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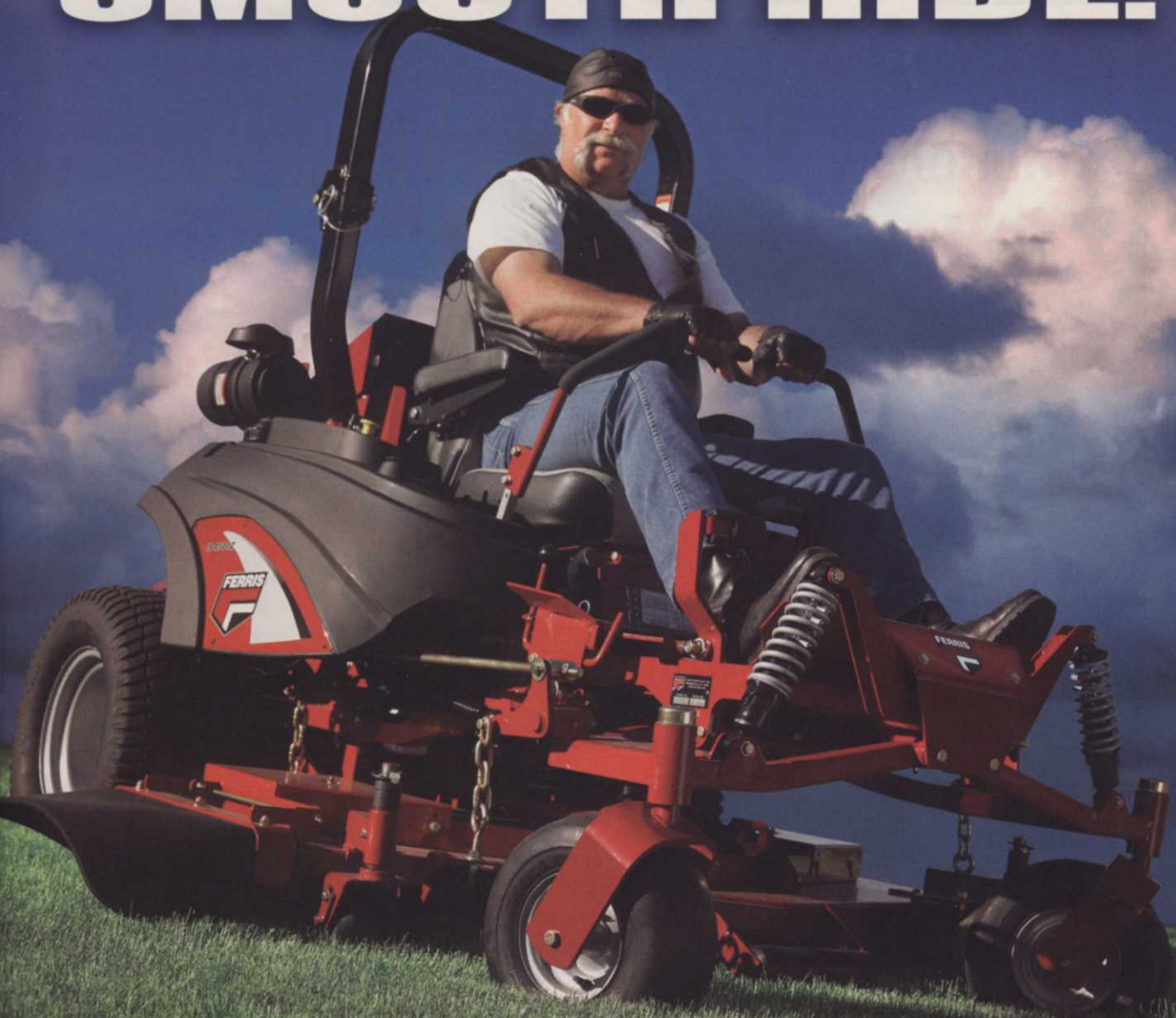
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The place to H-2B

Business owners gathered March 15 in Washington for a grassroots lobbying effort to extend the H-2B guest worker program. Read more about their issues online.

» Readers respond

Service businesses thrive or die on customer retention. This month's business feature on service recovery got us thinking, **what's your company's track record on losing customers?** Here's what you said:

49%

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39% It happens rarely and we always respond right away to smooth things over.

