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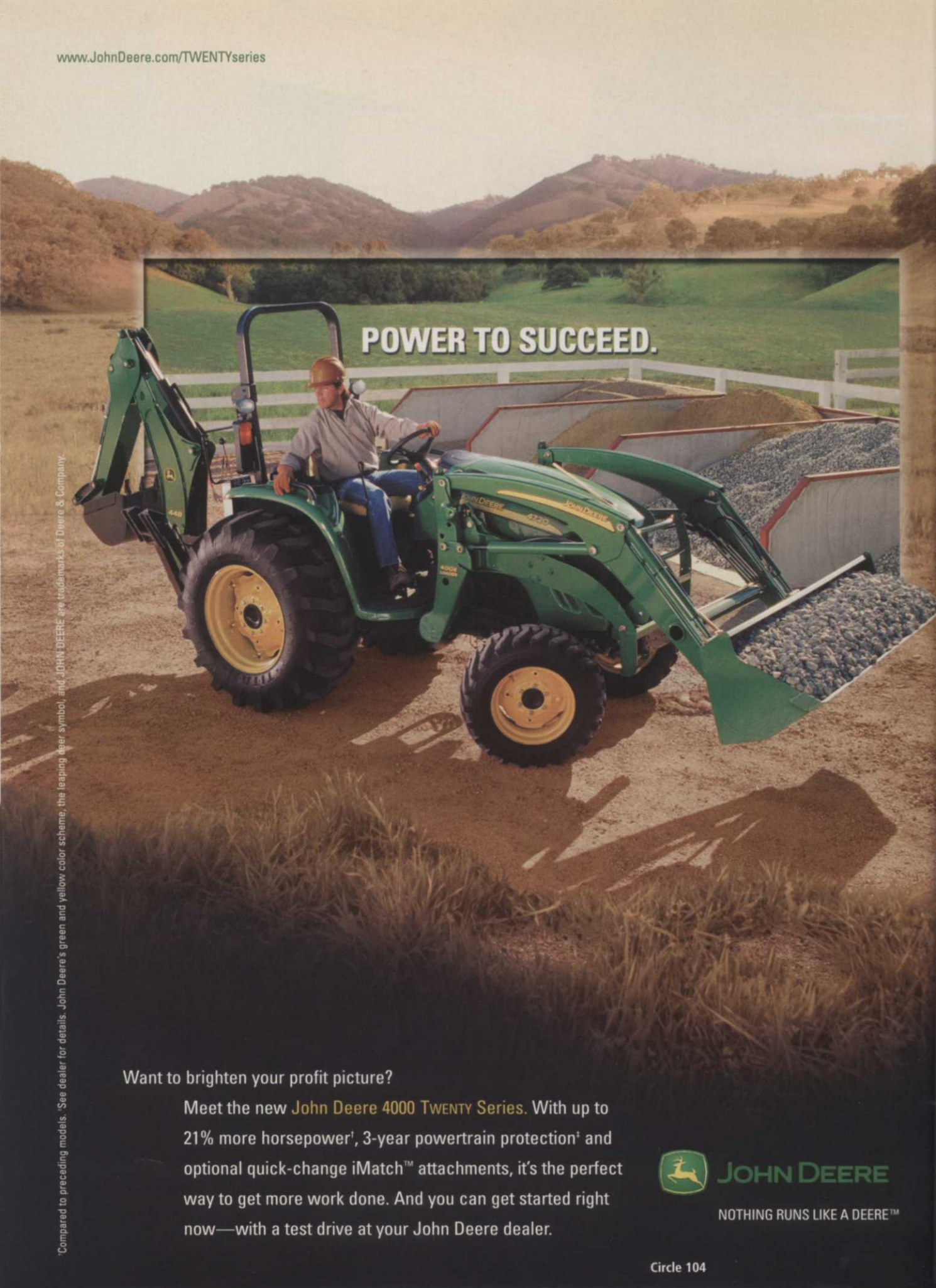


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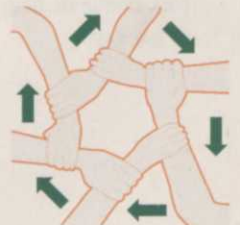
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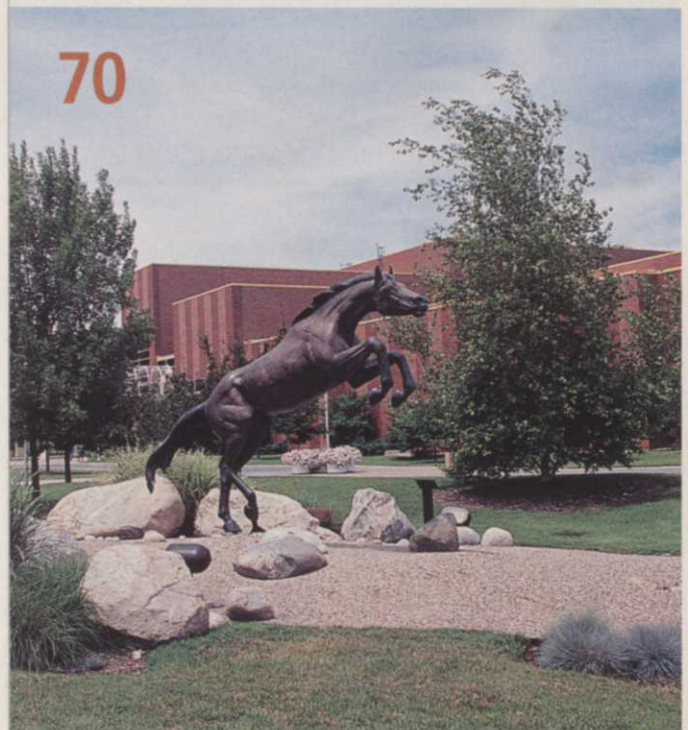
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Business Planner

Our biggest issue ever! Chock full of smart business management articles written by top industry experts. Here is some of what you can expect:

■ Tips from ten top managers

Certified Grounds Manager Dusty Hallman picks the brains of the industry's finest to unearth secrets to crew management

■ Build your network

Landscape company owner Larry Iorri explains how to create friendly relationships with competitors

■ Key figures to know

Industry consultant Phil Nilsson emphasizes the importance of keeping track of your financials in the short-term

■ Exceed your 2005 sales goals

Wanna pump up your sales? Industry consultant Jim Paluch talks about how to set goals and stick to 'em!

■ Improve your profit

Industry consultant Ed Wandtke tells how to grab opportunities to increase the total value and profitability of landscape sales

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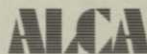
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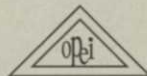
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Circle 108

Why stop now?

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

It ain't over yet. And it shouldn't be. By now, the members of both the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA) have spoken. My guess is that they've voted to combine the two associations by a huge majority.

Now that the process has started, let's keep it rolling. Rock on, merger!

Few events have been as noteworthy in the landscape/lawn service industry this season as the announcement of the merger. It's a step in the right direction, but just a step.

Let's forget about the differences separating the various niches within the contract segment of the professional Green Industry and build a bigger whole. Today and tomorrow are what counts, not yesterday.

A slam dunk

Some of the lawn application company owners that I've talked to seem to think that the merger is a big win for ALCA. These longtime PLCAA members fear losing "their identity" within the bigger association.

Of course they will...to a certain degree.

But the upside to the merger is much greater for PLCAA members who, since the association's founding in 1979, have been primarily the owners of small independent companies offering lawn application services — fertilization and weed/insect/disease control.

Consequently, mowing contractors typically gravitated to ALCA, which they perceived to offer more services and be more aligned to their business interests.

PLCAA's narrow focus on chemical services, combined with the consolidation of the industry by national companies such as TruGreen-ChemLawn and Scotts

Lawn Care, limited its growth. Without some big changes, it was unlikely to grow much more. ALCA, by contrast, has been on a fast growth track, as evidenced by the numbers it attracted to the past few Green Industry Expos, the industry's largest trade show.

PLCAA Executive Director Gary Clayton and his board realized that a new, larger association could better serve their lawn care members. That's what associations are all about, right? They took the bigger view, so hurrah for them.

Our goals overlap

The ALCA/PLCAA merger is set to take effect January 1. The combined organization will have a new name by then. It will have four separate divisions: maintenance, design/build, interior and now lawn care.

But why stop there? The universe of Green Industry services is huge. It's also interconnected, and each piece is vitally important to all the others. From wholesale plant nurseries to those of us specializing in decorative pavers, we all serve the same consuming public.

Farsighted ALCA leaders this past year have had discussions with the Irrigation Association (IA), the National Arborist Association (NAA) and the American Nursery and Landscape Association (ANLA).

They've been exploring areas of common interest. Let's applaud this effort to build bridges within our great industry.

Contact Ron at 440/
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The landscape/lawn service industry is huge. Each piece is as vitally important as all the others.

Target desirable work by customer type, customer profitability and density considerations.



Build density to help profits

BY BRUCE WILSON

Many companies proudly say they grow their businesses by referral. They have a right to be proud because referrals are a real reflection of quality and service. However, there's a problem with this as a primary growth strategy.

Referrals can come from business contacts of satisfied clients. However, they may not come from the business next door but instead the one from across town. Companies instinctively chase referrals because they're easy to close, salespeople don't have to cold call and it's good for the ego of the company.

I'm not suggesting that you ignore referrals or that they're bad. They just shouldn't be the primary sales driver. Companies are better built if they target their growth to improve density and choose the clients who are value aligned and will be loyal.

Don't penalize the client

Don't underestimate the importance of density. When companies work all over town, their travel time goes up as a percentage of hours worked. This is a "Dumb Tax" that has to be born by either the customer or the company. Dumb Taxes provide no value-add to the service being delivered.

Another greatly underestimated problem associated with a lack of

density is the increased cost of supervision, the difficulty in being responsive to a customer and/or a decrease in quality control. Managers cannot as easily visit properties and monitor quality because of the span of control issues created by lost time traveling from job to job. Many companies start to lose the customer intimacy that generated all the referrals to start with. Alternatively, they add managers to keep quality up, and profits go down. Or they may raise prices and lose their competitive edge.

Is it right for you?

It's better to target desirable work by customer type, customer profitability and density considerations. If you get a referral that doesn't fit the criteria, think long and hard if it's right for you. It may be best to pass, or if you like the opportunity, then you need to develop a plan to immediately work on building density around that job so as to quickly solve the associated problems it might create.

This will be a new way of thinking for some of you. But you need to be not only good but competitive. For this reason it's essential to do everything possible to keep your costs low in order to be competitive and still be highly profitable. This requires being more strategic and less reactive.

— The author is a partner with entrepreneur Tom Oyler in the Wilson-Oyler Group, which offers consulting services. He is also the Director for the Symbiot Landscape Network. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.



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Circle 109

In the Know

BUSINESS NEWS YOU CAN USE

Sales Symposium targets 'rainmakers'

BY JASON STAHL & SUE PORTER

JERSEY CITY, NJ — The over 350 attendees of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America's (ALCA) Sales & Marketing Symposium held here in late July were in a New York state of mind. How could they not be with views of Manhattan across the Hudson River from their hotel?

Tom Oyler of the Wilson-Oyler Group quickly got their minds back on sales, however, with his keynote address on "Value Chain Strategies That Unleash Organizational Sales Potential." Oyler's main point was to know and understand your clients' needs. He gave two other talks as well on how to structure commissions strategically and developing rainmakers in your organization.

Oyler said that nurturing rainmakers is a strategic task and warned landscape owners that organizational rainmakers have different personalities, viewpoints and methods of operation than most employees. Oyler pointed out it's rainmakers who generate sales and strong customer relationships, and it's that quality of building relationships that makes rainmakers look out for the customer.

Generosity abounds

During the event, incoming ALCA president Dan Foley called for donations to the Renaissance Park project in lower Manhat-



(Above) New palm trees thrive in the Winter Garden, previously damaged on 9/11. (Left) (L to R) Kurt Kluznik, Tom Heaviland and Dan Foley relax on the cruise.



tan, ALCA's gift to New York and its people in the aftermath of 9/11.

The spirit of giving was obviously in the air as he was able to raise more than \$15,000, bringing total donations so far to around \$100,000. A drawing was held at the Symposium for a prize of either \$200 in publications or one Green Industry Conference registration. The winner, Brad Winemiller of Greenleaf Landscaping, Claymont, DE, decided to donate \$100 of his prize to the Renaissance Park project.

Leisure time

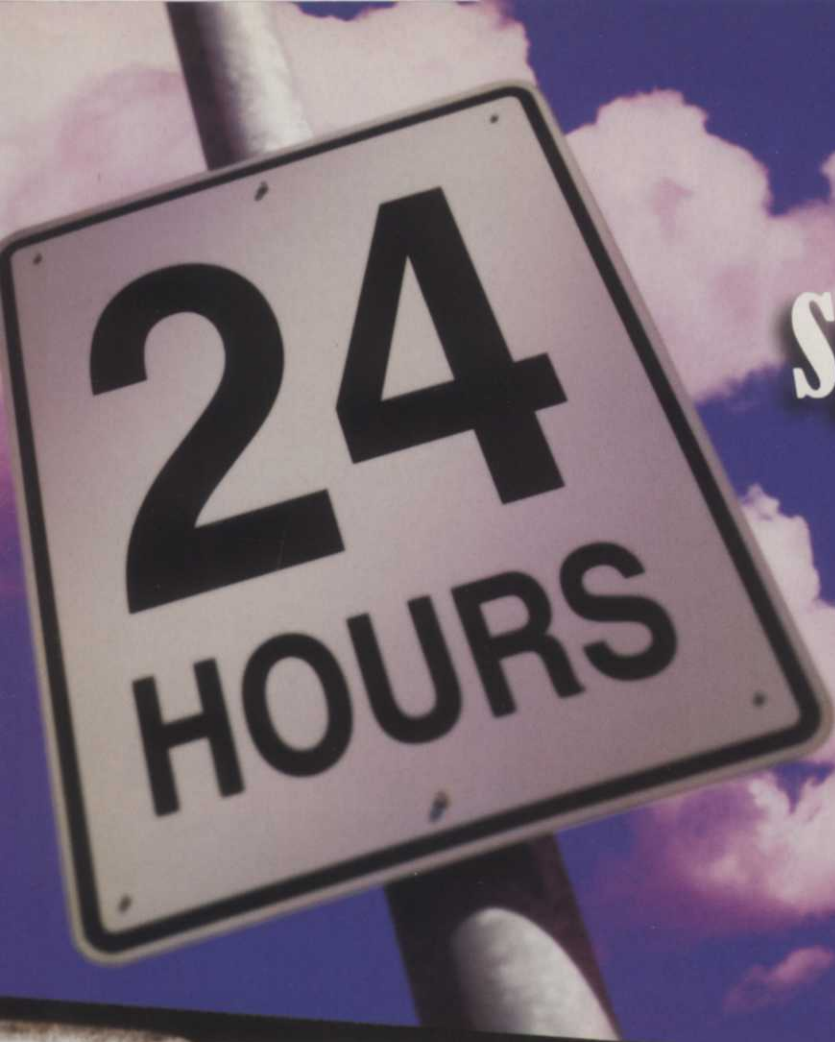
On the social track, participants who signed up for an optional Landscape Tour

Merger update

Kurt Kluznik, president of ALCA, gave an update on the proposed merger of ALCA and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. Both associations sent out ballots in early August for a vote. The plan for realignment is:

- ▶ Seven PLCAA board members will be added to the ALCA board, and other committee chairmen and participants will become part of the appropriate ALCA KRAs (Key Results Areas)
- ▶ Two more KRAs will be added: GIE Show and Legislative Day on the Hill
- ▶ Next year (2005) the officers will be: President — Dan Foley; President Elect — John Gibson; Secretary/Treasurer — Maria Candler; Immediate Past President(s) — Jim Campanella & Kurt Kluznik
- ▶ ALCA is hiring a marketing firm to develop a new name that reflects the "new era"
- ▶ Certification will be developed in two lawn care categories
- ▶ Challenges for the integration are: retain PLCAA members, deal with pesticide regulations effectively, help PLCAA members integrate into the ALCA "culture," meet the needs of the "Lawn Care Specialty Group," which will be formed to be similar to those for interior, exterior and design/build.

were treated to a walking tour of Battery Park at the southern tip of Manhattan. Another highlight on the tour was the Winter Garden, which was damaged during the 9/11 attacks and rebuilt. On Saturday evening, many took part in a boat cruise on the Hudson River while taking in the beautiful Manhattan skyline.



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Count on it.



The Color Guard formally begins the dedication ceremony.

Lawn pros hit Hill for work, politics

BY JASON STAHL

WASHINGTON, DC — As a landscape contractor or lawn care professional, it's rewarding enough to participate in the Professional Lawn Care Association of America's Renewal and Remembrance Day of service at Arlington National Cemetery. But for Chris Hayes, the thrills were even larger this year because he shared the experience with his family.

Hayes, Vice President of Operations of Groundmasters, Cincinnati, OH, brought his wife and three sons, Lee, 16, Cole, 14, and Jay, 12, to the nation's capital the weekend of July 17th not only to see the sights but to put in their fair share of sweat at the cemetery.

"The most rewarding part of this has been getting my family here to see the sacrifice of lots of Americans, and to gain an appreciation of that and give something back," said Hayes.

For Mark Thelen, Vice President of Landmark Landscapes, Norcross, GA, this year was his first at the 8th annual event. Judging from his experience, it won't be his last.

"It's sobering as you're passing by these headstones," said Thelen, whose grandfa-

thers both served in World War II. "Some of these people were completely unknown. They sacrificed their lives for freedom, and it just gives you a great feeling to do this."

More than 200 lawn care and landscapers pros and tree care specialists representing more than 30 states pruned trees and shrubs, fertilized, sodded, mulched and laid sod on the most recent gravesites to improve the green spaces at Arlington National Cemetery. The value of the services and products donated exceeded \$100,000.

After the cemetery project, everyone polished up and headed to Capitol Hill to meet with their respective congressmen and senators. Topping their list was the H-2B guest worker program and the need for comprehensive immigration reform.

