Like the common name, it will be always the same for a particular pesticide.

Ingredient statement – Every label must list the product's contents. The chemical toxic to the pest is referred to as the active ingredient and is given as a percentage of the formulation. It may be listed by either the common or chemical name. The inert ingredients (emulsifiers, solvents, carriers, etc.) presently do not need to be identified except by the percent of the formulation they constitute.

Net contents – The net contents indicate how much pesticide is in the container. The

number will be expressed in gallons, pints, quarts or other units of measure.

Name and address of manufacturer – The manufacturer is required by law to list its name and address on the label so the applicator will know where to write for information in case of an emergency.

Registration and establishment numbers – Two numbers must appear on every pesticide container: the registration number and the establishment number. The EPA registration number indicates that the product has been registered. The number is a code that identifies the manufacturer and the specific product label. The EPA establishment number appears either on the label or the container. It identifies the facility that formulated the product. This allows the product to be traced to the production facility.

Use classification – EPA is required by the amended FIFRA to classify pesticides for either general use or restricted use. In classifying a pesticide EPA considers:

- The toxicity of the pesticide;
- The way the pesticide will be used;
- The pesticide's environmental effect.

A general use pesticide is defined as one that will not harm the applicator or the environment to an unreasonable degree when used according to label directions. Pesticides classified for general use will be identified by the words "General Classification" appearing immediately below the heading "Directions for Use" on the label. General use pesticides are available to the general public for use according to label directions.

A restricted use pesticide is one that could harm the applicator or the environment even when used as directed by the label. Pesticides classified for restricted use will be identified by the words "Restricted Use Pesticide" at the top of the front panel of the label followed by the statement: "For retail sale to and application only by certified applicators or people under their direct supervision and

(continued on page 76)



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USE READER SERVICE #27

Pesticide Labels

(continued from page 74)

only for those uses covered by the Certified Applicator's Certification." Restricted use pesticides must be applied by or under the direct supervision of a certified applicator. Through certification, an applicator demonstrates that he/she knows how to safely and properly apply restricted use pesticides.

Pesticide products that have not gone through the classification process are unclassified and will have no general use or restricted use designation on their labels. They may be purchased and used according to label directions by anyone. Amended FIFRA calls for the reregistration of all currently registered pesticides. These products will be classified when they are reregistered.

Directions for use - Here, the manufacturer indicates the use classification, which is followed by: "It is a violation of federal law to use this pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its labeling." The label lists only registered (legal) pesticide uses. The directions for use also include the following:

- Areas to be treated
- Amount to use (per acre, per gallon of water, per 1,000 square feet, etc.)
- Application method and equipment type
- Application timing and frequency
- Limitations on reentry to treated areas
- Limitations or restrictions on use to prevent any unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.

Precautionary Statement - The label contains precautionary statements to alert the applicator to hazards to self, children, domestic animals, wildlife and the environment.

Signal words or symbols - Signal words are used to indicate approximately how toxic the pesticide is to people. "Danger" means highly toxic, "warning" means moderately toxic and "caution" means low toxicity.

Statement of practical treatment - The labels for all highly toxic pesticides must give instructions for first-aid treatment in case of poisoning. Often, labels for less toxic pesticides also provide first-aid instructions.

Hazards to the environment and humans - When a pesticide is hazardous to bees, fish or wildlife, the label will indicate the nature of the hazard and the precautions to take to prevent injury or damage to non-target species or to the environment.

The label also contains a statement of the human hazards and the routes of exposure together with a list of precautions and protective equipment to prevent accidents or injury.

Physical or chemical hazards - The label provides information about any fire, explosion or chemical hazards the product may have.

Reentry statement - Some product labels will specify how much time must pass before a pesticide-treated area is safe for entry by a person without protective clothing.

Storage and disposal - This section details proper storage and disposal procedures.

Category of applicator - Some pesticide products may be limited for use to certain categories of commercial applicators.

(continued on page 117)

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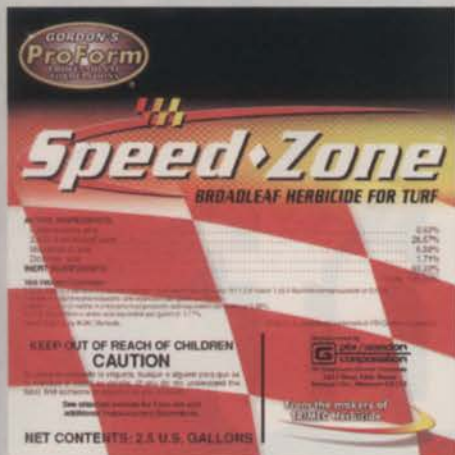
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USE READER SERVICE #28

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Dealing with Drought

by Kristen Hampshire

Landscape maintenance, installation and irrigation require special consideration and care during dry times.

Contractors could use a sixth sense if it came in the form of a Doppler weather radar – nothing is more unpredictable than Mother Nature's mood swings.

"If I could predict that, I'd be on TV," joked Bruce Allentuck, president, Allentuck Landscaping, Gaithersburg, Md.

Surely, a meteorological streak would be a complimentary quality for contractors, whose daily schedules can depend on the nightly forecast. And considering the severely dry conditions parts of the country faced earlier this spring and summer, a little weather guesswork can prepare contractors for drought damage control so clients' properties look less parched.

"We kind of have to be weathermen, in a sense," said Larry Brinkley, president, BLT Landscape Services, Dallas, Texas. "We need to constantly watch the forecast and, if we see future problems cropping up, we need to try to do all that we can before they get here – the mulching, watering deep and getting water into the ground – so that when we do get into a drought situation, we've done everything humanly possible to help the client keep their plants alive."

HURRY WITH H₂O. Landscapes dehydrate quickly and drought signs are rather noticeable. Green color disappears from turf and footsteps leave prints on properties. "Trees really take a beating," pointed out Bobby Byrd. "You'll see the leaves curl up, which indicates they are under a lot of stress, and later on you will see limbs start to die back."

(continued on page 80)



CRACKING
through
Drought



Gary Mason, Director of Housekeeping, ProPlayer Stadium

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year. So they rely on the BR 420C Magnum—16 of them, actually. Gary says, "They're lightweight, powerful, and run longer than any other blower." It's the best all-around blower he's used. And after 6,000 times around the stadium a year, he should know.

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USE READER SERVICE #29

Dealing with Drought

(continued from page 78)

What's more, properties can shrivel in a hurry, added Byrd, president, Byrd's Lawn & Landscape, Charlotte, N.C. "In this part of the country, we don't have loamy topsoil, so you can go a week or 10 days without rain and the ground gets hard quickly," he noted, noting that cool-season grasses on his jobs go dormant and grassy weeds crop up.

Insect activity also increases in times of drought, identified Michael Hornung, president, Valley Green, St. Cloud, Minn. He noticed grub and sod webworm activity on dry properties and expects to see more pests this year than usual.

Hornung also received calls for irrigation systems much earlier this spring. "Usu-

ally you don't get that until July or August, but this year we [got calls] right out of the gate," he said.

Irrigation is even more important when rain clouds aren't gathering over a region, Brinkley added. While areas with water restrictions must watch their water consumption, making sure lawns don't dip into conditions beyond repair will ensure the property revives once the dry spell ends, he said. Efficient irrigation systems will cover the ground without wasting water.

"Try to fine-tune the heads so they are getting the maximum gallons of water on turf and not on the sidewalks and driveways," Brinkley advised, adding that the city of Dallas enforces this practice and will fine contractors up to \$1,000 for systems that water more pavement than turf.

Sprinkler run times should allow water to sink into the ground as well, Brinkley added. "A lot of people will set their irrigation system to run 30 to 40 minutes at a time, and sometimes you are better off if you run it for 10 to 15 minutes and let it rest and then run it again for 10 to 15 minutes," he said. "With our clay soil, water has a tendency to run off."

