

GET READY FOR MOSQUITO SEASON PG. 56 THE LATEST WALK-BEHIND MOWERS PG. 84

MARCH 2017

www.lawnandlandscape.com

Lawn & Landscape®

Leading business media for landscape contractors

PRICE POINT

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOWBALLING
AND SMART SELLING IS A MATTER OF STRATEGY.

YOUR VOICE:
NEW RESEARCH
ON HOW LOW
PRICING AFFECTS
THE INDUSTRY

SALES TIPS:
HOW TO COMPETE
WHEN YOU'RE NOT
THE CHEAPEST
GAME IN TOWN



#BXNCJNN *****CAR-RT LOT**C-050
#00416744870#
MIKE SCHURY MANAGER - TURFGRASS INFO
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
366 W CIRCLE DRIVE (10)
EAST LANSING MI 48824-3700
V9015

WAC

LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

The Wait is Over.

You asked, we delivered. One LED accent light, fully adjustable. Multiple beam angles and wattage are controlled directly on board. Yes, really.



Wattage (Output): 2W-16W (100-1000 Lumens)
Comparable to: 10-75W Halogen MR16
Construction: Corrosion Resistant Cast Aluminum
Marine Grade Cast Brass
CCT: Warm White (2700K), Pure White (3000K)

Offered in both 9V-15V and 110V-120V

See the entire WAC Landscape Lighting line — waclandscapelighting.com

COVER STORY

PRICE POINT

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOWBALLING
AND SMART SELLING IS A MATTER OF STRATEGY. 28



IN EVERY ISSUE

- 6 Editor's Insight: Women in landscaping
- 8 LL Insider
- 20 Grunder: 3 keys to success
- 22 Huston: Don't get buried
- 24 Words of Wilson: Culture checklist
- 26 Green Guides: Selling your lawn care business
- 122 Hire Power: Retain and cultivate your crew



DID YOU KNOW?

- ➔ According to our 2017 financing survey, less than 40 percent of customers sign up for financing.

PG. 50



SMART
FINANCE
2017

45



2017
FERTILIZATION
GUIDE

70



2017
SPRING PREP
PLAYBOOK

93

FEATURES

Buzzkill

56 Take the time to decide if adding mosquito services is right for your company.



Software update

68 After implementing CRM software, two companies weigh in on how it's helped their businesses.

Haul it all

80 For design/build crews, the ability to carry materials is something all vehicles need to offer.



Give your crew a push

84 If walk-behinds are your mower of choice, check out these models.

Pieces & parts

90 Understanding the functions of irrigation systems' crucial components can help prevent system breakdowns.

A tight squeeze

102 How to handle a driveway project when it's shared by two married couples.



Seal the deal

104 Your hardscape projects will look much more put together with the right products on the job.

A fertile debate

110 LCOs weigh the pros and cons of liquid and granular fertilizer.



Harmony in the landscape

112 Arborists and agronomists can meet in the middle when it comes to trees and turfgrass.

Spring is coming...
So is that headache from
managing your business
for another year.



Don't let the chaos win... We've got a better way.

Start building profits for life with LMN and let us help you prepare and manage your business for 2017. Our software will help you with:

- ✓ Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- ✓ Budgeting & Estimating
- ✓ Timesheets & Job Costing
- ✓ Planning & Scheduling
- ✓ GPS & Routing
- ✓ QuickBooks Integration
- ✓ Invoicing for Maintenance
- ✓ Jobsite Pro Photo Storage

It couldn't be easier with our simple sign up & free onboarding process. Plus, we offer members only Bootcamps & Workshops held across North America to help get you started and stay on track.

Find out what we've got going on under the hood.

Sign up for a free demo:

GOLMN.COM/DEMO

*When you're ready, we are offering a free trial for new users! Yup, that's one whole month to explore LMN.

No credit card required! Visit **GOLMN.COM/FREETRIAL**





Chuck Bowen
Editor | Lawn & Landscape

Just because
I haven't
experienced
harassment
doesn't mean
other people
haven't.

Women in landscaping

Out of seven industry leaders, Abby Santos was the only woman on the stage during a panel discussion at a conference I attended this winter. A landscaper in the audience asked her how the industry can better market itself to women and recruit women.

Santos, owner of No Ka Oi Landscape Services in Hawaii and NALP's Woman Entrepreneur of the Year, made the point that the industry should do more, but it can be difficult to recruit women or show them a path for progress in the landscape industry when there's only one woman on the board of the national association.

"It has been a struggle in a man's industry. Like in the construction industry, I have mostly men working for me, four women," she told me in an interview later. "Very few women want to come in at the entry level. Women who want to do it have to be prepared to deal with that reality."

According to our 2015 Landscaper Census, just 11 percent of the industry is female. I'm not here to say that's too low or too high, but as contractors across the country struggle to find qualified candidates for employment, the green industry could do a lot better by making itself

a better place for women to work at all levels. That means treating them fairly, viewing them as competent, capable employees, and having a zero-tolerance policy on harassment.

For a lot of reasons, we don't all start from the same point in life. Just because it's been easy for one of us doesn't mean it's been easy for all of us, and just because I haven't experienced harassment or hurdles in my life doesn't mean other people haven't.

And Lawn & Landscape could do better as well. We can and should do more to profile and promote women in the industry. The landscape industry has no shortage of smart, talented women leaders – Christy Webber, Jen Lemcke, Debbie Cole, Barb Stropko and Joy Diaz (who is on the NALP board) all come to mind.

We don't lack for sources and we need to feature more women. But we won't do it just because they're women, but because they're running interesting and innovative landscape or lawn care companies.

So that's what we can – and will – do at Lawn & Landscape. But the industry as a whole needs to diversify its labor pool and make itself a better place for women to work, and to show them that there's a path for their success as landscapers, too. – *Chuck Bowen*

Lawn & Landscape

Leading business media for landscape contractors.

58th Canal Rd., Valley View, OH, 44125

Phone: 800-456-0707 Editorial Fax: 216-651-0830 Subscriptions & Classifieds: 800-456-0707

gie
media

EDITORIAL

CHUCK BOWEN EDITOR AND ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: cbowen@gie.net
BRIAN HORN MANAGING EDITOR: bhorn@gie.net
KATIE TUTTLE ASSOCIATE EDITOR: ktuttle@gie.net
KATE SPIRGEN DIGITAL CONTENT EDITOR: kspirgen@gie.net
MARTY GRUNDER MARTY GRUNDER, INC. mgrunder@giemedia.com
JIM HUSTON J.R. HUSTON ENTERPRISES jhuston@giemedia.com
BRUCE WILSON BRUCE WILSON & COMPANY bwilson@giemedia.com
BROOKE BATES CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
KRISTEN HAMPSHIRE CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

CREATIVE

JUSTIN ARMBURGER ART DIRECTOR jarmburger@gie.net

ADVERTISING/PRODUCTION INQUIRIES

JODI SHIPLEY jshipley@gie.net

SALES

DAVID SZY PUBLISHER dszy@gie.net
DAN HEBERLEIN ACCOUNT MANAGER dheberlein@gie.net
TRACI MUELLER ACCOUNT MANAGER tmuellet@gie.net
GAGE ROBERTS ACCOUNT MANAGER groberts@gie.net
TED SCHULD ACCOUNT MANAGER tschuld@gie.net
BONNIE VELIKONYA CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SALES bvelikonya@gie.net

CORPORATE

RICHARD FOSTER CHAIRMAN
CHRIS FOSTER PRESIDENT AND CEO
DAN MORELAND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
JAMES R. KEEFE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
CHRISTINA WARNER AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
MARIA MILLER CONFERENCE MANAGER
KELLY ORZECZ ACCOUNTING DIRECTOR
IRENE SWEENEY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
KEVIN GILBRIDE BUSINESS MANAGER, GIE VENTURES

LAWN & LANDSCAPE MARKET INSIGHT COUNCIL: BILL ARMAN & ED LAFLAMME, The Harvest Group; ANDREW BLANCHFORD, Blanchford Landscape Contractors, Bozeman, Mont.; KURT BLAND, Bland Landscaping, Apex, N.C.; BENTON FOREY, Chackbay Nursery & Landscaping/Forest Land and Tree, Tibodaux, La.; JOHN GIBSON, Swingle Lawn & Tree Care, Denver; BOB GROVER, Pacific Landscape Management, Hillsboro, Ore.; MARTY GRUNDER, Grunder Landscaping and Marty Grunder Inc., Miamisburg, Ohio; JIM HUSTON, J.R. Huston Enterprises, Englewood, Colo.; BRAD JOHNSON, Lawn America of Tulsa, Tulsa, Okla.; JESUS "CHUY" MEDRANO, CoCal Landscape, Denver; TAYLOR MILLIKEN, Elite Landscape Company, Hendersonville, Tenn.; RICHARD RESTUCCIA, Jain Irrigation, Fresno, Calif.; PHIL SARROS, Sarros Landscaping, Cumming, Ga.; JERRY SCHILL, Schill Grounds Management, North Ridgeville, Ohio



Bend the sanding rules.

This abrasive takes on any shape to make detail and flat sanding easy. And the unique film backing resists punctures, tears and creases. It'll change the way you think about sanding.



© 3M 2017. All rights reserved. 3M and PRO GRADE PRECISION are trademarks of 3M. U.S. patent pending.

3M

PRO GRADE PRECISION™
Ultra Flexible Sanding Sheets and Rolls

SUPERthrive® Essential for Transplanting



SUPERthrive® ~ the secret to abundant spring lawns. Essential for successful transplanting.

SUPERthrive® Features

- Unique vitamin solution with kelp
- High economic value
- May be combined with fertilizing programs for ease of use

SUPERthrive® Benefits

- Restores plant vigor
- Promotes chemical balance
- Reduces transplant shock

**Always ahead in
science and value.**

SUPERthrive®

The Original Vitamin Solution

www.SUPERthrive.com  
Vitamin Institute / North Hollywood, CA

800-441-8482

L&L INSIDER

For more news, visit
Lawnandlandscape.com



The iLandscape show took place in early February in Schaumburg, Illinois, a suburb northwest of Chicago, and featured a trade show floor, education sessions and a keynote from actor Ed Begley Jr.

EYES TO THE SKY

Drones, along with a glimpse into an industry giant and advice from an Emmy-nominated actor, were some of the highlights at the iLandscape show. **By Brian Horn**

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — Lawn & Landscape made a stop at the iLandscape show, taking in all that Illinois and nearby states have to offer in the green industry. Here are some highlights from the show, which took place Feb. 1-3.

TAKE TO THE SKIES. One growing trend in the industry is using drones to photograph landscapes from above. This gives contractors a new marketing tool to use to get better photos and to help potential customers visualize how a job will be done.

Peter Spero and Brendan Stewart, founders of AeroVista Innovations, an aerial vehicle service company, said learning to fly a drone for commercial purposes isn't as easy as buying one and operating it. That means getting the correct paperwork filed and practicing the



**"IT'S BEST TO KNOW THE LAWS
OF THE PARTICULAR COMMUNITY
BEFORE YOU GO OUT."** —Peter Spero, co-founder,

AeroVista Innovations

right way to fly one. "It's more complicated than stopping at Best Buy and buying one," Spero said.

If you want to fly over a landscape and use the image for marketing purposes, you must obtain a 107 FAA license to fly the drone. You can obtain the license by taking a 60-question test at a small local airport. You'll need to take a refresher test every two years and have a registration like you would for a car, which



Specticle® & Celsius® — When Weeds Don't Grow, Your Business Can.



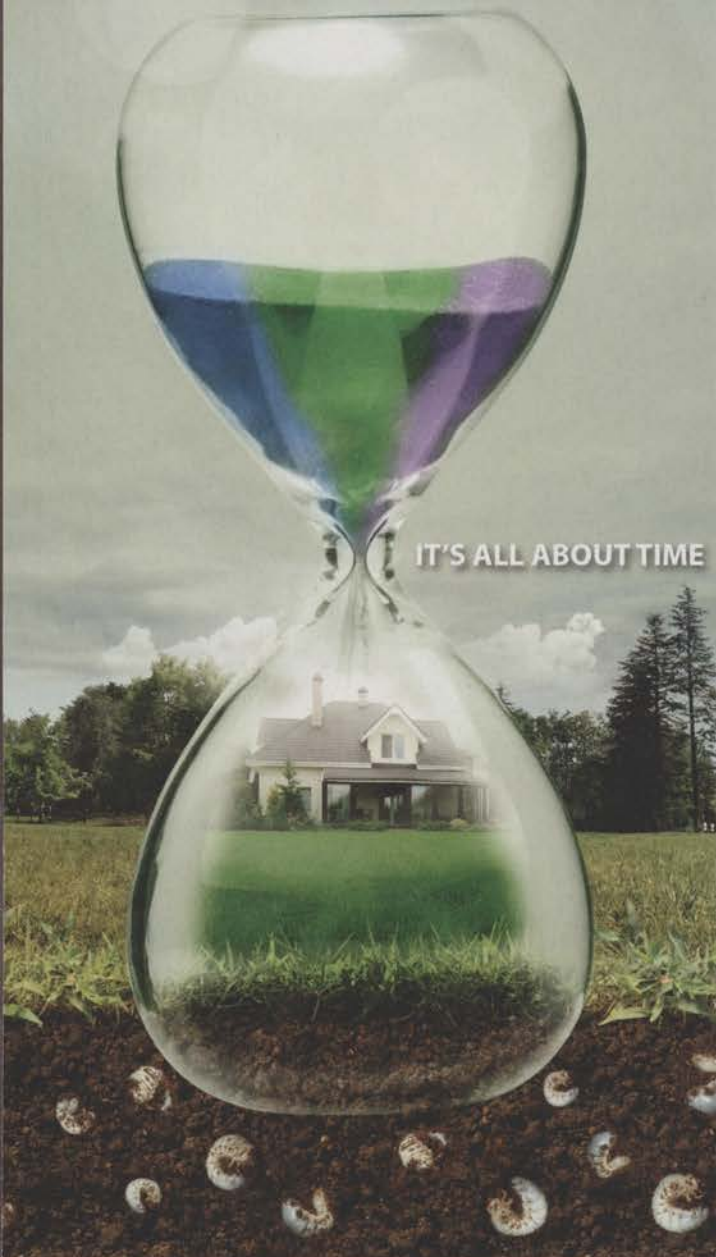
Science For A Better Life

The Bayer herbicide portfolio featuring Specticle and Celsius offers more than just outstanding pre-emergence and post-emergence weed control, it offers peace of mind. Fewer weeds mean fewer call backs, and fewer call backs can lead to more business referrals. When weeds don't grow, your business can.

Visit backedbybayer.com/lawn-herbicides to learn more.



Follow us on Twitter @BayerLawn



IT'S ALL ABOUT TIME

ProScape® Fertilizer with Acelepryn plus Dimension.

LebanonTurf now offers our industry-standard controlled release ProScape fertilizer with Acelepryn insecticide plus Dimension herbicide. **It's a one-two-three punch that delivers beautiful dark green color while providing effective, season-long control against grubs and crabgrass.** One granular application in the spring protects your turf for the year. **It's all about time ... using it, saving it.**

LebanonTurf

Best of All Worlds® | LebanonTurf.com | 1-800-233-0628



can be done online. And though it's not mandatory, Spero and Stewart recommend buying an insurance policy.

This can be purchased at any company that sells aviation insurance, and you can buy \$1-million worth of liability coverage for \$1,500-\$2,000 for a year.

First, you have to ask yourself how you want to use it. Then, identify who on your staff is going to fly it. Third, develop standard operating procedures, especially for larger companies.

The fourth step is applying for any waivers you may need. One example of a waiver is, if you are doing a job within 5 miles of an airport, you must get a waiver. Then acquire and register the drone.

"Buying a drone is one of the last steps," McCarthy said.

To practice, Stewart has a little drone he flies around his living room to stay sharp. "If you don't do it for long enough, your skills get rusty," he said.

If you are going to fly it over a client's property, make sure you have the client's permission and all your paper work and proof of insurance with you. Some local governments have passed laws making it illegal to fly drones, but Stewart said those may not be law-binding since the federal law may overrule the local law.

Spero and Stewart said they've flown in cities where those types of laws have been passed. They called the police department or city hall and explained why they were flying, and the local government or law enforcement had no issues with it.

"It's best to know the laws of the particular community before you go out," Spero said.

AFTER THE MERGER. Three Bright-View employees, Chuck DeGarmo, vice president of sales for the landscape construction group, Peter Hunn, a principle in development, and Brent Lloyd, a managing principle in the design group, talked about what the past two years have been like since Brickman and ValleyCrest merged, forming the new company.

DeGarmo said because ValleyCrest and Brickman were already large companies individually, employees from both sides knew the challenges of communicating in a large organization. That helped ease some pains, but DeGarmo said one key to establishing good communication practices was simply getting to know the people in the organization. Whether that was through meetings or company events, it was important to develop relationships within the organization where you knew the single point of contact for a situation if you needed something for a customer.

"Then it's repetition, repetition, repetition and driving that home to create the relationships to know who we should talk to for what," he said.

Since the company has 600 construction projects going on at all times, problems can escalate quickly. DeGarmo said the company communicates the importance of the customer on all levels, which keeps managers from always having to put out fires.

DeGarmo added that since the maintenance side is bigger than the construction side, and both ValleyCrest and Brickman offered maintenance, figuring that division of the business out was much more complex.



Wouldn't you rather have *and*?

Why limit yourself to
fertilizer *or* weed control?
Why settle for killing weeds
before *or* after they appear?

At LebanonTurf, we don't like *or*.
We like *and*. As in fertilizer *and*
pre- *and* post-emergent weed
control—all in one.

And with ProScape®
fertilizer *and* weed-control
solutions, you get to save
time *and* money.

ProScape®

ProScape 19-0-6 MESA® **AND** Dimension® **AND** LockUp™
ProScape 19-0-6 MESA® **AND** Dimension® **AND** Confront® 3



Best of All Worlds®
LebanonTurf.com 1-800-233-0628



"The maintenance business is now three-quarters of the revenue. It's a much bigger integration challenge," he said. "We've been at it two years now and have gotten to the other

side of that lifting... where we can act quickly."

One other challenge the company faced was hiring. Since they need to hire so many workers and train them, the company tried to

use local ties and hire organically. That proved to be a problem because those who would be in charge of hiring were focused on running their departments and branches.

So BrightView invested in hiring managers whose sole purpose was to recruit, and now new employees have a constant companion with them when they start so they don't get lost in the shuffle.

"We're investing tons of money in that, and it's paying dividends," DeGarmo said.

DeGarmo said the company is looking to expand in the Midwest, but Lloyd said local contractors shouldn't be concerned if BrightView becomes a neighbor.

"We approach it as we have a lot of resources... but we also want to partner with folks on the ground who know the market really well," Lloyd said.

ADVICE FROM HOLLYWOOD. In 1970, actor and environmental activist Ed Begley Jr., started to make more decisions based on the environment. Today, the Emmy-nominated actor gets asked about what happened in 1970 to push him in that direction.

He said living 20 years as a kid in "smoggy" Los Angeles where he couldn't go out on the playground some days because of the smog, and it would hurt to breathe, planted the seed of being more environmentally conscious.

But, as a struggling actor, he had to do it on the cheap, and he stressed to the audience during his keynote address that you can start small and inexpensively.

He started composting and recycling and taking public transportation when he had little income, and it helped put money back in his pocket.

"I saved money at every turn," he says.

Begley also said avoiding "vampire power" could save you money. Vampire power is a term used to describe when electronics, like a television, are turned off but still use electricity because they are plugged in. He suggested buying a power strip and turning it off when you aren't using those devices.

"We have to do everything in our power to turn it around," he said in regards to problems with the environment.



Lightweight, flexible, aluminum edgings that are easy to install, look great, and last the lifetime of the project.
Why use anything else?

800.356.9660 | permaloc.com



A beautiful landscape is defined by beautiful edges. Permaloc provides application and solution-driven products for all of your challenging projects.

EENY. MINI. MIGHTY.

WHOA!



THE ALL-NEW **C** SERIES MINI EXCAVATORS

A full line engineered to provide maximum power, greater versatility and lasting durability. With six models from 1.7 to 6.0 tons, there's nothing mini about what these machines can do. Pick the one for you at CaseCE.com/MiniEx

CASE
CONSTRUCTION
SINCE 1842



Z MASTER® ZERO-TURN MOWERS



OUR TOUGHNESS IS YOUR STRENGTH

When you can't be out making money, you're losing it. So choose the mowers that pay off with longer life, fewer repairs and less downtime. Toro® Z Master mowers deliver outstanding quality of cut, commercial-grade durability and comfort to help you get more done every day.

TORO.COM/ZMASTER

\$500 INSTANT REBATE*

ON SELECT Z MASTER MOWERS

Offer runs February 1 – May 31, 2017
Only at participating dealers

*Off manufacturer's suggested promotional price.

TORO®

L&L INSIDER

For more news, visit
Lawmandlandscape.com

The event takes place on Kimberly Nurseries' 3.5-acre property the day after Thanksgiving.



CHRISTMAS IN THE NIGHTTIME SKY

A service project combining Christmas and fireworks is helping children in Idaho. **By Katie Tuttle**

FOR 26 YEARS, Kimberly Nurseries in Twin Falls, Idaho, has held its annual Christmas in the Nighttime Sky event. A fun evening and simultaneous charity event, it was started by Jack Wright, who was then the president of the company.

"My dad always liked fireworks and he liked Christmastime and he thought why not combine those two into a charitable event and put those two things together that people don't normally associate," says Dave Wright, now company president.

The event takes place on the nursery's 3.5-acre property the day after Thanksgiving, although Wright says people can see the fireworks from anywhere nearby.

"People mark it on their calendars. It's an expected annual event," he says.

For attendees who come to the facility for the event, there are bonfires set up with plenty of folding chairs and tables. There are lines for Idaho potatoes with chili, and Coca Cola sponsors the event, providing coffee, hot cocoa and soft drinks. Christmas music plays on loud speakers and a praise and worship band from a local church performs inside one of the buildings.

The event goes on for an hour and a half, culminating in a 10-minute fireworks display with 450 to 500 fireworks.

Admission to the grounds is one unwrapped children's toy per fam-



GOOD WORKS

Have you completed a charity project you are proud of or helped out your community in another way? Email Associate Editor Katie Tuttle at ktuttle@gie.net to be considered for coverage in a future issue.

ily. The event has drawn as many as 4,000 people and averages 2,500-3,000.

"We just like to see it grow, quite honestly, because it's such a worthwhile event," Wright says. "All the toys we gather stay in our area. It's a major — without this event it would be a lot of kids that didn't get anything for Christmas."

Wright says his goal for the event is to say it has collectively received one million toys from attendees. Currently, they're sitting at 100,000. He says some families bring more than one toy, and some people go above and beyond.

"This year we got 18 bikes that people brought," he says. "The generosity toward this is just tremendous."

After the event, the toys are packed up and taken to a facility to be sorted. Then, different agencies in the surrounding areas come with wish lists from clients and are able to pick gifts and deliver them for Christmas.

Over the years, other places in Idaho have started to do their own versions of Christmas in the Nighttime Sky. It's Wright's hope that more places across the country will contact him for the rights and begin doing it as well.

"I've trademarked it but we're willing to share, and we have everything a person needs to set up an event like this," he says.

"I would like to see these events all across the country, in every state I think they can do them."

A NEW DESIGN FOR A CHANGING INDUSTRY

Ohio's MGIX saw a rebrand, as well as a shift in safety culture and a focus on the true buyer. **By Katie Tuttle**

PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS CENTS, the Midwest Green Industry Xperience went through a show redesign in the hopes of better encompassing the industry professionals in attendance. Running in Columbus over three days in January, the conference featured education for landscapers, snow and ice pros and other horticulture professions. Here are three takeaways:

1. WOMEN MAKE UP 80 PERCENT OF BUYING DECISIONS.

"That isn't saying your industry; that's saying all industries," said Anne Obarski, a consultant with Merchandise Concepts. Focusing on female buyers will help your company because a satisfied woman is, as Obarski describes it, "contagious."

"They'll tell everyone," she said, highlighting this as a marketing technique.

2. IN ORDER TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL MEDIA

marketing campaign, you need to have a brand and a strategy. You also need to take advantage of platforms like YouTube and Instagram. Obarski suggested even asking happy clients to do video testimonials that you can post on those sites to catch the eye of potential customers.

"Video is now becoming one of the biggest ways to sell your product and you," she said.

3. IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2017, THE AMERICAN

National Standards Institute is rolling out new changes to the Z133 safety standard for the arboriculture industry. "This was the biggest overhaul that's ever occurred," said Phillip Kelley, owner of Samara Tress Preservation and the lead instructor for North American Training Solutions.

Not regulated by OSHA, Kelley said several incidents within the last year have caused OSHA to take serious interest in writing a standard for tree care. He said if arborists abide by the updated ANSI regulations, it may keep OSHA from getting involved in the industry.

Kelley highlighted important sections, such as one requiring all arborists to be certified in first aid and CPR within 90 days of being hired. "We've got to find a balance because we can't keep burying people" Kelley said. "I don't care how much red tape there is if it keeps people out of the ground."

GRANDSTAND®
STAND-ON MOWERS



GET DONE FASTER

The Toro GrandStand® delivers the speed and comfort to help you do more, faster. Cushioned suspension keeps operators fresh while traction and stability keep them working. And it's now even better with **all-new upgrades** for higher productivity with lower maintenance.

TORO.COM/GRANDSTAND

\$500 INSTANT REBATE*

GRANDSTAND STAND-ON MOWERS

Offer runs March 1 – May 31, 2017
Only at participating dealers

*Off manufacturer's suggested promotional price.

TORO®

SPENDING TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Q: My landscape company doesn't have a large staff so we have a hard time keeping up with social media posting and we aren't sure what is most important. Where should we be spending our time to get the greatest impact?

A: It is important to have a plan because the opportunities for digital communications keep expanding and it can definitely seem overwhelming, but it is also an incredible opportunity. Don't think of social media



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
LANDSCAPE
PROFESSIONALS

and digital communications as something nice to do – think of it as part of your overall marketing strategy.

DECIDE ON RESOURCES. Review your marketing goals and determine the time and money you have to commit to developing and posting content. Then choose the best platforms to go

all in on. Once you commit to a blog or Facebook page, you want to post enough content to appear timely and relevant.

Have your designated staff set aside a few hours (or whatever you deem reasonable) every week to work on digital content.

CHOOSE PLATFORMS WISELY. Focus your time on platforms where you can easily reach clients, potential clients and your community.

You may not have time to fo-

ASK THE EXPERTS

cus on every platform and every platform might not be worth your effort. We find that most NALP members focus on Facebook first with fewer contractors putting time into Twitter.

Facebook offers reasonably priced advertising options like promoted posts where you can target your audience geographically and by interest. Twitter, on the other hand, has more expensive advertising options and takes longer to build a targeted audience.

Many contractors are joining Instagram every day because our



EASYLIFTER

SOMETIMES A NAME TELLS YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW.

EasyLifter by Corona® is tough as nails and designed to take whatever you throw at it. Made of heavy-duty steel with a reinforced plate under the tray for lasting durability. Innovative built-in fulcrum bars make dumping a 6-cubic-foot load of dirt seem effortless. Handles may be fixed or removed for easy storage and transportation.



CORONA.
SEASON AFTER SEASON

22440 Temescal Canyon Rd., Corona, CA 92883 • 800.847.7863
coronatoolsusa.com

A WELL-RUN BUSINESS RUNS ON HUSQVARNA.

© 2017 Husqvarna. All rights reserved.



INDUSTRY-LEADING INNOVATION

Over 325 years building tools that are powerful, ergonomic and packed with innovation.



AUTHORIZED DEALERS, TRAINED TECHNICIANS AND GENUINE PARTS

Providing sales and service excellence with quick access to genuine Husqvarna parts.



HUSQVARNA FLEET DISCOUNTS*

Provides commercial customers a volume discount on major purchases of new Husqvarna equipment.



Simply put, we make it easy to run your business. We pride ourselves in offering superior products, the most variety, and one of the best fleet programs around. We have an extensive sales and servicing dealer base that exceeds 5,000 locations nationally, backed by our dedicated dealer support team. Give your business the edge, with superior performance, experienced sales and expert service that only Husqvarna can deliver. We're the key to your success.

**SAVE
UP TO
20%***
WITH DISCOUNT
PERIODS UP TO
24 MONTHS



*Some restrictions apply. Ask your dealer for complete program details.