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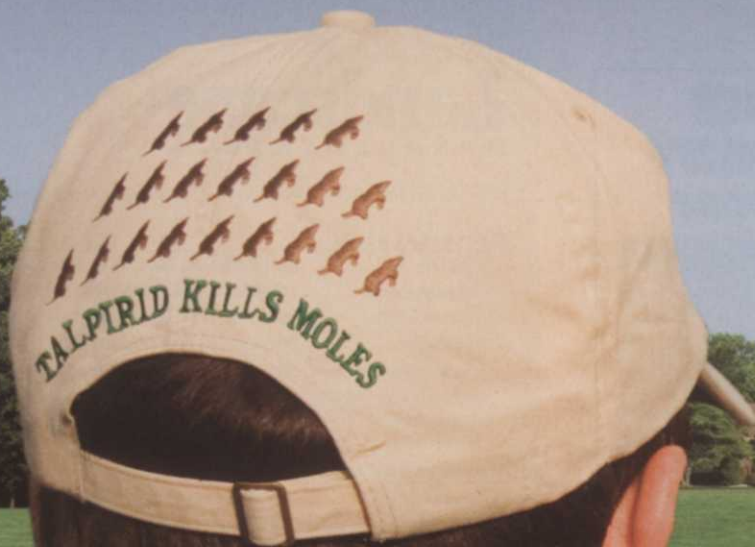
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» Overheard

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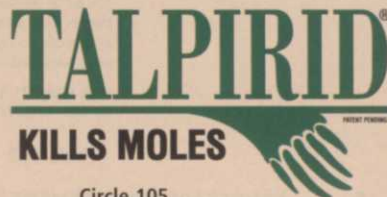
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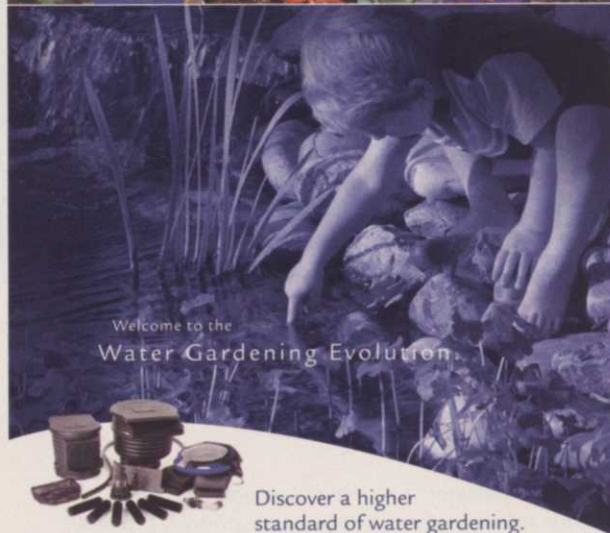


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Editorial staff

Editor in Chief	RON HALL / 216/706-3739 / rhall@questex.com
Managing Editor	STEPHANIE RICCA / 216/706-3754 / sricca@questex.com
Associate Editor	MIKE SEUFFERT / 216/706-3764 / mseuffert@questex.com
Web Editor	LYNNE BRAKEMAN / 216/706-3753 / lbrakeman@questex.com
Senior Science Editor	KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D. / danneberger1@osu.edu
Corp. Creative Director	LISA LEHMAN / 216/706-3732 / llehman@questex.com
Art Director	CARRIE PARKHILL / 216/706-3780 / cparkhill@questex.com

Reader advisory panel

DEBBY COLE	Greater Texas Landscapes / Austin, TX
WAYNE VOLZ	Wayne's Lawn Service, Inc. / Louisville, KY
JOHN GACHINA	Gachina Landscape Management / Menlo Park, CA
WALTER BONVELL	Xavier University / Cincinnati, OH
BILL HOOPES	Scotts Lawn Service / Mansville, OH
ROB SANTO	Garrick-Santo Landscape / Malden, MA
FRED HASKETT	US Lawns / St. Louis, MO
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GEORGE VAN HAASTEREN	Dwight-Englewood School / Englewood, NJ
BRIAN VINCHESI	Irrigation Consulting / Pepperell, MA

