

Marketing We Can Believe In // Control Fast Growth // Be Nice to Your Suppliers

MAY 2009

[www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com)

# Lawn & Landscape®

Leading business media for landscape contractors



## Past Due

Payments coming in **late**? Make customers an offer they can't refuse to improve your company's cash flow.



In today's economy,  
there's only one  
sure-fire investment.

*"PRO Landscape paid  
for itself 30 times  
over the first year!"*

Kostas Menegakis, Landscapes-R-Us

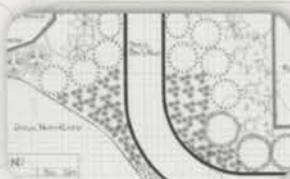
If you make only one investment in your business this year, PRO Landscape design software should be at the top of your list. It's packed with more money-making tools than you ever thought possible, and is so easy to use, you'll be up and running in minutes, translating your ideas into photorealistic images, accurate CAD plans and polished proposals that sell.

*"I sold two jobs the  
first week I owned  
the program."*

Dustin Leite, Maple Leaf Farms & Nursery



Realistic photo imaging



Easy-to-use CAD



Item	Qty	Unit Price	Total Price
1.000 - Landscape Design	1.000	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
2.000 - Plant Materials	1.000	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
3.000 - Plant Installation	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
4.000 - Plant Care	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
5.000 - Plant Maintenance	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
6.000 - Plant Removal	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
7.000 - Plant Replacement	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
8.000 - Plant Pruning	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
9.000 - Plant Fertilizing	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
10.000 - Plant Watering	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
11.000 - Plant Mulching	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
12.000 - Plant Weeding	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
13.000 - Plant Mowing	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
14.000 - Plant Trimming	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
15.000 - Plant Staking	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
16.000 - Plant Tying	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
17.000 - Plant Labeling	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
18.000 - Plant Tagging	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
19.000 - Plant Painting	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
20.000 - Plant Sealing	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
21.000 - Plant Wrapping	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
22.000 - Plant Bundling	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
23.000 - Plant Packaging	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
24.000 - Plant Shipping	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
25.000 - Plant Receiving	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
26.000 - Plant Unloading	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
27.000 - Plant Storing	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
28.000 - Plant Inventory	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
29.000 - Plant Accounting	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
30.000 - Plant Reporting	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
31.000 - Plant Analysis	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
32.000 - Plant Forecasting	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
33.000 - Plant Budgeting	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
34.000 - Plant Scheduling	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
35.000 - Plant Monitoring	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
36.000 - Plant Evaluation	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
37.000 - Plant Review	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
38.000 - Plant Feedback	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
39.000 - Plant Improvement	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
40.000 - Plant Optimization	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
41.000 - Plant Innovation	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
42.000 - Plant Research	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
43.000 - Plant Development	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
44.000 - Plant Testing	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
45.000 - Plant Deployment	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
46.000 - Plant Support	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
47.000 - Plant Training	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
48.000 - Plant Documentation	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
49.000 - Plant Compliance	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
50.000 - Plant Security	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
51.000 - Plant Privacy	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
52.000 - Plant Access	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
53.000 - Plant Safety	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
54.000 - Plant Health	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
55.000 - Plant Performance	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
56.000 - Plant Reliability	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
57.000 - Plant Scalability	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
58.000 - Plant Flexibility	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
59.000 - Plant Portability	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00
60.000 - Plant Interoperability	1.000	\$500.00	\$500.00

Customer proposals



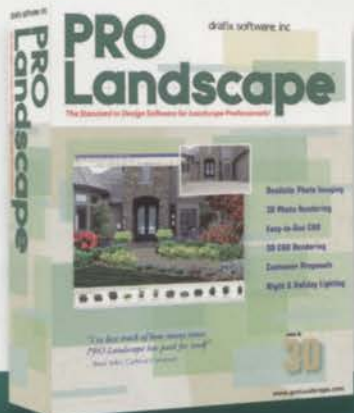
3D photo rendering



3D CAD rendering



Night & holiday lighting



drafix software, inc.

**PRO Landscape**<sup>TM</sup>  
The Standard in Design Software for Landscape Professionals!

**60-day Money-Back Guarantee!**

[www.prolandscape.com](http://www.prolandscape.com)  
800-231-8574 or [prolandscape@drafix.com](mailto:prolandscape@drafix.com)

SELL BETTER • PLAN BETTER • BID BETTER

USE READER SERVICE #10

Current Periodicals  
Features DO NOT CIRCULATE

### INTERVIEW

#### 36 **Winning Against the Odds**

David Plouffe took a no-name senator and made him president. His tactics can help you market and brand your business better.

### BRIEFCASE

#### 54 **Business in the Fast Lane**

Growing pains can be worth the financial gains. We talk to three fast movers who share how they manage speedy growth.

### STRATEGIES

#### 68 **Service Check**

Experts have a thing or two to say about the landscape industry's practices when it comes to customer service ... and you're not going to like it. But, hopefully, you'll learn from it.

### WHAT'S YOUR NICHE?

#### 74 **Treat Them Right**

A Kansas landscape firm insists positive relationships with suppliers goes a long way.

### BLUEPRINTS

#### 78 **Storm Catcher**

A rain garden provides a runoff solution for Texas property battling extreme weather – from drought to downpours.

### SUSTAINABILITY

#### 80 **Route H<sub>2</sub>O**

Try rain gardens for a profitable, "green" add-on service that solves customers' drainage troubles with an aesthetically pleasing solution.

## 42 COVER STORY

Payments coming in *late*?

Make customers an offer they can't refuse to improve your cash flow – no horse heads or dead fish necessary.



# Past Due

#### 84 **Global Warming: Full of Hot Air?**

The economy pushes environment and global warming issues to the bottom of priority lists.

### INTELLIGENT IRRIGATION

#### 86 **It Takes Two**

Two-wire technology – how does it work and should you switch?



## 64 BRIEFCASE: REBUILT & RENEWED

## Departments

- 8 My Turf
- 10 Readers' Forum
- 14 Editor's Notebook
- 115 Classifieds
- 120 Ad Index

## INSIGHT

- 20 **Secrets to My Success**  
What makes a small business successful and how do you measure up?
- 22 **Home, Sweet Home**  
Home buying generates a wave of additional spending, and one in five people say they plan to buy a home this year. What does that mean for you? Do the math.
- 24 **Trouble Makers**  
Keep an eye out for these insects when inspecting trees and shrubs this season.



## 36 INTERVIEW WITH DAVID PLOUFFE

## MONEY

- 26 **Breaking the Bank**  
Banks are suffering from slumping profits, and you're paying for their slow recovery. Not anymore.

## PERSPECTIVE

- 30 **Live & Learn**
- 34 **What I Know**

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- 96 **Irrigation Controllers**
- 108 **Engine Maintenance**

## Columns

- 28 **Notes From the Grunderground**  
MARTY GRUNDER
- 76 **Huston, We Have a Problem**  
JIM HUSTON
- 94 **Water Smart**  
BRIAN VINCHESI
- 122 **Devil's Advocate**  
PAT JONES

## 22

HOMES + BUYERS = \$\$\$



## 26

THEY SHOULD PAY YOU



## 56

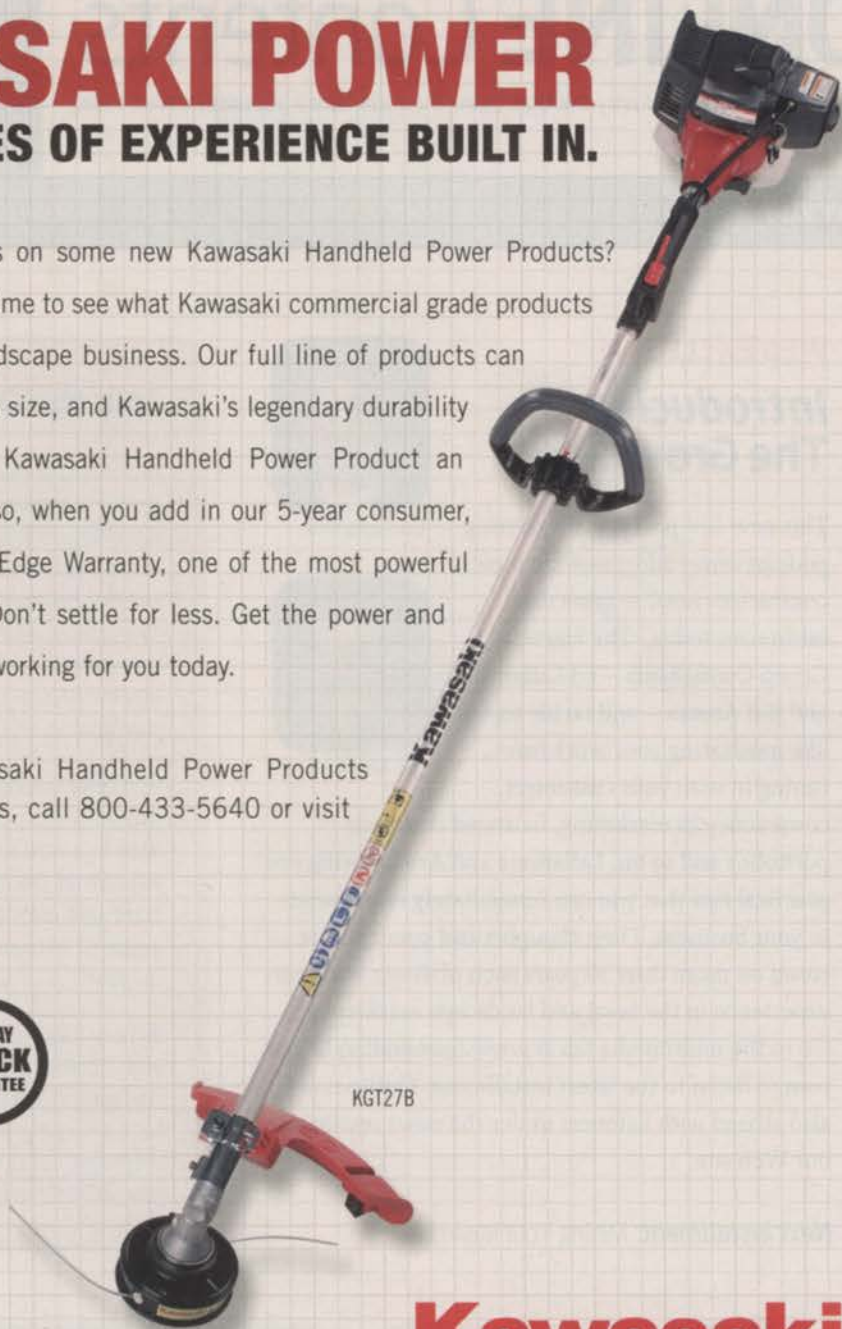
CONTROL YOUR GROWTH



A FULL LINE OF  
**KAWASAKI POWER**  
WITH DECADES OF EXPERIENCE BUILT IN.

Why wait to get your hands on some new Kawasaki Handheld Power Products? There's never been a better time to see what Kawasaki commercial grade products can do for you and your landscape business. Our full line of products can knock your workload down to size, and Kawasaki's legendary durability and reliability make every Kawasaki Handheld Power Product an excellent value. Even more so, when you add in our 5-year consumer, 2-year commercial Leading Edge Warranty, one of the most powerful warranties in the industry. Don't settle for less. Get the power and performance of a Kawasaki working for you today.

For more about how Kawasaki Handheld Power Products can help grow your business, call 800-433-5640 or visit [www.kawpower.com](http://www.kawpower.com).



KGT27B

**Kawasaki**  
Engines/Power Products

HIGH PERFORMANCE RUNS IN THE FAMILY.



From world-class motorcycles to commercial grade engines for landscape professionals, the Kawasaki name says it all.

USE READER SERVICE #11



# ONLINE Contents

/// Network with the industry through *Lawn & Landscape's* interactive Web tools.



**Cindy Code**  
Director,  
Interactive  
Content,  
*Lawn &  
Landscape*

MAY 2009

## WEB EXCLUSIVE

### Introducing The Grow Show

This new fast-paced, quick-hitting podcast series addresses the topics contractors need to grow their businesses today. The Harvest Group Consultants – Ed Laflamme and Bill Arman – will tackle topics like motivating your work force, tuning in with your customers, consistency in marketing, balanced customer portfolios and so on. Laflamme and Arman bring you practical tips that you can immediately implement in your business. Their thoughts and concepts are based on more than 30 years each of direct business experience in the lawn and landscape marketplace. Go to the multimedia tab at [www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com) to listen to the latest installment. Outlines are also shared with listeners under the news section of our Web site.



Ed Laflamme



Bill Arman

**Next installment:** Mining Your Market

## Join the Online Forum



From social networking to multimedia content, the redesigned *Lawn & Landscape* Web site provides everything you need to stay up-to-date on your business needs. Check out our new online forums covering a wide range of industry issues including: lawn care, irrigation, design/build, maintenance, nursery, snow, green, trucks/trailers, general business and general discussion.

Immerse yourself in conversations with other professional contractors from across the country. No idea is a bad idea. And, in today's business climate, we can all borrow a page from another contractor's business plan or take advantage of the years and years of experience *Lawn & Landscape* readers have to offer.

Simply log in at the top right-hand corner of our Web site, click on COMMUNITY (middle button on the top navigation bar), followed by FORUM. You'll be ready to read, reply and become engaged in wide-ranging professional business discussions. Why wait any longer? Get involved today.

## Online Sweepstakes

Monthly, lawn and landscape professionals are eligible to win products, money, cameras and more on our online sweepstakes. Be sure and visit [www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com) and click on our sweepstakes button for the latest contest. It just takes a few minutes to register, answer a few questions and you're on your way.



## COMING THIS MONTH ONLINE

### Podcast interviews with:



**Jeff Korhan** – green industry social networking guru

**Kris Kiser** – OPEI vice president of public affairs with an update on ethanol use in power equipment

## Visit our Online Bookstore



Check out [www.lawnandlandscape.com/store](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/store) for a variety of valuable industry and business titles, including *Green Side Up: Straight Talk on Growing & Operating a Profitable Landscape Business* by Ed Laflamme.



# Just how LONG

do you want your

# FERTILIZER

to last? Weeks, months, the whole season?

# Okay.

**New DURATION CR® Controlled-Release Fertilizer** uses an advanced generation polymer coating technology to gradually meter nutrients for two months, four months, or even all season long to meet your turf's needs. Thanks to DURATION CR's enhanced efficiency, you can use up to 25% less Nitrogen per year which is good for the environment and your bottom line. Now that's a smarter way to grow your business and separate you from the competition.

**Ask your supplier for a fertilizer blend Driven by DURATION CR and get results that last.**



Smarter Ways To Grow™

[www.agriumat.com](http://www.agriumat.com) • 888.757.0072



© 2009 Agrium Advanced Technologies (U.S.) Inc. | DURATION CR, AGRIMUM ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES and SMARTER WAYS TO GROW are trademarks owned by Agrium Inc.

USE READER SERVICE #12



**NICOLE WISNIEWSKI**  
Editor

## Do You Walk the Walk?

**A**re your customers happy? Many of you don't know.

Seventy-two percent of landscape contractors say they do not conduct annual client surveys, according to the most recent *Lawn & Landscape* research. Customer satisfaction and retention is essential to business survival, yet you haven't asked customers if they are pleased with your service.

This is especially important in an economic downturn when customer experience is the top determinant of customer loyalty, according to a new report from Forrester Research. "These days, customers will do more business with companies that serve them best – period," explains Bruce Temkin, vice president and principal analyst of customer experience at Forrester. And many of you agree – 58 percent of you admit customers are more critical of customer service this year and 65 percent of you agree customer service is more important in a tough economy.

Another recent study by the Chief Marketing Officer Council found that despite this overwhelming agreement on the importance of customer experience and subsequent word-of-mouth, senior marketers admit their companies are failing to take decisive companywide action to integrate feedback from customers and their experiences into key business and marketing processes.

So while companies may talk the talk of customer service, not that many walk the walk. Thirty-eight percent of executives surveyed say their companies have no programs in place to track or propagate positive word-of-mouth among customers. Plus, only 29 percent rate highly their ability to handle and resolve customer problems or complaints. Wow.

So you're not alone – other industries have this problem too. But what this *does* reveal is that with some very small changes, you can stand out in the minds of your customers this year. And that could mean all the difference as the economy improves in subsequent years. As Temkin says, "In down times, customers become even more alert to the way they are being treated and get even more sensitive to the experiences they have. In this economic environment, every service interaction customers have is a large portion of what they care about."

And don't let positive renewals dissuade you from customer interaction and improved service. Fifty-four percent of landscape contractors have renewed more than 90 percent of their customer base this year, and another 24 percent have renewed 80 to 90 percent of their customers. In total, 93 percent of landscape contractors have renewed more than 70 percent of their client contracts in 2009. This is great news. But despite the fact that you've won the initial battle, the season and the economic struggles this year are clearly not over.

Take a moment to take better care of your customers. If they aren't talking to you, they may be talking about you. **L**

**"These days, customers will do more business with companies that serve them best – period."  
– Bruce Temkin**

Leading business media for landscape contractors.

4020 Kinross Lakes Parkway, Suite 201  
Richfield, Ohio 44286  
Phone: 800-456-0707  
Editorial Fax: 330-659-0823  
Internet: www.lawnandlandscape.com  
Subscriptions & Classifieds: 800-456-0707

#### EDITORIAL

**NICOLE WISNIEWSKI** Editor  
nwisniewski@gje.net

**CHUCK BOWEN** Associate Editor  
cbowen@gje.net

#### ONLINE

**CINDY CODE** Director, Interactive Content  
ccode@gje.net

#### CREATIVE

**MARK ROOK** Creative Director  
mrook@gje.net

**ANDREA VAGAS** Managing Art Director  
avagas@gje.net

#### COLUMNISTS

**MARTY GRUNDER** Grunder Landscaping Co.  
& Marty Grunder Inc.  
marty@gje.net

**JIM HUSTON** J.R. Huston Enterprises  
huston@gje.net

**PAT JONES** Flagstick LLC  
pjones@gje.net

**BRIAN VINCHESI** Irrigation Consulting  
irrigation@gje.net

**KURT K. THOMPSON** K. Thompson & Associates  
irrigation@gje.net

#### LAWN & LANDSCAPE MARKET INSIGHT COUNCIL

**BILL ARMAN**, The Harvest Group, Caza, Calif.

**ANDREW BLANCHFORD**, Blanchford Landscape  
Contractors, Bozeman, Mont.

**KURT BLAND**, Bland Landscaping, Apex, N.C.

**JENNIFER BUCK**, Next Level Network, Baltimore, Md.

**JOE CIALONE**, industry nursery consultant,  
Boynton Beach, Fla.

**TOM DELANEY**, PLANET, Lilburn, Ga.

**CHRIS ECKL**, Earthtones, Atlanta, Ga.

**TOM FOCHTMAN**, CoCal Landscape, Denver, Colo.

**BENTON FORET**, Chackbay Nursery  
& Landscaping, Boyne City, Mich.

**BOB GROVER**, Pacific Landscape Management,  
Hillsboro, Ore.

**MARTY GRUNDER**, Grunder Landscaping  
and Marty Grunder Inc., Miamisburg, Ohio

**RICHARD HELLER**, Greener by Design, Petham, N.Y.

**TOM HEAVILAND**, Heaviland Enterprises, Vista, Calif.

**JIM HUSTON**, J.R. Huston Enterprises, Englewood, Colo.

**JEFFREY JOHNS**, Coastal Greenery, Brunswick, Ga.

**BRENT MECHAM & ANDY SMITH**,  
Irrigation Association, Falls Church, Va.

**DALE MICETIC**, ISS Grounds Control, Phoenix, Ariz.

**CHRIS & MATT NOON**, Noon Landscape, Hudson, Mass.

**TODD REINHART**, Reinhart Grounds  
Maintenance/Weed Man, Bloomington, Ill.

**CHAD STERN**, Mowing & More, Chevy Chase, Md.

**BOB WADE**, Wade Landscape and CLCA,  
Newport Beach, Calif.





Support means helping you win on your terms.

Get **\$400** off a **Z830A** and  
**5.99%** a month financing for **5** years.

In a business where time is money, we've figured out a way to help you make the most of yours: 5.99% financing for 60 months on our entire line of Z-Trak PRO Series zero-turn mowers. And with the Z830A, you'll get \$400 off instantly. So see your John Deere dealer today. Because we're ready to give you support in the field – and on the bottom line.



**JOHN DEERE**

[JohnDeere.com](http://JohnDeere.com)

5.99% Low-Rate Financing for up to 60 Months at Participating John Deere Dealers offer available February 3, 2009 through August 3, 2009. Excludes Z-Trak Estate and EZtrak Zero-Turn Mowers. Subject to approved credit on John Deere Credit Revolving Plan, a service of FPC Financial, f.s.b. For personal use only. No down payment required. Finance charge will accrue at 5.99% APR and is for qualified buyers. Monthly payment will be calculated based on 2.0% of the amount financed at 5.99% APR. Rates subject to change. See local dealer for current rates. A \$1.00 per month minimum may be required. Upon default the interest rate may increase to 19.8% APR. Other special rates and terms may be available, including installment financing. Available at participating dealers in the United States. Prices and savings in U.S. dollars.

Save \$400 (U.S.) on Z830A Z-Trak™ PRO 800 Series Mowers available February 3, 2009 through August 3, 2009. Prices and models may vary by dealer. Savings based on the purchase of eligible equipment. Offers available on new equipment and in the U.S. only. Prices and savings in U.S. dollars. See your dealer for details.



**SMALL BUT MIGHTY**

I truly enjoy your magazine and regularly find useful articles that help me in running my day-to-day business. Keep up the great work. I also appreciate the fact that your issues tend to focus on the smaller businesses, which we all know are 80 percent of the lawn and landscape industry.

That focus on the smaller businesses is why I regularly read your magazine. I think all of us in the green industry benefit the most when we hear what other businesses are doing to improve sales, profit, etc. This year is going to be a huge challenge for each of us. The economy is not helping sales in my business, and with the spring and summer season coming up I know most of my peers are planning to hire fewer service technicians and fewer sales reps.

I appreciate the great work you do. Keep it up. This is the first time I ever wrote a note to a magazine.

*Scott Norwood  
Sales Manager, Shelby-Novu Lawn Care*

**MARCH MADNESS**

I want you to know that the March edition of *Lawn & Landscape* is the best I have seen in a long time. I especially like the article "How Much Do you Make?" Being in busi-

ness for 14 years, this question has always been at the back of my mind. I wanted to ask someone but never could build up the nerve. I always learned that it was no one's business. I am glad to see *Lawn & Landscape* answer the question. For future magazine articles, I would like to see *Lawn & Landscape* answer more of these tough questions. This will keep you at the front of all magazines and keep you cutting edge. I also believe that showcasing a landscape company or contractor in your monthly articles gives other landscapers hope to succeed.

Thanks for a great read!

*Jeffrey Johns  
Owner, Coastal Greenery  
Brunswick, Ga.*

Just wanted you to know that I really like the look of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine. The March issue was outstanding.

*Scott Jamieson  
Vice President, Bartlett Tree Experts  
Northbrook, Ill.*

I actually read through the entire March issue of *Lawn & Landscape* last night and

**Lawn & Landscape**

Leading business media for landscape contractors.

**SALES**

**KEVIN GILBRIDE** Group Publisher  
kgilbride@gie.net

**JON AVELLONE** Account Manager  
javelone@gie.net

**MELISSA BIERMANN** Account Manager  
mbiermann@gie.net

**JAMIE LEWIS** Account Manager  
jlewis@gie.net

**TARYN O'FLAHERTY** Account Manager  
2835 Serena Rd., Unit #A  
Santa Barbara, Calif. 93105  
PH: 310-545-1567 FX: 866-802-0549  
tollaherty@gie.net

**AMEE ROBBINS** Account Manager  
616 Marine Ave.  
Manhattan Beach, Calif. 90266  
PH: 310-465-6060 FX: 866-857-5442  
arobbins@gie.net

**DAN WEIST** Account Manager  
dweist@gie.net

**MIKE ZAVERL** Account Manager  
mzaverl@gie.net

**BONNIE VELIKONYA**  
Classified Advertising Sales  
bvelikonya@gie.net

**PRODUCTION**

**HELEN DUERR** Director, Production  
hduerr@gie.net

**SAMANTHA GILBRIDE**  
Advertising Production Coordinator  
sgilbride@gie.net

**CHRISTINA HACKEL**  
Internet Production Coordinator  
chackel@gie.net

**CONFERENCES**

**MARIA MILLER** Conference Manager  
mmiller@gie.net

**CORPORATE**

**RICHARD J. W. FOSTER** CEO

**CHRISTOPHER W. FOSTER** President & COO

**DAN MORELAND** Executive Vice President

**JAMI CHILDS** Director, Business Resources & IT

**MELODY BERENDT** Director, Circulation

**KELLY ROOP** Manager, Accounting Department



syngenta

Until the lawn can water itself.

Imagine not having to rely on homeowners. Not having to worry that they'll forget to water-in an application. With the weeklong watering window of Meridian® insecticide, it's possible. You can provide the broad-spectrum grub and foliar insect control that noticeably beautiful lawns require—for even the most forgetful customers.

1-866-SYNGENTA • MeridianForLawns.com

©2008 Syngenta. Syngenta Professional Products, Greensboro, NC 27419. **Important: Always read and follow label instructions before buying or using this product. Meridian is not currently registered for use in all states. Please check with your state and local extension service prior to buying or using this product.** Meridian® and the Syngenta logo are trademarks of a Syngenta Group Company.

USE READER SERVICE #14



it's really good – I mean really good. I can see how you focus on “business” aspects much better than any of the other magazines in our industry. You're doing a great job.

*Barbara Mulhern  
President, RB Editorial & Consulting  
Verona, Wis.*

Recently I read an article from the March edition of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine. It was an interview with Jerry Faulring, who was a pioneer in the professional lawn care business in the 1970s and 1980s. Faulring built and sold his lawn care business and went on to develop a very successful nursery growing operation. He was asked in the interview what advice he would have for people in business today. He said the following four things. First, be passionate about what you are doing. Second, mandate

time for family and leisure. Third, find a good mentor. Finally, don't get lost in the “sea of sameness.” Translated, this means, find a way to differentiate yourself from your competitors. So, let's keep our heads up, stay the course, talk to each other and participate.

*Kenneth J. Clemmer  
Chairman of the Board, PrimeraTurf  
North Ridgeville, Ohio*

#### WATER WISDOM

Dear *Lawn & Landscape* irrigation columnist Brian Vinchesi,

This year, I was asked by an organization in Memphis to install a system they had heard about that would fertilize their lawn at the same time it watered it. Then we got

a call from the designer of the “Terra” house in Memphis, also asking about rain recovery systems.

As the year has started we have received calls from new prospective clients asking us to take over their systems because they just weren't pleased with their past contractors. They didn't know why for sure, but thought there was someone else out there that could better serve them.

It has become evident real quick that it is necessary to become smarter about irrigation especially in the economic times we face. Even the rich are shopping, and they aren't even sure why except to get a cheaper deal. I don't know about most contractors, but none of my costs



**IN ENGLISH,  
DANUSER  
MEANS  
TOUGH  
AS HELL.**



We make attachments that stand the test of time. Our family owned company takes pride in quality and service. And we have since the day we opened our doors in 1910. From Auger Bucket and Earth Auger Systems, to Postmaster/Slab Blaster and Pallet Forks, DANUSER attachments are designed to get the job done right. To learn more, call 573-642-2246.

**DANUSER**  
• EST. 1910 •

[danuser.com](http://danuser.com)

have gone down. So we had to get educated about new innovations in the installation part of the business. When we did get educated with the help of our main supplier, we found we were actually able to increase our prices in some cases and maintain a higher profit level.

This exercise has forced me to get out of the service truck and spend more time trying to educate myself, and grow my business in a "smart" way.

I truly enjoyed your column "Can Irrigation Really Be Smart?" in the March issue. It made me feel like we made the "smart" decision.

Joe D. Moscon  
Owner  
Smart Water Irrigation & Lighting  
Arlington, Tenn.

Dear *Lawn & Landscape* irrigation columnist Brian Vinchesi,

Thank you for your fine column "Don't favor Change" in the January 2009 issue of *Lawn & Landscape*. You are so correct pointing out that change will come, or, in part, is already here.

It is becoming more difficult to keep up with all the regulations. In so many places the regulations mean well but as you pointed out do not take all problems into consideration. Since our office does work all over the U.S., as well as in some places in Europe, we are well-aware of the many different climatic as well as soil conditions we encounter.

With the new regulations, we may have a person at the government level reviewing drawings and contracts without knowing much about landscape irrigation. In some communities they engage the services of professionals such as yourself to be a consultant to the municipality. This is often better than having a person look at drawings and not

knowing what they are looking at.

Government does not take into consideration that every time they make a new regulation someone will have to enforce it and this adds expenses to government operations.

Thank you again for your wisdom and your long service for our industry. I have been in practice for 71 years. In 1940 I was confronted with designing an irrigation system. I took a daytime job working for an irrigation contractor to learn what it was all about so that I could design a system myself. At that time we did not have irrigation consultants. It was only after World War II that Ewing surfaced and helped us out. We have come a long way since that time.

Ernest Wertheim  
Partner  
Wertheim, van der Ploeg & Klemeyer  
San Francisco

# NEVER TRIED A STAND-ON MOWER?



**IT'S TIME.** You'll get a quick lesson in improved productivity when you experience the speed, maneuverability, compact size and visibility of the Toro® GrandStand.™ Combining the best attributes of wide-area walk-behinds and zero-turn riders, the GrandStand can take the efficiency of your business to the next level.

When you demo the GrandStand, its comfort and ease of use will be immediately clear. The fatigue-free ride will enhance the productivity of your operators by keeping them fresh throughout the day, and the superior TURBO FORCE® after-cut appearance will keep your customers happy, too.

Toro® GrandStand™  
Stand-On Mower



**SAVE  
THOUSANDS**

Save thousands of dollars when you purchase multiple units for your fleet. Ask your local Toro commercial dealer for details.

**MOW NOW  
PAY LATER**

Toro's special retail finance offers can put these machines to work for you today, so they can start paying for themselves.



Schedule a personal demo during the Smooth Operator Tour coming to a Toro commercial dealer near you. For tour dates, locations and product information, check out [TORO.COM/SMOOTH](http://TORO.COM/SMOOTH).

**TORO.** Count on it.



# WASHINGTON & WATER

New administration might mean new opportunities for irrigation professionals.

**T**he presidential administration's impact on the irrigation industry and regional drought updates were hot topics at the Irrigation Association's mid-March Web conference.

John Farner, federal affairs director for the IA, says the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, signed into law by President Obama in February, has some benefit for irrigation contractors.



Farner

## One Company More Choices!



*Turf Tracker Time Machine*



*Turf Tracker Stealth*



*Power Pod with Spreader*



*Power Pod with Aerator*



C&S Turf Care Equipment, Inc.

[www.csturfonline.com](http://www.csturfonline.com)

1-800-872-7050

USE READER SERVICE #17

The stimulus package includes \$4 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan program, 20 percent of which is set aside for "green infrastructure and environmental innovative activity," Farner says.

The revolving fund offers low-interest loans that can be paid back over 20 years, Farner explains, and each state-level EPA office manages its own fund.

President Obama's top priorities are the economy, health care and energy and climate change, Farner says. This renewed focus on the environment – and its economic impact – means consumers may pay more attention to the use of sometimes-scarce water resources, in Farner's opinion.

The IA is encouraging members to spread the message that green spaces have value, and to justify landscape use by explaining its benefit as a tool for carbon sequestration, to beautify

and to mitigate dust. He said efficient irrigation is a "critical component in these systems."

Concerning drought, Andy Smith, the IA's external affairs director, gave an update on drought conditions across the country:

- *California* – The state has had two "critically dry" years, and 2009 could be the most severely dry in years. There are water regulations popping up all across the state.

- *Georgia* – Water has been shut off to landscapers since 2007, Smith says, adding that 55 counties allow drip irrigation and soaker hose watering systems one hour a day, three days a week. Lake Lanier is still 22 feet below its rim.

"We're expecting a ruling in federal courts on a tri-state water war between Georgia, Alabama and Florida that could significantly impact Georgia's ability to draw water from the lake," Smith says.

- *Florida* – Once- and twice-a-day water restrictions are in place all across the state. At the same time, Smith says he is seeing salt water intrusion in coastal communities. This intrusion happens when freshwater is pumped out of wells faster than it can be replenished.

- *Texas* – "There's a deep, dark red form in Texas, and we're uncomfortable about what's happening there," Smith says, referring to a map of drought conditions in the South. The state has seen "significantly less rainfall" and he expects more irrigation restrictions as the season wears on. **L**



Smith

For a look at some events the IA has planned this year and additional Webinar updates, visit the May Web Exclusives at [www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras). – Chuck Bowen

# ALREADY TRIED A STAND-ON MOWER?

## THINGS HAVE CHANGED.

Whether or not you're a fan of stand-on mowers, you owe it to yourself to demo the machine the industry is buzzing about ... the revolutionary new Toro® GrandStand™. Guided by input from experienced operators, Toro designed the GrandStand with superior enhancements that can take the jolts out of your jobs and bumps out of your business.



You'll immediately notice the comfortable, fatigue-free ride, outstanding hillside handling, ride/walk versatility, and the immaculate cut of Toro's TURBO FORCE® deck. And at a length of only 59 inches\*, the GrandStand delivers the compact size that's critical for your trailer.

## SAVE THOUSANDS

Save thousands of dollars when you purchase multiple units for your fleet. Ask your local Toro commercial dealer for details.

## MOW NOW PAY LATER

Toro's special retail finance offers can put these machines to work for you today, so they can start paying for themselves.



Schedule a personal demo during the Smooth Operator Tour coming to a Toro commercial dealer near you. For tour dates, locations and product information, visit [TORO.COM/SMOOTH](http://TORO.COM/SMOOTH).



Toro® GrandStand™ Stand-On Mower

**TORO**

Count on it.

\* With flip-up platform in stowed position

Out-pricing our competition—  
so you can out-perform yours.

That's intelligent.



**RAIN  BIRD®**



## Save \$1,600 or more on a typical Rain Bird commercial installation.\*

To help your business stay profitable in these tough times, we've lowered prices on even

TALK TO YOUR  
SALES REP OR  
DISTRIBUTOR

more of our industry-leading commercial irrigation products. Because The Intelligent Use of Water™ is about saving water *and* money. Talk to your Rain Bird sales representative or distributor and see how much you'll save thanks to these new, lower list prices.

*"In this economy, lower Rain Bird prices make a big difference. We're able to keep our prices competitive, while taking advantage of Rain Bird's industry-leading quality."*

Ken Bing, Owner  
Research Irrigation  
Medley, FL

Calculate your savings and find these plus over 30 more low-priced products at [www.rainbird.com/savings](http://www.rainbird.com/savings)



**Rain Bird® 5004 SAM Rotors:** Save more than 45% over Hunter® PGP-ADV® Rotors.\*\*

Rain Bird List Price  
**\$13<sup>50</sup>**

Hunter List Price  
**\$25<sup>75</sup>**



**Rain Bird® 1806 Sprays:** Save more than 10% over Hunter® PROS-06 Sprays.\*\*

Rain Bird List Price  
**\$9<sup>38</sup>**

Hunter List Price  
**\$10<sup>50</sup>**



**Rain Bird® 1812 Sprays:** Save more than 10% over Hunter® PROS-12 Sprays.\*\*

Rain Bird List Price  
**\$13<sup>18</sup>**

Hunter List Price  
**\$14<sup>75</sup>**



**Rain Bird® U-Series Nozzles:** Save more than 20% over 2008 Rain Bird list pricing.\*\*

2009 Rain Bird List Price  
**\$1<sup>82</sup>**

2008 Rain Bird List Price  
**\$2<sup>29</sup>**



**Rain Bird® ESP-LX 8-Station Modular Controller:** Save more than 5% over Hunter® ICC-800PL.\*\*

Rain Bird List Price  
**\$356**

Hunter List Price  
**\$379**



**Rain Bird® 100 PEB Valves:** Save more than 5% over Hunter® ICV-101G Valves.\*\*

Rain Bird List Price  
**\$92<sup>90</sup>**

Hunter List Price  
**\$99<sup>00</sup>**



**Rain Bird® 100 PGA Valves:** Save more than 5% over Hunter® PGV-101G Valves.\*\*

Rain Bird List Price  
**\$28<sup>15</sup>**

Hunter List Price  
**\$30<sup>00</sup>**

\* Based on 40 Rain Bird® 1806 Sprays, 16 Rain Bird® 100 PEB Valves, 40 Rain Bird® U-Series Nozzles, 1 Rain Bird® ESP-LX Modular 8-Station Controller, 170 Rain Bird® 5004 SAM Rotors versus 2008 Rain Bird® U-Series Nozzle price and competing Hunter® products and quantities. Commercial jobs only. Calculations based on U.S. Rain Bird® list pricing effective March 23, 2009 and Hunter® list pricing effective January 1, 2009. See [www.rainbird.com/savings](http://www.rainbird.com/savings) for details.