In meetings with aides for Sen. George Voinovich (R-OH) and Sen. Mike DeWine (R-OH), Joe Drake, President of J.F.D. Landscapes, Chagrin Falls, OH, went as far as to say he might be out of business within a few years if something doesn't change. His date of need for seasonal labor is Mar. 15, so the earliest he can apply for his visas is 120 days before that date. Last March, enough H-2B petitions had been received to meet the congressionally mandated cap of 66,000 new workers.

BlueYellow acquired by Koch

BRUNSWICK, GA — Koch Cellulose, LLC will now manufacture and market BlueYellow, the new innovative turf establishment system, which combines high quality seed and fertilizer in a lightweight, biodegradable roll. Koch Cellulose acquired BlueYellow as part of a purchase deal struck with Georgia-Pacific, which was finalized in May.

Rain Bird aids reforestation

TUCSON, AZ — Rain Bird Corporation donated 800 quarts of Rain Bird Irrigation Supplement to Trees for Mt. Lemmon to aid in the group's efforts to reforest private land damaged in last summer's Aspen Fire near Tucson.

KTC opening Columbus site

TORRANCE, CA — Kubota Tractor Corporation (KTC) broke ground in July on a new warehouse and distribution facility located in Columbus, OH. The new warehouse will facilitate the need for amplified distribution of Kubota's tractor equipment and related implements and accessories to Kubota's Northern Division of 15 states.

Franks offers discounts

TROY, MI — Franks Nursery launched a "Business Benefits" program available to all licensed businesses, non-profit organizations and government agencies. The program offers member companies a 10% discount on any purchase over \$250 made at Franks Nursery, with 169 stores in 14 states. More information and a complete list of Franks locations is available at www.franks.com.

[CLIPPINGS]



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In the Know

NIAAA spurs school field fixups

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

LOUISVILLE, KY — The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) is promoting an ambitious sports field improvement campaign among its 5,800 members, most of whom are high school athletic directors. Through its Sports Turf Committee, it's drawing upon the support of a growing number of sports turf equipment and material suppliers and the expertise of some of the industry's most knowledgeable professionals, in an effort that will shortly begin producing and distributing educational material, including "how-to" videos to its membership.

"What the NIAAA is doing is what we're trying to do too," says sports turf expert Charlie Vestal, Profile Products LLC, who was one of about 20 volunteers who renovated the high school girl's softball field in Moore Traditional School here in July.

And what a job that he, and some hard-working volunteers from the NIAAA, The Toro Co., LESCO, Kenny Outdoor Services and GCA Services Group, Inc., did for the public high school and its 700 students. They, and four female Moore softball players:

► Resurfaced and reshaped the skin infield, adding four tons of Turface field conditioning material to improve its playability.

► Rebuilt the pitching area and the batter's box using MoundMaster clay blocks.

► Removed a 6-ft.-wide swath of weedy sod around the edge of the infield and removed and resurfaced the field's lip.

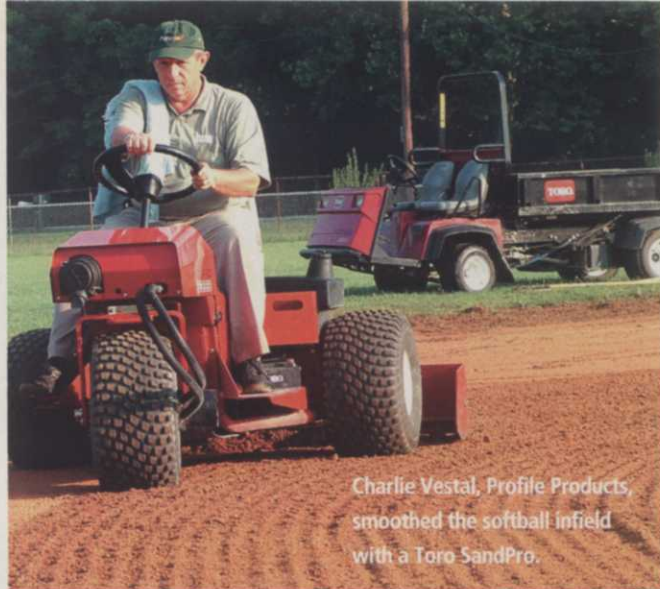
► Improved drainage to prevent standing water in areas along the first base dugout and behind the batter's box.

► Repositioned the left field foul pole (moving it 3 ft. to the left) and correcting the position of second and third bases.

► Fertilized the turf outfield (LESCO Professional 30-3-7) and mowed it with a Toro Groundmaster 3500D.

► String-trimmed along all fenced areas of the softball field and adjacent fields.

► Contracted with Ralph Earley of Perfection Lawn &



Charlie Vestal, Profile Products, smoothed the softball infield with a Toro SandPro.

Landscape, Mt. Washington, KY, to apply Momentum broadleaf control to the turf portions of both the softball field and the adjacent boy's baseball field.

Baltimore's next

This is the second year that the NIAAA and, basically, this same group volunteered their services. In 2003 they renovated a baseball field in Indianapolis. Next year they travel to Baltimore.

Obviously, renovating that fields at a single school each year isn't going to meet the challenge facing our public

schools in providing safe and attractive sports, but it's a great example for other schools within these communities, says NIAAA Executive Director Frank Kovaleski, a former high school AD himself. He was out in the sun with a rake and a shovel just like all the others.

The bigger changes will come when the NIAAA and the members of its Sports Turf Committee, working in conjunction with groups such as the Sports Turf Managers Association, start reaching the right people in the administration in our public schools.

People & companies



Bayer Environmental Science named **Jeff Weld** programs manager.

Peterson Pacific added **Dave Sumner** as Eastern Region Technical Support Representative.

Agri-Inject, Inc. named **Jim Fields** National Sales Manager of its Irrigation Injection Technologies division.

HydroPoint appointed **Patrick Halahan** as Vice President, Engineering and **Robert Torre** as Vice President, Finance and Administration.

The American Nursery & Landscape Association elected a new Board of Directors: **Peter Orum**, president, **Buzz Bertolero**, president-elect, **Tom Courtright**, Region IV director, **Frank Schmidt III**, Region IV

director, **Greg Schaan**, Region I director. **Charles Wayne Lovelace**, vice president and general manager of Forrest Keeling Nursery (MO), recently received ANLA's 2004 Hall of Fame Award.

The Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association named **Jason Schmaderer** of Swanson Russell Associates to its Board of Directors.

ValleyCrest adding OMNI to its fold

CALABASAS, CA — ValleyCrest Companies, a privately held national landscape and horticultural services company headquartered here, signed an agreement on Friday, August 20, to purchase the landscape assets of Omni Facility Services, Inc. Omni Facility Services filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on June 9, 2004. The Omni Landscape Group, which employs 640, has annual revenues of approximately \$50 million.

ValleyCrest Companies President Richard A. Sperber said, "We are very excited about the people of Omni Landscape Group joining the ValleyCrest family and look forward to welcoming them to ValleyCrest. This acquisition will help us continue to grow and develop our landscape maintenance business, strengthen our position in several east coast markets and deepen our penetration in Atlanta and the Mid-Atlantic region. We look forward to working with the people of Omni and serving their customers for years to come."

Stronger presence in East

Omni Landscape Group provides landscape services in the Atlanta area, the greater Washington D.C. area, the Philadelphia area, Destin, FL and Birmingham, AL. During the late 1990s, Omni Landscape Group acquired former landscape companies Morrell Group in Atlanta, GA, Heyser Landscaping, Inc., of Norristown, PA and Spring Gardens in Maryland.

The acquisition will go through the process and approval required by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. If approved, the deal is expected to close within 45 days.

Prior acquisitions by ValleyCrest Companies include the purchase of The Impact Group, Delray Beach, FL, in 2003; the landscape construction operations of Tru-Green LandCare, a division of ServiceMaster, in 2001, and North Haven Gardens,

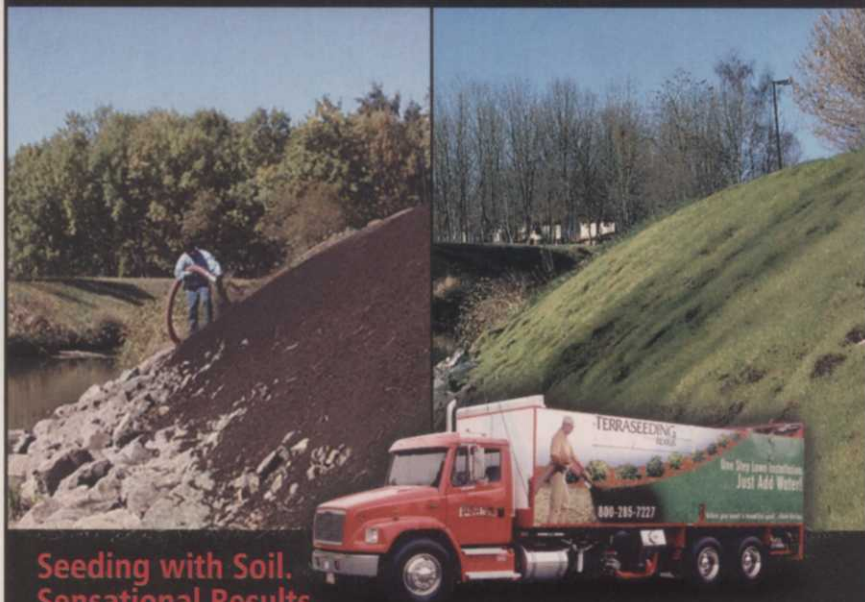
Dallas, TX, and STM Landscape Services, Oakton, VA, in 2000.

Founded in 1949, ValleyCrest Companies is the nation's leading provider of land-

scape development and maintenance services, and a major supplier of trees.

ValleyCrest Companies has a workforce of more than 8,000 people nationwide and annual revenue of approximately \$700 million.

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We're heading in the right direction with more work, more revenues and (surprise, surprise) more competition

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

Still on the 'grow'



Rochester, NY, with its sun-dappled streets, might be a lot like your town. Homeowners there, to a greater or lesser degree, take pride in their landscapes, particularly their lawns. Also, maybe again like your town, hundreds of former good wage earners there have been "downsized." Corporate giants Kodak and Xerox have shed hundreds of workers in recent years in Rochester.

Inevitably, some of these displaced workers become "landscapers." But you expected that, right?

"I've even seen guys pulling trailers with their cars, including a guy in a Buick pulling a trailer with a push mower on it," says Roald Hughes, Green Mountain, Rochester. "Some of these guys are advertising 'Most Lawns \$10'."

When you question your sanity for getting into the professional landscape and lawn service industry (perhaps on the day when a service truck



Roald Hughes

breaks down), take heart — you're in no danger of having your profession being shipped to China or India. If you can accept the day-to-day challenges of running any

small business, you likely agree that you're in a good business at a good time.

At least that's what readers told us in our annual survey. The majority of the 300 people responding to our survey said that demand for your services picked up this season, that we're beyond digging out from post 9/11. You also told us that we're not experiencing the explosive growth of the mid to late 1990s, but your sales are still tracking upward, and improved by a small margin over 2003.

Squeeze on prices

That's the good news; the bad is that competition for customers is intensifying, especially for mowing and maintenance. While startups and part-timers chip away on the residential end of the market, national and big regional firms target retail, industrial and commercial accounts in major markets with very tight pricing.

If you feel like you're being squeezed on pricing, you needn't feel like the Lone Ranger.

"This is the worst that it's ever been," says Dan Beekhuizen, co-owner of Keesen

Enterprises, Denver, an award-winning company that has been offering landscape services for more than three decades. "We had a few contracts signed up this year, and even before we started mowing they had come in and renegotiated them. The clients sent rejection letters saying don't bother coming because we signed with another company."

Rather than fight for what he feels are unacceptably low prices for maintenance in his primary market in south Georgia, Brian Turner, Green Thumb Landscape, Tifton, GA, is slowly converting his company's focus to installation.

"There's a lot of cut-throat competition here, and we really haven't attempted to increase our maintenance business this year," says Turner, who left a career in real estate three years ago to start Green Thumb. "We're trying to break away from some of the other guys who are about our size and aren't willing to take on some of the bigger installation jobs that we're starting to get."

To that end, his 12-person operation has been taking on jobs elsewhere in Georgia as well as Florida, Alabama and the Carolinas, too.

"Our biggest challenge so far has been growing too fast, and also securing and tackling those bigger jobs," he adds. "But it seems that every job that we've done on the commercial side has been larger than the one before."

TOP 10 FASTEST GROWING SEGMENTS THIS YEAR:

- Mowing
- Landscape installation
- Tree care
- Turf fertilization
- Landscape design
- Ornamental care
- Irrigation installation
- Paving, deck & patio installation
- Turf weed control
- Irrigation maintenance

TOP 5 MOST PROFITABLE SERVICES THIS YEAR:

- Landscape installation
- Mowing
- Turf fertilization
- Snow removal
- Landscape design

BASE 320 RESPONDENTS

SOURCE: LM 2004 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY

Industry-wide business ticked up this season in almost every category from '03, says our survey. There were no big jumps, but you, our readers, say the big picture is:

- ▶ revenues (for most of you anyway) continue upward,
- ▶ your cash flow improved over '03,
- ▶ you're reasonably satisfied and well-rewarded with your career choice, and
- ▶ you feel the industry, as a whole, is healthy.

Equally encouraging, most of you indicate that better days are ahead and look toward '05 with optimism, especially those of you doing design/build, which is benefit-

ing from the record-level home-building market of the past several years.

"It's almost too good. We've exploded," says Gerry McCarthy, Mac's Landscaping, Stoneham, MA. "We have a good backlog of projects going into the fall, and it's going to be busy. In the Northeast, people are spending. They're putting money back into their homes and businesses. They'll spend that additional \$10,000 or \$15,000 to put in that patio or that nice stone wall. Why not? A stone wall like that will last almost forever. It's a good investment."

McCarthy, who has worked in the landscape business for almost 30 years, says that his company's expertise in installing hard-scapes eliminates many of the fringe players

in his north Boston suburbs. "I think you have to find and develop a particular niche, something that a lot of your competitors can't do as well," he says.

Our survey bears out McCarthy's enthusiasm.

Four out of five (265 of 308 responders or 86%) tell us they have more work this season than last. That is up from 75% in our '03 survey. Also, 70% of you (212 of 302) tell us that your revenues increased this year, up two percentage points from our '03 survey. Significantly, only 6%



Gerry McCarthy

reported a decrease in sales compared to 11% in our 2003 survey.

This is heartening in the face of increased competition and a growing num-

WILL YOUR REVENUE INCREASE, DECREASE OR REMAIN THE SAME THIS YEAR?



BASE 302 RESPONDENTS
SOURCE: LM 2004 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY

ber of dollars-and-cents concerns, such as historically high fuel prices, and significantly higher costs for products such as fertilizers and insurance.

Certainly the specter of ever-growing competition and ever-rising costs are causing some of you to re-evaluate your mix of services and how you deliver them. You realize that you must maintain profits at levels that will sustain and allow you to

ALCA survey: consumer spending rising

Consumer spending on professional landscape and lawn care services is going up, up, up, says a survey commissioned by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) this past spring.

The report — ALCA's Report on Landscape Industry Growth: Trends and Buying Practices in the Consumer Market, 2004 — says that consumers spent a total of \$28.9 billion on these services in 2002, \$37.9 billion in '03 and will spend \$41.6 billion this season, a 31% growth rate.

Some of the findings include:

- ▶ One in three consumers (32%) purchased professional landscape services in 2003. The most popular services, in

order, were mowing, fertilizing/weed control, maintenance and pest management.

- ▶ One in four consumers (27%) planned to purchase landscaping services this season, with mowing and fertilizing/weed control again the most mentioned services.

- ▶ Referrals from family members or friends is the top method (55%) used by those hiring landscape/lawn service professionals. Other methods used, in order of responses, were: advertising (22%), phone book/Yellow Pages (22%), area professional organizations, Internet and contact from the professional.

- ▶ Cost is the biggest consideration when people decide to hire service professionals. More

than four in five (83%) ranked it as one of the top three criteria. About half (52%) also use recommendations and customer service (46%).

- ▶ Landscape construction (design/build) accounted for the largest dollar volume of Green Industry home improvements in 2003, with \$13.4 billion spent on these services, an increase of \$2.2 billion from '02.

"Although the industry has experienced steady growth during the past five years, growth has been explosive over the past three years," says a release from ALCA. "This explosion of growth is attributable to continued low interest rates as well as the growing recognition of the

value and return on investment of landscape expenditures. There appears to be a direct correlation between housing starts, interest rates and consumer confidence in investing in professional landscape services."

Bendure Communications, on behalf of ALCA, commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct the study and it surveyed 2,004 adults. Harris claims the results are accurate to plus or minus 2.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

The consumer trends and buying practices report, which contains almost 200 pages of survey data, is available for purchase from ALCA. For more information call 800/395-2522 or visit the Web site www.alca.org.

WE HAVE MORE WORK THIS YEAR COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?



Agree 86%
Disagree 14%

BASE 308 RESPONDENTS

IT IS EASIER TO BE PROFITABLE THIS YEAR COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?



Agree 38%
Disagree 62%

BASE 299 RESPONDENTS

FINANCING/CASH FLOW IS BETTER THIS YEAR COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?

Agree 50%
Disagree 50%

BASE 297 RESPONDENTS

SOURCE: LM 2004 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY

grow, which leads us to one discouraging response in this year's survey.

While you report higher revenues this season over last, profits didn't keep the same pace. Last season, 37% of you said it was "easier to be profitable" compared to the year before. This season, 38% of you agreed with that statement, a mere 1% blip.