Business staff

Publisher	KEVIN STOLTMAN / 216/706-3740 / kstoltman@questex.com
Admin. Coordinator	JEN OAKLIEF / 216/706-3751 / joaklief@questex.com
Production Manager	JILL HOOD / 218/279-8837 / jhood@questex.com
Production Director	RHONDA SANDE / 218/279-8821 / rsande@questex.com
Circulation Manager	JESSICA BORGREN / 218/279-8858 / jborgren@questex.com
Asst. Circulation Manager	LISA MILES / 218/279-8866 / lmiles@questex.com
Directory Production Mgr.	JAN LAULUNEN / 218/279-8843 / jlaulunen@questex.com

Advertising staff

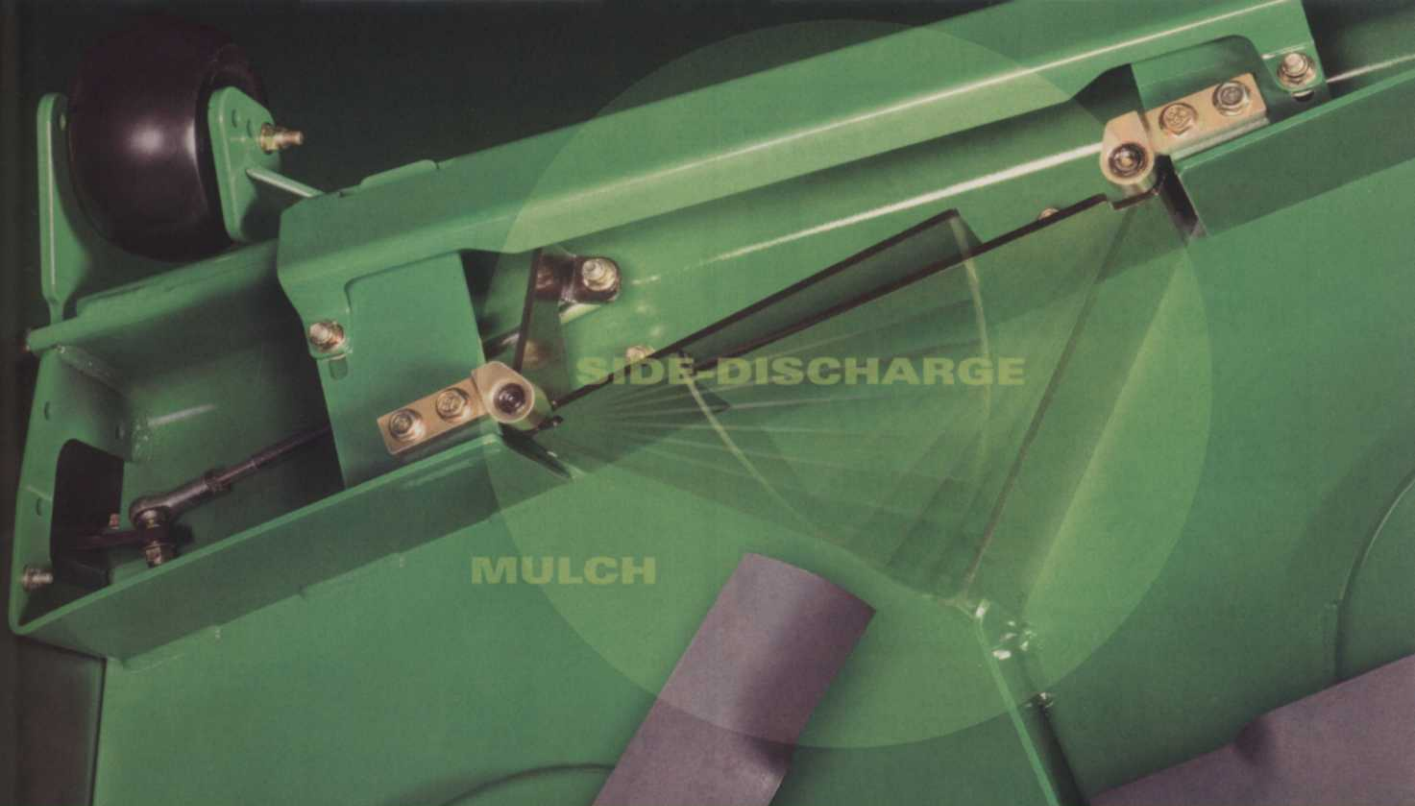
Cleveland Headquarters	600 Superior Ave. E., Ste. 1100, Cleveland, OH 44114
Associate Publisher	PATRICK ROBERTS / 216/706-3736 Fax: 216/706-3712 proberts@questex.com
National Account Manager	GEORGE CASEY / 216/706-3752 Fax: 216/706-3712 george.casey@questex.com
Regional Account Manager	MICHAEL HARRIS / 216/706-3755 Fax: 216/706-3712 mharris@questex.com
Account Manager	KENDRA KOVALYCSIK / 216/706-3763 Fax: 216/706-3712 kkovalycsik@questex.com
Account Executive, Classifieds	BRIAN OLESINSKI / 216/706-3757 Fax: 216/706-3712 bolesinski@questex.com