\*\* Based on U.S. Rain Bird® list pricing effective March 23, 2009 and Hunter® list pricing effective January 1, 2009.



# BE AN OPTIMIST

Industry veterans advise contractors to keep their chins up going into the busy season.

**“W**e live in interesting times.”

This is The Brickman Group's Mark Hjelle quoting a Chinese philosopher in reference to today's economy.

Hjelle, president of the Gaithersburg, Md.-based landscape maintenance company, was one of five speakers during J.P. Horizon's "It's a Great Time to Be in Business" Webinar earlier this year. The challenge landscape business owners have in this recession is maintaining optimism amidst economic struggle, event speakers explained to the seminar's 1,000 attendees. As Hjelle says: "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity and an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Residential construction/real estate is drying up and commercial real estate is also starting to feel the affects of the down economy with decreased occupancy rates, Hjelle reported.

The Brickman Group's focus this year is to forge deeper relationships with clients and express ways they can help them through tough times. At the same time, they are driving efficiencies on the back end in order to improve their service and quality models.

Customer service should be a major focus for companies in 2009, according to Blake Smith, president of Christmas Décor, Lubbock, Texas. "Don't be a typical contractor," he advises. "There will be fewer clients and they will have more options. It's not enough to be timely and follow-through on your promises. This year, you must be remarkable."

Contractors should evaluate their service and discuss and implement improvement options. "Increase your contact with customers – find a way to create more buzz," Smith suggests. "And guard against your own assumptions. Don't think you know what your customers want. Ask them what they want via a short survey so you know what they want. This could mean the difference in your marketing message and service quality. This is not a time to be a commodity service provider." (For more on customer service, see page 68.)



Smith

As contractors analyze their customer service strategies, Jennifer Lemcke, chief operating officer of Weed Man, recommends they also look at their company vision. "What do you want to achieve in the short term and long term – this should serve as a clear guide for choosing current and future courses of action."



Lemcke


If a landscape business owner lacks direction and hasn't defined what he or she wants to do and where to take the business, it's time to do that, Lemcke says, adding: "Your core values are your operating philosophies or principles that guide your organization's internal conduct as well as its relationship with the external world."

Weed Man is going to face challenges head-on, continue to develop customer relationships, be proactive and manage their financials, take advantage of opportunities and inspire employees to keep following the company vision.

Part of that stems from leadership, according to Austell, Ga.-based HighGrove Partners president Jim McCutcheon. "These are the times when great companies are made," he says. "Those who continue to run their businesses the same way in 2009 as they did in 2007 and 2008, unfortunately, may not be here. Poorly run companies won't make it; good companies will. This happens through leadership – and that has to come from the owner of the business. It's not time to be a middle-of-the-road provider. Don't let this be the time when you don't listen to customers or employees. Keep them all in the loop. Let them know what's driving you and your decisions. Team building is important. Promote your companies financial health and struggles so they know where you are and what they need to do."



McCutcheon

And, above all else, "be an optimist," Hjelle advises. "No matter what the situation, the decisions you make today will have a meaningful impact on your business five to 10 years from now." 

For a recording of this Webinar, visit [www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras). – Nicole Wisniewski

Revenue



Productivity

**PRODUCTS BUILT TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS.**

**INNOVATION HAS A NEW NAME: CUB CADET COMMERCIAL TANK™ S**

At Cub Cadet Commercial we build our products with one thing in mind—to help your business. From our revolutionary steering wheel controlled TANK™ S—the first and only zero-turn with patented Synchro Steer™ technology—to our innovative Select Cut System™ deck, everything is designed to work faster and cut better. And we offer a complete line of professional-grade products to help you get big jobs done.

To find your dealer or schedule a product demo call 1-866-246-4971.



**WE MEAN BUSINESS.™**

©2009 Cub Cadet

**INSIGHT** /// Trends and statistics to give you an edge

## Secrets to My Success

What makes a small business successful

and how do you measure up?

BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

Ever wish you could find out where small business owners are struggling so you can learn from their mistakes?

Now you can. The Small Business Success Index, an ongoing measurement of the overall health of U.S. small businesses commissioned by Network Solutions and the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business, asks small businesses to identify key areas where they are succeeding and failing. Then, it can help others use these lessons as benchmarks.

Among 10 long-term business goals, small business owners are the most successful in minimizing costs (51 percent are highly successful) and reducing risks (50 percent). In all other goal areas in the study, less than half of owners consider themselves successful. Owners are the least successful in building personal wealth (30 percent highly successful, 23 percent failing) and growing business revenue (31 percent successful, 19 percent failing).

The report provides these details on other strengths and weaknesses of small businesses:

# STOP...



...going up your customers' trees! Get on the BAND wagon. The BugBarrier Tree Band wagon. It's the best way to stop Gypsy Moth, Fall & Spring Cankerworm, Winter Moth, Forest Tent Caterpillar and other crawling & climbing insects.

It's pesticide & pheromone free so no licensing or special handling is required.

It's attractive & clean, so customers won't complain.

It's easy to install & remove so your crews will be more productive

800-379-9677

[www.treebands.com](http://www.treebands.com)  
For ordering information



USE READER SERVICE #21

20 MAY 2009 [www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com)

## No Spaghetti Tubing

*Not that we have anything against conventional irrigation  
- it just doesn't work everywhere.*

**When you can't run drip or micro-irrigation,**  
your solution is Container Irrigation by Tournesol Siteworks.

**Our reservoir-based inserts will help you**  
maintain your pots and planters with a minimum of effort.

**Patios • Balconies • Roof Gardens • Pool Decks • Terraces**



**Tournesol**  
SITEWORKS

*A better way to irrigate pots.*

[tournesolsiteworks.com](http://tournesolsiteworks.com)

800.542.2282

USE READER SERVICE #22

• **Capital Access:** Small businesses face a major problem obtaining capital internally or externally to invest.

• **Marketing and Innovation:** While small businesses are reasonably successful in getting their own customers to provide referrals, they struggle to find efficient ways to advertise their businesses and convert leads into buyers.

• **Workforce:** Small businesses have average success in this area; they are able to manage employee turnover, while their most serious workforce issue is providing attractive benefits.

• **Customer Service:** These organizations are successful in all aspects of service, particularly in answering questions and showing customers they care.

**THE TECHNOLOGY ADVANTAGE.** Small businesses rely on a range of Internet business solutions and computer technologies to succeed. The most common

include: online customer service via e-mail (60 percent use), a company Web site (50 percent use), online advertising in directories (38 percent use), a shared computer network for employees (36 percent use), and internal communications by e-mail (33 percent use).

Solutions and technologies with the fastest growth in the next two years include adding a Web site, allowing customers to order online, general online advertising and adding a social media presence.

The degree of use of Internet business solutions contributes to the overall competitiveness of a small business, but it takes more than just having a Web site. To illustrate, those that are "Internet tech-powered," meaning they use at least six technologies, have a 31 percent chance of being "highly competitive," and more successful. The percentage who are highly competitive drops to 24

percent for those with moderate use of these technologies (two to five), and 19 percent among those with minimal use of Internet technology.

The role of Internet business solutions remains strong even when controlling for size. The pattern above holds when examining very small businesses with less than five employees. It would appear that even a very small business can use such technologies as an equalizer to compete with larger firms. **L**

The author is editor of *Lawn & Landscape* and can be reached at [nwisniewski@gie.net](mailto:nwisniewski@gie.net).



The Small Business Success Index details traits of successful owners. Read it – and compare your business – at [www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras).

**“The JobClock reduced overtime, lowered workers’ comp and saves us over \$25,000 a year.”**

—Jason Kirkpatrick, Kirkpatrick’s Construction, LLC

**JobClock® saved Kirkpatrick’s Construction thousands. Now it’s your turn.**

**The problem:** Guys forget how many hours they worked. Some guys occasionally round up their time. And timecards get lost. **The solution:** The JobClock System. It accurately tracks every worker’s time at every job. **The result:** You save money on every payroll—money that can help you survive and even prosper in today’s tight economy.



Employee Time Card		Resident View LANDSCAPE					
<b>Bill Kemp</b>							
Monday, October 12, 2009 - Friday, October 16, 2009							
JobSite Name	Cost Code	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Total
Brentwood Job	Engalton	7:35	7:35	7:52	--	--	23:06
Crestview Job	Planting	--	--	--	7:58	7:49	15:47
		7:08	7:35	7:53	7:58	7:48	38:53
		Regular Hours				38:53	
		Overtime Hours				- 0 -	
		Double Time Hours				- 0 -	

Forget trying to decipher handwritten timecards! JobClock works under the toughest weather and work conditions.



Jason Kirkpatrick  
Kirkpatrick's Construction, LLC

**LIMITED TIME OFFER!**

FREE one-year subscription to *Cabela's Outfitter Journal* just for letting us give you a FREE quote!

**CALL 1-888-788-8463 for your FREE quote.**

15 minutes could save you thousands of dollars.

After all, over 600,000 professionals ALREADY rely on The JobClock System.

**EXAKTIME**  
INNOVATION AT WORK



# Home, *Sweet* Home

Home buying generates a wave of additional spending, and one in five people say they plan to buy a home this year. What does that mean for you? Do the math. BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

**B**uying a home is one of the biggest financial decisions families make, according to a recent Housing Economics report from the National Association of Home Builders.

Therefore, it's not surprising NAHB's analysis shows a home purchase triggers a series of additional spending on appliances, furnishings and remodeling/renovation activities that exceed typical spending of non-moving owners.

And this activity persists for quite a while after a move takes place. Specifically, NAHB analysis shows that during the first two years after closing on a house, a typical buyer of a new single-family detached home tends to spend on average \$7,400 more than a similar home owner who does not move, including \$4,900 in the first year after purchase.

When it comes to outside additions and alterations, including the addition of a patio, terrace, new driveway or fence, new home buyers outspend existing home buyers and non-moving owners, on average spending \$4,275 a year on exterior updates.

This presents an opportunity for landscape contractors who want to target these customers as prospects. According to a new survey commissioned by Move, Inc.

operator of Realtor.com, one out of five Americans plans to buy a home this year to take advantage of the \$8,000 tax credit recently passed by Congress.

NAHB estimates that the first-time home buyer credit will result in 143,000 new homeowners. Assuming this estimate is accurate, the additional estimated first-year effects of new home buyer tax credits include the following:

- A ripple effect of 83,000 additional home sales and ac-

quisitions generated by displaced homeowners trading up.

- 33,000 of the vacant units currently on the market sold and occupied by homeowners.
- A net increase of approximately 41,000 additional housing units built with a net value of \$7 billion.
- An increase in economic activity from broker and other transaction-related services, property alterations and furnishings of \$3 billion.

- Creation of approximately 85,800 full-time jobs, \$4.2 billion in wages and salaries, \$2 billion in small business income and \$1.4 billion in corporate profits.

While landscape contractors may think the move-up buyer deserves more focus, one can't ignore the potential of the first-time home buyer, particularly this year.

According to NAHB's Housing Economics, first-time home buyers account for 43 percent of all home sales. On average, a first-time buyer is 33 years-old, and has a household income of \$64,074. Homes purchased by first-time buyers have a median value of \$150,000. The sheer number of these first-time buyers makes them important targets as landscape customers, even if they have slightly lower aver-

age incomes and cheaper houses than move-up buyers.

The survey also reveals why people buy particular homes. After price comes layout of the unit and size. Yard is fourth on the list at 21 percent, building exterior at 19 percent and quality of the home at 18 percent. **(L)**



The author is editor of *Lawn & Landscape*. Send her an e-mail at [nwisniewski@gie.net](mailto:nwisniewski@gie.net).

# ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIES of NORTH AMERICA



fig. I.  
AQUA-ROC  
[running bond pattern]



fig. II.  
DRAINSTONE  
[herringbone pattern]



fig. III.  
TURESTONE  
[stack bond pattern]



fig. IV.  
ECO-DUBLIN  
[herringbone pattern]



fig. V.  
SUBTERRA  
[stack bond pattern]

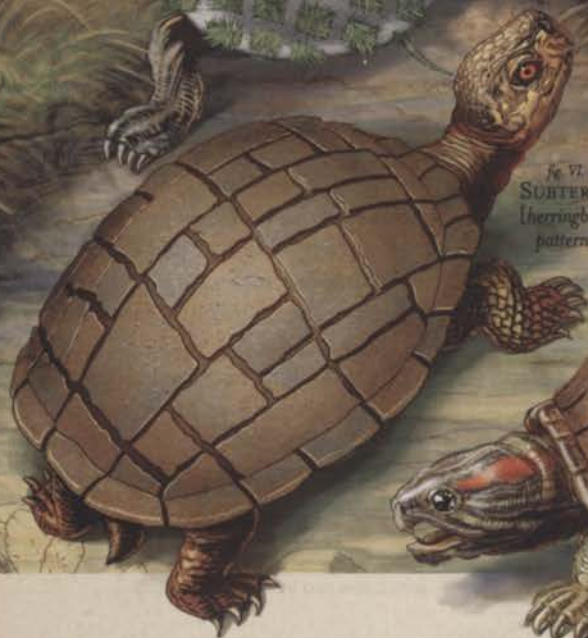


fig. VI.  
SUBTERRA  
[herringbone pattern]



fig. VII.  
AQUA-ROC  
[herringbone pattern]

Discover a new genus of paver, ideal for both residential and commercial hardscapes. Belgard's collection of environmental pavers are attractive, all-weather durable, and most important, eco-friendly. The perfectly natural way to protect one of Earth's most vital resources. Every paver allows water to permeate and directly enter the ground, thereby reducing the negative effects of runoff on local watersheds, and ultimately the lakes, rivers and seas downstream. Thoughtfully crafted to help you construct hardscapes both good-looking and green. Because it is what's beneath that truly matters.



**BELGARD**  
— environmental —

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NATURE'S HARDSCAPES, PLEASE CALL 1-877-BELGARD OR VISIT US AT [WWW.BELGARD.BIZ](http://WWW.BELGARD.BIZ)

# Trouble Makers

Keep an eye out for these insects when inspecting trees and shrubs this season.



**M**any pests that attack trees are very territorial – meaning they stick to a certain region. Several, however, have gained national attention, even in areas where they are not yet a problem. Landscape and tree care professionals should pay particular attention to certain insects that researchers say are sure to cause trouble this year.

The gypsy moth gets the prize for having the widest range. That is because it has had the most time to spread. Until the 1960s, the gypsy moth's destruction was confined to New England. In the mid-1960s, this pest began spreading West and South. Its natural progression was helped by late summer campers who unwittingly took home egg cases attached to their RVs. Today, the gypsy moth's range spreads from the East Coast to the Mississippi River and south to North Carolina.

Another more recent pest that strikes fear into the hearts of entomologists, tree and landscape professionals and ash tree owners is the emerald ash borer. This Asian immigrant, which was discovered seven years ago in the Detroit area, attacks only ash trees. As a borer, it spends much of its life cycle beneath the bark, making its presence difficult to detect until it is too late.

The emerald ash borer (EAB) has spread into Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. It was transported to Maryland, reportedly in firewood, but that small pocket is believed to have been eliminated. Other isolated pockets have sprung up near Pittsburgh and in Ontario and Quebec, Canada.

Dan Herms, professor of entomology at The Ohio State University, rates the gypsy moth, emerald ash borer and the hemlock woolly adelgid as the worst in the East, South and Midwest. The hemlock woolly adelgid has decimated hemlocks from northeastern Georgia to southeastern Maine and as far West as eastern Kentucky and Tennessee.

While the Asian long-horned beetle has gotten a lot of media attention, Herms wouldn't put it in a class with the gypsy moth, EAB and hemlock woolly adelgid. He did say it is a pest to watch, but it has been relatively well contained in New York and Chicago, although one infestation was discovered recently in New England.

Whitney Cranshaw, professor and extension entomologist at Colorado State University, says nearly all insect problems in the West are drought-related. This was echoed by Californian and certified arborist Bruce Hagen.

Bark beetles present the biggest problem in the West, according to Cranshaw. While the mountain pine beetle is destroying forests, Ips beetles are destroying pines and spruces in landscapes. Other widespread western pests include hard and soft shell scale, aphids and spider mites.

Widespread western and western Midwestern pests include the Zimmerman pine moth, lilac ash borer, tussock moth and peach tree borer. Many pests find an area of the country they like and settle there. Fall cankerworm, for example, is a problem in Charlotte, N.C.; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Regina, Saskatchewan; and Cape Cod. Cape Cod and other areas in New England also have to battle the winter moth, which behaves much like the cankerworm. And people in San Diego have a new pest to deal with – the gold-spotted oak borer. **L**

The author is based in Victor, N.Y., and writes frequently about tree and landscape subjects.



Landscape and tree care professionals need to watch out for (from the top) the hemlock woolly adelgid, gypsy moth caterpillar and emerald ash borer this season.

Interested in other insects that will be plaguing trees and shrubs this year? Look for some detailed predictions from Syngenta based on its new *Guide to Protecting Woody Ornamentals* at [www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras).



LEAN, MEAN,

# TIGHT-ACCESS

MACHINE



Bobcat® loaders work comfortably in tight spaces that can put clumsy, large machines on the sidelines. The super-compact size of the new T110 is perfect for challenging work in small jobsites and on existing lots. More than twenty unique attachments enable you to complete hundreds of different tasks: pool digging, sidewalk construction, existing-lot construction, grading, site development, landscaping and more. This exclusive combination of agility and versatility is only offered by Bobcat.



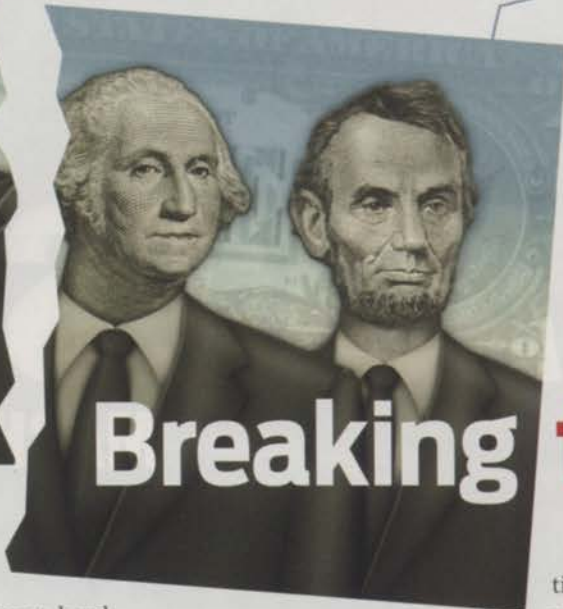
**Bobcat**

[www.bobcat.com/t110](http://www.bobcat.com/t110) 1.866.823.7898 ext 984

Bobcat® and the Bobcat logo are registered trademarks of Bobcat Company in the United States and various other countries. ©2003 Bobcat Company. All Rights Reserved.

USE READER SERVICE #24

*One Tough Animal*



# Breaking the Bank

Banks are suffering from slumping profits, and you're paying for their slow recovery. Not anymore.

BY WILLIAM LYNOTT

**A**mong the most hard-hit victims of today's troubled economy are the nation's banks. New service charges, confusing account options and wildly varying interest rates are just some of the techniques banks are using to help pump up their slumping profits – at your expense.

One former bank executive estimates you could overpay your bank tens of thousands of dollars in service charges, credit card fees, business loans and checking and savings fees during the lifetime of your business ... unless you learn how to beat the banks at their own game. Here's how:

- **Never put a dime in a savings account.** When the Federal Reserve lowered short-term interest rates to at or near zero, all interest-bearing bank accounts took a hit. Commercial banks have always paid miserable rates on passbook savings accounts, and they're worse than ever now. In fact, they're guaranteed to lose money with inflation factored in. If you keep *any* of your operating cash in a bank savings account, close it out and transfer it into a money market account where it will begin drawing substantially more (but still not great) interest.

- **Never sign up for direct deposit.** Most banks pay little or no interest on business checking accounts, so keep the least amount of money possible in your checking account while making certain that you never overdraw it. Ask your bank to link that new money market account to your checking account, then set it up for telephone or online transfers. Make *all* of your deposits into the money market account, where they will immediately start drawing interest. Then, transfer cash into the checking account only as you need it to cover checks written.

- **Invest cash in CDs.** In our current economy, CDs are a reasonable alternative to risky market investments. Because of today's unusually low interest rates, stick with short-term CDs – no more than six to 12 months.

- **Never be satisfied with the first offer.** Shop around before you sign. Bank deregulation has produced a competi-

tive environment with wildly differing interest rates and service charges. If you can find a better deal than your present bank is offering, take it. There is no reason for you to stick with a bank that isn't competitive.

- **Never overdraw your checking account.** Banks make customers pay big penalties for small errors.

- **Ditch that ATM card.** Years ago, banks embarked on extensive marketing campaigns to persuade us to use ATMs to help them lighten their payroll load. Of course, they didn't put it quite that way. Instead, the ads trumpeted how convenient and time saving it would be for you to use an ATM instead of bothering to visit a live cashier. What's more, this new service would be entirely free. But that was then and this is now. At last count, more than 90 percent of banks are assessing ATM surcharges. A 2007 survey by Bankrate.com found that the most common ATM surcharge was \$2, up from \$1.50, and 99 percent of banks surveyed charge a fee for using an ATM card at other banks.

- **Bank small, and locally.** Is your giant bank larger than the gross national product of some countries? Does it treat you well? Does it use economies of scale to bring you superior services? Not likely. Experience is showing that many of the megabanks resulting from merger mania are raising inefficiency and customer alienation to new heights.

Solving this problem is relatively painless. Just search out the smallest FDIC member bank in your neighborhood and give it your business. They'll be happy to have you as a customer. They need you and they will appreciate you. You'll receive more personal attention from a small community bank than you ever will at a financial behemoth.

Even at a small neighborhood bank, you should follow the principles outlined here, but you'll be doing it in a friendlier atmosphere. Fewer banking frustrations will leave you better prepared to enjoy your stroll down the path to a healthier bottom line. **L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Abington, Pa., with 40 years of experience specializing in business management and personal and business financing.




management solutions

**Championship turf is now affordable for lawn care.** Introducing DISARM G granular fungicide, strobilurin disease control that can help your operation become more profitable. It's the best value in the category, lowering your investment. It's the only strobilurin granule labeled by the EPA that offers maximum control of light-to-moderate dollar spot infestations and other major turf diseases. And its superior turf quality helps you satisfy customers and attract new accounts, while reducing callbacks, reapplications and wasted crew time. To learn more, call 866-761-9397 or visit [arystalifescience.us/disarmg](http://arystalifescience.us/disarmg).

**Disarm G**

The Spreadable Solution™

 Arysta LifeScience

Always read and follow label directions. DISARM and the DISARM logo are registered trademarks of Arysta LifeScience North America, LLC. "The Spreadable Solution" slogan is a trademark of Arysta LifeScience, Inc. Arysta LifeScience and the Arysta LifeScience logo are registered trademarks of Arysta LifeScience Corporation. ©2009 Arysta LifeScience North America, LLC. DSM-1113

USE READER SERVICE #25

## Laugh It Off

**E**ven with things as tough in the world of business as they are right now, smart leaders are working hard, thinking positive and laughing. That's right, laughing. This month, I want to share with you some of the funny things I've witnessed in business in the last 25 years. I hope you'll get a chuckle or two from these stories too, and maybe you'll even learn something in the process.

**TRAILER PARK.** My third year in business, we had two crews. I oversaw one and my brother, Rich, oversaw the other. One summer afternoon he called me on my cell phone to tell me the trailer had "come off" the truck he was driving and hit a garage in a very wealthy neighborhood. I rushed to the scene to find my brother, his crew and a startled homeowner staring at the back end of the trailer jutting out from the middle of the guy's garage door. "We were just driving along when all of a sudden the trailer passed us on our right," one of the crewmembers explained. I wasn't laughing then, but I sure am now.

**BOOK SMART, NOT STREET SMART.** I went to high school with one of the guys on my crew. Doug was known as a very smart guy - I think he graduated third or fourth in our class. One day early in the season I went to check in on him at a large condominium complex. Doug was supposed to have been mowing the lawn, but instead it looked like he had been *thatching* it ... for more than two hours. You can imagine how big a mess he

had made. Doug had mistakenly put the high-lift blade on upside-down. I politely suggested to him that maybe his time would be better spent reading than mowing.

**LOST & FOUND.** In 1993, I built a brand new building for my business. I stayed late at the new office to try to make some sales. I took a break and went for a walk to admire my new facility, at which point I walked out the back door and locked myself out. I had no keys to get back in, no keys to drive my truck and no access to my cell phone, which was in the truck. So I walked 2 miles in the rain to a gas station and called my mom, who got out of bed, picked me up and took me home to get another set of keys. But I couldn't get into my house either, because the keys to it were back in my office. I finally got a spare office key from an employee, and now always keep a spare key hidden.

**INSERT FOOT IN MOUTH.** I hired a national company to paint my house and they did a pretty good job. I noticed a few things I didn't like and so I asked them to fix them. They came back the next day and took care of most but not all of the problems, so I showed one of the crewmembers exactly what still needed to be fixed. He then called his boss on his Nextel and said he needed a caulk gun and another pint of paint.

His boss shouted back, "@!#\$% him! You tell him to write you a check right now or I'm going to come over and kick his @!#\$%!" I heard all this on the radio. The

### LAUGH-IN

They say, "Laughter is the best medicine." Research conducted well over a decade ago by Drs. Lee Berk and Stanley Tan, authors of *The Laughter-Immune Connection*, shows "the positive effects of mirthful laughter not only decreases stress.... but spontaneously increase the activity of natural killer cells that are vital to fighting and preventing disease."

Look for humor in everyday situations, even the difficult ones. Read the comics. Check out an upbeat book or movie from the library. Laughter is even better shared, so joke good-naturedly with employees, friends and family members. - The American Association of Therapeutic Humor

employee looked at me, shrugged his shoulders and apologized for his boss. I asked him for the radio and said, "Hey, Bob, I hear you loud and clear. I don't want to get in a fight with anyone, so I'll just write you a check. Thanks for the great service and for providing me with a great story I will share with others for years." I never spoke to him again, nor did I ever refer any work his way, and he went out of business a few years later. I can laugh about it now, but I suspect Joe's not laughing much these days.

It's important to laugh. It's also important to take care of the customer. If you remember to do both, you can and will survive these tough times. **L**



#### MARTY GRUNDER

is a speaker, consultant and author, and also owner of Grunder Landscaping Co. in Miamisburg, Ohio. Reach him at [marty@gie.net](mailto:marty@gie.net) or via [www.martygrunder.com](http://www.martygrunder.com).

# The Best Thing To Happen To Landscaping SINCE LAND.

RATES  
AS LOW AS

0%

FOR 72 MONTHS\*



With all the work to do on the jobsite, it's good to know there's a multi-tasking KIOTI tractor to get it done.

KIOTI offers hard-working models from 22 to 90 horsepower, with all the bells and whistles that will make your job easy: Hydrostatic transmissions. Heavy-duty three-point hitches. Rear PTO with optional Mid PTO. Ag tires. A wide range of implements. Plus a comfortable seat, seat belts, rollover protection and a 4-Year, Full-Fleet Warranty to back it all up.

For more information, check out your next tractor at [www.KIOTI.com](http://www.KIOTI.com). Even better, take a test drive at the KIOTI dealer nearest you.

  
**KIOTI**<sup>®</sup>

*run ahead of the pack*

1-877-GO-KIOTI  
[www.KIOTI.com](http://www.KIOTI.com)



\*See your local dealer for full details or visit [www.KIOTI.com](http://www.KIOTI.com) for current promotional rates.

# Fleeting Lapse of Judgement



**Don't be hasty when buying equipment – it's a lesson one landscape professional had to learn the hard way.**

BY LINDSEY GETZ

**P**urchasing equipment can be one of the biggest challenges for landscapers who aren't mechanically inclined. And making a wrong buying decision can not only be a headache, but a costly mistake.

That's exactly what happened when Bruce Zaretsky, co-owner of Macedon, N.Y.-based Zaretsky and Associates, a \$1 million business, dropped \$12,900 on a municipal dump truck in the anticipation of winning a large plowing contract. "At the time, we did a decent amount of snow plowing and I felt confident we were going to get this project," Zaretsky says. "I knew a plow truck with a plow wing on it would help us immensely, so when this truck became available, and one of my employees told me about it, I went and bought it."

But when that contract never panned out, Zaretsky found he had not only invested a lot of time and effort, but a lot of hard-earned cash into a truck he didn't need. Still, he thought he could make his investment worthwhile.

"When we didn't get the contract, I decided we'd add the truck to our fleet so I spent another \$9,000 to refurbish it," recalls Zaretsky. "But it kept breaking down. The problem with municipal trucks is that they throw a lot of salt and that eats the frame of the trucks, so there were a lot of undercarriage issues. I ultimately ended up spending another \$6,000 on repairs."

By the time Zaretsky realized the truck was more of a hassle than a help to his 10-person business, he had invested nearly \$30,000 in the vehicle. Unfortunately, he could only sell the truck for \$7,500. "It was a huge loss," he admits.

Zaretsky says the most important lesson he's learned from this ordeal was to never be hasty when it comes to making any large purchases – whether it be equipment or a vehicle. "I'm a designer and an installer – but definitely not a mechanic," he admits. "I got stars in my eyes and made a quick decision, and that wound up costing me a lot of money in the end."

Though he hasn't purchased a vehicle since this ordeal, Zaretsky says this experience has ensured he'll be prepared the next time he does. "I will take both my heavy equipment mechanic and my truck mechanic with me," he says. "We don't buy new trucks, so I've realized the importance of having someone I trust look at it. My heavy equipment mechanic is a welder, so I'll trust him to look at the body of the vehicle. And my mechanic, who's not an employee, but someone we take our trucks to, could also look it over and take it for a ride. It's important to get more than one opinion on any large equipment or vehicle purchase and have a qualified mechanic look at it."

It was five years ago that Zaretsky sold the troublesome truck. Around this same time, his business stopped offering plow services altogether. It's another lesson he says he's learned in his 20 years in the industry.

"When I first started my business, it was just me and a helper," he says. "I worked 16-hour days and essentially had no life, but I enjoyed what I did and I made money." But as his business grew, and more equipment was needed, Zaretsky says more problems began to

arise. "Every night I was getting a phone call," he recalls. "There was damage to a site, or something broke down, and I was getting fairly massive equipment repair invoices."


His ordeal with the municipal dump truck coupled with a theft – someone stole the tail lights out of one of his Bobcats – was the final straw for Zaretsky. "Landscape companies that also do plowing usually do it as a way to keep their employees busy and to get some extra cash flow during the off season," he says. "But for the size of my business, I realized it wasn't worth the stress. I just don't have the stomach for it. Plowing was a necessary evil for some time, but I reached the point where that wasn't true anymore, and I got out of it."

Today, Zaretsky is happy sticking with what he does best – landscape design and installation. And though he obviously wishes he hadn't lost that money, the lessons were valuable. "Never, ever anticipate a contract until it's in your hands," he advises. "And don't buy on a whim or too hastily. If there's a bargain to be had, most likely there will be more out there." **L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Royersford, Pa.



After sinking thousands into an ill-fated plow truck, Bruce Zaretsky dumped it (and snow plowing all together) and instead focuses on landscape design and installation.



*"It was Quali-Pro's formulation quality that got our attention. Sure they save us some money, but what got me was the better formulation — Quali-Pro products mix well and do a great job. That's what I want."*

Sam Lang, President  
Fairway Green, Raleigh, NC


Today, your operation needs both quality and value. And that's exactly what Quali-Pro has been delivering since day one. Proven plant protection products featuring the newest formulation technologies at an unprecedented value. **Unsurpassed Quality. Outstanding Value. Get to know Quali-Pro.**

For more information on our comprehensive portfolio of products call 800-979-8994 or visit [quali-pro.com](http://quali-pro.com).

©2009 FarmSaver.com, LLC. Quali-Pro is a registered trademark of FarmSaver.com. Know The Sign is a trademark of FarmSaver.com. Always read and follow label directions.





 **Know The Sign.™ Greater Than Or Equal To.**

**QUALI-PRO**

Professional Turf & Ornamental Products

USE READER SERVICE #27

## What I Know

by Chuck Bowen

# Get Physical

Stressed? Get out of the office and burn off some steam.



Forget the funny pants: Maurice Dowell, president of Dowco Enterprises, gets on his bike to work off the stress of running his business.

**M**aurice Dowell has a message for managers who want to be successful: Get out.

The 50-year-old president and owner of Dowco Enterprises, Chesterfield, Mo., uses his bicycle, a yoga class and the gym to put some distance – literally – between himself and his business, and he's seen it pay dividends.

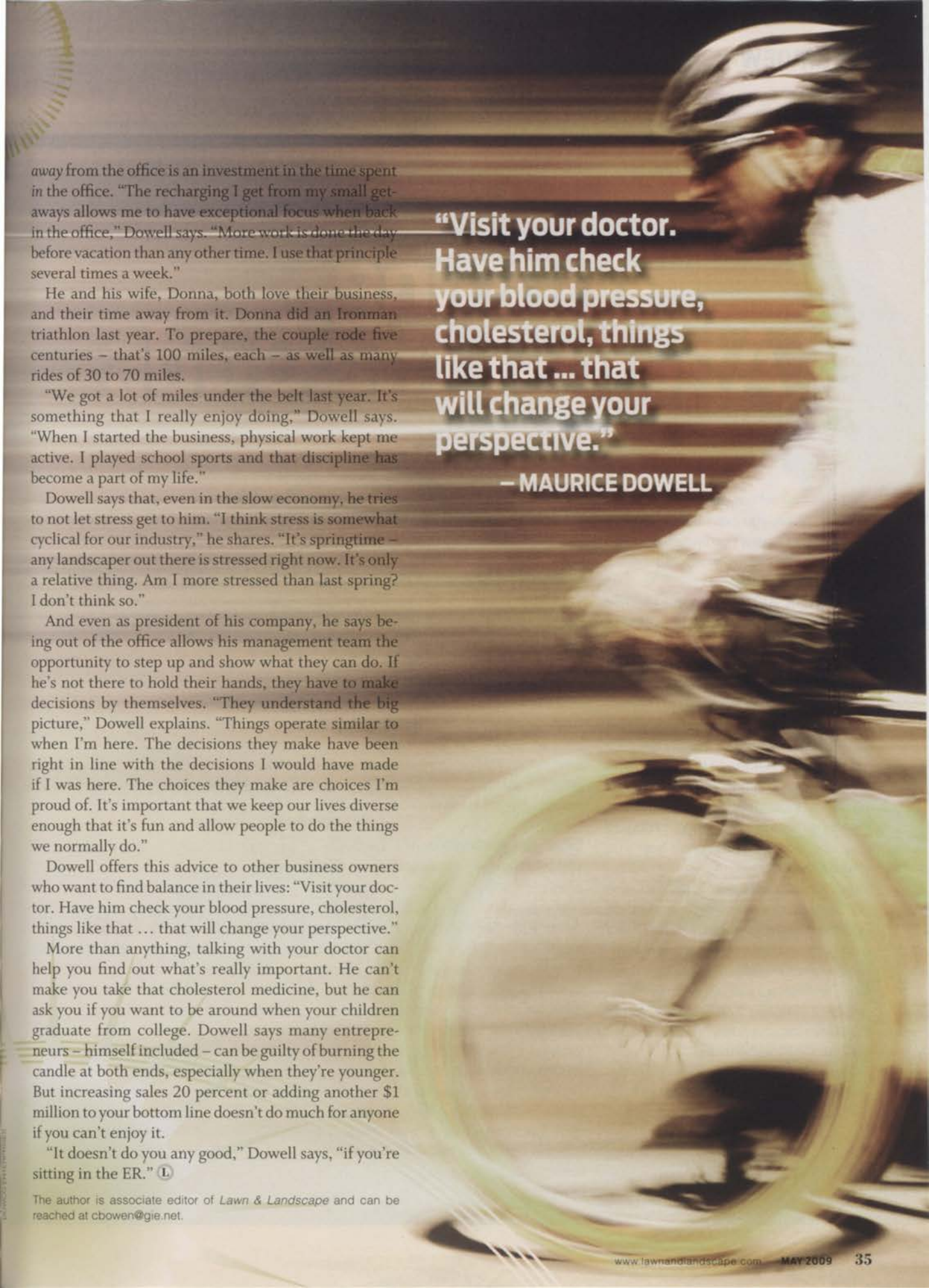
"I think most of us get an extreme amount of enjoyment out of what we do," Dowell says of business owners, especially entrepreneurs. But, too much focus and too much time at the office can actually start to be a detriment to the business.

