

Big 25 Landscape Contractors

Consolidation continues, and the big guys have gotten even bigger. Some names are familiar, others are new, but all have significant presences in the Green Industry.

TruGreen LandCare Memphis, TN

After absorbing Houston-based rival LandCare in March 1999, TruGreen is apparently slowing down to consolidate its many separate acquisitions into a single national company. "We're still doing some acquisitions, but we're being very selective," reports Paul Anderegg, vice president of sales and marketing. In only its third season, the subsidiary of ServiceMaster is expecting revenues of about \$715 million this season, a 30% jump over what it reported in 1999. The more than 60 companies that TG-LC has put under its umbrella are divided into four geographic operational divisions overseeing 14 regions.

Environmental Industries Inc. Calabasas, CA

Once again, Environmental Industries has grown much of its business internally, reporting revenues for 1999 in the range of \$450 million.



In addition to building growth internally and making some key acquisitions (most notably in the Washington DC area) for fiscal 2000, EII continues to develop business in all areas of its focus: landscape design/build; maintenance; golf course construction and maintenance; nursery; specialty plants and accessories; and "themed" development, reaching \$451 million. President Burt Sperber expects revenues to top \$500 million in fiscal 2001.

The Davey Tree Expert Co. Kent, OH

A growing commercial grounds maintenance division, residential and commercial lawn care, specialty vegetation management programs and a long tradition of tree care and installation propelled The Davey Tree Expert Company to gross revenues of \$308 million in 1999. The company looks for a 10% growth rate in its services, which total about 70% residential and 30% commercial. R. Douglas Cowan, CEO, and Karl Wamke, president, expect the company's 6,000 employees will generate upwards of \$315 million for the year 2000.

The Brickman Group Langhorne, PA

Acquisitions and internal growth continued to drive The Brickman Group's revenues higher in 1999, reaching \$180 million (topping projections

by \$5 million), reported Scott Brickman, president. The recent addition of two San Diego-area companies should push 2000 revenues into the \$230 million range, he noted. The West Coast move also is significant for Brickman, which traditionally has had a heavy East Coast influence.

RBI Companies Littleton, CO

This western landscape player grew business again in 1999, reaching revenues over \$68 million and



projecting a further increase to top \$78 million for 2000 revenues. In addition, RBI's strategic merger with American Civil Constructors earlier this year brings total revenues near \$109 million later this year. Jody Randall, vice president of internal operations, notes, "This merger means opportunity and stability for the employees and companies that are part of the team." Watch for RBI to further expand into Western markets and continue to sell its landscape, golf, sports field and road construction services.

Gothic Landscape Valencia, CA

This mainly commercial landscape construction and maintenance firm continues to see good growth from its hot markets – southern California, Las Vegas and Arizona. For 1999, Michael Georgio, president, and Jon Georgio, vice president, reported revenues of \$52 million, topping their earlier projections due to an estimated 25% rate of growth. The brothers see upwards of \$60 million in revenues for 2000 for this 16-year-old business employing about 800 people.

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OneSource Landscape & Golf Services

Tampa, FL

Ron Schmoyer, president, projected \$45 million in 1999 revenues for this southeast landscape giant, but the firm topped that by \$10 million. This healthy bump in revenues comes from landscape design/build and maintenance, as well as golf course maintenance and related services. Watch for further growth for 2000, which may reach \$65 million, Schmoyer predicted. Acquisitions and forays



into new service niches such as aquatic and resort maintenance may propel this company ahead by several millions more very soon.

Grounds Control

San Antonio, TX

Grounds Control, the landscape division of Sanitators, Inc., pulled in a cool \$35 million in 1999, mainly due to acquisition. But president Al Honigblum is also aiming for an ambitious 10% annual internal growth rate. "We're cultural buyers — we buy companies with similar cultures," Honigblum says. "We're interested in top quality leaders in high-end markets. We're also looking for the entrepreneur to stay on to continue to service clients like before." Sanitators' goal is for the landscape division, which currently has 650 employees and offers everything from landscape construction to irrigation, to eventually bring in \$90 million to \$120 million.



The Bruce Company of Wisconsin Inc.

Middleton, WI

Since starting in 1952, The Bruce Co. has grown into a \$31 million full-service operation. Services offered include design/build, landscape management, irrigation, golf course construction and maintenance. Commercial/residential client mix is 65% to 35%. The company also has a retail garden center and nursery. Jeff Joutras, sales manager for the landscape management division, says the company aims for steady growth, and it looks like it will achieve that in 2000 with projected revenues of \$33 million. "What makes us unique is the depth of resources we offer, and that we're vertically integrated," Joutras said. "We can take a project from start to finish, then maintain it. We also have a strong team of landscape professionals who like our company and have made careers here."