Hornung said dry times call for irrigation system redesign in some cases. After all, when raindrops take care of areas where sprinkler heads don't reach, clients are unaware of a poor set-up. When heat dries up their landscape, they notice patches the water stream misses. "You really get to see the value of an irrigation system," he noted. "We might talk to clients about upgrading the sprinkler heads or adding zones to cover areas. We want to make sure that we have head-to-head coverage. When we put a system in, we replace rain, we don't just sprinkle the lawn."

Besides irrigation systems, contractors must also consider feeding thirsty plantings – especially new installations, Byrd added. Young plant material that isn't properly cared for in early stages will not last past a dry spell. "You almost need a watering provision with the clients on new construction," he said. "It can be very expensive not to have a full-fledge irrigation system when you are planting material at this time of year under these conditions because of the warranties you have to provide," he said.

He suggested establishing a water agreement with clients who do not have irrigation

(continued on page 82)

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USE READER SERVICE #30

Dealing with Drought

(continued from page 80)

systems and working the watering costs into the estimate. He doesn't leave it up to the clients to water plants – they often don't give new installations the weekly attention they need. And, he will not warranty plant material without a watering agreement.

"We like to put things on paper," Byrd noted. "The vast majority of the times when plants die it is because of a lack of water. High humidity and heat complicates things as well."

Allentuck works out a similar plan with customers and generally guarantees plants for one year, provided clients turn watering responsibilities over to the company. "If clients spend a lot of money with you and you tell them the plants weren't watered so you won't guarantee them, you do more damage for yourself than just replacing a plant or two," he decided. "If we water the plants, we can make sure that losses will be minimal and that there will be no one to blame but ourselves and there will be no finger pointing and hard feelings."

This is the first year Allentuck paired watering contracts with annual plantings, and few customers question this requirement. "They view it as they are paying a lot of money for their annual rotations and they want them to look good as well," he commented.

BREAKING GROUND. Allentuck didn't want the nursery to dig plant materials for him in July – it was just too dry in Maryland to successfully install the trees, he said. "We worked on a job where the trees [from the nursery] didn't make it and we didn't plant them," he recalled. "We used container items instead."

On another property, a client constructed an elaborate new building and wanted the landscape installed immediately to polish the look. However, Allentuck knows summer installations present complications with plant root establishment and he didn't want the material to fail. "Since it was a design/

Insect activity also increases

in times of drought, identified

Michael Hornung. He noticed

grub and **sod webworm**

activity on *dry properties*

and **expects** to see *more pests*

this year than usual.

build project and we knew his desire upfront was a summer install, we changed our plant selection to mostly container plants so they would do well," he said.

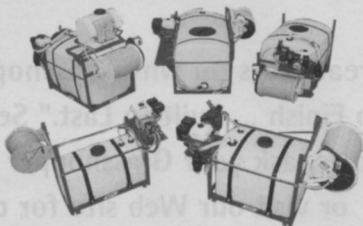
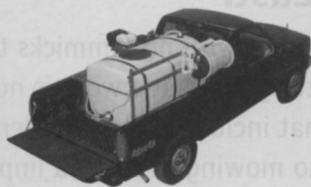
On the other hand, he postponed a project for a shopping center. "We're going to do the prep work now and have it ready to go in the fall," Allentuck said.

The bottom line: Know when to say no –
(continued on page 84)

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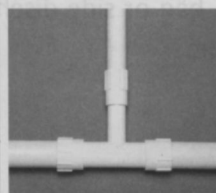
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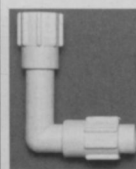
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Operating Weight (lb/kg)	5,490/2490	5,645/2560	5,843/2650	6,459/2930	6,860/3111	6,481/2940	7,036/3191	7,338/3328	7,615/3454	7,655/3472
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Width Over Tires (in/mm)	54", 60", 66"	60", 66"	60", 66"	60", 66"	60", 66", 72"	60", 66"	66", 72"	66", 72"	66", 72"	66", 72"
	1372, 1524, 1676	1524, 1676	1524, 1676	1524, 1676	1524, 1676, 1829	1524, 1676	1676, 1829	1676, 1829	1676, 1829	1676, 1829

* Standard machine with optional 10 x 16.5 6 PR tires and 60"/1525 mm Dirt Bucket.
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Dealing with Drought

(continued from page 82)

and when to explore alternate installation options if dry conditions will cramp plant root establishment and scar the new landscape.

"If the temperature is above 90 degrees and the ground is dry 8 inches down and it's coming up in dust, or if you are digging for trees and you find it's dry 30 inches down

and you're still planting, you're a fool," remarked Mark Himmelreich, president, Bill's Nursery, Littlestown, Pa. "You're the one standing there with a warranty."

Flexibility is key during a drought, and contractors simply need to push back projects if weather won't allow for a successful in-

Brown grass, wilted plants and insect-eaten lawns aren't what clients have in mind when they hire a landscape contractor. So, when weather conditions don't allow for lush, green grass, communication becomes even more important to retain accounts and satisfy customers.

"You have to educate them on the fact that they may not get exactly what they want," said Larry Brinkley, president, BLT Landscape Services, Dallas, Texas. For example, municipal restrictions might allow for only weekly watering and straw-like grass might simply be dormant. But it will revive when weather allows. These are keys contractors need to pass on to their customers.

Be honest, Brinkley stressed. "Don't tell them that there are not going to be problems – tell them if the city cuts off the water that you may have this and this happen," he said. "They need to know that."

Michael Hornung, president, Valley Green, St. Cloud, Minn., tells clients to increase their mowing height to 3 inches in dry conditions and warns them to water their properties to get through dry times. He suggests certain pesticide and fertilizer applications for turf so it remains healthy and can combat dry spells. And, if he recommends reseeding or aeration, he sends an employee to follow up with the client so they don't risk their turf by sidestepping the company's advice.

"He calls on the clients to see what has been done about the [problem]," Hornung said. "We tell them if they overseed they will have less activity later on and their lawn will thrive once the weather evens out."

Offering solutions for suffering turf shows concern, and despite some clients' initial, dissatisfied reactions to their dehydrated landscapes, contractors who are proactive will calm customers' nerves, Hornung said. "Most of the time the client is not mad at you, but because their lawn doesn't look good," he remarked. "If you've taken the time in advance to explain what they need to do, they won't be in that situation."

Meanwhile, training employees to deal with drought situations will ensure they are prescribing the right cure for the property, Hornung added. "Make sure your technicians can answer questions when customers stop them on a lawn, and make sure when a technician sees a problem he can tell the customer," he said. "It's all about training."

Brown turf and footprints in the grass, leaf curling and tree die-back, and increased insect or weed activity alerts technicians of potential long-term damage. Passing these warnings on to clients will ensure that both parties understand the situation at hand and remedy the problem.

"If you can educate one customer, they will educate their neighbor, who may or may not be a customer of your's, while they are sitting around having pizza or talking in the yard," Hornung said. "When you tell your customers how to handle their watering and mowing during a drought, they usually tell a friend." – **Kristen Hampshire**

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Check out this article online for some quick drought dos and don'ts.

stallation, he stressed. What determines the "right time?" "I let Mother Nature tell me," Himmelreich said. "When the grass is green enough to grow again, then there is enough moisture to begin planting again."

Actually, Himmelreich does not warranty his plants – weather is just too risky. He deals with customers on an individual basis and finds that this communication is more effective. This contact also allows him to exercise flexibility and reschedule installations if necessary. "I believe that clients respect you when you say, 'Let's hold off and do this at a later date,'" he confirmed.