"I'll go out and I'll ride my bike, and I can't say that it's something where I'll just get a revelation out there, but I definitely feel good about myself and I believe that confidence about what you've accomplished regarding your goals translates into your work life," he says. "You come back confident in your ability to solve the problems you're going to run into in the office."

When he's not at the helm of his \$2.4 million company in the St. Louis suburbs, Dowell can be found on his bike – the same model Trek that Lance Armstrong used to win the 2003 Tour de France. Some mornings, he goes to a spinning class; others, it's yoga. Four to five times a week, he's at the YMCA gym where he has a membership.

"My normal workouts and my spin classes are definitely my therapy. We need to find time during the week to disconnect," Dowell says. After a Friday yoga class, he says, "sometimes I come back and sometimes I don't."

Some owners might think, "How does this guy get anything done?" But he sees the time



away from the office is an investment in the time spent in the office. "The recharging I get from my small get-aways allows me to have exceptional focus when back in the office," Dowell says. "More work is done the day before vacation than any other time. I use that principle several times a week."

He and his wife, Donna, both love their business, and their time away from it. Donna did an Ironman triathlon last year. To prepare, the couple rode five centuries – that's 100 miles, each – as well as many rides of 30 to 70 miles.

"We got a lot of miles under the belt last year. It's something that I really enjoy doing," Dowell says. "When I started the business, physical work kept me active. I played school sports and that discipline has become a part of my life."

Dowell says that, even in the slow economy, he tries to not let stress get to him. "I think stress is somewhat cyclical for our industry," he shares. "It's springtime – any landscaper out there is stressed right now. It's only a relative thing. Am I more stressed than last spring? I don't think so."

And even as president of his company, he says being out of the office allows his management team the opportunity to step up and show what they can do. If he's not there to hold their hands, they have to make decisions by themselves. "They understand the big picture," Dowell explains. "Things operate similar to when I'm here. The decisions they make have been right in line with the decisions I would have made if I was here. The choices they make are choices I'm proud of. It's important that we keep our lives diverse enough that it's fun and allow people to do the things we normally do."

Dowell offers this advice to other business owners who want to find balance in their lives: "Visit your doctor. Have him check your blood pressure, cholesterol, things like that ... that will change your perspective."

More than anything, talking with your doctor can help you find out what's really important. He can't make you take that cholesterol medicine, but he can ask you if you want to be around when your children graduate from college. Dowell says many entrepreneurs – himself included – can be guilty of burning the candle at both ends, especially when they're younger. But increasing sales 20 percent or adding another \$1 million to your bottom line doesn't do much for anyone if you can't enjoy it.

"It doesn't do you any good," Dowell says, "if you're sitting in the ER." **L**

The author is associate editor of *Lawn & Landscape* and can be reached at [cbowen@gie.net](mailto:cbowen@gie.net).

**"Visit your doctor.  
Have him check  
your blood pressure,  
cholesterol, things  
like that ... that  
will change your  
perspective."**

**– MAURICE DOWELL**

# Winning Against the Odds

David Plouffe took one no-name senator and made him president. His tactics can help you better market and brand your business.

**N**o matter which political affiliation you favor, you can't ignore the fact that Barack Obama's campaign manager David Plouffe did an excellent job marketing his candidate.

In fact, in 2007, few people thought the then-Senator had a chance of being elected president. But Obama's leadership team, with Plouffe at the helm, created an extraordinary strategy to develop an online community. They not only proved the naysayers wrong, but also blew by previous fundraising records – \$580 million in two years, with 91 percent coming from individual donors. The campaign generated a brand loyalty program with unprecedented success. And, ultimately, they won Obama the election.

In April, Plouffe gave a presentation on "The Art of the Possible: Online Branding Strategies and Tactics," educating the 12,000 attendees of Digital Marketing World on branding tactics small businesses can learn from his experience. He also took questions from the audience, and *Lawn & Landscape* got the chance to participate.

Here, Plouffe, whom Obama called "the unsung hero" of his campaign in his acceptance speech, shares some marketing successes, mistakes and surprising realizations during his experience as Obama's campaign manager.

## How does a political campaign differ from a small business' marketing campaign?

A political campaign is not about selling a product or service, but it is about trying to get 50 percent of the vote. If you have 40 or 45 percent and your opponent has 40 or 45 percent, you're fighting for a small sliver. So you try and reach these people with powerful messages and in creative ways. The second objective is to increase your side of the base, so to speak, by increasing your pool of supporters so it is bigger than your opponent's – in our case, this was younger voters, African-American voters and Hispanic voters.

## What were the keys to your branding?

The first thing we did was make sure the campaign was consistent so what the presidential candidate was saying, what the vice presidential candidate was saying, what the TV ads and the volunteers were saying all was the same. We wanted to make sure there weren't three or four different messages out there.

This is similar to what you do as a small business trying to find new customers. Like us, you spend a lot of time talking to customers five or six or seven or eight times before they make a decision. A lot of times one entry point is not enough. We had to find out what issues people cared about, what would

help them make up their minds. Then use that to tailor future interactions with them. It was all about message consistency and repetition.

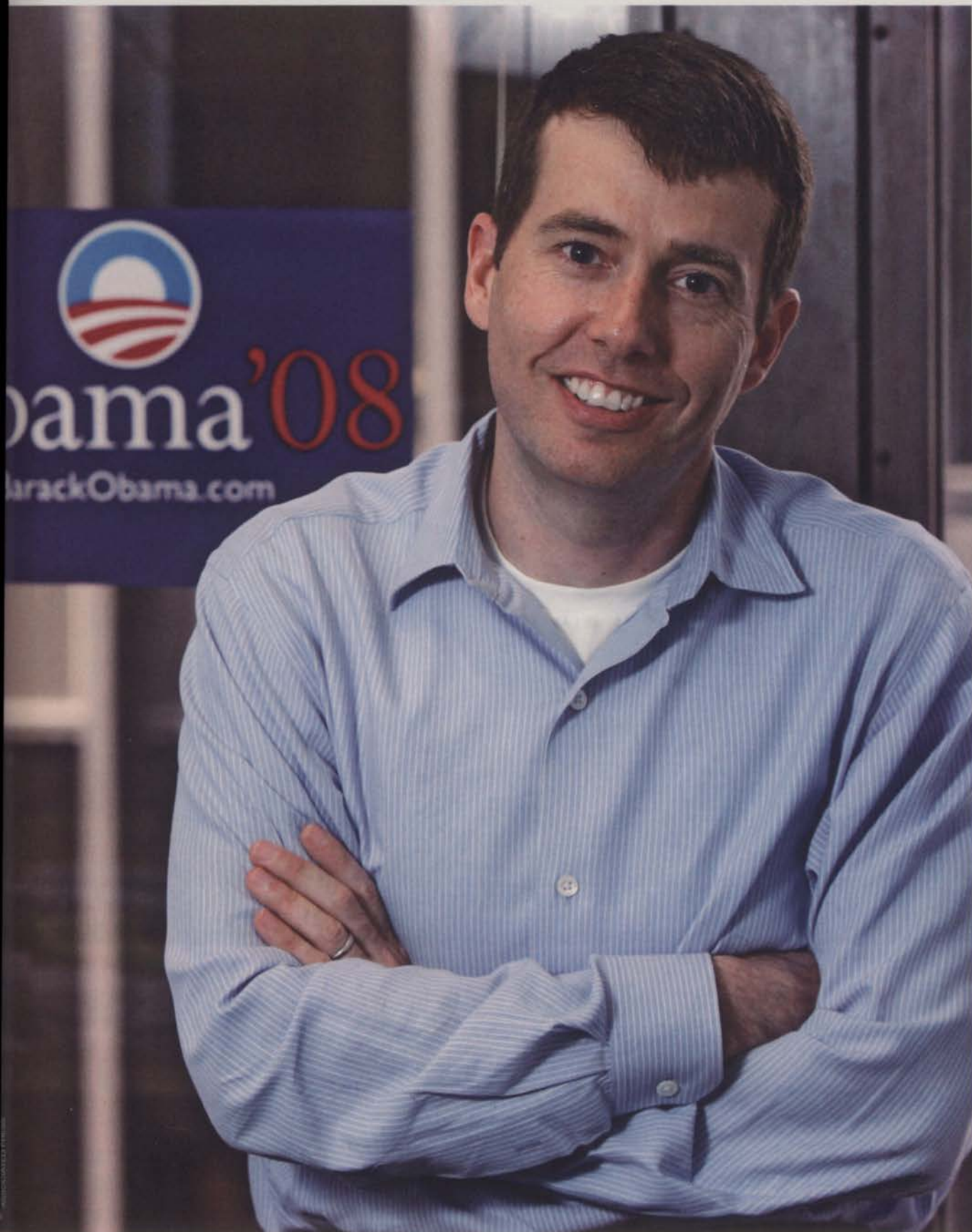
A presidential campaign is not perfect – it's flawed in many ways. It's also a very revealing process. Obama's consistency played well with that. People want to know what they are getting and know that it's not going to change from month to month. So we never changed our core message.

While we gave our volunteers the creativity to distribute the message, we couldn't allow them to change the core integrity of the message. We allowed people to submit videos, blogs, post messages on Flickr. Not many people will read our six-page position statement, but if it's a video related to it, then people may watch. The most successful strategies pertained to people – where one person explained why they are volunteering or voting. Those were the most watched – they had a deep impact. People found them authentic and inspiring.

## How were you innovative in the methods you used to reach people?

We used new tactics – from Twitter to Facebook to texting to the Internet and YouTube. But we also used old school tactics like knocking on doors and making connections. One small thing we did

THE TIME HAS COME...



PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]

# THE TIME HAS COME... THE ULTIMATE REDEFINING TOOL IS HERE!



REDEFINES EXISTING BEDS UP TO 60' PER MINUTE!

- Light weight - 95 lbs.
- Very maneuverable, for re-edging tree rings and fancy bed designs
- 5.5 hp Honda GX160
- Low maintenance
- Cutting depths of 2", 3" or 4"



MODEL R450  
REDEFINER

 BROWN  
PRODUCTS, INC.

CONTACT:

Brown Products, Inc.

800-897-3726

[www.brownproducts.com](http://www.brownproducts.com)

[lee@brownproducts.com](mailto:lee@brownproducts.com)

on cable and satellite was we had an On Demand Obama program – millions of people ended up watching that. The opponent never took advantage of that. In a busy world when it's hard to grasp people's attention, we tried to use every tool out there. Some people watch TV or go online and some people don't watch TV but they text and are on Facebook. We didn't want to make one tactic more superior than another.

We didn't follow the old playbook when it came to television ads, and this turned out to be very valuable to the organization. We tried unconventional two-minute ads. This was a gamble because we were running fewer ads in a market and they were longer and more expensive. But there were so many political ads in the 30-second time slot. So this helped us focus a message to the demographic we were trying to reach.

When we did something people thought couldn't work, and we executed it well and it succeeded, those were our best moments. It made our campaign and everyone in it excel. If we failed, we knew the price would be high, so we continued to innovate and when we deviated from the standard political playbook, we focused on execution.

#### **What was one strength of your campaign that you didn't expect?**

We believed in the power of real people to deliver our message for us. There is nothing more powerful than a human being talking to another human being. Fifty percent of the people who volunteered or gave us money never did so before, which I think is amazing. When I talk about politics in my circle, they tune me out, but if someone who never raised their voice before or spoke about politics or someone you wouldn't expect speaks up, then people listen to them.

#### **How did you take advantage of social media to market your message?**

We were open to a lot of new technologies – we realized we had to reach people where they lived. At the same time our belief in core technology also made the difference – the Web and e-mail

were central drivers in our campaign. For a certain audience, texting was great at delivering information. We sent out a lot of reminders about early voting, not forgetting to vote, information about when the polls closed, etc. We were able to grow our e-mail list from a couple thousand to 13 million people.

Another interesting medium for us was video. The more video we did, the better off we were. Not everyone watched video, but people responded better to it. We tried to make our Web site people's home – [www.mybarackobama.com](http://www.mybarackobama.com). A place where people could organize, raise money and talk about the campaign. We posted every speech or event right away, so supporters and swing voters could get all the information they needed. And some people didn't want to organize on the site, so we let them set up Facebook and Twitter accounts.

You have to embrace new technology, but you can't let new technology take you away from your core tasks.

#### **How did you measure the success of your various campaign/branding strategies?**

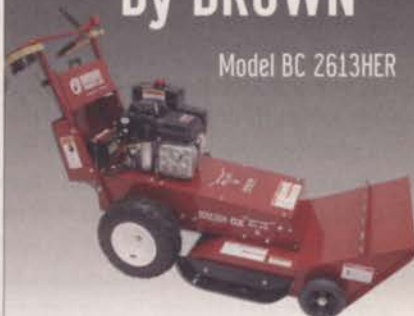
We measured everything we could and measured maniacally. We knew what money was raised weekly and even daily and then made it hard to spend money in our organization. This meant we spent money more wisely than our opponent. Everyday, we would measure each state's progress on their goals so we knew what we needed. We also measured individual production – if someone signed up to volunteer in November 2007, I could tell you since then how many contributions they made, e-mails they opened, what volunteer work they did, how many people they talked to, etc. We were obsessed with the metrics. We also paid a lot of attention to the early vote – 30 percent of the country is early vote now. What wasn't terribly quantifiable was measuring people talking to people. We could measure the amount, but not the conversations. But we still believed in this a great deal. We weren't afraid to put some investment into tactics we strongly believed in even if they weren't as easy to measure.

**BRUSH OX** 

**NEW!**

## **Brush Cutter By BROWN**

Model BC 2613HER



Quadro-cut  
Brush Cutting  
Blade Assembly



Brush Area

Cut Area  
Note Mulched  
Materials



- Model BC 2613HER
- Electric & Recoil Start
- 26" Wide Cut
- Self Propelled
- Hydrostatic Trans Axle
- Easy Maintenance Access
- Mulches Cut Material
- 13hp Honda GXV390

 **BROWN  
PRODUCTS, INC.**

**CONTACT:**

Brown Products, Inc.  
800-897-3726

[www.brownproducts.com](http://www.brownproducts.com)  
[lee@brownproducts.com](mailto:lee@brownproducts.com)

## INTERVIEW

### How do keep your message consistent?

One of the strengths of our campaign was that we put a lot of time and thought into our electoral strategy and message and believed strongly in it. And we never deviated from that. We came under a lot of pressure and criticism. So we said, "It will work or it won't." But we had this strength of message and strategy in place, so we were able to focus on execution. This meant we didn't have a lot of drama and meetings and conferences where we had to come up with a new message. It starts with establishing a message and strategy in any organization and making it clear to anyone who matters – your customers, employees, shareholders, media, etc., and then people will understand what you are about and will get a consistent message when they question you.

In our case, everyone had an opinion – "you need a new message," "you're

not aggressive enough," "your electoral strategy is flawed," etc. We tuned that out and focused on executing our message and strategy. We had no guarantee it would work, but we believed in it.

If negativity around a message came about, we policed it well. If someone wasn't talking about health care properly, we enforced our message. The fact that we didn't put a script in people's hands also was a challenge here. But it was a big mistake to have people scripted. People say things in a way that is more authentic in their own words. The upside far outweighed the downside.

### What was the biggest mistake you made or lesson you learned along the way?

There were so many surprises and mistakes we made. We get credit for running a great campaign, but it's not as easy as people think. One thing that surprised us was the huge percentage

of people out there seeking information on their own. No one trusts government business leaders or even the media anymore. They don't just accept information that's presented anymore. It's why they like talking to friends and neighbors. They go out and find out if assertions are true. We loaded up Web sites and supporters with one-pagers and paragraphs. Volunteers would say, "What I want to do is respond to the 500 people in my address book and you're not giving me the tools to do that." So we had to adjust. **L**

The author is editor of *Lawn & Landscape*. She can be reached at [nwisniewski@gje.net](mailto:nwisniewski@gje.net).

### EVERY VOTE COUNTS

For more on how Plouffe reached younger voters, and how he structured the new media department, visit the May Web Exclusives section at [www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras).



**Get your employees SAFE-CERTIFIED®**  
for as little as \$69 per employee.  
It's all online at  
**[www.LandscapeSafety.com](http://www.LandscapeSafety.com)**  
Contact a Safety Advisor today  
at [info@landscapesafety.com](mailto:info@landscapesafety.com)  
or call **877-482-2323**

**LandscAPE SAFETY .COM**  
ONLINE SAFETY TRAINING

USE READER SERVICE #30



## KWIK-TRENCH

Our Name Says It All

- Fastest mini-trencher on the market
- Trench up to 30' per minute
- Cut 2"-4" wide trenches up to 12" deep
- Choice of 4 models, plus optional trailer

Replaceable heat-treated hardened steel carbide-tipped teeth

**Kwik-Trench earth saw**

Call today for a FREE product video or literature  
**800-227-7515**

Little Beaver, Inc. P.O. Box 840 Livingston, TX 77351  
[www.littlebeaver.com](http://www.littlebeaver.com) [sales@littlebeaver.com](mailto:sales@littlebeaver.com)

**LITTLE BEAVER**  
EARTH DRILLS & AUGERS

USE READER SERVICE #31



# Unleash The Power!

## ZAP<sup>®</sup> Warm-Weather Weeds

Spurge, knotweed and clover are no match for the power of Surge<sup>®</sup> Broadleaf Herbicide For Turf. Energized with sulfentrazone, Surge has the power and speed to knock out tough broadleaf weeds fast. **Visual results in 48 hours** – now that has a powerful effect on call-backs.

Your customers will be pleased with the speed and performance. You'll be pleased with the economy of Surge's water-based amine formulation. And it's even rain-fast in just 6 hours!

**Put the power of Surge to work for your business this year!**

- ✦ Energized with Sulfentrazone
- ✦ Warm Weather Weed Control
- ✦ Reduces Call-Backs
- ✦ Designed for Residential and Commercial Turf
- ✦ Yellow Nutsedge Suppression
- ✦ Low Odor



ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS

**G** pbi / GORDON  
CORPORATION

An Employee-Owned Company

1-800-821-7925  
[surge.pbigordon.com](http://surge.pbigordon.com)

From the makers of  
**TRIMEC<sup>®</sup> Herbicide**

© 2009 PBI/Gordon Corp. Surge<sup>®</sup> and Trimec<sup>®</sup> are registered trademarks of PBI/Gordon Corp.

00643

USE READER SERVICE #32



# Past Due

Payments coming in **late**? Make customers an offer they can't refuse to improve your cash flow - no horse heads or dead fish necessary.

by Julie Collins

**T**here is one number that Steve Coswell watches as if he's glued to the television waiting for his favorite sports star to score.

But this is business; it's not personal. What Coswell watches are his company's receivables. He takes note the moment an invoice is even a single day past due. "I call or visit customers on day 31 to see if there is a problem or if there is something they aren't pleased with," says the owner of Plantscape Services, a Winchendon, Mass.-based grounds maintenance company that brings in between \$500,000 and \$1 million annually. "If so, we'll be right there to take care of it." That diligence and attention to customer service usually works like a charm – often the payment is in the mail or even in his hand by the end of the day.

But every once in a while, things don't progress quite so smoothly, particularly when Plantscape Services customers are feeling a cash squeeze themselves.

Currently, Coswell is dealing with a couple of problem clients who aren't paying up and is even embroiled in collections with one of them. And he's not alone. As the economy slows to a crawl, an increasing number of people are finding they don't have the cash they thought they did – and accounts receivable for the lawn care and landscaping industry suffer as a result. Fifty-four percent of contractors say customer payments have been delayed a little longer than normal, with those having a problem reporting 15- to 45-day delays, according to *Lawn & Landscape* research.

And in general, many small businesses are having the same problems. In a recent survey of 751 businesses with fewer than 10 employees, Intuit found owners averaged \$1,500 in overdue customer payments each month. With 22 million businesses of that size, the overdue payments add up to a strain of \$33 billion in cash flow.

Which is exactly why staying on top of accounts receivables is so important. "Cash flow is the lifeblood of any organization," says A.J. Young, managing principal of A.J. Young & Associates, a professional services firm in the Washington, D.C., area. "One of the things I tell clients to do is get invoices out as quickly as possible to speed up cash flow. Staying on top of accounts receivable is something you should be doing anyway. But if you used to start at 90 days, you now want to start at 45 or 60 days for the collection process."

"People who used to pay within 30 days are now paying in 60," agrees Matt Moskowitz, partner and director of American Profit Recovery, a national collections agency. That, paired with an overall drop in revenue, puts many companies in a sticky situation – and makes it all the more necessary to collect those receivables that are outstanding as soon as possible.

The whole situation could make any business owner wish he had the influence of Don Corleone. But instead of a Godfather-esque "battle of bullets," negotiating collections is more of a "war of words and jockeying of positions,"



explains Eric Swartz, president of The Byline Group, a marketing consulting firm. To be successful, Swartz suggests contractors articulate a clear payment policy and due date, keep in contact with customers and start the entire invoice process earlier (without the accompanying murder and mayhem, of course).

**'POWER WEARS OUT THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE IT.'** The secret to surviving, experts and industry professionals agree, lies in making the right moves upfront.

"It's one of those things that can become a nightmare," Moskowitz says. "Late receivables can get companies – especially smaller ones – in trouble because they don't have the capital. You need to be upfront and proactive with your receivables. The shorter the timeframe, the better."

Moskowitz says his company deals with more disputes in the lawn and landscape industry than in any other. That's why he stresses the importance of explaining from the start what the financial terms are so customers know what to expect. In addition, he recommends walking customers through what they need to do to maintain their landscapes to avoid complaints that may slow payments later on.

It's a technique that works for Kevin McSherry, owner of From the Ground Up Landscapes, a retail nursery and landscaping company in Decatur, Ill.

"When I go into a landscape job, they know what my payment requirements are. I require 50 percent deposit at the time I start the job. For probably 90 percent of my landscape jobs, I bill the balance at the end of the installation, after they've approved everything and we've walked over the job," he says. If the project is detailed and may last longer than a couple of weeks, McSherry informs his mostly residential customers they will receive invoices as the work progresses.

McSherry says his average receivable is 20 days – and because he communicates requirements to clients before the project begins and keeps abreast of receivables weekly, he's only had trouble with a handful of receivables in the past 20 years.

"My receivables are my cash flow, so they're as important as sales," McSherry says. This follows suit with industry statistics – 46 percent of contractors report receiving customer payments from clients in 15 days, while 31 percent receive payments in 30 days. The vast majority of contractors – 79 percent – also display payment terms on their invoices, and 73 percent show an actual due date on invoices – two proven encouragers of on-time payments.

The same holds true for Michael Carazo, owner of All Terrain Landscape, a landscape and irrigation contractor in Metairie, La. "I basically do everything in writing – there are no verbal agree-



Financial experts and landscape professionals agree that these easy steps can save you headaches and heartache down the road.

- Make a plan for how often you will review accounts receivable – daily or weekly is recommended.
- Decide how much time you will give customers to pay – 30 days is standard.
- Determine what fees will be assessed on late payments – 1 percent per month is typical; the maximum amount that can be charged varies by state.
- Consider offering discounts for invoices that are paid in full within 10 days – discounts of 2 to 3 percent off the total bill are typical.
- Check in with customers frequently.
- Follow up when receivables are late – be polite yet persistent.
- Identify a point at which late payments are turned over to a collection agency or lawyer, and notify customers when you have reached that point.

## Pay Now, Pay Later

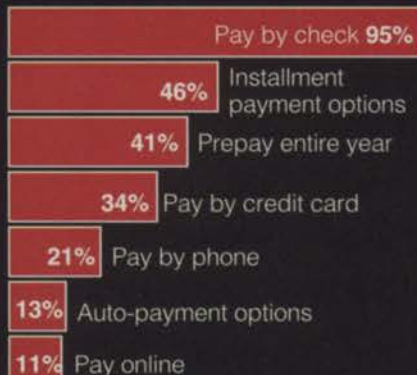
DO YOU DISPLAY PAYMENT TERMS ON INVOICES FOR CUSTOMERS TO SEE UPFRONT?



DO YOU INCLUDE AN ACTUAL DUE DATE ON YOUR INVOICES?



WHAT PAYMENT METHODS DO YOU OFFER CUSTOMERS?





GOLF



LAWN



NURSERY



ORNAMENTAL



## Until it's proven, all the claims mean nothing.

The same goes for lawn care products. You need solutions that are proven to work. Products that have been researched and tested to stand up to even your toughest weed, insect and disease problems. Others can claim it. Dow AgroSciences can prove it. Our comprehensive portfolio includes the leading solutions you know and trust, like Dimension<sup>®</sup>, Gallery<sup>®</sup> and Snapshot<sup>®</sup> specialty herbicides, as well as MACH 2<sup>®</sup> specialty insecticide. And our Turf & Ornamental Specialists are a proven resource for the service and support you need. But don't just take our word for it, see the proof at [www.DowProvesIt.com](http://www.DowProvesIt.com).

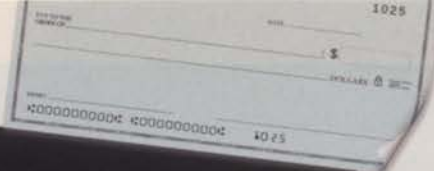
[www.DowProvesIt.com](http://www.DowProvesIt.com) 800-255-3726

\*Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension specialty herbicide products, Snapshot and MACH 2 apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions. \*\*The swinging golfer logo is a registered trademark of PGA TOUR, Inc. ©2009 Dow AgroSciences LLC. T36-000-014 (1/09) BR 010-60534 DATOTURF043

OFFICIAL  
CHEMISTRY  
COMPANY

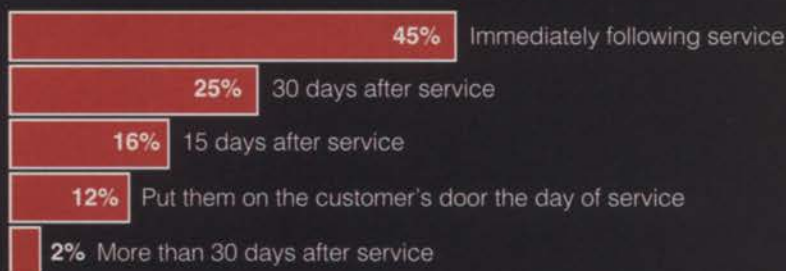


PROVEN SOLUTIONS



# The Check is in the Mail

## WHEN DO YOU SEND OUT INVOICES?



## WHEN YOU SEND AN INVOICE, WHEN IS PAYMENT TYPICALLY DUE?



## WHEN DO YOU NORMALLY RECEIVE PAYMENTS FROM CLIENTS?



ments," Carazo says. "It's pretty much understood upon signature from the beginning."

Establishing rapport with customers helps, too. "Someone who is in a leadership position in the organization needs to stay in touch with the client," Young advises. "Make calls to see how things are going. Keep in touch with them on a regular basis, so the only time you're calling isn't just to ask for money. There needs to be service after the sale and an ongoing relationship."

That's another reason McSherry, whose annual revenue was approximately \$710,000 in 2008, thinks he has such good luck.

"I'm a hands-on person, I'm involved start-to-finish, and I think that really helps me tremendously to not have a receivables problem," he says. "They see the face behind the company on a regular basis – I'm out on almost every job from start to finish and in contact with the customer."

When customers know a business keeps in touch with them, watches payments and notices when they're late, having them shudder a little bit in their shiny black shoes if they are past due isn't such a bad position to be in, experts agree.

"In my agreements, I make it boldly clear that if my clients don't pay within their 14 or 30 day period depending on whether they are commercial or residential, I will curtail service automatically without warning," says Chris Fox, president of Salient Landscaping. "I found that I don't have to make any accounts receivable calls.

"On the other hand, I have found that when times are tough and I need money and I am talking a look at my A/R, I send invoices with 'past due' handwritten in red ink," he adds. "I send them registered mail, too. My customers freak and think I am going to take them to court and they pay almost immediately. It sounds bad, but it wakes them up."

**'LEAVE THE GUN, TAKE THE CANNOLI.'** Being proactive with receivables early on staves off trouble down the road. That's why Coswell checks in with customers the moment their receivables are past due. Even before the invoice is overdue, however, the hint of a problem may present itself – particularly if a customer seems to suddenly fall off the face of the earth. And this is important for contractors to watch, since the 57 percent do not qualify new customers, trusting they will pay on time.

"One of the things we find is when a customer or client ceases to communicate – they won't return the calls, they're just not responding at all – that's a sign that there is trouble," Moskowitz says.

Many late-paying customers will write a check as soon as they're able to. They may have hit a rough spot and are simply lying low until then. The problem is that the longer a bill is outstanding, the less likely you are to receive payment. "If the company isn't more proactive upfront, it's almost sending a signal to the consumer that this isn't all that important," Moskowitz says. So they start prioritizing bills – and that landscape invoice won't be at the top.

To get money moving in his direction, after 30 days McSherry resends a monthly statement listing any outstanding invoices. At 45 days, customers receive a handwritten note on the statement. "It's short and sweet: 'If you're having a problem and you need some extra time, give me a quick call or send this back with a note letting me know what your plans are,'" he says. It's a non-confrontational way to remind customers McSherry is expecting payment. By 30 days, the majority of contractors – 37 percent – make a customer service call, with the next highest percentage – 25 percent – saying they make the call at 45 days. Some – 21 percent – wait until 60 days, *Lawn & Landscape* research shows.

Yet sometimes a more direct method is necessary to get the check in the mail – such as a polite phone call or in-person visit. "At 30 days, if they

COVER STORY

WHAT DO LEAF-FEEDING CATERpillARS THINK ABOUT  
PROVAUNT®? GOOD LUCK FINDING ONE TO ASK.



## Advanced chemistry that leaves caterpillars speechless.

DuPont™ Provaunt® insecticide has earned high praise for its outstanding performance against turf and ornamental pests, including gypsy moth caterpillars and tent caterpillars. Even with its low application rates, Provaunt® is the ideal choice for protection of oaks, crabapples, flowering cherries and a wide range of additional trees and shrubs. What's more, the active ingredient in Provaunt® has a favorable environmental profile. Learn more by calling 1-888-6DuPont (1-888-638-7668) or by visiting us at [proproducts.dupont.com](http://proproducts.dupont.com).

DuPont™ Provaunt®. Advanced chemistry. Outstanding performance.

DuPont Professional Products



The miracles of science™

## COVER STORY

have not paid, do a customer service call to see if they have any questions or concerns or if there is anything you can do," Moskowitz recommends. "With that call, sometimes you'll weed out concerns. Then say, 'by the way, while I have you, I see that you have a 30-day outstanding balance – can I get you to take care of that today or when I can expect that?'"

Also, organized customer files of invoices and notices make customer negotiations and A/R calls go more smoothly, particularly when a customer is full of excuses, the National Federation of Independent Business suggests. Landscape contractors do extremely well here, according to *Lawn & Landscape* research – 81 percent of contractors keep records of calls and letters sent to customers for the purpose of collecting money owed and 85 percent describe

these files either very (55 percent) or somewhat (30 percent) organized

**'JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS OUT...'** Collecting payments from clients needn't be adversarial – it's possible to get your money and keep the clients, too. Once you get in touch with a customer who's late paying, Young recommends working out an agreement that's mutually beneficial.

One option he suggests: setting up an informal payment plan. You can structure it with or without interest. Or, if you're dealing with a commercial client, you might even accept company stock or an exchange of services in place of payment. Regardless of the agreement, however, Young stresses the importance of laying out the terms in writing.

"We will work with any customer who needs a payment plan as long as they ask

and are reasonable," says John Hoover, owner of Prime Landscape Services in Arlington, Texas. "The season is young, but we have already had a few people ask to stretch out anything from \$2,000 to \$8,000 over two to three months, and of course we obliged."

To Carazo, negotiating terms makes sense. "My suppliers do the same for me right now because they want to retain my business, so of course I am willing to work out a payment schedule with my customers."

While working with customers is encouraged, many experts warn small business owners to be careful here – giving in too much could create a recurring problem. In terms of leniency with late paying customers in this economy, 29 percent of contractors have been more lenient, 14 percent have been less lenient and 57 percent of contractors say

## Late Show

IN THIS ECONOMY, HAVE YOU NOTICED CUSTOMER PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN DELAYED MORE THAN NORMAL?



DO YOU USE A COLLECTION AGENCY TO HELP WITH LATE PAYING CUSTOMERS?

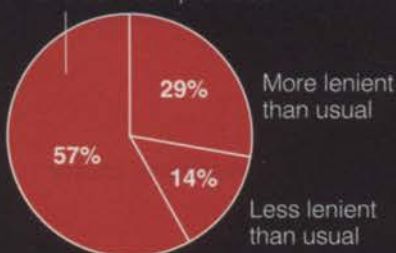


DO YOU KEEP RECORDS OF CALLS AND LETTERS SENT TO CLIENTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF COLLECTING MONEY OWED TO YOUR COMPANY?



HOW LENIENT HAVE YOU BEEN WITH LATE PAYING CUSTOMERS IN THIS ECONOMY?

The same – the economy doesn't change the fact that they should pay for a service I provided



HOW LATE DOES A PAYMENT GET BEFORE YOU MAKE A CUSTOMER SERVICE CALL?





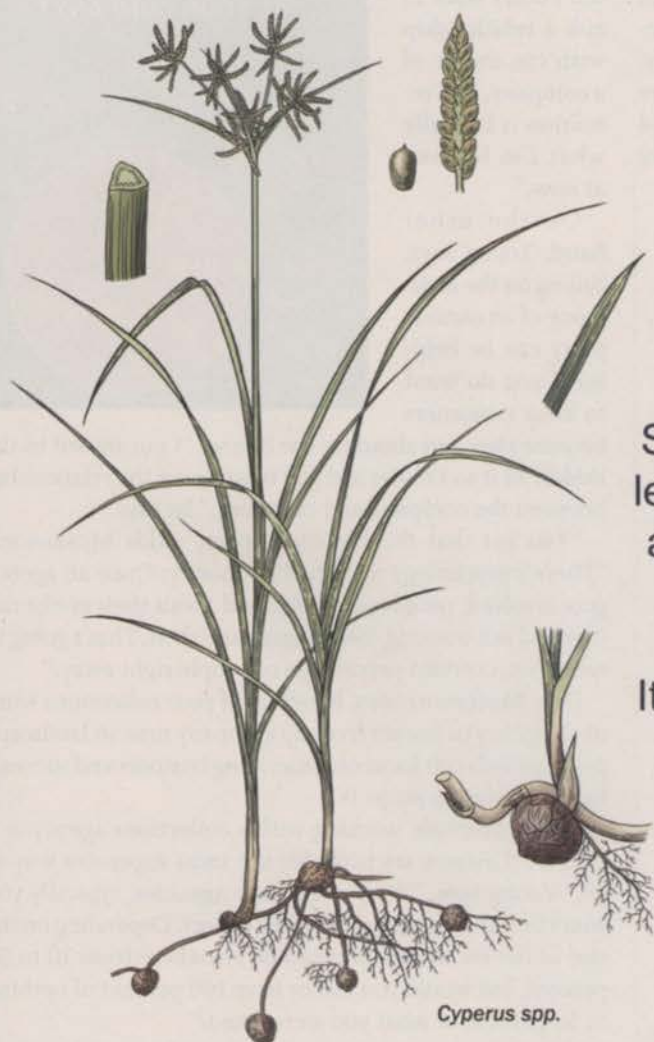
**The most safe and effective solution  
for nutsedge control**



# SedgeHammer<sup>®</sup>

Turf Herbicide

**Knocks out nutsedge**



SedgeHammer<sup>®</sup> doesn't just kill the leaves, it **effectively** controls yellow and purple nutsedge by destroying the growth *underground*.