Roald Hughes in Rochester, for example, is seeking to boost his bottom line (and job satisfaction) by reducing his residential mowing. "I've dropped about 50% of my mowing customers this year," he says. "When I'm paying more than two dollars a gallon for gas, I can't afford to drive 30 or 40 minutes just to do a couple of lawns." The mowing accounts he's keeping are concentrated within neighborhoods, but he says his real passion is designing and installing low-maintenance landscapes or landscapes that use water ef-

He's leaving lawn care . . . reluctantly

Ken Franke, 70, is selling his lawn care accounts, but he's almost evangelistic in extolling the opportunities he continues to see in the lawn application business. He says there are even more than when he and his wife, Myra, began their application business in Plato, MN, (pop. 450) more than 20 years ago.

Secrets? There are none, he says. It's all a matter of pleasing customers with your own unique service and developing the business skills to make it profitable.

The Frankes run a unique operation by offering just two client lawn visits a season — a spring three-way application (slow-release fertilizer, pre-emergent and post-emergent) and a fall application of slow-release fertilizer and crabgrass control.

Says Franke, "With the exception of the 450-foot hose, I still use the original equipment. Same engine, same tanks, same truck ('73 Dodge 3/4-ton pickup) with over 200,000 miles and it still runs good." Franke serviced as many as 1,800 clients a season and walked about 12 miles each work day, he estimates.

"It's been a true ma-and-pa business. My wife kept the books and did the talking and I did the walking. You bet I'd keep doing it if weren't for my legs. There's plenty of business out there," he says with conviction. "People just love what we do."

The longevity enjoyed by Ken and Myra Franke shows that you don't have to follow a cookie-cutter approach to be successful as a Green Industry contractor. More often than not, it's the uniqueness of a company's service that separates it from the rest of the pack.



Jason Cupp

ficiently and require few inputs such as pesticides and fertilizer.

"I love the opportunity to take my knowledge in landscaping and take my degree in graphic design to cre-

ate a business," he tells us. His goal is to ramp up to three employees and to be able to buy, rather than rent, some of the construction equipment he needs to more efficiently design and install customized landscapes for his residential clientele.

Although Hughes is cutting back on mowing, 36% of the people answering our survey say that it remains the fastest growing segment of their businesses. This is down slightly from '03.

A sharper focus

Jason Cupp, CLP, isn't sure if his company will reach its budgeted goal of 20% growth this year, but he's confident it's headed in the right direction. He too has redirected his company to deliver more specialized services to better match his team's talents and take advantage of opportunities in his Kansas City, KS, market.

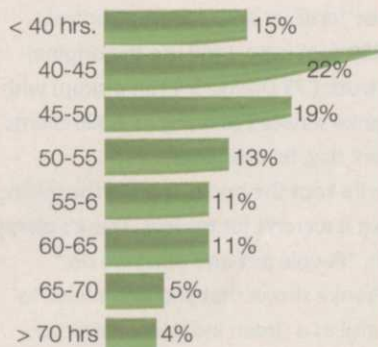
"We used to be full service and do everything under the sun, but we're moving into high-end design/build," says Cupp, president of The Kincaide Company. He decided to back away from "home-builder" work this season ("We got sick of dealing with the nuances of trying to get paid."). They also sold most of their maintenance accounts, and now service only those they acquire from their construction.

"As we looked at the numbers, we became convinced that we weren't as profitable in maintenance as we wanted to be," says Cupp. "We've talked to guys who have wonderfully large and profitable maintenance businesses and they've got it figured out. I can't figure it out.

"Anyway, we love construction and we love taking the blank canvas of someone's property and turning it into something incredible. We're going to continue raising the bar in terms of the types of projects we take on."

"We're having a great year," Cupp adds, this in spite of not experiencing the level of growth of the previous five years. He says the changes he made this season are resulting in a financially stronger, more profitable operation.

ABOUT HOW MANY HOURS DID YOU WORK LAST WEEK?



BASE 313 RESPONDENTS
SOURCE: LM 2004 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY

While Cupp sees greater opportunities dealing with high-end residential clients, every market is unique and every owner must choose the particular areas of the market they want to serve. The landscape and lawn service industry offers many avenues to success.

Indeed, successful owners tell us over and over again that the key to success in the landscape and lawn service business is to identify an area of strength, consolidate success around that competitive advantage and then expand services to grow and support it. Few companies succeed by offering a shotgun mix of services or by trying to serve all clients.

Roscoe Klausung several years ago renamed and repositioned his company to service commercial accounts and work with property management companies in and around Lexington, KY. Just four years ago, his company was almost 100% residential. He likes the commercial market because he feels customer expectations "are better defined and not as subjective" as dealing with homeowners.

"For me, at least, there's a lot less stress.



Roscoe Klausung

I also like developing systems for commercial work," says Klausung.

He says his biggest short-term challenge is rebranding his company and generating name recognition. "Our old logo had been around eight or nine years and people saw our trucks all over because when you're doing a lot of homes, your trucks are on the road a lot," he explains. "But when you're doing commercial work on a big property, you may drive somewhere early in the morning, park and never leave the site all day."

Creating employee opportunities

Klausung wants to grow his landscape company, The Klausung Group, to \$3 million as quickly as possible. With approximately 25% growth this year, his company should approach \$1.1 million in sales by year's end. He says the growth is necessary for him to hire a human resources person, give his employees better employment and advancement opportunities, and increase the overall value of his company.

The task of getting his new company's message out was helped immeasurably earlier this year when it earned the "Small Business of the Year" award. "It made a lot of people aware of us as a company that, maybe, wouldn't have otherwise."

While Klausung and Cupp have taken different routes in building their companies beyond \$1 million in annual revenues, both agreed upon one point — customers want convenience.

Bottom line, that means identifying clients offering the greatest potential for desiring and being able to pay for your particular service...and then servicing them to death. **LM**

For a complete rundown of the LM Survey, please visit www.landscapemanagement.net.

Biggest challenge: managing growth

In 2003, readers responding to our annual survey choose "labor availability" more than any other as their biggest business challenge (21%). Coming in second was "managing growth" (18%). This year, managing growth topped labor availability by a single percentage point (18% to 17%).

Readers offered these other business challenges:

"Finding and keeping someone in a leadership position that really cares about what we're trying to achieve." — CATHERINE NATHO, *SuperiorScapes, Inc. Sugar Land, TX*

"Too many people not charging correctly." — VINCENT NESTOR, *Nestor's Sprinklers & Lighting, Alpharetta, GA*

"I can't believe the number of companies willing for work for pennies." — JEFF WELCH, *Southwood Landscape & Nursery Co., Inc., Tulsa, OK*

"Developing business systems and training procedures." — KENT LOOSE, *John's Lawn Service, Dayton, OH*

"Training people to do things the way that I have, the way our customers are used to things being done." — TIM DONLEY, *Lawnsapes, Colgate, WI*

"Having the office systems to manage acquiring another company and keeping up with invoicing and collections." — *Sunshine Landscaping, Cherry Valley, MA*

TOP 5 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES THIS YEAR:

- Managing growth
- Labor availability
- Cash flow
- Cut-rate price competition
- Developing supervisors/foremen

BASE 305 RESPONDENTS
SOURCE: LM 2004 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY

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BASF

In spite of industry's efforts, the seasonal worker issue worries landscape company owners

BY JASON STAHL / Managing Editor

H2B

issue still hazy

In March, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced it had received enough H-2B petitions to meet this year's congressionally mandated cap of 66,000 new workers. It quickly became apparent that a number of landscape companies would not be able to bring in all the H-2B workers they had planned to employ. The fact that the cap was hit so early in the year underscored the urgent need for comprehensive immigration reform.

Throughout the spring and the summer, industry groups lobbied for relief from the cap, and H-2B was the top concern when more than 200 lawn service and landscape representatives visited Congress during the PLCAA/ALCA Day on the Hill event in late July.

In spite of these efforts, the issue remained unresolved heading into the fall.

Joe Drake, President of J.F.D. Landscapes, Chagrin Falls, OH, went as far as to say he might be out of a business within a few years if something doesn't change. His date of need for seasonal labor is March 15, so the earliest he can apply for his visas is 120 days before that date, meaning that if the cap continued to be filled at such an early date his supply of labor is threatened.

"Theoretically, companies in other areas of the country who have an earlier date of need could apply earlier than those companies in the northern states and take up all the visas," Drake says. "Being in Geauga County (OH), the available workforce for us isn't the same as it would be if we were located on the west side of Cleveland. Our

business is seasonal and depends on how quickly we can ramp up and be ready to go once we have the work contracts in hand."

"Over the last six years, I've struggled to maintain a local-only, American workforce," Drake says. "I currently have eight or nine H-2B guys, but I've requested approval for 15. We're hoping to expand to one more mowing crew, but it's expensive to go this route." **LM**



Ohio landscapers talk H-2B on Capitol Hill.

H2B — it's no time to lollygag

The take-home message coming from this year's H2B snafu is simple — line up your workers as promptly as the law allows. If you use an outside labor contractor, in addition to questions of cost and recruiting, you might want to ask them the following questions:

- ▶ How does the visa cap affect me?
- ▶ How soon do we need to get started?
- ▶ Do you guarantee your workers?
- ▶ How long does it take to get a replacement?
- ▶ How do you expedite my applications?
- ▶ Do you have electronic information and tracking of filings and workers?
- ▶ What percentage of your clients failed to get their Department of Labor Final Determination in the last few years?

—JS

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Poll

position

We surveyed grounds managers on everything from job satisfaction to job challenges. Here's what they had to say

BY JASON STAHL / Managing Editor

You hear it time and time again from professional grounds managers. You're passionate about your job, you strive for perfection,

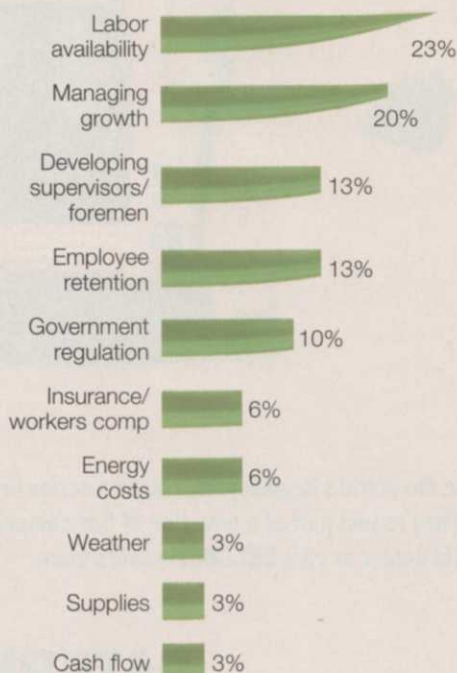
but you're consistently forced to do more with less due to budget cuts. One would think these cuts would eventually start to demoralize you, but that doesn't seem to be the case according to our latest LM Outlook survey.

A full 80% of you said that you were either very satisfied or mostly satisfied with your careers in grounds management, despite the fact that 78% of you said your budget stayed the same or declined in '04. Obviously, the self satisfaction achieved through a career in grounds management keeps your spirits up through bad times.

When long-time grounds managers are asked why they got started in grounds management or why they have stuck with it so long, the answers are almost always the same: love of the outdoors, being able to see the tangible results of their projects, helping the environment.

It's no coincidence that some of you can remember the names and faces of long ago employees, even someone who may have spent a single summer on the crew to earn extra cash for college. You're good at dealing with people, and your success often hinges on your interaction

WHAT IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE YOU FACE ON THE JOB?



BASE 33 RESPONDENTS

SOURCE: LM 2004 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY



with co-workers and the public. Many of you offered additional comments on the challenges you face at work. Here's what you had to say:

“Dealing with layoffs and cutbacks from the institution we service. So many skilled and wonderful people had to be let go due to budget cuts. Flowers and turf treatments that make our university look great were cut back.”

— PAUL MACNELIS, *Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI*

“Looking for experienced gardeners to maintain parks, facilities and right-of-way landscaping. It's very difficult to find skilled and certified workers in this field.”

— KEN VONDERSCHER, *City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation, Phoenix, AZ*

“The university is constantly growing, and we lack the staff to properly maintain what we have. New buildings, new landscapes and more land really keeps us hopping, and we can barely keep up. Due to state budgeting, we're rarely ever allowed to add staff.”

— LANSE FULLINWIDER, *University of North Texas, Denton, TX*

“My biggest challenge is being asked to do more and more (additional properties, higher standards) without increasing staff and/or expenses. Overall, I would say increasing insurance costs is the biggest concern affecting the organization as it continues to impact tax increases to my customers. I also make constant comparisons to outsourcing services, and consequently there's potential to lose work to 'cut-rate competition' who may do inferior work.”

— GREGORY FORAN, *Town of Glastonbury, Glastonbury, CT*

“As with most city governments, we're having to do more with a smaller budget.”

— GEORGE MORCHE, *City of Chesterfield, Chesterfield, MO*

“Trying to work within another cut budget for 2005, yet still trying to provide the same level of service to the property owners of Wauwatosa.”

— TODD KUCHARSKI, *City of Wauwatosa, Wauwatosa, WI*

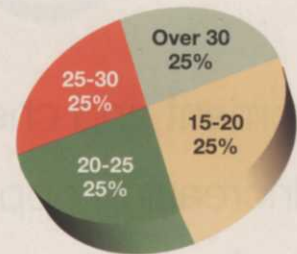
“Construction projects on campus.”

— DAVID ACEVES, *Rio Hondo College, Whittier, CA*

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR JOB?



HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR PROFESSION?



WE HAVE MORE WORK THIS YEAR COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?



Agree 93%
Disagree 7%

OUR BUDGET IS LARGER THIS YEAR COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?



Agree 21%
Disagree 78%

BASE 33 RESPONDENTS

SOURCE: LM 2004 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY

Suppliers speak out

Equipment and chemical manufacturers see increasing opportunity in an environment of moderate growth

BY RON HALL & JASON STAHL

Steve Stansell is bullish on the professional lawn application industry. Home building's frenetic pace the past several years, spurred by historically low interest rates, means...well, more lawns requiring care.

"Lawn care is still growing," says Syngenta's Marketing Manager for Lawn, Landscape and Aquatics. "Interest rates are still low and people are getting busier and busier. They find it convenient to use the services of lawn care providers." Stansell estimates their growth at 3% to 5% "generated mainly from new construction."

But why just keep up with the growth when you can expand the services you can offer clients, he asks. He believes that more

property owners would be willing to add disease control to their programs if its benefits were explained to them. Fewer than half of lawn care providers offer disease control, he says.

"The disease control opportunity is out there, and one of our jobs as a supplier is to educate our customers on the use of these products and help them go out and generate more business," says Stansell.

Another neglected profit opportunity is turfgrass plant regulation. It's an excellent fit when combined with a disease control program, says Stansell, especially when targeted for customers wanting "premium" lawns.

"It helps build a lush lawn by producing a healthy, more durable blade, and can

provide water savings and conservation by inhibiting vertical growth," he says.

The challenge for suppliers is to develop formulations, packaging and delivery systems (and attractive pricing) that allow professionals to offer these products.

Freeman: zero-turns rule



Wesley Freeman, Brand Manager for John Deere Commercial Mowing, says that zero-turn mowers continue to be the hot item in the mowing business.

"The last time I looked at the numbers, they were up 40% in the industry as a whole," he says. "When the industry continues to grow like that, everyone else seems to."

"There are two primary customers who we think are driving this, and they are the landscape contractors who we think have more grass to mow now and large property owners, or the 'pro-sumers,'" says Freeman.

The million-dollar question, Freeman says, is how long the good times will keep rolling. "The industry predicted 12% growth this year, and here it's grown 40%. It can't go on forever, but when it will slow down is anybody's guess. It seems to be speeding up rather than slowing down, and we're looking to produce more than we have in years past."

Predicting what's on the horizon is an even harder task, Freeman says. "There are 40 some odd manufacturers of zero-turns. Obviously, once the market levels out you'll see consolidation. But the market is still going like gangbusters."

As far as Deere sales go, Freeman says the popular models seem to be the higher horsepower ones with diesel or liquid-cooled engines and the models under 20 horsepower.

continued on page 36

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Mills: let's educate homeowners



Ken Mills has been in the irrigation industry long enough to know that changing the public's collective behavior is a long, slow process — but it can be done.

When it comes to using water more efficiently, it must be done, he says.

"Water is a finite resource," says Mills, now in his 40th year with Rain Bird Corporation. "There is not an unlimited quantity." However, demand for water, fueled by population growth and development, keeps increasing. That's where irrigation product suppliers come into the picture. They manufacture the products, the tools that allow people to use water efficiently on their landscapes.

But that's just the first step toward efficient irrigation. There are four others — proper design, quality installation, regular system operation adjustments and continuing maintenance.

Landscape professionals can and should help educate homeowners across the United States on the importance of proper irrigation. It's crucial to the landscape industry's long-term success, says Mills, Vice President of the Contractor Division.

"While revolutionary products for the residential market will come in the future, many excellent products are already available to help landscape professionals install and maintain water-conserving systems," he adds. Contractors can also count on irrigation product manufacturers and distributors to continue offering support in the form of training and educational material.

For an excellent primer on irrigation and its challenges, download Rain Bird's White Paper, developed this year. It's entitled "Irrigation for a Growing World." Find it at www.rainbird.com.

"We're working to educate folks throughout the entire supply channel to make them well aware of all the things that we're going to have to do to continue to have a successful landscape industry," says Mills.

Donnelly: chemistry saves labor



When landscape professionals seek ways to improve their productivity, most think of equipment first. But chemical tools are also valuable labor savers.

Suppliers to the chemical side of the professional lawn & garden market are very much focused on customer productivity and labor management, says Dow AgroSciences national sales team leader Mike Donnelly. For instance, he points to the relatively new herbicide Snapshot that eliminates hand weeding in landscapes and nurseries.

One growing trend in the industry, says Donnelly, is the popularity of granular formulations of popular products — especially in the area of herbicides impregnated on fertilizer. They offer end users convenience, and the public views their use more positively than liquid applications.

Another industry trend, and one his company has embraced, is working with a number of formulator partners such as Lebanon Turf, The Andersons, LESCO, Knox Fertilizer, Prokoz, Verdicon and Howard Johnson in growing and extending the breadth of use of today's chemistry.

