Because they provide the ultimate in flexibility, video programs are invaluable as training tools in the golf/landscape markets. Outdoor maintenance tasks are dependent on varying weather patterns, so video training can be conducted on days when the weather precludes normal maintenance schedules.

Videos are also an inexpensive way to get the message of a recognized expert. They are one-way, instant and highly visual educational tools.

However, because video viewing is a static rather than dynamic process, you must remember that the medium supports—not replaces—instruction. Encourage the trainee to interact with the medium.

To be most effective, the video should:
• be used at or near the working area;
• be accessible to everyone;
• feature close-up photography demonstrating exactly how to do a part.

Video training sessions may not be as entertaining as ABC-TV’s ‘Tool Time,’ but—when properly conducted—are much more informative.

“Advanced Pruning”
no length specified, no amount specified
VEP Video Productions
California Polytechnic State Univ.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(800) 235-4146

“Annual Plant Bed Preparation and Installation”
15 min.
$34.95 includes S&H
DeKalb Extension Service—Video
101 Court Sq.
Decatur, GA 30030
(404) 371-2821

“Basic Landscape Plan Drawing”
60 minutes
$59.95 + $5 S&H
Progress Products
8652 W. Progress Dr.
Littleton, CO 80123
(303) 973-1011

“Careers in Horticulture”
15 minutes
$39.95 includes S&H
American Society for Horticultural Science

“Common Turfgrass Diseases”
no time specified, no price specified
Leco Inc., Attn: Art Wick
20005 Lake Rd.
Rocky River, OH 44116
(800) 321-5325

“Common Turfgrass Insects”
no time specified, no price specified
Leco Inc., Attn: Art Wick
20005 Lake Rd.
Rocky River, OH 44116
(800) 321-5325

“Creating and Maintaining a Shade Garden”
45 minutes
$39.95 + $3 S&H
Berner’s Gardens
Star Route Box 86
New Hope, PA 18938

“Equipment Use, Safety and Field Maintenance”
15 min.
$34.95 includes S&H
DeKalb Extension Service—Video
101 Court Sq.
Decatur, GA 30030
(404) 371-2821

“Common Turfgrass Weeds”
no time specified, no price specified
Leco Inc., Attn: Art Wick
20005 Lake Rd.
Rocky River, OH 44116
(800) 321-5325

“Annual Plant Bed
15 min.
$34.95 includes S&H
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New Hope, PA 18938

“Equipment Use, Safety and Field Maintenance”
15 min.
$34.95 includes S&H
DeKalb Extension Service—Video
101 Court Sq.
Decatur, GA 30030
(404) 371-2821
VIDEOS continued from page 22

“Floating Fountains”  
no time specified, no price specified  
Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick  
20005 Lake Rd.  
Rocky River, OH 44116  
(800) 321-5325

“Floyd Perry’s ABCs of Grounds Maintenance”  
softball 40 mins.; baseball 55 mins.  
$49.95 + $5.99 S&H each tape  
GM Video  
P.O. Box 617018  
Orlando, FL 32861  
(800) 886-2006

“Irrigation Maintenance and Troubleshooting”  
no time specified, no price specified  
Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick  
20005 Lake Rd.  
Rocky River, OH 44116  
(800) 321-5325

“Knowing Mowing Safety”  
90 minutes  
$20 includes S&H  
Briggs & Stratton  
606 E. Wisconsin Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI  
(414) 223-7520

“Landscape Irrigation Maintenance & Troubleshooting”  
no time specified, no price specified  
VEP Video Productions  
California Politechnic State Univ.  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407  
(800) 235-4146

“Lawn Management—In Balance with Nature”  
free  
Monsanto Fulfillment  
1325 N. Warson Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63132

“Pesticide Safety, Introduction to”  
15 min.  
$34.95 includes S&H  
DeKalb Extension Service—Video  
101 Court Sq.  
Decatur, GA 30030  
(404) 371-2821

“Planting Procedures for Woody Ornamentals”  
15 min.  
$34.95 includes S&H  
DeKalb Extension Service—Video  
101 Court Sq.  
Decatur, GA 30030  
(404) 371-2821

“Power Blower Maintenance”  
10 min.  
$49.95 plus $5 S&H  
Advantar Marketing Services  
7500 Old Oak Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH 44130  
(216) 826-2839

“Power Shear Maintenance”  
12 min.  
$49.95 plus $5 S&H  
Advantar Marketing Services  
7500 Old Oak Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH 44130  
(216) 826-2839

“Professional Hazmat Solutions”  
free  
Safety Storage  
2301 Bert Dr.  
Hollister, CA 95023

“Professional Shrub Trimming and Pruning”  
40 mins.  
$59.95 plus $5 S&H  
Progress Products  
8652 W. Progress Dr.  
Littleton, CO 80123  
(303) 973-1011

“Professional Turf Management”  
no time specified, no price specified  
VEP Video Productions  
California Polytechnic State Univ.  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407  
(800) 235-4146

“Research—Practically Speaking”  
4 videos/gr. 30 min. each  
$25.00 each  
International Society of Arboriculture  
P.O. Box 908  
Urbana, IL 61801  
(217) 355-9411