Marketing/magazine services

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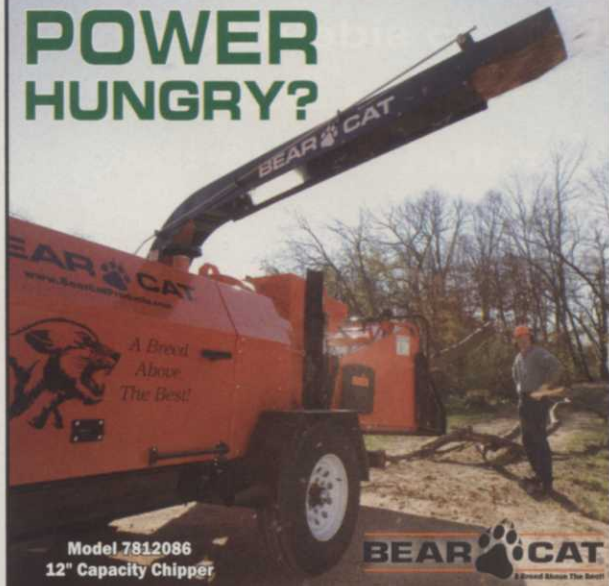
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Coming to America

BY STEPHANIE RICCA / Managing Editor

In the early days of my job on this magazine I read an article by my editor Ron Hall about H-2B and thought, "H-2 what?" I hadn't realized the sheer numbers of immigrant workers that make up the seasonal workforce in our industry. I thought college kids home for the summer took most of the landscaping jobs.

I soon realized that's less and less common.

Curious, I read as much as I could about seasonal workers in the Green Industry, and asked around when I visited companies and met people at trade shows. Now it's a year after I first starting following this issue and I'm getting a better idea of it and the politics that surround it.

What you're saying

But I wanted to learn more about how you, our readers, perceive the foreign worker issue, so last month I asked you via *Landscape Management's* e-newsletter, *Week in Review*, what you thought about the onslaught of H-2B and immigration reform news coming at us from all directions. I wanted to confirm (or reject) my suspicion that most of what we got was big-picture stuff and not enough of the details.

"Personally, I have no idea how to go about using this program," one of you wrote.

"I have no idea how to even get started," wrote another reader, hinting that she's not even sure her workers are legal. "All the paperwork makes it hard to get anything else done," she said.

"I wish I would have taken my Spanish classes more seriously in high school," said another.

I also had a letter expressing the idea that the industry doesn't need immigrant workers and should instead fix the system to value the American service industry more. "I say, eliminate the program all together and give Americans a wake-up call to the importance of service industry professions," he wrote. "We are falsely holding wage rates down."

There's a lot going on with this issue — it's emotional, political and has an impact on your business. We wanted to know the ins and outs of the process and the people in it — the workers and their employers. Why do you need these immigrant workers so much? Why do they need the jobs so badly? Why can't (or won't) Americans take these jobs? And what does Washington have to do with it?

That's why we're tackling H-2B from the inside out, starting on page 30. We start our ongoing series, "A question of labor," with Editor in Chief Ron Hall's first-hand account of the immigrant visa process from Monterrey, Mexico. And don't miss Associate Editor Mike Seuffert's report of legislative activity going on now in Washington.

We'll continue our coverage of the issue from different perspectives in the coming months.

As usual, keep an eye on www.landscapemanagement.net, for more pictures and breaking news.

We'll keep answering your questions about this topic, so keep asking.

**Contact Stephanie at 216/
706-3754 or e-mail
sricca@questex.com.**

Why do you need these workers so much? Why do they need the jobs so badly? why can't (or won't) Americans take these jobs?



The trick to providing consistent, season-long safety training is to keep each session focused, short and sweet.



Spring training starts here

BY BILL HOOPES

Spring has sprung! No matter where you hang your hat, the growing season is in full swing. Landscapers are installing and maintaining plants and beds, mowers are already working at a fever pitch and lawn service applicators are wading through spring's predictable sea of dandelions.