"They take our molecules and create products that not only allow for the application of our materials, but also provide additional value," says Donnelly. "Our formulator customers are able to get our products into forms that the end users want and need."

As far as industry growth, Donnelly

says that the Green Industry has been growing "in and around 5% annually" for the past several years.

Otterson: little machines, big jobs



The skid steer is the Swiss Army Knife of landscape equipment. Consider the number of labor-saving tasks it can accomplish thanks to its many attachments — buckets, rakes, rotary

cutters, vibratory plows, to name a few.

But the skid steer, as versatile as it is, can't do everything that a landscape pro needs to do. And that's the driver behind the increasing variety and popularity of specialized compact equipment. As labor becomes more expensive and competitive pressures build, contractors turn to these easily transportable work machines for more efficient production.

"The skid steer has acted as a springboard for a lot of new different pieces of equipment," says Rob Otterson, Marketing Manager for Bobcat Co. "What this compact equipment really does is free up your crews to do other things."

This particular category has rebounded strongly along with the economy the past two years. "The low interest rates and the housing boom meant construction," Otterson says, "and you can figure that landscaping starts about nine months after housing starts."

Otterson points to the growing popularity of equipment such as track loaders (including a "mini" version) and his company's all-wheel-steer loader and Tool Cat utility work vehicle as examples of the growing breadth of the category.

Today's machines, unlike those of just five years ago, are equipped with features such as two-speed, cab heat/air conditioning, outlets for cell phones and radios.

Did we mention the cup holders? **LM**

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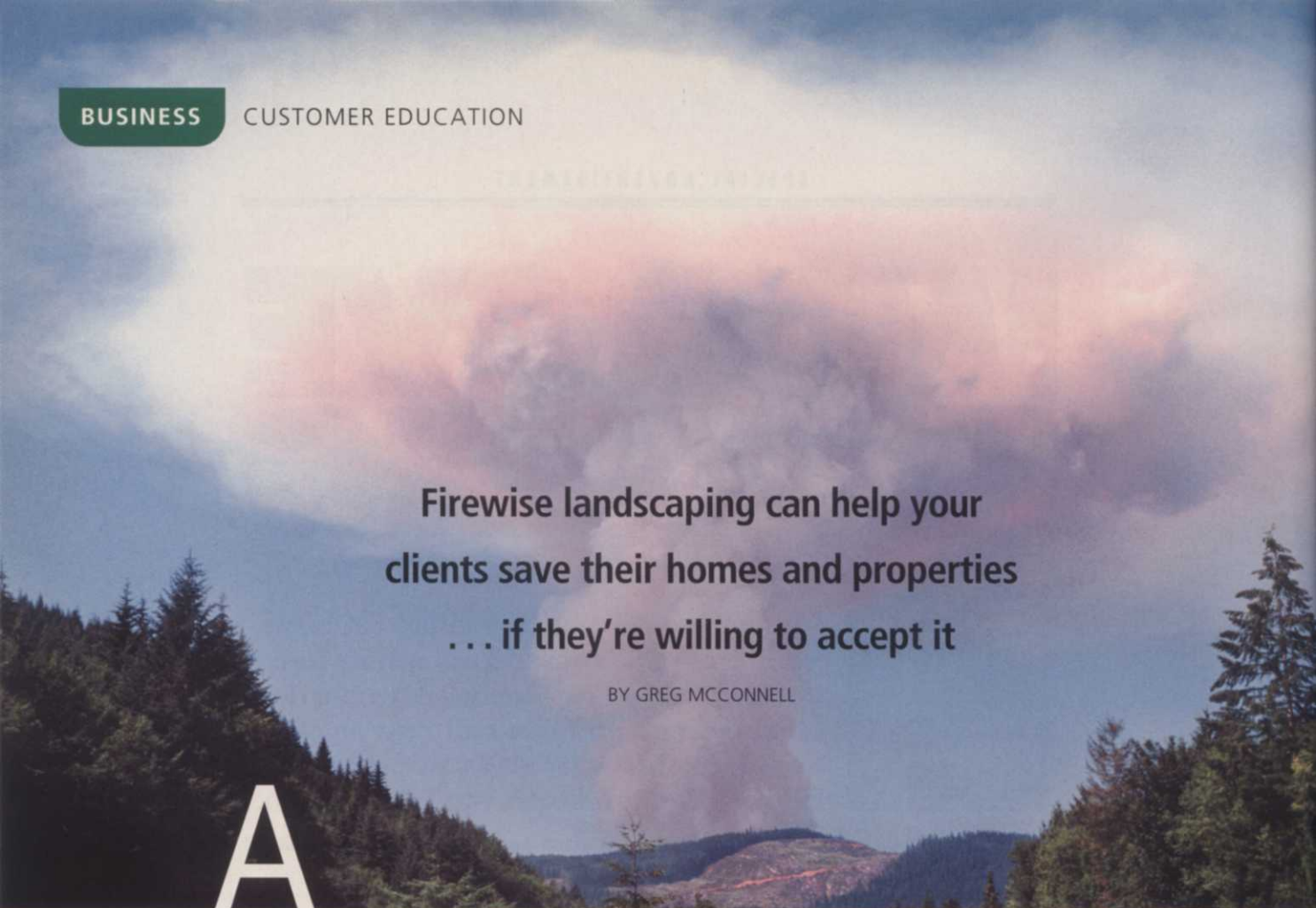
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Firewise landscaping can help your
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BY GREG MCCONNELL

A BURNING ISSUE

“**Y**ou mean we actually have wildfires in the East?”

Aaron Kloss gets that comment all the time while educating people, including landscapers, about wildfires, which is part of his job as the Firewise Coordinator of the Ohio Division of Forestry.

While wildfires in the West and Southwest usually grab the headlines every summer, the risk of sudden, widespread wildfires in the United States isn't limited to a few regions. In fact, landscapers nation-

wide should know the basics of firewise landscaping whenever working in settings that border woodlands.

Larry Steward, Nursery Technology Coordinator and Associate Professor in Horticulture Technologies at The Ohio State Agricultural Technical Institute, Wooster, OH, says he got interested in firewise landscaping about 15 years ago because he felt that the subject wasn't viewed as important in the East. He spent decades in Virginia (where he still owns a home in the woods) before moving to Ohio five years ago. When speaking of the wildfire risk to homes and cabins in the woodlands of states like Ohio and Virginia, he says it's not a matter of “if” a wildfire will happen, it's a matter of “when.”

Sudden devastation

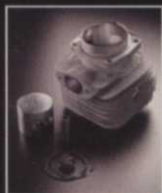
Annaleasa Winter, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist with the Florida Division of Forestry, says there are basically two ways that homes or buildings catch fire:

1. Burning embers from a treetop land

continued on page 40

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continued from page 38

on your roof which has flammable debris on it

2. The fire creeps up your landscaping across your dry grass, shrubs or mulch and then ignites your home's flammable attachments, such as your porch or deck.

Winter says that many people who live in Florida come from "up north," and some don't understand that Florida is actually a fire dependent ecosystem.

"Florida has been formed for thousands of years by natural lightning strike fires, and all of the plants and all of the animals and species have adapted to fire," he says, adding that "any little accident, particularly when we have days when the humidity is

"We don't necessarily get to pick or choose which plants we want to use." — **Greg Mohns**

in the 30% range or lower and wind speeds are above 25 miles an hour, then any little thing can cause a fire." Usually, he says, the leading cause of wildfires in Florida is people burning trash in their backyard.

Steward recalls about 15 years ago when Virginia was simultaneously going through a drought and a severe attack of southern pine beetles. The beetles killed hundreds of thousands of pines — far more than could be harvested. "For a period of about five years, there was a great hazard of fire getting started and burning on those logs and the dried pine, and just taking off real quickly."

Fortunately, nothing came of that situation, but the story doesn't always have a

happy ending.

Last October, the Cedar Fire, which was the largest fire in California's

recorded history, threatened 25 communities in San Diego County and destroyed over 2,000 residences.

Craig Mohns, Vice President of Benchmark Landscape, Inc. in Poway, CA, had an

unexpected front-row view of the Cedar Fire when it came within a half mile of his Scripps Ranch home in San Diego. Though Mohns' residence was spared, his previous home along with 300 others in Scripps Ranch were lost.

'Lean, green and clean'

Since wildfires can't be prevented by a simple act of Congress, what can be done to make residences in woodland areas less at risk? Many would argue that the answer is simple: firewise landscaping.

But what is firewise landscaping? Is that when you chop down every tree in sight and surround your house with a moat and some gravel? That would keep a residence safe from fire, but proponents of firewise landscaping think we can do better than that. They know that a residence can be made firewise while still retaining the privacy and natural beauty of the area.

The two factors that determine a house's risk level for igniting from wildfire are its construction materials and the landscape immediately surrounding it.

"Basically, the most important thing is that you have the defensible space," says Winter about firewise landscaping.

The defensible space is the area of at least 30 feet (depending on where you live) between the forest and your house that should be landscaped with fire safety in mind.

Winter gives the following guidelines to

continued on page 42



Annaleasa Winter



Craig Mohns

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follow in the defensible space:

- ▶ Remove all dead debris, especially dead branches and leaves
- ▶ Break up horizontal continuity. Plant trees and shrubs in clumps, separated by green grass or something nonflammable so that the plants can't form a "ladder" from the forest to your house
- ▶ Break up vertical continuity. Keep trees pruned at least six to 10 feet above the ground so a fire has more difficulty climbing a tree and landing on your roof

Choose more fire-resistant mulch, shrubs and trees, such as broad-leafed deciduous trees as opposed to evergreens and pine trees close to the house.

In other words, Winter says, "You want to keep this area lean, green and clean."

The retrofit project

A great example of a Florida home being retrofitted to firewise guidelines was recently completed in Gainesville by a coalition of agencies (including the Institute of Business & Home Safety, Florida Division of Forestry, Florida Division of Emergency Management, USDA Forest Service, University of Florida, Alachua County Fire & Rescue Department and the Florida Department of Corrections).

The house's location next to a forest preserve, construction materials that included wooden siding and a fiberglass skylight, and landscaping, including dense trees and shrubs leading right up to the house, made it a prime target for wildfire.

"We approached both problems: the building materials of the house itself and the landscaping around the house," says Cotton Randall, Coordinator of the Wildland-Urban Interface Project at the University of Florida.

Randall worked closely with the Florida



Cotton Randall

Division of Forestry's landscape architect and other project members, making firewise recommendations along the way.

Randall highlighted the landscaping modifications to the property as follows:

- ▶ Removed dead debris from the site
- ▶ Reduced the density of shrubs, while still keeping some here and there for wildlife habitat and also for privacy
- ▶ Removed some trees close to the house, including some pines because they shed needles and can ignite a fire if they're on your roof or accumulate on the ground
- ▶ Next to the home, planted primarily low-growing, relatively fire-resistant plants about three to five feet from foundation
- ▶ Created vertical separation by removing vines and low branches.

"Clients are reluctant to take out what we ask."

— Shane Owens

Randall says that not only did they accomplish their goal to make the landscape firewise, but they made it aesthetically pleasing, retain its privacy and achieve better energy conservation by using plants that require less water and fertilizers.

Randall also notes that one of the most difficult principles of firewise landscaping is deciding what gets planted within 10 feet of the house. He says that the landscape architect often wanted to accentuate certain parts of the house, and

it's common to plant right next to the foundation to achieve this. However, with firewise landscaping, planting next to the house increases risk of fire damage, so he and the landscape architect had many discussions regarding what would be planted



Shane Owens

near the house and how close it would be. He also emphasizes using mulches that are low in flammability, not pine straw, dead leaves or small wood chips.

(Note: To read about this project and see before/after photos, please visit www.interfacesouth.org).

In the real world

Some landscapers work in woodland areas, yet don't get to make many firewise decisions; and even if they do, they might not always have the final say.

"There are going to be certain types of plant material that are going to be allowed or not allowed," says Mohns, who's California company is a commercial contractor. "A lot of times, that's where the landscape architect has already come into play and has designed it for the codes and regulations and wish lists of the fire marshal and whatever governing agencies there are. We're kind of working off the plan. We don't necessarily get the luxury of picking and choosing which plants we want to use — they've already been spelled out for us."

Shane Owens, Manager at Progressive Resource Management, Payson, AZ, knows that it's not always easy convincing customers to take wildfire safety into consideration. His company does "natural landscaping." So, for instance, they'll take trees, rocks, topsoil and such out of a site so construction can begin; then they'll return it all later in a firewise manner.

But sometimes customers (in Owens' case, often homeowners) put up resistance. They're willing to sacrifice safety for that.

How often does Owens meet such resistance?

"Right now we have about a 64,000-acre fire burning, so there's no resistance," quips Owens. But he adds, "Other times, I'd say 50% of the clients are reluctant to take out what we suggest taking out." **LM**

— *The author lives in Crystal Lake, IL, and can be reached at gjmc90@yahoo.com.*



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PROBLEM: **How Do I Increase My Sales and Stay Motivated?**

SOLUTION: **Set Goals, Stay Positive, Don't Quit (And a Good Sales Jam Doesn't Hurt Either)**

How Goal-Setting Keeps People Motivated

Fun Goal Charts Show Tangible Results

A lush poster board vine climbs along the walls in Beth Rowley's sales office - a tribute to her company's healthy sales. Each green leaf represents fifty-thousand dollars in sales, and as of August 2004, Four Seasons Garden Center in Michigan, has far surpassed its 2003 sales. Rowley, landscape designer for Four Seasons, has surpassed her own sales goals by about 200 percent.

Rowley attended a **JP Horizons' Sales Jam** in St. Petersburg, Florida this January, where the idea of setting goals and achieving them sparked in her an enthusiasm that's been contagious back on the job. That's where the idea of her lifelike goal chart took root, and it's been growing, well, like a weed, ever since.

"The whole **Sales Jam** experience was incredible," she says. "Everything from the hotel to the programs, speakers, exercises and materials was a step above typical expectations. And that was a subtle, but important message I took from **Sales Jam**. When people set goals, keep them in front of their faces and then do everything a step above customer expectations, they can make incredible differences in how they approach their work. The results of increased sales follow naturally."

JP Horizons held two **Sales Jams** this year, the company's fifth year of hosting these all-out energizing events featuring the dynamic motivation of speaker and company president Jim Paluch. In a room with Paluch, attendees can't help but catch his zeal for enjoying one's work and performing it with gusto.

In **JP Horizons'** style, **Sales Jams** deliver a consistent message of promoting sound sales strategies, juiced up with engaging experiences that differ from year to year. Whether it's with mind reading, fire walking or comedy, **Sales Jams** create an experience that participants not only find energizing, but also highly informative and practical for everyday use.

Keep A Positive Attitude to Drive Sales

Jason Hollway, commercial landscape manager for **Mountain View Landscapes and Lawncare** in Mass., has been working with **JP Horizons** for over eight years, and finds that achieving goals and maintaining high work standards directly correlate with keeping a positive attitude.

"The message of **Sales Jam**, and actually central to **JP Horizons'** teachings, is timeless," Hollway says. "People have the power to choose their own attitudes. So why not choose a good one? Both positive and negative attitudes are catchy, and everyone

knows who makes a better company. **Sales Jam** drives that idea home. And when you're on a team that's energized and upbeat, sales will come."

Like Rowley, Hollway finds his sales surpassing his expectations by miles. Personally, he's more than 300 percent beyond his target. He's doing it by clinching multi-year contracts - a feat that was unfathomable a year ago.

His goal centers on expanding large building commercial landscaping and maintenance sales, and in the process, he's rediscovering many of the basic tenets of effective selling, which were addressed at the December **Sales Jam** in Scottsdale, Ariz. Hollway explains his interpretation of what Paluch calls Dirt Disease. If you see construction dirt, an opportunity is just one step away.

"Like we learned, sales comes down to hitting numbers," he says. "So, I decided to go door-to-door. **Sales Jam** teaches that you may have to make 100 contacts to net five sales, but it's also important to pay attention to who your clients are. I'm learning not to settle for work that just keeps us busy. Rather, it's better to find and keep clients that make us profitable."

Adopting a few new techniques hasn't hurt. Hollway advocates partnering with vendors as well as developing relationships with the competition. **Mountain View** now exchanges referrals with a landscape company out of its immediate area. "At first, people were skeptical," he says. "They were viewed as competition, but by having a good rapport with them, we've passed referrals and in the process both of us can afford to be more selective in choosing clients."

Competition Sparks Friendly Rivalry and Sales Goals are Surpassed

Although all participants attend **Sales Jams** to increase their company's sales, the other half of the story is the year-long competition among all the companies that's kicked-off at the event. When the two-day **Sales Jam** event comes to a close, a yearlong competition begins. Participants share their sales goals with the group, and for the next twelve months, they post their sales online. Additionally, each year's grand prize for the winner with the highest sales is a trip for two to the Bahamas.

"Most sales people love a good competition," says **JP Horizons'** coach Jud Griggs. "Holding everyone accountable and keeping them energized after the event is crucial to the success of **Sales Jam**. When people know they'll be compared with all their peers who attended the **Jam**, they're more than likely to attack

their sales with more punch. The competition has been a great way to keep everyone inspired about selling throughout the year, and this year's group is more competitive than ever. The camaraderie is energizing, and people really enjoy it."

Sales Jams stress personal development, setting goals, building motivated teams and continued training. Of course, these techniques will increase sales, but a magical effect of practicing them is increased satisfaction in other areas as well. "People start improving their attitudes at work, and then they notice that their personal lives improve," Paluch says. "People start complimenting their spouses, showing appreciation toward their children, helping neighbors, and before they know it, they're living a more harmonious life."

"The two days we spend together present energy, fun and an atmosphere that builds individuals. And that's the basis of selling anything. You've got to sell yourself, your enthusiasm, your interest in others and your products and services. Profits are a direct result."

- Jim Paluch



Rowley sees the improvements in all areas of her life, especially in the area of confidence building. "Whether or not I feel confident when I sell or in my personal life isn't what matters anymore," she says. "**Sales Jam** teaches that the more you want a desired quality, such as confidence, you've got to act like you already have it. And I've become a lot more confident simply because the more I make myself feel confidence within, the more of it I have to draw upon in all situations. It flows into all areas of my life."