It's **safe** because it won't injure cool or warm season turfgrasses.

For more information or to find a retailer near you, please visit:

[www.gowanco.com/sedgehammer](http://www.gowanco.com/sedgehammer)

SedgeHammer<sup>®</sup> and the SedgeHammer<sup>®</sup> logo are registered trademarks of Gowan Company, L.L.C.  
EPA Reg. No. 81880-1-10163. Illustration by Taina Litwak, CMI of Litwak Illustration Studio.  
Always read and follow label directions. AD09-35720\_lawnandlandscape 040809

**Gowan<sup>®</sup>**  
TURF & ORNAMENTAL

USE READER SERVICE #34

the economy doesn't change the fact that customers should pay for a service their company provided.

And an increasing number of lawn and landscape companies are turning to another tool that ensures they get paid: credit cards. Companies that take credit cards are able to work with customers to set up recurring payments each month until their debt is paid off.

"In 1995 I started accepting credit cards," McSherry says. "I have more people now who pay with their cards than send me a check. I look back at it now and I wonder if I'd have all this business if I didn't accept credit cards. Plus, it has made my receivables easier because it's deposited in my bank account in 48 hours."

Unfortunately, while offering more options for payments increases the likelihood of them coming in on time, *Lawn & Landscape's* survey reveals that beyond the 95 percent of contractors who accept checks/cash, the number of contractors offering other payment options drops considerably. Forty-six and 41 percent of contractors, respectively, offer installment payment options and prepay options. Only 34 percent offer credit card payment options, 21 percent offer

pay-by-phone methods, 13 percent offer auto-pay and 11 percent allow customers to pay online.

**'KEEP YOUR FRIENDS CLOSE, BUT YOUR ENEMIES CLOSER.'** It can be difficult for a business owner to determine when to continue seeking payment independently and when to call for reinforcements. The line is particularly blurry during a recession when business slows.

"I need all the customers and relationships I can get as far as new business," says Carazo, who is dealing with a down economy and still trying to build his \$200,000-a-year business after Hurricane Katrina. "Often I don't want to risk a relationship with the owner of a company, and retention is basically what I'm looking at now."

On the other hand, Young says, calling on the assistance of an outside party can be helpful if you do want to keep customers

because they can shoulder the blame. "I put myself in the middle of it so I'm the bad guy to preserve the relationship between the company and customer," he says.

"You get that third-party impact," adds Moskowitz. "There's psychology to collecting money. Once an agency gets involved, people get concerned about their credit ratings and not wanting their wages garnished. That's going to weed out a certain percentage of people right away."

Plus, Moskowitz says, handing off your collections work to an agency or lawyer frees up company time so landscape professionals can focus on generating business and successfully completing projects.

Options include working with a collections agency or a lawyer. "Lawyers are probably the most expensive way to go," Young says. "With collections agencies, typically you won't be out of pocket unless they collect. Depending on the size of the receivable, it could be anywhere from 10 to 50 percent, but would you rather have 100 percent of nothing or 50 percent of what you were owed?"

If a customer simply needs a formal reminder of an outstanding balance, finding a low-cost company or one that charges a flat fee per account rather than taking a percentage of what is collected may be the best option. Larger debts, however, may require more aggressive moves, which is why more complicated collections work typically costs

## Owner Takes All

### WHO MANAGES RECEIVABLES AT YOUR COMPANY?



## StealthSpout™

Low-profile drain system

**NEW!**

This new upscale emitter helps landscaping pros eliminate drainage eyesores from projects large and small!



### Features

- Low profile spout
- Wider water dispersion
- No-clog design
- Extension available for curbs or retaining walls
- Water flows away from down spout
- HDPE construction
- Easy installation
- Versatile

### Benefits

- Drain exit disappears into landscape
- Reduces erosion
- Less maintenance
- Perfect for low grade applications
- Pipes stay drier
- Durable and long lasting
- No special tools required
- Fits 3 and 4 inch straight pipe and 4 inch corrugated

StealthSpout™



Made in the USA  
US Patent 7,418,131  
Patent Pending



Want more information?

**InvisaFlow** LLC

1350 Bluegrass Lakes Parkway  
Alpharetta, GA 30004  
Phone: 678.942.1327  
Email: info@InvisaFlow.com  
www.InvisaFlow.com

USE READER SERVICE #35

# Jonsered®

## Legendary Quality, now with Clean Power™

JONSERED chain saws are world-renowned for their high performance, durability and dependability. The JONSERED Power Line of outdoor power equipment is made from that same DNA.

Many of the JONSERED Power Line models feature the new, advanced technology Clean Power™ Engine,

with 60% less emissions and 20% better fuel economy.



JONSERED's Clean Power Engine.



[www.jonseredpower.com](http://www.jonseredpower.com)

**REACH FOR THE RED™**

## Jonsered® POWER LINE



Hedge Trimmers



Trimmers and Brushcutters



"Combi" Power Broom



Turbo Chain Saws



Blowers

Sold, serviced and supported by independent authorized JONSERED dealers. • Imported and distributed in the Eastern US exclusively by Tilton Equipment Company.  
877-693-7729 • [www.tiltonequipment.com](http://www.tiltonequipment.com)

USE READER SERVICE #36

"When you make  
**4 MILLION**  
gallons of product  
**PER ACRE**  
you have to get  
the details  
**RIGHT.**"

Tony Cantu  
Production Manager  
Chicago Heights Facility



Talk about productive: our US manufacturing plant is on a site a commercial sprayer could cover in minutes. But our team there formulates, packages and ships millions of gallons of over 200 products every year. That productivity and attention to detail lets us provide you with more options and more value. In other words: better choices for better business. For more, see your Nufarm representative or [www.nufarm.com/us](http://www.nufarm.com/us).

**Better Choices. Better Business.**

© 2009 Nufarm. Important: Always read and follow label instructions.



[www.nufarm.com/us](http://www.nufarm.com/us)

## Keep Clients' Financial Problems from Becoming Yours

An average small business' receivables count for approximately 40 to 50 percent of their actual assets, according to PowerHomeBiz.com, an online resource for small business owners.

To avoid sinking in this economy, businesses must safeguard this life jacket of cash flow.

Receivables count for a bit less in a typical landscape contractors business – between 0 and 40 percent, a *Lawn & Landscape* research study reveals. And this is good, according to industry consultant Jim Huston, who prefers contractors keep this in the 0 to 20 percent range. "In the best of worlds, A/R would be zero," he says. As a major component of current assets, working capital and cash flow, accounts receivable must be carefully managed in order to be turned into cash as quickly as possible and to avoid becoming uncollectible.

**YOUR RECEIVABLES COUNT FOR APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH OF YOUR COMPANY'S ASSETS?**



a percentage of the money recovered. Still, there's no guarantee you'll get your money. "Even with a trained staff of collectors working for you, there are still people who don't pay," Moskowitz says.

That's something Hoover knows all too well. His company, which surpassed \$3 million in revenue in 2008, currently holds liens on a number of residential and commercial properties – some are even for relatively small jobs where the homeowner simply wouldn't pay.

To further complicate matters, Hoover recently ran into another unexpected problem: "We had very negative experiences with more than one collection agency. Collections were made and not disclosed to us. In fact, one agency is under investigation by the FBI and we are listed as a victim," Hoover explains. "My warning to other contractors is to investigate any collection agency vigorously and examine contracts diligently."

"This is an area where a business owner needs to be careful about who they engage," Young adds. "Do reference checks and make sure they're ac-

credited. Sometimes they'll tout the fact that they're members of the Better Business Bureau or collections associations – those are good things to look for."

According to *Lawn & Landscape* research, 84 percent of contractors do not use a collection agency. Of those remaining who do, the majority wait until 90 days to turn the account over.

Although Hoover's experience is a cautionary tale, many contractors do have luck with collections agencies or, like McSherry, with attorneys who also do collections work. "I've only been hit twice in 20 years for about \$4,000 and when they did go to collection I ended up getting all my money," he says.

Coswell has yet to see what his success rate will be. He is sure he will collect on some outstanding debts; with others, he's not so optimistic. His advice?

"Stay on it. Don't be bashful. You've earned it. All you have to do is be polite and work out terms – you give a little, they give a little," he says. "It relates to trust on both sides." **L**

The author is a freelancer based in Lincoln, Ill.

# Deader. Faster.

## 4-SPEED™ 4-SPEED™ XT

**Faster, better broadleaf control.  
Because you can't afford to wait.**

Can a weed be deader, faster? It can if it's hit with the power of 4-Speed™ or 4-Speed™ XT herbicides. These new, hard-hitting herbicides deliver symptoms in 24 hours or less, and control a wider spectrum of weeds more effectively\*. The result: fewer complaints, fewer callbacks, and more time to move on to the next job. For more information, contact your distributor or visit [www.nufarm.com/us](http://www.nufarm.com/us).

### Better Choices. Better Business.



[www.nufarm.com/us](http://www.nufarm.com/us)

© 2009 Nufarm. Important: Always read and follow label instructions. \*Compared to standard 3-way herbicide mixes. 4-Speed™ is a trademark of Nufarm.



## Business in the *Fast Lane*

Growing pains can be worth the financial gains. We talk to three fast-movers who share how they manage speedy growth.

**W**hen an entrepreneur sees a dollar sign, he gets double vision. Zeros are a sign of success. The more, the better. Growth is always the goal, though there are limits to what a company can handle in a single year without sacrificing quality.

Those limits are the yellow light at the intersection. Hard-driving entrepreneurs see green.

"For every dollar of revenue earned, you want to figure out how to do two dollars tomorrow – that's what entrepreneurs do," says Ed Schatz, president, Austin Outdoor, Bunnell, Fla.

But there's nothing worse than "hollow revenue," Schatz adds. "Growth for the sake of growing just doesn't make sense."

So when does it make sense to grow, and how do landscapers plan for significant revenue increases? Nancy Terrill, director of transaction advisory services at Grant Thornton and Ohio chapter president of the Turnaround Management Association, coaches businesses through tough growing pains: cash flow crunches, performance challenges, infrastructural inadequacies.

"I've seen a lot of businesses fail as a result of significant growth they lost control of," Terrill says.

It's difficult to manage fixed expenses and meet new sales demands. And companies must judge if a surge in business is indeed growth, or a "blip."

"You don't want to ramp up your business and income structure to meet

demands and then find out that the higher level of revenue is not sustainable," Terrill notes.

Planning is the No. 1 pitfall of green industry businesses on the grow, Schatz says.

Terrill adds: "Sit down and map out your business. Find out where the bottlenecks are in your current configuration and plan the resources necessary – whether manpower or capital – to get you through that growth period."

According to *Lawn & Landscape's* 2008 State of the Industry research, 77.8 percent of respondents were confident going into 2009. Certainly, talk of fast growth in today's economy will turn heads. The topic is usually framed in the past tense: we *grew*, it was a great year, we *planned* to boost revenues. Is growth possible in this environment? Companies of all sizes are telling us it is.

"I just consulted with a business in growth mode, a situation where the competition didn't do a good job so the business earned a good client," Terrill says. "Do more homework in this economy – know what your risks are," she adds.

*Lawn & Landscape* talked fast growth with three landscape contractors who operate companies in different revenue categories. Here is how industry peers ran their companies full throttle and succeeded at driving growth yesterday, and now. **L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Bay Village, Ohio.

### Raise Capital Now

A business on the grow needs to be "fed" with capital. Self-fund your expansion with these tips provided by Nancy Terrill, director of transaction advisory services at Grant Thornton and Ohio chapter president of the Turnaround Management Association.

#### **Work your receivables:**

Cash becomes scarce when receivables grow. Offer meaningful discounts to encourage clients to pay fast so you can infuse more "liquid" into your business.

#### **Tighten inventory:**

Think "just in time" when ordering inventory. This requires careful management and strong supplier relationships to be sure you have the required materials when you need them.

#### **Trade terms:**

Negotiate longer terms with suppliers. If you are a more meaningful customer to them as you grow their business, they will understand the term extensions are temporary (and due to a cash flow crunch). A valuable supplier will work with you.

# Sure you can cut it. The question is, can you grow it?

You know Gravelly has an impressive lineup of powerful, high-performance mowers. What you might not know is that Gravelly also has a program to help you grow your business. It's a lean approach that streamlines your operation by eliminating waste and inefficiencies. It's a process that creates avenues for sustained profitability. It's a boost to employee morale. You're doing everything you can. We're saying **CUT IT OUT**. Take the first step toward working smarter. Not harder.

Visit [WWW.GRAVELY.COM](http://WWW.GRAVELY.COM).

**GRAVELLY**

WE KEEP YOU CUTTING®  
[www.gravelly.com](http://www.gravelly.com)

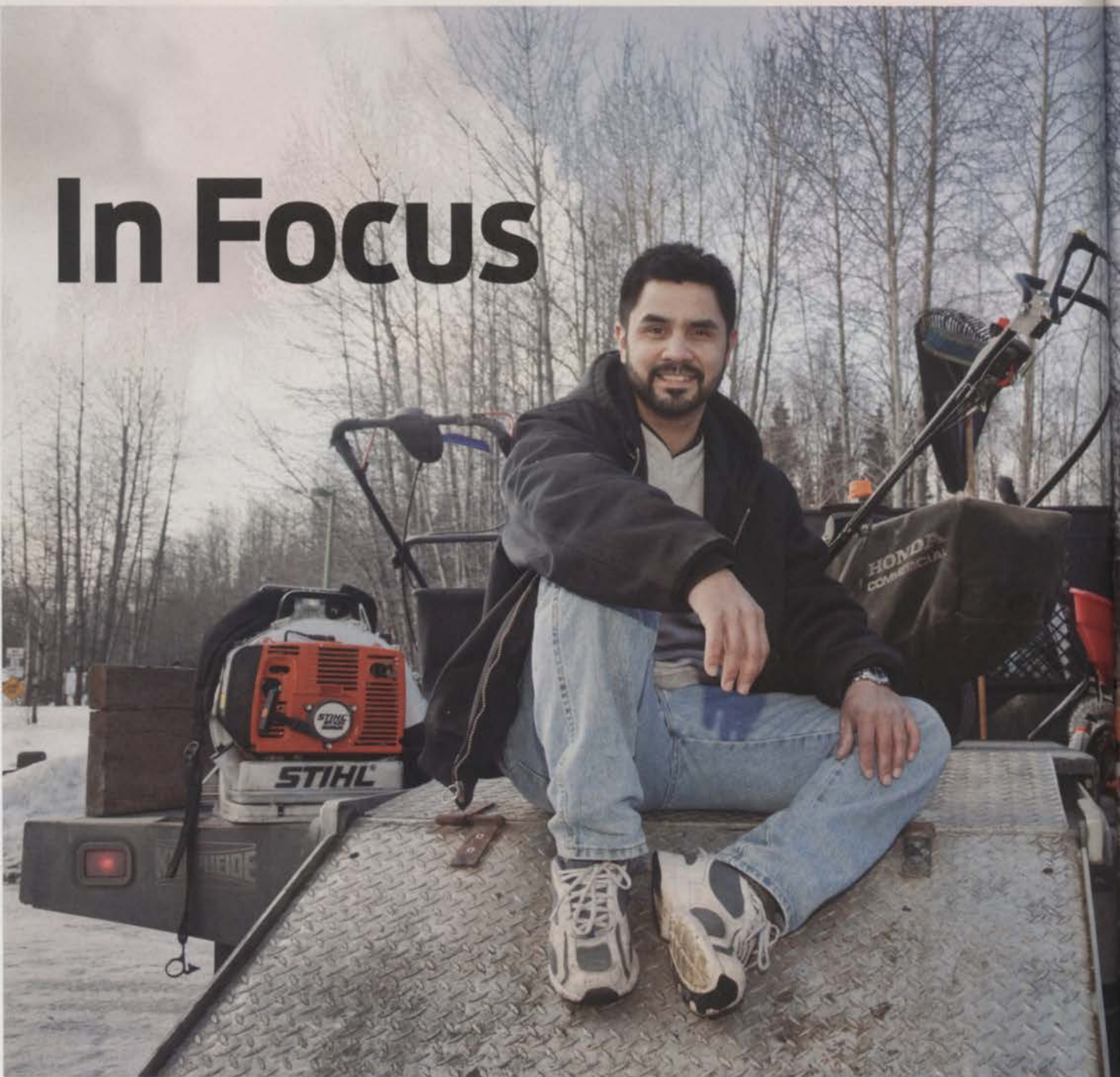


An Ariens Company. ® Registered trademark and ™ trademark of Ariens Company.

USE READER SERVICE #39

Focusing on his core business allowed Jeffrey Walker to grow his company to more than eight times its first-year revenue.

# In Focus







JEFF SCHULTZ PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.

## Concentrating 100 percent on the business rather than raising capital by working outside jobs helped grow Quality One's revenue and reputation.

**W**hen the property manager of a condominium association asked Jeffrey Walker if he would maintain the landscape once the snow melted, the power of suggestion spurred a new service and, eventually, a 77 percent revenue increase for Quality One.

While a couple of big-name landscape companies bowed out of the condo association market – one because of retirement, the other to refocus on government work – Walker recognized some wide open space for a new guy.

“There was a hole in the maintenance end,” Walker says, noting that aggressive marketing with phone calls and walk-ins helped get the word out at first. These days, Quality One earns most of its business through referrals. And the company plans to hit its \$315,000 revenue target in 2009.

Four years ago, Walker was focused on snowplowing as a subcontractor for another company. In late 2005, he worked to earn his own clients, and the first big landscaping gig expanded his seasonal business by 2006. Still, he wasn't ready to leave his job working construction in the summer, so he handed Quality One operations to his only employee at the time.

Big mistake. “I under-managed the business, I relied on him too much,” Walker says, reflecting

on the days before his business got QuickBooks. The other guy ran daily operations while Walker earned much-needed capital to fund Quality One. Fear of losing that income stream prevented Walker from focusing solely on his landscape/snow business.

“I spread myself really thin,” Walker says. “We almost lost the company.”

Walker quit working construction and, in 2007, decided to partner with a friend who started another business venture. “I thought running two businesses would be easier than owning one and working full-time in construction because I would at least have more control,” Walker says.

That was another big mistake – and a valuable lesson that cost Walker a couple of big condo association clients. “No one is going to take care of the business like I will,” he says. Still today, hiring quality people is a challenge. And when a company is growing like Walker's, trustworthy manpower is mission critical to fulfilling demand. “I've learned to plan ahead and start interviewing and getting key people in place now instead of waiting until after I get the work,” he says.

Walker took a leap of faith in 2007 after the other partnership fizzled; he dedicated 100 percent


of his energy toward Quality One. Securing a \$20,000 loan that year, followed by a \$15,000 credit line in 2008, infused enough capital into the business to free Walker from raising dollars himself with outside work. And the loan limits were such that Walker says he could not grow too fast.

"My credit would only allow me to get so much equipment, so I could only do so much lawn mowing," Walker says. "Now, I don't market more than I need to. I look at big jobs that come up for bid, and if it looks like more than we can handle, I'll bid higher. That way, if we get the work, it will be worthwhile."

Meanwhile, Walker used credit with vendors to fund equipment, supplies and projects. He watched every penny "in and out" and maintained detailed, accurate route sheets. "We gained customers' trust when choosing products and services," he adds.

Walker aims for at least 30 percent growth each year. In 2006, his business leaped from \$29,000 to \$127,000, mainly because of branching into landscape maintenance. In 2007, revenue increased 25 percent to \$170,000. Last year, Quality One earned \$252,500. The business is more efficient now with Walker at the helm, managing operations and tweaking systems so the company can run lean. "We're doing more with less now," he says.

The key to growing swiftly but safely is to push forward and recognize limits.

"In the beginning, I thought I could handle it all," Walker says. "I learned that acquiring manpower and equipment to perform the work wasn't as easy as 1, 2, 3. Hiring good people and good equipment is a different story." 

The author is a freelance writer based in Bay Village, Ohio.

## Quality One

**Principal:** Jeffrey Walker

**Location:** Anchorage, Alaska

**Established:** 2005

**2008 Revenues:** \$252,500

**Customer/Service mix:**

Primarily condominium associations; snow removal, lawn maintenance and surface lot cleaning

**Employees:** 6

**Growth record:**

2005 - \$29,000

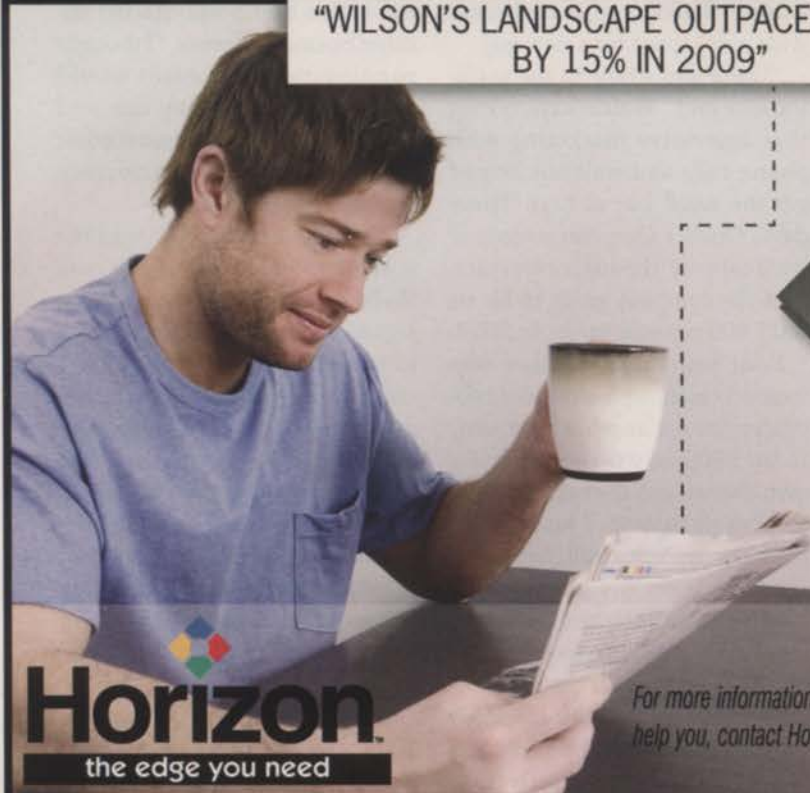
2006 - \$127,000

2007 - \$170,000

2008 - \$252,500

## Make headlines this year with Horizon's Business Builder Program

"WILSON'S LANDSCAPE OUTPACES MARKET BY 15% IN 2009"



Monthly online trainings featuring ready-to-use sales & marketing tools

Customizable web sites

Professional business cards, door hangers and yard signs

Equipment financing options

**Horizon**  
the edge you need

For more information on how the Horizon Business Builder Program can help you, contact Horizon at 877.876.3900 or visit [HorizonOnline.com](http://HorizonOnline.com)

irrigation | specialty | landscape | equipment

USE READER SERVICE #40

# NOTHING SELLS MORE HUSTLERS THAN A HUSTLER.



But don't believe an advertisement.

Go ride any of our competitors' mowers and then visit your local Hustler dealer for a demonstration.

We trust your judgement.

*Be sure and ask your dealer about special offers, and low financing available right now!*



**HUSTLER**

HUSTLERTURF.COM

• UNCOMMON COMMITMENT

USE READER SERVICE #41

# By Leaps and Bounces

A fast-growth attitude from the get-go set the stage for significant revenue jumps at Moscarino Outdoor Creations.

**C**has Moscarino is busy. Real busy. His company grew 800 percent in four years, and hard-driving Moscarino addresses this economy by asking, "Why take a step backward? We are taking steps forward so we can blow up even faster than we did the past two years once this thing is over."

To prepare, Moscarino Outdoor Creations is breaking ground on a 36-acre facility that will house offices for staff and provide space for landscape material and supplies – more room to grow. The new location in a neighboring community will poise Moscarino Outdoor Creations to attract more business.

"We are jammed tight on a few acres now," Moscarino says, admitting that he second-guessed the decision to expand this year. At first, "We almost pulled out of the project four months ago, but our numbers were strong enough to be approved by the bank, and we're taking advantage of interest rates that will save us money down the road," he points out. His accountant and consultant agreed.

Moscarino is a sponge when industry mentors offer advice. He started the company while in college, and after graduation when he decided to build a career

out of his side job, he pursued growth aggressively. "I got involved in every industry association that I could, and I talked to as many people as I could," he says.

Before long, Moscarino was bidding for the same projects as the companies that gave him advice. In 2004, his company boomed from a \$300,000 firm that did mostly residential work and some winter snowplowing to a \$700,000 company managing commercial accounts. People became a priority, and so did marketing. "We place a priority on company image and we do a lot of home and garden shows – we stay out there," Moscarino says. "We are watching our dollars, but we are still going to market more aggressively than we ever have."

Aggressive is a word Moscarino uses liberally when talking about growth. "You have to go for it, that's my philosophy," he says. "I don't know how much fun I would be having at this point in my life if I stopped where I am today and said, 'We are at \$2 million. Let's just stay here.' My drive is in growing the company."

So Moscarino continues to soak up information,

What recession? Chas Moscarino has his eye on posting even better numbers this year.

ds

**"We are watching our dollars, but we are still going to market more aggressively than we ever have."**

— CHAS MOSCARINO

**Moscarino Outdoor Creations**

**Principal:** Chas Moscarino

**Location:** Strongsville, Ohio

**Established:** 1999 (incorporated in 2005)

**2008 Revenue:** \$1.9 million

**Customer/Service mix:** commercial and residential; full-service design/build, maintenance and snow removal

**Employees:** 40

**Growth record:**  
2005 - \$300,000  
2006 - \$700,000  
2007 - \$1.4 million  
2008 - \$1.9 million

particularly from an outside adviser who helped the company establish an organizational chart – job descriptions, basic systems, rules, all the ingredients to get Moscarino out of the green room and into the director's chair.

These efforts were mission critical after the company jetted past the \$1 million mark. That happened Moscarino's third year in business.

"We had to hire secretaries and get a bookkeeper," he says, noting that the company employed eight people in 2005 when revenue was \$300,000. Today, 40 people work at Moscarino Outdoor Creations, including two in-house designers, a design assistant and a personal assistant for Moscarino.

"You have to set up systems, and something as simple as an organizational chart, I didn't have," he says. "People need to see how they can grow in the company. Now that is in place."

And now Moscarino knows exactly how much revenue to expect from one truck and three laborers. "Before, we were guessing; we'd go out and buy a truck," he says.

While Moscarino admits to working best in an environment of organized chaos – "I like it out of control" – he says the keys to managing the company's fast growth have been hiring the right people, delegating operations and bringing on quality sales people.

Even this season, the phones haven't stopped ringing. Spring broke early in Ohio. That could be why, Moscarino muses.

While 2009 is "a big question mark," he is optimistic that the company will achieve at least 30 percent growth. "We are selling a lot of work right now," he says. **L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Bay Village, Ohio.



# Hunter®

## \$ALE



**MODULAR PRO-C CONTROLLERS**  
UP TO 15 STATIONS  
REMOTE READY

PC-300i (INDOOR) 3-STA.....\$ 74-  
PC-300 (OUTDOOR) 3-STA.....\$ 87-  
PCM-300 (3-STA.MODULE)....\$ 21-

PROS-04...4" PROSPRAY...\$ 120  
ALL REGULAR NOZZLES ..... 75¢  
BUY THE BOX OR BAG

MINI-CLIK<sup>®</sup> RAINSENSOR ONLY \$17<sup>00</sup> ea.

ADJUSTABLE POP-UP 4" TURF ROTOR

ONLY \$8<sup>50</sup> ea.

TOP ADJUSTING BUY THE BOX

NEW LOWER PRICES

Hunter® DEPENDABILITY

WE STOCK THE COMPLETE Hunter® LINE

MTI Is Your BEST SOURCE FOR Hunter® PRODUCTS AT THE BEST PRICES



FREE Shipping

# 800-600-TURF

Order By 1 p.m. SHIPS SAME DAY

M-F 7:30-5 SAT 8-1 PDT Se Habla Español

ASK ABOUT QUANTITY PRICING



Call Now & Save

ORDER ON-LINE WWW.SPRINKLERS4LESS.COM ORDER ON-LINE

**wright**<sup>™</sup>  
commercial products

**3.9%** **FOR 48**  
**MONTHS**

**wright**<sup>™</sup>  
commercial products

To Locate Your Nearest

Dealer call

1-800-686-3128

or visit

[www.wrightmfg.com](http://www.wrightmfg.com)

**TRADE UP TO A  
STANDER ZK**  
WITH OUR "THREE FOR  
FREE" DEMO PROGRAM.

Visit our website to sign up today!  
[www.wrightmfg.com](http://www.wrightmfg.com)



## STAND UP AND PERFORM



Introducing the new Wright Stander® ZK™.

With speed, stability and control, you can go the distance. Tackle the changing terrain with absolute ease. Introducing a new force in lawn maintenance that let's you do it all—the 31 hp Wright Stander ZK. With cut speeds of up to 14 mph, you'll blow any mid-mount Z out of the water on jobs big and small.

Experience the advantages of standing.  
Ride Wright.

**\*\*Note: Some models may  
not yet be approved for  
California**



### STANDER

- Shift your weight instantly to handle changing terrain
- 16, 17, 19, 23, 25HP Kawasaki Engine
- Outstanding control and handling
- 32, 36, 48, 52, 61" Deck sizes

**32" & 36" Decks are great for small  
lots, maneuvering around  
obstacles and fitting through gates!**

WS3617KAWRE

**\$6199.95**

**or \$143/Month**

### STANDER ZK

- 27 or 31hp Kawasaki Engine
- Deck sizes of 52" and 61"
- Short overall length for greater maneuverability than any Midmount Z
- Cut speeds up to 14 mph
- Quick cut height adj. changes from 1.5" to 5.5"
- Low center of gravity and large wheels for hillside stability
- No seat, seat belts or arm rests mean you can easily bail out or step off to pick up debris
- Cooling fans on pumps for more effective hydro cooling

WSZK5227KAWE

**\$9949.95**

**or \$227/Month**

USE READER SERVICE #43

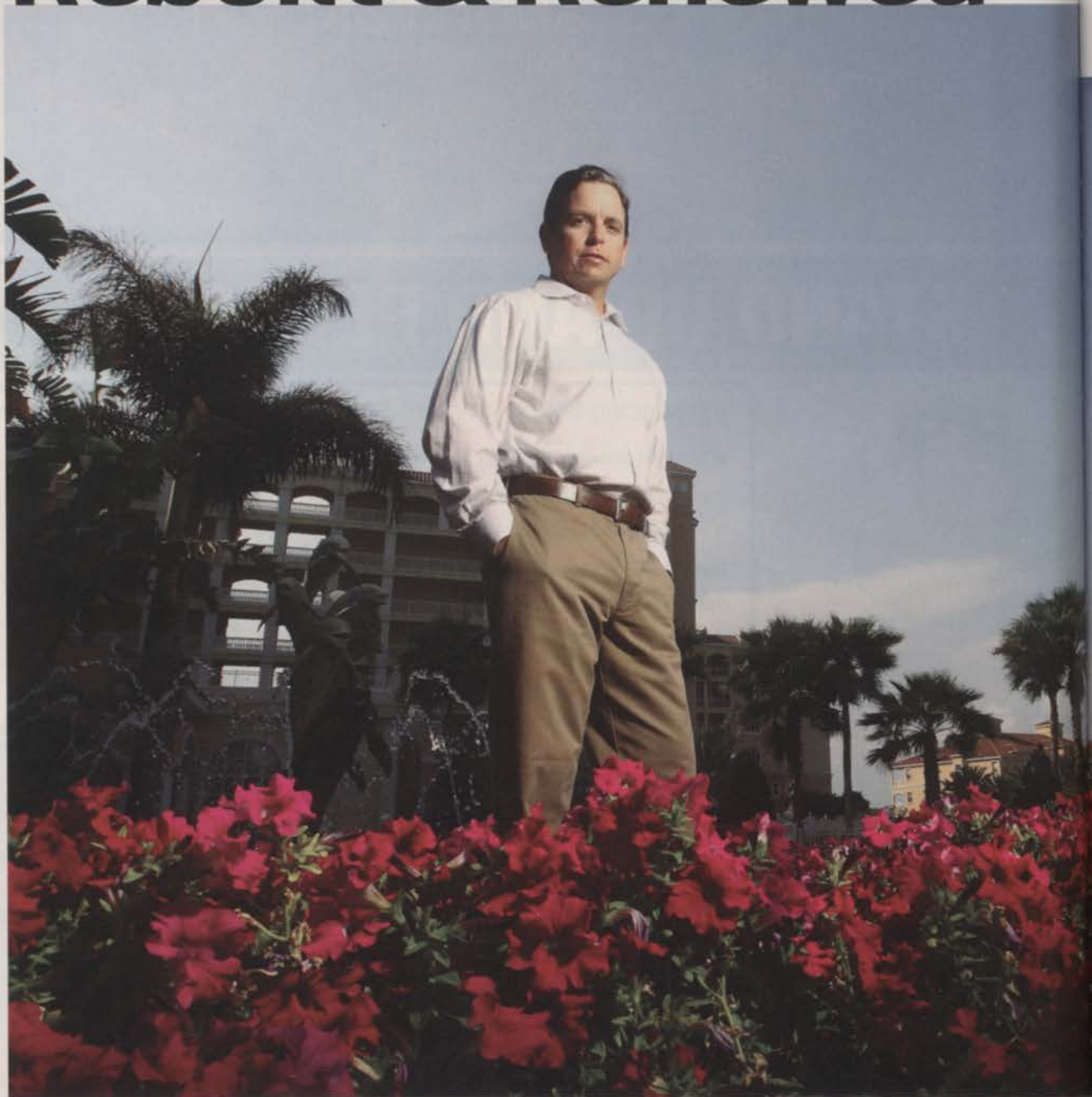
**The Wright Way to Mow**

**wright**<sup>™</sup>  
commercial products

Qualified buyers through Yard Card on new equipment only. \$125 Doc fee is included in monthly payments shown. Taxes are not included and vary by state. See dealer for details.

**LARGE** – MORE THAN \$2 MILLION

# Rebuilt & Renewed







Ed Schatz stands on the grounds of The Club at Hammock Beach in Palm Coast, Fla. The company focuses on high-end homeowners' associations that seek resort-level services.



BY KRISTEN HAMPSHIRE

Constantly improving infrastructure to manage more customers gave Austin Outdoor the operational capacity to say "yes" to more business without sacrificing quality.

**T**he *Lawn & Landscape* cover story featuring Austin Outdoor in the June 2000 was aptly titled, "In Pursuit of Growth." Then, we wrote how young Ed Schatz, president, grew his business from \$157,000 to \$6.5 million in four years. (Most of the management was then under the age of 30.)

"Growth is something we are accustomed to," says Schatz, who grew up working at his dad's firm, then branched out to start his own in 1995 after graduating from college with a finance degree.

Six months after the story ran, Schatz sold the business to conglomerate OneSource, still managing the operation as president and still driving growth. He bought the business back in 2003, and analyzed ways to capture more business from the company's existing customers. Selling maintenance to design/build customers produced the recurring revenue that Schatz wanted.

Then, growth really kicked into high gear. In 2004, Austin Outdoor did \$17.5 million, \$6 million of that in maintenance. The next year, the company closed out at \$24 million with \$11.5 million in maintenance – 48 percent of sales. The company continued to nearly double its revenue annually.

In the midst of all this, Schatz stepped back and built a true budget for the first time – and rebuilt the company's technology

platform to handle the growing customer population. He invested more than \$1 million in optimizing the accounting, sourcing and customer software. "In order to operate that system and develop those processes, as part of our restructuring we had to review all positions and search for the right people," Schatz says.

Matching the company's talent to the task is a continual focus at Austin Outdoor.

"It took us 18 months to get where we knew we made the right choices," says Schatz, who used industry recruiting services and reached out to college horticultural graduates. By 2007, he had a strong team in place, and the hard hiring work paid off with Austin Outdoor's biggest year, \$53.5 million.

With internal systems in place, Schatz shifted focus to the field. "The biggest challenge was getting our arms around the field-level management and that goes back to recruiting," he says. That year, Schatz also dealt with rising commodity prices. It was more difficult to find quality materials.

Focused on earning a target profit margin of 10 percent, the company re-priced some design/build projects to meet that goal. Customers were understanding. Longer-term maintenance contracts were locked in, but Schatz worked on improving efficiency, such as tighter routing.

"We just continue to reengineer our internal efficiencies to help offset price increases," he says.