Once again, we've become walking, talking multitaskers. When work loads begin to defy imagination, experienced trainers know it's smart to call a quick time out, review and reinforce operational basics, especially related to safety.

Don't have the time, you say? Of course you do.

Keep it short and sweet

The trick to providing consistent, season-long safety training is to keep each session focused, short and sweet. Here is your April training 'Action Now' list:

- ▶ Reconfirm a commitment to safe operations.
- ▶ Prioritize training topics by on-the-job need.
- ▶ Condense the message.
- ▶ Present training in small bites.
- ▶ Confirm understanding and buy-in.
- ▶ Verify behavior on the job.

A few details on how to accomplish these tasks:

A **commitment** means top-down, visible support from management. To gain this support, remind management that one trip down the road to litigation can cost more than you want to pay. This approach usually gets their attention.

Prioritizing by need means you teach people what they need to know now. Two or three pieces of information at one time are about all you can deliver with a hope of retention and use on the job.

Condensing the message is critical. Lay out the procedures you want people to follow. Use bullet points. Too many words dilute your message. People learn best with their eyes and actions, not ears.

Present in **small bites**. Deliver 10 minutes of training and stop. Go further and retention will drop off. Monday morning meetings provide a great opportunity to get your message across before the crew heads out, where learning will be reinforced.

Confirming understanding and buy-in should be a no-brainer. Still, I've seen trainers spew out the data, telling learners everything they know about a topic and assuming it is understood. Use a quick, two-minute verbal quiz. Ask a few questions to be sure the most important points were clear. Be sure to get a firm, verbal commitment to following the procedures presented. If there are disconnects, you need to know it now, not out on the job.

Verify behavior on the job. Most important, to confirm satisfactory performance, you need to get out of your office and on the job. When training fails to change behavior this is the problem. If performance is reinforced with positive recognition, the worker will be motivated to repeat the performance. Do it enough times and bingo, you have a habit.

— *The author is founder of Grass Roots Training in Delaware, OH. Contact him at hoopes@columbus.rr.com or visit www.grassroots-training.com.*

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Spend quality time working on systems and procedures that will prevent the service glitches that occur.



Do it right the first time

BY BRUCE WILSON

Service recovery is a very expensive customer service policy. Yes, many companies, including mine at times, are all too addicted to excelling at service recovery. We all fall into the trap of spending so much time on service recovery that we do not have time to get it right the first time. Obviously "getting it right the first time" is better for everyone involved.

Service recovery is a hard habit to kick. You get a lot of "warm fuzzies" from customers for jumping through hoops to fix a problem that never should have occurred in the first place. Employees get satisfaction from solving problems; many solve them themselves so the guilty party never learns from it.

Systems prevent problems

So what is the answer? Spend quality time working on systems and procedures that will prevent the service glitches from occurring. This means building best practices throughout your company that make the work routine, and all people do things the same right way each time.

Start with the critical things. What causes the

problems that lead to customer recovery incidents? For many it's missed details that the customer sees and has to call to your attention. If a company has a best practice that includes a final checklist before leaving a job, could that problem be avoided?

I believe more problems arise out of work that gets done that is out of the "normal" routine. Knowing this, a company should do extra training whenever doing non-routine operations. Or, make sure that the crew performing any non-routine service has enough experience.