Teamwork and Energy Produce Sales

Peter Copes, vice president of **Gibbs Landscape Co.** in Georgia, has attended two **Sales Jams**. He finds the experience energizing. "Some of the content involving the basics of selling is similar from year to year," he says, "but it's like a vitamin to keep a strong commitment to growing the sales process. They're fun and entertaining. This year, I've had a big increase in sales, and I attribute it largely in part to the **Sales Jam** competition. This year, the competition is really good, which keeps me pumped up to work hard."

Copes has surpassed his original sales goal by over 300 percent, and is on track to exceed three million dollars in sales this year. But he's got a tradition to uphold. The current defending champion of the **Sales Jam** competition is his co-worker, Dwayne Johnson, a landscape architect at **Gibbs** who won last year's contest. "I'm trying to win it for us two years in a row," Copes says with a laugh. "Personally, the competition has been extremely motivating. I enjoy being part of the contest, and use the excitement to drive my sales as far as I can. I'm thrilled to have accomplished so much already. It's tremendous."

Gibbs Landscape Co. is implementing professional programs to

help its sales force reach uncharted territory, which Copes says contributes to his success. Getting everyone to work together to achieve a common goal makes all parties stronger. One such program is a new direct mail service that targets the commercial market with more tenacity than they have in the past. Using



Sales Jam attendees exceed their sales goals by as much as 300%

technology to keep an updated email list is another way **Gibbs** is reaching customers, putting valuable information into their hands for a relatively low cost. These tools help Copes prospect more effectively. Additionally, sales techniques addressed at **Sales Jam** help him close better and provide follow up that strengthens his client relationships.

"When you factor all the support I'm getting internally with all the energy, direction and good information that comes out of a **Sales Jam**, it's nearly impossible not to improve," he says. "And the follow-up is great."

Included in the **Sales Jam** experience is a year of phone and email follow-up coaching to ensure that once the event concludes, the energy remains high.

"**Sales Jam** is just the start," Paluch says. "The two days we spend together present energy, fun and an atmosphere that builds individuals. And that's the basis of selling anything. You've got to sell yourself, your enthusiasm, your interest in others and your products and services. Profits are a direct result."

Upcoming Sales Jam Dates:

December 13 & 14 Las Vegas
January 6 & 7 Fort Lauderdale



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Reduce injuries & fatalities

Thorough safety programs can help landscape companies avoid OSHA-related litigation

BY BARBARA MULHERN

A 60-year-old worker who's trimming shrubs in a median strip returns to the company truck parked in the road. While behind the truck, he's struck and killed by a vehicle. The worker is not wearing a high visibility vest, and the high visibility traffic cones have been removed from behind the truck.

A 51-year-old employee who's trimming branches in a tree without a properly secured lifeline falls 40 feet to his death due to a lack of fall protection.

And a 26-year-old worker who's replacing an ornamental tree with a truck crane receives a severe electrical shock after the tree is lifted directly over live power lines and the crane is energized. The worker dies less than a month later.

These are just a few of the many fatalities that have oc-

curred in landscaping, commercial lawn care, and ornamental shrub and tree services over the past three years. In eight southern states alone, OSHA reports that fatalities in landscaping and closely related industries rose from 19 in fiscal 2002 to 28 in fiscal 2003.

These fatalities — which include drownings, electrocutions, falls, and being struck by trees, vehicles or equipment — are just part of the reason why OSHA is paying close attention to the landscaping and horticultural services industries nationwide.

Eye on landscaping

"OSHA has made no secret of the fact that it is targeting landscaping/horticultural services as a high hazard industry, and is expecting a 4% reduction in injuries and illnesses this year," says attorney Chris Robinson of Fisher & Phillips



Traffic cones can alert passing motorists to your work site, but workers should still take care.

LLP in Fort Lauderdale, FL. "Any landscape contractor or commercial lawn care employer who doesn't have a written and enforced safety program that includes ongoing training and regular hazard inspections is setting up that company for potentially costly OSHA-related litigation."

Nationwide, OSHA re-

viewed injury and illness data for the year 2000 from all industries, and determined that landscaping/horticultural services was among the seven industries the federal agency would specifically target. OSHA's 2003-2008 Strategic Management Plan calls for a 15% reduction in workplace

continued on page 48

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OSHA resources

OSHA has a number of safety resources that you can tap into. These include:

► **Bilingual (Spanish-English) publications and training materials.** See the Spanish page on OSHA's web site, www.osha.gov. The web site is also an excellent resource for employers seeking more information on OSHA standards, publications and programs.

► **An electrical CD-ROM.** Developed by OSHA Region IV, which covers Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi (federal OSHA) and North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky (state-run OSHA Plans), this CD-ROM includes: most frequently cited electrical standards, all applicable electrical standards, selected OSHA directives and photos of what has occurred when OSHA's electrical standards have been violated. (Employ-

ers in Region IV can request a free copy from their OSHA area office.)

► **Compliance assistance.**

In addition to each OSHA area office having a compliance assistance person, OSHA's State Consultation Program — run completely separate from OSHA — is a good resource for companies with 250 or fewer employees desiring on-site safety and health audits to determine potential hazards. Auditors are not part of OSHA's enforcement staff. For more information, visit OSHA's Web site at www.osha.gov.

► **Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP).**

This is a cooperative program involving OSHA, company management and employees for companies that have implemented comprehensive safety and health programs. See OSHA's Web site for more information.

— BM

continued from page 46
fatalities and a 20% reduction in workplace injuries and illnesses (for all industries).

"We want the landscape industry to reduce its illnesses, injuries and fatalities," Rich Fairfax, Director of OSHA Enforcement Programs, Washington, DC, told *Landscape Management*. "This does not mean we're going to be running out there doing inspections. We have instructed each of our regional offices to determine the best way to handle it."

Robinson, whose firm represents employers in numerous

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Use proper procedures when loading and unloading equipment.



OSHA-related disputes, says it's important that employers heed OSHA's warning for more than one reason. "Not only are the landscaping and commercial lawn care industries being targeted for reductions in injuries and illnesses, but OSHA is also continuing to place a strong emphasis on the safety of the Hispanic workers who are prevalent in these industries."

OSHA seeks help

If you're in the South, you may be one of more than 3,400 landscape/horticultural services employers who recently received a letter in English and Spanish from your OSHA area office. The letter, which cites examples of fatalities over the past three years, lists additional workplace hazards "employees may be exposed to in your industry," including lightning; noise; lack of protective gear for the eyes,

head and face; moving parts of machinery and equipment; and lack of high visibility vests when exposed to traffic. The letter also includes a Landscaping Hazard Alert flyer with photos of various hazards.

"We are asking these employers to help us," says Teresa Harrison, OSHA's Deputy Administrator for the Southeast. "Some of these (hazards) are easily avoidable. If we keep seeing an increase in fatalities, we might have to do a local 'special emphasis' inspection program. But hopefully, they will contact us or their state OSHA Consultation Program on what they can do to keep their workplaces safe."

This past February, the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) formally aligned with OSHA in an effort to improve safety among its members. "ALCA is setting up a task force to work

GIC features special OSHA course

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) is adding a ticketed OSHA course to the agenda of its Green Industry Conference (GIC), November 3–6, 2004, in Charlotte, NC.

This 10-hour course, divided into two parts, provides health and safety training for employees at all levels who work on or around construction sites. It includes practical information on OSHA construction standards, inspections, and the citation process, and emphasis will be placed on hazard identification, avoidance, control and prevention. Attendees will receive a handbook of the OSHA code of federal regulations, and participants who successfully complete this course will receive a wallet-sized card from the OSHA Training Institute.

This seminar is made possible through sponsorship from CNA Commercial Insurance and through the ALCA STARS Safe Company Program ("Safety Training Achieves Remarkable Success"). Developed in partnership with CNA and in keeping with the recent alliance with OSHA, this safety program is designed to move the entire landscape industry toward safety excellence, and it encourages all landscape contractors to take workplace safety to the next level. There's no fee to participate in the program, and all landscape contractors are invited to become STARS members.

The first part of the OSHA course will be held from 1:00–6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 3, and the second part will be at the same time on Thursday, November 4. All members of the STARS program may participate in the OSHA course for free if they register on or before the September 15th early-bird deadline and for only \$50 after that date. For all others interested in participating in the OSHA course, the fee is \$250 if registered by the early-bird deadline and \$300 if not. Landscape contractors are encouraged to attend the OSHA seminar and to pledge to be a leader in safety excellence by joining the STARS program.

For more information about the STARS Safe Company Program, please contact the ALCA office at 800/395-2522 or visit the ALCA Web site at www.alca.org.

with OSHA and get a plan established to deliver safety programming in both Spanish and English," ALCA Board of Directors President Kurt Kluznik said. "There is no enforcement component to this. This is a safe way for an industry to

work with OSHA on training and education, outreach and promoting a dialogue with the agency." **LM**

— The author is a Belleville, WI-based agricultural/horticultural project consultant. She can be reached at bamu100@aol.com.

Inside the Owner's Head

BUSINESS PERSONALITY PROFILE

Johnette Taylor

► Roundtree Landscaping

BY JASON STAHL / Managing Editor

Johnette Taylor owns Roundtree Landscaping, a \$1.2 million full-service landscape company located in Dallas. Her company focuses on high-end residential design/build work (70%), but is aggressively growing its maintenance division. Taylor is a member of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America and participates in the JP Horizons' Owners' Network.

What's the weirdest request you've ever received from a client?

This one guy who owned a self-serve car wash wanted us to design an area where people could wash their dogs, as well as their cars. We decided the area should be put somewhere away from the cars where the dogs couldn't get hurt.

So this is why you got a landscape architecture degree, right?

Well, there were lots of reasons. I got my degree from Louisiana State University, and when I told my parents what I wanted to study, they had no idea what it was. I knew I wanted to do something creative, and I really loved the outdoors.

Did you always work for yourself?

No, I worked for two or three small companies before I started my own. I worked at a retail nursery, as a designer for another nursery and then I worked in design/build. I wasn't sure there was a great future with the design/build company I was working for, and I was getting mar-

ried. So I didn't want to stay in that job and not know my future was secure and drag my husband into that. He encouraged me to start my own company, because if I didn't at that point and found a stable job elsewhere and liked it, I'd probably never leave that job.

What was it like as a woman trying to start a business in what was and remains a male-dominated industry?

A woman doing this 20 years ago was unusual. I remember the banks wouldn't talk to me unless my husband was with me. Even my insurance agent said, "You just get your husband to come down and sign for this stuff." When I interview potential employees, I'm sensitive about what to look for. Most of the guys who work for me don't mind that I'm a woman. Just by happenstance, two of our other managers are women now, so top management is now all-female.

How has your role changed?

Over the last couple of years, I've been able to step away from day-to-day production and manage the business more, but I'm still heavily involved in sales. I've tried to keep growth slow while I was learning so the company didn't get away from me. We've also refined our market over the last three or four years, dropping some of our larger commercial accounts.



Sounds like you must have a training program in place, too.

Yes, we're focusing heavily on training now. The training is aimed at getting all employees from top to bottom to understand what they have to accomplish. That way, on any given day when things go wrong, they can get right back on track and not mess up a whole day.

What do you do to snag new business?

One of the things we do is work with top realtors and give them gift certificates offering free design consultation or one month's free maintenance to give to their clients. That gives us a month to sell our other services to them, and if we do a good job, we could get a long-term client. We want to grab new clients before anyone else does.

In an episode of "The Sopranos," a mobster beats up a landscape contractor who invades his own company's turf. You wouldn't handle the competition like this, would you?

I'm thinking no. I'm friendly with my competitors and know them well. That's the great thing about JP Horizons. Everyone is from across the country and is willing to share information. If I look at a job and I think a competitor is better suited for it, I'll tell them about it. It's better to be up front about these things. If I take on a job I'm not right for, I lose, the client loses and the competitor loses.

— Roundtree Landscaping participates in JP Horizons' People Solutions programs. To learn more visit www.jp Horizons.com or call 877/574-5267.

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The support and encouragement of management and fellow workers opened my eyes to a new career.



A-team's motto: 'get it done'

BY JAMES KINDLER

In my five plus years of life in the real world, I've put time in as an excavation laborer for a small company, worked in a maintenance department, bartended and, for a spell, even drove a Zamboni at a hockey rink. It wasn't until I was hired by Cole Landscaping and Irrigation, Inc., near

Boston, in 2003 that I found myself working in an organization that embodies the kind of dedication and determination that I was seeking.

Sure, I experienced both the ups and downs in my first season in the landscape business. It's not easy work. But the training, support and motivation provided by the management and by my fellow workers opened my eyes to new career opportunities.

Racing the weather

I'm sure many of you feel the same way, so let me tell you about one particular job to help describe what I mean. This was our final large job last season, building a 140-ft. Versa Lock wall, laying down two brick patio style walkways and grooming what would ultimately become a picturesque backyard landscape.

The motto for our construction team all season long had been "Getting It Done," and it served as the rallying cry for this job and for our crew — Teddy Mendez,

Dan Birmingham, foreman Ralph Peters and myself.

New England in late fall usually means wind, rain and cold, and that's what we got. But we remained in high spirits. In fact, when the cold rain poured down while Teddy and I spread straw to start the project we both started laughing like crazy. This was part of the job and we didn't care. Through the hot summer the four of us worked together and humorously referring to ourselves as the "A-Team." We kept that sense

of teamwork in spite of the horrible weather during that last job. At one point, we even got our Bobcat stuck in the soup, but even that didn't slow us down...not much anyway. We kept at it until we put the final cap on the wall, graded and hydroseeded the property and planted the last shrub in the front yard — in the snow.

A great feeling

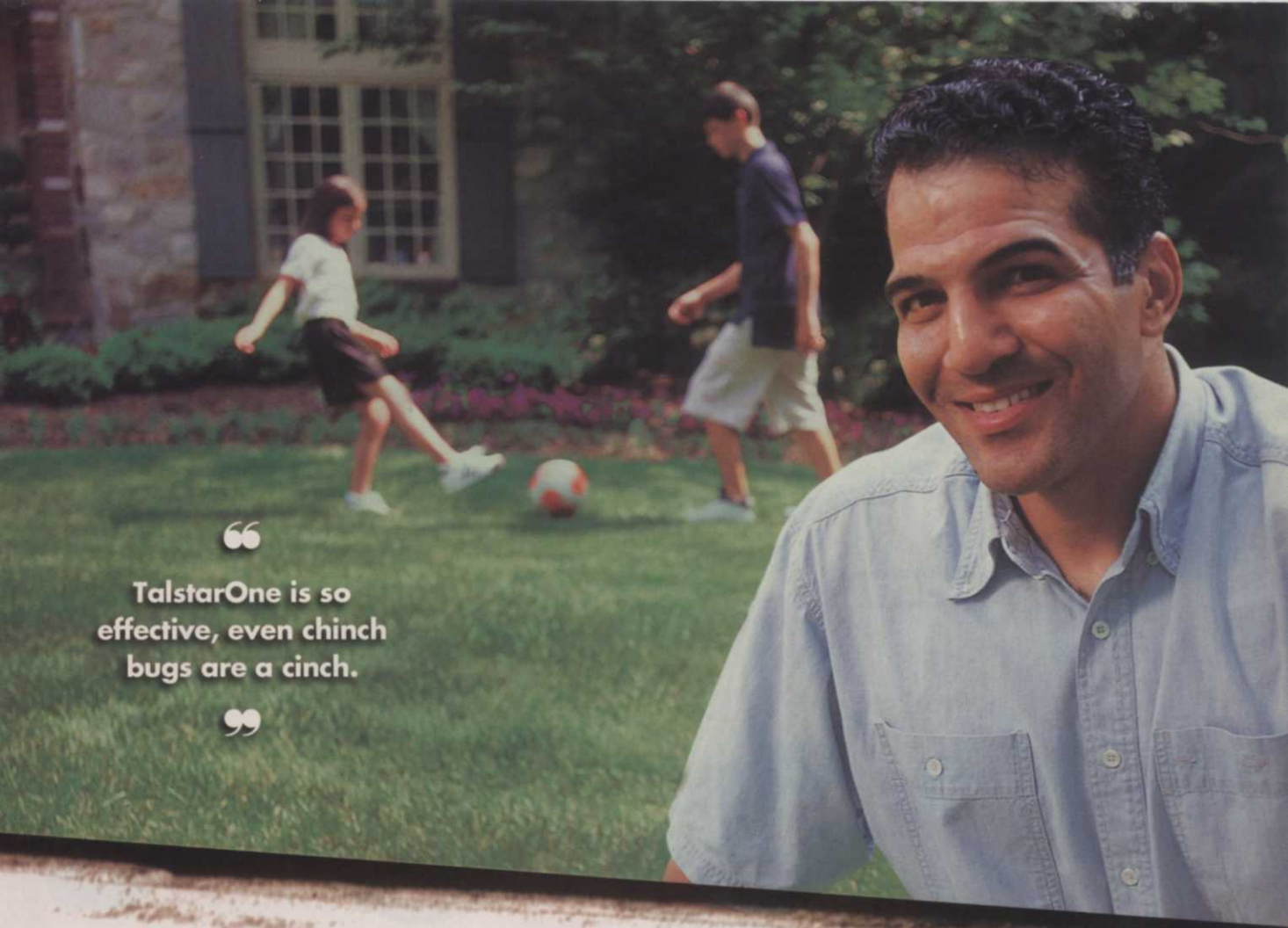
We were proud of that job. We had worked as a team. We

knew that each one of us had a role in getting it done, and doing it well. We knew that if we performed to our own potential, then the task at hand would be completed and the client would be pleased.

I won't forget what I learned that summer, my first in the industry, when our motto was "Getting It Done" — and we always did.

— The author is just finishing his second season with Cole Landscaping and Irrigation, and owner Greg Cole reports he's doing just fine.