In 2008, Austin Outdoor's revenue was down by 20 percent. Watching the growth barometer drop is more difficult than steering a company in the fast lane,

Schatz says. Installation dropped off 50 percent last year, while maintenance continued a steady 7 to 8 percent growth rate. "We have a real high conversion rate from our installation projects," Schatz explains.

"To me, the bigger challenge is main-

Kichler can put you in the landscape lighting business ... **TODAY!**



Training



Products



Rewards

We'll help you grow your business and accelerate your profits with ... installation training, a comprehensive line of premium products including LED, and our exclusive Light Pro Rewards Program.

Learn more about becoming landscape lighting contractor at [www.landscape-lighting.com/lalm](http://www.landscape-lighting.com/lalm)

**KICHLER**   
LIGHTING

## Austin Outdoor

**Principal:** Ed Schatz

**Location:** Palm Coast, Fla.

**Established:** 1995

**2008 Revenue:** \$35 million

**Customer/Service mix:** commercial/homeowners' associations; full-service design/build, maintenance and irrigation

**Employees:** 280

**Growth record:**

2005 - \$24 million

2006 - \$42.7 million

2007 - \$53.5 million


2008 - \$35 million



taining margins after coming off some high-growth years," he says.

Again, talent and task take top priority at the company.

"You make tough decisions about people and matching your workforce to your work," Schatz says. Austin Outdoor employed 480 workers in 2007. Now, 280 people are on payroll. Schatz predicts flat growth in 2009, aiming for \$35 million. Last year, the company invested heavily in business development. "We really focused on building relationships with the types of clients that could help us meet our goals," Schatz says. Those are high-end homeowners' associations that seek resort-level services, and A-list commercial projects.

Today, Austin Outdoor is a wholly owned subsidiary of Yellowstone Landscape Group. The strategic merger will hopefully mean more growth for Austin Outdoor. "Now we will remain focused on our core values and continually refine our processes and operations to identify projects that are important to us," Schatz says. 

The author is a freelance writer based in Bay Village, Ohio.

WASTED NITROGEN.



WORKING NITROGEN.



With volatile fertilizer prices, you can't afford to use urea fertilizer that wastes nitrogen. Using enhanced efficiency UFLEXX™ Stabilized Nitrogen keeps more nitrogen working in the soil longer, which means better-looking lawns and happier customers. Keeping nitrogen in the soil where it belongs allows rates to be reduced by as much as 20%. That helps the environment and your business.

Build your program on a better nitrogen source for a better season. Ask your distributor for UFLEXX.

**UFLEXX**  
STABILIZED NITROGEN FERTILIZER

# Service Check

Experts have a thing or two to say about the landscape industry's practices when it comes to customer service ... and you're not going to like it. But, hopefully, you'll learn from it.

BY TOM CRAIN

John Tschohl has a passion for his yard. He resides in a tiny suburb of Minneapolis where the outdoor season is compacted into a short window of time. That's why he was particularly furious when he needed a new installation last summer and found the majority of landscapers on his list never returned his calls, and when they did, failed to follow through on scheduled appointments.

These landscapers picked the wrong guy to reckon with. Tschohl is no ordinary consumer. In fact, he's known as the guru of customer service and president and founder of Global Quality Institute, which coaches leading companies worldwide on customer service issues.

Tschohl's personal experience with landscapers, coupled

with his own compelling research, makes him think the landscape industry is for the most part "clueless" when it comes to customer service standards. Tschohl can only rant, and certainly not rave, about this industry. "I am convinced most landscapers don't want more business," he says. "Why? Because they are not customer-driven. That's precisely why they don't get the volume of business they want."

Tschohl believes landscapers haven't quite yet made the paradigm shift from the heady times when customers were falling out of the trees to the current economy where customers are hiding in the trees. He also believes most landscapers are still taking care of themselves rather than their customers. "Until landscapers understand they are first a customer service company and second a landscaping company, they don't stand a chance," he says.

Tschohl is not alone in his thinking. And landscape contractors are feeling

it – according to *Lawn & Landscape* research, 58 percent of contractors say their customers are more critical of their service in this recession. Some customers and customer service experts think landscape businesses have a long way to go in securing and hanging on to customers during this extreme economic downturn.

**THE CUTBACK CHALLENGE.** "To make matters worse, customers are also in a "nitty" mood," according to Laurie Brown, a Detroit-based speaker, author and trainer on improving sales, customer service and presentation skills. It's so easy in this economy for customers to say: "I don't have to go with your published list of services. If you don't accommodate me with exactly what I want, I'll just go somewhere else."

Sixty-three percent of landscape contractors report their customers are feeling more apprehensive and concerned about spending money on landscape

and lawn care services this year while only 30 percent say customer mood is the same as they've seen in previous years, according to *Lawn & Landscape* research.

"In times of economic struggles, it's a matter of what do consumers give up," adds Michael McCall, marketing/law professor with specialties in marketing strategy and consumer behavior

at Ithaca College. "When consumers are stressed economically, they have to make choices. He says in this recession consumers are already in the second tier of things to give up – services people believe they can do themselves even though it takes their time – and that includes landscaping.

Bill S., an IT consultant and landscape customer based in Atlanta, is doing just that. Over the years, he has hired a landscape service to take care of his yard maintenance. This year, he and his wife are for the first time planting their own flower beds, edging and foregoing half of their fertilizing applications even though they have less leisure time. "I am fortunate my business hasn't been affected yet," he says on Yelp.com (a geo-specific Web site for service provider reviews), "but we're taking the necessary steps just in case things sour on us."

Matt Noon, co-owner of Boston-

based Noon Lawn & Landscape, is seeing the same worries and concerns with his customers. "Our wealthy clients are recoiling, pulling back on everything. We are dealing with more cancellations. We find the more confident and wealthy our clients are, the more they use the economic climate as an excuse to get out of services such as lawn maintenance."

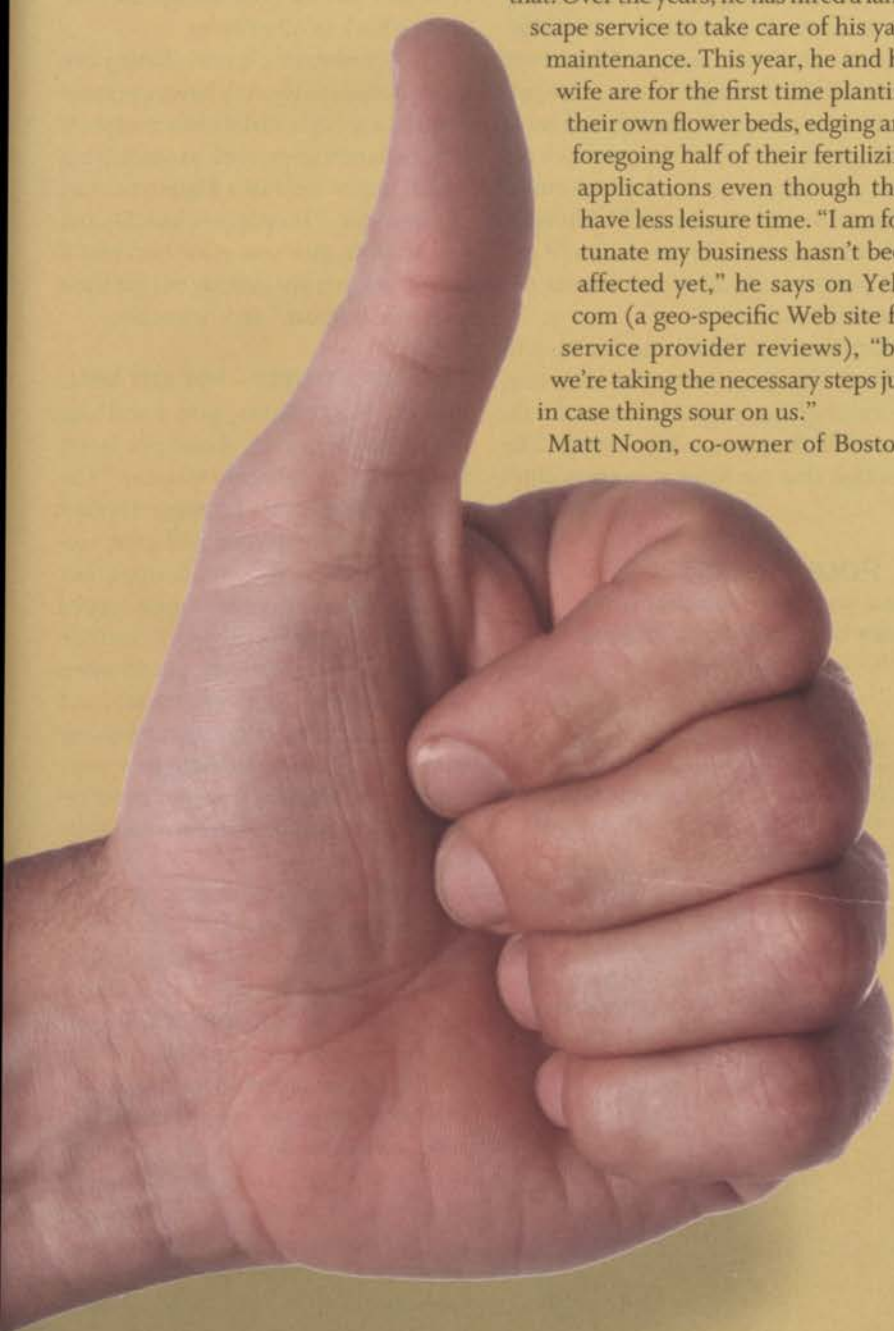
If customers are cutting back on landscape services, large design/build projects are getting cut most, with 57 percent of contractors reporting, followed by extra services like aeration (44 percent), then small design/build projects (36 percent) and then chemical lawn care services (32 percent), *Lawn & Landscape* statistics show.

"We have experienced customers cutting back on frequency of fertilizer applications and dropping enhancements such as lawn seeding and seasonal garden color installations," shares Rob Schucker, owner of R & S Landscaping in New Jersey's Bergen County area, adding that he finds his company's customer retention is good, but cutbacks of services are higher this year.

"Everyone is trying to save money," says Brown. "Small businesses have to acknowledge this and not fight it. If your customer knows you are trying to save them money, you will gain their loyalty. Give them choices. Offer various packages and plan on them picking the one in the middle."

Noon finds this recession is requiring a lot more of his staff's time to sit down and educate his customers. "My sales managers have to act like managers of 401(k)s. We find it helpful to explain to our customers that if they stop fertilizing and weeding all together, just like if they divest their money in the stock market, it will take three to four years to gain what may be their only remaining investment back, which is their lawn. We didn't have to do too much of that before."

"It's up to us to educate our customers about the fact that maintaining a good lawn is not in that frivolous category," says Todd Reinhart, owner of Reinhart



Grounds Maintenance in Bloomington, Ill. "We know many of our clients are down to their last investment – their home. So we get them to recognize that a good lawn is part of increasing the value of their investment."

**GET CLOSER.** Experts say now is prime time for small businesses to keep in close touch with their customers. "Since 2004 when the economy was booming, many small businesses weren't able to go back to fallen away customers," says Kate Zabriskie, founder of Business Training Works, a Washington-based business training firm with clients worldwide. "Now, with the slower economy, it's a good time to re-visit them."

Pamela B., San Francisco, awarded a second installation to one of her several contractors because he was the only one who kept in touch with her. "Even when he was done with the garden patio installation, he kept calling me and furnishing me with his observations on how the garden was doing, offering

suggestions on what I could do myself to improve upon it, and even stopped over a few times to deadhead and edge for free. When it came time for a second installation, it was a no-brainer."

Unfortunately, a majority of landscape contractors – 72 percent – report they do not conduct annual customer surveys, and a majority 43 percent do not offer extras like holiday presents as thank-yous, e.g. poinsettias during the holidays or pumpkins around Halloween. However, most – 65 percent – realize customer service is more important in a down economy, and most – 64 percent – reward customers for referrals that turn into sales with either a future service discount (27 percent), a thank-you note (23 percent) or a gift certificate to a local establishment (13 percent).

Earthtones Landscaping Services in Atlanta is paying particular attention to valuing its long-term customers, too. "I'll throw in a few things like aeration that our loyal customers don't

expect, and not charge for them," says owner Chris Eckl. "We might also blow roofs and clean gutters as a 'throw in' for loyal customers."

Earthtones also is much more sensitive to responding to customers. "We are getting back to their calls and concerns more quickly than ever before," says Eckl. They have also recently upgraded their Web site design to improve their customer service even though they are cutting back in other areas.

R & S Landscaping is now offering free consultations to identify how customers can reduce high maintenance aspects of their landscapes, such as identifying which plants require a higher amount of pesticides. "They appreciate this and will want to give you more business if they know you are looking out for their own best interest," says Schucker.

**TRAIN FOR ATTITUDE – NOT JUST SKILL.**

Erin G., Plano, Texas, gave a scathing report on Yelp.com about her latest landscape maintenance company. "The owner and account manager seemed great on the phone, and had great credentials and creative renderings, but what a disappointment the crew turned out to be. They were dropping cigarette butts all over my driveway, put off when asked questions about plant care, and had no knowledge of the services on my contract other than the one they were working on that day. I would never re-hire this company again based on their frontline."

Tschohl agrees landscaping requires a high degree of artistry and technique to remain competitive in a bad economy. "Sure, training for these two skills are very important, but most landscapers ignore the most important skills training of all – that of customer service."

Ninety percent of contractors report they train employees on customer service, but Tschohl thinks maybe that training could be more focused on customer interaction rather than task training. Customer service training must include all employees who have any interaction with a customer, Tschohl insists. "Ninety-nine percent

**Critical Mass**

Are your customers more critical of customer service in this economy?



**Anti-Survey**

Do you conduct an annual customer survey to find out how your customers are feeling about your service?



**Price Breaks?**

What have you done this year when customers have called you looking for a deal on price?



# The Power Of One.



Shift your business to the independent distributor members of PrimeraTurf® and tap into the power of a wide range of high-quality PrimeraOne® products.

You'll find the products and the name of the distributor in your area at [primeraone.com](http://primeraone.com).

**PrimeraONE**

of employees haven't been trained in customer service," he claims. "The mentality of the small business owner is: 'If I train this guy in customer service, he is going to be gone within a year anyway.' It doesn't matter how long they are with you or how low on the totem pole they may be. Customer service starts with the owner and extends down to the frontline employees. The myth is that everyone from birth understands customer service. It has to be taught."

**DISCOUNTING NOT ALWAYS PAY DIRT.** McCall cautions contractors to be careful with discounting prices – a tendency offered more generously in a down economy. "Once your customers become used to a lower price, it's then hard to raise it," he explains. "Put simply, most people associate price with value. If you lower your price, what does that say about value? Develop loyalty and rewards programs instead. Reward patronage... this makes people feel special."

The landscape industry seems to be following suit on this suggestion. According to *Lawn & Landscape* research, 24 percent of contractors are standing by their prices, while 37 percent are working with customers to keep price but reduce total cost by reducing services. Only 20 percent of contractors said they have lowered prices this year to prevent the loss of a customer.

## Where the Cuts Are

If customers are cutting services this year or holding back on services, which services are affected (check all that apply)?



**"I am convinced most landscapers don't want more business. Why? Because they are not customer-driven. That's precisely why they don't get the volume of business they want." – JOHN TSCHOHL**

Zabriskie points out: "If you are a Cadillac, stay a Cadillac. If you are a Hyundai, stay a Hyundai. If you've never run discounts before because you are known for superior service and/or talent, don't all of sudden shift gears."

Experts do agree in a down economy it is imperative to negotiate more with customers one-on-one. "This may be a time to roll out a new program that allows pricing choices low enough for customers to still use you," Zabriskie suggests. "Offer more price points but make sure your customers know that if they are getting a cheaper deal, there will be something taken away from their usual package (i.e., taking longer to complete a service or no more lawn analysis after each fertilization)."

**BAD ECONOMY IS ALL THE BUZZ.** Customers are going to be talking a lot about the bad economy with their service providers for quite some time. And using it as an excuse to cut loose or not bite.

"Especially over the past six months, people have been in a daze," says McCall. "They are shell-shocked. There's a

depressed, subdued feeling – a malaise lingering over us like a dark cloud."


Brown believes when customers talk about the bad economy, contractors may want to shut them down, but should not. "Look at this as an opportunity to get their business. Empathize with them. Turn it into a positive. This is an opening to offer them your solutions to their woes."

Zabriskie advises it's OK to play a therapist role to them. "Acknowledge what they've said. But what you don't want to do is match them with tales of woe about your own business. They need to know that your company is solid; it won't be going away. It's OK to say something like: 'We've had to look at different ways to manage our business to weather the storm.'"

In this economy, Noon sometimes has to shake his customers out of their quandary. "We have to sit down with them and tell them that the world is not ending. There's still food on the table."

Schucker is convinced there is a ray of hope demonstrating the beginnings of an economic turnaround. "In the last couple of months, I'm finding customers are tired of waiting and finally signing contracts they've been sitting on for the past year. It could be the recent turn of events (like the stock market increase) is making them more confident about the economy."

Tschohl reminds landscapers that regardless of when the economy rebounds, they need to always place customer service first and foremost in their businesses.

"Keep looking at all policies and procedures that make things difficult for your customers," he says. "Just good service doesn't get anyone to talk about you. *Stellar* customer service is what gets them buzzing about you." 

The author is a freelancer based in Akron, Ohio.



# TOTAL INSECT CONTROL TOTALLY

We're like, toast.

For sure.

Totally.

HELP

## ALOFT Insecticide provides total insect control, guaranteed.

Simply apply once early for season long control of all major turfgrass insects, surface feeding pests and white grubs. It has two kinds of powerful activity to provide residual, systemic control and fast knockdown. Plus, we're so confident in the proven effectiveness of ALOFT, we're backing it with our Unsurpassed Performance Guarantee. To learn more, call 866-761-9397 or visit [arystalifescience.us/aloftguarantee](http://arystalifescience.us/aloftguarantee).

Aloft<sup>®</sup>

Total Control. Guaranteed.™

# Treat Them Right

A Kansas landscape firm insists positive relationships with suppliers goes a long way.

BY LINDSEY GETZ

It may seem like common sense – treat your suppliers well and they'll treat you well, too. But there are a lot of people in this industry who abuse their suppliers, says Kevin Payne, owner of TenderCare Lawn & Landscape, a multi-million dollar company based in Derby, Kan. Instead, Payne goes above and beyond and has fostered a strong relationship with his suppliers, which he says has greatly paid off for his company.

In his 27 years in business, Payne has built trust with his suppliers by giving them advance notice on jobs whenever possible, and always paying his bills on time. "When we have a project coming up, we let them know three or four weeks in advance what we'll need," he says. "And we always follow up a week beforehand to make sure we're on schedule. It makes our suppliers happy that we aren't hitting them with surprises."



Payne

Of course Payne says there are occasionally unforeseen circumstances that arise, which requires them to call in last minute supplies. But in those situations, Payne has found his good relationships with his suppliers always pay off. "They are more than willing to help us out in a pinch because of how we've treated them in the past – and that's important in this business," he says. "It allows us to get the job done efficiently for the customer."

For most companies, the extent of a relationship with a supplier ends after the bill is paid – they

received their supplies, paid for them and that's that. But Payne takes it a step further. "We like to go above and beyond," he says. "Suppliers usually come to landscapers and ask to take them out to lunch. We turn that around and take *them* out to lunch. We want our suppliers to know we appreciate them too."

Payne also says even though cost is an important factor, especially in these difficult economic times, he won't ditch a relationship built on years of trust to save some money.

"We get a lot of catalogs in the mail and a lot of phone calls about beating the price we pay, but nothing means as much as a strong relationship with a supplier," he says.

Besides help in a pinch, one of the other ways those relationships have paid off is in getting new work. "Our suppliers have actually helped get us jobs," Payne says. "Many times a homeowner will call a supplier directly and we're always one of the names they give out. There have even been a few times they've heard of a large commercial job and will give us the information before anyone else. It gives us a leg up and time to come up with a bid."

Payne also says it's wise to take advantage of any free resources or opportunities to learn from suppliers. "The No. 1 thing we do is ask a lot of questions," he says. "And almost anytime they host a free seminar, we send someone – even if we feel we are already knowledgeable about their products. There's always something new you can pick up on that will help you grow." **L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Royersford, Pa.

# Cut Costs!



## Cut Operating Costs - And Increase Profits!

Looking for a place to cut operating costs? Atrimmec® can reduce labor and disposal costs by 50% or more. Use the on-line Atrimmec Trimming Cost Calculator at [pbigordon.com/trimmingcalculator](http://pbigordon.com/trimmingcalculator) to input your current costs and compare. See for yourself how Atrimmec can enhance your profit potential.

Easy Spray Application • Irrigation Not Required • No Affect On Turf

For a **FREE** 8oz. Sample Offer!  
[pbigordon.com/trimmingcalculator](http://pbigordon.com/trimmingcalculator)

Atrimmec® is a registered trademark of PBI/Gordon Corporation  
Always Read and Follow Label Directions.

800-821-7925 • [pbigordon.com](http://pbigordon.com)

**G** **pbi / GORDON**  
**CORPORATION**  
An Employee-Owned Company

USE READER SERVICE #49

## How Low Can They Go?

I hear it all the time in every market and in every geographic region of the country. Low-ballers – contractors with unrealistically low pricing – are everywhere and they are ruining the market for contractors who know their costs and who have accurate pricing. And the situation is getting crazier by the day as the 2009 season kicks into gear.

The bad news is that low-ballers are, in fact, everywhere. I don't know of any major market in North America where they do not exist. However, that is not the end of the story. There is good news.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** First, low-ballers don't necessarily have to impact your pricing. It's like wrestling with a pig – he likes it and you get dirty. You don't have to get down into the mud with low-ballers. I've seen lots of contractors compete for work and it's not always the one with the lowest price who gets the work. Often the contractor with the most experience or best presentation wins. My clients are rarely the low price bid. Many of them, upon first talking with prospects, tell them right up front they will not be the low-price bid.

Second, low-ballers may be doing you a favor. Just as water seeks its own level, clients who want the lowest price tend to find the contractors whose primary benefit (and often their only benefit) is the lowest price. I once tried to work with a contractor who told me, "If I'm not the low bidder, I

don't get any work." After seeing his operation, I knew why. Unless this contractor had the lowest price, you'd be crazy to work with him. But even with the lowest price, you'd be crazy to work with him, as he was disorganized and had poor quality control. Low-ballers and their customers often deserve one another.

Third, it's really not about the price. Quality companies often

is a mind-set. You can't climb a fence that's leaning toward you. You can't kiss a girl who's leaning away from you. And you can't make someone else successful. Those who need it most recognize it the least. Some low-ballers will see the light. Most won't.

### LOW-BALLERS NEVER GO AWAY.

Low-ballers are like flies at a picnic. You kill one and 50 come to

## "LOW-BALLERS AND THEIR CUSTOMERS OFTEN DESERVE ONE ANOTHER."

tout a higher-than-usual pricing structure. One retailer boasts that they are the highest price around, and darn well worth it! I often ask seminar attendees to share their irrigation service pricing with the group. It never fails: The companies with the highest pricing for their services are the most successful ones in the room. They are also the ones with the best reputations for doing good work.

**YOU CAN'T PUSH A ROPE.** Trade association members, vendors, educators and other contractors think they need to "educate" low-ballers. Then they will see the light and raise their prices. Don't believe it. I've been teaching contractors how to price their work for more than 23 years. The contractors who need to be in my workshops and seminars the most are the ones who never will attend. Being a low-baller

its funeral. They're always going to be in your market. You need to find the clients who appreciate your level of quality and service, and who appreciate your price. That's what marketing is all about. You also want four to five good contractors in your market who reinforce good pricing and who provide good quality. If you don't have other companies reinforcing good pricing in your area, or if you think that your market needs help with its estimating, contact your local vendors and fellow contractors and let's do an estimating workshop in your local market. Who knows, maybe we'll help create some good company (and companies) for you. **L**

### Coming Next Month

Low-ballers getting you down? In the June issue of *Lawn & Landscape*, three contractors share their solutions for dealing with these competitors.



#### JIM HUSTON

runs J.R. Huston Consulting, specializing in green industry consulting. Reach him at 800-451-5588, houston@gie.net or via www.jrhuston.biz. To purchase his book, visit www.lawnandlandscape.com/store.

2  
AUGER 6 TREE HOLES  
BRING 30" BIT



5

TAKE ... IN

9



12

REMOVE  
CONCRETE PATIO  
& HAMMER  
& BUCKET

7  
INSTALL  
IRRIGATION  
SYSTEM AT  
JOHNSON HOME

18  
ATTACHMENTS NEEDED:  
★ BACKHOE  
★ TRENCHER  
★ VIBRATORY PLOW

19



24  
FORM UP PATIO  
CEMENT BOWL  
ALLSTAND



# Less does more.

30

31

© 2011 The Toro Company

The Toro® Dingo® compact utility loader helps you do more work in less time.

With more than 35 attachments that can be changed in seconds, manual labor and equipment costs aren't the only things it saves. The light footprint of Toro's wheeled and tracked models minimizes damage to existing landscapes. Call 1-800-DIG-TORO for a demonstration, or visit [toro.com/dingo](http://toro.com/dingo).

USE READER SERVICE #51



# Storm Catcher

A rain garden provides a runoff solution for Texas property battling extreme weather – from drought to downpours. BY TOM CRAIN

When your client is the sustainability volunteer coordinator for the city of Plano, Texas, with a vast knowledge and passion for “green” landscape concepts and ideas, selling a rain garden project to her isn’t as big of a challenge as one might think.

“It was a dream project come true,” explains Carrie Dubberley, president of Dubberley Landscape. “I did not have to spend any time educating or convincing this client to build a rain garden as a solution to her landscaping issues, which is often the case.”

One of the main reasons for the installation was to manage her client’s property storm water runoff. North Texas is known for weather extremes, alternating between periods of severe drought followed by excessive downpours.

During typical summer downpours, her client’s neighbor’s roof downspout carried excessive rainwater off the roof directly into her client’s yard, resulting in a major area of standing water that pooled on both sides of the property line. Depending upon the amount of rainfall, it could often take weeks to drain, causing foundation cracks and costly repairs.

To alleviate the problem of pooling water, Dubberley installed a French drain to conduct storm water away from both her client’s and client’s neighbor’s roofs into the rain garden system. For the rain garden build-out itself, Dubberley removed up to half of her client’s lawn, replacing it with native and well-adapted plants and shredded hardwood mulch. She excavated the clay (which is

the typical soil type for North Texas), later using it as a fill material to create a berm on the lower side of the rain garden featuring moss boulders and flowering thyme. In the back yard, she installed a rain barrel to collect water for her client’s vegetable garden.

“So far, the rain garden works like a charm,” says Dubberley. “Although we haven’t had any excessive rains yet which will provide a true test for the new garden (North Texas is in its third year of major drought and the garden was installed last summer), the moderate rainwater that has fallen, has percolated through the system rather quickly resulting in no standing water.”

The author is a freelance writer based in Akron, Ohio. See how Dubberley Landscape makes rain gardens profitable in “Route H<sub>2</sub>O” on page 80.

## DESIGN DETAILS

**Company name:** Dubberley Landscape

**Headquarters:** Plano, Texas

**President:** Carrie Roschlau Dubberley

**Web site:** [www.dubberleylandscape.com](http://www.dubberleylandscape.com)

**Client/service mix:** 98% residential, 2% commercial

**Number of employees:** 2

**Initial project estimate:** \$8,000

**Final project cost:** \$5,324

**Total project land area:** 1,507 square feet

**Total rain garden area:** 200 square feet

**Total design hours:** 16 (project management time not included)

**Total labor hours:** 84

**Subcontracted services:** 5 laborers for installation

**Key plant species:** Texas Star Hibiscus, inland sea oats, Louisiana Iris, cardinal flower, rain lilies, columbine, obedient plant, thyme

**Key hardscape materials:**

French drain, downspout drain adaptor parts, 4-inch PVC pipes, popup emitter, overflow drain, flagstone, moss boulders, rain barrel, compost and clay killer, shredded hardwood mulch

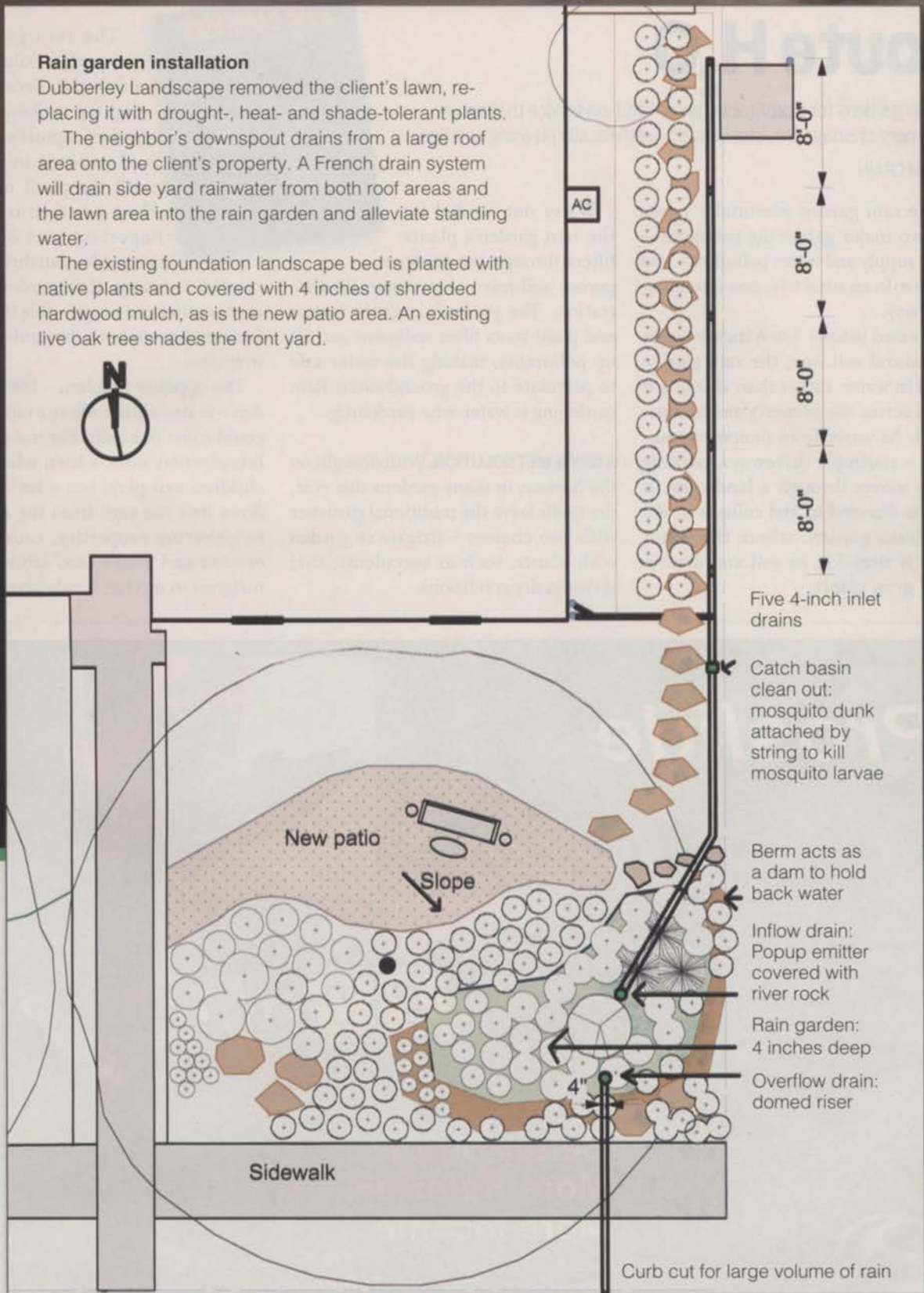
**Key equipment:** sod cutter, rototiller

### Rain garden installation

Dubberley Landscape removed the client's lawn, replacing it with drought-, heat- and shade-tolerant plants.

The neighbor's downspout drains from a large roof area onto the client's property. A French drain system will drain side yard rainwater from both roof areas and the lawn area into the rain garden and alleviate standing water.

The existing foundation landscape bed is planted with native plants and covered with 4 inches of shredded hardwood mulch, as is the new patio area. An existing live oak tree shades the front yard.



# Route H<sub>2</sub>O

Try rain gardens for a profitable, 'green' add-on service that solves customers' drainage troubles with an aesthetically pleasing solution.

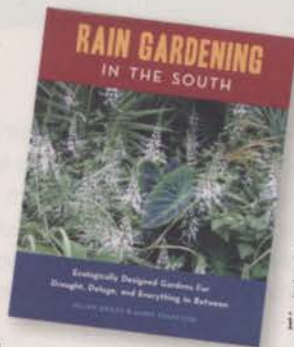
BY TOM CRAIN

The rain garden essentially solves two major gardening problems – water supply and water pollution – and it does so in an attractive, non-retention-pond way.

Recessed usually 3 to 6 inches below the natural soil line, the rain garden draws in water, rather than allowing it to run across the property and become runoff. As water from nonporous surfaces – rooftops, driveways, parking lots – moves through a landscape, it is directed to and collects in the rain garden, where the water is stored in its soil and used to grow plants.

Water not needed for the rain garden's plants filters through the garden's porous soil mix – a process called filtration. The garden's organic matter and plant roots filter sediment and tie up pollutants, making the water safe to percolate to the groundwater. Rain gardening is water-wise gardening.

**A DRY & WET SOLUTION.** With drought on the horizon in many gardens this year, dry spells leave the traditional gardener with two choices – irrigate or garden with plants, such as succulents, that thrive in dry conditions.



The rain garden is the perfect solution for a dry spot. Because it is slightly sunken, a rain garden captures rainfall and stores it in the soil until the plant needs it. Plant selection is also an important part of why a rain garden can thrive when

rainfall is scarce. Rain garden plants are beautiful and tough – able to survive extended periods of drought without irrigation.

The opposite problem – the wet garden – is also a place where a rain garden could come in handy. For instance, say homeowners want a lawn where their children can play, but a lot of water flows into the yard from the roof and neighboring properties, causing soil erosion and ground too saturated for turfgrass to survive. Landscape contrac-

## Proslide<sup>®</sup> XT



## GOslide



Better Stripes  
More Referrals  
More Income



**Novae**  
NovaeCorp.com

607 S. Chauncey St. • Columbia City, IN 46725  
PH (260) 244-4654 • FAX (260) 244-7355

Toll Free

**888-400-3545**

USE READER SERVICE #52





# RedMax<sup>®</sup>

The Professional - Commercial choice for over 20 years!

**Mean, Green & Clean.**

- Blowers
- Brushcutters
- Chainsaws
- Edgers
- Hedge Trimmers
- Reciprocators
- Sprayers
- Trimmers

## MaxTorque Features Include:

- ▶ Heavy-Duty 4-bearing extended life gearcases
- ▶ 44% More Cutting Torque
- ▶ 20% Faster Acceleration
- ▶ MaxClean Air-Filtration
- ▶ MaxComfort control grips
- ▶ MaxSpeed Loader trimmer head standard



## 3 The NEW MaxTorque Trimmer models are here.

- BCZ2450T
- BCZ2650T
- BCZ3050T



New MaxComfort Grip

New MaxClean Air-Filtration

New MSL100 MaxSpeed Loader Head

To contact your RedMax dealer ... Zenoah America, Inc., 1100 Laval Blvd., Suite 110, Lawrenceville, GA 30043, U.S.A.  
Phone: 800.291.8251 Fax: 770.381.5150 Web: [www.redmax.com](http://www.redmax.com)



All the same features of the MaxTorque trimmers in a smaller package! 7 Inches shorter than a standard trimmer, but not short on performance!

The **NEW MaxTorque BCZ2650SS** "Short Shaft" Trimmer  
Because One Size does not fit all

# MaxPro is here and available at a dealer near you.

USE READER SERVICE #53

tors can install a series of drainage pipes throughout the lawn and from each downspout. The pipes can pull water from the soil and direct it toward the rain garden. Within the rain garden, swales and rocks slow the water's velocity as it travels down the slope. With proper drainage, a beautiful lawn can now grow for the first time.

**A TEXAS CASE STUDY.** Carrie Dubberley, president of Dubberley Landscape, has installed, designed and/or consulted on about a half-dozen rain garden projects, which represent 10 percent of her company's overall revenue. Her business revenue tripled last year and is projected to triple again this year. She is sure rain garden installations will turn from a trickle to a deluge of dollars for her company within a few years.