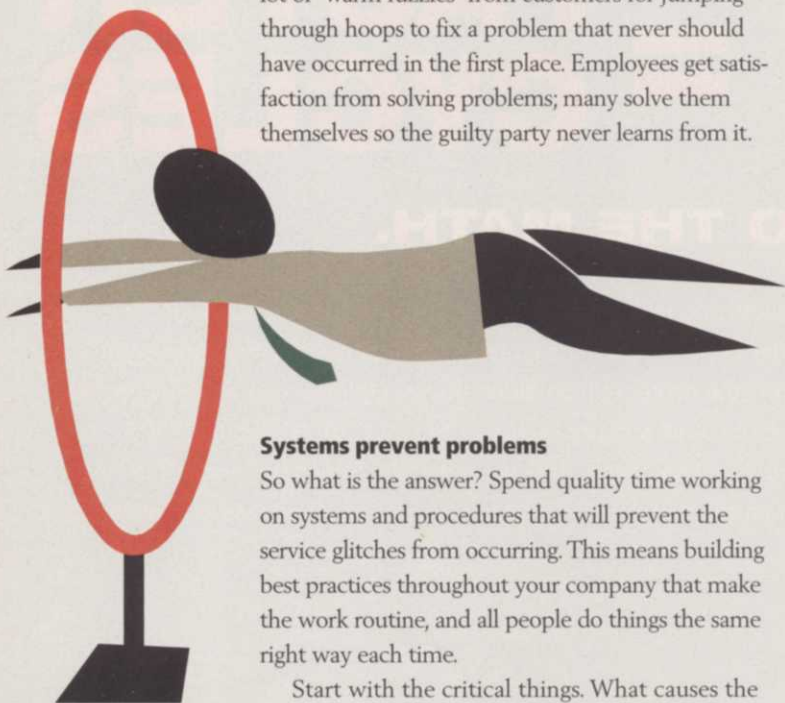
Try auditing

Another suggestion is to perform operational audits during the early part of the season. Watch your crews at work. Look for deficiencies in process, time wasters and just plain wrong techniques for doing the work. This will help you see what your crews are actually doing.

Finally, investigate service glitches just like you would accidents. Then do some training around your findings so that others do not repeat the same mistake. Or, better yet, get to the real-life reasons that are causing the problems in the first place. Then implement a "best practice" to prevent them.

Take positive, proactive action to get out of the service recovery mode or you will become addicted to an expensive customer service policy.

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





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READER COMMENTARY:

Spread the lawn care word

BY RICHARD CARTER

April is National Lawn Care month and gives us the opportunity to promote the many benefits of turfgrass. Do you think that your customers realize all of the benefits that it provides?

When was the last time you mentioned to Mrs. Jones that just one area of grass, only 50 by 50 feet, generates enough oxygen to meet the needs of a family of four? Or when have you told

A well-maintained lawn and landscape can increase a property's value by 15 to 20%.

Mr. Smith that grass traps 12 million tons of dirt and dust from the air annually? Do you think that Mrs. Robinson truly understands that one of the many benefits of turfgrass is its ability to trap and hold rainfall better than most surfaces; it reduces water loss by runoff?

I would like to think that your average homeowner knows at least one solid piece of information when it comes to having a healthy lawn and landscape. And that one nugget would be the fact that a well-maintained lawn and landscape can increase a property's value.

Now, picture yourself discussing little Julie's pollen allergies with her mom (your next potential client) and informing her that a well-maintained lawn is a natural pollen trap. With regular mowing (a well-maintained mulching mower

PLANET tips

HERNDON, VA — The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) celebrates National Lawn Care Month by reminding consumers about the environmental benefits of a healthy lawn.

There are more than 30 million acres of lawns across the United States. It's estimated that these lawns remove 5% of the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and provide a significant amount of oxygen. Healthy lawns trap and filter rainwater and they protect from erosion. They provide a cooling effect in summer months and help in energy efficiency.

"Lawns are not only beautiful, they're environmentally effective," explained John Gibson, president of PLANET. "Homeowners need to be proactive in April and put together a lawn care program to ensure that

their lawns will be healthy and beautiful throughout the year."

Healthy lawns also play an important role in home sales and they have an impact on curb appeal. Realtors report that homes with beautiful lawns and landscape can increase property values by 15 to 20%. Gibson noted homeowners often see returns on their landcare investment up to 200-300%.

April is also National Landscape Architecture Month, sponsored by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). ASLA chapters across the country will celebrate with public outreach activities to help communities "Discover Landscape Architecture," the theme for this year. The month encompasses Earth Day on April 22 and the birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted on April 26, who founded the American landscape architecture profession.

works best) and irrigation, pollen remains in the ground.

Keep in mind that just because you may be familiar with the fact that the front lawns of just eight average houses provide the cooling effect of about 70 tons of air conditioning, doesn't mean that Mr. and Mrs. Cooper know this bit of knowledge.

Pass the word along to your customers. Not only will they appreciate what you

know, but also what their little green patch of lawn is actually doing for them, besides putting a smile on their face.

If you haven't used any these wonderful attributes of turf to help sell your services, think about adding them to your literature. You'll be doing your clients a favor.

— *The author is the proprietor of My Lawn Guy, LLC in Andover, MA. Contact him at rich@mylawnGuycares.com.*

Termite-based urban legend spreads

NEW ORLEANS — Rumors that Formosan subterranean termites are being spread around the country through cheap, termite-infested mulch are untrue, experts are saying.