Husqvarna
READY WHEN YOU ARE



VENTURE 220

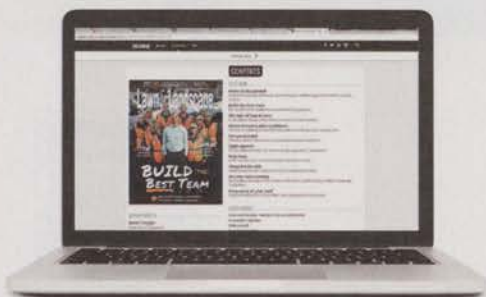
PATHFINDER

ROVER XR

COMPLETE LINE OF COMMERCIAL SPREADERS AND SPRAYERS

GROUNDLOGICINC.COM | 877.423.4340

REDESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND



**YOUR ONE-STOP,
MOBILE-FRIENDLY
SHOP** for breaking
industry news,
podcasts, and full
monthly issues as
well as our Top 100,
Benchmarking Your
Business and State of
the Industry reports.

Lawn & Landscape

L&L INSIDER

For more news, visit
Lawnandlandscape.com

industry has great visuals and it is quick and easy to post photos of your work.

Pinterest is a good option for residential design/build companies and LinkedIn can be a good outlet for companies that have a commercial client base.

FOCUS ON WHO YOU WANT TO REACH. Part of your content marketing strategy should include who you are trying to reach and what your goal is for communicating with them.

For client retention, a good place is on your blog or client emails.

Providing your clients with helpful seasonal tips with photos of your team in the field or sharing stories of your latest projects and community service work are a great way to keep you connected with clients, and it positions you and your team as experts in the field.

Photos and videos are critical to making your stories engaging, so have a process in place to get photos of your projects and your team in the field.

For client recruitment, posts that drive readers back to your website are key to getting them locked in as clients.

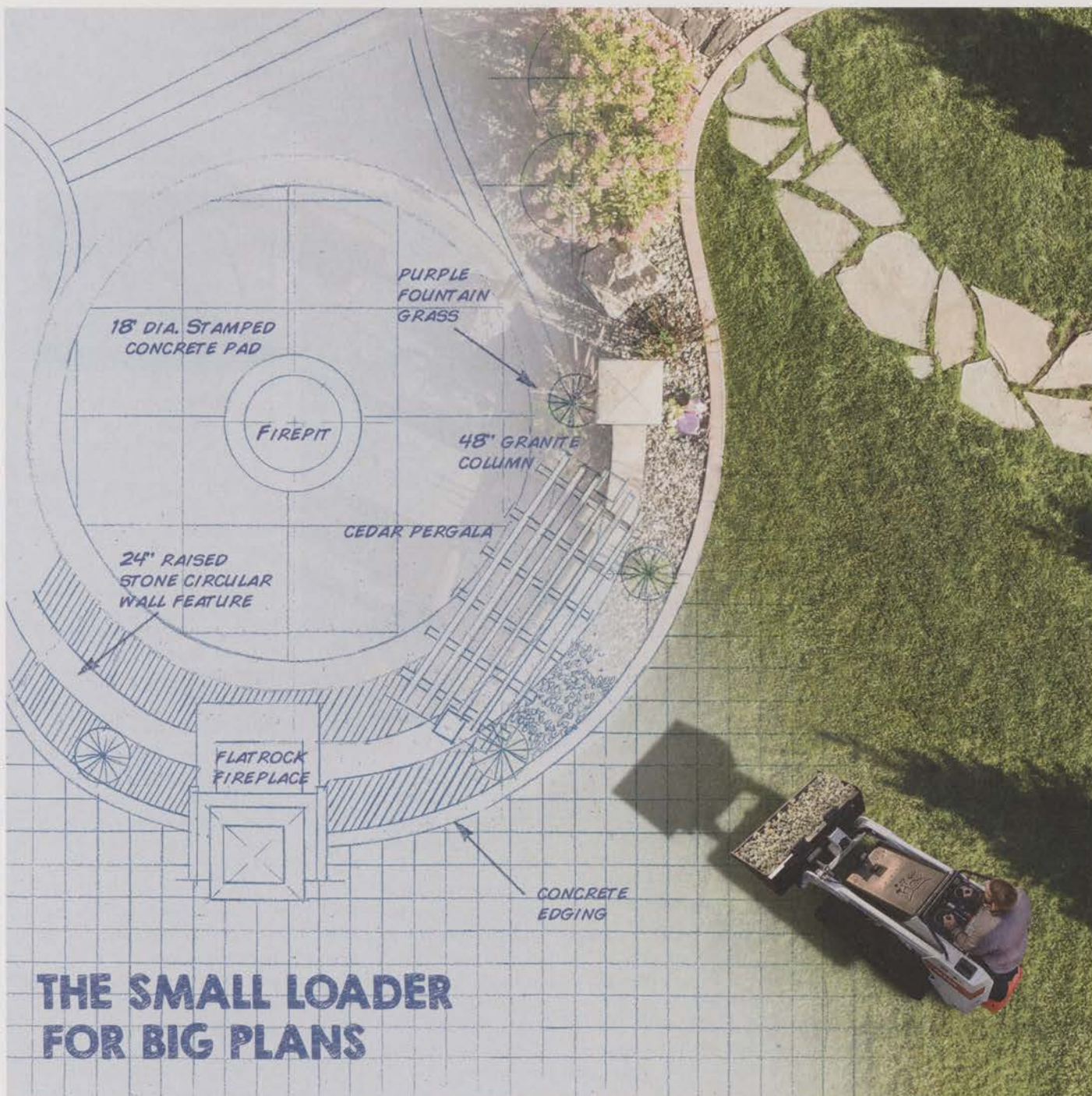
If you have a blog, news section or helpful videos on your website, create posts on your social media platforms that link back to those sections of your website.

MEASURE YOUR REACH. Twitter, Facebook, your blog, your website and most every digital platform has free analytics you can look at to see how your posts performed; i.e. how many people they reached, how many people liked a post or clicked on a link. You can use that to create future posts on topics that your audience finds most interesting.

Also, you can look at your website analytics to see which social media platforms are driving more traffic to your website.

Lisa Schaumann, NALP director of communications and public relations adviser for members

**Have a question for Ask the Experts?
Send it to llexperts@gie.net**



THE SMALL LOADER FOR BIG PLANS

Don't let its small size give you the wrong idea. The Bobcat® MT85 does serious work. See why more landscapers are choosing this 850-lb.-capacity mini track loader to bring their biggest ideas to life.

▶ **Build the ultimate landscaping machine:**
Bobcat.com/LLBuildQuote

1.877.745.7813



Bobcat

One Tough Animal.

*Certain specification(s) are based on engineering calculations and are not actual measurements. Specification(s) are provided for comparison purposes only and are subject to change without notice. Specification(s) for your individual Bobcat equipment will vary based on normal variations in design, manufacturing, operating conditions, and other factors.
Bobcat is a Doosan company. Doosan is a global leader in construction equipment, power and water solutions, engines, and engineering, proudly serving customers and communities for more than a century.
 Bobcat®, the Bobcat logo and the colors of the Bobcat machine are registered trademarks of Bobcat Company in the United States and various other countries.
 ©2017 Bobcat Company. All rights reserved. 11333



3 KEYS TO SUCCESS

WELCOME TO SPRING, MY FRIENDS, the start of another growing season for landscape professionals. If you're like me, you can't wait to get started on another year and see just how much you can improve on the last.

I'm especially excited this time around, having just wrapped up GROW! 2017, the three-day conference my green-industry consultancy, Marty Grunder! Inc (MGI) holds every year. The event brought together 300 landscape pros to learn from industry leaders about building successful businesses and achieving our dreams.

This year I was joined on stage by a truly extraordinary group: Frank Mariani, of Mariani Landscape; Jim McCutcheon, of HighGrove Partners; Todd Pugh, of Enviroscapes; Mike Rorie, of GroundSystems; and Scott Jamieson, of Bartlett Tree Experts.

James Cali and Jason New, our newest additions to the MGI team, also delivered presentations, as did MGI Vice President, Vince Torchia.

When these men speak, I listen, and you should, too. Together we focused on three keys to success:

1. FINDING GOOD PEOPLE. I don't know of a single landscape company that's not struggling with this chal-



MARTY GRUNDER is a speaker, consultant and author. He owns Grunder Landscaping Co.

lenge now, and I didn't meet a single owner or manager at our GROW! Conference who wasn't worrying about it. Every one of our experts' approaches to this problem is at least slightly different – just as everyone's particular market is – but some common themes emerged.

Be creative in where you look for prospective employees: Catholic Services and laundromats, women and minorities. Make your company a place people will want to work at. Offer flexible hours. Work as hard at retaining good staff as you do at retaining good clients. Have a career path for every single employee, from the top down to the lowest rung.

2. IMPROVING PROFITABILITY. Again, every one of our presenters had their own particular path to

success in this realm, but I was struck more by our commonalities than our differences. We all agreed you've got to control your overhead; manage closely your outlay on rent, salaries, advertising and the like. Some of us don't pay for advertising at all, relying instead on referrals and word of mouth. The single best marketing tactic you have in your arsenal is doing the job you've won well.

MGI's Jason New minced no words when he told the audience what they need to do to get ahead: If you're only working 40 hours a week and expecting extreme growth, you're not going to succeed. Continuously monitor – monthly, weekly, even daily – what's working and what's not, and refine your strategy accordingly. Jim McCutcheon reminded us that zero debt isn't realistic or opportunistic. And if you're not opportunistic, you should close up shop and go home.

3. STANDING OUT. All of us on stage agreed that our clients can't or won't



ONLINE: You can now view Marty's video series "60 Seconds for Success," where Marty will give you quick tips on how to better run your business.



Download the Layar app, then use your mobile device to scan this page. The video will then play on your mobile device. This month, Marty talks about how you should be answering phone calls.

differentiate between our own and our competitors' products, but they can and most assuredly will distinguish between our own and our competitors' service. In fact, I owe the success of my own company in no small part to this principle.

That's why our trucks at Grunder Landscaping are spotless, our crews are cleanly uniformed and unfailingly polite, and we never leave a site without letting our clients know what we accomplished that day and what we'll do on our next visit. We send handwritten notes to those who award us contracts and to those who turn us down. The rejection you get today just might become a sale tomorrow if you handle it right.

It's a lot to think about and be inspired by. But that's also what makes our profession so much fun. So, get out there, put these ideas to work, and see if you can make this your best year yet. Go GROW! **L&L**

Sponsored by



Vermeer

HIRING?



0% FINANCING

FOR 24 MOS. NOW AVAILABLE

Put a Mini Skid to Work. Versatile. Dependable. Hard-working. This describes every member of your crew and also defines the core of the Vermeer mini skid steer lineup. Let us help make your next hire an easy decision and choose a mini skid steer from Vermeer as the newest member of your crew. The Vermeer mini skid steer is built strong to handle the toughest jobs. It could be your best hire yet.

LEARN MORE AT VERMEER.COM/MINISKIDS

Vermeer



EQUIPPED TO
DO MORE.

CTX50
vermeer.com/miniskids

CTX100
vermeer.com/miniskids

S450rx
vermeer.com/miniskids

S725rx
vermeer.com/miniskids

S800rx
vermeer.com/miniskids

*Terms and conditions: This promotional offer is valid for the following Vermeer new equipment models: CTX50, CTX100, S450rx, S725rx and S800rx, and any attachments are eligible if sold with eligible machine. Promotional financing available only through DLL. See your Vermeer dealer for other promotional rates on these models. Financing is available to qualifying customers within the U.S. and Canada only. Subject to credit and equipment approval. Promotional rate is good for transactions approved by May 31, 2017, and transactions must be funded by June 30, 2017. Offer not valid with any other offers. Vermeer Corporate Accounts are not eligible. Vermeer Corporation reserves the right to modify or terminate all services and programs offered, without notice. Void where prohibited.

Vermeer, the Vermeer logo and Equipped to Do More are trademarks of Vermeer Manufacturing Company in the U.S. and/or other countries. The DLL logo and DLL Financial Solutions Partner are trademarks of De Lage Landen International B.V. © 2017 Vermeer Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

dLL financial solutions
partner



DON'T GET BURIED

● **MY 450-MILE JANUARY DRIVE** to Jackson, Wyoming, for our annual brainstorming meeting was uneventful. Uneventful, that is, until 10 miles from my final destination. As I rounded a curve on U.S. Hwy. 191 something seemed out of place on the road ahead. Through the evening darkness, I saw the lights of cars and pickup trucks catawampus to the road. Many were making U-turns.

I had just missed an avalanche that covered the entire highway. Fortunately, no vehicles were smothered in the hundreds of tons of snow. Even more fortunate, no vehicles had been swept off the road into the adjacent Hoback River.

The brainstorming meeting went well. Forty-five attendees from 20-plus companies throughout the U.S. all participated in the discussions on topics they chose. Not surprisingly, the No. 1 topic was the shortage of industry labor and the upward pressure on labor rates for 2017.

CONTEXT. The cost of field labor has risen sharply in the past three years. Some reasons include the rise in minimum wage, the rise in the cost of H-2B labor from nearly \$10 per hour to almost \$15 per hour in many parts of the country, the talk about a living or sustainable wage rate and so forth. Add to this the shortage of qualified laborers and a demand for the same as the economy improves,



JIM HUSTON runs J.R. Huston Consulting, a green industry consulting firm.

and you have a supply-demand curve that shows pay rates being pushed higher and higher.

Business profitability is all about controlling risk. Field labor, due to its volatility, is responsible for roughly 80 to 90 percent of the risk in business operations. If your company is going to be profitable, you have to control labor productivity and its cost.

INACCURATE BUT HELPFUL. When calculating field labor rates, I use a fairly detailed Excel worksheet that I've developed over the years (see the example on the L&L website). After I create a budget for a client, calculate their company's overhead cost, figure the labor burden rate and include the crew truck and a reasonable net profit margin (NPM),

quite often the resulting labor rate is roughly three times the crew's average wage rate. In other words, the rate charged to clients for a three-person crew with unburdened wage rates of \$24, \$18 and \$16 per man-hour turns out to be roughly three times the average wage rate. I don't use this formula to calculate labor rates for clients as it isn't always accurate. However, it is useful to estimate a labor rate.

- $(\$24 + 18 + 16) = \58
- $\$58 \div 3 = \19.33 crew average wage rate
- $\$19.33 \times 3 = \58 per man-hour charged to clients
- The man-hour rate using my Excel worksheet is \$56.28 (with a 15 percent NPM) and \$60.12 (with a 20 percent NPM).

HOW IT WORKS. All of this means that for every dollar your labor wage rate increases, you have to increase what you charge your clients for labor by roughly \$3. If you don't

increase your prices to your clients, you're doing your company, yourself, your family, your employees and your industry a disservice. Most of my clients throughout the U.S. have seen a \$2 to \$3 an hour increase to their average hourly cost of labor in the last three years. As a result, they've had to increase the price of such labor to their clients by a factor of three.

USEFUL INDUSTRY BENCHMARKS.

If your crew members work 45 man-hours per week 40 weeks a year, they each produce about 1,800 billable man-hours per year. An increase of \$1 to your crew's average wage translates to a \$3 increase to the rate you charge. It works out as follows for a crew of five people.

- 1,800 man-hours \times 5 people = 9,000 total billed man-hours
- \$1 increase to your cost of labor \times 3 = \$3 increase per man-hour in the price of labor charged
- \$3 increase per man-hour \times 9,000 billable man-hours = \$27,000 in extra net profit margin for your company

CONCLUSION. The average cost of field labor for my clients at the meeting and in Jackson will increase anywhere from \$1 to 3 per man-hour in 2017. Virtually all of these contractors will have to increase the price of labor to their clients by \$3 to \$6 per man-hour. While they don't necessarily like the increase, they realize they have little choice. Because most clients know the cost of labor is increasing, now is the time to increase the labor rate that you charge.

Just like my January drive to Jackson, the path that your business takes is filled with risk. Hopefully you'll prepare for the hazard that labor cost increases pose to your bottom line. If you do, your bottom line will remain on track. If not, you could be smothered in an avalanche of thousands of hours of under-priced labor. **L&L**

Starts at \$32,495.**

Enjoys smooth jazz.

Starts at \$25,995.

Sleeps with a nightlight.



The truth may surprise you.

THE 2017
WORKER CARGO
FAMILY

STARTING AT
\$25,995*

Visit MBVans.com

Mercedes-Benz
Vans. Born to run.



©2017 Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC. *Starting at price refers to base model Metris WORKER Cargo Van. Excludes all options, taxes, title, registration, transportation charge, and dealer prep fee. **Starting at price refers to base model Sprinter WORKER Cargo Van. Excludes all options, taxes, title, registration, transportation charge, and dealer prep fee. All illustrations and specifications contained in this print ad are based on the latest product information available at the time of publication. Sprinter is the 2017 ALG Residual Value Award winner in the Fullsize Commercial Van segment. Metris is the 2017 ALG Residual Value Award winner in the Midsize Commercial Van segment. ALG is the industry benchmark for residual values and depreciation data, www.alg.com. Edmunds.com logo is a service mark of Edmunds.com. All rights reserved. ©2017 Edmunds.com



For more questions you should be asking, visit Lawnandlandscape.com and search culture checklist.



CULTURE CHECKLIST

- **MOST LANDSCAPE BUSINESS OWNERS** talk about culture the way most people talk about diet and exercise. Every CEO knows that the organization needs to be more fit and functional, but changing workplace behaviors to get there is as easy to put off as a New Year's resolution to get back to the gym. Willpower is simply not enough.

Over the last decade, owners have become more aware of the advantages a high-performing culture offers. What's less clear is how to achieve it. Defining what makes some cultures thrive and what tears others apart is knowing that:

1. Cultures aren't fixed; they are changing and evolving and unique.
2. They are vulnerable to constant market and human variables.
3. They are defined by the cumulative traits and behaviors of employees.
4. The best way to change workplace behaviors and habits is to make change less difficult. Let's explore.

1. CULTURE AS PERPETUAL MOTION MACHINE. Your business culture is not easy to pin down. It is subject to constant whims from diverse stakeholders, fickle customers, economic swings and generational attitudes, which all impact your company's unique rhythms. Keeping your culture from being manipulated



BRUCE WILSON is principal of green industry consulting firm Bruce Wilson & Company.

by any one of these elements can be managed by recognizing that, like the unfit body, frequent recalibration is required to keep your culture in better shape. And the secret to cultural strength is equally universal: discipline, consistency and elevating culture to its rightful place as the driving force of your business. Make caring for it a top operational priority.

2. CULTURAL DRIFT. Avoiding drift starts with being more careful about decisions. While one bad decision, such as a bad hire, can be singularly disruptive, when combined with recurring poorly executed plans or ideas, your company will veer off course and be more difficult to turn around. Slippage can be halted by having leaders and managers – in fact your whole team – who com-

pletely buy in to your purpose and behave in a manner that supports it. When purpose is embedded into your organizational fabric, everyone can self-correct on a daily basis. Giving culture a voice at your planning and strategy table, in the hallways and at the water cooler will empower everyone to act accordingly.

3. EMPLOYEE BEHAVIORS. Make sure that you and your leadership team are united in walking the walk – that the values your company holds: codes of conduct, ethics, standards and practices, vision and mission statements, training programs and incentive/accountability systems – are clearly defined. Understand the behaviors and personalities needed to execute your mission and vision. If sense of urgency is an important behavior, interview for that trait. Use your role modeling and these tools to identify what your company stands for and why, and what is acceptable and what is not.

Be strategic about hiring people

QUESTIONS EVERY CEO SHOULD ASK:

- What is working? What do you like about your culture? What do you dislike? Where does accountability rank? Is there a sense of urgency? Is there a sense of decency?
- What traits make a "keeper"? Why do your best employees stay? What motivates them? What values do they align with? What don't they like? What do they see as your company's weaknesses and strengths?
- What behaviors irritate you? Is there a lack of social interaction? Too many slackers? Hardworking but under-qualified people? Extreme competitiveness? A lack of teamwork? Silo politics? If so, why, and what steps can you take to fix?

who are compatible with your values. When people are not value/behavior-aligned, or toxic employees are indulged, the whole organization suffers. Employing people who value your values should be every owner's No. 1 goal.

4. WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS. As your company gets going on cultural improvements, it's essential to build in measures to manage the process. Enacting a system of penalties and rewards can help filter and shape workplace behavior. So can terminating cultural misfits and chronically negative employees. I have seen a number of companies that have all the makings of a great culture but allow difficult employees to sabotage unity, cohesiveness and effectiveness. These misfits are often in key positions and hard to replace.

Often owners protect these employees due to their loyalty and past contributions, while at the same time, are frustrated with their company's financial results. They work around the misfits but rarely hold them accountable. While it might be a painful decision to make in the short term, getting rid of the people who aren't aligned with your values will pay off over time. **L&L**

OCEAN GRANDE

slab collection

The Ocean Grande's texture is the first of its kind and was inspired by nature's wavy sandy beaches. Techo-Bloc's latest revolutionary paving solution, featuring our proprietary High Definition technology, offers an extremely crisp and detailed surface texture. Contemporary styling is achieved through its size (2 3/8" x 19 1/2" x 32 1/2") and narrow joint spacing (1/8").

Perfect for patios, pool and roof decks, this innovative concrete surface is slip-resistant and stays cool underfoot on hot summer days thanks to its unique relief and light colour pallet. In winter months, de-icing salt resistance provides peace of mind.

⁺ HIGH DEFINITION COLLECTION



GREYED NICKEL



BEIGE CREAM



DOWNLOAD YOUR
FREE PRODUCT
SPECIFICATION
GUIDE AT
TECHO-BLOC.COM

Techo-Bloc

REDEFINING LANDSCAPE PRODUCTS
techo-bloc.com / 1 877-832-4625



SELLING YOUR LAWN CARE BUSINESS



ALL BUSINESS OWNERS will someday turn their business loose in one way or another. The main options are: **1.** The business is liquidated due to failure, death of the owner or other circumstances, often at a loss. **2.** The business is passed on or sold to family members. **3.** The business is successfully sold to another company, private investors, ESOP, etc., for a nice gain.

If you're fortunate enough to survive those early years and eventually build something of value, there will come a time when you will want to shed the daily responsibility of owning a business, while taking some "chips off the table" in converting your paper equity to cash.

One never plans on going the way of option No. 1, but in reality that happens to many small business owners. Option two may be good for a few, but the reality is that only 30 percent of second generation family businesses survive, and only 12 percent make it to the third generation.

So in my case, while I love my sons and daughter, I did not want to try to beat those odds in passing my business of 18 years, LawnAmerica, to them. My hope was that they



BRAD JOHNSON
is founder of
LawnAmerica, which
he sold to Swingle
in 2016.

blaze their own trail in whatever they chose to pursue, and enjoy the journey as I did during my 31-year lawn care career and selling three different businesses.

So, I started to prepare my business to be sold over the last three years or so in order for it to be passed on to another party that would not only preserve the legacy of what we'd built, but possibly take LawnAmerica to another level in the future. And of course, I wanted to walk away with a financial reward of the many years of hard work and sacrifice.

In many ways, selling a good business you love can be more difficult than starting it. It's your baby and there are many people you care about involved as customers and employees. It was important to me to take care of those people so that they would continue to be able to work at a great place.

I found that many of the suitors for my business were more concerned about cash flow than the people who actually helped to generate the profits. So, lesson one is to look for a buyer who genuinely understands the importance of taking care of the people in our

business and sees the value in what they bring to the business.

Lesson two in looking for the best suitor for your business is to find a company or investor who shares most of your core values, culture and processes. It's never going to be an exact match, but there must be commonalities in what you do in processes and in your culture. Opposites may attract in some marriages, but not in most businesses.

Once you find a possible suitor and the relationship gets to the point of an actual offer, then it can become more challenging in many respects. Business owners often think their business is worth more than it is, and buyers do not want to pay more than what it's worth ... at least most buyers. I did not use a broker in the sale and negotiation of my business. In retrospect, I probably should have, considering the value and complexity of the business.

I did employ a broker as an advisor during the final stages of due diligence, which helped us solve many of the issues that will always come up in the due diligence phase of the sale.

Selling your business is almost a full-time job by itself, and can take away from your core responsibilities of continuing to run your business during the sales process. So find trusted people who can help you rather than trying to go it alone, as many of us bull-headed entrepreneurs tend to do.






You'll only sell your business once, so you'll want to do it right. I was fortunate to be able to successfully sell mine and to walk away, somewhat, as I'm still employed part-time for LawnAmerica. The buck just does not stop with me anymore, and at my age, that's fine by me! **L&L**

**“IN MANY WAYS, SELLING A GOOD BUSINESS THAT
YOU LOVE CAN BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN STARTING IT.”**

ADD ZORO TO YOUR TOOLBOX

Ordering Ground Maintenance supplies shouldn't be **hard work**.
You do enough of that already.

FROM
AA BATTERIES TO Z-CLIPS,
ZORO'S GOT YOU COVERED.

-  **Huge product selection**
(over 1 million and counting)
-  **Helpful customer service**
-  **Net 30 terms available****
-  **Great everyday prices**
-  **Trusted brands**
-  **Easy ordering**
-  **Fast delivery**

*20% off your first order on \$50 minimum purchases. Maximum savings of \$2,000. Enter code above at checkout. Limit one (1) use per customer. May not be combined with any other promotions or discounts. Order minimum is required - excluding tax and shipping. Offer may not be applied to previous purchases. Promotion is non-transferable.
Offer valid until June 10, 2017—expires 11:59 p.m. CT.
Some exclusions apply. Visit zoro.com/rules_restrictions for details.

**Standard credit terms are \$1,000 with 30 days to pay. Credit is subject to Zoro's credit policies as determined from time to time in its sole discretion. Zoro reserves the right to terminate this offer at any time at its sole discretion.

VISIT
ZORO.COM/LAWNLAND
▼▼ AND RECEIVE

20% OFF
YOUR ORDER OF
\$50 OR MORE*

SUPPLY29

Enter code at checkout | One time use code.
Offer valid until June 10, 2017 11:59 p.m. CT*



zoro.com



Shop now at

ZORO
ZORO.COM

© 2016 Zoro, Inc.

COVER
STORY

PRICE

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOWBALLING
AND SMART SELLING IS A MATTER OF STRATEGY.

BY KATE SPIRGEN



POINT

LOWBALLER IS A DIRTY WORD IN THIS INDUSTRY.

Grass Roots in New Fairfield, Connecticut, defines a lowballer the same way most in the industry do: someone who cuts corners to give low prices and uses inferior products or unlicensed applicators.

"I do think lowball contractors hurt because they are cutting corners and giving what looks like the same product, but the long-term results will show it's not," he says.

Out of more than 600 contractors we surveyed, 89 percent say they've lost business to a lowballer in the last three years. However, nearly three-quarters have found it advantageous to lower their prices at some point. Some say it's a good strategy to keep their existing customers happy, while others say they'll do it when they know a client will have more work for them in the future. Still others use it as a strategy when moving into a new market.

And some don't view lowballers as all bad. "Low pricing forces us to constantly evaluate our processes and pricing, making sure we are productive, proactive and aggressively managing our expenses," says Bruce Bachand, vice president at Carol King Landscape Maintenance in central Florida. "What hurts most is when large national or regional companies buy jobs simply to increase market share. In many cases, those efforts lower job prices to levels that take years to bring back to realistic levels."

STRATEGIC PRICE SLASHES.

There are cases where lowering price can be advantageous. Many landscapers do it to keep a good customer happy or win over a new client. In fact, 80 percent say there are times when competing on price is necessary and 60 percent have lowered their price to win a job.

NOTE: We surveyed more than 600 landscape contractors to find out what they think about pricing in the industry. Lowballing is a big concern in the industry, but only 12 percent say they've ever been accused of undercutting.

But when competition is tough and you see an opportunity, is lowering price a necessary evil? According to our exclusive research, it depends on why and how you do it.

John Wolf, owner of



75
PERCENT

of contractors surveyed say they felt they had to compete on cost when they first started out. After two years, half had raised their prices.

92
PERCENT

of contractors surveyed say they've picked up business from clients who were dissatisfied with lowball contractors in the last three years.

COVER STORY

Wolf used it as a strategy when he saw his competition offering tick control application to a client at lower price than his company. "I saw that we were doing so many services for him and getting less for the applications would be better than letting another company do it," he says.

He also says it's an acceptable strategy when a client receives multiple services and having the customer makes routes more efficient.

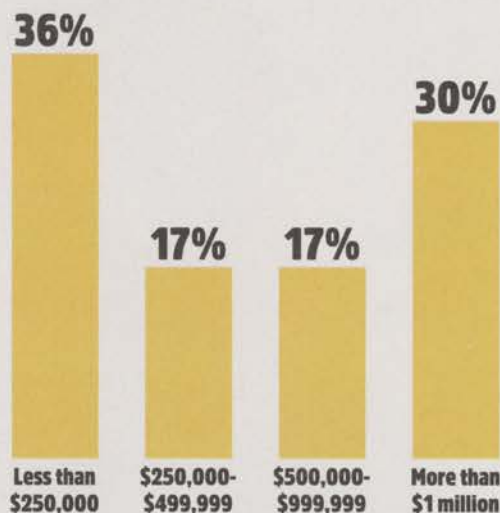
Rich Stephens, president of Red Oak Contractors, a \$1.6-million lawn care and landscape business in Arnold, Missouri, will discount some

aspects of a job if his company is already doing a project for a customer, or if a customer accepts multiple proposals for the same time frame. If that's the case, he can discount travel time or labor.