In cases like Allentuck's, choosing alternate plant selections allows the project to continue as scheduled. Contractors might explore drought-tolerant varieties or native plants instead of high-maintenance material that calls for heavy watering. Brinkley said dwarf wax myrtle and native grasses are successful in the Dallas area, and a particular Bermudagrass strain can stand a little water deprivation. "I would say that on a property that has some drought-tolerant plants, you probably could get away with almost half of the watering," he estimated.

With proper bed preparation, plants can make it with less moisture, Brinkley added. He tills and loosens soil so water can sink deep into the soil and adds compost for a nutrition supplement. "This gives fibrous roots a chance to grow," he explained, accenting the importance of these cultural practices – especially in drought situations.

Otherwise, plants will sit in the ground like they're in a vase, he compared. "If you put a plant in a vase, it has a hard surface all the way around it," he illustrated. "The plant doesn't have a chance to grow deep or out into the soil, and that is what plants do if you just stick them in a hole in the Dallas area. We have to work with hard clay."

Special attention during initial growth stages rewards clients with properties they

(continued on page 117)

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USE READER SERVICE #34

by Kristen Hampshire

Hands on MAINTENANCE

Handle two-cycle equipment with care for lasting engines that will run long and lean.

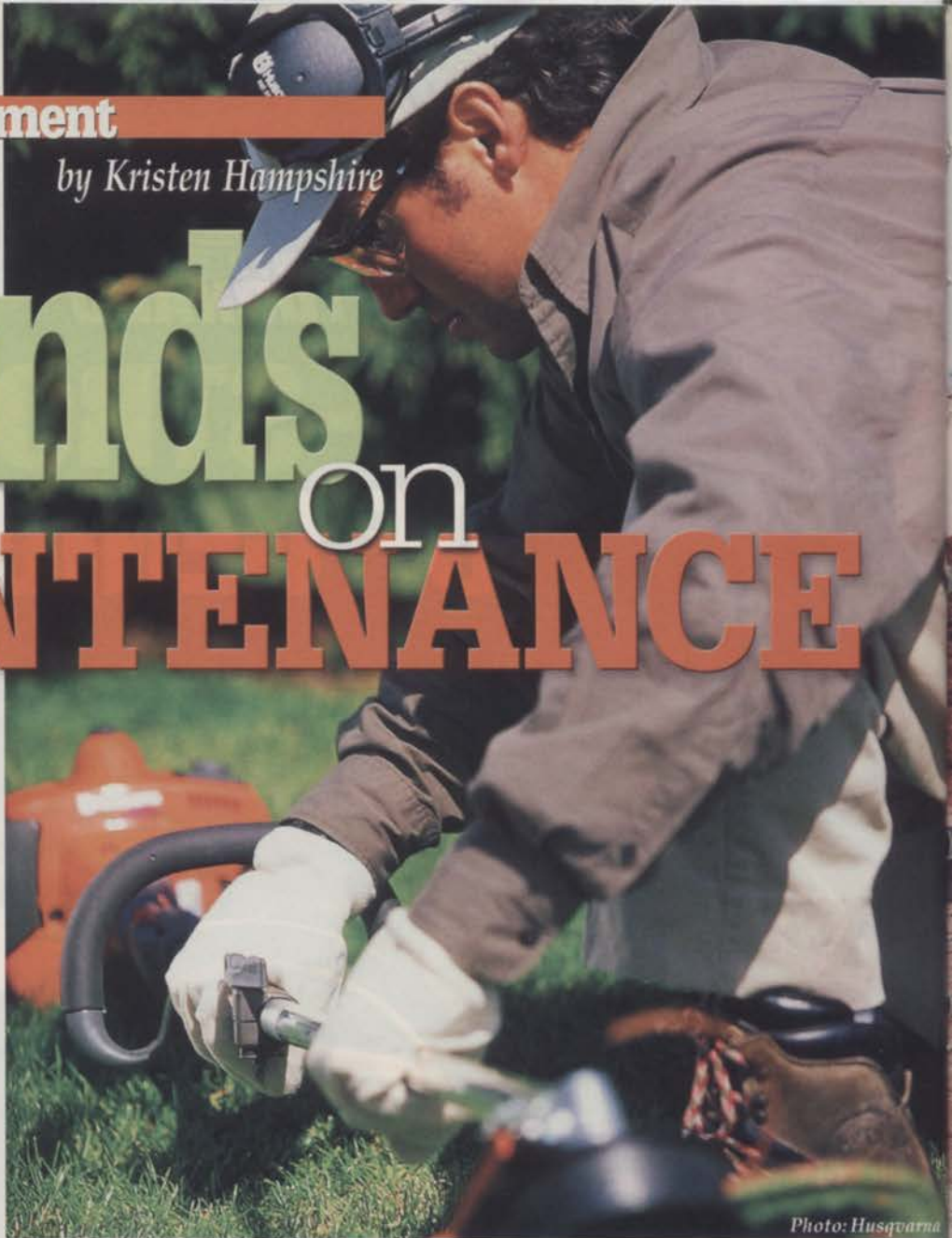


Photo: Husqvarna

Today's lean, mean hand-held machines require careful attention to basic maintenance. Evolution in engine technology offers the industry clean-burning, regulation compliant equipment, but these hot-burning models need care to keep them running cool all season.

"Contractors could get away with laxing on cleaning the engine – now, they don't have that luxury," noted Jay Larsen, marketing communication manager, Shindaiwa, Tualatin, Ore. "They have to be more aware that because of the way today's engines are set up – leaner running for cleaner emissions – they run hotter."

However, these new master-minded engines don't require master minds to maintain them. Attention to the base elements – fuel, oil and filters – will afford equipment a longer life, Larsen pointed out.

ENGINE FOOD. The ingredients that keep two-cycle engines humming – gas and oil – are the same substances that can stall an engine mid-field. Poor-quality oil and gas inevitably lead to problems, Larsen noted.

"If you get good quality oil and stick with it, the equipment will be a little more forgiving," he said. "If you miss some basic maintenance you still will probably be okay. But, if you use bad oil from the get-go, you will have problems, especially with today's engines."

Larsen recommends top-shelf oil designed for air-cooled engines and gas with an alcohol content that doesn't exceed 10 percent. Make sure gasoline has not expired past its 30-day limit, otherwise a gummy varnish will form in the engine, clogging it and affecting the carburetor parts, he added.

"If someone is going to store their equipment for longer than 30 days, we recommend that they drain out the fuel

(continued on page 88)



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USE READER SERVICE #97

Hand-held Equipment

(continued from page 86)

in an environmentally safe way and run the engine dry," Larsen advised, adding that a fuel stabilizer will prevent gasoline from turning into varnish and some oil packages already include this formula.

In addition, contractors should check that gasoline is designed for two-cycle engines and

is mixed with oil in a 50-to-1 ratio, noted Chris Brown, warranty coordinator, Kawasaki, Grand Rapids, Mich. Car gas and string trimmer gas aren't one in the same and, sometimes, inexperienced technicians mistake the two.

"The owners of the equipment are careful," he said. "The problem is, you go out in

the field and you have people who aren't familiar with the equipment and they might grab the wrong gas can to fill up their blowers or hand-held equipment, and they end up putting in regular gas without oil. It will run for a while, but over time, the bearings start

(continued on page 90)



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Today's fuel-lean engines call for extra care to prevent failure due to seizing and cylinder scoring, noted Jay Larsen, marketing communication manager, Shindaiwa, Tualatin, Ore. Here are some basic maintenance tips to keep hand-held equipment tops.

FUELS - Oxygenated fuels are mandated for many metropolitan areas, but they can contribute to a hotter-running engine. Though there is much more control in place to prevent excessive levels of alcohol, you should still check to see if alcohol is present when you encounter a seized or scored piston. Gasoline should be stored for no longer than 30 days and contractors should avoid gas with alcohol in it if at all possible.