The rumors come from an e-mail that circulate across the country this winter that said the termites were in trees that had been blown down by Hurricane Katrina and subsequently turned into mulch. It said that the mulch was turning up in big box stores at cheap prices.

Not true. The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry said it issued quarantines following the hurricanes for woody debris. Woody debris cannot be moved out of these areas without first submitting a plan for treatment to the department.

"I've had my people looking into these claims to make sure there are no violations of the quarantine. I've also had our invasive pest expert contact the stores mentioned in the e-mail and we've yet to find any validity to the claims in the e-mail," Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry Bob Odom said.

"In my opinion, someone is using the Internet to cause hysteria about a problem that doesn't really exist. If there are people out there who know about someone violating the quarantines, then they need to report it to us," he added.

Gary Bennett, chairman of the entomology department at Purdue University, said "I do not feel this is a valid concern."

Susan Jones, an Ohio State University Extension urban entomologist, said that though the rumors are untrue, this is a good reminder to homeowners to be aware of the potential spread of termites in landscaping timbers and mulch, particularly if these items have had previous

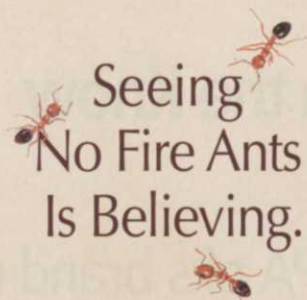
contact with the soil. Subterranean termites nest in the soil, which provides the high moisture requirements they require.

"It's always a good idea to check mulch for termites when it is purchased," she advised.

Keep 'em out

The National Pest Management Association (NPMA) offers some helpful hints to prevent termites from invading houses. Keep these in mind as you work in residential yards this spring:

- ▶ Keep mulch away from the home's foundation.
 - ▶ Advise your client to divert water away with properly functioning downspouts, gutters and splash blocks. Don't allow water to accumulate around the house.
 - ▶ Quickly repair house damage from a leaky roof or window, since termites can thrive in this moisture.
 - ▶ Never bury wood scraps or waste lumber in the yard, especially near the home. Remove old tree stumps and roots around and beneath the home.
 - ▶ Eliminate any wood contact with the soil. Maintain at least a one-inch gap between the soil and wood portions of the home.
- Infestation warning signs include:
- ▶ Swarming of winged forms in the fall and spring
 - ▶ Evidence of mud tunneling in, over and under wood structures
 - ▶ Wooden structures exhibiting darkening or blistering



Jim Duffy operates Lawn Doctor of Fort Myers, Florida. Though he's been in business only 18 months, he already has a solid customer base with a strong retention rate. Jim loves using TopChoice® to solve fire ant problems. He also knows that it's a killer tool that can help build his business.

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"TopChoice makes me an expert in my customers' eyes."

When people aren't home, Jim uses a TopChoice postcard or an insert with his invoices. He says many customers are initially skeptical. Their experience tells them that fire ants usually come back, no matter what.

"But once I tell them it's guaranteed, safe and effective, they decide to sign up for a treatment."

As Jim has discovered, once customers try it, they're happily hooked. Up-selling has never been easier with a product like TopChoice.

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EPA oks brand name on generic labels

CARY, NC — A practice common in the pharmaceutical industry is about to debut in the pesticide industry: product labeling that includes a statement identifying the branded version of the generic alternative. The EPA Office of General Counsel recently granted a request from post-patent supplier Gro-Pro LLC to use the statement on its product labels, marking the first time this type of language has been approved for pesticide product labels.

On all product labels moving forward, Gro-Pro will include a statement saying

"Contains [name of active ingredient], the active ingredient used in [brand name]."

According to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), a product is identical or substantially similar to a branded product if it would be identical or substantially similar in composition and labeling to a registered product; or if it would differ in composition and labeling from such currently registered product only in ways that would not significantly increase the risk of unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.

[CLIPPINGS]

Ariens earns big state honor

BRILLION, WI — Ariens Co. received the 2005 Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Award for large-size manufacturer from the state's Manufacturers & Commerce Association. Ariens Co. was nominated for the award by the Brillion Chamber of Commerce. The award's judges acknowledged Ariens for successfully taking on the challenges of international competition.