Oak Leaf Landscape

Anaheim, CA

Even as big as Oak Leaf is (\$31 million in 1999), president Dennis Buccola says it could grow as fast as it wanted. In 2000, revenues are expected to be anywhere from \$36 to \$40 million. "The quality of employees is the hard part," Buccola says. "They're our strongest asset." Right now, there are around 550 employees to perform the company's commercial nursery, maintenance, landscape, irrigation and general contracting services. "We're a niche company — we look for repetitive business," Buccola says. "We do as much of each customer's business as possible."

American Landscape Co.

Canoga Park, CA

Commercial landscape construction, golf course construction, maintenance and a wholesale nursery gave American Landscape a surprisingly good year in 1999, boosting revenues by nearly \$6 million to reach the \$30 million mark, says Mickey Strauss, president. Public works projects, parks and housing development brought much of the business recently, he notes. While most of the landscape work is centered in southern California, golf projects can take this firm farther afield — this year to Salt Lake City. Strauss says his 550-employee firm positions itself to be flexible and adapt to economic changes. Look for further 2000 growth, possibly reaching \$33 million.

Duke-Weeks Landscape Services

Atlanta, GA

This landscape giant was started in the late 1960s as an in-house service for A.R. Weeks & Associates development and didn't even take outside customers for 20 years. According to Mark Flowers, senior vice president, Duke-Weeks Land-



scape's combined revenues for commercial landscape services totalled about \$27.5 million in 1999. The firm handles commercial installation and construction, irrigation, design, maintenance and color. Flowers expects further growth in 2000 due to a "refocus" on its services in 11 markets throughout the South and the Midwest. Look for more movement into dynamic markets showing strong growth and plenty of commercial development.

The Groundskeeper

Tucson, AZ

With \$25 million in revenues in 1999, an expected growth of 10 to 15% in 2000, seven branch offices and over 600 employees, The Groundskeeper is a major player in its region. According to Kent Miller, vice president, the company has achieved its growth in the face



of political and regulatory issues present in its three-state area: gas blower and mower regulations in Arizona; water issues in California; the INS; and pesticide regulations. It has also managed its sizeable work force well, emphasizing core practices such as weed-eating, fertilizing and mowing.

Lipinski Landscape and Irrigation, Inc.

Mt. Laurel, NJ

Robert Lipinski, who carved a niche for his company by incorporating swimming pools into landscapes, led the company to \$22.5 million in revenues in 1999 and expects to see that total increase to \$25 million in 2000. Ever since starting the company in 1976, Lipinski has seen an average annual growth of 10%. The company has the same number of commercial and residential clients, all of whom are located in South and Central New Jersey. About 450 employees enable the company to provide a variety of services, including landscape, irrigation, maintenance, pools and snow removal.

Vila & Son Landscaping

Miami, FL

This family-owned landscape powerhouse has offices in Miami, Orlando and West Palm Beach, FL, and employs upwards of 300 people. The specialty of the house is landscape installation for commercial properties, government and parks projects and large condominium developments. This organization also owns a nursery and container tree farm providing woody ornamentals to the trade. Vila's managers were rocked in 1999 by a 50% increase in revenues, totalling \$21 million, reports Ricardo Leal, vice president. With the backlogs at the Miami headquarters and plans to grow the business in the new West Palm Beach branch, the 2000 revenue figures may reach upwards of \$24 million. Plans for 2001 include investment in company and equipment, plus emphasis on growing more business in these lucrative markets.

Chapel Valley Landscape Co.

Woodbine, MD

Watching a 10% revenue projection blossom into a 25% reality, J. Landon Reeve, president of Chapel Valley Landscape, reported a 1999 jump to \$20 million. This landscape design/build, maintenance and irrigation leader in the hot Washington-Baltimore market saw growth in all

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areas of services. Business in both commercial and residential sectors is equally brisk, he reports, mostly driven by the area's extensive development and healthy economy. Reeve thinks that 2000 will be a "catch-up" year when managers organize to manage this speedy growth.

Scott Byron & Company, Inc. Lake Bluff, IL

High-end residential design/build clients of Scott Byron & Company "understand the value of landscaping and are willing to spend money for the service," says owner Scott Byron. Serving what Byron calls the "unique and great market" of the north side of Chicago and areas of Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, this company took in \$20 million in 1999. It was established in 1983 and now employs about 320 people. He sees plenty of untapped opportunity in this market, with much room to expand, despite the competition. Byron projects



\$23 million in revenues for 2000.