Ricardo Baldi, owner and founder of Baldi Gardens in Arlington, Texas, will lower his gross profit margins during the slow season or change the scope of work to lower the price of a job to secure a customer. But under normal circumstances, it's not an option for his team, even though lowballers are a big problem in his area, he says.

"Since there is so much work here, and we are close to Mexico,

WHAT IS YOUR APPROXIMATE REVENUE?



RICH STEPHENS, PRESIDENT OF RED OAK CONTRACTORS, a \$1.6-million lawn care and landscape business in Arnold, Missouri, will discount some aspects of a job if his company is already doing a project for the customer, or if the customer accepts multiple proposals for the same time frame.

EST. 1885
A.M. LEONARD
HORTICULTURAL TOOL & SUPPLY CO.

**A PARTNER FOR
YOUR BEST
SPRING YET!**

888-558-8665



BLUEGRASS

Artist

Turf is your canvas and every landscape is a masterpiece. It takes uncommon skill, premium equipment and one brand of engine: Kawasaki. Nothing else gives you the tight precision, efficient power and final results to impress your most demanding critic: yourself. www.kawasakienginesusa.com

Kawasaki

Engines



“WHAT HURTS MOST

is when large national or regional companies buy jobs simply to increase market share. In many cases, those efforts lower job prices to levels that take years to bring back to realistic levels.”

Bruce Bachand, vice president at Carol King Landscape Maintenance in central Florida

GETTING INTO THE GAME.

Many entry-level landscapers felt they needed to compete on price when they first started out in the field, but there's a difference between cutting prices to achieve a goal and competing solely on price. According to our research, nearly three-quarters of those in the industry say price is among the most important factors to customers in their markets. Fifteen percent raised their prices in their first season and 35 percent raised their prices within the first two years.

“An entry-level landscaper is one who just doesn't understand the real costs of running a busi-

ness,” he says. we have lots of people moving into the state and they find it easy to become a landscaper,” he says.

Lowering pricing can backfire though. Last year, Wolf lowered prices on fall cleanup for a customer, but when he calculated the hours it took to complete the task, he realized he should have stuck with his original number.

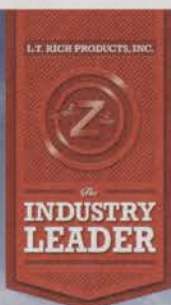
Stephens learned that lesson as well when he once lowered his prices to get a maintenance contract to meet a competitor's bid and couldn't make his target numbers on the job.

Cutting prices is the second most popular reason to lower prices among landscapers, right

behind keeping a current customer happy, according to our research.

But Stephens says it hurts the industry since many homeowners have a more DIY mindset and look more at the cost of materials than the cost of skilled labor. “When it comes to what we do, two finished projects using the same materials can look and perform very different as time passes,” he says.

He says that the difference will show as early as a year after an installation, and customers who go with the cheaper option often end up paying twice: once to get the job installed and again to get that job fixed.



Z-SPRAY

COMMERCIAL SPREADER-SPRAYERS



(877) 482-2040

WWW.Z-SPRAY.COM/SPRAYERS

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

To Cut with Jacobsen® Quality and Prestige

NEW ZT600™
48-, 54-, 60 in width-of-cut



The new ZT600™ zero-turn mower offers Jacobsen® cut quality trusted at prestigious greens spaces like Pebble Beach and the White House.



Parker® HT Transmission
Super smooth steering and
1,000 hour oil change intervals



Suspension Seat
Full suspension seat for
ultimate comfort all day



48-, 54-, 60-in Decks
7 gauge welded deck with deep
deck design for more volume



InCommand™ Console
Key-less ignition, SoftStart
clutch engagement, and more



PerfectTension™
Optimal belt tension to
increase belt life expectancy

NJPA
National Joint Powers Alliance® Contract 070313

AFNAF Contract F41999-10-D-0007

GSA U.S. General Services Administration
Contract GS-07F-0013M (utility vehicles)
Contract GS-06F-0042K (turf equipment)

JACOBSEN

1.888.922.TURF | www.jacobsen.com





While many worry about lowball competition, three-quarters of lawn care and landscape contractors say their prices are somewhat higher than the competition. Less than 1 percent say their prices are much lower than average.

THE TERM 'LOWBALLER'

can mean many things in this industry. Those who took the survey let us know where they stand on the issue and we got some very differing responses. Some see lowballers as people who are new to the industry while others see them as weekend warriors. Still others see them as competition whose profit margins are just enough to sneak by on.

Here are some contractors describe lowballers:

- "A poor quality workmanship, poor equipment and lacking knowledge and skills. Someone who is anti-construction permit and operates a business (without) professional licensing even when they are required."
- "Confuses staying busy with making money."
- "A low-ball contractor is an individual that doesn't understand their operating cost, is willing to sacrifice quality in an attempt to complete the project and cares nothing about tarnishing the image of the green industry."
- "Companies using subpar materials and minimum profit margins to undercut the competition resulting in dissatisfied customers and a blemish on our industry as a whole."
- "A contractor who only wins business solely based on lowest price."
- "Coming in to poach my customers, talking to customers and promising them the moon and doing exactly what I would do for a fraction of price for what really needs done to do the job correctly."
- "Here today, gone tomorrow."
- "Someone that low bids everybody to get the work no matter who is involved."

© JFSKY | THINKSTOCK

Pathway: Rooted in Nutrient Use Efficiency

Get on the Path to a better ROI

- Maximized plant response to fertilizer
- More efficient water use
- Better turf uniformity

Pathway[®]
Microbial Technology
Grounded in Science

Contact a Pathway representative today.
855-356-3743

www.PathwayBioLogic.com

111 E. Tever Street, Plant City, FL 33563

**Microbes
Matter**

THIS IS EXMARK PRODUCTIVITY...



REACHING NEW HEIGHTS IN CUT QUALITY— AND USER PROFITABILITY.

Exmark's Commercial 30 walk-behind mowers tout the industry's largest decks, resulting in an unmatched quality of cut and efficiency, year after year. Just when you thought the best couldn't be improved upon, recent innovations like a patented front-height adjustment system and 3-in-1 cutting system provide even more versatility and a better, quicker cut than ever before.

Stop in to one of our 1,500+ servicing dealers today to experience, first-hand, why Exmark mowers are purchased 2-to-1 over the next best-selling brand by those whose livelihoods depend on delivering the perfect cut.



COVER STORY

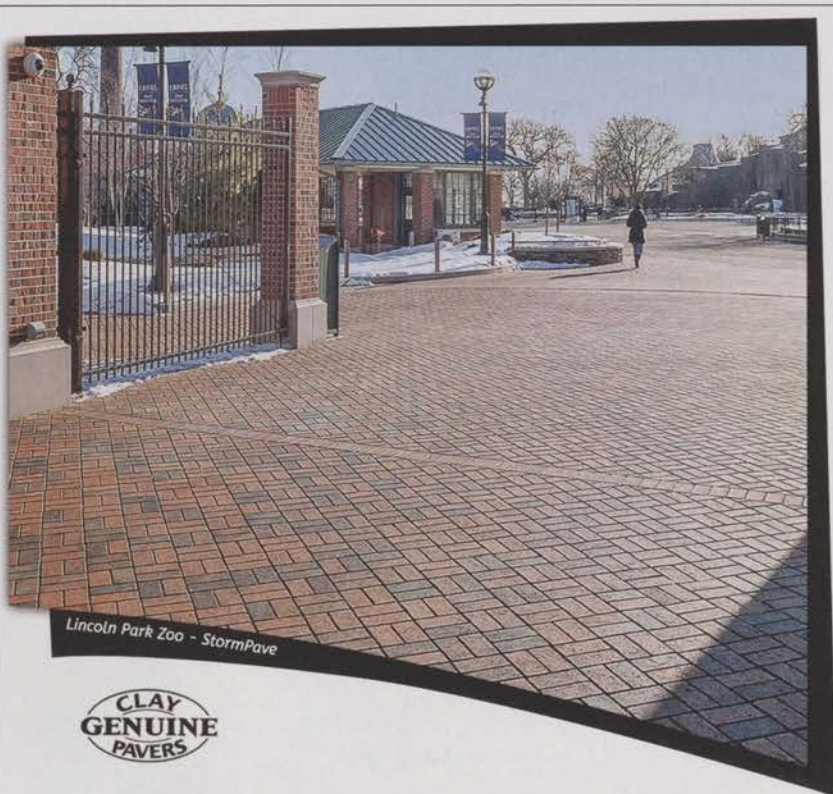
ness and tends to under-bid for a while until they either go out of business or get educated on the real costs of running a business," says Gayle Van Sessen, director of sales and

marketing at Blade Cutters Landscaping. "A lowballer is one who knows and just doesn't care."

Landscape contractors generally see a

lowballer as someone who either doesn't understand the industry and how to make a bid, or someone who will lower a price just to get a job. Many also say lowballers don't have insurance or proper licensing which allows them to place lower bids.

Bachand says entry-level landscapers and lowballers are similar since neither understands the costs associated with completing a job and making a profit. However, Wolf believes entry-level landscapers can bid lower since they have less overhead and can perform work themselves without sacrificing quality.



Durability - clay pavers lasts more than 100 years

Colorfast - clay paver colors will never fade

Strength - 12,000 psi average compression

No degradation - significantly exceeds rigorous freeze/thaw standards in salt water

Clay pavers have rich, warm colors with great aesthetic appeal.

The perfect compliment to brick, block and many other building materials.

pinehallbrick.com

800.334.8689

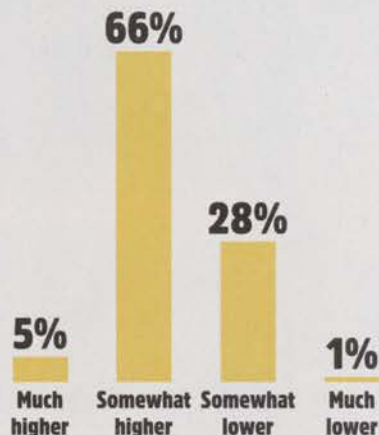
info@pinehallbrick.com



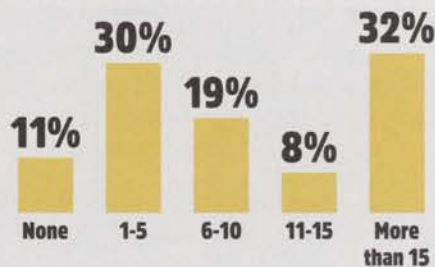
PINE HALL BRICK

BUILD YOUR DREAMS.

HOW WOULD YOU RANK YOUR PRICES COMPARED TO YOUR COMPETITORS?



HOW MANY CUSTOMERS HAVE YOU LOST TO LOWBALLERS IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?



Spring May be Right Around the Corner, But This Offer is Right Here Now.



0% FOR 48 MONTHS
AND \$300 OFF** + UP TO \$400 OFF†
with GreenFleet™

Get \$300 off* plus 0/48 Month** Financing on a New ZTrak™ Z930R or QuikTrak™ 652R.

Not only is spring in the air but so is a great deal on a new ZTrak 930R or QuikTrak™ 652R mower. Because right now, we're offering \$300 off* these incredible mowers. And we're combining this savings with 0% financing for 48 months.** Better yet, if you're a GreenFleet Platinum 1 member, you can get an additional \$400 off instantly! See your John Deere dealer today for a deal on two great mowing machines.

Keep Mowing



JOHN DEERE

JohnDeere.com/MowPro

*Offer available March 1, 2017 - May 1, 2017 on a ZTrak™ Z930R or QuikTrak™ 652R. 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.

**Offer available from March 1, 2017 - May 1, 2017. Subject to approved installment credit with John Deere Financial, for commercial use only. Up to a 10% down payment may be required. Taxes, freight, setup and delivery charges could increase monthly payment. Some restrictions apply, so see your dealer for complete details and other financing options, including financing for Consumer use. Available at participating dealers in the U.S. only.

†GreenFleet Platinum Level savings based on total units purchased. Amount shown in U.S. dollars is based on a Platinum 1 level discount for Z930R ZTrak™ or 652R QuikTrak™. Members per unit discount for an eligible sale is based on the highest accumulated qualifying equipment purchased at the time of an eligible sale. See terms and conditions at JohnDeere.com/GreenFleet for details.

Stephens says lowballers often have a “Wal-Mart mentality” of doing high volume with low prices. “In our industry, however, this can only work so long because the wear and tear

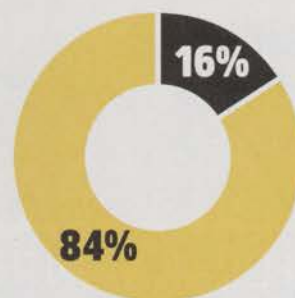
on trucks, equipment and bodies will soon need upgrades and typically the lowballer cannot afford to upgrade and that’s why most of them don’t last five years or more,” he says.

Most agree that lowballers are aware of what they’re doing and cut corners to get the job done, unlike entry-level landscapers who either figure out how to price their services in a way that will net a profit or go out of business.

STICKING TO YOUR GUNS.

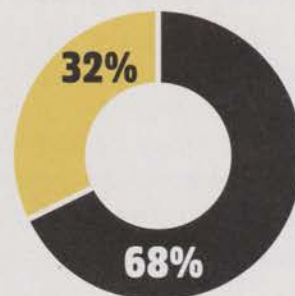
But others say lowering prices is never a good strategy. Blake Reeder, president of Verde Landscape, says he isn’t in business to lose money and instead, sells based on quality. He’s been in business for 13 years

DO YOU USE LOW PRICES AS A STRATEGY TO GET JOBS?



● Yes ● No

ARE THERE TIMES WHEN IT'S ADVANTAGEOUS TO LOWER YOUR PRICES?



● Yes ● No

meet
Nurture

Nurture your business, and your customers.

Trust the brand that offers a variety of reliable water pumping solutions. With easy installations, energy efficiency savings, and premium standard features, **Little Giant** is the ideal partner to expand your product offering and grow your business.

Little GIANT
CELEBRATING
75 YEARS

f t p y lg-outdoor.com

"DONE ALREADY?" WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU SAID THAT?



BOB-CAT® QuickCat™
stand-on mower with
52-inch deck

With unmatched quickness, comfort and control, the QuickCat™ stand-on turns mowing from a chore into a choice.

Quick

8-mph mowing speed and 10.5-mph travel speed lets you get the job done fast and get on to the next.

Comfort

Ride cushioning suspension, a wide stance and x-large drive tires mean you won't feel beaten down at the end of a long day.

Control

Excellent balance and maneuverability and an all-in-one parking brake and run control keeps it simple and lets you focus on laying perfect stripes.



Throw in the industry's best warranty and it all adds up to peace of mind for your bottom line.
Learn more at bobcatturf.com

Powered by
Kawasaki

DURABILITY - QUALITY OF CUT - EASE OF OWNERSHIP

COMPETING WITH CUTTHROATS

and brought in \$3 million last year.

Lowballers are a big problem in his area of Lubbock, Texas, since they drive prices down and lower the expectations of his clients, he says. And he's lost clients in the past to lower cost competitors.

"This makes it difficult to sell the quality and service because the customer has been sold based on price in the past," he says.

However, Reeder says his quality speaks for itself and lowballers actually make his business look good. He's picked up some customers

THE BIGGEST COMPLAINTS LANDSCAPERS hear from customers who got fed up with their old service provider are a lack of communication, inconsistent pricing and just generally low-quality work.

And while price is one of the most important factors to most customers, it's not the only thing that matters.

"Our quality speaks for itself," Reeder says. "Quality and service don't come cheap."

Wolf points out to his customers that his team members are properly trained and outfitted, and that he's licensed and insured. "But we are not for everyone and if there's someone lower and that's what they want to do, I understand but I think if they try us, they will most likely keep us and not have to worry about another landscaper for a long time," he says.

Others point to awards, reviews or other nearby customers to show that they're worth the money. Sometimes that education includes walking potential clients through the job from start to finish. For Stephens, that includes guaranteeing that there won't be any surprises when the final bill comes.

"Many lowballers give a low price to get the work and the finished project is less than described and then the extras kick in and the quality of work is low or there are many things the client still has to have done when the project is done," he says.

HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT LOWBALLING IN YOUR MARKET?

41  **VERY CONCERNED**
PERCENT

45  **SOMEWHAT CONCERNED**
PERCENT

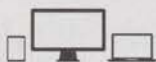
14  **NOT AT ALL CONCERNED**
PERCENT



INSTANT GRATIFICATION

Your customers want it,
PRO Landscape lets you deliver it.

In the office or on the go, PRO Landscape has all the tools you need to create winning designs.



LEARN WHY PRO LANDSCAPE DOES IT BETTER

prolandscape.com | 800-231-8574 | sales@prolandscape.com

PRO Landscape

TAKE CONTROL

Manage your customers from any place, any time.



Introducing the New Rain Bird® LNK WiFi Module



Upgrades the ESP-TM2
to a WiFi controller



Upgrades the ESP-Me
to a WiFi controller



EPA WaterSense Approved*

*When installed with the WR2 and ESP-Me.

RAIN BIRD®

Kawasaki
Engines

Liquid
STAMINA

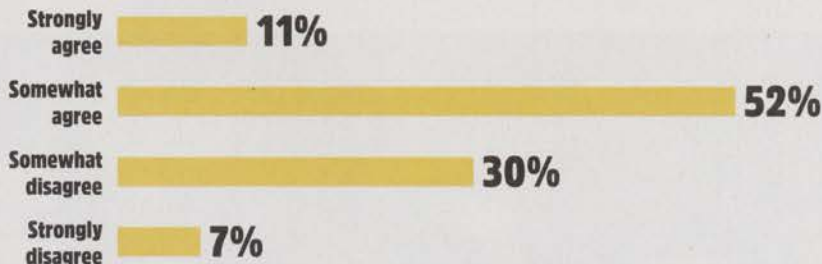


Made for severe conditions, extreme use and high temperatures. Zinc-formulated for extreme parts-plating lubricity. Engineered for anti-shear, grade-stable endurance. JASO and API certified for heavy commercial duty. Robust conventional or synthetic blends. Don't cut engine life short.

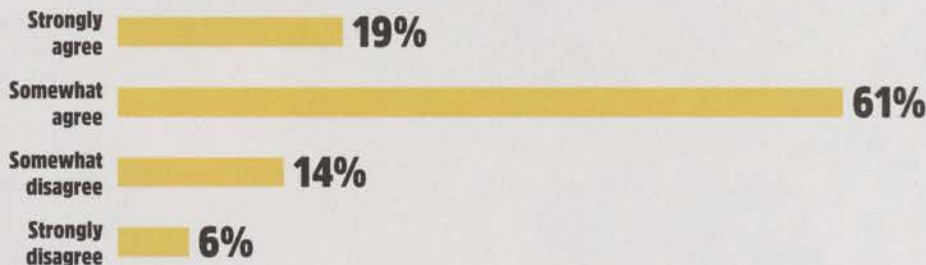
Keep it genuine Kawasaki.
kawasakienginesusa.com

We asked contractors if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

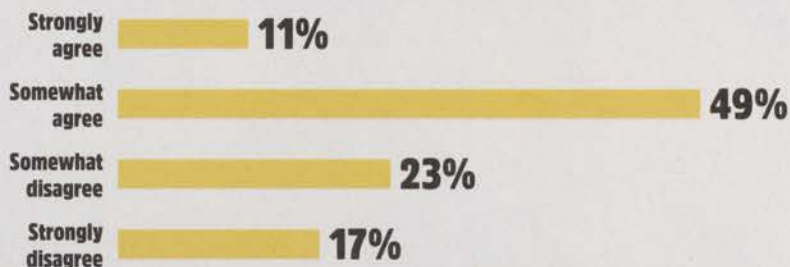
PRICE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR TO CUSTOMERS IN MY MARKET



THERE ARE TIMES WHEN COMPETING ON PRICES IS NECESSARY



I HAVE LOWERED THE PRICE OF MY WORK TO WIN A JOB



who weren't satisfied with the professionalism, consistency and attention to detail of competitors who charge less.

"They make us look good. We charge more, but we provide a top-tier service," he says.

Van Sessen agrees, although lowballing isn't a big problem for her in Crown Point, Indiana. She says most often, lowballers are either newcomers to the industry or they're landscapers who are getting ready to retire. Either way, they aren't interested in helping to further the industry, she says.

Blade Cutters' policy is not to bargain with customers on price. Instead, they always give the best and lowest price on

the first proposal no matter what. The company has been in business for 19 years and brought in \$1.9 million in 2016.

"Several years ago, we used to lower prices for a larger customer, maybe for a specific project, or a one-time project, but then they began to expect it for every project so we no longer do it for anybody," she says. **L&L**

Editor's Note: To see how your prices stack up to the rest of the industry, see our *Benchmarking Your Business* report in the November issue. (<http://bit.ly/Benchmarkreal>) Let us know where you stand on the topic on Twitter at [@lawnlandscape](#) or on Facebook.

“COME FORTH INTO **THE
LIGHT OF THINGS,**
LET NATURE BE YOUR TEACHER.”

—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



LAGUNA • DX3
COMING IN 2017

RAIN MASTER®
RIGHT AS RAIN™

(800) 777-1477 RAINMASTER.COM

Outdoor living headquarters.

Our stores carry a wide range of top landscaping and hardscaping products. From pavers and lighting to grills and specialty tools, Ewing carries the materials you need today.

Stop by and let the Ewing professionals help you.

Estimating your next job is quick and easy online at EwingIrrigation.com.

Create custom lists and assemblies while browsing products. Download or print your custom lists for easy ordering and importing into your estimating software.

Follow us on social media:



Irrigation
+Landscape



Turf+Land
Management



Outdoor
Living



Sports Fields



Golf



Sustainable
Solutions


EWING[®]
Irrigation & Landscape Supply



ARTICLE
SPONSORED BY

WELLS
FARGO

SMART FINANCE 2017

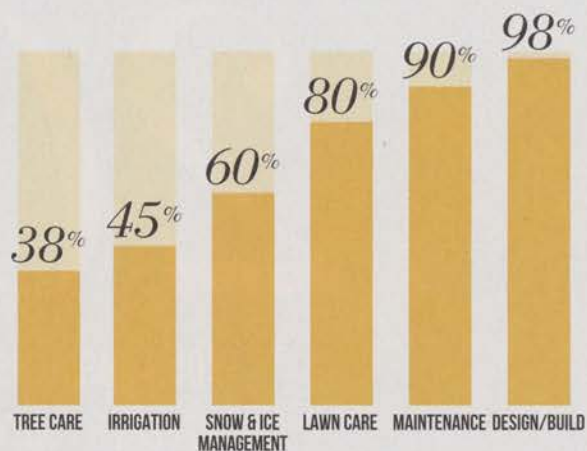
YOUR BUSINESS CAN GROW IF YOU OFFER
DIFFERENT WAYS TO PAY FOR A PROJECT.



The next level

The plans you've designed for a customer look great, but you have a few suggestions you think they'd love and would take the project up a notch. Except, the increase in price may cause them to turn those suggestions down. That's when you may want to consider third-party financing. While still not a popular method of payment in the green industry, our 2017 numbers show more contractors are offering this compared to last year. In 2016, 6 percent said they offered third-party financing, while 10 percent this year confirmed they offer it. Over the next few pages, find out how almost 150 contractors responded to our financing questions, including what projects they offer it for and how it has helped their company.

WHAT SERVICES DO YOU OFFER? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.



*Lawn & Landscape magazine financing survey, February 2017

REDEFINE YOUR MOWING EXPERIENCE

with the new BlackHawk HP from Dixie Chopper



BLACKHAWK HP™



Suspension Seat – Full suspension seat for ultimate comfort



OCDC – Foot-operated discharge chute to control grass clippings



Parker® HT Series – Smooth steering and 1,000 hour oil change intervals



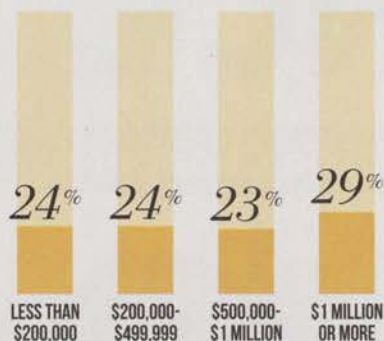
InCommand Console – Keyless ignition, SoftStart clutch engagement, and more

A mower built to give you an unparalleled mowing experience is coming to a Dixie Chopper dealer near you. Elevate your ride with the smoothest steering, intuitive controls, and a deep 7-gauge deck for heavy-duty mowing. See the new BlackHawk HP online or at your local Dixie Chopper dealer today.

dixiechopper.com | 765.246.7737


DIXIE CHOPPER®
The World's Fastest Lawn Mower.

**WHAT IS YOUR APPROXIMATE
ANNUAL REVENUE?**



**FOR WHICH SERVICES DO YOU OFFER
THIRD-PARTY FINANCING? CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY.**



DO YOU CURRENTLY OFFER THIRD-PARTY/CONSUMER FINANCING? YES: 10%



NO: 90%

*Lawn & Landscape magazine financing survey, February 2017

Make Your Competitors Green with Envy.



A versatile machine for all types of jobs:

- Over 150 attachments
- Articulated, compact sized
- Minimal turf impact
- Excellent lift to weight ratio
- Low operating and maintenance costs

To learn how an Avant loader can help you work more efficiently, call us at **847-380-9822**, or visit our website.

AVANT®

www.AvantTecnoUSA.com

All in One Solution

For purpose-built, commercial-grade protection,
choose AMSOIL.



AMSOIL synthetic lubricants are engineered specifically to deliver reliable operation for professionals who depend on their equipment to make a living. With tough formulations that protect against heat, wear and deposits, they help hard-working equipment remain clean and retain their power for maximum efficiency.

Maximizes Engine Power | Helps Cut Maintenance Costs



**Hydrostatic
Tranny Fluid**

**Small-
Engine Oil**

**2-Stroke
Oil**

FULL FAMILY OF PRODUCTS

AMSOIL

The First in Synthetics

For more information visit:

www.amsoil.com/landscape

1-800-777-8491

Call or go online for our
FREE Product Catalog



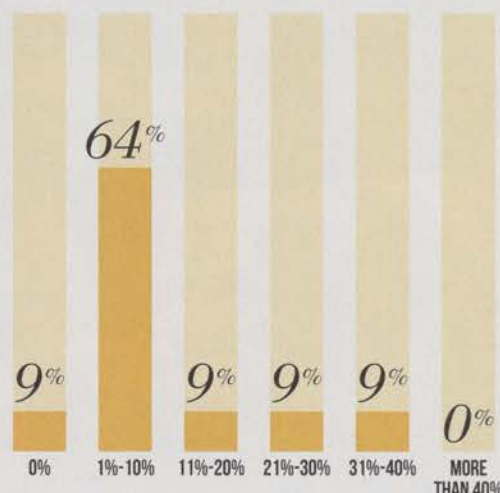
All trademarked names and images are the property of their respective owners and may be registered marks in some countries. No affiliation or endorsement claim, express or implied, is made by their use. All products advertised here are developed by AMSOIL for use in the applications shown.

WHAT OBJECTION DO YOU MOST OFTEN HEAR
WHEN A CUSTOMER REJECTS A JOB? (IN PERCENTAGE)

92 COST OF THE JOB IS TOO MUCH **2** PAYMENT OPTIONS AVAILABLE **6** SPREAD THE JOB OVER SEVERAL MONTHS/YEARS TO AFFORD



AS A PERCENTAGE, HOW MANY OF YOUR
CUSTOMERS SIGN UP FOR FINANCING?



*Lawn & Landscape magazine financing survey, February 2017

© ALEXEY I THINKESTOCK

Only **1%** of all **lawn and landscape** companies
Exceed **\$1,000,000** in Annual Revenue*

• **[Be Bold]**
Join The 1% Network
America's #1 Commercial Grounds Care Franchise

www.uslawnsfranchise.com •

*47 franchised territories that were open and operating from January 1, 2015, through December 31, 2015, achieved in excess of \$1,000,000+ in Gross Sales. Please see item 19 of our 2016 FDD for additional information. Although this information is historical and represents actual information, the FTC requires us to include the following statement - Caution: There is no guarantee you would achieve these results. If you rely on these figures, you must accept the risk.



U.S. LAWNS®
Your Turf. Our Lawn.



WITH YOU WHEN THE GOING GETS ROUGH.