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2 On the right track

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For more information contact ClubCar at 800/800-1227 or www.clubcar.com / circle no. 267

3 Enhanced blower

Schiller-Pfeiffer, Inc., manufacturer of Little Wonder and Mantis landscaping and gardening power equipment, has enhanced the design of its Little Wonder high-output blowers. This fall, the blowers will feature 12-in. rear pneumatic tires and the gauge of steel used for the front cover and intake panel will be reduced to decrease unit weight and enhance maneuverability. The blower line includes four powerful models: the 8- and 10-hp models feature Briggs & Stratton Intek IC engines, and the 9- and 13-hp models feature Honda GX engines.

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Careful, professional training of your crew members is rewarding but not always the right solution.



Is this a training problem?

BY HARRY SMITH

Do any of the following scenarios sound familiar?

In the last six months, two zero-turn mowing units suffered catastrophic hydraulic system failure because an operator "topped up" the hydraulic reservoir with diesel fuel.

One of your longtime customers has called twice in the last month to complain that his driveway wasn't blown off and grass was crushed into ugly green streaks on the concrete by your departing truck.

Your technician reports that another walk mower engine seized because the oil level went unchecked.

Non-training solutions?

What are some solutions to these aggravations? Do you need to spend more time training your operators? Do not be too quick to assume that training is the answer to every problem. As a former technical trainer for a large international equipment manufacturer, I can admit to "throwing" training at more than a few problems that could have been solved with cheaper, more effective remedies. When your education and job title include the word "training," then training seems to be the solution. The old adage that everything looks like a nail when your only tool is a hammer applies to training, too.

The first problem with the zero-turn units was a very real one encountered by one of my former students. He had a very elegant non-training solution—he found a locking cap for the hydraulic reservoir. He keeps the only key in his toolbox. In this instance, it

was simpler and more effective to keep the operators out of the hydraulic systems than to train them to correctly identify and check the reservoir.

Job aid for first aid

The second problem was also solved with a non-training solution. A job aid was provided to each crew for each customer. Job aid sounds like an exotic and expensive tool, but in reality it was merely a laminated checklist tailored to each account.

If you're at Joe Jones' property, then pull Mr. Jones' checklist and mark off each required operation with a grease pencil.

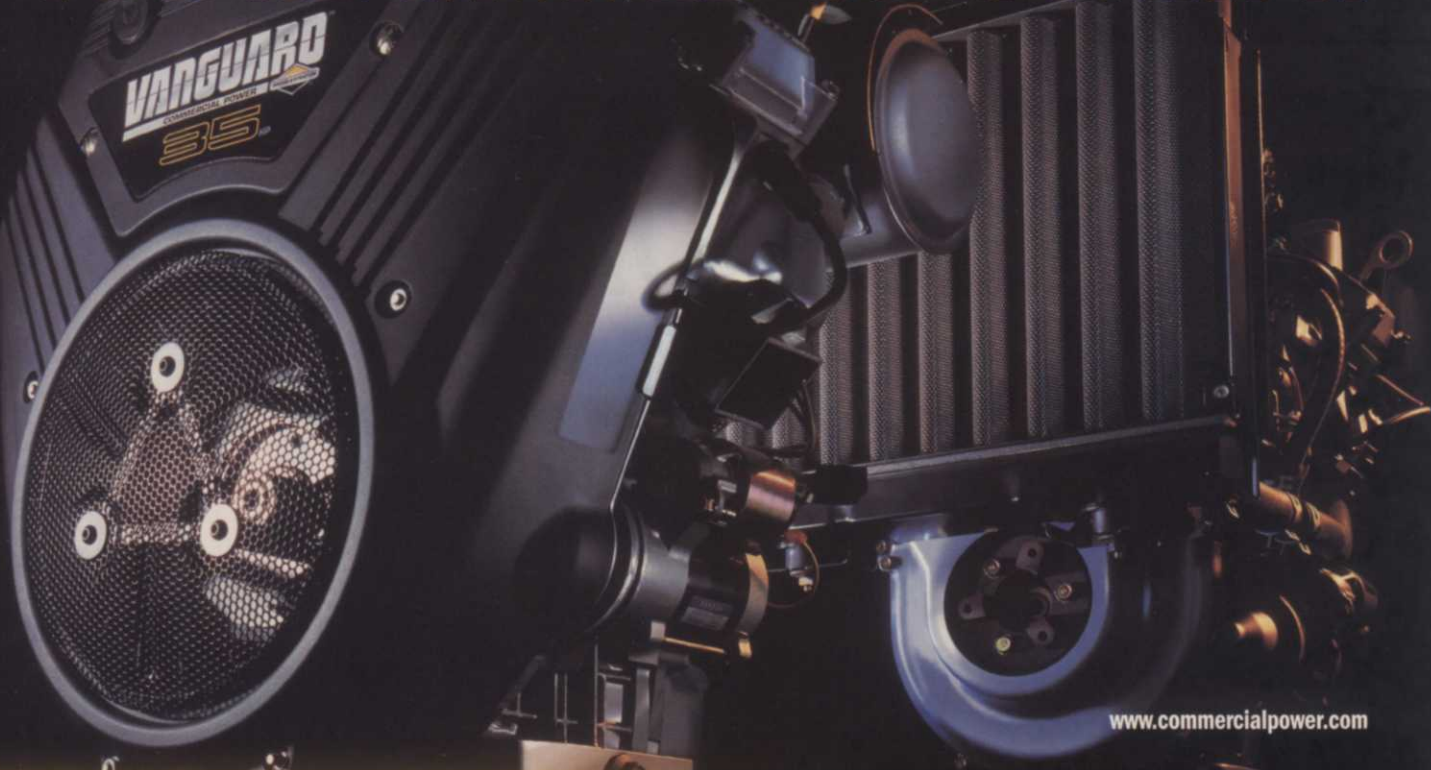
The supervisor checks the checklists each day and erases the pencil marks so the list can be reused. A space is provided at the bottom to add new or one-time services.

The third item about the walk mower can be approached several ways. You can spend more time (or some time, for the first time) training the operators to check the oil. Alternately, you could create a job aid (another checklist) that's attached to the mower or a clipboard to insure that all pre-operation checks, like correct oil level, are made before the equipment is used each time. In this instance, be sure to determine what's cheaper, faster and more effective.

Training is necessary. Careful, professional training of your crew members is very rewarding but not always the right solution. Good training and good luck.

— The author is the turf equipment professor at Lake City Community College, Lake City, FL. He can be reached at smithh@lakecitycc.edu.

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Circle No. 114

The facts on fertigation

All you need to know about fertigation in a 10 question & answer session

BY JASON STAHL / Managing Editor

Fertigation has been used in agriculture for more than 40 years, but it's still a relatively new concept in the landscape industry. Therefore, some landscape professionals are still sketchy about what it is and how it can benefit their business. To clear up the issue, we posed 10 questions to Dave Cross, President of Fertigator, one of the leading fertigation companies in the United States. The following questions and answers will give you a good idea of how to make it work for you.

LM: What is fertigation?

DC: Fertigation is the process of applying fertilizer through an automatic, in-ground irrigation system. Ideally, true fertigation is applying small, consistent amounts of fertilizer continuously through an irrigation system to achieve the ultimate benefit.

LM: How much does a landscape or lawn care pro have to invest to add this service?

DC: The cost would run from \$150 to \$300 including all accessories on a residential ac-



The addition of a fertigation system to a customer's property is hardly noticeable.

count. On the low-end, you're getting some type of passive fertigation device that uses the irrigation system's flow to push the fertilizer into the line. On the high-end, you're getting an injection-type device that's electronically activated by a control mechanism that lets the injector know how much fertilizer to apply, and it can be varied by irrigation zone.

LM: How much can an installer expect to make by installing this type of system?

DC: The potential profit is \$150 to \$300 per installation. But the real profit potential lies in the ability to sell the fertilizer needed on a continual basis to the customer. On a typical landscape, the profit

potential for selling this fertilizer is \$50 to \$150 a year. You might sell the fertilizer for \$100 and make \$50, but you're only paying the cost of delivering it to the customer. Then either you or the customer refills the container.

LM: Is this service a better fit for the lawn care provider or landscape contractor?

DC: The business that can benefit the most is a lawn care company that's already going to the property to provide fertilization on a regular basis. They already have a customer who wants that service, and they have the infrastructure built in to service those accounts regularly. They also have the route density, serving many customers in a small area.

LM: What would be the cost to the lawn care provider's client?

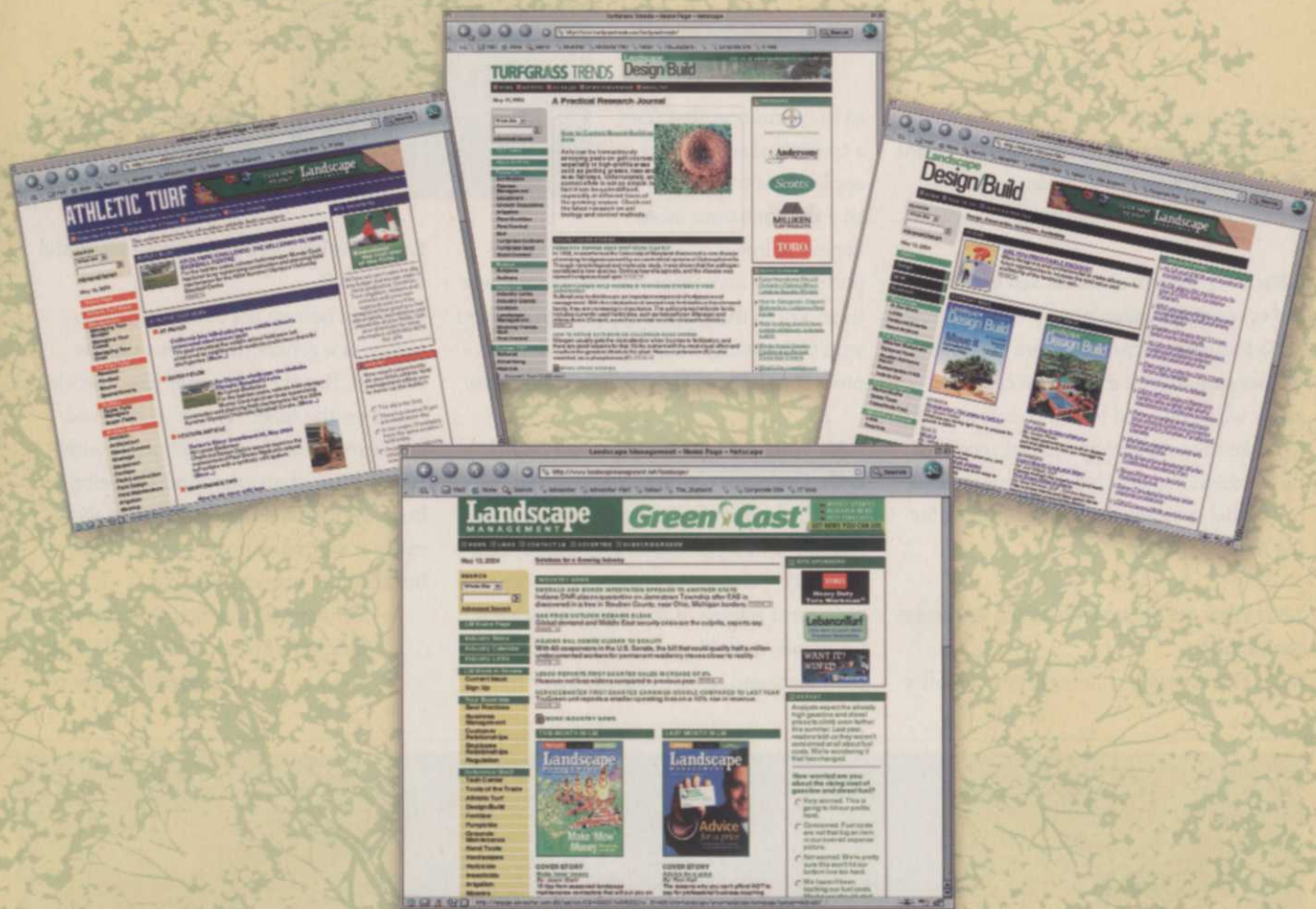
DC: The range of installation price is \$300 to \$600. Some companies are installing these systems at a more reduced price, though, just to gain a customer that they can sell fertilizer to each year and get their money back through an ongoing revenue stream.

LM: Do you need any specialized training to install this system?

DC: Anyone who has installed irrigation

continued on page 60

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Landscape
MANAGEMENT

continued from page 58

systems or other service systems won't need specialized training. But it's important to learn how to install the system properly.

LM: Is the system an easier sell to commercial or residential clients?

DC: Residential customers are an easier sell because they're easier to access. You know who you need to communicate with to make the sale. In commercial accounts, the decision maker is harder to reach. Plus, residential customers are often looking for the next cool thing.

LM: What are the benefits to the landscape contractor?

DC: This is new technology they can offer

to the consumer that does a traditional service and applies that technology to give the consumer more benefit at lower cost. There's also an opportunity to save labor and therefore lower their cost to maintain these properties. You won't necessarily make less visits to the properties but you'll spend less time there.

LM: What are the benefits to the client?

DC: The main one is agronomic. You take the human factor out and reduce the chance of misapplication and damaging a property. Fertigation results in a more consistent release of fertilizer that's ideal for plants, and 90 percent of it will get to the plants and not be washed away by



The real profit potential lies in selling fertilizer refills to the customer every year.

heavy rain. Plus, it's safer and more environmentally friendly.

LM: Why isn't fertigation more successful or popular?

DC: We believe it's because the consumer as a general rule doesn't know about it. But the consumer likes the idea based on the feedback we've received, and it registers as a good concept with them. Most companies don't develop a business model around it adequately to make it a thriving profit center; they just install a few systems. **LM**

— For more information on Fertigator call 866/344-2867 or visit their Web site at

www.fertigator.com.

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Landscape MANAGEMENT

Communication tools

BY CURT HARLER

Buying tips

- ▶ Licenses increase costs, but guarantee a private radio channel
- ▶ Unlicensed radios typically have distance limitations and anyone can use the channel
- ▶ It might be cheaper to give a handful of key people cell phones, rather than buy a radio system
- ▶ Know your required coverage area...wide areas will require licensed technology
- ▶ Nothing said on a radio is private or confidential
- ▶ Decide between fixed (in-truck) or mobile receivers
- ▶ Vibrating units are nice, especially when around a noisy environment like mowers and blowers
- ▶ Check battery life between charges

Xplore Technologies ▶

The rugged and wireless Microsoft Windows Tablet PC system works in harsh environments and stands up to harsh abuse like constant vibration or being dropped. The iX104 family has built-in wireless, docking stations, hot keys for specific tablet functions. The unit also has an optically enhanced indoor/outdoor lighting display. It also weighs just 4.5 lbs. with battery.

For more information contact Xplore at 888/449-7567 or info@xploretech.com / circle no. 259

Motorola

The LCS 2000 is a compact mobile analog radio that offers both local and wide-area coverage capabilities. A single software package eliminates complicated buying decisions. It's compatible with company's LTS 2000 portable radio series and allows nine pre-programmed telephone number interconnects. A range of models are available, including: 15 watt, 800 MHz; or 12 watt, 900 MHz.

For more information contact Motorola at 888/567-7347 or www.motorola.com / circle no. 260

Relm/Uniden

Keypad programmable, the RPV599A+ allows remote programming and interaction with irrigation and other computerized systems. The basic unit is a 99-channel radio that operates in the 148-174 MHz



range. It offers 5 watts RF power and tone paging. The 1500 mA battery has a 10-hour life range and a rapid rate conditioning charger to keep it going. Other available options include an external speaker microphone, multi-bay charger and leather carrying case.

For more information contact Relm/Uniden at 800/821-2900 or www.relm.com / circle no. 261

Maxon

Maxon's Legacy ML-3200 series offers 45 watts of RF power on 32 channels. It comes available in both VHF (3215) and UHF (3245) versions. The units include audio compander, public address mode, adjustable squelch control and VOX operation. One special feature is coverage of NOAA weather channels. Hands-free operation makes it safe to use in traffic.

For more information contact Maxon at 816/241-8500 or www.maxonamerica.com / circle no. 262

Kenwood

The new TK-2200/3200 ProTalk radio from

Kenwood Communications offers 2 watts transmit power. The units are available in 2- and 8-channel models. Both come with internal VOX, so radios are hands-free ready. Radio has "Super Lock" feature to prevent accidental channel changes. Both come packaged with accessories such as charger, belt clip and 14 hour NiMH battery pack.

For more information contact Kenwood at 800/950-5005 or www.kenwood.net/ circle no. 264



dust, shock, vibration, blowing rain, humidity and salt fog. Handset features a rubber encasing and sculpted grip for comfort, as well as a brushed chrome lens guard. Phone's interior lining and seals protect

against exposure to rain, sleet and snow.

For more information contact Nextel at 888/566-6111 or www.nextelpartners.com/ circle no. 265

Midland

Get up to a 7-mile range with the Midland GRMS G223 portable radios. Sold in pairs, they operate on 2 watts of power and have 22 channels. The units are water resistant and have a three-year warranty. They work with all FRS/GMRS. Other special features include keylock, roger beep tone, scan feature, high power/low power option, durable belt clip, auto squelch and an optional battery pack and drop-in charger. The units use four AAA batteries.

For more information contact Midland at 816/241-8500 or www.midlandradio.com/ circle no. 263

Nextel

Service from Nextel's Nationwide Direct Connect is over the largest guaranteed all-digital wireless network in the country — serving 293 of the top 300 U.S. markets. The company recommends the GPS-enabled Motorola i305 phone for this application. It resists



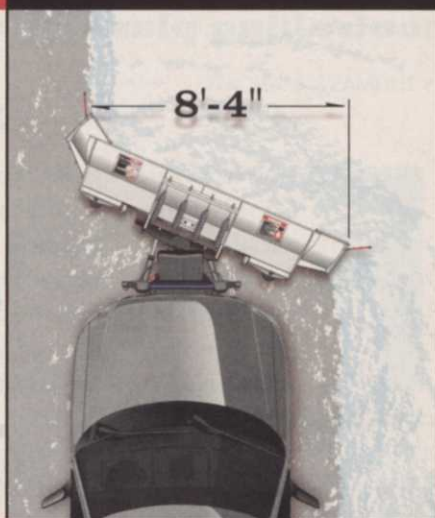
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Circle 130

See ya, slugs

Choosing the right brand of molluscicide is crucial in controlling plant-killing slugs

BY THOMAS J. BRANCATO

Few creatures are less welcome than slugs and snails. Indeed, many people find them disgusting. Not

only do they leave shiny silver "slime" trails through gardens and over pavers and sidewalks, they very often chew and damage landscape plants.