FUEL FILTER - A partially-blocked fuel filter can cause the engine to run too lean, leading to overheating - a major factor contributing to engine failure. Fuel filters should be replaced periodically. Carry extra filters to facilitate frequent filter replacement.

MIXING OIL - Oil should be of superior quality and at the proper ratio. Avoid high-ratio oils as they may provide less protection under severe conditions.

AIR INTAKE - Fuel spills on an engine - especially in a dusty or debris-filled environment - can quickly reduce the air intake. The air intake area has fins that should be cleaned. Also, inspect the flywheel and clean it to remove any debris buildup. Deflectors or enlarged gaskets designed to channel the flow of cooling air across the cylinder should be inspected for damage and positioning.

CYLINDER FINS - Inspect and clean fins every time the unit is serviced.

AIR FILTER - A partially-clogged air filter can cause the engine to run too rich. Carry replacement air filters and replace them periodically. - *Shindaiwa*

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Hand-held Equipment

(continued from page 88)

heating up and finally the equipment dies or shuts down."

Sounds basic – pour in the right mix. But Brown said this is the most common maintenance issue he comes across in the field. The solution to this misunderstanding can be as simple as clearly labeling gasoline cans so employees fill mowers with gas and two-cycle equipment with a mix.

Besides engine nutrients, a machine that breathes well will run efficiently. In other words, clean out air and fuel filters and cooling fins on a regular basis, Larsen suggested. "It's not a bad idea to pull out the filter and shake out the dust from the engine cover at the end of the day," he said. Also, spraying off cylinder fins with some compressed air will ensure they don't clog and overheat the engine, he added.

These often overlooked cleaning steps can break down buildup that causes engine issues. "If you forget to clean an air filter for weeks or months, all of a sudden, you don't

Contractors can prepare for unplanned engine problems in the field by taking along extra supplies like filters and spark plugs for a quick fix that won't hamper crew productivity. Photo: Husqvarna

have clean air getting into the engine and you could have problems," Larsen described.

Brown advised watching out for fuel and oil leaks, which can cause dirt and dust to collect on cooling fins. In addition, periodically checking the spark plug will ensure a snappy start. "It should have a nice, brown color to it to make sure it is burning the fuel correctly," he illustrated.

Besides these basics, two-cycle engines are fairly worry-free, he remarked. "There really isn't a whole lot else you have to do."

IN THE ROUGH. Mark Lambert admits he doesn't invest much time on maintaining his hand-held equipment. They are some of the least expensive components on his trailers, and if he can get a good two to three years



out of a trimmer, he's satisfied.

"I have to believe there are other contractors who have the same philosophy," said the president of Lawnmaster, Green Bay, Wis. "We don't have a regular maintenance schedule for the hand-held equipment because I don't think the pay-back on your labor is there. If they cost \$250 a piece and the labor is going to add up to maintain them..."

He purchases the same brand of string trimmers and blowers so he can use retired equipment for replacement parts, and he changes filters monthly and makes sure his gas and oil is a high-quality mix. But other than that, he let's them run – and then run out.



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"Parts are expensive for carburetors or engine shafts, so if you get a few years out of a string trimmer, you're lucky," Lambert noted.

However, as Lambert knows, most hand-held equipment troubleshooting starts in the field. While maintenance on these machines requires little attention, some technicians don't care quite enough on the job, Brown pointed out.

"The problems with hand-held equipment are more related to operator error," Brown identified. "They will throw it on a truck, they will put the wrong gas in it - there is abuse. They might hit a string trimmer on the side of a tree really hard or a part might come loose over time from the equipment coming on a truck."

Lambert sees this happen, and he assigns each technician to a specific piece of equipment so employees are responsible for its condition at the end of the day. "Before they leave for a job, they are instructed to make sure that all equipment is tied down on the

trucks and trailers," he said. "It is better for maintenance if technicians are accountable for a particular piece of equipment and you don't have to track down [broken] equipment and hear a 'he said, she said - no, I didn't do that.' It's their piece of equipment and they are accountable for it."

This system works for Lambert, and many other contractors who see hand-held equipment return to their shops in scrappy condition. And there's no hiding in-field neglect, Chris added.

"If components start breaking - engine shrouds or pieces of plastic - usually it's because someone stepped on it or threw it too hard into the truck or trailer."

Besides rough wear and tear, some operators run into problems with hand-held maintenance when they use the wrong product in the wrong place, Larsen said. For example, contractors might substitute a hedge trimmer for a chainsaw when pruning a small tree. Or, a technician might install a

brushcutter blade on a string trimmer, which can cause safety issues since trimmers don't have handlebar controls to manage kick-back, he noted.

These considerations aside, and with care to the basics, contractors shouldn't have to replace their hand-held equipment for at least 1,000 hours, Larsen said, adding that this figure is a rather conservative estimate. "I've seen them used for 2,000 to 3,000 hours and much higher than that," Larsen commented. "That depends on the user." **LI**

The author is Managing Editor - Special Projects for Lawn & Landscape magazine and can be reached at khamphshire@lawnandlandscape.com.



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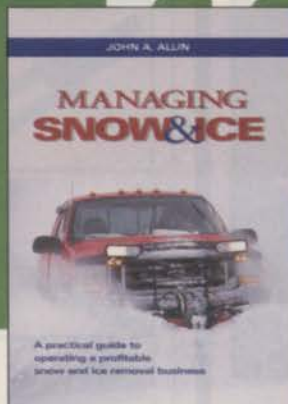
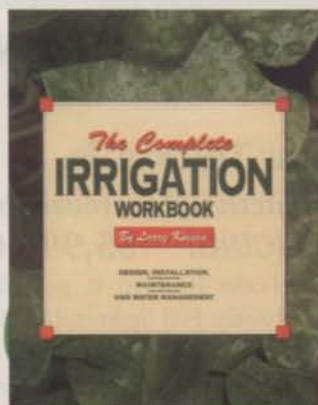
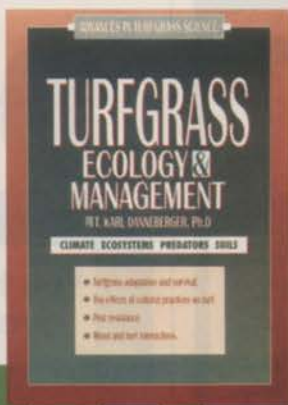


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Products



You can now request product information online and receive a response immediately! Just visit www.lawnandlandscape.com and click on the "free product information" logo on the front page. There, you can submit your product information requests directly to manufacturers. Or, simply circle the numbers on page 111 of this month's issue and fax the form to 216/961-0594.

Compliance Safety Reduran

- Available in convenient, easy-to-carry 3-ounce squeeze tubes

- Hand cleaner specially formulated to remove stains caused by pattern indicators, pond dyes and pesticides
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Products

Caterpillar Smaller Frame Vertical-Lift Skid Steers

- 232 and 242 skid steers feature a linkage that provides a lift height of more than 9 feet, 11 inches and a reach of 30 inches at a bucket angle of 45 degrees
- Offers rated capacity of 1,750 pounds for the 232 model and 1,900 pounds for the 242 model
- Ideal for stacking materials higher
- Wheelbase of 42.9 inches makes the models ideal for grading and provides operators with a comfortable ride
- Complete line of Cat Work Tools helps complete tasks – more than 30 tools available for both models

Circle 202 on reader service form

Kanga Tyre Tracks

- Rubber over tyre tracks provide increased traction
- For use with 13-hp Kanga Kid
- Offers improved performance when used with the Kanga Kid

Circle 203 on reader service form



M.K. Hansen Soil Moisture Data Logger

- Features built-in graphic display
- Logger enables operator to identify soil moisture trends at selected locations and soil depths without downloading the data to another computer
- M.K. Hansen soil moisture data logger automatically records soil moisture readings every eight hours from six soil moisture sensors
- Ten months of soil moisture and temperature readings can be downloaded to a laptop computer or PDA
- Downloaded data from the logger can be imported onto a PC spreadsheet program or graphed using the optional chart graphing software

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2002 Lawn & Landscape

November 1-2, 2002

Cleveland Marriott

Cleveland, Ohio

Business Strategies Conference



Strategic Planning For Your Company

Why You Should Register

Variety of expert speakers and topics all focused on helping you develop a successful business plan for your company.