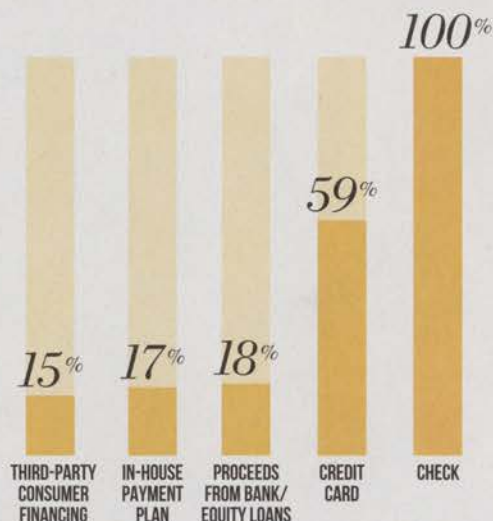
Long after the other guys have clocked out and gone home, you're still grinding away. That's why our commitment to you goes beyond the 9 to 5. No matter the place, no matter the time of day, no matter the challenge, we will be at your side with the service and solutions that work as hard you do. Partner with us, and let's become Stronger Together.



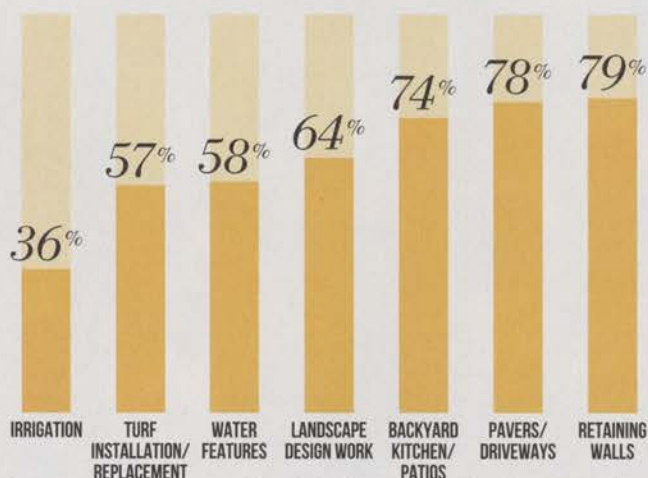
SiteOne.com

Irrigation | Lighting | Turf & Landscape Maintenance | Nursery | Golf Course Maintenance | Hardscape | Pest Control

WHICH FORMS OF PAYMENT DO YOU ACCEPT BESIDES CASH? CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY.



WHICH JOBS ARE MOST LIKELY NOT PAID FOR WITH CASH? CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY.



*Lawn & Landscape magazine financing survey, February 2017

Discover a Better Way to Run Your Business



Consolidate all your landscape management software and systems into one easy-to-use solution.

The result? Increased profitability. Reduced expenses. Greater productivity.

"We can't imagine our business today without BOSS."
— Megan Lowe, Milosi

www.bosslm.com/discover | 866-596-5971

BOSS^{LM}
Business Management Software
for The Green Industry

Were You Featured In This Issue?

Reprints enable you to reuse your article and simply place it into the hands of your target audience. Having been featured in a well-respected publication adds the credibility of a third-party endorsement to your message.

Give yourself a competitive advantage with reprints. Contact us for more information regarding reprints and additional applications designed to meet your challenging market needs.

**Call Bonnie Velikonya @
800-456-0707**

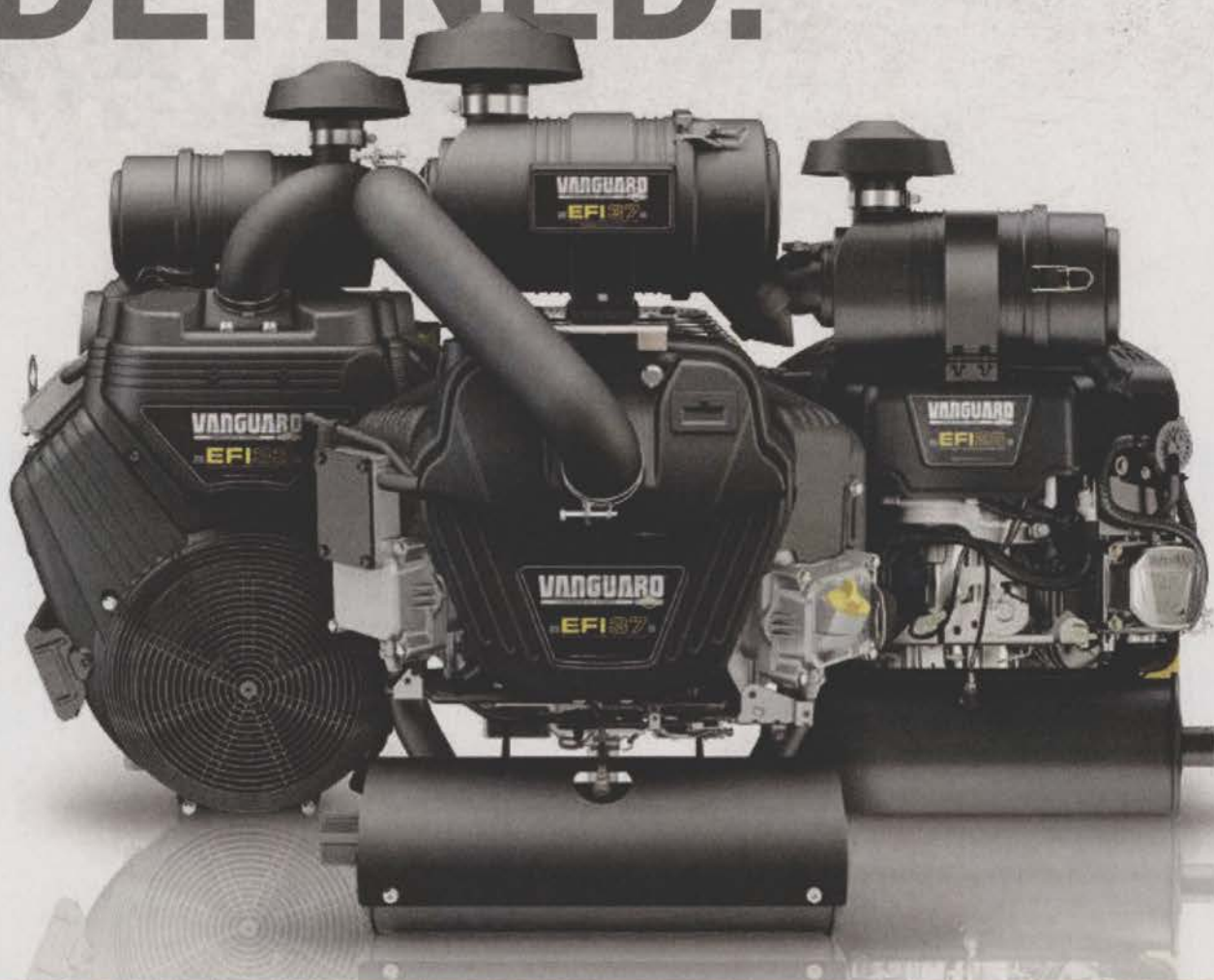


Use Reprints As:

- Sales Aids
- Recruitment Tools
- Managed ePrints
- Trade Show Handouts
- Media Kit Supplements
- Educational Programs
- Employee Training
- Sales Presentations
- Conference Materials
- Direct Mail Campaigns



PRODUCTIVITY DEFINED.



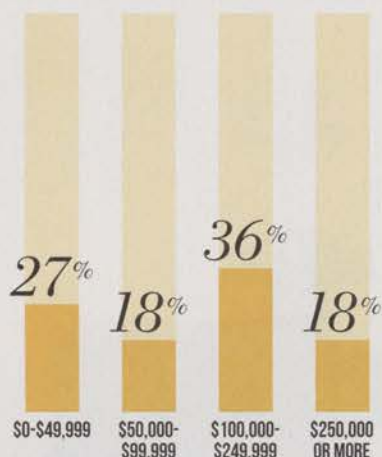
VANGUARD COMMERCIAL ENGINES OFFER MORE THAN JUST RELIABLE POWER TO KEEP YOU RUNNING.

Technology, strength and support to take on the world's most demanding job sites. Vanguard offers easier maintenance, 24-hour parts delivery* and innovations like Vanguard EFI—providing unmatched performance and efficiency. And all engines are backed by the largest sales, service and support network in the industry. Experience the power to get more done every day.

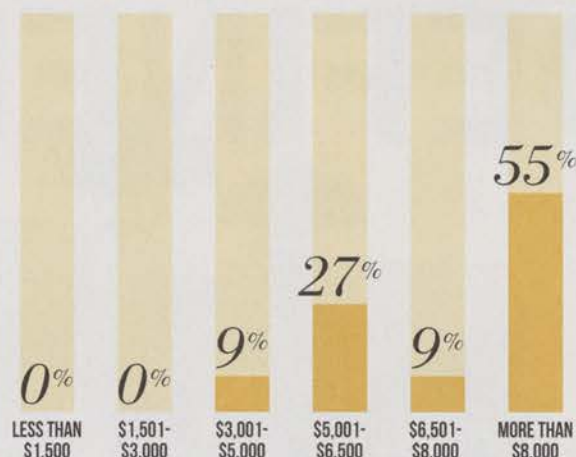
PUT VANGUARD COMMERCIAL ENGINES TO WORK FOR YOU. Go to VanguardEngines.com to learn more.

*Available in most states.

WHAT IS YOUR ANNUAL CONSUMER FINANCE VOLUME?



WHEN ONE OF YOUR CLIENTS USES YOUR CONSUMER FINANCING, WHAT IS THE AVERAGE TRANSACTION SIZE?



*Lawn & Landscape magazine financing survey, February 2017

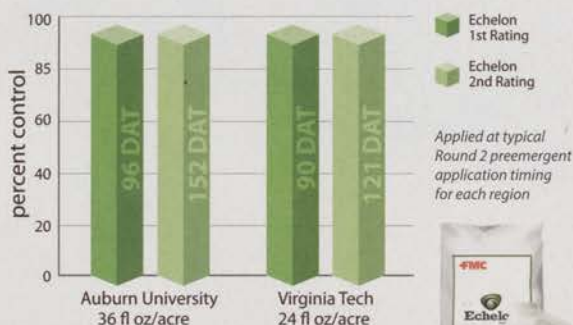


DON'T LET LAST YEAR'S SEDGE BE THIS YEAR'S PROBLEM

Echelon® Herbicide is the first in its category to provide pre-emerge control of perennial sedges while also providing industry standards for Poa annua, Crabgrass and Goosegrass pre-emerge control.

Proven Preemergent Sedge Control

2008 University Trials



Echelon®
HERBICIDE

“In one year, one sedge tuber can become
6,900 NEW TUBERS.”

Source: Tumbleson & Kommedahl, 1961



@FMCTurf



FMCTurf

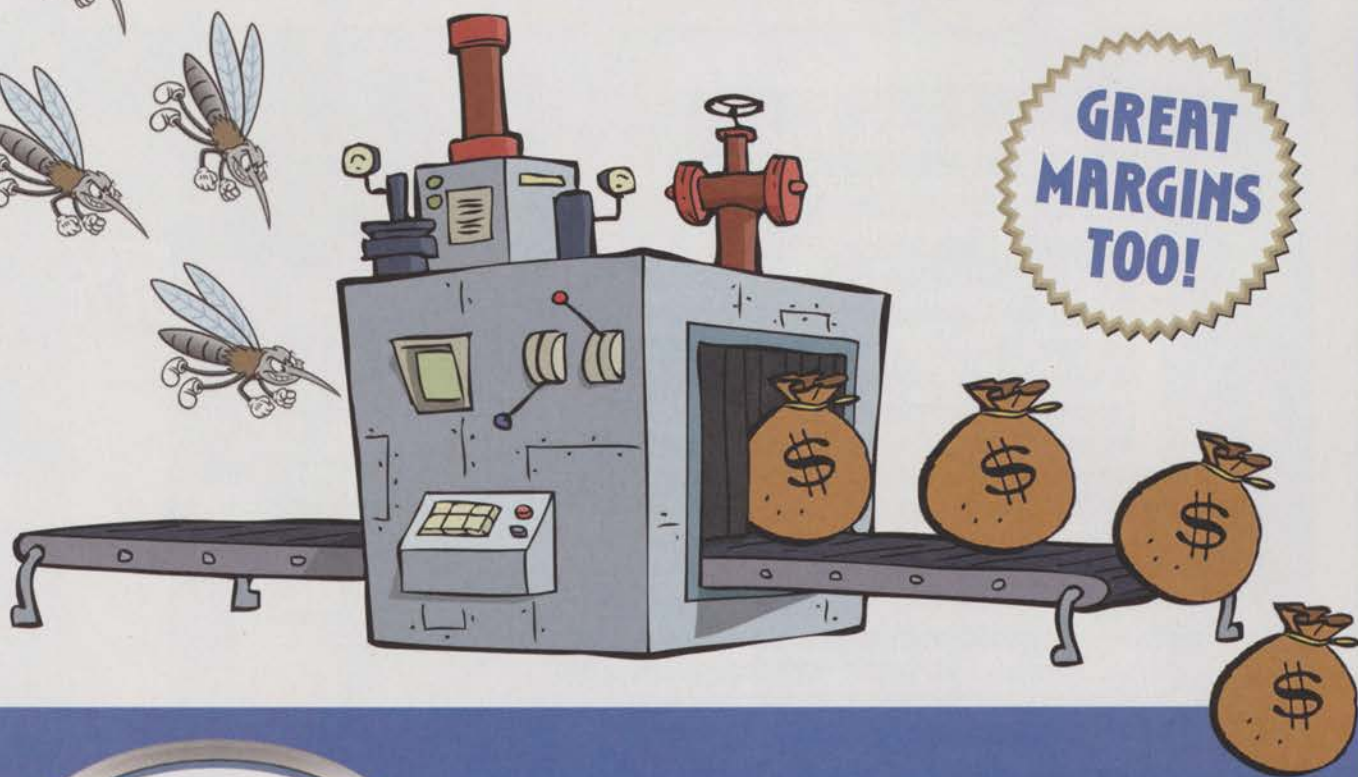
fmcprosolutions.com

fmcturfwire.com

Always read and follow label directions. FMC, FMC logo and Echelon are trademarks of FMC Corporation. ©2017 FMC Corporation. All rights reserved.

Turn Mosquitoes\$ into Recurring Revenues\$!

**GREAT
MARGINS
TOO!**



MistAway® Systems

**Sell and service our innovative misting systems
that effectively control mosquitos and other
annoying flying insects.**

BECOME A MISTAWAY DEALER TODAY!
1-866-485-7255 ✦ WWW.MISTAWAY.COM/GOODBIZ

BUZZKILL

Take the time to decide if adding mosquito services is right for your company. **By Katie Tuttle**

IN 2016, THE THREAT OF THE ZIKA VIRUS had many in the U.S. on alert about mosquitoes. "I think because of the Zika virus and the amount of media attention that it received, we actually had a good number of customers asking for the service," says Robert Kerns, president and CEO of Custom Turf Lawn & Irrigation Services.

Located in Finleyville, Pennsylvania, Custom Turf added mosquito control as a service in 2016, first marketing to existing customers via invoice upsells.

"We took a very conservative approach to advertising," Kerns says. "We didn't want to invest a tremendous amount of dollars to the service, not really knowing if it would be successful."

Roger Slaughter, owner of S&S Landscape in Hickory, North Carolina, also starts with his current client base when selling mosquito services.

"We started offering it even before the Zika problems happened in Florida and the deep south, and out of the country, but we started offering mosquito spray just because they're a nuisance," he says, adding that this is the company's third year offering mosquito services.

That nuisance factor of mosquitoes can be an effective selling tactic compared to marketing the threat of Zika or West Nile.

"We've – in West Michigan – had West Nile virus for many years," says Jim Zylstra, owner of Tuff Turf Molebusters in Byron Center. He says many people

HAVE QUESTIONS
ABOUT ZIKA AND OTHER
MOSQUITO-BORNE
ILLNESSES MADE YOU
CONSIDER ADDING
MOSQUITO SERVICES?



SURVEY RESULTS BASED ON RESPONSES FROM 200 CONTRACTORS AND LCOS.

WE HAVE THE TRUCK FOR THE JOB!

**ISUZU
TRUCK**



Isuzu NPR with 19' Dovetail Landscaper Body
297 HP Gas or 210 HP Diesel Engine, Automatic Transmission,
12,000 lb. or 14,500 lb. GVWR, Exhaust Brake (Diesel Only),
AMFM 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
297 HP Gas or 210 HP Diesel Engine, Automatic Transmission, 14,500 lb. GVWR, Exhaust
Brake, AMFM 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
297 HP Gas Engine, Automatic Transmission, 14,500 lb. GVWR, 19.5 Tires,
AMFM 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
297 HP Gas Engine, Automatic Transmission, 14,500 lb. GVWR, 19.5 Tires,
AMFM CD Player, A/C, P/S, Power Windows & Locks, Tilt Wheel,
Electric Hoist, (Other Options And GVW Ratings Available)



Isuzu NPR with 18' Enclosed Landscape Body
297 HP Gas Engine, Automatic Transmission, 12,000 lb. GVWR,
AMFM CD Player, A/C, P/S, Power Windows & Locks, Tilt Wheel,
Split Dovetail Ramp, Side Door, (Other Options And GVW Ratings Available)



Dual System Spray Unit!

Isuzu NPR HD with 11' Bed & 600/100 Gallon Tanks
297 HP Gas Engine, Automatic Transmission, 14,500 lb. GVWR, 19.5 Tires,
AMFM CD Player, A/C, P/S, Power Windows & Locks, Tilt Wheel,
(Other Options And GVW Ratings Available)



Isuzu NPR with 19' Custom Irrigation Body
297 HP Gas or 210 HP Diesel Engine, Automatic Transmission,
12,000 lb. or 14,500 lb. GVWR, Exhaust Brake (Diesel Only),
AMFM 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
Decatur, AL 800-433-6351**

NEW or USED TRUCKS @ www.neelycoble.com

MOSQUITO CONTROL

in the area don't fear acquiring a mosquito-borne illness unless they've known someone personally affected by one. Therefore, they're not likely to purchase the services to prevent those.

"Until it happens to somebody they know, it's really a 'not in my backyard' thing, so I wouldn't really use the viruses as a scare tactic," Zylstra says. "We go more for comfort. They're just a pain. Who wants mosquitoes landing on your arm while you're trying to enjoy outside?"

"To me, the mosquito buzzing in somebody's ear is a much better sales tactic than the threat of disease or a virus."

ADD-ON. While adding a mosquito service may seem simple, with low-cost products and equipment, it's important to look into a few factors before you just hand your guys backpack sprayers.

"First of all, you should know your state requirements for certification and licensing," Zylstra says. "At least in Michigan, they are their own classification, not general pest. So know what your state requires."

Once you've considered what requirements are present in your state, you need to train crews. Training requirements vary by state as well.

HAVE YOU HAD NUMEROUS (MORE THAN 10) CUSTOMERS ASK YOU SPECIFICALLY ABOUT PREVENTING THE ZIKA VIRUS?



"The required training comes from the state of North Carolina," Slaughter says. "I'm the one who holds the license. They dictate to me the training I need. We have to maintain our license and in order to maintain in North Carolina, we're required to have so many hours of training a year."

Ron's Organics, in Mesquite, Texas, approaches mosquito control differently. Owner Ron Hall's crews use an organic approach of applying plant oils.

Because of this, his crews require different training than most mosquito control crews.

"It's a pretty short learning

© WESAJOE | THINKSTOCK

My dad works for SavaLawn!

Join SavATree/SavaLawn and make a difference now and for generations to come.



Offices in CT, IL, MA, MD, MN, NJ, NY, PA, VA & WI
More information at savatree.com/careers

Improve Air Quality & Keep Your Shop Clean



New from Magna-Matic, the leader in lawn mower blade sharpening equipment, has designed a dust collector specifically for live sparks and metal dust created during blade sharpening.

The MAG-200+ Dust Collector can be connected to any other blade sharpener too.

The 2.5" rubber hose will connect to any existing Magna-Matic Sharpener, or can easily connect to your other sharpening equipment.

Fast and easy clean out tray



Fast filter access, and inexpensive filters.

MAG-200+ Dust Collector Specs
Dimensions: 16" x 13" x 19" tall
Filtration: 3 Stage Filtration (Aluminum Mesh, MERV 8 Pad Filter, and MERV 11 Pleated Filter)
Horse Power: 1/2 - RPM: 3450
Motor Type: Industrial - Totally Enclosed Fan Cooled
Impeller: 9" diameter Four Blade Backward Curve
Crushproof Rubber Hose 3.5' lg 2.5" dia cuffed ends
68 decibels



MADE IN THE USA

www.magna-matic.com

800-328-1110

Call for Free Catalog



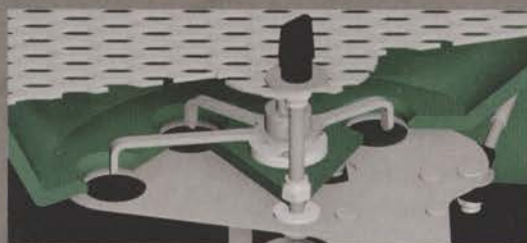
Watch Videos

You Tube

permagreen

UPGRADE TO THE ALL NEW

BREAKTHRU AGITATOR



Featured on the new 2017 PermaGreen Triumph, the revolutionary **BREAKTHRU** Agitator is guaranteed to reduce clogging of your LESCO® or PermaGreen™ 3-hole spreader or your money back.

Visit permagreen.com to see for yourself why PermaGreen is the **GOLD STANDARD** of spreaders



TAKE THE 60-DAY CHALLENGE

TRY THE PERMAGREEN ON YOUR TOUGHEST PROPERTIES FOR 60 DAYS. IF YOU DON'T **LOVE** IT, WE'LL BUY IT BACK!

CALL FOR DEALER LOCATIONS & REGISTER TO WIN A TRIUMPH

800.346.2001 permagreen.com

MOSQUITO CONTROL

curve," Hall says. "A lot of it has to do with the employee." Hall's crews watch YouTube videos with him before going out in the field and applying sprays made of garlic, clove,

cinnamon, thyme or peppermint. He also applies garlic granular products to the ground.

Kerns's training focuses on showing crews the most common locations of mosquitoes

STOP SWATTING

Concerns about Zika have more contractors offering insect control. **By Kate Spirgen**

AS NEWS OF THE ZIKA VIRUS hit last summer, lawn care and landscape companies saw an opportunity to add mosquito-control to their services and with some success last year, they plan to continue offering it.

Joseph Holland, president and owner of Majestic Lawn and Landscape in New City, New York, added about a dozen mosquito-control accounts due to Zika concerns last year. That increased the revenue of his full-service lawn and landscape business by about \$3,000. But in his area, the main concern isn't mosquitoes; it's ticks that carry and spread Lyme disease.

Luckily, the chemical Majestic uses kills both ticks and mosquitoes so he can kill two birds with one stone. The company bought a new \$1,000 backpack sprayer to apply chemicals more effectively.

Holland says most of the new accounts were either couples starting families and elderly customers.

"I spoke with a few other guys in the business and they were as surprised as I was that people aren't really going crazy to get on board with this stuff," he says.

Mike Wakeam, owner of RISON Irrigation-Lighting in Mt. Brydges, Ontario, also started a mosquito control service last year, adding it to irrigation and lighting. His company installs a lure and trap system that needs to be serviced once a month, putting it on the same timeline as irrigation services.

"The nice thing with this product that I'm selling is that I didn't have to buy any special equipment for it," he says. He simply sells the product to the resident and offers to provide the monthly service it requires.

Majestic is forging ahead with the service next year and planning to send out mosquito control marketing along with the first three billings of the year in hopes of picking up some more business.

RISON also plans to continue adding mosquito control accounts. Wakeam says the hardest part of selling his system is proving that it works, especially since control doesn't happen overnight. But as customers see results, he plans to use their reviews on his website.

"If the market keeps up and people want to purchase the product, I'm absolutely going to continue offering this," he says.



Engineered smarter – so you look better.



Why choose Kichler Integrated LED?

All-weather performance
Integrated solid-state drivers are fully potted and sealed to resist moisture

Superior results
Will not diminish lumen output or truncate beam spread like drop-in fixtures

Easy design & installation
9 to 15 volt operating range nearly eliminates voltage drop and delivers full stated lumen output even over long wire runs

15 YEAR
LIMITED
WARRANTY

On the light engine and electrical components.
Warranty subject to change without notice.
Visit www.kichler.com for full warranty and limitations.

View our full line of integrated products at
kichler.com/landscape

KICHLER

Trim·tect®

GROWTH REGULATOR

GET A HIGHER RETURN PER HOUR

Trimtect can help you
increase profits by freeing
up your crew's time

We sprayed Trimtect® on a privet shrub four days post
prune in June as a trial. We pruned again 10 weeks
later in August and found significantly less top growth
compared to the shrubs around it. The privet sprayed
with Trimtect® held its shape through September, over
5 more weeks, nearly absent of escapes (this was far
better than I had expected).

**Expanded use of Trimtect® would ultimately
reduce the workload of our prune crews allowing
them to assume responsibilities in other revenue
generating departments.**

It's conceivable that we will cut our prune-time in half
and reduce our clippings by more than half for the year.
With the results gained from the trials this year, we will
be expanding our use of PGR's next year.

Andrew Stith
Production Manager
Epic Landscape Productions L.C.
Olathe, Kansas



Go to www.treecarescience.com/TrimtectOffer for full details!



Species: **Privet** 4 weeks after Trimtect treatment

Special offer from 3/1 - 7/1/2017
Valid on case of 1 gallon (4 units) and case of 2.5 gallon (2 units)
Limit 3 cases. Certain restrictions apply. See website for details.

Tech support: www.treecarescience.com | info@treecarescience.com | 877-272-6747



©2017 Rainbow Treecare Scientific Advancements

**INTRODUCING
THE ALL-NEW 2017 SUPER DUTY® CHASSIS CAB**

SUPER POWERS WITHOUT THE STUPID CAPE



Class-leading capabilities where it counts:

Best-in-class GCWR – 40,000 lbs.*

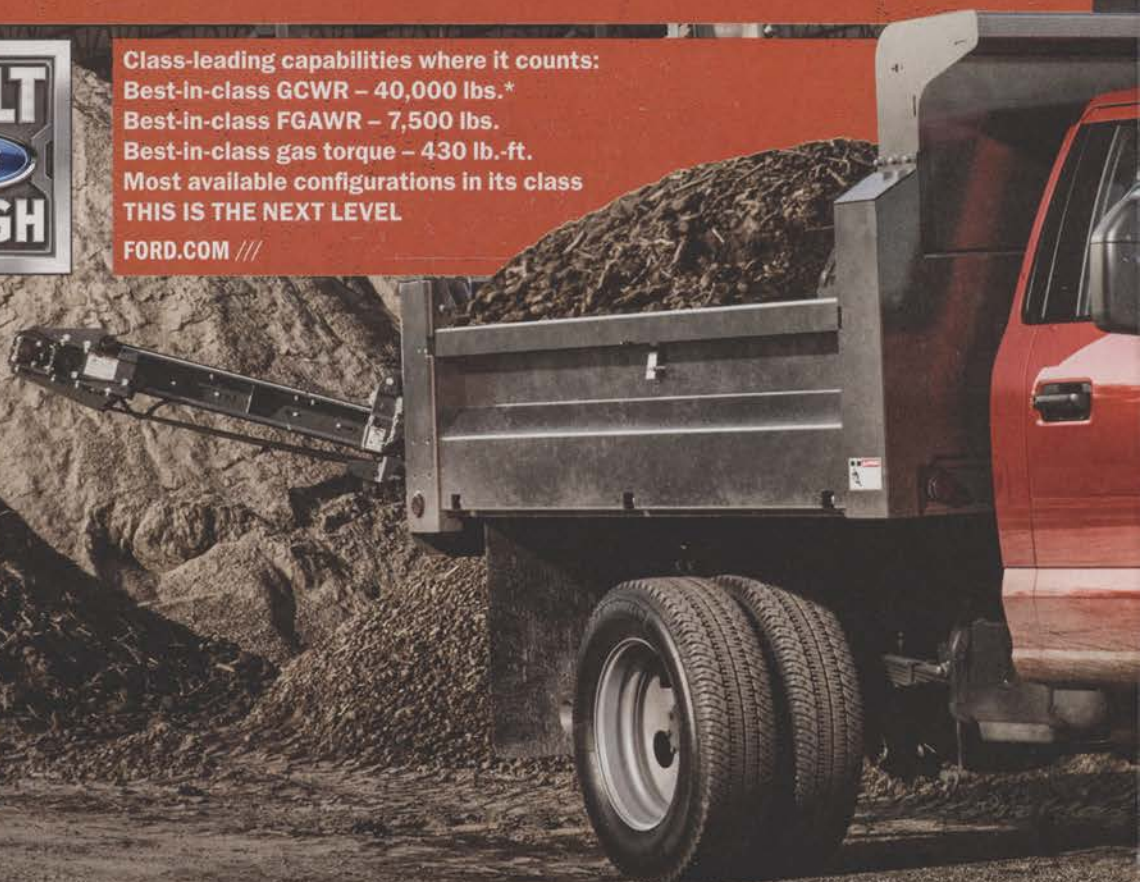
Best-in-class FGAWR – 7,500 lbs.