Landscape Concepts Grayslake, IL

Since Mike Kerton and Peter DeVore took the reins in 1985, Landscape Concepts has grown into a major landscape construction and maintenance firm serving Chicago's northern market. Last year, revenues grew more than 30% to reach \$20 million for 1999. The team expects another year of 30+% growth, with possibly \$27 or \$28 million in 2000 revenues. Rather than "killing themselves" to manage this growth, Kerton says their 2001 focus will be to concentrate on bringing all systems into line for the design/build, maintenance, tree care, irrigation, aquatic management and other programs they offer.

Teufel Industries Portland, OR

Started as a nursery in 1890, Teufel Industries has grown into a full-blown landscaping business — commercial landscape construction, maintenance and high-end residential work. Revenues in 1999 were \$19 million and are expected to jump to \$21 million in 2000. Rick Christenson, landscape division manager, said it's easy why his company stands out from the rest. "Reputation," he said. "For quality and value, we are the most outstanding company in the Pacific Northwest." Not to mention the largest independently owned landscape company in the Northwest. And in these times of lean nursery supplies, Teufel,



Cagwin & Dorward Novato, CA

Like many of its counterparts, Cagwin & Dorward enjoyed a year of growth in 1999, driven by a strong customer retention rate and acquiring word-of-mouth business. According to Wayne Richards, COO and an owner, revenues for 1999 totaled about \$18.153 million, with projections for \$20 million in 2000. He expects Northern California's strong commercial business to continue to push demand for maintenance, as well as landscape construction services. "We had downsized that division in the mid-1990s," he explained, "but now expect to get 20% to 25% growth in that business in 2001." C&D also plans to expand arbor care services.

Mariani Landscape Lake Bluff, IL

Started in the late 1950s, you might call Mariani Landscape an "oldie but a goodie." Revenues in 1999 were \$17 million, and are expected to reach \$20 million in 2000. For a company that prides itself on service, that kind of growth can be scary. "We don't want to get too large, too quick," says Paul Mondì. "We want controlled growth." Right now, the company's high-end residential clients are used to getting their calls returned promptly and having individual quirky requests fulfilled. "We do a lot of little things," Mondì says.



Mariani offers design/build and maintenance services, and also has a specialty garden division to care for high-end perennial and annual gardens.

AAA Landscaping Tucson, AZ

The economy is strong, prospects for landscape work are bright and the climate is ideal. What's wrong with this picture? According to Richard Underwood, vice president of AAA Landscaping, it's initiatives on the ballot to limit growth and the usual limitations brought by labor. These factors haven't stopped AAA from achieving \$16

million in revenues in 1999 and expecting \$17 million for 2000. The firm's split of maintenance and installation services (50/50), work in Tucson and Phoenix markets (50/50) and wholesale plant nursery of native and adaptive plants seems to be a recipe for success.

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Nanak's Landscaping Longwood, FL

Although they started 28 years ago with one truck and a mower, the owners of Nanak's Landscaping now depend on more than 325 employees to get the job done, says Sam Puran Khalsa, president. This 100% maintenance firm with branches in Tampa and Jacksonville does a small amount of installation for established customers it values. With 1999 revenues of \$15 million, Khalsa predicts figures of \$18.7 million in 2000. This 25% gain is right in line with performance of the last four years. "We've been growing at a 25% to 30% dip," he notes. Managing this growth is a challenge for Nanak's managers, who maintain a strong focus on employee retention and development. "We try to make an environment where really good people can succeed and have the opportunity to do things their way," he adds.

Lied's Sussex, WI

Unlike many of its large counterparts, Lied's relies heavily on residential customers (70%) vs. commercial operations (30%) to achieve \$14.9 million in 1999 revenues. This long-established firm continues to drive its design/build business (55%) but also sees ample growth on the maintenance side (30%), says Robb Lied, president. At peak season, Lied's employs about 300 people to handle robust demand for residential renovation, commercial work and new landscape construction projects. Lied predicts modest growth for 2000 — probably reaching the area of \$15.5 million.

Tropics North Princeton, FL

This 27-year-old company focuses on the south Florida market and offers installation (60%) and maintenance (40%) services to an almost exclusively commercial clientele. Led by Greg Proch, CEO, Tropics North has a significant presence in Dade, Broward and Monroe counties, up to the Palm Beach area. This presence and a very fruitful market may account for Tropics North's \$14 million in 1999 revenues, as well as the increase to \$15 million expected for 2000. Proch says his maintenance services are driving growth, with a 35% increase. Look for revenues near \$16 million in 2001, he predicts.