An opportunity to network with fellow industry professionals and trade ideas on how to grow your business.

Leave the conference ready to apply what you have learned in your business – see the results of your investment sooner!

Unmatched value – the depth of the material presented at the conference will have you ahead of the competition.

Easy to attend – the conference is scheduled for Friday and Saturday so you have less time out of the office.

Featured Speakers



MIKE FOTI
Leadership Builders
"Seeing The Forest
From The Trees"



KEN HOCHKOEPFEL
Enterprise Analysis
(Formerly of Ruppert
Landscape Co.)
"Strategic Planning:
A Blueprint for
Success"



TOM OYLER
Wilson Oyler
"Building Your
Business Plan
Workshop"



MARTY GRUNDER
The Winners Circle
"Where To Find
Customers" and
"Implementing Your
Strategic Plan"



DON SCHLANDER
Landscape Care
"Setting Priorities:
Finding The Right
Business Mix"

2002 Lawn & Landscape Business Strategies Conference Program

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1

- 10:00 – 6:00 p.m. Registration
8:00 – 11:00 a.m. Facility Tour
Yardmaster, Painesville, OH
(Separate admission required)
Opening Session
1:00 – 2:00 p.m. "Seeing The Forest From The Trees"
Speaker: Mike Foti, Leadership Builders
2:10 – 4:00 p.m. "Strategic Planning: A Blueprint for Success"
Speaker: Ken Hochkoepfel, Enterprise Analysis
4:00 – 4:15 p.m. Break
4:15 – 5:30 p.m. "Workshop: Building Your Business Plan"
Speaker: Tom Oyler, Oyler Wilson
5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Welcome Reception

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

- 7:00 a.m. Registration & Continental Breakfast
7:00 – 8:00 a.m. Contractor Roundtables
8:00 – 9:15 p.m. "Setting Priorities: Finding the Right Business Mix"
Speaker: Don Schlender, Terrain Systems/Landscape Care
9:20 – 10:30 a.m. "Dollars and Sense: Planning for Your Financial Success"
Speaker: Tom Grandy, Grandy & Associates
10:30 – 10:50 a.m. Refreshment Break
10:50 – 12:00 p.m. "Business Development: Where to Find Customers"
Speaker: Marty Grunder, The Winners Circle
12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Networking Lunch
1:15 – 2:45 p.m. "Building From Within: Investing in Your People"
Speaker: Frank Crandall, Wood River Evergreens
2:45 – 3:00 p.m. Refreshment Break
3:00 – 5:00 p.m. "Implementing Your Strategic Plan"
Speaker: Marty Grunder, The Winners Circle

Hotel & Travel Information

Hotel Information

Rooms have been reserved for conference attendees at the Cleveland Marriott Downtown at Key Center. Reservations can be made directly with the hotel at 216/696-9200 or 800/228-9290 on or before Thursday, October 3, 2002, to receive the special conference rate of \$109 per night single/double. Please ask for the Lawn & Landscape Business Strategies Conference rate.

Discount Travel Information

The Lawn & Landscape Business Strategies has arranged for special discount airfares to Cleveland for the conference. To take advantage of the discount rates, please contact Traveline Travel, the official travel agency for the conference at 888/743-8747 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Eastern.

Business Strategies Conference Special Events

Facility Tour Information

YARDMASTER
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2002
8:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Take a tour of Yardmaster, one of Ohio's leading landscape contractors and a 2001 Lawn & Landscape Top 100 Company, when you sign up for the facility tour. Yardmaster is a suburban Cleveland full-service company with more than 150 full-time employees. You will tour the company's facility and have the opportunity to talk and ask questions of the Yardmaster management team. It is a great way to pick up new ideas for your business and compare notes with fellow contractors. The cost is \$20 per person. Advance registration and payment is required.

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Grandy & Associates
Basic Business Boot Camp:
October 29 – 31, 2002
Cleveland, Ohio



Tom Grandy

Are you ready to commit three days to make a positive difference in your company that could last for years? If so, then consider signing up for Grandy & Associates' Basic Business Boot Camp. Join small business consultant Tom Grandy as he walks you through three days of intensive business training that is guaranteed to improve your company's financial management systems. You will learn how to:

- Create month-by-month cash flow budgets and track your progress on a monthly basis.
- Create a computer model of your company and learn the "what if" process of maximizing your profitability.
- Find out what pricing structure is right for your company and develop effective collection methods.
- Develop a program for properly estimating hourly rates.

Your registration to the Basic Business Boot Camp will include more than \$1,000 worth of educational materials including Grandy & Associates' financial software programs, educational tapes and customized marketing materials. As a bonus, each company attending the boot camp will receive one complimentary registration to the 2002 Business Strategies Conference. For registration information, please call 800/432-7963 or online at www.GrandyAssociates.com. You can e-mail your request to grandyasso@aol.com. Space is limited to 20 companies – call today! Co-sponsored by the Lawn & Landscape Media Group.

Contractor Roundtables

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2002
7:00 A.M. – 8:00 A.M.

Participate in a real eye-opener of an event as you join fellow contractors for a series of roundtable discussions on today's industry "hot" topics including how to delegate responsibility, how to give performance reviews, "real world" marketing ideas, open book management, how to find the right employees and many more. The roundtables are included in your conference registration and you will sign up for the topic you are interested when you arrive at the conference.

REGISTRATION FORM

November 1-2, 2002 • Cleveland Marriott • Cleveland, Ohio

2002 Lawn & Landscape Business Strategies Conference

BY PHONE: Call 800/456-0707 and ask to register for the Lawn & Landscape Business Strategies Conference (weekdays 9 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. EST)

BY MAIL: Conference Registration, Lawn & Landscape Business Strategies, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113

BY FAX: Complete form and fax, with credit card information, to 216/961-0364 (24 hours)

ON THE WEB: Register on-line at www.lawnandlandscape.com and click on "Events"

(Please print or type. Form may be photocopied for additional registrants; one form per person)

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Please Note: Registrations **will not** be processed until payment information is received. All faxed and phone registrations **MUST** include credit card information. There will be a \$25 fee for returned checks.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Full Conference Registration

Group Registration (3 or more same company)

One-Day Registration

Facility Tour

You must be registered for the conference to participate in the facility tour.

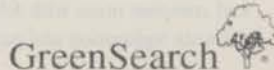
Number	Total
@ \$245 =	_____
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@ \$145 =	_____
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The Lawn & Landscape Business Strategies Conference is a business-to-business event open to trade professionals only. Persons under the age of 18 (including infants) are not permitted in the educational sessions.

CANCELLATION/SUBSTITUTION/REFUND POLICY/CONFIRMATIONS

All cancellations must be made in writing and faxed or mailed – voice mails and e-mails will not be accepted. A full refund will be issued if the cancellation notice is received before **October 18, 2002**. No refunds will be issued after **October 18, 2002**. Advance payment is **required** for the facility tour and evening reception. Attendees can notify *Lawn & Landscape* at any time that another individual will attend the conference in their place. All registrations postmarked by October 18, 2002, will be acknowledged by mail. *Lawn & Landscape* reserves the right to cancel the conference in the event of insufficient registration and will make full refund if this occurs. *Lawn & Landscape's* liability shall be limited to the registration fee amount.