Best-in-class gas torque – 430 lb.-ft.

Most available configurations in its class

THIS IS THE NEXT LEVEL

FORD.COM ///



Aftermarket equipment shown. *When properly configured. Class is Full-Size Pickup Chassis Cabs over 8,500 lbs. GVWR based on Ford segmentation.



MOSQUITO CONTROL

depending on different variables.

"The training is probably more technical than anything in terms of the habitat of a mosquito," he says. "Where they tend to congregate, under what conditions, the months of the year ... those specific questions are the specific details of a mosquito's lifestyle."

When using chemicals, one of the most important things for your crews to understand and actively do, according to Zylstra, is wear personal protection equipment. "Because this is a product that is putting up a fine particle in the air, you're going to be having to wear a lot more

PPE than we're used to," he says. This includes a full respirator, full face shield, long pants, boots and gloves.

Zylstra says it's also important for technicians to know the weather report for each day they'll be spraying.

"You can't do it with more than 10 mph wind, and you've got to watch the rain coming," he says. "It's the most weather-sensitive service we offer."

He adds that you don't want to do it on humid days because the moisture particles will stay suspended in the air.

THE SLOW GROW. If you're add-

HAVE YOU HAD NUMEROUS (MORE THAN 10) CUSTOMERS ASK YOU ABOUT PREVENTING OTHER MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES IN GENERAL NOT INCLUDING ZIKA (E.G. WEST NILE, CHIKUNGUNYA, ETC.)



ing mosquito spraying as a way to build your revenue quickly, Kerns warns you to think again.

"It's not something we expected was going to break production records for our company," he says. The company has a three-step program in June, July and August, and first started advertising in early spring. "We got a little bit of traction in June, a little bit better in July, but by the time the third and final treatment rolled around, we actually had a pretty good response."

Tuff Turf Molebusters also saw a slow increase in service after the company started offering mosquito control to customers.



Experience the ELECTRIC Mower Advantage!

- *Low Noise
- *No Gas, Oil or Fluids
- *Clean, Zero Emissions
- *Powerful
- *Low Maintenance
- *All Day Mowing On One Charge

Featuring S.A.M. (Solar Assisted Mower)
Ask us about the Federal Solar Tax Credit

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO ENTER OUR NEMESIS MOWER GIVEAWAY

Manufacturing a full line of Electric, Commercial, Lithium Powered Mowers, Handheld Equipment and Backpack Blowers

www.meangreenmowers.com 513-738-4736

Made in USA



PAVE TECH
Hardscape Outfitters

EASYLIFT PRO

A BEAUTIFULLY SIMPLE, SUPER-EFFICIENT AND RUGGEDLY BUILT 1-PERSON TOOL FOR HANDLING PAVING SLABS



VISIT PAVETECH.COM TO DOWNLOAD OUR 2017 PRODUCT CATALOG

952-226-6400 SALES@PAVEEDGE.COM



Innovative
Productivity™

**SAVE 60% ON OIL
MAINTENANCE PER
SEASON PER UNIT***



Ferris® Commercial Mowers with the new Vanguard™ Oil Guard System raise the bar on how productive a landscape contractor can be on any given day. A first-of-its-kind solution for the commercial turf market, Ferris mowers with the Oil Guard system offer major productivity gains by allowing landscape contractors to operate their mower for **500** hours between oil changes.



Less time spent changing the oil and more time cutting!

The Vanguard™ Oil Guard System is available on these Ferris® mowers:



IS® 3200Z
Vanguard™ BIG BLOCK™
Vanguard™ BIG BLOCK™ EFI



IS® 2100Z
Vanguard™ 810 EFI



F320Z
Vanguard™ BIG BLOCK™ EFI



F210Z
Vanguard™ 810 EFI

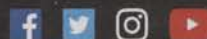


SRS™ Z2
Vanguard™ 810 EFI



FW35
Vanguard™ 810 EFI

Start Enhancing Your Productivity Today! Visit: **Ferrismowers.com** to locate a dealer near you.



*Cost savings based on standard oil maintenance with 100 hour interval versus Oil Guard 500 hour service interval.

MOSQUITO CONTROL

"It took us a long time to build up a good mosquito route," Zylstra says. "We were doing it for seven years and only had 35 clients that got mosquito control."

Then, five or six years ago, that part of Michigan saw a 100-year flood, with some yards seeing weeks of standing water.

When the water finally receded, some of the lawns were still wet and became a perfect habitat for mosquitoes.

"After three weeks, the mosquitoes were so bad, we literally went from 35 accounts to 305 within a 10-day window," he says. "I had five price increases.

We were selling 100 percent of the phone calls coming in."

The company raised prices until they only sold about 75 to 80 percent of the calls.

Since then, Zylstra says his company has had an 85 percent retention rate.

"We thought it would be one year and you're done, but they stayed with us," he says. "It comes and goes. Every year is different.

At the end of the day, location should be an important factor when determining whether it's a good idea for your company to add mosquito spraying as an add-on.

DO YOU CURRENTLY OFFER MOSQUITO CONTROL SERVICES?



"Look at the area of the country you reside and make a determination from there," Kerns says.

While he understands southern states will have more of a demand – sometimes resulting in companies that just offer mosquito spraying – he adds that states like Pennsylvania may not make as much sense, depending on companies in your area already offering it.

Still, he says to take the time and do a bit of research on what's out there for your location.

"It can be extremely lucrative," he says. "It can be very much in demand." L&L

YOUR EQUIPMENT TAKES CARE OF BUSINESS. We take care of your equipment!

GRIDIRON
Custom Tool Storage™

**Trimmer Rack
TB-01**



**Chain Saw Holder
CS-01**



**Universal Blower Rack
BP-02**



**Open Hand
Tool Holder
OH-01**



Novae
NovaeCorp.com

Two Novae Parkway, Markle, IN 46770
PH (260) 244-4654 FAX (260) 244-7355

Toll Free

844-240-8695



PROFESSIONAL
PEST MANAGEMENT

GIVE YOUR CUSTOMERS THEIR YARD BACK.

The SecureChoice™ Mosquito assurance program lets you offer a mosquito service that gives your customers up to 60 days of mosquito control. This is nearly 2 to 3 times longer lasting than other competitive services. So take advantage of the convenience of this offer, and give your customers a yard they can enjoy.

FOR LIFE UNINTERRUPTED™

Learn more at
[SyngentaPMP.com/
MosquitoControl](http://SyngentaPMP.com/MosquitoControl), and
don't pass up yearlong
savings available at
PestPartners365.com.



SecureChoice™

Mosquito assurance

syngenta.

©2016 Syngenta. Important: Always read and follow label instructions. Some products may not be registered for sale or use in all states or counties. Please check with your state or local extension service to ensure registration status. SecureChoice™, For Life Uninterrupted™, the Alliance Frame, the Purpose Icon and the Syngenta logo are trademarks of a Syngenta Group Company. Syngenta Customer Center: 1-866-SYNGENT(A) (796-4368) MW ILGP5022-P1-lawn



SOFTWARE UPDATE

After implementing CRM software, two companies weigh in on how it's helped their businesses. **By Katie Tuttle**

AS TECHNOLOGY CONTINUES to control back office operations, more and more companies are considering customer relationship management (CRM) software to help keep systems organized.

Reliable Property Services, located in St. Paul, Minnesota, and #49 on our Top 100 list, implemented CRM software three years ago. Dorie Roth, branch manager for the company's Racine branch, recommended CRM software to the company when she was hired to organize and grow her branch.

Previously, the company had used a proprietary access database with some customer information, but Roth admits it missed many components of what the company really needed.

"So, we brainstormed all the criteria or fields you might need in order to have all your contact information in there," she says. The brainstorming turned into a list, which became of flow chart

of items underneath different categories and that resulted in the full database.

This criteria included fields such as the ability to track activities, track opportunities and create history with future abilities of being able to speak to the company's accounting software.

Caretaker Landscape and Tree Management, ranked #71 on our Top 100 list, also recently implemented CRM software. The Gilbert, Arizona-based company decided it was time to have a database because client information was being saved on individual computers.

"If I was working on one group and someone else wanted to see it, they had to come over to my computer," says CEO Matt

Matt White wishes he asked these questions before making his CRM purchase:

1. How much customization should we expect to meet our needs and what is the cost? Aside from the licensing, initial purchase price, customization and training, what other implementation costs should we expect? What should we budget those to be?
2. What are the maintenance costs?
3. How much additional training is included for our staff? If we need additional training, what would those costs be? What is typical training costs for companies our size? Is there long term training involved?
4. Is your company our long-term partner in the implementation and training for CRM software or is a third party our partner?
5. Is there a training class we can send our IT manager to? Is there a "train the trainer" option?

White. "It was saved in Excel; everything was all over the place."

There also was no communication data, so any contact with a client had to be saved in an ongoing Outlook email trail for sales to figure out when they'd last spoken to a specific client.

IMPLEMENTATION. White says the system does a good job once implemented, but he says it's important to shop around and take the time to research what you're getting.

"When we started making the decision to switch, the cost seemed favorable," he says. But, as the company began implementing it, White discovered the program was too vast for the small company, and the only way to fit it was to bring in a third-party company to do it for them.

That customization ended up costing them twice as much, resulting in Caretaker going over budget and taking an extra three or four weeks to setup.

In hindsight, White says he wished the company had a better understanding of the implementation process.

"We didn't ask the right questions," he says. (See sidebar for a list of questions to ask.)

Despite problems implementing the software, White still recommends using CRM software, and advises asking other contractors about their experience with it.

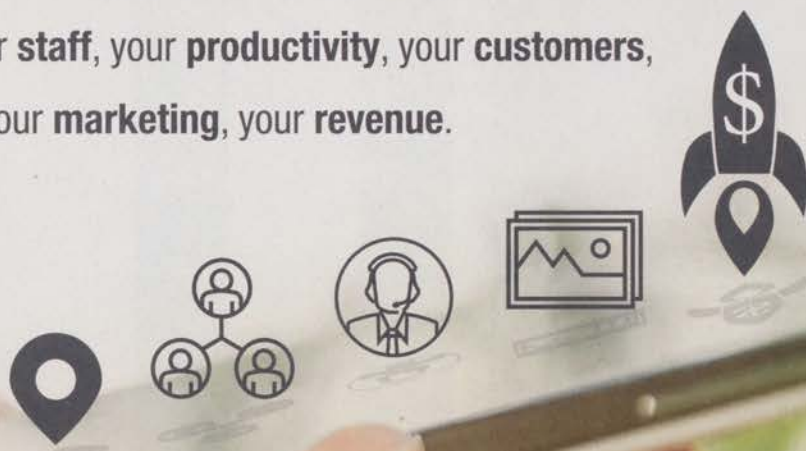
"I don't think this is a differentiator for our company," he says. "It makes us a better sales team, but not a better company, so I'd have no problem talking to a friendly competitor." **L&L**

Sponsored by








Get the complete mobile lawn care business solution that you'll never outgrow.

Agile, automated, intuitive **mobile software** and **growth solutions**
from Real Green Systems – the **single source to efficiently**
schedule, increase and manage
your **fleet**, your **staff**, your **productivity**, your **customers**,
your **marketing**, your **revenue**.



Grow Revenue • Optimize Efficiencies • Evolve and Scale

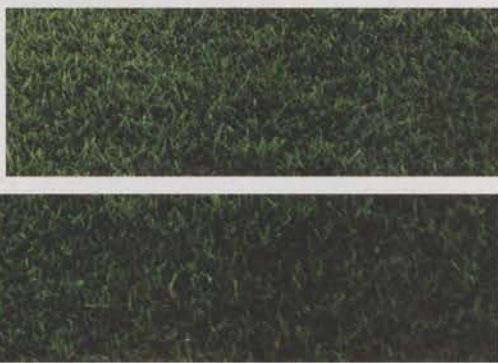
  For a no obligation demo, visit:
RealGreen.com/MobileGrow

     (877) 252-9929



2017

FERTILIZATION GUIDE



73 SOIL SUCCESS | 75 AGRONOMIC ANSWERS | 76 TURN CLIENTS TO KEEPERS | 79 TRAINING WHEEL

SPONSORED BY
KOCH
TURF & ORNAMENTAL

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
Lawn & Landscape

Consistent, reliable delivery maximizes nutrient uptake; reduces flush growth so there's less unplanned mowing; and minimizes the feast/famine cycle that can cause stress, so grass is more tolerant to weeds and diseases (POLYON® and XCU® fertilizers)

Reduced nitrogen use up to 40% compared to conventional fertilizers like unamended urea or ammonium sulfate

Environmentally responsible—low potential for nutrient leaching, denitrification, runoff or volatilization

Less time fertilizing frees up your crews to visit more properties per day or offer additional revenue-generating services

Extended longevities reduce fertilizer applications, saving you time and money

APPLY SOME FORWARD THINKING

Grow your business with a better way to fertilize.

How you're running your business is working. However, growing your business isn't easy in the face of rising costs, increasing labor concerns and environmental pressures. There is a solution—enhanced efficiency fertilizers from Koch Turf & Ornamental. Extended longevities, optimum nutrient uptake and fewer applications are keys to helping you overcome these challenges. If you are serious about moving your business forward, think about modifying your approach by incorporating A Better Way to Fertilize.™

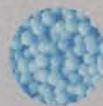
Visit KochTurf.com/lawns. Consult with your distributor about these enhanced efficiency fertilizers.



POLYON®
controlled-release
fertilizer



XCU®
slow-release
fertilizer



UFLEXX®
stabilized nitrogen
fertilizer

KOCH TURF & ORNAMENTAL: RELIABLE NUTRITION, EXTRAORDINARY RESULTS

TODAY, LAWN CARE PROFESSIONALS are facing more challenges than ever before. It's not easy to grow your business when competition is tough, expenses are rising and environmental pressure is building. At Koch Turf & Ornamental, a brand supported by Koch Agronomic Services, LLC, we're committed to helping lawn care professionals like you optimize plant and turf-grass performance while using fewer resources. With our research capabilities, processes, systems and people, we're manufacturing high quality, innovative products that can elevate your success.

THE DIFFERENCE IS CLEAR

Customer retention is key to the success of any lawn care business. Our enhanced efficiency fertilizers (EEFs) can help in providing your residential and commercial customers with thicker, healthier, more attractive lawns that will keep them coming back, year after year.

With Koch EEFs, far less nitrogen is lost due to leaching, denitrification and volatilization compared with unamended urea. Our controlled-release fertilizers, DURATION® CR and POLYON®, feature unique polymer coatings that allow for consistent, precise nutrient release, providing plants with nutrition when they need it most. With UFLEXX® stabilized nitrogen fertilizer, nitrogen moves directly into plant root zone for immediate green-up and stays there for up to eight weeks. And the polymer-coated, sulfur-coated urea technology present in our XCU® slow-release fertilizer gradually releases nitrogen into the soil, making it available to plants over time.

After trying our Koch Turf & Ornamental EEFs, the difference becomes clear. They're not like ordinary fertilizers. EEFs give turf the nutrients it needs more reliably, increasing its tolerance to disease, weeds and foot traffic.

DO MORE WITH LESS

Beautiful, healthy turf is important, but the benefits of EEFs don't stop there. Our fertilizers are designed to help you accomplish more with less, giving you an edge over your competition.

Because plants and turf treated with EEFs take up more nitrogen, less is lost to the environment. In other words, you get more from every bag of fertilizer you buy. And, since EEFs are available in extended longevities, you don't have to apply them as often, freeing up time and giving you the opportunity to offer additional revenue-generating services.

Ready to learn more about A Better Way to Fertilizer™? Our experienced agronomists and sales representatives are standing by, ready to create a customized plan for you. Visit www.KochTurf.com and discover how we can grow together. ●

SOIL SUCCESS

What lies beneath the turf is ultimately responsible for whether a lawn will thrive or struggle. Soil tests help lawn care operators determine what nutrients are necessary to include in a program.

By Kristen Hampshire

A SOIL SAMPLE IS THE ONLY way to take the guesswork out of lawn care. "It gives you an understanding of what's there from a plant nutrition standpoint so you know what you'll need to add in your nutrient management and fertilization program," says Charles Peacock, professor and turfgrass extension specialist at North Carolina State University.

A soil sample is important for every lawn, and especially properties that a lawn care operator has just acquired. (Long-time accounts may go every two or three years between soil samples.) Also, if there are areas of lawn that are not responding to a program, a soil sample should be collected and sent to a laboratory to get answers.

"If you see some variations in the soil texture and color, you ought to isolate those spots and only sample from those particular areas," Peacock says. "If the soil looks fairly uniform, you can take samples from throughout the property and send a composite sample to the lab."



The number of samples drawn from a lawn will depend on what an LCO sees in terms of variations in color and texture, Peacock says. What's critical is to let the lab know that the sample should be interpreted from a fertilization viewpoint.

That way, specialists will know the purpose of the soil test and provide relevant recommendations. "You can get different recommendations based on the same soil test results depending on the lab interpretation," Peacock says.

Here are four soil test components Peacock emphasizes, though a soil test report from their local extension will provide exact recommendations based on their geography.

pH: Perhaps the important information you'll glean from a soil test is pH level. The optimum pH range for plant-available nutrients is between 6.2 and 6.5, Peacock says. If a soil is too acidic, those nutrients can be "too available" and toxic to roots systems (especially in the case of aluminum). When soil is too alkaline, not enough nutrients are freely available, so plants are basically not getting a proper meal from the soil.

The fix: Acidic soil benefits from additional magnesium. Alkaline soil requires a fertilizer nitrogen source that is acid-forming and will react with soil to reduce its alkalinity, such as ammonium nitrate or ammonium sulphate.

Phosphorus: You might have seen advertisements for phosphorus-free fertilizers, particularly

AN EFFECTIVE LAWN CARE PROGRAM IS TRULY ABOUT CREATING A NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, NOT JUST FERTILIZING.

CHARLES PEACOCK, PROFESSOR AND TURFGRASS EXTENSION SPECIALIST, NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

from box stores promoting what is seemingly a healthier product for lawns. But if your soil is phosphorus deficient, this type of fertilizer won't deliver results. Phosphorus and potassium are critical for establishing stress and drought tolerance, and cold hardiness.

The fix: Research shows that fertilizers with a 2:1 nitrogen potassium level are effective in soils with a deficit, Peacock says. Phosphorus-deficient soils should be treated with fertilizers that do contain phosphorus.

Calcium and magnesium: Magnesium stokes chlorophyll production, which is essential for photosynthesis. Some soils have an imbalance of calcium and magnesium. When calcium is highly concentrated in the soil and magnesium is lacking, more magnesium is necessary to compete with calcium, Peacock says.

The fix: Products such as Sulfa-Mag will increase magnesium and potassium levels without affecting soil pH. (When soil pH is on the high end, adding straight magnesium can increase it further.)



Properly training lawn care technicians and educating clients can lead to beautiful lawns and happy customers.

Micronutrients: "In coastal areas and the deep south, their sandy soils have very poor inherent nutrient content," says Peacock, adding that micronutrients are not widely available in these types of soils.

"A soil test will give you an index value (of micronutrients), so you can determine what range the soil is in and whether you need to add back micronutrients."

• **The fix:** Iron and manganese are some common micronutrients that are added back into sandy soils that show deficiencies, though a soil test is the only way to identify exactly what soil needs.

ACHIEVING A BALANCE. Soil tests demystify what lies beneath the turf and help LCOs understand exactly how they can supplement the lawn with nutrients to achieve clients' goals.

"It's a real balancing act," Peacock says of making sure the nutrients in a lawn care program interact appropriately and benefit the soil pH.

"An effective lawn care program is truly about creating a nutrient management program, not just fertilizing," he says.

"You have to manage nutrients based on what the soil analysis tells you and what a particular turfgrass needs, and this can vary year to year." ●



AGRONOMIC ANSWERS

Lawn care operators solve tough turf issues by leaning on university extensions, supplier education and industry seminars. **By Kristen Hampshire**

THE THINNING BERMUDAGRASS on a client's property was receiving plenty of sunlight, but moss was growing in the turf. Garrick McCarty wasn't quite sure why the lawn was behaving this way, so he reached out to nearby Auburn University Extension to get some answers.

McCarty, owner of Running Roots Lawn Care in Birmingham, Alabama, customizes lawn care programs for every client's property. "That has been extremely important to my customers," he says. If a soil test comes back recommending an entirely different approach for a section of lawn, he'll modify the nutrient and fertilizer program accordingly.

Insight from agronomy experts helps McCarty identify lawn problems if he's not certain of the cause of an issue. That was the case on this Bermudagrass lawn. He sent in soil samples and learned that the soil was too acidic for that turf type to thrive. The extension recommended lime, and McCarty edited the lawn care program. Before he even had

a chance to tell the homeowner about the program change, the client remarked on how well the lawn had bounced back.

"The fertilizer mix recommended was a deviation from my normal summer fertilizer program, and it contained more phosphorus to help with rooting," McCarty says.

The client's remarks: "What you did really turned this around!"

LESSONS EVERYWHERE. McCarty also relies on a sales representative who works for his lawn care product supplier to provide information about turf disease and pest pressure. The supplier also

“
BETWEEN THE EXTENSION
OFFICE AND MY SUPPLIER WHO
HAS BEEN IN THE BUSINESS
FOR 30 YEARS, WE GET THE
INFORMATION NECESSARY TO
MANAGE TURF ISSUES.”

”
GARRICK MCCARTY, OWNER,
RUNNING ROOTS LAWN CARE

provides details about the latest technology and best practices for solving turf issues. A combination of resources gives him and other lawn care operators a proven foundation on which effective lawn care programs can be built.

"You can't just throw down fertilizer and be successful," says Robert Louiso, president, Louiso Lawn Care & Landscapes in Batavia, Ohio. He draws most of his turfgrass knowledge from experience working for the grounds department at a local golf course growing up. "Beyond that, I go to trade shows and attend seminars, read the trade magazines."

Information gives LCOs the power to tackle the most challenging lawn care issues. And accessing agronomic resources keeps operators' knowledge up to date.

That's why McCarty seeks out trade shows and classes held by the extension service so he can continue his education and pass that information on to his technicians. "If you can't find training, you aren't looking," he says.

AN EXTENSION OF TURF KNOWLEDGE.

McCarty only focuses on lawn care, and he regularly sends out soil samples to Auburn University and emails questions to staff. "I might ask about different turf varieties that I don't always service or ways to fertilize grass when we see certain symptoms," he says.

A quick email can yield critical information for properly diagnosing and treating turfgrass issues, McCarty says. Soil samples are necessary when a lawn is not responding to McCarty's typical program.

Sometimes, customers ask for soil samples, and McCarty happily complies. When a client is invested in gathering information about soil to ensure the best lawn care program, he knows that's a customer who will value Running Roots' customized approach.

"I run a small company, and the response that I provide to customers is a differentiator for me," McCarty says, adding that he addresses turf issues with a sense of immediacy and educates clients in the process.

"We don't take a cookie-cutter approach," McCarty adds. The information he gathers from agronomist experts and longtime suppliers helps inform lawn care programs for clients. "We focus on being flexible, responsive and customizing."

"I have a sales rep who does a tremendous job of keeping me informed," McCarty adds. "Between the extension office and my supplier who has been in the business for 30 years, we get the information necessary to manage turf issues."

An agronomist's perspective also helps the way disease issues are managed at Guilford Garden & Lawn in Greensboro, North Carolina, says Eric Campbell, lawn and yard care manager.

Campbell often references TurfFiles, an online resource through North Carolina State University's turfgrass management program.

He can watch for pest, weed and disease pressure and learn about common symptoms he might find on clients' lawns. Images are especially helpful. "This is a recognized resource," Campbell says, adding that his customers are also aware of it. "I can tell a customer, 'I looked on TurfFiles,' and I can email customers links, 'Here is what TurfFiles says.'" ●



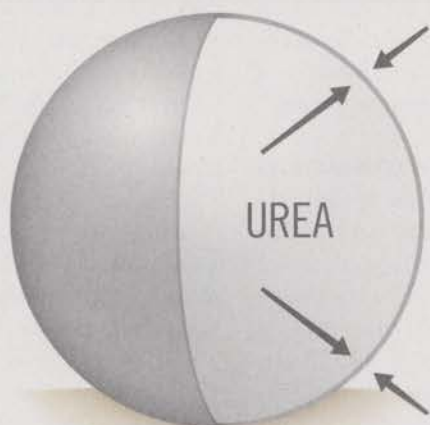
Ted Glaser, president of Summit Lawns, auto renews his customers' contracts each season to help with customer retention.

7 STRATEGIES FOR TURNING CLIENTS INTO KEEPERS

If you're looking to improve your customer retention, here are some suggestions you may have not considered. **By Kristen Hampshire**

"THIS IS A CUSTOMER BUSINESS," says Jerry Leary. "And, the customer is always right," he says, reciting an old adage that rings true today. Customers still want that relationship — they want to work with providers they trust and professionals who are knowledgeable.

The Advantages of Applying a Proven Brand Run Deep



SPRAY-ON INHIBITORS

Nitrification inhibitors are sprayed on granules of urea. However, only a limited amount of the nitrification inhibitor can be applied to the surface area.



UFLEXX® STABILIZED NITROGEN

Urease and nitrification inhibitors are incorporated and evenly distributed throughout granules of urea. With this process UFLEXX® fertilizer gives you **up to six times** the amount of nitrification inhibitor making it more effective.

You may hear "just about as good for turf" when discussing stabilized nitrogen fertilizer with spray-on inhibitors with your distributor. **But they're not.** UFLEXX® stabilized nitrogen is the only dual-inhibitor technology in the turf market that is backed by more than 15 years of research, demonstrating an effective combination and concentration of active ingredients that promote turf performance and prevent potential nitrogen losses to the environment—both on and below—the soil surface. Get your money's worth. UFLEXX® stabilized nitrogen is A Better Way to Fertilize.™

UFLEXX
STABILIZED NITROGEN

For more information, visit UFLEXXDual.com

UFLEXX® and the UFLEXX logo are registered trademarks of Koch Agronomic Services, LLC, in the United States and may be registered in other jurisdictions. A BETTER WAY TO FERTILIZE. Koch and the Koch logo are trademarks of Koch Industries, Inc. ©2017 Koch Agronomic Services, LLC. TXO-17-12404



Leary is president of Lawn Pro in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and after 37 years in the lawn care business, the average customer has been with his firm for almost 20 years.

He always takes the time to address clients' questions. "They are putting all of their faith and confidence in us," he says.

Here are seven strategies that Leary and other lawn care operators across the country use to keep their customer retention rates high.

1. LISTEN TO THE PROBLEM. Pay attention to how many times you interrupt a customer's feedback during the next call. Rushing into a solution is common; it's human instinct. But that doesn't exactly help a client feel the love.

"If a customer calls, I shut up," Leary says bluntly. "I want to listen to every word they say and then after they finish, then I respond. You don't win if you let them talk through half a sentence and then go into your 'tirade,' so to speak."

2. SQUEEZE IN FACE TIME. Emails can feel abrupt and get misinterpreted and text messages might feel terse. "If I get a sense that

a customer is having an issue that is bigger than what can be resolved easily over email or phone, I schedule time to meet in person," says Eric Campbell, lawn and yard care manager at Guilford Garden & Lawn in Greensboro, North Carolina.

In person, "you can gauge a person's tone better," Campbell says. "When we meet in person, we can talk out any concerns."

3. REMEMBER YOUR MANNERS. A thank-you note can go a long way toward earning a customer's appreciation. In today's digital age, the snail mail consists of bills or advertisements. A hand-written note is a rarity.

Leary sends holiday cards in December, and mid-season he sends thank-you notes. If he hears back from customers, he asks them, "Is there anything you'd like us to do for you?"

"This tells me if we need to tighten up with them and help them out," Leary says.

4. GIVE THEM OPTIONS. Customers won't seek other service providers if they can get what they need in one place. That's the theory that drives Robert

Louiso's diverse lawn care operation, which provides landscape maintenance, snow removal, landscape design and installation, firewood and car detailing. Louiso also owns a garden center and nursery.

Last year, he started his own operation. It's one more way to cater to the high-end clientele in Cincinnati, where Louiso Lawn Care and Landscapes operates.

5. AUTO-RENEW CONTRACTS. In some areas of the country, it's common for lawn care providers to go through an annual renewal season where all contracts are signed. But this isn't the case everywhere, says Ted Glaser, president, Summit Lawns, Lincoln, Nebraska.