Slugs and snails like shady, damp areas. And even during dry months, the irrigation that we apply to landscapes often entices slugs and snails to migrate from other properties and attack our blooming plants.

Overcome 'slugphobia'

Not to fret; you can protect your clients' landscapes and help them overcome their "slugphobia" because there are many brands of molluscicides. Your job as a horticulture professional, however, is to apply a product that not only controls slugs and snails but can also withstand damp conditions created by natural precipitation and man-made irri-

gation. You'll also want to use one that doesn't harm beneficial creatures such as carabid beetles, earthworms or bees. A good choice is products containing the ingredient metaldehyde.

Border treatments are the best way to prevent slugs and snails from relocating to your landscape. Timing is also critical. Make applications directly after precipitation and irrigation, or at dusk. After the application, avoid overwatering the landscape to extend the efficacy of the molluscicide.

Frame the perimeter of a landscape with an evenly spread professional grade bait, such as Amvac or Orcal. Don't allow the product to pile up or clump. The treatment will stop pests in neighboring properties from attacking seedlings and/or plants with succulent foliage, such as ornamentals and hostas. Consider an extra application to areas that hold concealed water, such as mulch piles, tall grass and even the underside of decks. Slugs and snails thrive in these cool,



damp areas. Once they're established, they multiply quickly. For example, garden slugs can lay up to 500 eggs and live for up to six years, leaving landscapers devastated by their damage.

Plant selection key

Finally, consider incorporating slug or snail-proof plants into a landscape, especially if locating them in areas where these pests have been previously plentiful. Slugs ignore ever-

greens and hard-leaved plants, such as rhododendrons.

By combining this tactic with a precise treatment method, professionals can combat slugs and snails before they take over a landscape. This method will benefit the landscapes that professionals are paid to take care of, as well as the horticulture professional's bottom line. **LM**

— The author is director of marketing Metaldehyde, Lonza Inc. Visit www.metaldehyde.com.



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TECHNOLOGY REAL ANSWERS TO REAL CHALLENGES

An annual chore

The Atlanta Botanical Garden found the right plant mix to keep its annual displays looking good

Amanda Briner's staff goes into a planting frenzy twice a year at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. Each spring and fall, nine staff horticulturists switch out 40 to 50 three- to four-foot pots holding hundreds of flowering annual plants to complement the Garden's formal outdoor plantings.

Problem: intensive plantings

"It's quite an undertaking," says grounds manager Briner, who joined the Garden nearly three years ago as a horticulturist. "We do it all in two and a half weeks, so we really have to work fast."

Briner manages 30 acres of outdoor gardens, including 15 acres of formal gardens and 15 acres of natural woodlands. The formal plantings feature specialty flower gardens such as the herb, Japanese and rose gardens, in addition to the 5-acre Woodland Shade Garden.

Solution: it's in the mix

"Since it's critical that we have reliable displays, our plants have to perform well no matter what the weather," explains Briner. "We start all of our plants with Fafard 3B



professional mix. For us, 3B has a great ratio of perlite to the mixture itself. It retains the moisture, so you aren't watering it several times a day, which we obviously don't have the time to do."

At switch-over time, Briner orders eight pallets of the mix. Her horticulturists layer materials in the pots — first a layer of 3B, followed by a layer of osmocote, then another layer of 3B. They immediately plant spring or fall annuals and water thoroughly to get them off to a good start.

Briner likes the fact that the material contains Nitroform Slow-Release Nitrogen right in the mix. "We do mass plantings, so there's usually some time before we get back around to fertilize the plants," she notes. "Nitroform gives them a boost right at first. It also works really well with our additional fertilizers.

"Other commercial mixes have lots of things mixed into them that we might not need," she continues. "But we know how

▲ The annuals in 50 of these pots are switched out twice a year.

to cater to our plants individually. We simply want a good, basic mix that allows us to customize from there. Fafard is the industry standard and Nitroform helps make it so reliable."

Family-owned business

A third-generation family-owned business, Fafard, Inc. sells 40 standard mixes and more than 700 custom-mixed professional media products. With sales representation in 42 states and 13 foreign countries, Fafard markets primarily to the professional greenhouse industry, though the retail market share is increasing. Steve Jarahian, regional sales manager of the firm's manufacturing facilities in Anderson, SC, and Apopka, FL, joined the company in 1979.

"Back then, I helped formulate, bag, load and sell," says Jarahian, who is also district sales manager for the southeast and South-

west for parent company, Conrad Fafard Inc. (CFI). "Fafard 3B is our bread-and-butter bark mix."

The bark-based mix also contains peat moss, perlite and vermiculite. "Everything that has at least 25 percent bark has some Nitroform in the bag," says Dr. Hugh Poole, Director of Technical Services and Quality Control for CFI. "You can't have bark in the mix without introducing a large population of microbes."

Poole explains that once the mix goes into the bag, microbes begin consuming the nitrogen. "Then, if you planted a plant in the mix, the microbes would compete with the plant for whatever nitrogen the grower added," says Poole, a former assistant professor at The Ohio State University.

Controlled-release nitrogen

Nitroform, a product of Nu-Gro Technologies, Inc., is a controlled-release nitrogen fertilizer with a guaranteed analysis of 38-0-0. Approximately two-thirds of Nitroform's nitrogen is insoluble in water and needs microbial activity to be released. The remaining one-third of the nitrogen is water-soluble.

Microbes use carbon and nitrogen in a process that transforms them into organic nitrogen. They consume it as energy and food and, as they die, they release nitrogen to the plants in the growing season.

"The bark material in a bag of 3B has plenty of carbon," says Poole. "When you add nitrogen and water, the mixture more or less incubates, and microbial activity increases under those conditions. It's just like making yeast bread. When you put the mixture in the pot, the nitrogen is still there and the plant can utilize it."

"We're looking to develop formulas in the future that best serve the new lifestyle," adds Jarahian. "A few years ago, we had formulas that dried out readily. Now, we put in polymers with water-holding capacities 400 times their weight. Our formulas



keep improving. Everyday I get new raw materials with potential for use in our mixes. We're constantly searching for better products." **LM**

— For more information about Nitroform or Fafard 3B call 800/268-2806 or visit www.nu-gro.com.

◀ Amanda Briner starts all of her container plants with a bark-based mix.



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Circle 132

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Controlling nutsedge

How do you clear nutsedge out of a lawn? One of our customers mentioned that they had a few in their lawn one year and pulled them to avoid them spreading by seeding. But now there are many in the lawn — why? What is the best way to control nutsedge?

— OH

There are many species of nutsedge, and most likely in your area it's yellow nutsedge. It's found throughout North America in low lying areas of landscaped turf with poor drainage. Yellow nutsedge is a grass-like sedge with erect, triangular-shaped stems that are yellow-green in color. Leaves are also yellow-green with a thick mid-vein.

Nutsedge plants grow taller than desirable grasses, often grow in clumps and become objectionable and aesthetically undesirable. In addition to maintaining healthy turfgrass, hand weeding is one of the best cultural options because it helps prevent further seed development. However, hand weeding may only remove the top part of surface-rooted plants, leaving behind the underground plant parts. Nutsedge often produces underground rhizomes and small nut-like tubers at the tip of its roots. New plants sprout from the perennial tubers and rhizomes in late spring and early summer as soil temperatures increase.

It's also important to know that the weed seeds can remain viable in soil for many years. They can present a problem when the desirable turfgrass isn't aggressively competing for the same water, light and nutrients. Advise your customer to water more infrequently and more deeply.

Lawn-applied pre- or post-emergent,

grassy or broadleaf herbicides won't help manage this troublesome weed. Nutsedge requires specific selective herbicides. Consider using herbicides such as DSMA, MSMA, Basagran or Manage. Some of these herbicides may temporarily discolor desirable turfgrass. For better performance of these products, don't mow the turfgrass for three or four days before and after applications. Also, don't irrigate the area for eight hours after an application of one of these herbicides. They work best when applied to young weeds.

To improve activity, add a crop oil concentrate to Basagran at a rate of 0.75 oz/1,000 sq. ft. Similarly, for Manage herbicide, add a nonionic surfactant at a rate of one to two quarts per 100 gallons of spray solution. Generally, two treatments are sufficient; however, more treatments may be applied for complete control.

Since the organic arsenicals such as DSMA, MSMA and Basagran control only the above-ground portion of yellow nutsedge, consider using Manage herbicide, which can be translocated to the underground tubers and possibly provide complete control of the plant.

Bark beetle management

A contractor in our area mentioned that Merit can be used to manage bark beetles on pines. Is this true? If yes, what can we expect as far as control? What other management options should we consider?

— IL

More than likely, the beetles you're referring to are Ips engraver beetles. Unfortunately, Merit isn't labeled for managing Ips beetles at the present time. A Bayer Envi-

ronmental Sciences representative mentioned that they're conducting several research projects dealing with bark beetle management and hope to have the results by the end of the year.

One option would be to use a product such as Astro insecticide. Apply Astro treatments to trunk surfaces when adults are active. Overwintering beetles begin emerging as soon as daytime temperatures consistently reach 50 to 60°F, but some may emerge early in February on warm days. Before you begin treatments, examine the pines for any Ips beetle activity. If you see the holes on a tree, it's too late to treat because the insect has already emerged from that tree and has moved on to other trees nearby. In this case, remove infested trees promptly and treat nearby pines as needed. Engraver beetles (*Ips* sp.) may require several treatments during the season.

In addition to insecticide treatment, reduce any stress that would predispose the plants to these opportune pests where feasible. Drought is one of the major contributing factors. Therefore, water, mulch and fertilize as needed to help improve plant health and monitor for any other chewing or sucking pests and diseases. Reports indicate that healthy trees are usually not attacked.

Read and follow label specifications for best results.

— *The author is Manager of Research and Technical Development for the Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, OH. He can be reached at 330/673-9511 or brao@davey.com.*

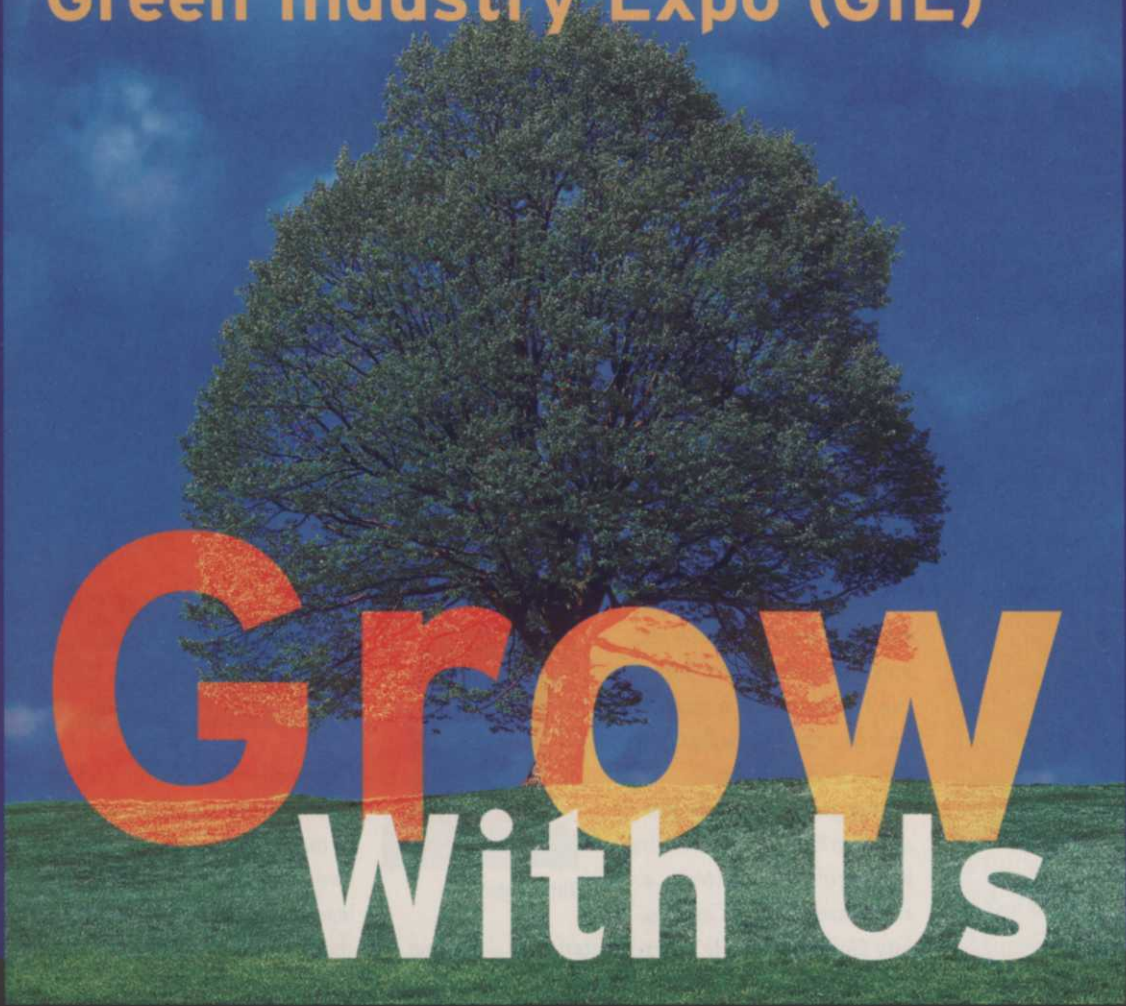
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Western Michigan University

2003 PGMS Honor Award Winner for School or University Grounds

Property at a glance

- Location: Kalamazoo, MI
- Grounds Supervisor: Tim Holysz
- Category: School or University Grounds
- Total budget: N/A
- Year site built: 1903
- Acres of turf: 175
- Acres of woody ornamentals: 50
- Acres of display beds: 2
- Total paved area: 100 acres
- Total man-hours/week: 2,080

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ 30,000 students
- ▶ Average yearly snowfall of 73 inches
- ▶ Urban soils and climate

Project checklist

Completed in last two years:

- ▶ Trolley
- ▶ VandeGiessen Walk
- ▶ Wood Hall "x" walk

On the job

- ▶ 52 full-time staff, 15 students, 28 licensed pesticide applicators

Tim Holysz remembers the late '60s and early '70s with fondness. He and his brother made a killing mowing and trimming lawns, and he recalls how satisfied he felt after completing a job.

Today, as Director of Landscape Services for Western Michigan University, he's still improving green spaces for that satisfying feeling. "Hearing the oohs and aahs from people, getting the pats on the back, and having them ask, 'How can I make my own landscape look like this?' is really what I'm in it for," he says.

Eliciting those oohs and aahs has been a lot more challenging of late for Holysz, a Kalamazoo Valley Community College grad. He's seen his staff reduced by 15 positions. "As a manager, you have to look at everything and prioritize things and do the best you can," he says.

With an average snowfall of 73 inches a year, snow removal is a big priority. Holysz says he's seen as much as 20 inches fall in 24 hours. And with 30,000 students roaming the campus, snow removal becomes an around-the-clock job.



Tim Holysz

In order to schedule and plan maintenance activities, each area of campus is classified as a one, two or three. Lee Honors College is an example of a Class

One area that requires intensive care including perennial care, push mowing and automatic irrigation.

Holysz says his grounds staff's job is all about adding eye appeal, like upgrading the high traffic entrance to Wood Hall or planting perennial beds near the library. "We're really in the marketing business," he says. "We're adding pizzazz to get more students because that's what we're after."

Editors' note: *Landscape Management* is the exclusive sponsor of the Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards for outstanding management of residential, commercial and institutional landscapes. The 2004 winners will be named at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. For more information on the 2003 awards, contact PGMS at: 720 Light St. • Baltimore, MD 21230



This bronze sculpture of WMU's mascot, a Bronco, and the Wood Hall Courtyard are two examples of areas that require the efforts of a true grounds professional.



WMU's campus features both high maintenance gardens and large areas of turf populated by mature oak trees.

Products

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Pulltarps Mfg. introduces the Smart Switch family of tarp motor controllers. Smart Switch relay kits are available in seven models that can operate any brand of tarp motor. Choose from outside the cab, inside the cab and wireless remote control models for 12- and 24-volt applications. Smart Switch improves tarp system performance by reducing the length of heavy gauge wire that's required to operate the system. More dependable than standard switch panels, the Smart Switch uses a low amperage switch to control a high amperage relay to the motor. The Smart Switch with wireless remote is the easiest to install and can be operated from up to 150 ft. away.

For more information contact Pulltarps at 800/368-3075 or www.pulltarps.com / circle no. 250

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The irriGuard system is designed to precisely monitor temperature and rainfall from a remote location anywhere inside the home or in the yard, and automatically disable the irrigation system when watering is unnecessary. It's compatible with virtually all sprinkler timer or controller brands, and it has combined rain/freeze shut-off capabilities for any sprinkler system. It also has indicators for power and lock-out status. A wireless in-home display unit acts as the user interface — a portable, wireless display console designed for in-home and outdoor use.