“Rotary Edger/Trimmer Maintenance”  
13 min.  
$49.95 plus $5 S&H  
Advantar Marketing Services  
7500 Old Oak Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH 44130  
(216) 826-2839

“Rotary Mower Maintenance”  
14 min.  
$49.95 plus $5 S&H  
Advantar Marketing Services  
7500 Old Oak Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH 44130  
(216) 826-2839

“Rotary Spreader Calibration”  
no time specified, no price specified  
Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick  
20005 Lake Rd.  
Rocky River, OH 44116  
(800) 321-5325

“Safety Training from John Deere”  
72 minutes  
$15.00 includes S&H  
Deere & Company  
Distribution Service Center  
Safety Films Dept.  
1400 Third Ave.  
Moline, IL 61265

“Snow Plowing”  
27 min.  
$39.95 plus $5 S&H  
Progress Products  
8652 W. Progress Dr.  
Littleton, CO 80123  
(303) 973-1011

“Soil Fertility”  
10 videos, 15-25 mins. each  
$20 each or $150 for all 10  
Potash & Phosphate Institute  
655 Engineering Dr., Suite 110  
Norcross, GA 30092-2821  
(404) 477-0335

“String Trimmer Maintenance”  
13 min.  
$49.95 plus $5 S&H  
Advantar Marketing Services  
7500 Old Oak Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH 44130  
(216) 826-2839

“Success with Bedding Plants”  
20 minutes  
$130 (100 PPPA members)  
Professional Plant Growers Assn.  
P.O. Box 27517  
Lansing, MI 48909

“Tree Care”  
free  
Monsanto Fulfillment  
1325 N. Warson Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63132

“Turfgrass Renovation”  
no time specified, no price specified  
Lesco Inc., Attn. Art Wick  
20005 Lake Rd.  
Rocky River, OH 44116  
(800) 321-5325

“Using Pesticides Safely”  
6-video set, 68 minutes total time  
$120 includes S&H  
University of Maryland Video Resource Center  
0120 Symons Hall  
College Park, MD 20742  
(301) 405-3928 or 405-3913

“Video Campus: Beginning Irrigation”  
free  
Rain Bird Sales Inc.  
145 N. Grand Ave.  
Glendora, CA 91740  
(800) 247-3782

24 Landscape Management, January 1994
How to select an accountant

by Dan Sautner,
Padgett Business Services

If you're in business for yourself, at the very least you'll need an accountant to help prepare your tax return, unless taxation is a major hobby of yours. Use an accountant to prepare monthly, quarterly and annual reporting. Not following the government's strict regulations, can mean heavy fines, so it's best left to people who work with it every day.

The government has devised a tax system that places a large burden on the independent business owner. With few exceptions, the reports required of a five-person operation are similar to those required of much larger organizations.

Besides complying with government demands, a good accountant should also help with other financial considerations. This leads us to the major criteria for selecting an accountant:

(1) Will you and your accountant understand each other?

The lines of communication must be clear, and the accountant must take time to review the financial information provided. A good accountant drops the jargon and speaks conversationally.

Select someone who appears interested in your business and someone with whom you feel you can develop a rapport.

Make sure you know your contact person. Also: how will the communication work? On what schedule and under what circumstances will your calls be returned? Your new accountant cannot be available 24 hours a day, but it is reasonable to expect a return call within 24 hours.

(2) Can you get good turnaround?

To be useful, accounting information must be on time. Find an accountant who can set a delivery schedule that gets you the information near the end of the period. If it's a monthly P&L, you need the information within 10 days. If it's quarterly information, it can still be useful within 20 days of the quarter's end. If it's annual work, the information should be available within 45 to 60 days.

To truly run your business properly, get accounting information every 30 days. A good accountant tells you what information to supply, when—and then will stick to the schedule.

(3) Where do you fit in the accountant's scheme of things?

Your business will have to be important to the accountant. In the business, the largest clients are served first, because they generate the largest fees. Find out where your organization will fit into this scheme. If you are the smallest client your accountant is handling, can you really expect timely service? Look for a company that has selected your size of company as its target client.

(4) What is the accountant's education/experience level?

Look beyond education and experience, to experience in your field, in your industry, or in businesses of your size.

Good accountants are able to answer technical questions. Since no one practicing taxation can ever claim to know everything, your accountant should have the ability and resources to ask others for a second opinion.

(5) What services will be provided?

You should know exactly what will be provided, and how often. Be skeptical of the following offers:

(a) A person who says he or she will do everything. (No one can.) Worse, "everything" can be defined by the accountant.
(b) The accountant who wants to build your tax return into the price. This may mean that your return will be competing with "cash" returns when it is due.
(c) An accountant who says he or she will do the tax return for free. (In your own business, how much importance do you place on "free" work?)

(6) What is the basis for fees?

Fees should be based on a combination of the volume and the condition of the accounting information. Also, you should not have to pay for extras that have not been discussed beforehand. You have the right to approve any fee increase before the work is done.

Fees should be affordable. For smaller companies, it depends on your location and volume of work. Shop for value. When comparing two different fees, make sure that you also compare the level of service.

—The author is chairman of Padgett Business Services, Inc., of Athens, Ga. This is the second in a series of basic accounting articles he is writing for Landscape Management.