"Where we are, it's understood that you'll be renewing, so in the fall we send out letters with the last invoice of the year, thank them for the season and says, 'See you again in spring,'" he says.

In February, Glaser sends out a letter that notifies clients of prepayment options. "We also use this as an opportunity to upsell spring services and say, 'We were servicing your

property last year, and we'll see you again soon,'" he says. That letter gives clients a chance to let Summit Lawns know if they will not renew versus going through an actual renewal period.

6. MAKE IT EASY TO PAY BILLS. If you can give them tools to make working with you easier, you'll increase customer satisfaction. Leary noticed this after he implemented a credit card payment option.

While only 10 percent of his customers take advantage of it, when a client asks if he or she can "charge it," the answer is yes. And, customers like to hear yes.

Sure, there's a fee for processing credit card payments, but Leary says he plans for this when pricing services. "So, I'm not losing that – the price is built in," he says. Clients who want to pay by credit card are happy they can "earn points" or whatever the motivation for charging the service, he adds.

7. USE SOFTWARE. "For commercial clients, customer retention comes down to how strong the relationship is, who we are competing against from a price standpoint and their property goals," Glaser says.

Using a CRM software helps Summit Lawns stay on top of client requests and issues so that all matters can be addressed quickly. The software automates communications, as well.

"We can send newsletters, emails and text to clients regularly," he says. "Using software to manage client relationships on the commercial side has been really helpful for us." ●



Summit Lawns sends a letter in February as a reminder service will begin soon, giving them a chance to not renew services for the season.

THE TRAINING WHEEL



SPONSORED BY
KOCH
TURF & ORNAMENTAL

A 360-degree approach including soft skills, technical expertise and safety information produces a well-rounded, lawn care technician.

By Kristen Hampshire

IF A CUSTOMER HAS A QUESTION, technicians at B&B Lawncare are trained to listen carefully and offer some advice. “We make sure they understand all of the services we offer, and we try to build up their confidence that way so they have the knowledge of everything we can do for the customer,” says Larry Bennett Jr., president of the Richmond, Indiana-based business.

During monthly training meetings, various soft skills are also emphasized. “We talk about empathizing with the customer, being respectful, checking in to see how the customer is doing,” Bennett says. “With us being a smaller operation, that’s what I try to push – giving customers our best work.”

At Guilford Garden & Lawn in Greensboro, North Carolina, a similar approach to serving customers is emphasized to technicians.

In fact, communicating with

customers is so important that when a team member’s first language is not English, another technician will introduce that colleague to clients and involve him in customer interactions until a comfort level is established.

“That way, the customer is comfortable not only with me, but also with approaching technicians if there is an issue,” says Eric Campbell, lawn and yard care manager.

TEACHING CLIENT SERVICE. Erik Sweetser has been serving high-

end North Hampton, New Hampshire, clients for 25 years. He has five employees at his business, Green Grass Lawn Care. He personally trains employees to understand the level of quality property owners expect.

That includes staying in touch with customers to inform them of environmental situations. “Last year, we had a lot of drought issues and no one was able to water their lawns, so we kept up with customers to let them know, ‘This is why your applicator is showing up even though your lawn is brown – to control this insect from infiltrating,’” Sweetser says.

He sends up to five newsletters each year to “train” customers; and technicians fill out pre-made forms after every visit to leave behind and educate property owners on what products were applied, what to expect and how to follow up.

Sweetser personally walks technicians through the most common turfgrass problems so they gain an understanding of proper identification. “Certain issues can present themselves almost identically, such as drought

stress and grub damage,” he says. “You have to take technicians through the steps of deciding what the issue is.”

Sweetser is currently supporting one of his maintenance employees’ pursuit of lawn care applicator certification. The employee indicated interest in turf treatment last summer.

“I said, ‘OK, what do you see on this lawn? What is that weed?’” Sweetser says, noting how he would test him in the field as he took licensing courses.

GAINING TECHNICAL EXPERTISE.

Every year, Jerry Leary, president of Lawn Pro in Virginia Beach, Virginia, takes his team to the GIE+EXPO in Louisville, Kentucky, to learn from experts. They attend seminars and try out new products. “We gain a lot of knowledge from trade shows,” he says.

At least twice per year, Bennett sends technicians to Purdue University for training courses. These continuing education hours go toward maintaining their applicators’ licenses, Bennett says. The courses also keep technicians engaged in their profession.

Bennett pays for the courses, the travel, hotel and also the time they spend there.

“It’s an incentive for us, knowing they come back with knowledge, and for them, because they are learning and getting paid,” he says.

The training at Purdue gives his team a break from the regular routine, Bennett adds. Also, they can get a boost in their base pay when they continue their education. “That gets our guys excited,” Bennett says. ●



HAUL IT ALL

For design/build crews, the ability to carry materials is something all vehicles need to offer.

By Katie Tuttle

DESIGN/BUILD CREWS often have an array of tasks when they're on a jobsite. Because of this, there is often a large collection of tools and equipment needed by the same crew each day as the project progresses.

When it comes to keeping your crew's equipment, tools and supplies in order, a lot of it depends on the vehicle you store it all in.

"When I'm sending a crew to a jobsite, I want them to go there with as many things they need as possible," says Michael Spatola, general manager and landscape designer with Ross and Jack's Landscaping in Elmhurst, Illinois.

To handle this, Spatola's design/build crews drive dump trucks and pull trailers. The dump truck carries the materials while the enclosed

trailer houses the tools and equipment.

"So, when they get to the job site, they not only have the equipment they need, but they've also got easy access to the materials," he says. If the crew runs out of materials, they're able to easily unhitch the trailer so one person can drive the dump truck back to the supply yard while the rest of the crew keeps working.

Travis Self, owner of Rose Valley Custom Landscaping & Construction in Muscotah, Kansas, says his crews use box trucks for design/build jobs.

"They're really nice if you can afford to have a truck designated to a certain type of work," he says. "If you have one for just decks or one to do just landscaping or one to do just retaining walls, it makes your jobsite a lot more efficient."

Using dump trucks for design/build crews means materials can be carried inside the dump bed, while a trailer pulled behind can carry all the equipment and tools needed on the site.

The first thing it spreads is the distance between you and your nearest competitor.



It can treat everything from small lawns to sprawling commercial properties. It has the industry's simplest, most intuitive controls. It holds a hill like no other machine. With its 3-in-1 tank, it can treat up to 132,000 sq. ft. Yet still fits through a 36" gate. The industry-leading Turfco T3100. Sold direct to shorten the distance between our customers and us. Go to turfcoirect.com or call 800-679-8201 today and get the full story from a product expert.



Self's company orders the box trucks and then customizes the inside, setting up shelves and other retaining systems to fit exactly what they need.

"Lumber's cheaper than metal shelving," he says, adding that members of his crews are able to build everything themselves. "We'll go ahead and set them up the way we want

them." That allows them to make shelves that fit the exact tools they need to hold, and leave the right amount of space for machines on the floor.

Spatola's company is able to customize its trailers as well, and his crews also do most customization in-house.

"The reason we do that is because each crew is going to be working with different materials," he says. "We have skilled guys who know how to do that stuff. Installing the shelving and everything is not that hard to do, and you're going to be paying a company a way higher labor rate if you have them do the custom things."

He says the only thing they customize prior to purchase is the length, width and weight capacity of each truck.

HOW SAM LEARNED THAT CONVENIENCE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH LOCATION



SAM LANG, CEO
FAIRWAY GREEN - RALEIGH, NC

In 1984, Sam Lang began his career in Georgia using Graham rigs and equipment. But when he started his own business in North Carolina, he thought a local supplier would be more convenient and switched. He soon learned that convenience has more to do with quality, service and reliability than with location. So, he switched back to Graham and has been with us ever since. After more than 30 years, he knows we'll always go the distance for him, no matter where he is.



STILL GOING STRONG
Sam's original Graham rig, purchased in 1984

To learn more about our products, visit our website or give us a call.

Graham Spray Equipment

YOUR IDEAS ARE WHERE WE START™

© 2017 Graham Spray Equipment

(770) 942-1617 | (800) 543-2810 | GrahamSE.com

EFFICIENCY IS KEY. Self says the one downside of a box truck over a setup like Spatola's is the ability to carry all supplies, resulting in lower deliver fees.

"I wish we could haul," Self says. "With all the tools and stuff we haul, we really don't leave a lot of room for raw materials with us."

Spatola says the efficiency of the dump truck-trailer system is a plus for his crews.

"For the type of work that we do, I think it's way more efficient to be able to drop tools off without having to unload everything — having that truck free to go get material or move material on the jobsite."

At the end of the day, Self suggests doing your research so you know what setup works best for your design/build crews.

"Research the brands as to what you're going to need," he says. "Research the engines. Really, you just want to do your research on what will work for you the best." **L&L**



Dump trucks allow crews to carry raw materials, tools and equipment in one trip.

2017
SNOW
AND
ICE SHOW
EDUCATION NETWORKING TRADESHOW



MAY 17-19, 2017
INDIANA CONVENTION CENTER
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

A comprehensive conference that brings manufacturers, suppliers and ice and management professionals together for 2½ days of high-quality education, elite networking and a trade show.

- Earn or renew your industry-leading ASCA-C certification.
- Focus on the modern principles of successful snow and ice management – including managing risk, reducing insurance rates and reducing bogus slip-and-fall claims.
- Engage in peer-to-peer discussions on real-world business issues.
- Discover cutting-edge technology and solutions from industry-leading **BUSINESSES** in our expo hall.
- Learn how the **ANSI Accredited** standards are changing the industry...for the better!

**EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION IS
NOW OPEN!**

Register today for the best rates:
www.snowandiceshow.com

Booth space is going fast!

Contact **Gage Roberts** at 800-456-0707 to
secure your spot at **Snow and Ice 2017**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



SNOW
MAGAZINE



GRAVELY PRO-WALK

The pitch: The 2017 Gravely Pro-Walk is a completely-redesigned commercial walk-behind mower designed for the professional landscaper.

- With welded deck designs in 48-, 52- and 60-inch sizes, the Pro-Walk incorporates enhancements that improve cut quality, durability, maneuverability and ease of use.
- The Pro-Walk was designed with new steering controls, which offer a shorter learning curve while providing precision handling.
- Models are available with Kawasaki engines.

For more information:
Gravely.com

GIVE YOUR CREW A PUSH

IF WALK-BEHINDS ARE YOUR MOWER OF CHOICE, CHECK OUT THESE MODELS.



BOB-CAT FLOAT DECK HYDRO

The pitch: New for 2017, BOB-CAT's Float Deck Hydro walk-behind mowers feature Zero-T drive tires. These tires offer improved grip on hillsides, better puncture resistance, improved tight turns without turf damage, and enhanced self-cleaning.

- The float deck is designed to move independently of the drive and caster wheels.
- Single-belt routing on the Float Deck Hydro mid-size walk-behind means a longer belt life.
- The walk-behind features a true float style DuraDeck.

For more information: Bobcatturf.com



CUB CADET SC700

The pitch: Cub Cadet's new SC700 with MaxControl is the first Cub Cadet walk behind mower to feature selectable four-wheel drive.

- Drive control enables the user to select front wheel drive, rear wheel drive or all-wheel drive for on-demand versatility.
- An integrated front bumper constructed of tubular steel provides added protection to the deck.

• It features an electric push-button start, and engine options include a 196cc Cub Cadet OHV engine or Honda GVC

For more information: Cubcadet.com



EXMARK TURF TRACER X-SERIES

The pitch: Exmark's Turf Tracer X-Series walk-behind mower features an Enhanced Control System (ECS), which places all vital controls at the operator's fingertips.

- A heavy-duty electromagnetic PTO clutch and single-belt deck drive offer increased durability and ease-of-maintenance.
- 52- or 60-inch UltraCut Series 4 cutting decks feature fabricated construction and maintenance-free sealed bearing cutter housings.
- Engine options include carbureted gasoline, EFI gasoline and EFI propane configurations.

For more information: Exmark.com

"WE CATER TO LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS' NEEDS NATIONWIDE!"

www.bellamystricklandisuzutrucks.com



Debris Dump



Irrigation



Dumps



Van Scape



Flat Bed



Spray



Open Lawn

BELLAMY STRICKLAND ISUZU

MCDONOUGH, GA • 1-800-535-5229 • jw@bellamystrickland.net

ISUZU
TRUCK

BELLAMY
STRICKLAND

ISUZU
TRUCK

THE REEL THAT WORKS AS HARD AS YOU

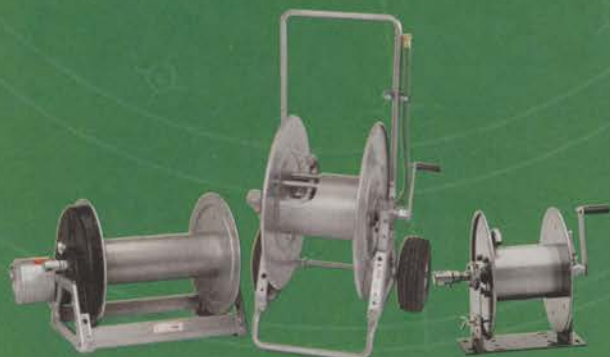
To keep up with the non-stop
demands of grounds maintenance,
Hannay Reels delivers every time with:

More than 3,800 reel models

Heavy-gauge steel frame, discs and drums

Quicker deployment and pick-up features

Reels built to order and shipped fast



Made in U.S.A.



Find your local dealer:
hannay.com or 877-467-3357



Hannay Reels®
The reel leader.

MAINTENANCE

HONDA HRC216K3HDA

The pitch: Honda's HRC216K3HDA lawn mower is designed to allow the user to save time by starting the engine while standing behind the mower.

- The Honda GXV160 commercial engine is the source of powerful, quiet operation with noise control for operator comfort.

- It features a Honda Micro-Cut Twin Blade System that offers four cutting surfaces to produce finer clippings, and the mower can be adjusted to eight different heights suitable to all types of grass and mowing conditions.

- The mower has a 21-inch steel deck with front axle and bumper protection for additional structural stability and durability.

For more information: Honda.com



HUSQVARNA HU800AWDH

The pitch: The Husqvarna HU800AWDH is an ergonomic and versatile walk-behind mower that can handle tough mowing conditions.

- The mower features a 3-in-1 cutting deck, which allows users to bag, mulch or discharge clippings.

- The HU800AWDH has a 22-inch heavy-duty steel cutting deck and 190cc engine.

- The all-wheel drive system and high rear wheels gives users the power and maneuverability they need for hilly, uneven terrain.

For more information: Husqvarna.com



MEAN GREEN MOWERS WBX-33HD

The Pitch: Mean Green's new walk-behind mower is an electric mower, built for commercial applications.

- The mower features low noise, zero gas or fluids, low maintenance and zero emissions.

- The electric power gives it all-day mowing capability.

- Lightweight at 395 pounds, it offers variable speed control up to 5 MPH, with an easy "one click" Start and Go.

For more information: Meangreenmowers.com





1-800-270-6782
www.goilawn.com



Know the job.
Show the client.
Guide the crew.

Quote With Confidence:

Use Go iLawn

With Go iLawn, you'll really know your jobsites, so you'll have the confidence to quote your work aggressively. Your customers can see exactly what you're quoting them, and they'll have the confidence to choose you.



See the whole job



Bid with facts, not guesses



Sell better using images



Visit more jobs in less time



Execute faster using maps



Market yourself to the neighborhood

Try Go iLawn
for Free today:

Visit www.GoiLawn.com/promo
and use the code LL173



To see more mower options, ranging from walk-behinds to zero-turns, head to **Lawnandlandscape.com**.



GREGSON-CLARK Spraying Equipment

A Division of Rhett M. Clark, Inc.



V-SERIES SKID SPRAYERS
50 | 100 | 150 | 200 | 300

HEALTHY GROWTH

(For lawns, trees... and your business)



- Balanced space-saving designs
- Expandable with modular add-on tanks
- Many options and accessories available

800-706-9530

sales@gregsonclark.com | gregsonclark.com



SCAG SWZT

The pitch: The Scag SWZT hydro-drive walk-behind mower features controls that contour to the natural angles of your extended hands, lowering operator fatigue.

- Ultra-comfortable, ergonomic control system makes operation easy, and are placed to keep your hands out of harm's way when mowing next to trees and bushes.
- Choice of 36-, 48-, 52- or 61-inch cutter deck paired with a V-Twin engine.
- Heavy-duty construction ensures strength and long life.

For more information: Scag.com



WRIGHT VELKE MOWER

The pitch: Specifically designed for the fleet operator; heavy-duty, easy to drive, light on the turf.

- Controls are easy on the hands and allow for getting on and off quickly.
- Full range of deck sizes from 32 to 61 inches, all perfectly balanced.
- Pump and motor drive allows for high ground clearance and ideal wheel placement.

For more information: Wrightmfg.com

0.99% APR

Leading the industry in more areas than one, Isuzu has the dependability that your business relies on. Take advantage of this limited time **0.99% APR** financing offer and get ready to drive your business into the future with a new gas or diesel Isuzu N-Series truck.



To learn more about the Isuzu advantage, visit your local Isuzu truck dealer today.

WWW.ISUZUCV.COM

ISUZU
FINANCE

The 0.99% APR finance offer expires June 30, 2017 and is only available through Isuzu Finance of America, Inc. Finance terms limited. Participating dealers only. Credit approval required. Please see your authorized Isuzu dealer for qualifying information.

© 2017 ISUZU COMMERCIAL TRUCK OF AMERICA, INC.

ISUZU
TRUCK



To choose the right valve for a job, contractors must assess the quality and dynamic conditions of the water supply.

PIECES & PARTS

Understanding the functions of irrigation systems' crucial components can help prevent system breakdowns.

By Catherine Meany

WHEN AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM FAILS, it's important to understand the mechanics behind the system.

"If a contractor really understands what makes a valve come on, they can then understand what possible causes of a malfunction might be and may be able to more quickly troubleshoot and fix a valve," says Rain Bird Product Manager Ron Wolfarth.

VALVES. An important part of an irrigation system, valves turn the water on and off in response to a signal from a controller, says Hunter Product Manager Steve Hovel.

"Valves are the one thing that controls everything else downstream. If your valve leaks or doesn't turn off or on, it can affect a huge portion of your landscape because it controls a larger zone of spray heads or rotors," Hovel says.

The valve is made up of three main elements: the body, the diaphragm and the solenoid. The body is where water enters and exits the valve. Water flows in the inlet, above the diaphragm and up into the solenoid. It's held there by the solenoid plunger until a controller sends an electric signal.

When that happens, the solenoid coil becomes an electromagnet and pulls the plunger up, allowing water to flow out of the valve.

This also raises the diaphragm, which is a circular piece of rubber that rises and lowers based on water pressure above or below it. When the valve is open, water pushes the diaphragm up and off the inlet.

When the signal is turned off, the plunger drops inside the solenoid and the water pressure above the diaphragm eventually offsets the pressure below it

TROUBLESHOOTING TIP

THERE ARE THREE PROBLEMS with valves: they don't come on, they don't shut off or they leak. The most common culprit of those malfunctions is debris. Even the most meticulous installations can result in some accumulation of PVC shavings, flakes of extra glue, dirt or other organic debris from reclaimed water. Debris can close off the communication ports that move water through a valve and can cause pumps to wear down from erosion prematurely.

While it might seem logical to disassemble the valve to clear the debris, an easier and more efficient way is to turn the bleed screw. When operated from the controller or the solenoid, a valve's diaphragm will only rise to equal the pressure. When you use the bleed screw, the pressure on the top is zero and the pressure beneath the diaphragm is always greater than it is above it, so the diaphragm will be pushed completely open and allow debris to flush out. If dirty water is a known factor, pumps and valves can be outfitted with various filters and cleaning devices to help protect the system.

Don't settle for ordinary...

Let's Build
Something Beautiful



ANCHOR™

LEADING HARDSCAPE BRANDS
AND LICENSING NETWORK

FIND OUT WHERE

www.anchorwall.com



to close the valve. Valves vary in materials, pressure ratings and configurations. The most common type of valve is a globe style, where the inlet and outlet are in a horizontal

line. Other styles include angle valves where the water enters from the bottom and exits at 90 degrees, which are popular in areas where the ground freezes, and a globe angle

valve, which can be configured either way, Wolfarth says. To choose the right valve for a job, contractors must assess the quality and dynamic conditions of the water supply.

Valves are built in different sizes for different flow rate ranges. If the application's needs fall below the chosen valve's operational range, the valve may not close, Hovel says.

PUMPS. In the same way as valves, irrigation pumps are sized based on both the flow rate and pressure of the water coming out of the source pipeline. If a contractor overestimates, the pump will not be matched to the actual needs and can destroy itself, says Rain Bird Product Manager Bill Beard.

"Pumps are what I call a dumb device; they are guaranteed to work or die trying. The amount of pressure and the flow required in the system dictates if the pump will operate, it's never vice versa," Beard says.

The most common type of irrigation pump is an end suction top discharge centrifugal pump. These pumps rely on centrifugal force to move water and a motor shaft to support the impeller. They have few moving parts and are easy to service, but for more boost, they must get larger and heavier.

In those cases, a vertical multistage centrifugal pump is more efficient because it has more impellers and can boost more pressure.

Serviceability and reliability of pumps and valves are the other important factors for contractors to consider when making purchasing decisions. The fewer parts it has, the easier it is to repair a product, Wolfarth says.

Contractors should work with the landscape designer to understand how much flow and what pressure is required at the point of highest demand on a job site, Beard says.

"The pump is designed to fill the gap between what is available for flow and pressure and what is required at the worst case scenario," he says. "That rotor or spray body that's the farthest away from the pump and the farthest uphill is the worst-case scenario. If you can't feed that particular device, you won't be able to irrigate effectively." **L&L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Kentucky.



- Product **INNOVATION**
- Proprietary **TECHNOLOGY**
- Natural **SUSTAINABILITY**
- Good **SCIENCE**
- Great **VALUE**



BioPlex Organics

toll free: 1-800-441-3573

email: bioplex2@earthlink.net

tech support: bioplex@earthlink.net

www.bio-plex.com

Were You Featured In This Issue?



Reprints enable you to reuse your article and simply place it into the hands of your target audience.

Having been featured in a well-respected publication adds the credibility of a third-party endorsement to your message.

Give yourself a competitive advantage with reprints.

800-456-0707
reprints@gie.net

ONLINE AUCTION

As part of ongoing business, Weingartz will be selling new & used inventory of commercial & residential mowers, tractors, trenchers, attachments, and other high quality equipment.



- Exmark Lazer Commercial Zero Turn Mowers
- Hustler & Bad Boy Zero Turn Mowers
- John Deere Front Mowers
- Simplicity, Kubota & John Deere Lawn & Garden Tractors
- New & Used 3pt Tractor Attachments
- Plus much more!

BID ON ORBITBID.COM

WEINGARTZ

FARMINGTON HILLS
39050 Grand River
East of Haggerty Road

TUESDAY, MARCH 28
BIDDING STARTS AT 8AM



2017 SPRING PREP PLAYBOOK

96 Plan ahead | 98 No breakdowns | 100 Get smart



SPONSORED BY



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Lawn & Landscape



The bottom line when it comes to weeds: **Kill them.** But our responsibility doesn't end there.

WHEN IT COMES TO CLIENT LAWNS, one thing always stands out: weeds. They hate 'em and they want them gone, A.S.A.P. That's understandable, and we know how to control just about all of them. But while killing the weeds might be the bottom line, we have to keep in mind what clients really want from us: beautiful, green, healthy lawns.

With that in mind, the employee-owners of PBI-Gordon are proud to be the exclusive sponsors of this Lawn & Landscape weed control guide, and to help you find all the information you need to make the right decisions for your clients.

In this section, you'll find columns and features that discuss the preparation you'll need to keep your clients' properties weed free. Whether it's a fast knockdown to keep clients happy (You know, like you'll get with TZone™ SE, the fastest triclopyr combo on the market) or you need a combination of fast control and turf safety for sensitive warm-season grasses (Avenue™ South Broadleaf Herbicide for Turfgrass from PBI-Gordon comes to mind), you'll find all the solutions right here in Lawn & Landscape.

Again, we're honored to be a part of this special section. Thanks, and have a great season!

Sincerely,

Jim Goodrich
Product Manager
Fungicides, Insecticides,
and Plant Growth Regulators



JIM GOODRICH
PBI-GORDON

“But while killing the weeds might be the bottom line, we have to keep in mind what clients really want from us: beautiful, green, healthy lawns.”

TZone™ SE:

The fastest triclopyr combo on the market.

Formulated for speed, and delivering twice the triclopyr per acre as most combination products, TZone™ SE Broadleaf Herbicide for Tough Weeds controls more than 60 of the toughest broadleaf weeds. And TZone SE does it with a fast visual response for fewer complaints and callbacks.



COOL-SEASON TURFGRASS

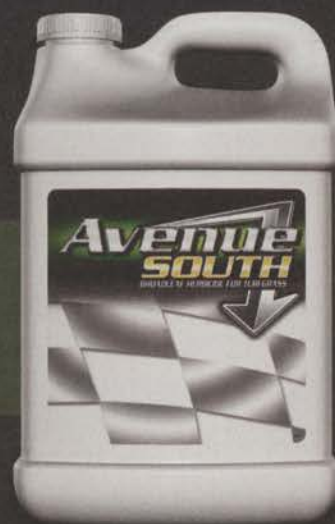


WARM-SEASON TURFGRASS

Avenue™ South:

Kill the weeds fast without sacrificing turf safety.

Avenue™ South Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf offers fast, dependable control of more than 90 broadleaf weeds, and it's formulated to perform in sensitive, warm-weather and southern grasses, including Floratam and other improved St. Augustinegrass varieties.



GordonsProfessional.com

G pbi / GORDON
CORPORATION
Employee-Owned

Always read and follow label directions. Avenue™ South and TZone™ are trademarks of and Checkered Flag Label Design® is a registered trademark of PBI Gordon Corp. 1/12 04547



Plan ahead for SPRING

The work you do before the season starts will pay off when business picks up. **By Kyle Brown**

RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL lawn care program isn't just about spreading fertilizer or chemicals on a client's property. It takes preparation to make sure your team has the right equipment and training, as well as a strong relationship with clients. Here are a few tips to get the most out of a lawn care program this year:

START EARLY. A successful start to the spring lawn care season begins in the middle of winter for the team at Landscape En-

terprise in Salem, Virginia, says co-owner Darrell Hungate. Right after Thanksgiving, the company sends out written renewal con-

tracts to all clients, then follows up on them after the holidays.

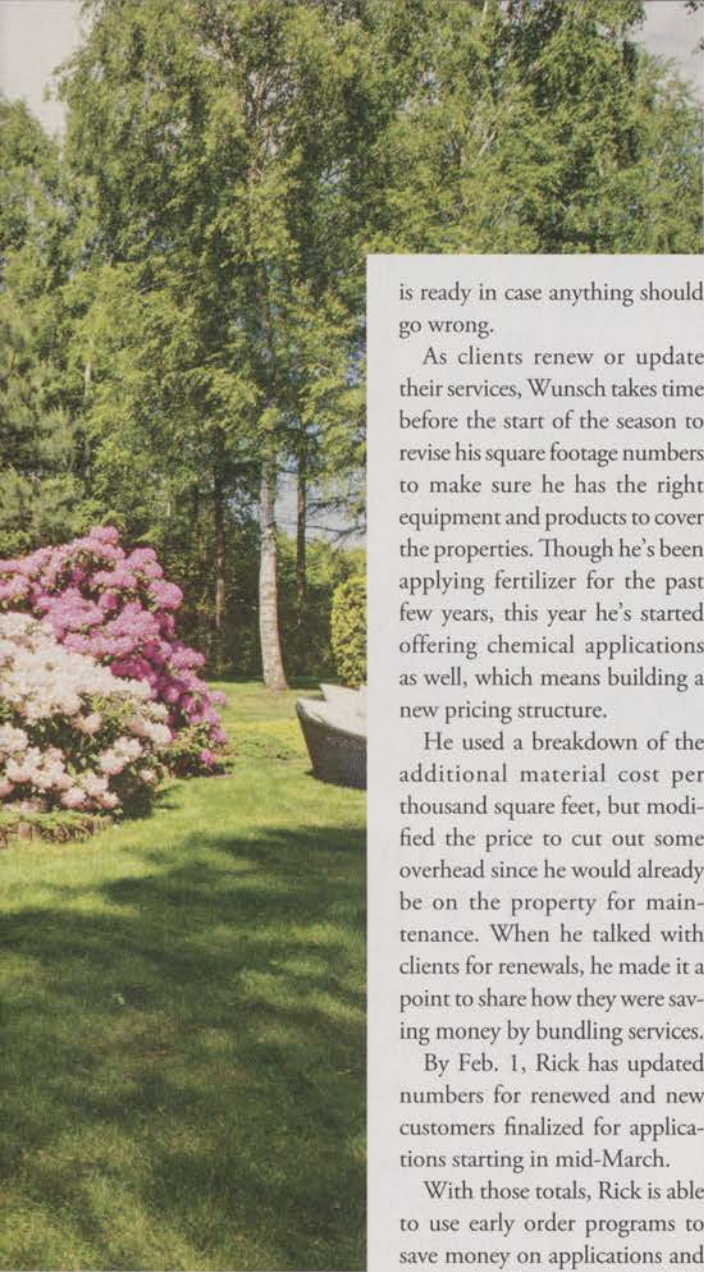
"We give them 60 days to renew," says Hungate. "That gives them through the Christmas holiday, but also gives plenty of time for them to think about it, or for us to call, if they have any questions or want any add-ons."