2002 Business Strategies Conference Sponsors



Textron Ryan Lawnaire

- Self-propelled, high-speed, core-type Lawnaire aerators offer updated styling, refined ergonomics, easier servicing and increased reliability
 - Improvements for 2002 include a folding handle for lower transport height and lift grabs on the IV Plus
 - Both models feature a handle-mount throttle and comfortable rubber grips
 - Drivetrain uses a single, heavy-duty chain driving a solid-steel axle mounted on construction-grade ball bearings
 - IV model covers up to 28,975 square feet per hour
 - V model features a 26.5-inch path, allowing it to aerate more than 40,400 square feet per hour
- Circle 205 on reader service form**

Grasshopper 725A Mower



- Features 25-hp Kohler AEGIS, liquid-cooled engine
 - Operator station offers all-day comfort, with controls in easy reach
 - Accepts 48-, 52-, 61- and 72-inch DuraMax Decks, which let operators mulch, collect or discharge clippings with the same deck
 - Grasshopper's QuickConverter Implement system allows operators to change decks sizes or add a complete line of year-round implements
 - PowerVac collection systems available from 8 to 25 cubic feet
- Circle 206 on reader service form**

Finn/Cat Eagle Compact Skid Steer



- Skid steer features CAT 3003 diesel with 23.5 hp
 - Weighs 1,940 pounds with standard bucket
 - Unit offers 13.25-gallons-per-minute flow rate
 - Parallel hydraulic system operates at 3,000 psi
 - Four-cubic-foot bucket comes standard
 - Choose from more than 40 different available attachments
- Circle 207 on reader service form**

Say CHEESE!

Contest categories include best residential, commercial and public service projects in warm-season and cool-season grasses. Besides national recognition, each of the six winners will also receive a \$200 Travel WorldWide Network travel voucher to the 2003 PLCAA Conference and Green Industry Expo in St. Louis, MO.

Winners will be chosen by PLCAA members who view 8-by-10 site photos and vote for the best-looking lawn in each category at the Association's annual dinner at the GIE Show Nov. 13-16 in Nashville, TN.

Are you proud of a site you currently maintain? Even if you're no Ansel Adams – take a snapshot of the lush, green grasses you care for. That photo could get you national recognition in the Picture Perfect Lawn Contest sponsored by *Lawn & Landscape* magazine and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA).

Interested in entering the contest? Call *Lawn & Landscape's* Nicole Wisniewski at 800/456-0707 or PLCAA's Jessica Veronneau at 800/458-3466 for an official entry form and to receive contest rules. Don't delay, the contest deadline is Sept. 30!



Products

W.E. Chapps Grass Handler

- Sliding mulch plate allows the operator to control when, where and the amount of grass that will be discharged at any given time on mid-size walk-behind, zero-turn, riding and stand-on mowers with a rectangular discharge opening
- Fits all discharge openings where the back of the opening is no more than 15 inches from the front of the deck
- Attaches to a special 2½-inch, heavy-duty chute that secures to the posts for the discharge shield on the side of the deck
- Sixteen different positions allow the operator to control the amount of grass the mower discharges
- Three-piece handle adjusts to fit the reach of all mower operators

Circle 208 on reader service form



Footage Tools Pneumatic Piercing Tools

- Piercing tools are ideal for sprinkler and lighting installation
- Offer a valuable, trenchless alternative to digging up a

driveway, walkway or sidewalk

- Simple, one-man operation allows for quick and easy use on all jobs
- Footage Tools pneumatic piercing tools are available in 2-, 2.5-, 3- and 4-inch diameter sizes

Circle 210 on reader service form

Prime Line 2002 Catalog

- Includes 249 new part numbers
- Catalog arranged by product categories such as air filters, engine parts, blades, etc.

- Within categories, products are arranged by manufacturer
- Many product groups have detailed application charts by model numbers to ensure that dealers can quickly find the correct part

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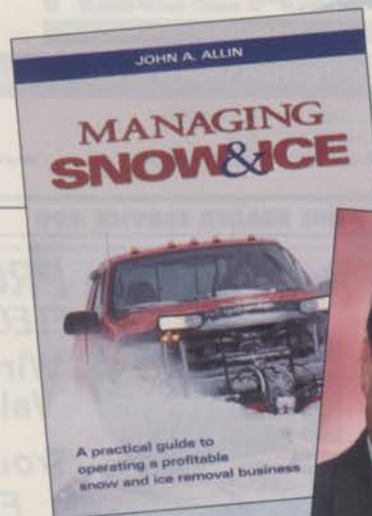
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- * Return to work ready to apply what you have learned and raise the quality and effectiveness of your snow management services.



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September 19, 2002

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September 26, 2002

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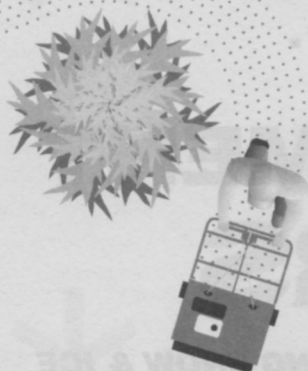
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- Environmental alternative to polypropylene fabrics
- Made of recycled wood fibers that are porous, strong and flexible
- Can be rolled out for temporary weed control or erosion control without mulch layer
- When mulch is applied, it adheres to the paper, even on slopes

Circle 211 on reader service form

Power Trac Bucketloader/ Backhoe

- Features a 25-hp gas-line engine
- Offers an 800-pound lift capacity and lift



- height of 84 inches
 - Backhoe features breakout force of 2,500 pounds, an 8-foot, 4-inch reach, and a digging depth of 6 feet
 - Remains turf-friendly thanks to the 4-wheel-drive articulated steering
 - Machine is designed to run the same 40+ attachments as the PT-400 series
- Circle 212 on reader service form

Robin 4-Stroke Trimmer

- Includes an ergonomic handle anti-vibration feature
- Feature 4-stroke engine technology
- Weighs 15.9 pounds
- Fuel tank holds 22 ounces
- Solid steel shaft is 59 inches
- Offers displacement carburetor with 33.5-cc diaphragm

Circle 213 on reader service form

Products

John Deere Extended Reach Hedge Trimmer



- Includes a 59-inch boom, providing operators with the ability to reach further and higher than with a conventional hedge trimmer
- 22-inch, double-sided, double-reciprocating blade allows for trimming up to 12 feet high
- 1.4-hp Deere M-Series engine provides enough power to cut through branches 1 inch in diameter
- Hedge trimmer includes a 20.2-ounce fuel capacity, easy adjustment points and weight of 13.7 pounds cuts down on operator fatigue
- Extended reach hedge trimmer adds productivity to both hedge-trimming and tree-pruning needs

Circle 214 on reader service form

Classen Compact Aerator

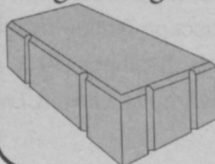
- Compact aerator features folding handle and lift/tie-down handles for easy transportation
- Aerator is full-time self-propelled with easy-reach controls
- Heavy-duty, sealed bearings never need regreasing
- Offers 17.5-inch aerating width and fits through 30-inch gate
- Includes choice of 4-hp Honda or 3.5-hp IC Briggs & Stratton engine

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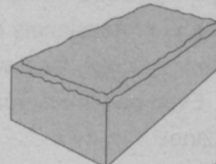