For more information contact irriGuard at www.irriguard.com / circle no. 251

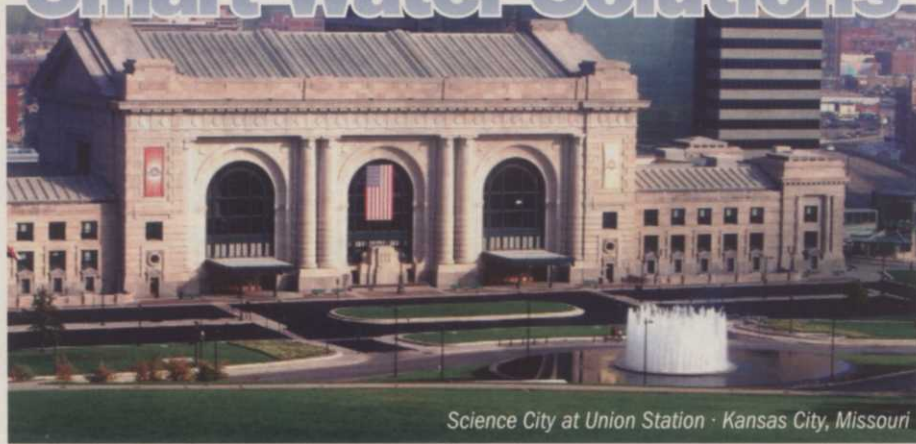


Walk this way

Aptly named Walker by Walker is a compact, mid-size unit powered by a 15-hp Kawasaki engine. Five 36-in. to 56-in. side-discharge and

a 42- or 52-in. mulching deck is available. The Walker accepts the same full-floating decks used on the rider, and has the same deck tilt-up function. Two HydroGear zero-turn trans-

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ANDY SCOTT
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axles let operators trim close to edges and zigzag handily. Simple, forward-speed control eliminates thumb locks.

For more information contact Walker at 970/221-5614 or www.walkermowers.com / circle no. 252

Let it snow ►

The Ultra Series is Snow Wolf's toughest snow plow specifically for the skid-steer, and now it has a tough two-year parts and labor warranty. Available in seven widths from 6- to 9-ft., the blade is specifically designed to scoop snow rather than push it, sending the snow rolling and moving it off the blade quickly to keep the skid-steer in control of a heavy load. A dual-pivot, A-frame construction allows the blade to oscillate, following the contours of uneven ground without scraping. It also has the ability

to apply full down pressure — to lift the front wheels of the skid steer and use the machine's full weight on the blade — allowing clean clearing of ice and packed snow.

For more information contact Snow Wolf at 800/905-2265 / circle no. 253



Seeding is believing

Finn Corp. introduces the T75 HydroSeeder that provides another option between the small tank sizes and larger trailer-mounted models. It weighs in as a trailer unit with a fully loaded weight of less than 10,000 GVW, satisfying the ideal towing requirements of a 1/2-ton or 1-ton pickup truck without a commercial license. The T75 has a 700-gal. working capacity tank covering 8,700 to 10,500 sq. ft. per load with spray distances up to 150 ft. from the discharge gun. Other features include a hydraulically controlled paddle agitator and liquid recirculation; agitator controls at each end of tank for operator convenience; and a large toolbox in the hitch for storing hoses and nozzles.

For more information contact Finn at 800/543-7166 or www.finncorp.com / circle no. 254

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Circle 134

Products

Spray away ▶

Shindaiwa's new SP 150 one-gal. ergonomically designed hand-held sprayer features a UV protected polyethylene tank, liquid levels in

U.S. gallons, Imperial gallons and liters, and a large, independent filler opening. The pump handle doubles as a carrying handle, and the spray wand material is reinforced PVC de-



signed with multiple channels. The SP 150 joins a complete family of five manual sprayers ranging from the one-gal. SP150 to the five-gal. SP518 backpack sprayer.

For more information contact Shindaiwa at 800/521-7733 or www.shindaiwa.com / circle no. 255

Get the edge

Maruyama's ED2320 handheld edger has a fully-supported, heavy duty flex steel drive shaft and rugged steel clutch drum that's

continued on page 76

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Circle 136



THE GLOVES ARE OFF.

Because of activists, extremists and misinformed politicians, consumers are questioning whether the products and resources (such as water) used to care for their lawns, landscapes and other green spaces are a waste—or a harm to the environment. Yes, legislation and regulations have been throwing the green industry some rough punches. And we're about to start fighting back.

Project EverGreen is an alliance of green industry associations, companies and professionals dedicated to educate the public, protect the green industry and grow our business. It was created in response to unfavorable regulations in many parts of the United States and Canada. If the services our industry professionals offer are restricted, regulated or made illegal, everyone will lose revenue and customers.

Help Project EverGreen educate consumers on the environmental, economic and lifestyle benefits of green spaces. To make a contribution, volunteer your time or find out more information, call **1-877-758-4835** or visit **www.projectevergreen.com**.



— PROJECT —
EverGreen

Products

continued from page 74

designed to withstand the stress of commercial operation without breakage or failure. The CARB-compliant machine has an open shield that allows greater visibility and, with the oversized guide-wheel, offers excellent control even on curves. Other features include a 22.5cc "CE" commercial engine, light weight of 14.6 lbs., great portability and maneuverability, and the same exacting standard as commercial-grade brushcutters.

For more information contact Maruyama at 253/735-7368 or www.maruyama-us.com / circle no. 256

No pressure ▲

Rain Bird Corp.'s Accessories Business Unit has introduced a new line of pressure regulating swing joints for rotors. The new Turf



Swing Joint with Pressure Regulating System (TSJ-PRS)

products are the first commercially available

inline pressure regulators designed

specifically for rotors. The new swing joints help maintain a constant, uniform pressure into the rotor regardless of how high the incoming pressure is or whether it's fluctuating. Preventing over-pressure conditions ensures optimal droplet size and eliminates misting, resulting in improved performance consistency and an increase in distribution uniformity.

For more information contact Rain Bird at www.rainbird.com / circle no. 257

Great mate

Jungle Jim's Accessory Products has done it again by developing a utility box that enables either the driver or the passenger to get out of the truck and have all of their equipment on their side of the trailer. The Trailer Mate can carry two blowers, two regular gas cans, two mix gas cans, one air tank, trimmer line and other accessories. The blowers and trimmers can be refueled, started and unloaded all from the resting position. The clearance enables the user to occupy the full space of the trailer floor by placing their mower or mowers under the apparatus.

For more information contact Jungle Jim at 888/844-5467 or www.junglejimsap.com / circle no. 258

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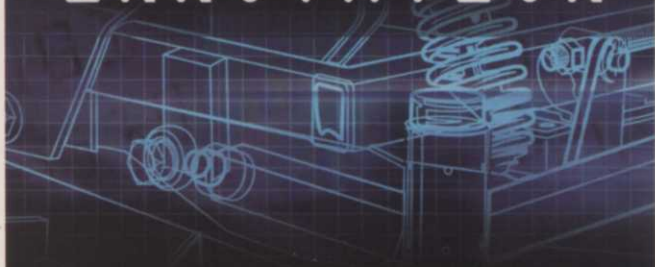
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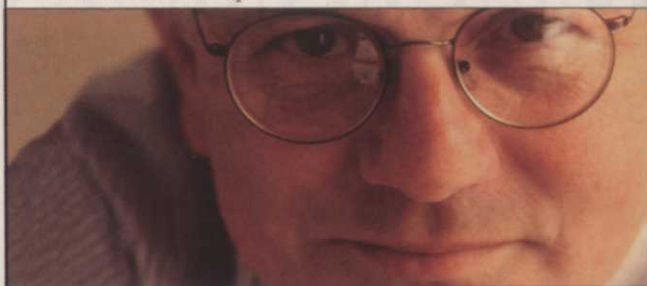
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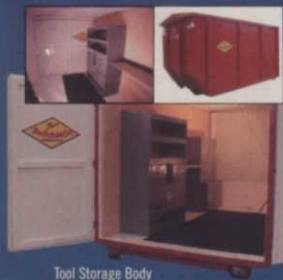
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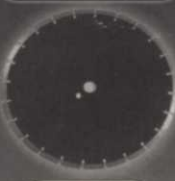
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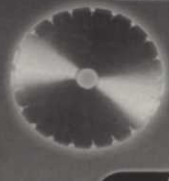
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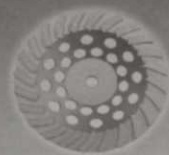
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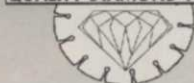
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304RS

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- 355 Extension Agents/Consultants for Horticulture 360 Sod Growers, Turf Seed Growers & Nurseries
 365 Dealers, Distributors, Formulators & Brokers 370 Manufacturers
 850 Other (please specify) _____

5. Which of the following landscape products do you purchase or specify? (Fill in ALL that apply)

- B Blowers H Herbicides Y Ornamental/Nursery Products P Tractors
 C Chain Saws I Insecticides Z Pavers/Masonry/Bricks/Rocks Q Truck Trailers/Attachments
 U Engines W Irrigation Systems (Hardscape Materials) R Trucks
 V Erosion Control X Landscape Lighting 3 Seed/Sod S Turfseed
 F Fertilizers J Line Trimmers 1 Skid Steers T Utility Vehicles
 G Fungicides K Mowers N Spreaders 2 Water Features

6. My firm's annual revenue is: (Fill in ONE only)

- F More than \$4,000,000 B \$1,500,000 - \$1,999,999 D \$500,000 - \$999,999
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2. Which of the following best describes your title? (Fill in ONE only)

- 10 **Executive/Administrator** - President, Owner, Partner, Director, General Manager, Chairman of the Board, Purchasing Agent, Director of Physical Plant
 20 **Manager/Superintendent** - Arborist, Architect, Landscape/Grounds Manager, Superintendent, Foreman, Supervisor
 30 **Government Official** - Government Commissioner, Agent, Other Government Official
 40 **Specialist** - Forester, Consultant, Agronomist, Pilot, Instructor, Researcher, Horticulturist, Certified Specialist
 50 **Other Titled and Non-Titled Personnel** (please specify) _____

3. Which of the following services does your company provide? (Fill in ALL that apply)

Maintenance/Services

- A Mowing F Turf Fertilization C Tree Care
 B Turf Insect Control D Turf Aeration L Pond/Lake Care
 J Turf Weed Control E Irrigation Services N Snow Removal
 G Turf Disease Control H Ornamental Care O Other (please specify) _____

Design/Build

- I Landscape Design M Landscape Installation P Irrigation Installation
 K Paving/Deck/Patio Installation Q Other (please specify) _____

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106	118	130	142	154	166	178	190	202	214	226	238	250	262	274	286	298	310
107	119	131	143	155	167	179	191	203	215	227	239	251	263	275	287	299	311
108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240	252	264	276	288	300	312
109	121	133	145	157	169	181	193	205	217	229	241	253	265	277	289	301	313
110	122	134	146	158	170	182	194	206	218	230	242	254	266	278	290	302	314
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- 30 **Government Official** - Government Commissioner, Agent, Other Government Official
- 40 **Specialist** - Forester, Consultant, Agronomist, Pilot, Instructor, Researcher, Horticulturist, Certified Specialist
- 50 **Other Titled and Non-Titled Personnel** (please specify) _____

3. Which of the following services does your company provide? (Fill in ALL that apply)

- Maintenance/Services**
- A Mowing F Turf Fertilization C Tree Care
- B Turf Insect Control D Turf Aeration L Pond/Lake Care
- J Turf Weed Control E Irrigation Services N Snow Removal
- G Turf Disease Control H Ornamental Care O Other (please specify) _____

Design/Build

- I Landscape Design M Landscape Installation P Irrigation Installation
- K Paving/Deck/Patio Installation Q Other (please specify) _____

4. Type of customer served? (Fill in ONE ONLY)

- A Commercial B Residential C Both

5. Which of the following landscape products do you purchase or specify? (Fill in ALL that apply)

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| B <input type="radio"/> Blowers | H <input type="radio"/> Herbicides | Y <input type="radio"/> Ornamental/Nursery Products | P <input type="radio"/> Tractors |
| C <input type="radio"/> Chain Saws | I <input type="radio"/> Insecticides | Z <input type="radio"/> Pavers/Masonry/Bricks/Rocks | Q <input type="radio"/> Truck Trailers/Attachments |
| U <input type="radio"/> Engines | W <input type="radio"/> Irrigation Systems | (Hardscape Materials) | R <input type="radio"/> Trucks |
| V <input type="radio"/> Erosion Control | X <input type="radio"/> Landscape Lighting | 3 <input type="radio"/> Seed/Sod | S <input type="radio"/> Turfseed |
| F <input type="radio"/> Fertilizers | J <input type="radio"/> Line Trimmers | 1 <input type="radio"/> Skid Steers | T <input type="radio"/> Utility Vehicles |
| G <input type="radio"/> Fungicides | K <input type="radio"/> Mowers | N <input type="radio"/> Spreaders | 2 <input type="radio"/> Water Features |

6. My firm's annual revenue is: (Fill in ONE only)

- F More than \$4,000,000 B \$1,500,000 - \$1,999,999 D \$500,000 - \$999,999
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29 Effectively Managing Palms / Brea, CA; 949/454-2409

30-1 FNATS Short Course / Orlando, FL; Sponsored by the Florida Nursery & Allied Trades Show; 800/375-3642

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5 OTF Annual Golf Tournament / Dublin, OH; Sponsored by the Ohio Turf Federation; 888/683-3445

6 Transplanting Palm Trees in the Urban Landscape / Brea, CA; 949/454-2409

6 Demo Day & Knowledge Network Event / Frank Liske Park, Concord, NC; 910/695-1333; www.ncturfgrass.org

8-9 Turfgrass, Landscape and Equipment Expo / Pomona, CA; Sponsored by the Southern California Turfgrass Council; 800/500-7282

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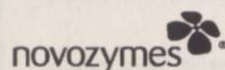
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Landscape Maintenance Supervisors

Landscape Development Inc. has opportunities for Maintenance Supervisors, in our Vista and Inland Empire locations. Our Supervisors oversee the foreman and crews to ensure proper maintenance is completed, on all job sites.

A minimum of six years of landscape, irrigation, and general construction and drainage experience needed.

Qualified applicants please apply to:

Cheryl Barron

cbarron@landscapedevelopment.com

28447 Witherspoon Parkway

Valencia, CA 91355, FAX 661-295-2000.

DIRECTOR OF LANDSCAPE SERVICES AND BOTANIC GARDEN

The University of Missouri-Columbia department of Landscape Services is seeking candidates for the position of Director of Landscape Services and Botanic Garden. This individual will be responsible for the University's landscape architecture, and landscape construction and maintenance services. This position exercises management and fiscal oversight of approximately 50 FTE's and a \$2.2 million budget. Additional responsibilities include planning, directing and fund raising for the University's 300-acre, campus-wide Botanic Garden. Minimum qualifications include a bachelor's degree, masters preferred, in Landscape Architecture, Horticulture or closely related field, or equivalent combination of education and experience; significant administrative experience in the public or non-profit sector; 5-7 years management experience in landscape construction, and maintenance in a university or public botanic garden is desirable. The successful candidate will be self-motivated, organized, creative and visionary. Salary commensurate with experience with an excellent benefits package and the opportunity to work with a professional team.

Please call Barbara Webb for additional information at (573) 882-7976.

Please e-mail resume to umchrs@missouri.edu or send to University of Missouri-Columbia, Human Resource Services, 201 South 7th St, 130 Heinkel Building, Columbia, MO, 65211.

AA/EOE -- ADA accommodations, call (573) 882-7976; TTY users, 1-800-735-2966.

GROUNDS MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

NISH is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to create employment opportunities for persons with severe disabilities through contracts for services and products with the federal government under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) program. We have a position open for a GROUNDS MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST based in Arlington, TX.

Responsibilities:

Support for multiple non-profit businesses performing federal services contract work in eight states.

Provide technical expertise & problem-solving in planning, estimating, root cause analysis & plans of correction.

In order to meet federal regulations, offer advice regarding labor, supplies, equipment & process improvement regarding grounds maintenance.

Requirements:

Seasoned expert with 10+ years grounds maintenance service projects & four years at grounds management level.

Excellent interpersonal & customer service skills.

Working knowledge of federal contracting.

Excellent PC skills & BS/BA degree preferred.

PGMS grounds manager certification a plus.

To apply for this position, submit both a resume and a NISH application

(found at www.NISH.org>jobs>Business

Project Manager I, South Central Region) &

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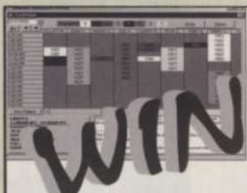
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Statistics

RESOURCES

INDUSTRY TRENDS BY THE NUMBERS

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTING EXPENDITURES ON THE RISE

A recent survey conducted on behalf of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America revealed these facts about consumer spending on landscaping services:

- ▶ 31% growth rate of consumer spending on lawn care, landscaping and tree care services since 2002
- ▶ \$37.9 billion spent by consumers on these professional services in 2003
- ▶ \$41.6 billion predicted consumer spending in 2004
- ▶ Referrals are the top resource that Americans use to hire landscape contractors
- ▶ 1 in 3 Americans paid for professional lawn, landscape or tree services in 2003
- ▶ More than 1 in 4 Americans plan to purchase professional landscaping services in 2004
- ▶ Landscape construction accounted for the largest dollar volume of Green Industry home improvements in 2003, with \$13.4 billion spent on these services — an increase of \$2.2 billion from 2002

NEW HOME PRICES

YEAR	MEDIAN	AVERAGE
1984	\$79,900	\$97,600
1994	\$130,000	\$154,400
2004	—	\$252,000

SOURCE: NAHB



Survey says...

Q As demand for water grows, so does its scarcity. Experts say there may be a full-blown crisis by 2025. If so, "water-wise" landscaping might be something everyone has to embrace. What do you think about the "water-wise" approach to landscape management?

61%



We already practice water-wise landscaping regularly out of concern for the environment.

21%



We don't practice water-wise landscaping at all.

6%



We practice water-wise landscaping regularly because the law forces us to.

6%



We offer water-wise landscaping to satisfy a customer need, not out of concern for the environment.

6%



I'm not convinced it's a problem, so I don't worry about it.

Percentages based on 33 responses

Log onto www.landscapemanagement.net and answer our online survey. We publish the results here monthly.

\$200 million

— Estimated damage done to the crops and facilities of Florida plant nursery owners by Hurricane Charley.

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