Hungate's team also sends out newsletters summing up the year to the client, to remind them of the crew's hard work and the value of the service. Since his 15 employees are assigned to particular properties, each newsletter can be personalized to the client.

As the only major employee (besides a longterm temp) at Wunsch's Lawn Care in Willows, California, Brian Wunsch often visits clients directly and talks to them face-to-face about renewals.

He generally waits until after Christmas to talk about contracts, because "everybody's got their mind somewhere else with the holidays," he says, but continues the discussion through February if necessary.

GET READY. As renewal contracts go out in December, employees at J. Rick Lawn & Tree in North



is ready in case anything should go wrong.

As clients renew or update their services, Wunsch takes time before the start of the season to revise his square footage numbers to make sure he has the right equipment and products to cover the properties. Though he's been applying fertilizer for the past few years, this year he's started offering chemical applications as well, which means building a new pricing structure.

He used a breakdown of the additional material cost per thousand square feet, but modified the price to cut out some overhead since he would already be on the property for maintenance. When he talked with clients for renewals, he made it a point to share how they were saving money by bundling services.

By Feb. 1, Rick has updated numbers for renewed and new customers finalized for applications starting in mid-March.

With those totals, Rick is able to use early order programs to save money on applications and ensure the first few weeks of the season run smoothly.

"We do early order for our chemical and fertilizer to make sure we're stocked up for at least 8-10 weeks into the spring, so we don't hurt production waiting on product," he says.

Rick sets aside time at work to walk his employees through the company policy manual to establish expectations for the job and for clients before the first crews go out.

He also takes his employees out and physically walks them through an application on one of his properties before the season starts, "just to make sure every-

one's on the same page on procedure and processes," he says.

GET THE WORD OUT. Because he spends time talking face-to-face with clients while he works on the property, Wunsch doesn't invest much in marketing. Instead, he relies mostly on word-of-mouth in his community.

"I've been extremely happy with who I'm getting as far as customers," Wunsch says. "If I have a good relationship with an existing client, they are most likely going to tell a friend of theirs with a similar property."

However, as Wunsch adds new offerings, he's looking into a more direct marketing approach to gauge interest in particular services. He has an order of 500 direct mail postcards to most of the mailing route in Willows this year to promote tree injections.

Rick also hasn't done much new marketing in the last few years for lawn care, even as a larger company across two states. The focus instead is usually on referral sources and maintaining current customers, as is evidenced by about a 98 percent renewal rate this year, he says.

With his team now more established in Colorado, he's started a few marketing efforts to bring in new customers through sponsored Facebook posts and technicians distributing door hangers in specific neighborhoods where they already have name recognition.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY. Though applications begin toward the end of March depending on the weather, Hungate looks at pest and disease trends locally to prepare for the season. His

TURF TROUBLE

Here's what to keep an eye on when it comes to turf disease this spring in some spots across the country.

BRADLEY GEARY, professor, plant & wildlife sciences at Brigham Young University

We won't have a lot of turf diseases this spring. The symptoms don't start showing up until summer. There will be areas that have brown rings because of necrotic ring, but that damage occurred in 2016 and is only an artifact of last year. Snow mold symptoms – dead grass – will be observed because of the heavy snow fall we had this winter, but these symptoms will quickly disappear as the grass greens up and grows.

Rhizoctonia brown patch will show up in the summer but will not be noticeable in the spring time. For insects, billbug and sod webworm are our biggest issues. Damage from the insects will not be obvious in the spring but you do want to treat for billbug in the spring.


CHERYL SMITH, extension professor/specialist, plant health, University of New Hampshire

Through the samples I receive in the UNH Plant Diagnostic Lab for the last 30 years, I can tell you the most prevalent diseases are brown patch, red thread, leaf spots/melting out (several fungi), anthracnose, Pythium blight. Winter doesn't really affect these. Snow came in late enough that I don't think snow mold will be a big issue this spring.

Dakota and Colorado are already preparing equipment for the spring lawn care season. The end of fall means cleaning and close inspection of equipment.

"Over the winter, whatever we determined needed repaired or replaced was done," says Jon Rick, owner of the company. "We want to make sure we don't have a problem out in the field where a hose bursts. A small problem can create a larger problem."

The preparation includes updating any MSDS sheets to be kept in the truck, and checking spill kits to make certain the crew



team's pesticide and chemical application recertification also comes up in March, which gives them the opportunity to talk with other technicians and see what they're fighting and what works.

"Also, we're 20 minutes down the road from Virginia Tech, which is the hotbed on the East Coast for turf, so we get firsthand info really quickly from there," on new turf pressures, he says.

Though he doesn't do a heavy amount of study before the season starts, Wunsch checks out new ideas and practices through the University of California's Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program website (www.ipm.ucdavis.edu) regularly.

For Hungate's area of the country, he's seeing molds like brown patch becoming a problem this year due to sporadic spring and summer temperatures, plus a heavy level of moisture during the winter. He's also seeing increased insect pressure, and a higher occurrence of blights like red thread.

His crew works with clients to identify the symptoms of mold and fungus diseases, and tells them about resolutions, like aeration for problem mold areas or liquid fungicide for fungus.

In California, Wunsch's clients deal with rust almost every other year, he says, but fungicides can be too expensive for them.

Instead, he talks to them to help manage expectations and ensure them that it will clear up after a little time, or with some nitrogen and aeration.

He's less forgiving with another constant, crabgrass. He'll use an application of Dimension to rein it in for clients. For other

pressures, like powdery mildew, he'll spray horticultural oil to keep plants healthy, weather permitting.

Moisture is a problem for Rick's clients as well, but only in that they don't have enough of it. Colorado has had a dry, warm winter, which could mean increased mite activity. One benefit to the dry weather is that a common issue, necrotic ring spot, might be less prevalent, since it thrives in wet seasonal conditions.

But the dry weather is an even bigger danger to the application program, since his crew isn't able to put down fertilizer without the moisture to water it in. Though they usually start applications in mid-March, this year's start date depends on the weather.

"That's going to make a heavy impact on when we start because we don't want to put fertilizer down on extremely dry lawns when people don't have their sprinklers on yet," he says. "Moisture is really going to dictate when we start this year." ●

The author is a freelance writer based in Akron.

An ounce of PREVENTION

Get ahead of problem equipment breakdowns with routine maintenance practices. **By Kyle Brown**

WINTER MEANS TIME to work on contract renewals or possibly servicing snow and ice removal clients. It's also the prime opportunity to repair and prepare equipment for the upcoming year.

Taking the time during the offseason to make sure equipment is ready to roll in spring is key for lawn care operators like Tom Uncapher of Uncapher Landscaping in Columbus, Ohio.

As leaf cleanups finish, Uncapher brings each of his machines into his garage to have them washed and start a thorough check of all of the parts. As the head of a crew of six employees, he works on routine maintenance alongside one employee

who he's trained personally as the team's mechanic. "We go right into changing the oil and fuel filters and all the easy things right away," he says. "Then, it depends on what kind of snow season we have for when I can buy the larger things that need repaired."

Uncapher will rinse any dirt or grass out of backpack sprayers and make sure there are no leaks. In the fall, he'll rinse them out and make sure no water is left in the tanks so they don't freeze and crack.

CLARISSA BALBALIAN, diagnostic lab manager for plant pathology at Mississippi State University

"In the winter, we'll check for crack seals/lines and replace as needed," he says. "We'll order some spare parts also."

Brian Lemmermann of Somerser Landscape operates across four states and keeps his three in-house mechanics on staff all year to maintain equipment before it can cause problems in the spring. During the winter, his mechanics start with the company's trailers, repairing and repainting before moving on to other equipment.

Winter is also the time when Lemmermann's team starts replacing older equipment, especially if it's seen heavy use. The machines might not be in bad repair, but have hit a stage where he doesn't want his crew relying on it every day in the field.

HELP AND COMMUNICATION.

Uncapher teams up with his in-house mechanic when it gets

hectic during the work season to keep his crew from waiting on repairs. He'll send the machine out to the dealer for repair if the problem is beyond his own expertise, or if he just doesn't have the time to handle it.

"If it's in April or May, I'll just tell them automatically, 'I don't have time to fix it. Take it to the shop,'" Uncapher says.

Occasionally, when breakdowns take out his spare equipment, he lets clients know about the slowdown. If he's able, he'll reach out to nearby LCOs to borrow a piece of equipment for the day to pick up the slack.

"Keep your avenues open to others, even your competition," Uncapher says.

Though he does almost all his repairs in-house, Lemmermann maintains a tight relationship with his dealers, to make certain he can get service or parts when

he needs them. "We don't buy a machine unless the dealer stocks all the parts for it," he says.

Before Uncapher's crews return for the day, they clean and check the equipment for parts that need attention, he says. He'll repair what he can in the evening, getting the morning crews off quickly after running down a checklist to make sure the team has the right equipment.

Lemmermann emphasizes the need to clean and take care of small maintenance issues as quickly as possible in the evening after coming in from the field to prevent future slowdowns.

"If your machine breaks down in the middle of the day, it's a whole lot worse than taking the time to do the routine stuff at the end of the day," he says. ●

The author is a freelance writer based in Akron, Ohio.

Moisture is predicted to be below average this spring, so I think take-all root rot is going to be a problem, especially on St. Augustine grass and maybe zoysia grass as well. The turf is stressed from the temperature extremes we had this winter. The extended periods of mild temperatures that we had during the winter made dormancy difficult in some areas – that combined with drought stress will make turf more susceptible to the take-all fungus.

Timing herbicide applications also will be tricky this year because of the mild weather, which could lead to herbicide stress on turf, another factor that favors take-all root rot. We also may be likely to see an earlier occurrence of dollar spot and leaf spot on bermudagrass, and large patch problems in St. Augustine grass and centipede grass, especially in irrigated settings or if we have several consecutive days of rainy weather. Winter weather doesn't really affect insect pests. Scout for chinch bugs during hot, dry weather. They prefer locations that are in direct sun.





The team at Killingsworth Lawn Kare is tested each year on identifying grass varieties.

Occupied in the off-season

LCOs should refresh their knowledge, and keep up on new trends during their downtime. **By Brian Horn**

OFF-SEASON TRAINING can be a bit boring, especially if you have a seasoned team of lawn care technicians. But don't let that get you in the habit of skimming over the essentials. There's nothing wrong with repeating the same message each off-season, especially when it comes to LCO training.

"A good bulk of (our training) is the same stuff every year, but it's always good to refresh," says Nate Leadenham, field supervisor at Killingsworth Lawn Kare in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Every year to kick off the season,

the six technicians have two, 8-hour days of training led by Leadenham in mid-February. Technicians go over the basics like safety training, application techniques and product information.

While the bulk of his classes are refreshers, Leadenham also focuses on any new problems that have popped up over the winter, including Zika and a crape myrtle bark scale, a pest attacking crape myrtle trees.

He also has employees identify grass types and has a plot of land on site where technicians can receive equipment training.

At the end of two days, everyone is tested on what they've learned. "It's an opportunity to see where one guy may be strong and another one may be weak," Leadenham says. "You can see where he needs to focus on. 'Hey this guy is really good at identifying weeds, so how about



ALEC KOWALEWSKI, assistant professor and turf specialist, Oregon State

Crabgrass and billbugs seem to be an increasing problem in lawns and landscape area in Oregon.

Crabgrass is a summer annual weed, which germinates in the spring, grows through the summer and then seeds and dies in the fall. Billbugs are a small beetle (6 mm long) with a funnel shaped nose and mouth, and feed on cool-season turfgrass maintained at lawn and athletic field height. Crabgrass and bill bug populations seem to be increasing. Crabgrass is a summer annual, which germinate in the spring. A mild winter followed by a warm spring would suggest early germination of this summer annual. Billbugs over winter as adults, emerging in the spring. A mild winter would also suggest high spring populations of overwintering adults, which will result in increased levels of damage in the spring and following summer.

you ride with him for a day and learn a little bit more?"

Josh Demers, owner of Pacific Lawn Maintenance in Spokane Valley, Washington, says he also uses his off-season training as a refresher and mixes information about any new products they may be using and new chemical laws.

His technicians want to be ready for any questions customers may ask them about a certain product or when kids and pets can play on the lawn.

"We try to get our crews and spray guys really well-rounded so they are knowledgeable and educated when it's time to get out in the field both obviously for our company to keep things rolling forward and then for the customer so they can be well informed," he says.

During Pacific's off-season months, Demers will have 4-5 in-

house classes and two full days of state required classes. And while employees aren't laid off and have work to do, like snow removal, Demers still wants to keep them engaged in lawn care.

"It's important to me to keep a close connection with my crews and top guys so we aren't going December, January and February without any communication," he says.

"Then all of a sudden, everyone is MIA come the springtime. That's a very important part of my business is keeping everyone kind of tight knit during slow times."

John Bannon and his two lawn care technicians take advantage of training courses hosted by distributors, as well as educational sessions at tradeshow.

"Two of my employees have been with me for a while so they are pretty well trained on

the basics. It's the new products and techniques we get trained on," he says. Bannon likes using the outside training courses and doesn't mind paying for them because it allows his employees to hear lessons from someone besides himself.

"It's not that they don't believe me. But it's reinforced way better when the professor or the person from the distributor speaks to them than when I do."

He's also keeping an eye out for articles in the news and in trade publications that pertain to the industry, and sharing those with his employees.

All three companies pay for employees while they are trained, and Leadenham says it's well worth the expense.

"It's extremely important," he says. "If you don't train, you pay at some point. I believe it pays to train and it hurts not to train." ●

2017 SPRING PREP PLAYBOOK



THE BUG STOPS HERE

Zylam® Liquid Kills Emerald Ash Borers FAST!

A bark band application of Zylam Liquid Systemic Insecticide provides exceptional control of EABs and more than 100 insects with low labor and equipment costs, and without damaging the tree.



GordonsProfessional.com

G pbi/GORDON
CORPORATION

Employee-Owned

Always read and follow label directions. Zylam® is a registered trademark of PBI-Gordon Corp. 12/16 04539

TIM BENZ

RESIDENTIAL PROJECT
DESIGNER FROM
NATURE'S PERSPECTIVE
LANDSCAPING

A TIGHT SQUEEZE

NATURE'S PERSPECTIVE LANDSCAPING, located in Evanston, Illinois, took on a driveway project in a federal historic district. The driveway was shared by two properties, so that meant a pair of married couples would have to agree on the design. The goal was to develop a cohesive and integrated plan that would be functional and aesthetically pleasing while complying with zone codes. While the driveway was being installed, all parties agreed it would be best if the homeowners were not present for construction, which meant Nature's needed to have the plan accepted and authorized by both parties prior to them leaving. Any issues that came up were then reviewed via phone calls or emailed pictures. Nature's had the driveway portion of the project done in three weeks, when the homeowners returned from vacation. **L&L**



PROJECT FACTS

The homeowners wanted the driveway wider because there wasn't room for one car to leave and another car to enter at the same time. This led to people backing up into the retaining walls, damaging both the wall and cars. So, the driveway increased about 400 square feet. LED lighting was added so that drivers could see the walls and the edge of the driveway.

The driveway had to be straightened and split down the middle by the property line to reduce the headlights on the front house and make it easier to back up without hitting the retaining walls.

There was also water runoff from the driveway that was flooding the lower level basement, and a drainage system/grade changes had to be designed and implemented. A large fountain in the center of the driveway turnaround was also installed at the center of the driveway turnaround.

The Whitacre Greer pavers were chosen because they integrated with the clay face brick of the two houses.



To be bigger, faster and stronger. This is why I do it.

ZD1500 Series



Kubota ZD1500 Series zero-turn mowers are big, strong and powerful. These precision-focused machines use advanced technology and Kubota diesel engines to deliver superior performance and supreme comfort. Equipped with a 72" ACS™ Kubota PRO deck, deluxe air-ride suspension seat and hydraulic lift, the ZD1500 Series is the perfect addition to any professional crew.

\$0 Down and 0% APR Financing for 36 Months*

See your local Kubota dealer for details.

Offer ends 3/31/2017.



*\$0 down, 0% A.P.R. financing for up to 36 months on purchases of new Kubota equipment (excluding VS Series) is available to qualified purchasers from participating dealers' in-stock inventory through 3/31/2017. Example: A 36-month monthly installment repayment term at 0% A.P.R. requires 36 payments of \$27.78 per \$1,000 financed. 0% A.P.R. interest is available to customers if no dealer documentation preparation fee is charged. Dealer charge for document preparation fee shall be in accordance with state laws. Inclusion of ineligible equipment may result in a higher blended A.P.R. 0% A.P.R. and low-rate financing may not be available with customer instant rebate offers. Financing is available through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A., 3401 Del Amo Blvd., Torrance, CA 90503, subject to credit approval. Some exceptions apply. Offer expires 3/31/2017. See us for details on these and other low-rate options or go to www.kubota.com for more information. Optional equipment may be shown.

kubota.com



© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2017

DESIGN/BUILD

SEAL THE DEAL

Your hardscape projects will look much more put together with the right products on the job.



ANCHOR WALL LANDINGS STEP UNIT

The pitch: The Landings step unit's quarried limestone look can be integrated into landscape projects or used as a standalone feature.

- Double-sided texture and two faces on the rise allow steps to be rotated for optimal aesthetics.
- Smooth sides allow steps to be placed side by side for longer treads.
- It features a granite-like texture on tread surface.

For more information: Anchorwall.com

WORK VISAS



Robert Kershaw
The Kershaw Law Firm PC

"Are you having a difficult time finding legal workers? Let us help you get the labor force that you need, just as we have for hundreds of other companies."

Legal foreign workers with H2B visas may be the answer to your labor needs!

EARLY SIGN UP OFFER
1-99 H2B Visas
\$3,500.*

That's \$3,500 in fees for all of your visas—not \$3,500 per visa!
(Landscape Companies Only)

*Flat rate per application paid in advance.
Does not include FedEx fees, bus fare, USCIS (DHS) fees, required newspaper ads,
foreign processing & consulate fees, nor foreign recruiting fees.

Number of potential clients is limited! Call toll-free for more information

1.855.321.0077

Robert Kershaw, Attorney at Law

The Kershaw Law Firm PC, 3355 Bee Caves Rd., Suite #307, Austin, TX 78746

Office: 512.347.0007, 1.855.321.0077, Fax: 512.347.0009

www.workvisasusa.com • E-mail: robert.kershaw@kershawlaw.com

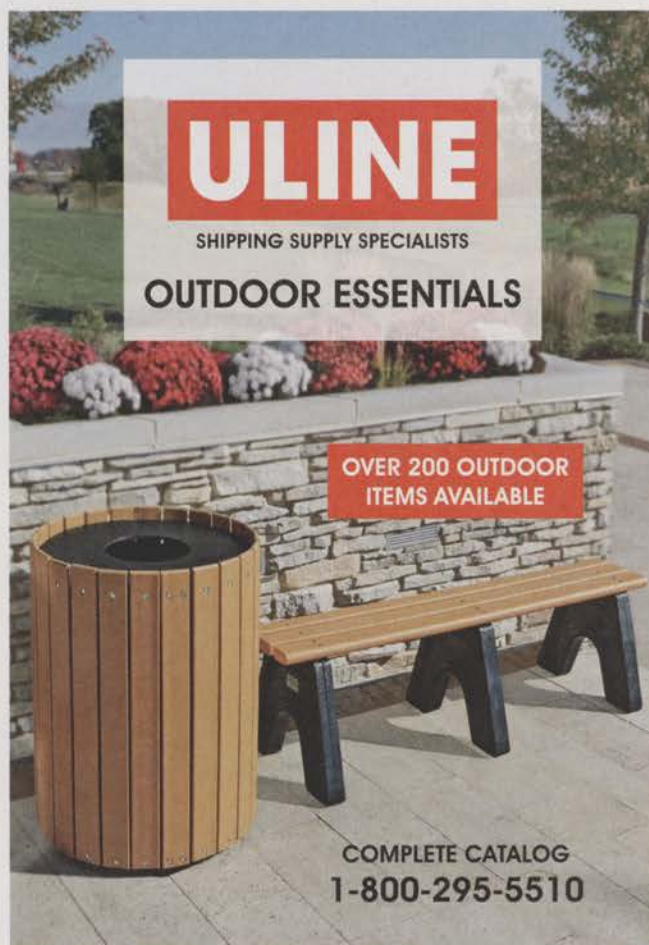
Licensed By The Texas Supreme Court. Not Certified By The Texas Board Of Legal Specialization.

ULINE

SHIPPING SUPPLY SPECIALISTS

OUTDOOR ESSENTIALS

OVER 200 OUTDOOR
ITEMS AVAILABLE



COMPLETE CATALOG
1-800-295-5510

SWEEPSTAKES

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



ENTER THE AM LEONARD PRO PLUS SWEEPSTAKES AND WIN:



GRAND PRIZE:

\$500 GIFT CERTIFICATE
TO A.M. LEONARD
\$500 VALUE - 1 WINNER

1ST PRIZE



THE LEONARD WB6 WIDE TURF
TREAD WHEELBARROW WITH
FLAT-FREE PNEUMATIC TIRE
\$169.99 VALUE - 2 WINNERS

2ND PRIZE



LEONARD DELUXE SOIL KNIFE
AND SHEATH COMBO
\$29.99 VALUE - 10 WINNERS

TO ENTER, VISIT

amleo.com/prosweeps

POWERED BY

Lawn & Landscape



GET SOME GREEN IN YOUR SOCIAL FEED

If you're not following
Lawn & Landscape, you're
missing valuable insights,
opinions and some fun from
peers and experts throughout
the landscaping world.

Lawn & Landscape



Search "Lawn & Landscape" on Facebook, LinkedIn
and Instagram, or find us on Twitter @lawnlandscape.

DESIGN/BUILD

BELGARD BORDEUX GRILL ISLAND

The pitch: A part of Belgard Elements' modular design hardscapes, the Bordeaux Series features a stackstone design that allows a grill island to become the focal point of an outdoor space.

- The prebuilt, modular grill island is packaged as a single unit and installs in less than one hour with existing patio build out.
- The single piece unit, which weighs approximately 3,000 pounds, has a two-way fork slot design, configured for easy transport.
- The Lamina Stone product has a multi-length and layered appearance which provides a rustic, stacked stone aesthetic appeal.

For more information:
Belgard.com



BLACK DIAMOND COATINGS SG+

The pitch: The SG+ high performance sealer provides rich color enhancement and a semi-gloss to glossy finish on concrete pavers and other concrete surfaces.

- Coverage up to 400 square feet per gallon per coat (typically two coats applied) and long-lasting performance due to its industrial grade UV additive.
- May use on damp surfaces (no pooled water) for job efficiency.
- Certified by the USDA as Bio-Preferred; water-based and environmentally friendly for customer satisfaction and your own crew's health.

For more information: BlackDiamondCoatings.com



PINE HALL BRICK RUMBLED BLUFFS

The pitch: Pine Hall Bricks' newest paver, Rumbled Bluffs, are made of clay.

- The pavers are tumbled after firing to represent an aged look of a paver that has been around for hundreds of years.
- Customers can choose between antique or traditional then mix and match to personalize patterns.
- Come in sizes: 2¼- by 4- by 8-inch pedestrian/light vehicular and 2¾- by 4- by 8-inch heavy vehicular.

For more information: Pinehallbrick.com



GREENWORKS
COMMERCIAL



Now available at
SiteOne
LANDSCAPE SUPPLY

COMMERCIAL GRADE **POWER**

...from a
BATTERY



**COMMERCIAL
GRADE POWER**



**FUEL AND
MAINTENANCE
SAVINGS**



**CLIENT
FRIENDLY**



**ECO
FRIENDLY**

***The Most Powerful
Cordless Commercial
Tools on the Market***

Find out more at www.greenworkscommercial.com





PROSERIES - PAVER TREATMENT PRODUCT LINE

The pitch: ProSeries from Techniseal is a product line specifically aimed at paver professionals.

- It features a complete three-step paver-care system for removing stains, preparing the surface and applying a sealant.
- Paver-care Protectors are a solution for protecting and beautifying landscaping projects.
- The paver-care products are environmentally responsible. They meet and sometimes even exceed current government standards.

For more information: Techniseal.com



SEAL 'N LOCK SUPER WET LOOK

The pitch: Seal 'n Lock's Super Wet sealer is a two component, water-based urethane designed for pavers.

- With its process, contractors don't have to wait days for pavers to dry; the sealer can be applied the same day.
- Its formula can even be used on damp surfaces without the risk of turning white.
- SuperWet has very low odor and applies quickly and easily by sprayer, eliminating the need for rollers, respirators and toxic solvents.

For more information: Sealnlock.com



VERSA-LOK RETAINING WALL SYSTEMS

The pitch: The original solid, pinned SRW system offers unparalleled design versatility and ease of installation of small to tall walls.

- Retaining/freestanding walls, curves, multi-angled corners, columns and stairs without specialty pieces or hollow cores to fill.
- Available in traditional split-face and vintage Weathered textures.
- The VERSA-LOK family includes standard, mosaic, cobble, accent and harmony solid wall systems as well as big block options.

For more information: Versa-lok.com

Fleet Intelligence For Your Landscaping Business



VEHICLE & EQUIPMENT TRACKING SOLUTIONS

877-477-2690 GPSINSIGHT.COM



**"TRULY AN
OVERALL
IMPRESSIONING
DESIGN."**



**THE NEW
PRO Z SERIES**



**"MAN,
THIS THING
IS A BEAST!"**

**"I'M TYPICALLY ABLE
TO DO AN EXTRA
ACRE PER HOUR."**



TO PROVE OUT THE TOUGHEST DECK, WE HAD TO FIND THE TOUGHEST CRITICS.

You don't test the strength of a zero-turn on the factory floor — especially not one with the industry's first triple-7-gauge steel cutting deck. So before launching the new PRO Z Series, we gave one to 100 landscapers and asked them to put it through the wringer. After thousands of hours on the job, they proved the PRO Z could handle anything a day of landscaping might throw at it.

Visit your local dealer to demo a PRO Z today.

Cub Cadet

CUBCADET.COM/PRO

© 2017 Cub Cadet

A FERTILE DEBATE

LCOs weigh the pros and cons of liquid and granular fertilizer.

By Neil Moran

LAWN CARE operators have a number of items to consider when choosing between a granular or liquid fertilizer program.

Here is a look at some of the pros and cons of granular and liquid fertilizer in lawn treatments from two lawn care professionals who are in charge of selecting and applying lawn care products for residential and commercial properties in some of the larger markets in the country.

GRANULAR. Tom Knopsnyder, vice president of operations with Green Lawn Fertilizing/Green Pest Solutions in West Chester, Pennsylvania, says the company is sold on using granular fertilizer for most of the properties they service – 85 percent residential and 15 percent commercial.

He says the granular slow release fertilizers stay in the soil for a longer period of time than do the liquid applications. Another plus for granular is the perception of property owners.

“Customers seem to like the granular more because they can see it and they’re used to going

to Home Depot and buying a granular product,” Knopsnyder says. “With liquid, it looks like they’re just spraying these chemicals everywhere.”

The math is also a little less complicated with granular products, says Dr. Rodney St. John of Ryan Lawn & Tree, out of Overland Park, Kansas. St. John, who is an agronomist and a former professor at Kansas State University and now holds the title of vice president, director of agronomy and environmental stewardship at Ryan.

“It’s easy to do the math with granular,” St. John says. “You know so many pounds covers so many square feet – with liquid the math is a little more complicated.” St. John says one of his jobs is to prepare the recommended amount of fertilizer for the crews who will be doing the actual applications.

“The main benefit is the release time; liquid only lasts for a few weeks, where granular will last

up to 16 weeks, depending on the type of poly coated fertilizer we use,” he says.

One drawback St. John sees in granular fertilizer is with the mechanized equipment they use. He says the operator can get going pretty fast or cut corners, which reduces the amount of product that is applied.

Another drawback of granular fertilizers, according to both lawn care professionals, is the clean up that is often required after application. Pelleted fertilizer often inadvertently lands on sidewalks, driveways and streets.