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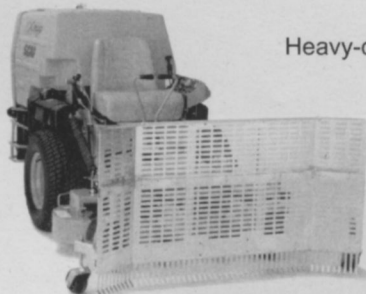
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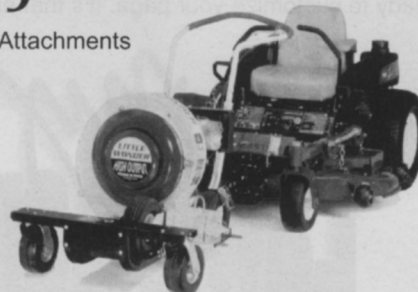
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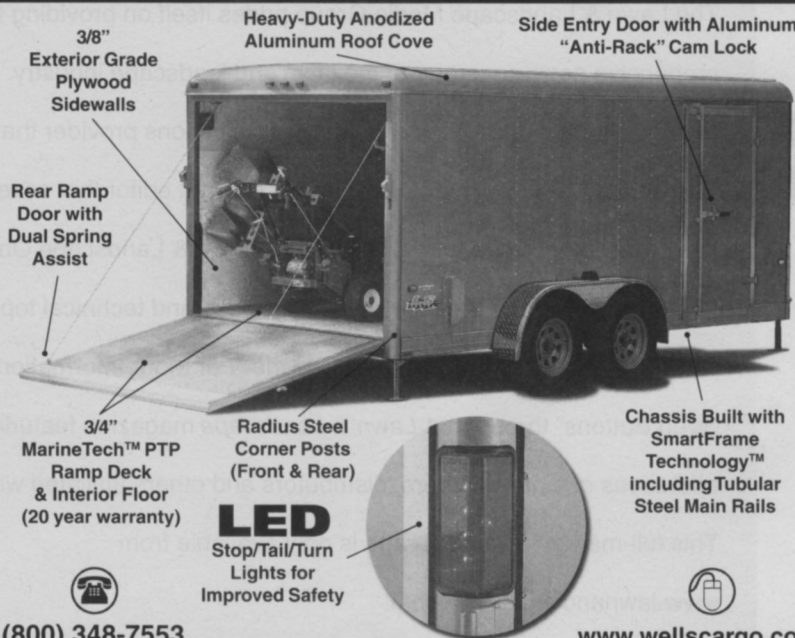
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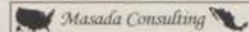
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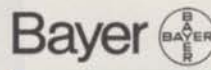
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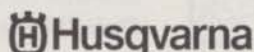
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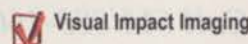
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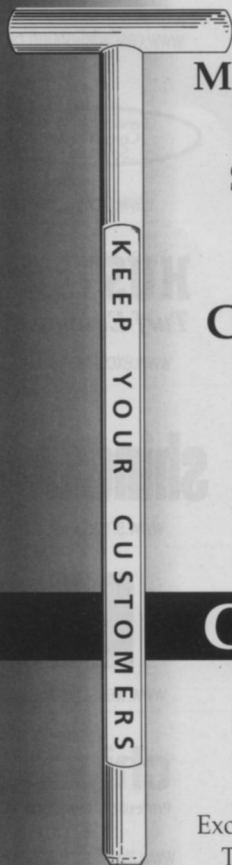
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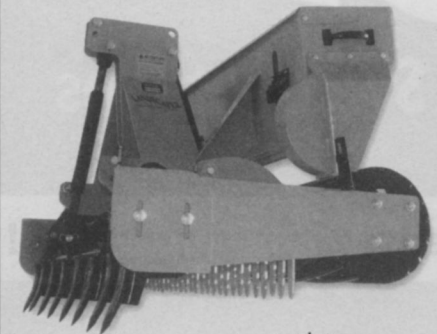
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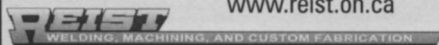
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DIRECTOR OF IRRIGATION

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IRRIGATION INSTALLATION

PROJECT MANAGER

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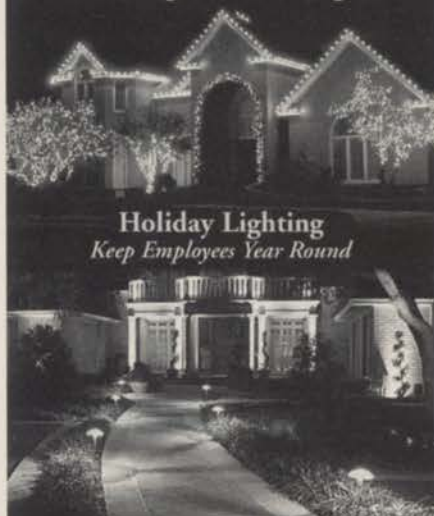
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Dealing with Drought

(continued from page 84)

can be proud of – even if they view them from inside their air-conditioned homes. “Do the right thing upfront,” Brinkley said simply. “I’m a firm believer that you have to prepare and mulch the plant beds and use a root stimulator to get the plants started, and if you do these things upfront, you will have less of a chance of plant loss in the long run.”

THE MOW DOWN. Maintenance crews are most visible – clients expect to see a crew on their property once every week, cutting, trimming and taking care of clean-up. But when grass is dormant and sunny spots are dying out, a weekly cut is the last thing turf needs to stay strong.

“Every property will have certain areas that get full sun and will not grow at all and other areas that are shaded, and those areas will continue to grow,” Byrd described. “You have to cut the lawn – but you may not have to cut everything.”

Byrd tells customers to expect less frequent mowing and explains that dry conditions slow down growth. “You need to tell them that running over the turf for the sake of running over it does more damage than good,” he said. “But explain to them that you will still be on the property doing bed work, policing areas and blowing.”

Typically, mowing time decreases when grass is dry, so crews can finish more properties in a day, Byrd added. He uses this opportunity to slim down overtime hours and he moves cross-trained employees to other projects. While mowing needs decrease, shrubs still require pruning and beds need weeding, he pointed out. This allows his crews the weekly appearance on a property to maintain the client relationship.

When crews do mow properties, they should adjust cutting height so they are not scalping the lawn and tearing away the turf’s sun protection, Hornung said. He suggests setting mowers at a 3- to 3½-inch cutting height so turf will not require as much water.

“As tall as your grass grows, your roots will go that deep, too,” he noted. “Deeper roots, taller grass, and watering every other day or every third day with deep watering is better for a lawn in a drought situation. And then you pray for rain.”

Allentuck also stretches out mowing days during drought, and said this gives his crews a chance to catch up on other detail work. “I

think it’s important to be in the clients’ eyes so they know they are getting value for what they are paying for,” he pointed out.

“Our account managers talk to the clients and say, ‘We are not going to mow this week, but we’ll be there to do pruning,’” he added. “If the grass hasn’t grown and it’s a drought, there isn’t a benefit to rolling a lawn mower over a turf besides getting the lines and turf patterns.”

In addition to mowing schedule adjustments, Himmelreich eliminates fertilizer applications. Overheated turf won’t benefit from applications – it isn’t ready to absorb the additional vitamins, he explained. “Fertilizer to a lawn is kind of like a vitamin to a human body – it is a chemical stimulant. If a human body is frozen in an iceberg, it doesn’t matter what kind of stimulant you give it, it won’t react because it is dormant.”

Hornung leaves dormant lawns alone, but for turf in “danger zone” stages, he switches from liquid to granular applications, which are less likely to burn the lawn if they are not watered in the turf, he explained. For properties that die out and show little sign of rejuvenation, he recommends overseeding and, in drastic cases, resodding or reseeding the property in the fall.

“If the property is brown, we recommend clients wait until August and start on a regular watering plan every other day for a half hour to 40 minutes to get the lawn to come out of the drought,” Hornung suggested. “Then, they should aerate or slit-seed the yard if there are areas that don’t come back.”

Old-fashioned T.L.C. – and preventive care like pesticide and fertilizer applications, adequate watering and maintenance – will ensure properties that slip into a sleep in hot, dry weeks will wake up when weather turns around, Brinkley noted.

