Successful contractors reveal the trucks that work for them, and their dream trucks, too

BY VICKY POULSEN

"Old reliable" is the name landscape professionals prefer to give their most beloved truck. Almost every company has an "old reliable." It's the truck that never breaks down and always performs satisfactorily. Landscape professionals stick to proven brands that have given them years of excellent service and reliability. They've built partnerships with local truck dealers who can give them the greatest return on their investment, and they've employed excellent mechanics to keep their company vehicles in high gear. Three contractors have this to say about their trucks:

**Dora Landscaping Company**

Name: Jim Oyler  
Title: President  
Location: Apopka, FL  
2001 gross revenue: $10 million  
Business mix: Mostly commercial  
Employees: "We currently employ 88 employees, but this will fluctuate to approximately 125 in our peak summer season. The majority of our crews are four-man crews, but we have crews varying from three to eight people depending on the size and scope of our projects."

Company profile: Dora Landscaping Company began in 1976 in Orlando, FL. "Each year we've prudently expanded, striving for excellence and providing only the highest quality service and workmanship at a reasonable cost. We operate four full-service divisions: landscape construction, irrigation, grounds maintenance and Southern Landscape Growers, our wholesale nursery. Landscape construction is our largest division. Highly qualified and trained superintendents manage each project. Our grounds maintenance division provides comprehensive grounds management services. Basic grounds management, integrated pest management (IPM), fertilization, arbor care and floriculture are all services we capably provide. The irrigation division provides build-to-suit and design/build irrigation systems to meet any customer's needs. Our wholesale nursery occupies a large portion of our 30-acre facility in Orlando. In addition to retail operations, we provide premium materials on retrofit grounds maintenance projects."

Trucks: Their fleet includes several Ford F-series trucks (150/250) as well as Ford 150 vans, F600 dump trucks, XL-Club wagons, extended-cab pickups, Rangers and Explorers. The company also has Chevy models, which include extended-cab pickups, C1500 extended cabs, Tahoes and Step Vans. Their fleet also includes a Jeep Grand Wagon, Freightliner with 16-ft. flat dump body, Isuzu NPR spray rig, three Nissan Xes, a Nissan pickup truck and an International S1900 dump truck.

Favorite features: Alan Swinburne, mainte-
Trucks with dump beds are a necessity for Anderson's design/build services.

Finance operations manager, says his favorite is Ford's Super Duty truck because it's bulletproof, unstoppable and requires low maintenance. A must-have item in Florida is air conditioning. "It's the only creature comfort we have in these trucks," Swinburne says.

**Finance method:** The company currently leases 16 vehicles, and 19 vehicles have been purchased. Swinburne says Ford's Trac lease program is a popular option. "We shop around but have a good relationship with the Ford dealer next to us who gives us a good price and excellent service."

**Dream truck:** "F-550 crew cab with a flatbed dump on the back... a Super Duty truck that will do anything big or small."