LIQUID. One of the biggest advantages of using a liquid application is you can mix products like fungicides and herbicides with fertilizer into a tank, and take care of everything at once.

“Some herbicides that are available as a liquid aren’t available in a granular,” says St. John.

Both companies find occasions where it is more practical

to use a liquid fertilizer over a granular. St. John says it’s easier to pull a hose up a steep hill and fertilize with a liquid then it is to drive equipment up a sloping property.

And, of course, different products, like fungicides and herbicides, can be mixed in with liquid fertilizers as needed.

Some companies also use liquid applications in the spring for a quick green up and then follow up with granular applications.

Knopsnyder says one disadvantage of liquid applications goes back to customer perception. A customer can see that the job got done because they can easily see that someone has been treading on their lawn with a spreader while the footprints of someone walking with a hose is less discernable.

St. John adds that liquid fertilizers can be sticky and messy and even stain clothing. **L&L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Michigan.





**Now backyards have a powerful new weapon
in the fight against mosquitoes.**

Introducing NuTone® Haven™. The first, and only, low-voltage mosquito repellent system. With just the flip of a switch, Haven releases an odorless, invisible vapor that repels up to 92.5% of mosquitoes. Each fixture provides 110 square feet of protection that lasts all season long.* Finally, backyards have a better way to defend themselves. See how to defeat mosquitoes at nutone.com/haven.

*90 days at 2.4 hours per day.

NuTone
haven™
Mosquito Repellent System





Geometric designs and formally trimmed hedges were characteristic of the Renaissance Period.

Harmony IN THE LANDSCAPE

Arborists and agronomists can meet in the middle when it comes to trees and turfgrass. **By Christopher Fields-Johnson and A.D. Ali**

TREE CARE professionals and turf care professional have been at odds for a long time.

Arborists claim that turfgrass is evil and must be eliminated from tree areas. Agronomists believe that their best tool is a chainsaw!

It is a given fact that in nature, trees and turf do not co-exist. Take a look at a forested area. You will notice the absence of turfgrass primarily due to shade. This did not occur overnight. In ecological succession, turfgrass establishes first, then second-

For photos of examples from this article, and a history of the tree and turf battle, visit bit.ly/treeturf.

ary invaders arrive, such as low growing trees and shrubs. As the community matures, larger trees start to shade out the understory and the turfgrass dies out.

On the other hand, in a prairie setting, there is a dearth of trees likely due to recurrent brush fires that eliminate tree saplings. Where trees and grasses do co-exist in natural savanna landscapes,

bunchgrasses, not turfgrass, are typically present and the trees are adapted to be tolerant of frequent grass fires.

When we care for landscapes, we try to optimize the growth of both turfgrass and trees to maintain aesthetics.


HEIGHT MATTERS. Trees occupy a higher stratum than turfgrass; as a consequence, tree canopies will intercept most of the sunlight and only filtered light will reach ground level. Even though turfgrasses, in general, prefer full

sun, there are certain types that show good shade tolerance. Tall fescue and Red fescue tolerate shade well, whereas Kentucky Bluegrass does not. Warm season grasses such as Bermudagrass and St. Augustinegrass, prefer sunny conditions.

However, there are some cultivars with good shade tolerance such as St. Augustinegrass 'Bitter Blue,' Bermudagrass 'Celebration,' and Zoysiagrass 'Emerald.' In addition to intercepting sunlight, trees indirectly shade the turf through fallen leaves and spent flowers.

What about artificial turf? This product maintains its green color regardless of light levels. It does not require fertilization, irrigation or mowing.

However, depending on the product used, the underlayment may be made of non-porous material that does not allow water, air or nutrient movements into



Working forward to payment solutions that don't cut corners.

Every outdoor power equipment dealer is different, but all share a common ambition: to succeed. And it starts by serving customers better. Synchrony Financial delivers payment solutions that help drive traffic, increase average transaction size, and build repeat business. Whatever you're working forward to, we can help make it happen.

Engage with us at
synchronybusiness.com/OPE
or 1-855-433-4756.



What are you working forward to?

Credit is extended by Synchrony Bank
© 2017 Synchrony Financial

the soil. This may result in poor growing conditions for tree roots.

UNDERGROUND CONFLICTS. Turfgrass and

tree roots continually compete for water and nutrients. Trees consume large amounts of water that is lost to the atmosphere through transpiration. As the water supply is depleted

in the soil, turfgrass begins to show symptoms of wilt. Roots also compete for nutrients as shown in many studies in the literature.

This is especially true with aggressively growing turfgrasses such as Bermudagrass. Surface applications of granular fertilizers applied to turf are not likely to benefit trees growing in the same environment. Deep root injection of tree fertilizers would be a better option to care for trees. Removal of fallen leaves to free turfgrass from their effects also deprives the trees of their natural mineral recycling method, further reducing their supply of nutrients.

Allelopathy (or chemical warfare) is another phenomenon to consider when placing plants together in the landscape. Some plants exude chemicals through the roots which inhibit the growth of other plants. A famous example is Juglone produced by Walnut trees.

Certain turfgrasses, such as Kentucky Bluegrass, Perennial Ryegrass and Red fescue may produce harmful leachates from the roots that adversely affect the growth of small trees such as Flowering Dogwood.

Trees and turfgrass have different optimal pH ranges; so it is impossible to optimize soil pH for both at the same time. Living under the wrong pH conditions will cause the plant to become deficient in some nutrients, while other nutrients may reach toxic levels.

THE SOLUTION. Create a mulched zone around trees helps to mediate these conflicts. The area inside the mulch ring is managed for the tree needs, while the area outside the mulch is managed for the turf needs. Fertilization, pH adjustment and irrigation can then be tailored for their very different needs.

As can be deduced from the above, trees and turfgrass may be able to get along in a precarious peace treaty. However, that treaty will need the support of turfgrass professionals, arborists and landscape architects in order to maintain healthy and aesthetic urban landscapes. **L&L**

Dr. Christopher Fields-Johnson is Technical Advisor, Mid-Atlantic region; and Dr. A.D. Ali is Technical Advisor, Southeast and South regions. Both are with the Davey Institute, The Davey Tree Expert Company.



GREGSON-CLARK Spraying Equipment

A Division of Rhett M. Clark, Inc.



YOUR SEARCH FOR THE IDEAL SPRAY SYSTEM JUST GOT EASIER.

Let us design and build
the ideal modular spray
system for your business.



800-706-9530

sales@gregsonclark.com | gregsonclark.com



THE POWER OF THE PURPLE POT.

Regional assortments, retail appeal and battle tested.



First Editions® has an outstanding assortment of plants that are well matched to your markets.



The purple pots are easily recognized and add instant value to your selections.



First Editions® plants are rigorously tested for performance in production and in the landscape.

For more information, visit FirstEditionsPlants.com

BUSINESS FOR SALE



**EAST COAST OF FLORIDA
TREE AND CONTRACTED WORK**

**Sales \$2.7M Great Equipment
Contracted Work**

Contact: John Brogan
Office: 772-220-4455 • Cell: 772-284-4127
E-mail: john@acquisitionexperts.net
Visit our website at www.acquisitionexperts.net

WE SELL BUSINESSES

**FOR SALE:
LAWN-LANDSCAPE-
SNOW REMOVAL BUSINESS
PRIME LOCATION IN WEST VIRGINIA**

Owner wanting to retire. A premier company with an excellent reputation. Over 30 years in business. A fully staffed experienced team. Approximately 200 weekly/bi weekly commercial and residential accounts. Average annual gross sales are 700k to 800k a year. Asking 995k. Sale price includes 2 properties (1 with commercial building), trucks, lawn, landscape and snow equipment. Owner will help with transition. Price is negotiable.

Call 1-681-315-8803

**FOR SALE
Lawn Maintenance Company
South Eastern MI**

Excellent reputation, Services: snow plowing, salting, fertilizing, irrigation service, lawn and landscape services. Option to lease current facility. Well-maintained trucks and equipment. 100 accounts many of them large.

**Please only very serious inquiries
586-531-3708**

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

!MAKE MORE MONEY!

\$\$ Attention Landscapers \$\$
Add a Lawn and Ornamental Spray service
or Bug route to your existing customers!

**Go to Pestcontrollicense.com
Give us a call 352-443-1193**

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES



**Voted Best Landscape Company in
425 Magazine and Best of Houzz.com**

**Landscape Design/build in the
heart of the Puget Sounds Microsoft/
Starbucks & Amazon residential areas
See us at classicnursery.com**

A leading Puget Sound area landscape design/build firm for 30+ years with a 10-acre nursery is seeking business expansion, partnership or an acquisition opportunity. Located in a winery district, this \$2M+ firm is very profitable & well-established with thousands of successful residential projects and strong referral network. This 5-Star Envirostar, Best of Houzz & Angie's List Award winning company has a reputation for innovative cad based design & timely project execution. The owners are looking to explore options for future growth & are flexible with continued involvement.

To learn more, please contact:
Brad Wiens, Vantage Point Advisors, LLC
Vantage-Points.com
206-713-1234
bradw@vantage-points.com
11820 Northup Way, Suite E 200 | Bellevue

SELLING YOUR BUSINESS?

FREE NO BROKER
APPRAISAL FEES

Professional Business Consultants



Professional Business Consultants can obtain purchase offers from qualified buyers without disclosing your identity. Consultants' fees are paid by the buyer.
CALL:

708-744-6715

FAX: 508-252-4447
pbcmello1@aol.com

**THE L&L MEDIA GROUP'S
REPRINT SERVICE**

Email: reprints@gie.net or call
800-456-0707 to learn more.

BOOKS

**Benchmarks for Landscape
Construction Professionals**

Publication Special for Jim Huston's new book!

Benchmarks, Standards and Critical Numbers
for your company, your industry and your life.

- Benchmarks book
- Benchmarks audiobook
- Benchmarks MS Word CD

33% Discount!

All three for \$150 plus \$19 S&H

Email Jim for more info at jhuston@jrhuston.biz

BUSINESS SERVICES

**J.R. Huston Consulting offers....
Standardization for Profit
(SFP) Consultation**

with Michael Hornung of



Work with a successful lawn care professional with 28 years of experience to provide you with the tools and the training you need to start and grow your lawn care company profitably.

Total cost is \$1,500 for one day/\$3,000 for two days, plus travel expenses. You will also receive **60 days of free telephone support.**

If you would like to schedule a SFP consultation, please contact Michael by telephone 320-241-5959 or email (michaelh@valleygreen.net) for scheduling and further details at your earliest convenience.

<http://valleygreen.net>

**Need to calculate the value
for a Green Industry Company?**

From the Green Industry's Leading Management Consultant!

Obtain a written evaluation for your business or a business that you're thinking about buying.

Cost to you \$3,500.00

Email Jim Huston for details at:
jhuston@jrhuston.biz

Or call: 1-800-451-5588

**VIEW CLASSIFIEDS ONLINE AT
LAWNANDLANDSCAPE.COM**

ESTIMATING

Simplify Your Entire Bidding Process

Easy New Software from Jim Huston
Proven with hundreds of contractors
Fully Integrates Estimating, Job Costing & More

Learn more at www.jrhuston.biz
Free on-line demo e-mail: jrhuston@jrhuston.biz

FOR SALE

Discount Small Engines & Parts

Small engines & parts
from Briggs & Stratton, Kohler,
Tecumseh, Robin and more.
www.smallenginesuppliers.com

Also, look up your own parts
and buy online at
www.smallenginepartssuppliers.com

REDUCE PESTICIDE USE BY 50% OR MORE



**ECO-505
INJECTION SYSTEM**
Spot-spray pesticide while
blanket applying fertilizer

G
GREGSON-CLARK
Spraying Equipment
A Division of Kibitz M. Clark, Inc.

Toll free - 800.706.9530
Phone - 585.538.9570
Fax - 585.538.9577
Sales@GregsonClark.com
GregsonClark.com

NEW/USED/REBUILT

Plows, Spreaders and parts
Largest diverse plow inventory
Western, Fisher, Blizzard,
Meyer, Diamond, Snoway,
Snowman, Boss, Snowex
1000 plows in stock
WWW.STORKSPLOWS.COM
610-488-1450

Lawn & Landscape

FOR SALE

**Walk Behind
Spreaders**

POWERSPREADERS.COM

941.650.9730

Reduce downtime, equipment
failure, wear and maintenance costs.
One gas can for all your two-stroke mix
ratios. AMSOIL for **all** your lubricants
and fertilizer needs.
Buy wholesale. Free catalog!
1-800-866-7570,
lubedealer@coho.net.
9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Pacific.



* Unique Patent Pending Design *



Mighty-Spikes™ can
be used for holding
down most any
product securely to the
ground. Made from
strong Polycarbonate plastic with 8 unique
Patent Pending alternating reverse arrows,
designed to resist pulling back out.

*** Last For Years * Re-Usable * Sharp Point
* Large 3/4" Head * Super Strong * 6" Length**

Proudly Manufactured In The USA



www.mightyspikes.com
Phone: 1-800-410-7661

FOR SALE

**GOT PLOW
PARTS?**
WWW.GOTPLOWPARTS.COM

Seat Warehouse Quality Replacement Seats



Call 855-700-SEAT (7328)
www.seat-warehouse.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.

Jacto PJB16 & HH5



FREE SPRAYER



PJB16
versatile battery-powered sprayer

HH5
pro-grade compression sprayer

The PJB16 is the world's most advanced battery-powered
sprayer. With 5 pressure settings, 4 walking
speeds, agitation, Li-Ion battery, 8 hour average
continuous spray time and much more. Buy a PJB16
between March 1 & May 26 and receive our popular
HH5 compression sprayer for free. The perfect
combination for specialty growers, nurseries and
landscapers.

For complete details go to www.jacto.com
800-JACTO10 (800-522-8610) • info@jacto.com • www.jacto.com

LAWN & LANDSCAPE IS ALSO ON FACEBOOK: Search Lawn & Landscape on facebook.com

INSURANCE

Liability Insurance For Your Work

Most insurers will not provide coverage for damaged lawns as a result of **your work** as defined in all standard General Liability policies. If your tech is negligent, the product applied is improperly mixed or agitated, a rogue employee intentionally damages the yards, or perhaps the lawn was not properly diagnosed, there is no coverage for the damage done to the customer's lawn as a result of **your work**. Some insurers call this the business risk exclusion.



Other common endorsements that have been added to General Liability policies in the past such as the Pesticide-Herbicide Applicators endorsement and various forms of Contractors Limited Worksite Pollution endorsements will not cover damages to your customer's lawns based on the issues discussed above and damages caused as a result of **your work**.

The Keenan Agency, Inc. has designed a stand alone Lawn Care Professional Liability policy which will provide coverage for damaged customers lawns due to your negligence including damages which are/were the result of **your work**.

This program is not a replacement for your standard commercial general liability policy.

In summary, you probably do not have the coverage you think you have.

Please contact The Keenan Agency, Inc. if you are concerned that your current coverage does not cover **your work**.

Premiums as low as \$550/yr.

The Keenan Agency, Inc.
6805 Avery-Muirfield Dr., Suite 200
Dublin, Ohio 43016
614-764-7000

Rick Bersnak – Vice President
rbersnak@keenainc.com

Gen. Liab., W.C. and Comm. Auto, Property Programs also available.

ADVERTISE WITH LAWN & LANDSCAPE TODAY!

Please contact Bonnie Velikonya
at 800-456-0707 x291
or bvelikonya@gie.net

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 or call toll free at 888-375-7787 or via e-mail info@greensearch.com

SPECIAL PROJECTS LEADER

Large landscape company is seeking experienced installer of plants and irrigation. Must have a minimum of 3-5 years of previous experience.

\$15-\$25/HR

Call (925) 786-2780

RESUMES: email to: greg@fslandscape.com
43197 Osgood Rd.
Fremont, CA 94539

LANDSCAPER ACCESSORIES

W.E. CHAPPS
Hedge Trimmer Chapps, Mower Trash Bags, Chemical Spray Vest and Chapps, String Trimmer Chapps, Zero Turn Mower Covers, String Trimmer Covers, Arm Guard Chapps and Much Much More!!!
Over 200 Quality, Innovative Landscaper Accessories
WWW.WECHAPPS.COM
800-816-2427

INSURANCE



INSURANCE PROGRAMS: ALL LAWN / LANDSCAPE BUSINESSES
Auto, Equipment, Liability, Property, Umbrella, Work Comp

PLUS SPECIALTY COVERAGES INCLUDING:

- Professional Liability
- Damage to YOUR Customer's Property / Your Work
- Pollution Liability Including Auto Spill
- Herb/Pest Endorsement

Active Members of: NALP—ONLA—OLCA—CALCP

CALL 1-800-886-2398 TODAY FOR A QUOTE!

Daryl Erden, Green Industry Specialist
daryl.erden@bureninsurancegroup.com

HELP WANTED

LANDSCAPING JOBS & CAREERS

Find your next job
in the Green Industry.
Visit today!
LandscapeHires.com

IRRIGATION TECHNICIAN

Large Landscape company is seeking experienced Irrigation Technicians with valid driver's license. Must have a minimum of 3-5 years of previous experience. Qualified females are encouraged to apply.

INTERVIEWS: Tuesdays at 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.

\$14-\$18/HR | Full-time

RESUMES: email to: paulw@fslandscape.com

Call Paul (909) 851-3763

1139 E. Dominguez St. Unit A
Carson, CA 90746

Florasearch, Inc.

In our third decade of performing confidential key employee searches for landscape and horticulture employers worldwide. Retained.

Career candidate contact welcome, confidential and always free.

Florasearch, Inc.

Phone: 407-320-8177

Email: search@florasearch.com

www.florasearch.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

PLANTS, SEEDS & TREES

NATIVE SEEDS

Largest supplier of native seeds east of the Mississippi. Over 400 species of grass and wildflower seeds for upland to wetland sites. Bioengineering material for riparian areas and erosion control. Contact **ERNST SEEDS** today.
www.ernstseed.com - 800/873-3321

SOFTWARE

1 SOFTWARE DOES IT ALL!

LANDsuite Professional

(239) 984-5363

Serving Landscapers and Chem Applicators 25 yrs!



FREE YEAR SUPPORT & DESIGN MODULE

**Manage Clients
Schedule Jobs
Setup Routes
Colorful Invoices
Chem Tracking
DEC Online Filing
Network Ready
Secure Backup**

www.rmponline.com/software.html

LAWN SIGNS

PROMOTE TO NEIGHBORS

PROMOTIONAL POSTING SIGNS

RND SIGNS

Marketing, Design & Print

View Hundreds of Promotional Ideas, Layouts & Exclusive Images Online!

RNDsigns.com • 800.328.4009

Posting Signs • Door Hangers
Brochures • Mailers More



SOFTWARE

BILLMASTER Software®

Simple, Reliable, Affordable

Perfect for Small Business

Convert from any existing system

All at a price your business can afford

Call today to get started.

201-620-8566

Email: sales@billmaster.info

www.billmaster.info

LOOK FOR LAWN & LANDSCAPE ON

facebook

[facebook.com/lawnandlandscape](https://www.facebook.com/lawnandlandscape)

MAXIMIZE YOUR ADVERTISING DOLLARS

We offer the industry's **lowest costs** for you to be seen in both Lawn & Landscape magazine and on Lawnandlandscape.com.

Please contact Bonnie Velikonya at 800/456-0707 x291 or bvelikonya@gie.net.

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 email Chuck Bowen at 216-393-0227 or cbowen@gie.net.

3+ MILLION PARTS ONLINE

www.JacksSmallEngines.com

String Trimmers
From \$109

Classen Dethatchers
From \$1,475

Billy Goat Debris/Lawn Vacs
From \$959

Ryan Aerators
From \$2,495



JACKS SMALL ENGINES

1-877-737-2787

www.JacksSmallEngines.com
www.MowersAtJacks.com
www.SnowblowersAtJacks.com



SAVE ON EQUIPMENT

FREE SHIPPING & NO SALES TAX OUTSIDE OF MARYLAND

COMMERCIAL & BUSINESS SAVINGS

SIGN UP FOR AN ACCOUNT TO RECEIVE DISCOUNTED PRICING

Advertiser	Website	Page #
3M	3M.com	7
AM Leonard	amleo.com	30, 105
AMSOIL	amsoil.com	49
Anchor Wall Systems	anchorwall.com	91
Ariens/Gravely	gravely.com	cover tip, 123
Avant Tecno	AvantTecnoUSA.com	48
Bayer	backedbybayer.com	9
Bellamy Strickland	bellamystrickland.net	85*
BioPlex	bio-plex.com	92
BOB-CAT	BOBCATTURF.COM	39
Bobcat Co.	bobcat.com	19
Boss LM	bosslm.com	52
Briggs & Stratton	Briggsandstratton.com	53
Broan-NuTone	broan-nutone.com	111
CASE Construction Equipment	casece.com	13
Corona Clipper	coronatoolsusa.com	16
Cub Cadet	cubcadet.com/pro	109
Dixie Chopper	dixiechopper.com	47
Ewing	EwingIrrigation.com	44
Exmark	exmark.com	35
Ferris	FerrisMowers.com	65
First Editions Plants	FirstEditionsPlants.com	115
FMC	fmcprosolutions.com	54
Ford	ford.com	62-63
FX Luminaire	fxl.com	124
GIS Dynamics	GoiLawn.com	87
GPS Insight	gpsinsight.com	108
Graham Spray Equipment	grahamse.com	82
Greenworks Tools	greenworkstools.com	107
Gregson-Clark	gregsonclark.com	88, 114
Ground Logic	groundlogic.com	18
Hannay Reels	hannay.com	86
Husqvarna	husqvarna.com	17
Isuzu	isuzucv.com	89
Jacks Small Engines	JacksSmallEngines.com	119
Jacobsen	jacobsen.com	33
John Deere	JohnDeere.com	37
Kawasaki	kawpower.com	31, 42
Kichler Lighting	landscapelighting.com	60
Koch	KochTurf.com/lawns	71, 77

Advertiser	Website	Page #
Kubota Tractor Corp.	kubota.com	103
L.T. Rich Products	Z-Spray.com/Sprayers	32
Law Office of Robert Kershaw	workvisasusa.com	104
Lebanon Turf Products	LebanonTurf.com	10, 11
Little Giant	lg-outdoor.com	38
LMN	golmn.com	4-5
Magna Matic Corp	magna-matic.com	58
Mean Green Products	meangreenmowers.com	64
Mercedes	MBVans.com	23
Miedema Auctioneering	miedemauctioneering.com	92
MistAway	mistaway.com	55
Neely Coble	neelycoble.com	57
Novae	NovaeCorp.com	66
Pathway Biologic	PathwayBioLogic.com	34
Pave Tech	pavetech.com	64
PBI/Gordon Corp.	pbigordon.com	95, 99-100, 121*
PermaGreen Supreme	permagreen.com	59
Permaloc Aluminum Edging	permaloc.com	12
Pine Hall Brick	americaspremierpaver.com	36
Pro Landscape / Drafix	prolandscape.com	40
Rain Bird	rainbird.com	41
Rain Master	rainmaster.com	43
Rainbow Treecare	treecarescience.com	61
Real Green Systems	RealGreen.com	69
SavaLawn	savafree.com	58
SiteOne	SiteOne.com	51
SUPERthrive / Vitamin Institute	superthrive.com	8
Synchrony Financial	synchronybusiness.com/OPE	113
Syngenta	syngenta.com	67
Techo-Bloc	techobloc.com	25
Toro	toro.com	14, 15
Turfco	turfco.com	81
ULINE	uline.com	104
US Lawns	uslawnsfranchise.com	50
Vermeer	Vermeer.com	21
WAC Landscape Lighting	waclandscapelighting.com	2
Zoro	zoro.com	27

* denotes regional advertising



Place your Classified today!

Please contact Bonnie Velikonya
at 800-456-0707 x291 or bvelikonya@gie.net.

IN THE RACE TO KILL WEEDS...



SPEED PLUS TURF SAFETY WINS.



- ▶ **Avenue™ South** gives you both speed and safety in sensitive warm-season grasses.

Your goal: beautiful turf and happy clients. But between you and that finish line are weeds and sensitive grasses. Kill the weeds fast without sacrificing turf safety with Avenue™ South Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf.

Avenue South offers fast, dependable control of more than 90 broadleaf weeds. And it's formulated to perform in sensitive warm-season grasses, **including Floratam and other improved St. Augustinegrass varieties.**

**Don't Sacrifice Speed for Turf Safety:
Choose Avenue South.**

GordonsProfessional.com

Always read and follow label directions. Avenue™ is a trademark and Checkered Flag/Label Design® is a registered trademark of PBI-Gordon Corporation. 1/17 04698

G pbi/gordon
CORPORATION
Employee-Owned

RETAIN AND CULTIVATE YOUR CREW



• **LESS THAN ONE-THIRD OF AMERICANS** are engaged in their jobs in any given year, which usually results in low productivity and high employee turnover. As the costs of attrition and recruitment soar across our industry, we must keep in mind that an employee's first year at a company is highly predictive of their long-term goals.

Taking this information into consideration, along with the industry's ongoing struggle to secure sufficient H-2B visas to keep businesses afloat, retaining the current workforce remains a top priority for business owners nationwide.

Retention starts at the time of hiring and requires constant communication, evaluation and implementation of solutions throughout an employee's time with the company.

To improve retention, there are several components that must be considered, all of which must be applied through a holistic approach so that the team can grow both collectively and individually to promote efficacy and employee satisfaction.

HIRE SMART. Hire the right people for the job off the bat. When recruit-



JUAN TORRES is founder of Next Step Solutions and president of the National Hispanic Landscape Alliance

ing, try not to guide yourself by the candidate's personality. Instead, focus on their preparation, job skills, enthusiasm and proven results. This will ensure a shorter learning curve and help to mitigate turnover, which can later cost more down the road.

TRAIN YOUR MANAGERS. Too often there is a disconnect within the hierarchy of the organization. Make sure managers are trained well and are in tune with your organization's mission and goals.

Managers account for at least 70 percent of variance in employee en-

gagement scores. A good manager dedicates time to coaching their team.

Maintaining harmony in the ranks involves making sure each employee, from the top down, understands their role and can provide leadership and support as part of a team.

UNDERSTAND YOUR EMPLOYEES.

Ensure that employees are working under appropriate conditions. Always keep in mind that rules have to be followed in order to meet certain standards.

However, overly rigid rules can cause the opposite effect by driving good employees away. Foster an amiable, non-accusatory environment. Learn more about your employees' needs and get to know what motivates them.

PERFORM STAY INTERVIEWS. Don't wait until an employee has one foot out the door to learn which aspects of your business they find appealing and how they'd like to grow. Employees who feel invested are more engaged and happier in their workplace environment.

SHOW BALANCE. Be flexible with schedules, taking into account that many employees have families. Be aware of the amount of stress your employees have and, if necessary, provide them with resources to manage it. Show employees that you care about each of them personally, not just the immediate results they are producing at the company.

DON'T BURN BRIDGES. Whether you like it or not, employees may leave your company for another opportunity. Those employees should still be considered valuable assets and how you make them feel at their time of departure will affect your retention rate. Keeping your door open and treating them with respect will encourage them to speak positively about your company, which can help attract future candidates and maintain the company's reputation.

MEASURE RETENTION. Finally, don't forget to measure retention rates. You will never know how much you have improved or which areas you need to work on if you don't keep track of employment activity.

The basic formula for measuring employee retention consists of dividing the number of employees leaving the company by the total number of employees over the same time period. Multiplying the result by 100 will express your rate as a percentage. **L&L**

Sponsored by



MARCH 1 - MAY 31

TEST RIDE AND WIN



GRAVELY

TEST RIDE ANY GRAVELY PRO-TURN® 400 OR 200 SERIES AND YOU COULD WIN A PRO-TURN 460.
VISIT GRAVELY.COM FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO FIND YOUR LOCAL DEALER.

POWERED BY  **YAMAHA**

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. Open to legal residents of 50 U.S. (& D.C.) and Canada (except Quebec) age 18 or older at time of entry. Begins 3/1/17; ends at 11:59 pm CT on 5/31/17. For details on how to enter including the alternate method of entry & to view complete Official Rules, visit www.gravely.com/testride. Sponsor: Ariens Company.



The possibilities are endless



Low Voltage



30,000+ Colors



Fountains



Specialty Lights



Line Voltage



With ZD and ZDC technology and Luxor Accessories, the Luxor® ZDC controls, zones, and dims almost any brand of 12V or 110V fixture. And it powers any relay-driven elements, like fountains and fire pits, all wirelessly. Plus, with over 30,000 color lighting possibilities, *it's the ultimate system for outdoor automation.*



ZD MR-16



LUXOR Cube

Visit Hunter and FX Luminaire at the IA Show Booth #515 and 615

LANDSCAPE LIGHTING | Learn more. Visit fxl.com

A Hunter Industries Company

FXLuminaire.