For now, Dubberley finds customers who are interested in

rain gardens are more environmentally sensitive than price-sensitive. "It's still a difficult sell for the average customer because it is a more expensive outlay initially," explains Dubberley. "But once established, it saves money in the long run."

Dubberley says rain gardens are a viable alternative to storm drainage problems, and an answer to prolonged droughts. "As landscapers, we need to landscape responsibly," she says. "The homeowner won't ask for it if they don't know about it, and the landscaper won't tell the customer about it, if they don't know about it."

Companies interested in rain gardens should focus on areas of new construction. "It's hard to convince someone to build on an already-established landscape," says Dubberley.

The town of Frisco, Texas, which lies inside Dubberley's service area, requires

all new construction sites to ensure proper water drainage. "Although Frisco is quite progressive, more new communities will be mandating these same requirements," Dubberley says.

Ideal sites have a lot of space, and the gardens need to be at least 120 feet away from a home's foundation, she says.

Landscapers must consider all of the elements affecting water flow and drainage. The overall watershed, other surrounding vegetation and gutters are just a few. "Rain gardens can have a great impact on storm water management and water quality. Are they the answer? I believe so, but don't expect them to solve all landscape problems alone." **L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Akron, Ohio. For an example of one rain garden project, see "Storm Catcher" on page 78. The first portion of this article was excerpted from the new book "Rain Gardening in the South" by Helen Kraus and Anne Spafford. To purchase the book, visit [www.lawnandlandscape.com/store](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/store).

**Our country is spending billions on infrastructure. Every new project will require erosion and sediment control. Why not add a BURCHLAND attachment to your lineup and start making more money today?**



**XTS** Silt Fence Installer

- Easy threading, single-fold, rear-discharge fabric chute keeps 48", 42" and 36" fabric uniform and running smoothly.
- Forward mounted pivot point allows for tight turns.
- Category-1 and -2 3-point hitch. 3-point to skidsteer adapters and dedicated skidsteer mounting available.
- Optional 72" or 84" sliding offsets available.



**EZR** Material Roller

- The EZR's hydraulic actuator allows the stem to swing 180 degrees to the left or right of the skidsteer. It can also be positioned to the front of the machine to load or unload heavy rolls from a trailer.
- The stem can pivot up and down to work in any terrain.



**SCX** Straw Crimper

- Unique, pivoting, spring-loaded couler assembly allows discs to float over obstacles while others remain engaged with the soil.
- Pivoting coulters allow crimping around a curve.
- Double disc rows and pivoting action prevents rocks from wedging between discs.
- Category-1 and -2 3-point hitch models to 6', 8' and 10' widths.

**BURCHLAND**™

3311 Yates Avenue, Gilman, IA 50106 • 641-498-2063  
Fax 641-498-2540 • [www.burchlandmfg.com/lawn](http://www.burchlandmfg.com/lawn)

©2008 Burchland Mfg. Inc. Photos or illustrations may show optional equipment. Specifications subject to change without notice.

# NOW IN IT'S SECOND YEAR!

STRAIGHT TALK ON  
GROWING AND OPERATING  
A PROFITABLE  
LANDSCAPE BUSINESS.

# GREEN SIDE UP

**NEW!**

**JUST RELEASED: NEW AUDIO CD SET (7 CD'S - 8 HOURS)**

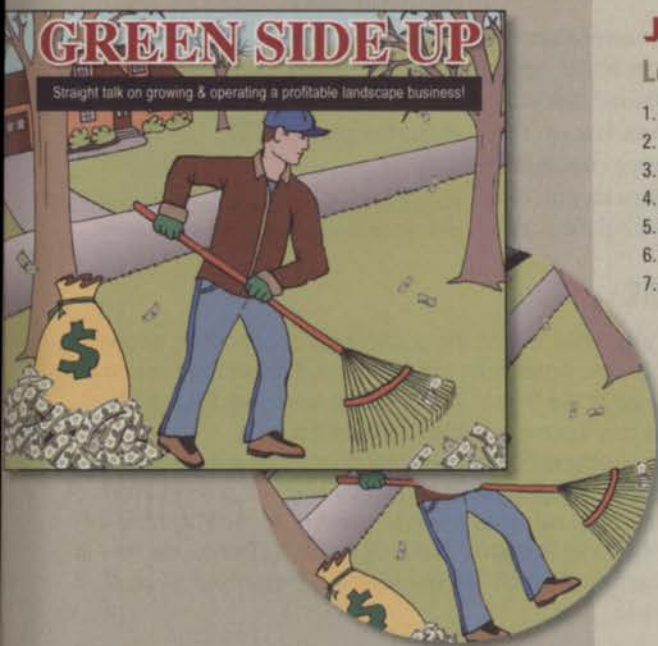
**Learn Seven Keys to Reap Immediate and Lasting Success**

1. Your Business: The power of a plan and getting to know banks.
2. Your Money: How to keep score, make a budget and get paid!
3. Your People: How to find, get and keep great people.
4. Your Operations: Safety, first. Systems and quality.
5. Getting Customers: Remarkable marketing and widening your net.
6. Keeping Customers: Build trust, satisfy - hey, delight!
7. You: See it, believe it, then take it on the road!

Book Price: **\$19.95**

New! Audio CD Set: **\$34.95**

Combo Set (book and Cd): **\$45.00** (Save \$9.90)



Author Ed Laflamme, CLP, was founder of Laflamme Services, Inc. a full-service landscaping company in Bridgeport, Conn. Starting out in 1971 with two mowers purchased with \$700 borrowed from his mother, he built an award-winning company to revenues of \$7 million and sold it in 1999. A much sought-after keynote speaker, author, consultant, business coach and mentor, he serves landscape business owners nationwide.



For more details and to order visit:

[www.lawnandlandscape.com/store](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/store)

**800-456-0707 (or) 330-523-5341**



# Global Warming: Full of Hot Air?

BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

While sustainability remains trendy, the sluggish economy may have some landscape business owners thinking this is not the right time to spend money investing in a sustainability service or solution.

And those who haven't jumped on the sustainability bandwagon just yet may be able to rest easy for another year.

For the first time in Gallup's 25-year history of asking Americans about the trade-off between environmental protection and economic growth, a majority of Americans say economic growth should be given priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent.

The reason for the shift in priorities almost certainly has to do with the current economic recession, Gallup reports. The findings reflect many recent Gallup results showing how primary the economy is in Americans' minds, and help document that in times of economic stress, the public can be persuaded to put off or ignore environmental concerns if need be in order to rejuvenate the economy.

Even when energy comes into play, it takes precedence over the environment, per Gallup's latest research. Although the importance of energy as a policy concern in Americans' minds has moderated since last summer's high gas prices, a different trade-off question shows Americans are more inclined now than in past years to favor giving the priority to energy production over the environment. For landscape contractors who want to educate customers on their fuel consumption-saving efforts, this might be appropriately timed PR.

In another March survey, Gallup also found many Americans – 41 percent – now believe global warming is exagger-

ated. This represents the highest level of public skepticism about mainstream reporting on global warming seen in more than a decade of Gallup polling on the subject.

The 2009 Gallup Environment survey measured public concern about eight specific environmental issues. Not only does global warming rank last on the basis of the total percentage concerned either a great deal or a fair amount, but it is the only issue for which public con-

cern dropped significantly in the past year. Also, fewer Americans believe the effects of global warming have begun to occur, and a record high say the effects will never occur.

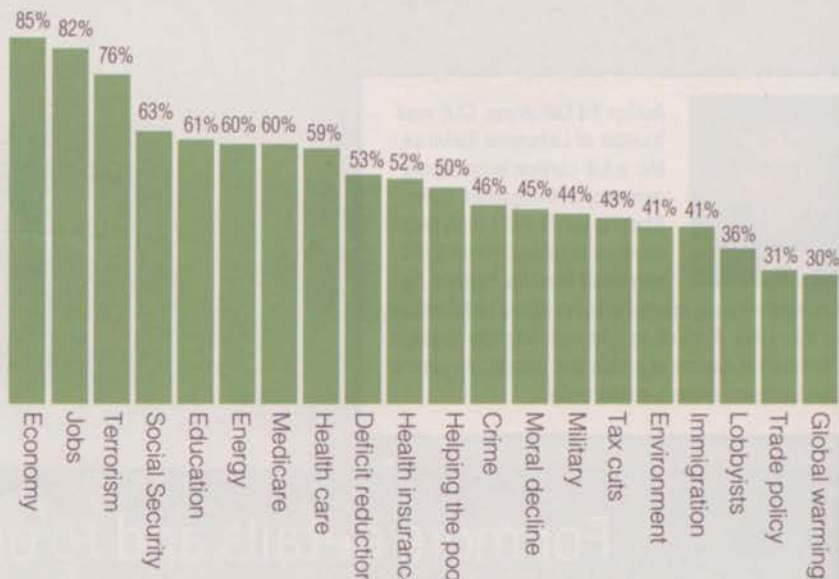
Overall, Americans believe global warming is real, only 34 percent of Americans say they worry "a great deal" about the problem. **L**

The author is editor of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine and can be reached at [nwisniewski@gie.net](mailto:nwisniewski@gie.net).


## Last on the List

Addressing global warming ranks low on the public's list of concerns, according to a Pew Research Center poll. Americans are concerned about the economy first of all, and they are tired of the "hype" about global warming, Patrick Michaels, a leading climate change expert, told CNSNews.com.

Michaels says the economy is not the only reason people are caring less about climate change today. "People are turned off by alarmist presentations of global warming," he says. "Acid rain was going to result in an 'ecological silent spring' according to the National Research Council. It didn't. The ozone hole is going to give everyone cancer. It didn't. Global warming is going to kill us all. It won't." – Cybercast News Service



Source: Pew Research Center



Does your insurance company think a “grub problem” means mystery meat monday?

In a competitive business environment, you can't afford an insurance company that doesn't understand your business. Hortica has over 120 years experience in the horticultural industry. We provide specialized insurance solutions and loss control strategies that other companies don't deliver.

To learn how Hortica can help protect your business visit [www.hortica-insurance.com](http://www.hortica-insurance.com) or call 800-851-7740

  
**hortica**  
INSURANCE & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS  
To guide and provide

With two-wire systems, less material and less labor can mean more savings and greater profitability.



# It Takes TWO

Two-wire technology  
– how does it work and  
should you switch?

BY ED UNDERHILL

Irrigation contractors who are looking for new ways to be more competitive have discovered the advantages of two-wire irrigation systems when preparing bids for large commercial or residential sites. With two-wire, less material and less labor can add up to more savings and greater profitability on many jobs.

Even though two-wire installations have increased dramatically in the last five years, many contractors haven't made the switch ... yet.

They may be concerned about the learning curve – how much time it will take to train their crews, whether or not they can use the same controllers and tools they are familiar with, whether they have to make new investments, whether the technology is reliable. The most interesting question is: “Why spend the money on multiple wires for a large-scale

Do you remember it being this hot?



Let's wait until it warms up.



It is just a passing shower.



I am glad I took swimming lessons.



Don't forget your coat.



## Control your Controller.



Now a change in the weather means an automatic change to your controller watering. The New Solar Sync is the ET system that does the work for you. Simple.

The Solar Sync sensor and module work with all Pro-C and ICC controller models.

**Hunter**<sup>®</sup>  
hunterindustries.com  
committoblue.com

## INTELLIGENT Irrigation

irrigation project when just two wires will do the job?"

Simplified installation and lower installation costs, particularly on sites with 20 valves or more, make two-wire an economical alternative to a traditional multi-wire system. Plus, any existing or new commercial controller can be converted to two-wire operation.

In many areas of the country, especially the Midwest and East Coast, two-wire technology is growing in popularity. According to *Lawn & Landscape* research, 16.4 percent of contractors purchased two-wire supplies in the past 12 months, and 18.8 percent plan to purchase these materials this year. The average contractor who purchases two-wire irrigation equipment spends \$4,437 annually.

**UNDERSTANDING TWO-WIRE.** A two-wire system is similar to a multi-wire system



Long-throw valve-in-head sprinklers, used to cool synthetic turf fields, are commonly used in two-wire systems.

in operation. As the controller runs the program, it sends out a signal to the two-wire field decoders/receivers attached to each valve. The field decoders/receivers recognize their individual station addresses and activate sprinklers in that zone.

The two-wire path can be branched in any direction that works best on the site. In a two-wire system, instead

of a maze of multiple wires running to each station, just two wires extend from the controller to field decoders/receivers installed at each valve in the irrigation network. Twenty-four volts of alternating current and unique station addresses are sent over the same pair of wires to each decoder/receiver to activate the sprinklers.

On a large job that may require 50,000 feet of multi-wire, for example, the two-wire contractor trades those thousands of feet of copper wire for the small waterproof field decoders/receivers in each valve box.

Other than that, everything else in a two-wire system is the same as in multi-wire systems – the same valves, the same solenoids with waterproof connectors, the same copper wire, the same tools, etc.

Irrigation manufacturers, including Hunter, Rain Bird, Underhill and Toro,

# CARSON

SPECIFIED and PREFERRED WORLDWIDE

*40 Years of Leadership and Innovation*

*1969 - 2009*



### Introducing the New DROP-N-LOCK™

Automatic security for valve boxes.

The new DROP-N-LOCK tamper resistant locking device is one of the most innovative in the industry. No locking tools required. Unlocked with common tools carried by technicians. Push and go! engaging system. Practically invisible from outside. Available in a variety of sizes.



**Oldcastle Precast®**  
Enclosure Solutions

(800) 735-5566

[oldcastleprecast.com/enclosuresolutions](http://oldcastleprecast.com/enclosuresolutions)

USE READER SERVICE #58





## **160 BRANCHES, 29 STATES, ONE MOWER.**

When you're the leader in the landscaping industry, you look to the leader of mowing equipment to provide you with the absolute best professional-grade tools. That's why the Brickman Group stocks its trailers with Exmark mowers. Brickman knows that only Exmark mowers will provide its customers with an unmatched cut every time.



**BRICKMAN**  
*Enhancing the American Landscape*

USE READER SERVICE #60



**FIRST... BEST... ALWAYS!**

**KEEP IT GREEN!**

**FIRST...**

- Exclusively designed low profile riser and open drum slot allow smooth, even hose wraps & **NO HUMP!!**
- One piece all welded steel "A" frame with a full flow, machined from solid brass swivel. Motorized models feature a direct drive - **NO CHAIN!!**
- State of the art CNC robotically spun discs & backed by the industry's most comprehensive 2-year warranty



**DIRECT GEAR DRIVE MOTOR CONNECTED TO A STEEL HALO NO CHAINS!**



**LOW PROFILE RISER & OPEN DRUM SLOT NO HUMP!**



**BEST...**

and largest selection of high quality, professional grade hose and safety reels for air & water in the industry.



**EZ-COIL**



**ALWAYS...**

100% pure Coxreels quality in every reel we design & build.



**Your Reel Source**

USA MADE - USA QUALITY - USA SUPPORT

**800-COX-REEL**

Toll Free: 800-269-7335 • Fax: 800-229-7335

Email: info@coxreels.com

[www.coxreels.com](http://www.coxreels.com)

Int. Tel: 480-820-6396 • Fax: 480-820-5132

## INTELLIGENT Irrigation

Much of a two-wire system is the same as a multi-wire system: the same valves, the same solenoids, the same copper wire.

all offer two-wire options, although each system may be a little different.

The two-wire concept has been around since the 1970s, when it was primarily used on golf courses. In the last 10 years, major technical advances have been made to improved decoder/receiver technology and to simplify installation.

Today two-wire is becoming the standard in large-scale, high-profile installations around the world. Two-wire irrigation is most cost effective on large jobs with more than 300 feet of mainline – park and recreation centers, highways and median strips, commercial centers, sports fields, public parks, college athletic fields, hotels and resorts, cemeteries and homeowners' association common areas. The cost savings on wire alone can make contractors more competitive on these bids.

On small residential sites, however, two-wire is not considered the most economical way to go.

One of the biggest advantages of two-wire systems is that they help simplify adding new zones. If a sports complex wants to add more fields or a commercial center is adding more stations, the installer has two options with two-wire. He can connect two new wires at the controller and expand the system from there or he can connect to any two good wires in the network and continue the wire run. No new trenching back to the controller is needed.

**LESS COST, FEWER CALL-BACKS.** Because the valves are closer to the controller on a two-wire system, the wire runs are shorter. The savings add up on big jobs when extended multi-wire runs are replaced with two-wire.

To set up a multi-wire system with 30 valves, for example, you might use upwards of 50,000 feet of wire. However, with two-wire, you may only need 6,000 feet of copper wire. That's 44,000 feet of wire savings, plus less labor to trench



Water-proof field decoders are attached to each valve solenoid in a two-wire system. Field decoders have unique station addresses and receive program signals from the controller, activating the sprinklers in that zone.

# THE ARMY KNIFE OF TURF HERBICIDES



[ PATENTED SYNERGISM REQUIRES LESS ACTIVE INGREDIENTS ]

CRABGRASS • YELLOW NUTSEdge • BROADLEAF WEEDS • TURF TOLERANCE • SPEED



**G** pbi / GORDON  
CORPORATION

An Employee-Owned Company

800-821-7925 • [pbigordon.com/q4](http://pbigordon.com/q4)

ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS 00610  
Q4™ is a registered trademark of PBI/Gordon Corp.  
U.S. Patent 6,849,579

Big efficiency,  
small cost.

That's intelligent.



Save more than 20%  
on water-efficient  
Rain Bird®  
U-Series Nozzles.

Deliver 30% water savings with the Rain Bird® U-Series Nozzle. The patented dual orifice design minimizes brown spots, while conserving water. Happier clients and a better bottom line: that's The Intelligent Use of Water.™

TALK TO YOUR  
SALES REP OR  
DISTRIBUTOR

Rain Bird® U-Series Nozzles

Save more than 20%\*  
over 2008 Rain Bird  
list pricing.

Rain Bird  
List Price  
**\$182**

\*Based on 2009 U.S. Rain Bird® List Pricing effective January 1, 2009.

**RAIN BIRD**



Two-wire systems need field decoders attached to each valve. Here, the two yellow wires connect to the valve solenoid and the red and black are the "two wires" that run throughout the system.

and run lines.

Costs to expand a Hunter ICC (from 32 to 48 zones with an Underhill 2Wire system) typically work out to: decoder module, list price approximately \$315; 16 field decoders, approximately \$60 each; plus the irrigation wire. The total cost would be in the range of \$2,000 for a 16-station two-wire system expansion.

Some two-wire systems require a universal sender, which is connected between the controller's terminal strip and the two-wire path. The universal senders generally have a list price of \$119 per eight stations.

Two-wire also saves call-back time because the new technology is extremely reliable and can simplify troubleshooting. Most site problems on a two-wire job are due to damage caused by trenchers, or a poorly-tightened wire nut or non-functioning valve. If there is a break in the line, it's easy to find because the valves would stop operating beyond that

point. If it's not obvious where the break may be, you could use a clamp meter to check the voltage. Repair is easier than multi-wire since there are only two wires to reconnect.

Two-wire installation can be easy to understand and contractors and their crews can learn the basics in less than a day. After a single hands-on install, they can be ready to go to work. And because they are using controllers they already know, as well as the same tools, they can become comfortable with two-wire fairly quickly. **L**

The author is president of Underhill International Corp., Lake Forest, Calif. He has been in the landscape irrigation industry for 13 years.

### THE HYBRID OPTION

For a look at how to set up a hybrid irrigation system with two-wire technology, visit the May Web Exclusives section at [www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras).



See how much you'll save at  
[www.rainbird.com/savings](http://www.rainbird.com/savings)



Getting unbeatable quality  
at an unbeatable price.

That's intelligent.

TALK TO YOUR  
SALES REP OR  
DISTRIBUTOR

**Save more than 10% with the Rain Bird® 1806 Spray.**

The industry's most durable and water-efficient spray now carries a lower list price—so you won't have to sacrifice quality for cost. Your customers will enjoy greater reliability and higher water efficiency, while you enjoy more than 10% savings. You could call it an easy choice in tough economic times. We call it The Intelligent Use of Water™.

**Rain Bird® 1806 Sprays**

Save more than 10% over Hunter® PROS-06 Sprays.\*

Rain Bird List Price  
**\$9<sup>39</sup>**

Hunter List Price  
**\$10<sup>50</sup>**

\*Based on 2009 U.S. Rain Bird® and Hunter® List Pricing effective January 1, 2009.

**RAIN  BIRD®**

USE READER SERVICE #64

## Is Your Glass Half Full?

**S**pring has sprung and April showers have brought May flowers to much of the country. With spring comes the ramp up of the irrigation season: in the northern climates, this means starting up systems and in the more southern climates, increasing the frequency of irrigation.

Unfortunately, there is no appearance of an economic recovery for quite some time – maybe 2011 – and water issues are still at the forefront of many regulators. You may be wondering where your next job is coming from or, if things are really depressing, your next meal. It's easy to look out and get depressed. If you're familiar with the concept of a glass half full or half empty, the following may sum it up for some of you:

*"I guess I just see the dark side of things. The glass is always half empty and cracked. And I just cut my lip on it and chipped a tooth."* – Janeane Garofalo

The landscape/irrigation bailout package probably won't be arriving soon. With all the bad news, it is easy to have a "woe is me" attitude. But it's in the bad times that the good companies separate themselves from the mediocre. Now is the time to get aggressive, position your company and come out of the continuing economic slump better than you went in and ready to grow. You may have to re-define your company and get some additional education or training, but thinking ahead will go a long way toward improving both your company and your bottom line.

Irrigation is still at the forefront of the water issue and as such provides opportunities to set you apart from your competition. Many states are considering enacting irrigation contractor licensing (North Carolina starts on July 1). Why? Because states are finally recognizing that water is a finite resource and that the average irrigation contractor is a poor steward of its use. Play the water card and separate yourself from the pack.

**Education** – How much formal irrigation training have you had? Have you ever read a book on irrigation? Have you attended a class on irrigation design or installation or have you learned by experience or from someone "who taught you everything you know?" Today's irrigation systems are about efficiencies and uniformities, reduced water use and alternative water supplies, two-wire systems and multi-trajectory, multi-stream nozzles. If you are not aware of these terms, you need to get educated so your systems are up to date and more efficient.

**Certification** – As an irrigation contractor you can be certified in irrigation design, installation or auditing. You can piggy-back your new education by getting certified. Certification demonstrates to your customer that you have taken the time to learn your trade, to care about doing it right and have raised yourself above the competition. It demonstrates initiative, knowledge and commitment. It is expensive, but it raises the bar

for your competitors and sets you apart. If you are certified, you can then quickly and easily parlay that into an EPA WaterSense Partner designation. As a WaterSense Partner you have the power and marketing reach of the EPA working for you and your company, and it's free.

**Technology** – How do you learn about new products? Do you incorporate them into your irrigation system designs and installations or do you just continue to do the same old thing with the same old equipment in the same old way? In today's market, status quo will be the death of an irrigation contracting business. New products save water or make it easier for you and your employees to install, schedule or service irrigation systems. Learn about new products and how they can improve your irrigation systems and your profitability.

This economy forces companies to be lean and mean, but also better, and that requires being more educated, more qualified, more aggressive and willing to stand by their work more than someone else. Make a higher percentage of customers yours; that way you can always think of the glass as being more than half full, and keep your teeth intact. **L**

Learn how product options, warranties and customer service can grow your irrigation business at [www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras).



**BRIAN VINCHESI**

is president of Irrigation Consulting, Inc., an irrigation design and consulting firm that designs irrigation systems throughout the world. He can be reached at [irrigation@gie.net](mailto:irrigation@gie.net) or 978-433-8972.

# WATERMARK



**SMART**  
Water Management  
based on  
plant  
demand

Where  
Irrigation  
Decisions  
Should  
Be Made

## IRROMETER

951-689-1701

[www.IRROMETER.com](http://www.IRROMETER.com)

USE READER SERVICE #66

# #1 CHOICE

for Spray Equipment & Parts!



Large Inventory • Most Major Brands in Stock  
Same Day Shipping • Se Habla Español

888-777-2937 • 888-SPRAYER

Order Online: [www.SprayerPartsDepot.com](http://www.SprayerPartsDepot.com)

Proudly serving you since 1972

USE READER SERVICE #67

# MTI RAIN BIRD SALE

4" POP-UP SPRAYHEAD 1804 SALE

### SPRAY HEADS

- 1804 BODY.....\$ 1.20
- 1806 BODY.....\$ 4.50
- 1812 BODY.....\$ 6.00
- STD. NOZZLES....\$ .80
- VAN NOZZLES...\$ .90



ONLY \$1<sup>20</sup> ea.

BUY THE BOX OR BAG



### MAXIPAW



ONLY \$12<sup>00</sup> ea.

A SUPER DEAL ON THIS  
RELIABLE IMPACT-ROTOR

LOWER PRICES ON DV VALVES, 1804, 1806, 1812 & Nozzles

### 1" DV VALVES

- 100-DV & DV-SS.....\$ 10.25
- 100-DV-MB.....\$ 10.75
- 100-DVF.....\$ 11.00



Install Confidence: Install Rain Bird.

MTI - YOUR BEST SOURCE  
FOR RAIN BIRD



# 800-600-TURF

Order By 1 p.m.  
SHIPS SAME DAY

M-F 7:30-5 SAT 8-1 PDT  
Se Habla Español

ASK ABOUT  
QUANTITY  
PRICING



Call Now & Save

ORDER ON-LINE [WWW.SPRINKLERS4LESS.COM](http://WWW.SPRINKLERS4LESS.COM) ORDER ON-LINE

USE READER SERVICE #65

# Conservative Growth

Nebraska irrigation contractor waits for a better market, better opportunities to grow his business. BY ANGELA DYER

**M**illard Sprinkler is facing the same challenges in 2009 as many other contractors: wanting to grow but being forced to wait, while still hunting for truly qualified workers.

This 100 percent irrigation services contractor is facing economic challenges this year but remains optimistic for growth in the years ahead. One of the largest irrigation contractors in Omaha, Neb., with current revenue between \$3 and \$6 million, Millard Sprinkler handles a large amount of irrigation installations, which account for about 80 percent of its business, along with maintenance of existing systems.

"As far as buying new property and

new machinery and spending money on new employees ... that will not happen this year," says Dustin Nihsen, general manager. "In five years then, yes, we would like to go visit some other cities."

The company has 20 to 25 employees year-round, and in the summer increases to 50 or 60 workers. According to Nihsen, finding applicants in this market is easy, but finding quality workers isn't. "With the job market, we are getting applications but the problem is making sure they are of the caliber we want," he says.

He says sometimes the solution is finding a potential employee with some



Millard Sprinkler says bidding on irrigation installation jobs has become more competitive in today's tough economy.

experience, even if it is not the exact kind they need, because that person could be easier to train in the end.

But even after they have the right employees in place, 2009 still holds other challenges. For example, some homeowners who signed contracts over the winter now want to wait a few



Available at leading distributors nationwide!



Pull wires back through the installed pipe

**SIDEWALK SLEEVER®**  
Patented tool and method

Ask your irrigation /lighting supplier or call us at:


**1-800-691-1148**

[www.sidewalksleever.com](http://www.sidewalksleever.com)

- Sidewalk Sleever installs 1" & 2" pipe underneath a sidewalk in as fast as 60 seconds. All in one step!
- Requires no boring.
- Longer tools are available.

**EarthWay**  
**SPRAYPRO**

**S25 Ground Driven Push Sprayer**



Use the S25 for spraying pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers around the home and office.  
Use it on lawns, driveways and paths.  
**NO GAS, NO BATTERIES, NO PROBLEM...**

For information call 800-294-0671 or visit [www.earthway.com](http://www.earthway.com)

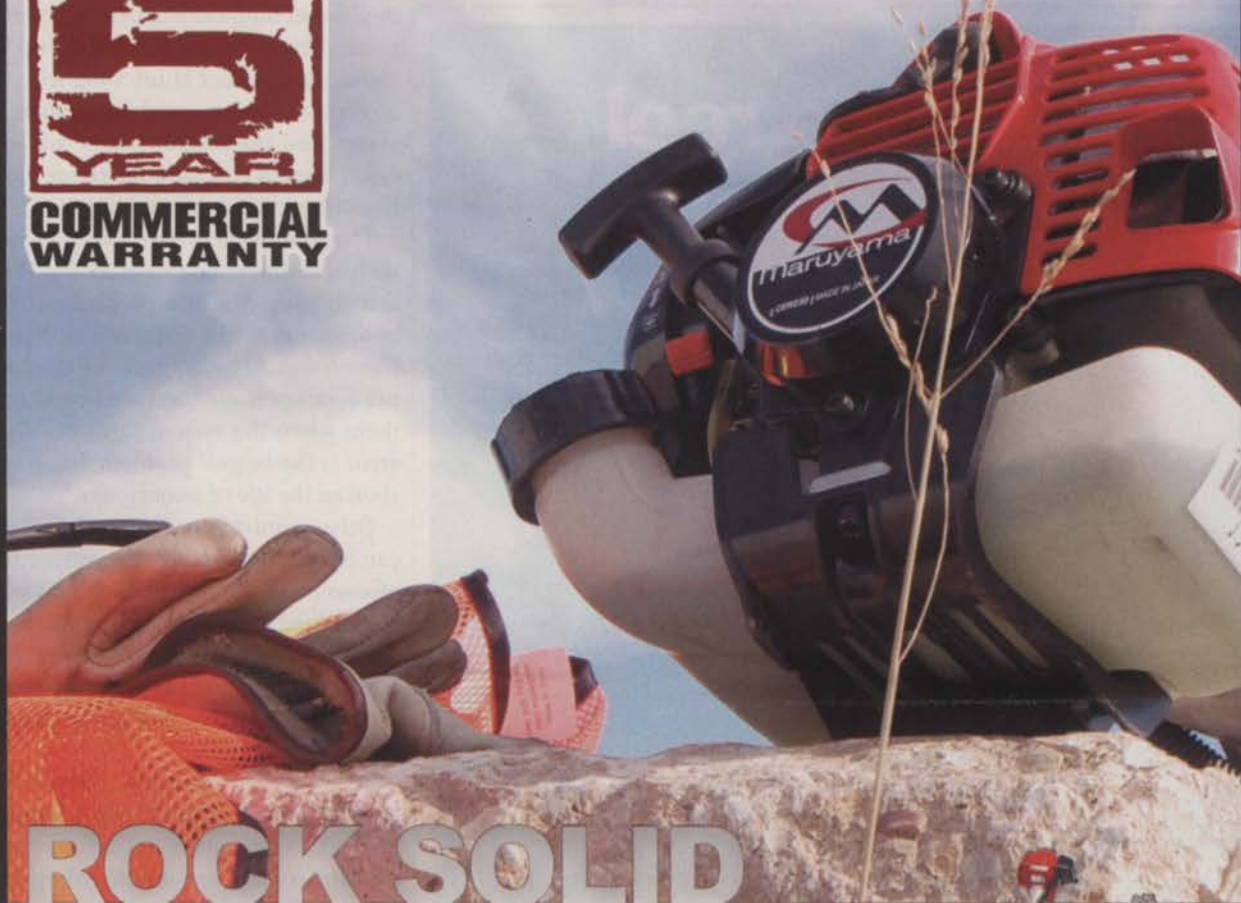


# MARUYAMA

MARUYAMA



COMMERCIAL  
WARRANTY



## ROCK SOLID

When you depend on your tools for your living they'd better be tough, they'd better be rugged and they'd better be dependable. That's why Maruyama professional-grade outdoor power equipment is backed by the longest commercial-use warranty around... 5 years. That's right a 5 year commercial warranty. Extraordinary.



Maruyama. [www.maruyama-us.com](http://www.maruyama-us.com)

TRUE COMMERCIAL OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT

PREFERRED SUPPLIER OF PORTABLE OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT

UNIVERSAL *Orlando*

more months before having the system installed. Another sign of the times is more competitive bidding: Ten contractors might bid for one job, instead of only a few.

However, the one sure thing this year is that Millard Sprinkler will once again

be using Hunter brand irrigation controllers for its new installations. Since controllers are essentially the brains of an irrigation system, it's crucial to have one that the contractor and homeowner can feel comfortable with. "It's really an alarm clock, and you just set what time

you want the sprinklers to go off," Nihsen says. "We seldom have a homeowner who is confused by the clock."


They have been very satisfied with the Pro-C controller, which retails for about \$150 to 200. Nihsen says price can go up as high as even \$5,000 per controller for large commercial properties, depending on what the customer wants. The only time Millard Sprinkler chooses a different Hunter model is on larger installations, with more than 15 zones, and they then choose the ICC clock because it can offer them more flexibility in their programming.

These controllers have a long life and no real maintenance is necessary. "You usually only run into problems if the homeowner is not maintaining them," Nihsen says. "They might leave the cabinet door open and then water gets into them when the system turns on. User error is the biggest problem that could shorten the life of a controller."

Other controllers Nihsen has tried can be too complex for the average homeowner. "I think manufacturers who are making these advancements have good intentions to conserve water, but they are only as good as your end user – they just don't know how to use them," Nihsen explains.

For water conservation, Nihsen follows the KISS method (Keep It Simple, Stupid). Inputting several different run times can cause problems when the homeowner wants to make one simple change. Contractors and homeowners should be aware that setting up zones for everyday watering does not make sense as it simply creates runoff, he says.

"If your clock is set up for three different increment times and you are doing this every two or three days, then you could be watering smart," he says.

The best thing to do when installing a system is for a contractor to use his or her own experience, according to Nihsen. He says: "Listen to your clients and find out what they want and then you can recommend options based on your knowledge." 

The author is a freelance writer based in Valley View, Ohio.

## Only one reel makes your business grow.



From maintaining grounds and spraying lawns to washing down trucks, Hannay Reels deliver rugged dependability.

- Outperforms and outlasts every other brand
- Heavy-duty construction for demanding applications
- Portable units, wheeled, or truck- and trailer-mounted
- Complete custom capabilities

Hannay Reels deliver confidence by standing up to the most demanding jobs and providing lifetime value – proving that you can't buy a better reel. To find yours, go to <http://go.hannay.com/GM7>



**Hannay Reels®**  
The reel leader.

[www.hannay.com](http://www.hannay.com) • 877-467-3357

USE READER SERVICE #71

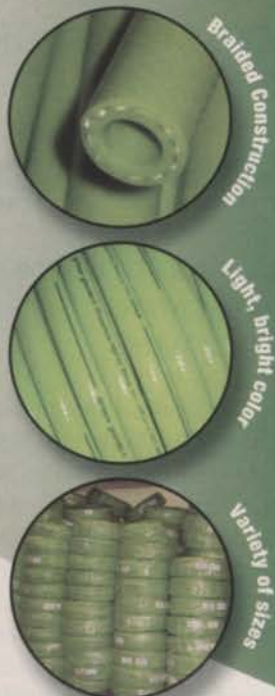
**NEW!** Westheffer™  
Premium Lime Green Hose

Westheffer™ sells Green Garde® Premium Lime Green hose, the finest spray hose available anywhere. Our hose is made of rugged, reinforced PVC with high burst strength; saves you money because it lasts longer. Ideal for grounds maintenance, landscape contractors; in greenhouses, golf courses, cemeteries; for lawn care and tree care; pest control, mosquito control and more.



**Professional Grade Features:**

- Unique construction technique
- Molds inner core and outer covering forming complex reinforcement--will not separate under high pressure.
- Heavy duty braid reinforcement
- Provides up to 600 PSI working pressure and 2,400 PSI burst -- the highest in the industry.
- Wide variety of sizes and lengths
- Available in 3/8" & 1/2" sizes in 300' & 400' rolls
- Light, bright color
- Easy to see but won't mark curbs or sidewalks.
- Braided construction
- Resists kinks and memory bends.
- Costs less because it lasts longer.



**While Supplies Last!**



Suggested List Price  
3/8" = \$0.96 a foot  
1/2" = \$1.39 a foot

**HOT**  
**SPECIAL PRICE**  
3/8" = \$0.50 a foot  
1/2" = \$0.65 a foot

**WESTHEFFER COMPANY**  
921 North First • Lawrence, KS 66044

Phone: 1-800-362-3110 Fax: 800-843-3281  
E-Mail: info@westheffer.com Web: www.hdhudson.com

USE READER SERVICE #72

**Merit Injectable**

**The #1 tree and shrub insecticide now available in a new Microinjection Product.**

Tree Tech® Microinjection Systems and Bayer Environmental Science present Merit Injectable, the latest addition to the Merit insecticide family. Injected directly into the tree trunk or root flare tissue, Merit Injectable offers arborists and landscape professionals a powerful new weapon in controlling pest infestations and contains more active ingredient (17.1%) than other injectable products on the market.