And keeping clients in the loop with mowing and installation project changes will help maintain healthy relationships as well. “Tell them the situation upfront and be honest with them,” he emphasized. “Down the road, they will respect you more for it and buy more plants.”

But when that “sixth sense” fails and properties take a turn for a worst, informed clients are more understanding clients, Byrd added. “We tell them that we can’t control Mother Nature.” **LL**

The author is Managing Editor – Special Projects for Lawn & Landscape magazine and can be reached at khamphshire@lawnandlandscape.com.

Pesticide Labels

(continued from page 76)

Worker protection standard – The worker protection standard contains requirements for the protection of agricultural workers and handlers on farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses, who use agricultural pesticides. This section contains requirements for training, decontamination, notification and emergency assistance. It also contains specific instructions and exemptions pertaining to the statement on the label about personal protective equipment and restricted-entry interval.

WHEN TO READ A LABEL. A pesticide label should be read at least four times by the person using it.

1. Before purchase, read the label to see:
 - If it is the right one for the pest problem;
 - If the site is on the label;
 - If it is too hazardous for the conditions;
 - If you have the right equipment to apply the pesticide;
 - If you need to be a certified applicator to purchase and use the pesticide.
2. Before mixing, read the label to see:
 - What protective equipment is needed;
 - What the pesticide can be mixed with (compatibility);
 - How much to use;
 - How to mix the pesticide.
3. Before application, read the label to see:
 - Safety measures to follow;
 - Where it can be used;
 - Application timing and waiting periods;
 - How to apply and the rate of application;
 - Any special restrictions on its use.
4. Before storing or disposing pesticides containers, read the label to see:
 - Where and how to store;
 - How to clean or decontaminate and dispose of the pesticide container;
 - Where and how to dispose of surplus pesticides.

The pesticide label is an LCO’s single most important source of information about the product. If an LCO doesn’t understand the information and the directions for use on the label, he or she should ask the manufacturer or a university extension specialist for assistance in correct interpretation. **LL**

The authors are extension pesticide coordinator, agriculturist and Oklahoma Department of Agriculture program manager, respectively, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Okla.

How We Do It

Managing Arbor Services at Stiles Landscape

South Florida experienced growth in commercial and residential construction, as a result of the expanding tourist and hospitality industries.

This growth gave Stiles Landscape, Pompano Beach, the opportunity to introduce arbor services to the South Florida market. With proper management, staffing and equipment, what at first seemed a daunting challenge, turned into a highly efficient and profitable operation.

Large tourist attractions draw crowds 12 hours a day, seven days a week, so tree work is impossible during the day. Upscale business park property managers are more receptive to tree jobs when their clients are not inconvenienced by traffic disruptions and noise. So, we decided to offer these services at night.

Since night tree operations are less supervised, staff should be well-trained self-starters with proven track records. Although lighting is provided, night work increases injury and property damage risks, so weekly reviews reinforce safety consciousness and limit accidents.

For safety, all crewmembers must be currently certified in CPR and first aid because in the evening public emergency services are more thinly staffed and help may not arrive quickly. All trucks must have fully stocked first aid kits and a clear, well-posted list of emergency phone numbers. The foreman is provided with a cell phone – a link to 911. Arrow boards, along with normal signage and cones, are necessary when operating on roadways and in empty business parks, and the Department of Transportation requires reflective safety vests when working near roadways. Strategically placed vehicle strobes clearly mark our location for traffic, workers and pedestrians.

Efficiency is another issue. After 1 or 2 a.m., the human body wants to shut down. Foremen must supervise crews closely. Developing systems to reduce paperwork for foremen ensures time can be spent monitoring crews.

We schedule jobs monthly. Crew room boards keep personnel up to date on jobs and reinforce safety issues. Property lines are hard to see at night, making daily site inspections necessary. Workers use monthly meetings to discuss any special equipment needs or pruning requirements and to review the next 20 days' assignments.

We use a noise control program when operating during off-hours because local police are quick to shut down any operation causing complaints. We stack brush and chip it at the end of the shift. We also use disc chippers, which are quieter than drum-style units, and handsaws when in earshot of residential areas.

An adjacent empty lot or the corner of a back parking lot can serve as temporary dumpsites. Stiles' hauling contractor sends a 50-yard clamshell to the site the next day for cleanup.

Most commercial properties are easily accessible by self-propelled lifts, and there are several models with light footprints that give a 27- to 40-foot reach. Putting the worker in the basket with a lanyard is far less risky than using a rope and saddle. Sixty-foot bucket trucks, though expensive, are usually mandatory on large commercial work. Smaller units usually cannot reach entryways and large feature trees.

State-of-the-art lighting equipment is a must for off-hours work. Many narrow track models are prone to rollover when towed, so we use light towers with wider tracks and 6,000 watts to illuminate large areas. When powered by a small diesel engine, these machines run 12 hours on one fill-up and make little noise. Should the lighting system fail, operations stop immediately.

Nothing shuts down night work faster than breakdowns. If a lift goes down, nightly production can drop by 20 to 30 percent. A strict preventive maintenance program ensures long stretches of trouble-free production. Night crews must report equipment irregularities immediately, so repairs are made before the next shift.

As our customers needs evolve, so must our service. With proper staffing and the right equipment this new 'off hours' service is a win-win situation for both our clients and Stiles Arbor Services. ■

The author is Claude Brigante, manager of Stiles Landscape Co.'s arbor services division, Pompano Beach, Fla.

FIVE KEYS TO *Managing Night Arbor Services*

1. Require that crewmembers be certified in CPR and first aid and follow safety rules at all times.
2. Incorporate a noise control program that includes the use of quieter equipment.
3. Employ a foreman who can supervise crews closely.
4. Use of on-site dumping, an outside hauling contractor and self-contained aerial lifts is the key to higher profits.
5. Use wide-track lights with 6,000 watts to adequately illuminate work areas.



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CHOOSE ONE FREE TRIAL. MAIL THIS

(One ounce makes 500 cups or gallons. 1/4 teaspoonful per gallon, 3 ounces per 100 gallons, (or, constantly, a drop a gallon, 1 ounce per 500 gallons.)

- FREE \$6.20 2-ounce bottle, with 16-ounce \$29.40 size purchase. (RETURN pint for full REFUND if not delighted with 2-ounce bottle effects.)
- FREE \$9.98 4-ounce bottle, with 32-ounce \$51.60 purchase. (RETURN quart for full REFUND if not happy with free 4-ounce bottle new life.)
- FREE \$1.69 1/10-ounce sample Dropac™—Send 55¢ stamped, addressed envelope.
- 128-ounce \$148.75 size, (refundable, therefore FREE only to established business or public agency, if, after using 4200 to 64,000 gallons from gallon, you wish you had not bought it.)
- DEALER resale trial, FREE bottle with each dozen: DEDUCT 40% IN CHECK FOR DOZEN(S)
 - _____ dozen 1/2-ounce \$3.30 sellers; _____ dozen 1-ounce \$4.65 sellers;
 - _____ dozen 2-ounce \$6.20 sellers; _____ dozen 2-ounce \$9.98 sellers;

Firm Name _____ Phone _____
 Delivery Address for UPS _____ ENCLOSED CHECK \$ _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Your Name (Print, please) _____ Position _____

If your distributors already have SUPERthrive™ for you, buy trial **gallon** and **dozen(s)**, etc. from them. Same offers. Send copy of invoice or date and number for "baker's dozen" and other free bottles, direct. OTHERWISE,

MAIL TO VITAMIN INSTITUTE • 12610 Saticoy St. South, North Hollywood, CA 91605, U.S.A.
 Phone (800) 441-VITA FAX (818) 766-VITA (8482) www.superthrive.com



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