Merit Injectable is available in leak-proof Tree Tech units in two different dosages, depending on tree diameter. Tough-to-control insect pests such as Asian longhorned beetles, emerald ash borers and hemlock woolly adelgid meet their match with Merit Injectable. Other nuisance insect pests such as aphids, armored scales, Japanese beetles, lace bugs, leaf beetles, leafhoppers, mealybugs, psyllids, thrips, tip moths and whiteflies also get their due from Merit Injectable treatments.



**Tree Tech®**  
microinjection systems

950 SE 215th Ave.  
Morrison, FL 32668  
**1-800-622-2831**  
e-mail: info@treetech.net  
www.treetech.net

Merrit is a registered trademark of Bayer AG.

When the control of deserving tree insect pests demands your attention...



**Merit Injectable is your best choice!**

USE READER SERVICE #73

## Help Wanted

Full-service landscape and irrigation firm wants workers who can 'get their hands dirty.'

BY ANGELA DYER

A large, full-service landscaping company, Rothwell Landscape in Manhattan, Kan., remains cautiously optimistic about what lies ahead in 2009 and focuses on overcoming their biggest challenge – staffing. With revenue between \$3 and \$5 million, this full-service company offers landscape design and installation, irrigation design and installation, landscape maintenance, fertilization and pesticide applications, and lawn mowing services. Their irrigation division makes up about one-third of their total business and 70 percent of that is dedicated to installations.

Brent Rothwell, president, says even though the company is somewhat insulated from the economic turmoil in its region – near a growing military base and a large university – he still believes growth will be somewhat flat this year. But he remains hopeful.



Rothwell Landscape's goal is to become more efficient in how they program customers' controllers to help save water.

One challenge he faces is finding quality workers. "It's hard to find individuals who want to get their hands dirty," he says. "The unemployment rate here is half of the national average so the pool of job seekers isn't as great as one might think."

Regardless of how they find this year's workers, Rothwell plans to add 50 seasonal employees to his current 25 and aims

# Got Hills?

LT Rich now offers the Capture System with caster locking device

No other machine has more productivity or reliability.

New - Locking Caster System



Patent Pending

Call 877-482-2040  
www.z-spray.com

**L.T. RICH**  
PRODUCTS, INC.

Hillsburg  
Lawn Care  
& Turf Management

A hummingbird is shown in flight, hovering near a cluster of red flowers in the upper left. In the lower right, there are several potted plants, including orange roses and a tall grass-like plant. The background is a light-colored, textured wall with some vines and leaves.

**2009**  
**NURSERY LANDSCAPE**  
**Expo**  
**TEXAS NURSERY LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION**  
STANDING THE TEST OF TIME

JOIN US FOR THE BEST NURSERY/LANDSCAPE  
TRADE SHOW AND EDUCATION CONFERENCE  
IN THE SOUTHWEST!

[ [www.nurserylandscapeexpo.org](http://www.nurserylandscapeexpo.org) ]

Education Conference:  
**AUGUST 13, 2009**

Trade Show:  
**AUGUST 14-16, 2009**

Dallas Convention Center,  
Dallas, Texas

to be at full-force in early spring. Then he can prepare for the season and the irrigation work that is to come.

On Rothwell Landscape's residential irrigation installations, Rothwell uses Rain Bird controllers – specifically the ESP Modular control box.

These controllers, which cost approximately \$200 to \$250, will last for 10 or more years, according to Rothwell, with no real maintenance required.

Concerning some of the other controllers on the market, Rothwell says he finds they are still fairly difficult to



Rothwell hopes ET-based controllers help customers recoup installation costs quickly.

## Reduce Summer Stress

Demand genuine ROOTS plant performance products to promote healthy, strong plants throughout the summer season:

### ROOTS concentrate

Patented rooting stimulant for planting and drenching to promote rapid root growth and transplanting success

### TRANSPLANT 1-STEP

All-in-one planting and transplanting package for improved survivability of valuable trees and shrubs

Ask for ROOTS today.

800-342-6173 • [www.novozymes.com/roots](http://www.novozymes.com/roots)

**roots**  
Our name says it all




novozymes  
Rethink Tomorrow

Always read and follow label directions. The Novozymes logo is a trademark of Novozymes A/S. ©2009 Novozymes Biologicals, Inc.

program. "Some controllers out there are more complicated than they should be – we choose ones that are easy for the customer to operate and easy to program."

Rothwell is also looking forward to the company's soon-to-be-released ET-based controllers. These evapotranspiration systems adjust themselves based on real-time weather data in order to maintain the optimal balance of moisture in the soil. Besides using them on new installations when they become available, Rothwell says he will also suggest current customers switch to the new ET controllers.

"With the water management it offers, we can sell these to our customers and they will save on their water bills," he explains. "They could recoup their cost of the controller in a year to a year and a half because of water savings."

Hopefully, they will also help eliminate contractor mistakes when watering as well, Rothwell says. "The biggest mistake I see other contractors make is not putting the right amount of water down and not putting it evenly through the yard," he explains. This means water ends up on the concrete instead of on customers' landscapes and turf. "More often than not, contractors program controllers to put down more water than they should. With ET controllers, we can put down the right amount of water as opposed to programming the control box and letting it run. We want to be efficient, and this is the wave of the future." 

The author is a freelance writer based in Valley View, Ohio.

USE READER SERVICE #76

# WE HAVE THE TRUCK FOR THE JOB!

**ISUZU  
TRUCK**



**Isuzu NPR with 19' Dovetail Landscaper Body**  
325 HP Gas or 205 HP Diesel Engine, Automatic Transmission,  
12,000 lb. or 14,500 lb. GVWR, Exhaust Brake (Diesel Only),  
AM/FM CD Player, A/C, P/S, Power Windows & Locks, Tilt Wheel,  
(Other Options And GVW Ratings Available)



**Isuzu NPR HD 4 Door with 19' Dovetail Landscaper Body**  
325 HP Gas or 205 HP Diesel Engine, Automatic Transmission, 14,500 lb. GVWR,  
Exhaust Brake, AM/FM CD Player, A/C, P/S, Power Windows & Locks,  
Tilt Wheel (Other Options And 12,000 lb. GVWR, Gas Available)



**Isuzu NPR HD with 12' Dump Body**  
325 HP Gas Engine, Automatic Transmission, 14,500 lb. GVWR, 19.5 Tires,  
AM/FM CD Player, A/C, P/S, Power Windows & Locks, Tilt Wheel,  
Tow Package & Brake Control, (Other Options And GVW Ratings Available)



**WE STOCK USED  
LANDSCAPE TRUCKS!**

**Used Landscapers In Stock! Variety of Specs Available**  
If you are not in the market for a new landscape truck, maybe a premium used unit  
will work for you. We are one of the few dealers in the country that is dedicated to  
providing you with used landscaper trucks. Many have brand new bodies!



**Remove Dovetail  
In 5 Minutes!**

**Isuzu NPR HD with 19' Revolution Body**

325 HP Gas Engine, Automatic Transmission, 14,500 lb. GVWR, 19.5 Tires,  
Electric Hoist, (Other Options And GVW Ratings Available)



**Isuzu NPR with 18' Enclosed Landscape Body**

325 HP Gas Engine, Automatic Transmission, 12,000 lb. GVWR,  
AM/FM CD Player, A/C, P/S, Power Windows & Locks, Tilt Wheel,  
Split Dovetail Ramp, Side Door, (Other Options And GVW Ratings Available)



**Heavy Duty  
Composite Material**

**HAUL MORE  
PAYLOAD!!**

**Isuzu NPR HD with 10' Composite Dump Body**

325 HP Gas Engine, Automatic Transmission, 14,500 lb. GVWR, 19.5 Tires,  
AM/FM CD Player, A/C, P/S, Power Windows & Locks, Tilt Wheel,  
Tow Package & Brake Control, (Other Options And GVW Ratings Available)



**Isuzu NPR with 19' Custom Irrigation Body**

325 HP Gas or 205 HP Diesel Engine, Automatic Transmission,  
12,000 lb. or 14,500 lb. GVWR, Exhaust Brake (Diesel Only),  
AM/FM CD Player, A/C, P/S, Power Windows & Locks, Tilt Wheel,  
(Other Options And GVW Ratings Available)

**Neely Coble Company**

**Nashville, TN 800-367-7712**

**NEW or USED TRUCKS @ [www.neelycoble.com](http://www.neelycoble.com)**

## A 2009 Survival Philosophy

Minnesota irrigation contractor plans to make the most of this year and find areas for growth.

BY ANGELA DYER

**B**NR Irrigation is going into the 2009 season with a new philosophy. In terms of its installation work, its goal is to do "a little bit of work for all of its clients." According to owner Brandon Gothmann, if he is doing some kind of work – even minimal – for everyone, he should still be in contact with all of the company's customers when the economy turns around.

The business – located in St. Bonifacius, Minn., and dedicated solely to irrigation – is split evenly between installation and maintenance work when it comes to manpower. However, in terms of dollars, 70 percent of them come from irrigation installations.

According to Gothmann, BNR Irrigation's revenue is between 1.5 and 2 million, and the company currently employs 11 full-time workers. In the summer months, that number will go up to 30 or 35 employees. "I think it's very easy right now to find qualified employees," Gothmann says. "In the past it was hard finding qualified people, but now it's easier to find workers who are even overqualified."



Professional equipment, for professional operators. Do those big jobs with a compact scraper or grader, and your small tractor. Move more dirt and get better results with the right tools.

**HOELSCHER INC**  
312 S Main St - Bushton, KS 67427  
620-562-3575  
[www.hoelscherinc.com](http://www.hoelscherinc.com)

**HOELSCHER**  
COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS

USE READER SERVICE #78

## TRAILERS BUILT FOR THE LONG HAUL

Redi Haul Trailers prides itself in the quality and durability of the trailers it offers.

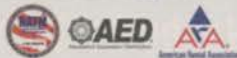


The Specialty Transport series of trailers offers great flexibility with I-beam construction and 82" between fenders with the deck made from 2" nominal bolted oak.

The Hydraulic Dump series of trailers are designed to meet the most demanding requirements. They feature heavy duty construction with a 7 GA floor & a 10 GA steel box with capacity from 1.4 Cu. Yds to 4.3 Cu. Yds.



[www.redihaul.com](http://www.redihaul.com)



**Redi Haul TRAILERS INC. 1-800-533-0382**  
1205 North Dewey • Fairmont, Minnesota 56031

USE READER SERVICE #79



BNR Irrigation suggests contractors test new controllers on sites where they can afford some failure until they are comfortable installing them on clients' properties.





# Urgent Message about the Economic Stimulus Plan and how it affects you!



You could save up to \$5,000 or more on the purchase of \$10,000 in new Scag Equipment utilizing the economic stimulus!

Consult your tax professional for more details.\*

The 2009 Federal Economic stimulus package, combined with TD Retail Card Services 3.9% 60-month retail finance program, can result in a tax benefit in excess of the remaining 2009 monthly payments for a new mower or other equipment used in business activities!

Savings will vary; Please consult your tax professional for specifics. For these assets, a taxpayer is entitled to expense the entire cost, or other basis, during the year the asset is placed into service, up to a maximum of \$250,000, provided you don't purchase more than \$800,000 of assets in that year.

**GREAT FINANCING AVAILABLE!\***  
**3.9% FOR 60 MONTHS!**



\*\*\*3.9% financing for 60 months is available to qualified buyers of new Scag equipment. See retail finance programs for details.

**ATTENTION  
LANDSCAPE  
CONTRACTORS!**

**VELOCITY<sup>+</sup>  
PLUS**

**ONE  
DAY** Challenge

This One-Day Challenge is all about showing you how the new Velocity Plus deck from Scag will make you more productive and more profitable. Here is our offer: If you are currently searching for the right mower, we will offer you a full one-day demonstration so that you can discover for yourself how much faster you can mow with the Scag Velocity Plus deck.

Go ahead and take the challenge — use our machine for a full day\* — there is no cost to you. We are confident that you will see for yourself why more and more professionals are buying Scag mowers with Velocity Plus decks.

\*Available only at participating dealers

USE READER SERVICE #80

To locate your nearest dealer call **800-686-3128** or visit **WWW.SCAG.COM**

## The solution for wildlife food plots.



Introducing the Brillion FPS-6 Food Plot Seeder, the newest member of the Brillion seeder family.

The Brillion FPS-6 has the versatility to operate in a wide variety of wildlife food plot conditions and plant numerous grasses, legumes, small grains and other blends and mixes. It has the features necessary for precise seed metering and placement, as well as outstanding preparation and finishing of the seed bed.

The FPS-6 was designed with input from you, our customers, and we stand behind it with our years of experience as a leader in the industry.

**The Food Plot Seeder has all the rugged durability to provide the years of service you've come to expect from a Brillion.**



**Brillion Iron Works, Inc.**  
www.brillionfarmeq.com  
(800) 409-9749

©2008 Brillion Iron Works, Inc. All rights reserved. BRPS09083237

USE READER SERVICE #82


## TOOLS of the Trade

Gothmann says 2009 will be a year of holding steady, but he is optimistic he will see some growth in the service area of the business. Property owners are looking to sell or rent this year and they want those properties well maintained so they can move them quickly, he explains.

To implement its new philosophy and complete the installations it has planned this year, BNR Irrigation uses Toro irrigation controllers. The company specifically relies on TMC 212 controllers for its residential properties because they are user friendly. BNR Irrigation also uses the newer Intelli-Sense controller on some jobs. The ET-based controller uses site-specific information and real-time weather data to set the watering schedule for the homeowner. "We are switching over to this more and more because with people going green it is becoming more popular," Gothmann says. "But it does cost more money and is not as user friendly, so whether we choose this controller depends on the client."

The company also uses the TMC 424 controller on commercial properties. This modular controller has higher electrical output and comes with more features needed for a larger area, such as flow monitoring, which shuts down the entire system if a broken line occurs.

For contractors currently looking at different irrigation product lines, Gothmann suggests they use what they are most comfortable with. A contractor should test controllers on sites where he can afford to have some failure until he works out issues, he advises. Gothmann also thinks contractors should be hesitant to purchase the newest controllers on the market until they test them thoroughly.

The only thing he would change about some of these newer controllers is that they can often have too many features and are not as simple to run as previous models. "Try to find a controller that you don't need a manual for," Gothmann says. "If you need a manual in order to look at it then it's not simple enough." 

The author is a freelance writer based in Valley View, Ohio.



ROOTED IN EXCELLENCE



405.233.2000 WWW.DFTREES.COM ARCADIA, OK

DEEP FORK



TREE FARM

USE READER SERVICE #83



*Middle  
Georgia*  
**ISUZU**

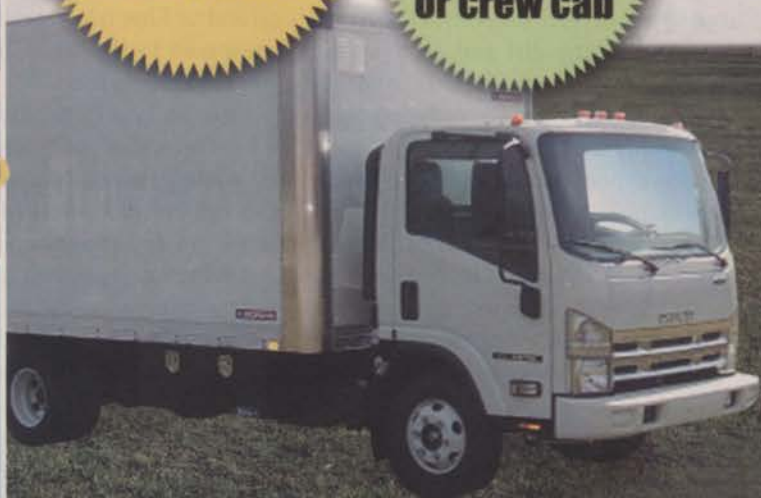
**Lawn  
MAX**



- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>A.</b> Cooler Rack   | <b>I.</b> Backpack Blower Pack  |
| <b>B.</b> Pool Pruner Pole Rack                               | <b>J.</b> Tool Racks            |
| <b>C.</b> Weedeater Racks                                     | <b>K.</b> Backpack Sprayer Rack |
| <b>D.</b> Chemical Jug Rack                                   | <b>L.</b> Pruning Sheer Rack    |
| <b>E.</b> Shelves   | <b>M.</b> Fire Extinguisher     |
| <b>F.</b> Translucent Roof                                    | <b>N.</b> Clipboard Rack        |
| <b>G.</b> Ladder Rack   | <b>O.</b> First Aid Kit         |
| <b>H.</b> Louver Vents<br>2 in front<br>2 on rear rollup door | <b>P.</b> Hardwood Flooring     |

**18x18x36  
TOOLBOX**  
Passenger Side

diesel or gas  
standard cab  
or crew cab



Driver Side  
**FUEL  
STATION**  
Gas/Diesel  
Pre-Mix



**1-866-308-4601**

**www.gatrucks.com**

**Ask for Chris Presley or email [chrispresley@gatrucks.com](mailto:chrispresley@gatrucks.com)**

# Start Your Engines

Today, efficiency is the name of the game. Avoid equipment downtime with frequent small engine attention. BY DALE GABRIELSE

Most preventive maintenance programs on small equipment engines are like borders without a string trimmer – shabby and unkempt. Too often, operators neglect proper maintenance checks, leaving dirt and dust to clog filters, contaminate fuel or cause an engine to overheat. Recognizing signs of trouble and understanding engine maintenance, whether it's preventive or a quick fix, will help operators avoid downtime, stay efficient and prevent productivity-draining repairs. Here are some engine maintenance tips and tricks that will help in starting a sufficient preventive maintenance program.

**THE DAILY SHOW.** Daily maintenance is usually the easiest and quickest to perform. Oil is one of the keys to the service life of an engine. Checking the oil and air filter takes about five minutes compared to the 10 hours it takes to overhaul an engine.

Also, in small, air-cooled engines, oil serves a dual purpose. Because an air-cooling system does not use a liquid coolant, it often is assumed air alone acts as the cooling medium. However, fuel and lubrication systems also help cool these engines.

Checking the condition of the air filter is another important daily practice



Change the oil at least every 100 hours to remove potentially harmful sludge.

that can prevent significant damage. A clogged, wet or damaged air filter can lead to a loss in efficiency and power or might stop an engine from running altogether, causing the operator to waste time troubleshooting. Even worse, a neglected filter may shorten the life of an engine by allowing dirt or water into sensitive areas.

Another basic daily maintenance step

## My Whole Life Changed When I Took On a Weed Man Franchise In Louisville, Kentucky

### My 4 Greatest Benefits Getting Into the Weed Man Organization:

1. Local Sub Franchisors that give hand-in-hand support. Advice, guidance, benchmarking support - it's all there and unlike any other program!
2. Buying power convenience. Everything we need in a packaged system is a true time saver.
3. The Budgeting Process. As an accountant I appreciate the well planned and effective process.
4. Tried and Proven Systems. The deliberate methods in serving customers is unequalled.



David West  
2005 Franchisee  
Louisville, KY

**Weed Man**

(888) 321-9333  
info@weedmanusa.com

**FREE REPORT**  
TOP 10 Advantages and  
Challenges of Franchises

## YOUR SINGLE SOURCE OF LANDSCAPE FABRICS & EROSION CONTROL PRODUCTS



*Landscape Fabrics*  
Weed Control • Filter Fabric  
Patio/Paver Underliner

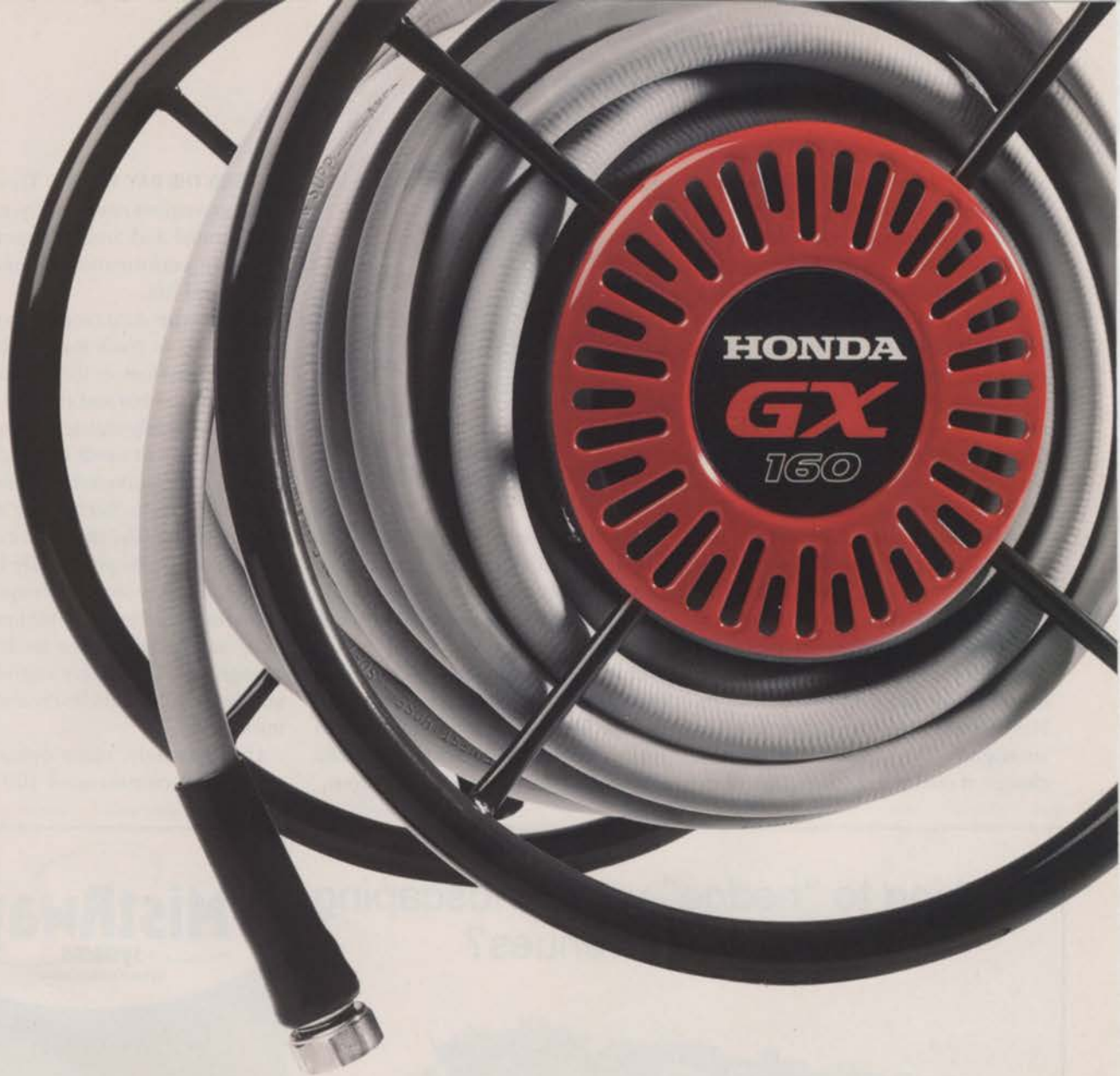
*Geotextile*  
WovenGeo Road Base Separation Fabric

*Erosion Control*  
FabriJute™ Erosion Netting  
Jute • Burlap • Silt Fence

Landscape Fabrics are a Great Complimentary Sale with Decorative Stone, Mulch, Pavers, etc.

6398 W. 74TH ST., BEDFORD PARK, IL 60638  
(708) 728-7180 • 1-800-992-0550 • FAX: (708) 728-0482

[www.fabriscape.com](http://www.fabriscape.com)



## HELPS BUSINESS GROW.

Nobody has to tell you that the lawn care business is full of unknowns from the weather to gas prices. That's why professionals count on Honda engines. They're legendary for being fuel efficient, quiet and tough. Plus, now they come with a three-year limited warranty\*. Good engines can do more than just make your business run. They can help it grow. **Find out more at [honda.com](http://honda.com).**

**HONDA**  
**ENGINES**

Built like no other.



\*Warranty applies to all Honda GX Series Engines, 100cc or larger purchased at retail or put into rental service after January 1, 2009. Warranty excludes the Honda GXV160 model. See full warranty details at [Honda.com](http://Honda.com). For optimum performance and safety, please read the owner's manual before operating your Honda Power Equipment. ©2009 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

USE READER SERVICE #87

is cleaning the engine. This eliminates potentially harmful dirt and gives the operator a chance to check the engine for leaks, loose parts and damaged components. Replace anything that is damaged, and tighten loose parts that could vibrate and potentially harm nearby components.

Clean a greasy or dirty engine by spraying it with a non-petroleum-based degreaser. Wait for the solvent to start breaking down the dirt, then wipe it clean with a cloth or soft brush. The engine should always be warm, not hot, when it is cleaned. Warm water at a low pressure can be used to rinse the engine. Dry the outside immediately afterward, then run the engine for a few minutes to help dry any parts that could not be easily dried with a cloth. Never use a pressure washer to clean an engine. The sudden temperature change of cold water coming into con-



Keep an eye on your oil levels to extend the life of your equipment.

tact with a very hot engine may result in cracks and damage, and the pressure of a power washer could be enough to break through the engine seals, resulting in water in the engine.

Once the equipment is clean, pay particular attention to any signs of fuel leakage. Tighten parts causing a leak, or replace them. A leak is not only wasteful and inefficient, but can be dangerous.

**BEYOND THE DAY TO DAY.** Throughout the year, engines need weekly, monthly, semiannual and annual maintenance to retain performance and maximize equipment life.

Landscape contractors can use a manual log to track maintenance and complete services, or they can purchase an hour-meter box and attach it to a machine to digitally register hours of use.

One item that needs to be addressed daily as well as bimonthly is the engine oil. In addition to checking the level and quality of oil daily, change it every 100 hours to remove potentially harmful sludge. Change it more frequently if operating in extreme conditions. Also, after using a new engine for 20 hours, change the oil to remove assembly lube and the metallic particles created during initial break-in.

Unfortunately, many operators go over the recommended 100 hours,

## Looking to "hedge" your landscaping or services revenues?



We are actively seeking Landscaping Professionals to sell, install and service our innovative outdoor misting systems that effectively control mosquitoes and other annoying insects.

Great margins and recurring revenues!

Special opportunities:  
Birmingham, AL and Charlotte, NC

**1-866-485-7255**  
**WWW.MISTAWAY.COM**

**BECOME A MISTAWAY DEALER TODAY!**

# Trim Your Labor Costs!

Leading landscape professionals rely on the easy-to-use, long-lasting formulation of Cutless® Granular Landscape Growth Regulator to reduce the labor costs associated with maintaining landscaped shrubs, hedges and groundcovers. Plants treated with Cutless Granular require less trimming and exhibit a more compact, uniform shape.

Use Cutless Granular today...You'll love the increased profits and your customers will love the fuller and more attractive plants.

For more information about Cutless Granular Landscape Growth Regulator, visit our web site at [www.sepro.com](http://www.sepro.com), or call 1-800-419-7779.

## Cutless® Granular Landscape Growth Regulator



## Side-by-side proven results with Cutless® Granular.

Example below of reduced shoot growth and enhanced bud development of the treated Jasmine on the left, and untreated on the right.



SePRO Corporation Carmel, IN 46032

\*Trademark of SePRO Corporation. Always read and follow label directions.



USE READER SERVICE #89

and some do not change the oil at all. But the increased efficiency and lower maintenance costs that result from a well-lubricated engine are worth the effort. A quart of oil costs about \$2.50, but a replacement engine could cost 100 times as much (not to mention, it's much quicker to change the oil than to replace an engine). Additionally, most small single-cylinder engines do not use an oil filter, making them especially reliant on oil changes when operated in dirty conditions.

The air filter also needs daily and bimonthly attention. Regardless of how dirty the air filter is, clean it every 100 hours and change it monthly. Along with oil, the air filter is one of the most important factors in promoting peak performance and long service life. Most manufacturers recommend cleaning foam air filters with soapy water. Then rinse the filter thoroughly, squeeze out



Run a tight ship: Check the engine's bolts to keep it from bouncing around.

excess water and blot dry with a paper towel or shop rag. Work a small amount of engine oil into the filter and blot away any excess before reinstalling it. If the filter still appears dirty or clogged after cleaning, it should be replaced. Another way to check for an abnormally dirty filter is to squeeze and release it. If it does not quickly return to its normal shape and size, replace it.

Clean a paper filter by removing it and tapping it on a hard surface to knock off any excess dirt. Don't use compressed air; it may cause tears in the paper. While manufacturers typically recommend replacing paper filters after about 50 hours of use, dusty environments will result in more frequent replacements. Checking the filter regularly ensures that a replacement is made when it is needed.

An operator also should inspect the spark plugs every 50 hours for damage, dirt and excessive carbon build-up. Dirty spark plugs can cause a decrease in power and poor starting performance. Clean spark plugs with a wire brush or spark plug cleaner. If the buildup seems excessive, it may be a sign of weak spark voltage, an incorrect carburetor adjustment or a lack of air cleaner maintenance. Check the electrode gap on the spark plugs as well, ensuring it still



**LARRY LUGS**  
**BOLT-ON DRIVE LUGS**



**CAT & ASV Multi**  
**Terrain Loader Parts**  
**Rubber Tracks**

**TRACK TENSIONERS**



**SPROCKET TUBES**



**ALLOY WHEELS**



2785 W. 247th Street  
Louisburg, KS 66053

913.947.3934

913.947.7223 fax

[www.bairproductsinc.com](http://www.bairproductsinc.com)

**WHERE THERE'S A JOB TO BE DONE  
THERE'S A KAWASAKI THAT CAN DO IT.**

*See more at our new website.*



Go to [www.kawpower.com](http://www.kawpower.com) to find out the latest on Kawasaki commercial grade Handheld Power Products and Engines. You'll find tips on buying equipment and learn why you should look for a Kawasaki engine when buying a mower. Check out our website and see how the family of Kawasaki products can help grow your business. To find a dealer check on-line or call 800-433-5640.

**Kawasaki**  
Engines/Power Products



# Enter and

# Win!

## **This Month, win Earthscapes Landscape Design Software**

With EARTHSCAPES Landscape Design Software, valued at \$1,095<sup>00</sup>, you can create a complete, high quality landscape design in less time than it takes to draw a hard-to-read site-plan by hand.

 visual impact imaging  
**EARTHSCAPES**  
Landscape Design Software



**Valued at  
\$1,095<sup>00</sup>!**



### **Redefine professionalism in your market!**

- High Resolution Imaging
- Easy to Use
- 12,000 Image Library
- Use GPS Mobile Mapper with Site-Plan Designer
- Remove Old Landscape
- Paint On Textures
- Night Lighting
- Irrigation design

**ENTER TODAY!**

Go to [www.lawnandlandscape.com/sweepstakes](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/sweepstakes)



visual impact imaging

241 W. Federal St. • Youngstown, Ohio 44503

[www.visualimpactimaging.com](http://www.visualimpactimaging.com)

330-259-7661

- **Chances to Win New Products**
- **Daily News**
- **Message Boards**
- **Archived Magazine Articles**
- **Sign Up for Your Personalized My Lawn&Landscape Account**

**Questions?**  
Call 800/456-0707

**Lawn&Landscape.com**  
**sweepstakes**

meets the manufacturer's specifications, and adjust as needed. Replace any spark plugs with cracked porcelain.

Additionally, clean and inspect the fuel strainer and fuel filter monthly. Contaminated fuel that is not removed can lead to trouble with engine starts. Replacing the fuel line and carburetor is expensive and time-consuming, so it is essential to prevent unnecessary damage caused by contaminated fuel. A carburetor could cost \$100 or more, not including the cost of labor, which could take about an hour.

If there is sediment on the fuel strainer, shut off the fuel line valve before any maintenance or cleaning. Then, remove, empty and clean the sediment bowl and clean the filter screen. If sediment has gone into the tank, all the fuel will need to be removed. Clean the residue from the sediment reservoir, which is the lowest point in the tank. Use a clean rag to



Let it breathe: An air-starved engine won't do you any good.

wipe sediment from the filter element and the sides of the tank before refilling the tank with clean fuel.

On an annual basis, inspect the engine for dirty, broken and misaligned parts. Such parts can cause a variety of engine problems, and thoroughly inspecting the engine gives the most comprehensive view of what needs to be cleaned and repaired. Furthermore,

check the fuel hose each year, and replace it if there are cracks.

Although it may appear time consuming to follow a strict maintenance schedule, most steps are fairly quick and easy to perform. And, in relation to the amount of time and money required to fix or replace a faulty engine, a few minutes spent on maintenance is a small investment to make. It's all about give and take – and a hard day's work from a machine should be reciprocated with a little "TLC" from the operator. **L**

The author is training manager with Subaru Industrial Engines, Lake Zurich, Ill.

Problem with hard starts? Losing power? Check out an engine maintenance troubleshooting guide at [www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/webextras).



**AWARD WINNING!**

# SUPER JACK

DON'T SETTLE FOR IMITATIONS!

**SUPER JACK FEATURES:**

- > Galvanized Steel Finish
- > Safe and Easy Access Under Deck
- > Stable 2 Arm Adjustable Design
- > 24" Safe Clearance
- > Powdercoat Finish s&d (blowout price)
- > Works on all ZTR's and Walk Behinds
- > Works on Stand or Walk Behind also
- > Quality 1-Year Warranty

**NO MORE GAS CANS!**

# EZ FILL



**EZ FILL FEATURES:**

- > 35 GAL / 15 GAL Split Transfer Tank
- > D.O.T. Complaint
- > Heavy Duty High Density Poly Plastic
- > Teathered Fill Caps
- > Locking Safety Valves
- > 10' Commercial Hose and Nozzles with Safety Hooks
- > Multiple Hose Hooks
- > Multiple Labeling Options
- > Universal Threaded Mounting Points

**AWARD WINNING!**

# EZGATE

**EZGATE DOVE TAIL**

THE ULTIMATE GATE LIFTING SYSTEM!



**EZ GATE FEATURES:**

- > Reduces the Lifting by 90%
- > Universal 1-Hour Installation
- > 2' & 4' Dovetail Kits Available also
- > Best Selling Gate Assist for 10 years
- > 1 Kit Works on Gates up to 200lbs.
- > Stainless Housing and Aluminum Hardware
- > Saves on Work Comp Claims Due to Back Injury
- > No Rattle Spring Insert
- > Quality 1-Year Warranty

NOTE: Works on all utility trailers with side rails.



**BALLARD**  
INCORPORATED  
Green Industry Accessories

**BALLARD-INC.COM**

**877.965.0951**

USE READER SERVICE #93

- YES, I would like to receive/continue to receive *Lawn & Landscape* FREE of charge.  
 No, I would not like to renew.

We now require your company address to process your request.  
 Please complete your company information below:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Dept \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

GIÉ Media will only use your e-mail address to contact you with relevant industry or subscription information.  
 If you do not want to receive e-mail from trusted 3rd parties, please check here.

How do you wish to receive your subscription?

- Electronic and Print  Print Only  Electronic Only

You may still receive your **FREE** subscription at your home address. Please provide your home address after completing your company information.

- Please send my **FREE** subscription to my home.

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Apt# \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**1. What is your primary business at this location? (choose only one)**

1. Landscape Contractor  
 2. Chemical Lawn Care Company (excluding mowing maintenance service)  
 3. Lawn Maintenance Contractor  
 4. Ornamental Shrub & Tree Service  
 5. Irrigation Contractor  
 7. Other Contract Services (please describe)

**2. What services does your business offer? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

1. Landscape Design

**Landscape Installation**

2. Seeding or Sodding  
 3. Turf & Ornamental Installation  
 4. Bedding Plants & Color Installation  
 5. Irrigation Installation  
 6. Landscape Lighting  
 7. Hardscape Installation  
 8. Water Features

**Landscape Maintenance**

9. Landscape Renovation  
 10. Turf Fertilization  
 11. Turf Aeration  
 12. Tree & Ornamental Care  
 13. Tree & Stump Removal  
 14. Irrigation Maintenance  
 15. Erosion Control

**Pesticide Application**

16. Turf Disease Control  
 17. Turf Insect Control  
 18. Turf Weed Control  
 19. Tree & Ornamental Pesticide Application

**Other**

20. Mowing  
 21. Hydroseeding  
 22. Snow Removal  
 23. Interior Landscape Services  
 24. Structural Pest Control  
 25. Holiday Lighting  
 26. Other

**3. What is the service mix %?**

- Mowing/Maint \_\_\_\_\_  
 Design/Build \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chemical Application \_\_\_\_\_

**4. How many full-time (year-round) employees do you employ?**

**5. Is Chemical Application work**

1. Outsourced  
 2. Done by own employees

**6. What are your company's approximate annual gross revenues?**

1. Less than \$50,000  
 2. \$50,000 to \$99,999  
 3. \$100,000 to \$199,999  
 4. \$200,000 to \$299,999  
 5. \$300,000 to \$499,999  
 6. \$500,000 to \$699,999  
 7. \$700,000 to \$999,999  
 8. \$1,000,000 to \$1,999,999  
 9. \$2,000,000 to \$3,999,999  
 10. \$4,000,000 to \$6,999,999  
 11. \$7,000,000 or more

**7. What percentage of growth do you anticipate this year?**

**8. What year was your business founded?**

**9. What is your business mix? (%)**

- Residential \_\_\_\_\_ Commercial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Is this a Headquarters or Branch location?**

1. Headquarters  
 2. Branch  
 3. Single Office

**11. What best describes your title?**

1. Owner  
 2. President  
 3. Vice-President  
 4. Corporate Officer  
 5. Partner  
 6. Manager  
 7. Director  
 8. Superintendent  
 9. Foreman  
 10. Specialist  
 11. Agronomist  
 12. Entomologist  
 13. Horticulturist  
 14. Plant Pathologist  
 15. Consultant  
 16. Technician  
 17. Serviceman  
 18. Other (please describe)

**12. Which of the following types of products and/or services are you considering adding/upgrading in the next 12 months? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

1. Construction Equipment (attachments, skid-steers, loaders, tractors, etc)  
 2. Mowers  
 3. Chemical Equipment (pumps, tanks, hoses, reels)  
 4. Handheld Equipment (trimmers, edgers, blowers, chain saws)  
 5. Engines  
 6. Tree Equipment  
 7. Chippers / Shredders  
 8. Fertilizers  
 9. Chemicals (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides)  
 10. Grass Seed  
 11. Nursery / Flowers  
 12. Irrigation Equipment  
 13. Financial Services (insurance, payroll, finance)  
 14. Uniforms (including hats and gloves)  
 15. Business Software / Hardware  
 16. Design Software  
 17. H-2B Services  
 18. Hardscape Products (lighting, pavers, water features)  
 19. Renovation Equipment (seeders, aerators, dethatchers, spreaders, hydroseeders)  
 20. Pest Control Services

**13. Which of the following subjects would you be interested in learning more about? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

**BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

1. Technology solutions for your business  
 2. Employee recruitment/retention  
 3. Ergonomics  
 4. How to set up a safety program  
 5. Immigration/H-2B  
 6. Major growth areas for contractors: Up and coming add-on services  
 7. Alternative fuel/keeping fuel costs down

**MOWING MAINTENANCE**

8. Mowing-labor savers  
 9. Quoting jobs/services  
 10. How to add an enhancement crew/division

**PESTICIDES & CHEMICALS**

11. Generating revenue by adding lawn care services  
 12. Best practices: chemical applications  
 13. Hydroseeding versus sodding  
 14. Fertiligation  
 15. Organic/eco-friendly lawn care options  
 16. Chemical lawn care as add-on services

**CONSTRUCTION & INSTALLATION & DESIGN**

17. Simplifying installation jobs  
 18. Installing pave stone  
 19. Software solutions for design projects—designing with technology  
 20. Design "how to's": Best practices for proper installation  
 21. Design/build/install as add-on service  
 22. Water features  
 23. Tips on selling design/build projects to home owners

**IRRIGATION**

24. Basics of irrigation installation & maintenance  
 25. Weather-based controllers  
 26. Dealing with water restrictions  
 27. How to become a WaterSense Partner  
 28. Irrigation as add-on service

**HORTICULTURE**

29. Best practices for dealing with drought  
 30. Soil treatments for best plants  
 31. PGR's  
 34. Bedding & installation  
 32. Software for planning  
 33. Seasonal planting guidelines

**OTHER**

35. None of the above  
 36. Other (please specify)

**14. Which of the following equipment do you have in inventory? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

10. MOWERS (riding, reel, walk-behind, zero-turn)  
 20. MOWER ATTACHMENTS (bucket, cab, dethatcher)  
 30. HAND TOOLS (shovels, saws, trimmers)  
 40. POWER TOOLS (blowers, edgers, chain saw)  
 50. APPLICATION EQUIPMENT (foggers, sprayers, spreaders)  
 60. CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT (tillers, forklifts, tractors)  
 70. IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT (filters, pipes, pumps)  
 80. TRUCKS and TRAILERS  
 90. NON-EQUIPMENT (pesticides, fertilizers)  
 99. OTHER

### FREE Product Information:

Write the appropriate reader service numbers in the boxes below for more information.


### INFORMATION IS EASY!



**FAST**

Complete the subscription and product information form, fold, and mail back to us. We're paying the postage!



**FASTER**

If you prefer you may fax us at:  
**330-659-4043**



**FASTEST**

For even faster service visit us at:  
**www.lawnandlandscape.com**

# FAST & FREE

## FREE SUBSCRIPTION & PRODUCT INFORMATION

FOLD AND MAIL YOUR COMPLETED SUBSCRIPTION  
AND PRODUCT INFORMATION REQUEST.

WE'RE PAYING THE POSTAGE!

VISIT [www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com)

FOR FASTER SERVICE

Fold along dotted line and tape.



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

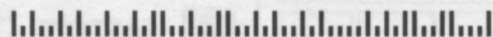
FIRST-CLASS MAIL

PERMIT NO. 10

RICHFIELD OH

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

GIE MEDIA  
PO BOX 532  
RICHFIELD OH 44286-9926



**Maximize your advertising dollars by reaching:**

- The Industry's Largest Print Audience.
- The Industry's Largest Web Media Audience.
- The Industry's Largest Classified Section.

We offer the industry's lowest costs for you to be seen in both *Lawn & Landscape* magazine and [www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com).

Please contact Bonnie Velikonya at 800/456-0707 x5322 or [bvelikonya@glie.net](mailto:bvelikonya@glie.net)

**BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

**SELL MORE LANDSCAPES & JOBS**



**FREE DVD & TRAINING  
NO PAYMENTS, NO INTEREST  
FOR 90 DAYS**

**We FUND Your Installs  
[www.allprogreens.com/training](http://www.allprogreens.com/training)**

- \* Two **NEW** Profit Centers
- \* Two **NEW** Revenue Streams
- \* Two **NEW** Customer Bases
- \* **90 DAYS - NO** Payments/Interest
- \* A Simple, Easy Add-On Service
- \* Buy Manufacturer Direct

**1-800-334-9005**

**SYNTHETIC GOLF GREENS**

**SELL MORE LANDSCAPES & JOBS**



**FREE DVD & TRAINING  
NO PAYMENTS, NO INTEREST  
FOR 90 DAYS**

**We FUND Your Installs  
[www.allprogreens.com/training](http://www.allprogreens.com/training)**

- \* Two **NEW** Profit Centers
- \* Two **NEW** Revenue Streams
- \* Two **NEW** Customer Bases
- \* **90 DAYS - NO** Payments/Interest
- \* A Simple, Easy Add-On Service
- \* Buy Manufacturer Direct

**1-800-334-9005**

**SYNTHETIC LAWNS**

**BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

**SELLING YOUR BUSINESS?**

FREE APPRAISAL

NO BROKER FEES

**Professional Business Consultants**



Professional Business Consultants can obtain purchase offers from qualified buyers without disclosing their identities. Consultants' fees are paid by the buyer.

CALL:

**708-744-6715**

FAX: 508-252-4447  
[pbcme1@aol.com](mailto:pbcme1@aol.com)

**NaturaLawn of America**  
THE LEADER IN ORGANIC-BASED LAWN CARE™

**Franchise Opportunities!**

Whether you are a business conversion or individual start-up, secure your future with a 20+ year environmental industry leader.

**Call today!**  
800-989-5444

[www.NaturaLawn.com](http://www.NaturaLawn.com)

**Incorporate**  
for as little as **\$99**

Visit [www.incorporate.com](http://www.incorporate.com)  
or call 888-743-7325

THE **COMPANY**  
CORPORATION™

INCORPORATING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

To advertise in *Lawn & Landscape*, call  
Bonnie Velikonya  
800/456-0707 x5322

## CLASSIFIEDS

- THINKING OF TAKING SOME OF YOUR MONEY OFF THE TABLE?
- WANT TO GROW BY USING OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY?
- LOOKING FOR A PRIVATE EQUITY BUSINESS PARTNER?



### The BlueSky Group LLC can help.

If you have had these thoughts recently, for a FREE, no obligation consultation, give us a call at (614) 221-9795 or visit us on-line at [www.blueskygrp.com](http://www.blueskygrp.com)

### BUSINESS WANTED

#### WANTED TO PURCHASE

Chemical lawn & tree care companies, any area, any size business reply in strict confidence. Contact Green Venture Group: [greenventurepartners@yahoo.com](mailto:greenventurepartners@yahoo.com)

#### MIDWEST ACQUISITION WANTED

Leading Midwest Winter Services Company with over \$12 million in revenue seeks to grow into additional cities in the West and Midwest. We are looking for winter services revenues in excess of \$2.5 million in a normal year as a minimum requirement. We bring a strong systems and management background, twenty years of history and financial strength to the transaction and we are willing to work with management to create a plan that works for both parties. Please contact [snowcompanies@gmail.com](mailto:snowcompanies@gmail.com) for a confidential discussion.

### BUSINESS FOR SALE

#### GREAT OPPORTUNITY

KUBOTA DEALERSHIP  
FOR SALE  
FIRST CLASS  
GOING BUSINESS  
SERIOUS INQUIRIES  
PLEASE E-MAIL  
[SELLKUBOTA@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SELLKUBOTA@GMAIL.COM)

#### FOR SALE IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Lawn Maintenance, landscape, pest control, irrigation and tree service company. Sales at \$3 million and growing, 10 years old, owners retiring. For more information: [www.swflbusinessmall.com/business-for-sale](http://www.swflbusinessmall.com/business-for-sale)

#### LANDSCAPE COMPANY FOR SALE

North Atlanta  
Landscape, Maintenance, Installations  
Equipment & Trucks available  
Revenue: \$500,000.00+

Contact Rand Hollon at Preferred Business Brokers  
800-633-5153

#### RARE OPPORTUNITY

Located in beautiful Prosper, Texas, we have enjoyed 25+ years of Cardinal Landscapes, Inc. - a successful and gratifying business. Now, we are ready to ride off into the sunset and explore the wild west! Opportunity offers \$200K of equipment, a commercial building on 6 acres (for lease/possible sale), and a stellar reputation with years of grateful customers. Average gross income \$500K. Excellent potential for expansion by adding maintenance to current and new customers. Serious inquiries only: [z4zoller@gmail.com](mailto:z4zoller@gmail.com)

#### REAL ESTATE/BUSINESS FOR SALE

Commercial Real Estate - view at <http://property.loopnet.com/16054113>  
Residential Real Estate, 2,300 s/f house with 1,300 s/f detached garage on 3.2 acres, 2 miles away, rented at \$1,500 p/m  
Landscaping / Maintenance business with equipment \$576,000.00 + Sales -

South Central New Jersey  
\$2,000,000.00

Hank 609-517-3063.

### ASSOCIATIONS

#### Don't Get Frustrated...Get Help!

[www.ALMANOW.com](http://www.ALMANOW.com)  
There's **NOTHING** We Can't Help  
You With!

### AUCTIONS

#### SELL YOUR EXTRA STUFF

Free Basic Listings. Buy and sell new or used items. Classifieds and Help Wanted. Exclusive Marketplace of the Green Industry.  
307-203-2736  
[GreenApplicatorAuctions.com](http://GreenApplicatorAuctions.com)

### BOOKS

#### Is the Economy getting you "Down"?

Jim Huston's book can help  
**Preparing for & Responding  
to a Down Economy**

Proven strategies to help you weather the storms of reduced cash flow  
Learn more at [www.jrhuston.biz](http://www.jrhuston.biz)

Email Jim with questions at: [jhuston@jrhuston.biz](mailto:jhuston@jrhuston.biz)  
Or call to order: 1-800-451-5588

#### In this "Down" Economy You need to know your costs more than ever!

Jim Huston's book can help  
**How to Price Landscape & Irrigation Projects**  
Proven with thousands of pro contractors  
Used by over 60 colleges  
Learn more at [www.jrhuston.biz](http://www.jrhuston.biz)  
Email Jim with questions at: [jhuston@jrhuston.biz](mailto:jhuston@jrhuston.biz)  
Or call to order: 1-800-451-5588

### ESTIMATING

#### Simplify Your Entire Bidding Process

Easy New Software from Jim Huston  
Proven with hundreds of pro contractors

Fully Integrates Estimating, Job Costing & More  
Links with QuickBooks

Learn more at [www.jrhuston.biz](http://www.jrhuston.biz)  
Free on-line demo e-mail: [jhuston@jrhuston.biz](mailto:jhuston@jrhuston.biz)

### GPS VEHICLE TRACKING

No monthly fees  
Call 407-888-9663  
[www.vehiclewatch.com](http://www.vehiclewatch.com)

### FOR SALE

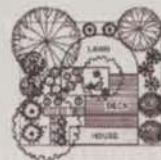
#### "The Dual Spreader Carrier"

For All Lawn Care Companies



Call 508-852-5501

For more information & pricing go to  
[www.paramountglobalsolutions.com](http://www.paramountglobalsolutions.com)



#### LANDSCAPE DESIGN KIT 3

48 rubber stamp symbols of trees, shrubs, plants & more. 1/8" scale.  
Stamp sizes from 1/4" to 1 3/4"

PRICE \$127 + S/H + tax in CA  
Price subject to change without notice

**AMERICAN STAMP CO.**  
CALL NOW 877-687-7102 TOLL FREE

Or 916-687-7102 Local Calls  
Tue Wed, Thur 8-4:30 Pacific Time

[www.americanstampco.com](http://www.americanstampco.com)  
CALL NOW TO ORDER or for YOUR FREE BROCHURE.

**MOW MORE** Mow More Supplies  
LANDSCAPE SUPPLIES, INC. 1-800-866-9667

Mower blades, air & oil filters, trimmer line, belts, plugs and tons of blades in stock

[www.mowmore.com](http://www.mowmore.com)

### LANDSCAPE SEEDING EQUIPMENT FOR SALE:

Rotadairon RD150 great shape \$11,000 obo  
ATI 725 Preseeder excellent condition \$6,000 obo  
Located in Central Ohio  
Call 740-412-1554 or email  
bowerjp@yahoo.com

### LAWN MAINTENANCE AND LANDSCAPING FORMS

Order online and save. Invoices, Proposals, Work Orders, Door Hangers, Promotional Products and more. ShortysPrinting.com. 1-800-746-7897.



## Spreader-Mate™

This self-contained "drop-in" sprayer converts your commercial broadcast spreader to a fully functional sprayer in minutes.



Toll free - 800.706.9530  
Phone - 585.538.9570  
Fax - 585.538.9577  
Sales@GregsonClark.com  
[www.GregsonClark.com](http://www.GregsonClark.com)

### LANDSCAPE EQUIPMENT

#### TREE STAKES

Doweled Lodgepole Pine  
CCA Pressure Treated  
2" Diameter, Various Lengths  
Economical, Strong and Attractive  
Phone: 800-238-6540  
Fax: 509-238-4695  
JASPER ENTERPRISES, INC.  
We ship nationwide.  
Web site: [www.jasper-inc.com](http://www.jasper-inc.com)

### Shop Our Online Store!

[www.lawnandlandscape.com/store](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/store)

### LANDSCAPE INFORMATION

Since 1998

## donnan.com

Landscaping & Lawn Information

### PLANT MATERIAL

#### PERENNIALS & GROUNDCOVERS

Over 160 varieties - No order too small  
FREE Color catalog  
Shipping UPS & FedEx daily

1-800-521-7267

[www.evergreennurseryinc.net](http://www.evergreennurseryinc.net)  
EVERGREEN NURSERY, INC.  
1501 Dials Mill Rd. Statham, GA 30666

#### WETLAND/NATIVES & CONSERVATION

Large selection of Plugs, Perennials, Grasses, Natives & Conservation.

#### CHIEF MOUNTAIN FARMS

Ph 443-350-3894  
fax 410-658-7331  
[www.chiefmountainfarms.com](http://www.chiefmountainfarms.com)

### HELP WANTED

## GreenSearch

Since 1995, GreenSearch is recognized as the premier provider of professional and confidential employment search exclusively for exterior and interior landscape, irrigation, and the overall green industry throughout North America.

Check us out on the Web at  
[www.greensearch.com](http://www.greensearch.com) or call toll free  
at 888-375-7787 or via  
e-mail [info@greensearch.com](mailto:info@greensearch.com)

#### SALES LEADERS WANTED

Leading Midwest Winter Services Company with over \$12 million in revenues seeks experienced sales staff to manage existing portfolio and build new customer relationships. A minimum of five years winter services sales experience required, CSP and College Degree Preferred. Full benefits package plus total compensation in \$80,000-\$125,000 for proven professionals.  
Please send confidential interest and resume with salary history to [snowcareers@gmail.com](mailto:snowcareers@gmail.com)

### KEY EMPLOYEE SEARCHES

**Florasearch, Inc.** in our third decade of performing confidential key employee searches for the landscape industry and allied trades worldwide.

Retained basis only.

Candidate contact welcome, confidential and always free.

**Florasearch Inc.**, 1740 Lake Markham Road, Sanford, Fla. 32771.  
Phone 407-320-8177,  
Fax 407-320-8083.

E-mail: [search@florasearch.com](mailto:search@florasearch.com)  
Website: [www.florasearch.com](http://www.florasearch.com)

### SUBCONTRACTORS

Looking for subcontractors to plow and salt commercial sites! SRSA, Inc. services Western PA, Eastern OH, and Northern WV.

We've been in business since 1979. We supply the salt. Top pay. Work today - get paid today! Call & come aboard with a great organization.

Call 1-866-352-SRSA  
Visit [www.srsainc.com](http://www.srsainc.com)



## Come Grow With Us!

Leaders in Vegetation Management Since 1978

Specializing in Railroad, Roadside, Industrial and Aquatic Vegetation Management, our clients include many of the largest corporations in North America.

DBi is a market leader with a clear vision of the future, investing heavily in our people, our core values and a friendly work environment.

**WE ARE LOOKING FOR HARD-WORKING TALENTED INDIVIDUALS WITH EXPERIENCE TO MANAGE THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF OUR BRANCHES AND DIVISIONS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.**

*Qualified applicants must have a minimum of 2 years of experience in the green industry, have proven leadership abilities and strong customer relations and interpersonal skills.*

**\*WE ARE ALSO ALWAYS LOOKING FOR TALENTED FIELD PERSONNEL - SUPERVISORS, FOREMEN, TECHNICIANS AND LABORERS... COME GROW WITH US!**

We offer an excellent salary, bonus and benefits package including 401(k) and company-paid medical and vacation benefits.

For career opportunity and confidential consideration, send resume including geographic preference and willingness to relocate to:  
DeAngelo Brothers, Inc. | Attn: Human Resources Department  
100 North Conahan Drive | Hazleton, PA 18201  
Phone 800.360.9333 | Fax 570.459.5363  
Email [cfaust@dbiservices.com](mailto:cfaust@dbiservices.com)  
EOE/AAP MF-D-DV  
[www.dbiservices.com](http://www.dbiservices.com)

## CLASSIFIEDS

### SALES REPS WANTED

Online landscape equipment training business seeks seasoned sales reps for southwest and southeast USA. Attend trade shows and develop the business in your territory. Investment required. Excellent product, reputable company, lots of support.

email [jay@landscapesafety.com](mailto:jay@landscapesafety.com)

### GREENINDUSTRYJOBS.COM

Since 1999  
LandscapeJobs.com  
IrrigationJobs.com  
TreeCareJobs.com  
and more

1-888-818-JOBS



### Join the company where People Matter...

Our motto is *Our business is people and their love for trees.*\* We offer excellent career opportunities at all levels.



We value **safety first**, provide ongoing training, and have an excellent compensation and benefit package that includes a 401(k) with company match and ESOP.



the care of trees.

877.724.7544  
fax 847.459.7479



Apply online at

[www.thecareoftrees.com/careers](http://www.thecareoftrees.com/careers)

Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C.



## BRICKMAN

Enhancing the American Landscape Since 1939

Brickman is looking for leaders who are interested in growing their careers with a growing company.

Nationwide career and internship opportunities available in:

- Landscape Management
- Landscape Construction
- Irrigation
- Accounting
- Business Administration

Start growing your career at:  
[brickmangroup.com](http://brickmangroup.com)

## GREAT CAREERS FOUND HERE

[GREENMATCHMAKER.COM](http://GREENMATCHMAKER.COM)

### MARKETING

## PROMOTE TO NEIGHBORS

WITH  
PROMOTIONAL  
POSTING SIGNS



View Hundreds of  
Promotional Ideas, Layouts  
& Exclusive Images Online

[www.RNDsigns.com](http://www.RNDsigns.com) • 800-328-4009

Posting Signs • Door Hangers  
Brochures • Mailers • More

### SOFTWARE

#### TurfGold Software

Save time, streamline your business, and make more money with customer relationship management software for the green industry!

FREE Demo Video at [www.TurfGold.com](http://www.TurfGold.com)

Or call 800-933-1955 today!

## TAKE YOUR OFFICE WITH YOU CLIP2Go



GPS Tracking + Bilingual Directions + Start/Stop Times for each Job

\* Requires CLIP<sub>XL</sub>, a Windows Mobile device, Garmin mapping software, Microsoft MapPoint and GPS receiver.

To Learn more call  
800-635-8485 [www.clip.com](http://www.clip.com)

View classifieds at  
[www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com)

### LIGHTING

Become a Certified  
Holiday Bright Lights® Member



866-932-9363

LET US SHOW YOU HOW OUR  
HOLIDAY DÉCOR SYSTEM  
WILL MAKE YOU **MONEY!!**

- FACTORY DIRECT
- HIGHEST QUALITY PRODUCTS
- NO LICENSE OR FRANCHISE FEES!
- COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING

Holiday  
Bright Lights®

Making Seasons Bright



SEE US AT OUR  
SHOWROOMS!

1-866-932-9363

SHOWROOMS IN OMAHA, DENVER  
NEW YORK, CHICAGO & HONG KONG!  
[www.HolidayBrightLights.com](http://www.HolidayBrightLights.com)

Let us help  
you get the  
**word out.**

The L&L Media Group's  
reprint service.

E-mail [reprints@gie.net](mailto:reprints@gie.net)  
to learn more.



## Learn From The Best!



**Christmas Decor is the  
Leader in the Holiday  
Decorating Industry!**

**24% Average Net  
Profit**

**Over \$2,000 Daily  
Production Per Crew**

Call Us Today!

**1-800-687-9551**

[www.christmasdecor.net](http://www.christmasdecor.net)

### SPORTS

NASCAR - Baseball - Football - Golf

**SportSpheres.net**

Sports news, blogs & videos

### WEB DESIGNERS

Web Design, Brochures, Logos, Lettering  
and Printing Services for Landscapers.  
Your single source for marketing your  
landscape business.

Samples online:

[www.landscapermarketing.com](http://www.landscapermarketing.com)

or call 888-28-DSIGN.

[www.lawnandlandscape.com](http://www.lawnandlandscape.com)

### INSURANCE



**M.F.P. Insurance Agency, Inc.**

*Insuring the Green Industry since 1986*



Applicators  
Industrial Weed Control  
Right of Way

Hydroseeding  
Holiday Lighting  
Mowing & Maint.

Snow Removal  
Tree & Shrub Maint.  
Landscaping

*Complete Range of Pollution Coverages*

**New Comm'l Auto Program for Landscapers  
and Mowing & Maint. Services with VERY LOW RATES!**

*Contact one of our Green Industry Specialists*

[matt@mfpinsure.com](mailto:matt@mfpinsure.com)

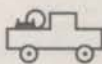
[jleonard@mfpinsure.com](mailto:jleonard@mfpinsure.com)

[rick@mfpinsure.com](mailto:rick@mfpinsure.com)

Toll Free: 800-886-2398

Fax: 740-549-6778

[www.mfpinsure.com](http://www.mfpinsure.com)



# Do you have something to say?

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

Want to sound off on something you saw in this issue?

Have an idea that you think would be worth  
featuring in next month's Lawn & Landscape?

We want to know.

Call or e-mail

**Nicole Wisniewski at**

**330-523-5382**

**or [nwisniewski@gie.net](mailto:nwisniewski@gie.net).**



## AD INDEX

Advertiser	Web site	Page #	RS #	Advertiser	Web site	Page #	RS #
Agrium Advanced Technologies	www.agriumat.com	7	12	Kawasaki	www.kawpowr.com	5, 112	11, 91
Agrotain	www.agrotain.com	67	46	Kichler Lighting	www.kichler.com	66	45
American Honda	www.hondapowerequipment.com	109	87	Kioti Tractor	www.kiotitractor.com	29	26
Ariens/Gravely	www.gravely.com	55	39	Kohler	www.kohler.com	124	97
Arysta	www.arystalifescience.com	27, 73	25, 48	Landscape Safety	www.landscapesafety.com	40	30
Bair Products	www.bairproductsinc.com	112	90	Little Beaver	www.littlebeaver.com	40	31
Ballard Equipment	www.ballard-inc.com	114	93	L.T. Rich	www.z-spray.com	100	74
Belgard	www.belgardwinter.com	23	23	Marsan Turf & Irrigation	www.marsanturf.com	62, 95	42, 65
Bobcat	www.bobcat.com	25	24	Maruyama Middle Georgia Freightliner	www.maruyama-us.com	97	70
Brillion Iron Works	www.brillionironworks.com	106	82	MistAway	www.mistaway.com	110	88
Brown Products	www.brownproducts.com	38, 39	28, 29	Neely Coble	www.neelycoble.com	103	77
BugBarrier Tree Bands	www.treebands.com	20	21	Novae Corp	www.novae.com	80	52
Burchland Mfg.	www.burchlandmfg.com/lawn	82	54	Nufarm	www.nufarm.com/usto	52, 53	37, 38
C&S Turf Care Equipment	www.csturfequip.com	14	17	PACE, Inc.*	www.pacelink.com	63, 105	43, 80
Carson - Old Castle Precast Enclosure Solutions	www.oldcastleprecast.com/enclosuresolutions	88	58	PBI Gordon	www.pbigordon.com	41, 75, 91	32, 49, 62
Coxreels	www.coxreels.com	90	61	Planter Technologies	www.tournesolite.com	20	22
Cub Cadet Commercial	www.cubcadetcommercial.com	19	20	PLNA*	www.plna.com	63	44
Danuser Machine	www.danuser.com	12	15	Primeraturf	www.primeraturf.com	71	47
Deep Fork Tree Farm	www.dftrees.com	106	83	PRO Landscape/Drafix	www.drafix.com	2	10
Dow AgroSciences	www.dowagro.com/turf	45		Project Evergreen*	www.projectevergreen.com	105	81
DuPont	www.proproducts.dupont.com	47	33	Quali-Pro	www.quali-pro.com	32-33	27
EarthWay Products	www.earthway.com	96	68	Rain Bird	www.rainbird.com	16-17, 92,	19, 63,
Exakttime	www.jobclock.com	21	59	RedMax	www.redmax.com	93, 123	64, 96
Exmark	www.exmark.com	89	60	Redi Haul Trailers	www.redihaul.com	81	53
Fabriscape	www.fabriscape.com	108	86	Roots	www.rootsinc.com	104	79
Gowan	www.gowanco.com	49	34	SePRO	www.sepro.com	102	76
H.D. Hudson Manufacturing	www.hdhudson.com	99	72	Sprayer Parts	www.sprayerpartsdepot.com	111	89
Hannay Reels	www.hannay.com	98	71	Syngenta Professional Products	www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com	95	67
Hoelscher	www.hoelscherinc.com	104	78	Texas Nursery	www.txnla.org	11	14
Horizon	www.horizononline.com	58	40	Toro	www.toro.com	101	75
Hortica	www.hortica-insurance.com	85	56	Tree Tech Microinjection Systems	www.treetech.net	13, 15, 77	16, 18, 51
Hunter Industries	www.hunterindustries.com	87	57	UPI Manufacturing	www.sidewalksleeper.com	99	73
Hustler	www.hustlerturf.com	59	41	U.S. Lawns	www.uslawns.com	96	69
InvisiFlow	www.invisiflow.com	50	35	Visual Impact Imaging	www.visualimpactimaging.com	120	94
Irrrometer	www.irrometer.com	95	66	Weed Man	www.weedmanusa.com	113	92
John Deere	www.johndeere.com	9	13			108	85
Jonsered (distributed by Tilton Equipment Co.)	www.jonseredpower.com	51	36				

\*Denotes regional advertising

# WHAT'S YOUR FUTURE?

## CONFUSED. NERVOUS. UNCERTAIN...

### NOW IS THE TIME TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS...

### OWN A HIGH PROFILE LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE FRANCHISE...



NATIONAL STRENGTH, LOCAL COMMITMENT®

**CONTACT U.S. LAWN TODAY...**

TOLL FREE: 866 781 4875 EMAIL: franchise@uslawns.net

LOCAL: 407 246 1630 WEBSITE: www.uslawns.com



# For the First Time Ever

You are invited to manufacturers' product launches and even press conferences. Only at GIE+EXPO! See it here first before you make business decisions for 2010.

GIE+EXPO is sponsored by:



PGMS

Professional Products Management Society



Professional Landcare Network



The New Products Arena will be prominently located on the show floor. Manufacturers' newest items will be displayed side-by-side. Check the stage schedule, and then sit in on press conferences and supplier announcements.

Talk with exhibitors in their booths about the details of products. Then step outside to test drive and compare for yourself.

*The No. 1 reason 75% of lawn and landscape professionals attend GIE+EXPO? To see new products and find out what's going on in the industry.*

"GIE+EXPO is an effective use of my time because not only do I see products and equipment I can use immediately at my facility, but I also see equipment that I didn't know existed. The show sparks ideas that will help me in the future."

**Kevin O'Donnell**  
Superintendent  
of Grounds  
Villanova University  
Villanova, PA



NETWORKING



DEMO AREA



EDUCATION



NEW PRODUCTS

# GIE+EXPO

The 14th largest tradeshow in the USA!

REGISTER TODAY AT [WWW.GIE-EXPO.COM](http://WWW.GIE-EXPO.COM)

Thursday, Friday, Saturday | October 29-31, 2009 | Kentucky Exposition Center | Louisville, Kentucky  
[www.gie-expo.com](http://www.gie-expo.com) | [info@gie-expo.com](mailto:info@gie-expo.com) | (800) 558-8767 or (812) 949-9200

USE READER SERVICE #95

Industry journalist Pat Jones presents both sides from his sometimes twisted point of view.

# Summertime blues?

**W**ell, we survived another winter that was brutal both climatologically and economically. Springtime holds the promise of a return to warmth, green grass and, hopefully, profitability. Yet, it's the summer that has me worried. Why?

Well, according to one of the smartest guys I know in our business, this could be a devilishly difficult summer of discontent from start to finish in the green industry supply chain.

Frans Jager runs PrimeraTurf, a co-op composed of about 40 independent T&O distributors around the country. He cranks out a monthly e-newsletter that always has a few great gems of information about industry goings on (you can view the newsletters and other info about the organization at [www.primeraturf.coop](http://www.primeraturf.coop)).

An article he wrote for the April issue blew me away in both its spot-on analysis of the market and its very candid assessment of a major problem that's brewing. Here's an excerpt from his piece called "Summer Heat":

"This is the year that our industry is likely to pay a price for two unsavory intertwined practices: early-order programs combined with extended payment terms. Come June-July the bills come due for early orders placed in the last quarter of 2008 by end-users and distributors alike.

"They will all come due at more or less the same time and the real question is if the funds will be available at that time to meet all the financial obligations while continuing to run

the operations. We hate to be the bearer of bad tidings, but the answer will, in more instances than we have seen before, be no.

"This summer, June-July, is the time that companies will find out that their customers cannot pay or cannot pay on time, increasing the need for working capital. Turning to their lenders, these companies will find out that credit lines they thought existed, are no longer available or only (under) punitive conditions.

"It is not hard to see the cascading effect of these predicaments: a couple of golf courses or lawn care operations fail to pay for early order purchases, causing their suppliers (distributors) to fail against their obligations against their manufacturers, who, in turn, run out of cash to fund their ongoing operations."

In short, Jager suggests that a domino effect that began last fall could cause distributors and even manufacturers to struggle mightily – or even fail – as cash-strapped customers default on payments mid-year.

There's no doubt that golf courses will contribute substantially to this problem. By my estimate, as many as 2,500 (about 20 percent of all U.S. facilities) face a pending sale, receivership or, in rarer cases, outright closure. I wouldn't even hazard a guess about how many LCOs might fail this year. The housing market still hasn't bottomed out. Without that, there are simply too many operators and not enough maintenance and commercial business to go around.

Yes, customers will go bye-bye

and so, perhaps, will a handful of weaker distributors without the adequate cash reserves or lines of credit to absorb the losses. I can only hope that the majority of the good independent distributors – many members of PrimeraTurf or the other big co-op, Prokoz – will weather the long, hot summer.

I've spent a lot of time at local events hosted by those folks. In general, they're committed, family-run operations that will bend over backwards for customers, and they support the industry 24/7. Even though they're sometimes derided for being what they are – salespeople – I think they're the backbone of the green industry in many ways.

Where would we be without the educational seminars they host or sponsor? What about the intelligence they share about pest problems or success stories at other operations they visit?

The vast majority of the good operators, distributors and manufacturers will survive this summer. But you have to wonder how early-order programs will look different this fall, and how terms might change for 2010. A wise contractor might start asking those questions now.

But, I fear Jager is right about one thing: The perfect storm scenario that he describes may be the end of the line for some folks. Good businesspeople will recognize the opportunity that a thinning of the competitive pack represents. Good businesspeople will, however, also recognize what we lose when good companies wilt and die in the long, hot summer. **L**



**PAT JONES** is a veteran journalist and marketing communications consultant in the turf/golf industry. He can be reached at [pjones@gie.net](mailto:pjones@gie.net).

See our full list of low prices at  
[www.rainbird.com/savings](http://www.rainbird.com/savings)



A rotor you can shut  
off for a price you  
can't turn down.  
That's intelligent.



TALK TO YOUR  
SALES REP OR  
DISTRIBUTOR

**Save 20% with Rain Bird® 5000 Plus  
Rotors featuring flow shut-off control.**

Add our 5000 Plus Rotors to your jobs for quick installs and proven Rain Curtain™ nozzle technology. Unlike the competition's more expensive rotor, the 5000 Plus offers flow shut-off control, allowing you to turn off individual rotors instead of entire zones. Delivering higher-performing rotors at lower prices. Now that's The Intelligent Use of Water.™

**Rain Bird® 5000 Plus Series Rotors**  
Save 20% over Hunter® PGP ADJ® Rotor.\*

**Rain Bird List Price**  
**\$15<sup>90</sup>**

**Hunter List Price**  
**\$19<sup>95</sup>**

\*Based on 2009 U.S. Rain Bird® and Hunter® List Pricing effective January 1, 2009.

**RAIN  BIRD®**

# Looking for a replacement engine that can stand up to harsh conditions?



Engine shown with tall CARB Tier III compliant fuel tank cap.



Quad-Clean Technology

With an industry-standard footprint for ease of installation and an impressive 3-year warranty, Command PRO<sup>®</sup> 7-14 hp engines by Kohler might just be the single-best replacement engine on the market. And because they come standard with the patented four-stage Quad-Clean<sup>™</sup> air filter, KOHLER<sup>®</sup> Command PRO engines will stay up and running even in the toughest and dirtiest conditions. KOHLER Command PRO — It's time you expected more from your engine.

To learn more about why you should make KOHLER Command PRO your next engine, visit us online at the **New KohlerEngines.com**.

## KOHLER<sup>®</sup>

USE READER SERVICE #97