Morris hangs out his shingle

PHILADELPHIA — Ken Morris, former corporate counsel to Bayer CropScience, established an independent legal consulting firm serving the agricultural, specialty products, pharmaceutical and technology industries. Morris retired from Bayer in 2005 after a 30-year career in pharmaceutical and crop science law. For more information about Morris' firm, Ken Morris Esq., LLC, visit www.kenmorrislaw.com.

US Maintenance buys DayStar

NORRISTOWN, PA — US Maintenance acquired DayStar USA, an exterior maintenance service company. US Maintenance provides contract management and outsourced facilities maintenance, including landscaping and snow removal. DayStar will retain its management team, name and continue operations from Oxnard, CA.

Irrigation down under: IA travels to Australia

FALLS CHURCH, VA — The Irrigation Association is sponsoring its first international irrigation study tour with a 19-day trip to New Zealand and Australia Sept. 29

through Oct. 17, with an optional four-day extension to Cairns in tropical North Queensland, Australia.

This exclusive tour will include private meetings with leading irrigation professionals, professors and practitioners, with opportunities to see their results in agriculture, parks and the region's most popular destinations.

The itinerary features private tours of farms, orchards, a model farm, parks, botanical garden, a turf-topped Parliament house in Canberra, an irrigation manufacturer, and a golf course.

Applications and a deposit are required before May 1. For more information contact Doug Fender at doug@dougfender-travel.com, call 888/272-6498 or visit www.irrigation.org.

◀ IA members will be asked to display the Smart Irrigation Month logo and share tips for efficient irrigation with their customers in July while highlighting products and services that promote efficient irrigation.

It's smart to irrigate in July

The Irrigation Association named July "Smart Irrigation Month" to raise awareness of the importance of using irrigation efficiently.

"The mission of the Irrigation Association is to promote efficient and effective irrigation worldwide," said

IA Executive Director Tom Kimmell. "Smart Irrigation Month is a way for the industry to highlight irrigation equipment and

practices that make the most of our most precious resource."



38:53

Hours Bill Owen worked last week

7:34

Hours Martin Cruz worked last Friday

372:16

Total hours: Irrigation

238:49

Total hours: Placing Sod

611:05

Total hours to date: Fairview Townhomes

TRACK WORKERS' HOURS AND COST CODES WITH DEAD-ON ACCURACY.

WEEKLY TIMECARD

NAME: *Bill Owen* DATES: *10-14*

	START	LUNCH	END	JOB CODES	JOB SITE/PROJECT	HOURS
Mon.	7:00	1/2	3:30		FairView	8
Tues.			3:30			8
Wed.			4:00			8 1/2
Thurs.			4:00			8 1/2
Fri.	▽	▽	4:00			8 1/2
SIGNATURE: <i>Bill Owen</i> TOTAL HOURS: <i>41 1/2</i>						

GUESSWORK

Employee Report

Bill Owen

Jobsite Name: Fairview Townhomes Date Range: 4/10/2006 through 4/14/2006

Day	Start	End	Activity	Hours
Mon 4/10	7:06 AM	12:05 PM	Irrigation	4:57 hours
	12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Irrigation	2:41 hours 7:38 hours
Tue 4/11	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Irrigation	4:55 hours
	12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Irrigation	2:40 hours 7:35 hours
Wed 4/12	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:50 hours
	12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Irrigation	3:03 hours 7:53 hours
Thu 4/13	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Placing Sod	5:02 hours
	12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Placing Sod	2:56 hours 7:58 hours
Fri 4/14	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Placing Sod	4:54 hours
	12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Placing Sod	2:55 hours 7:49 hours
Employee total				38:53 hours

SIGNATURE: *Bill Owen* Bill Owen

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In the Know

ValleyCrest adds Landscape Architecture Division

CALABASAS, CA — ValleyCrest Companies acquired two landscape architecture firms in a bid to strengthen its presence in the design/build segment of the landscape marketplace. The new division is called ValleyCrest Landscape Architecture.

ValleyCrest bought the assets of HRP LanDesign based in Santa Ana, CA, and Site Works, based in Fairhope, AL, for an undisclosed amount.

ValleyCrest customers now have access to integrated design/build services. However, the company says customers will still be able to purchase landscape architecture, landscape installation and landscape maintenance services separately.

HRP LanDesign was founded in 1974 by

Jim Hogan, who will continue to lead the 50-employee firm with his current management team. The company specializes in master planned communities, regional and community parks, town centers, destination resorts, golf courses and multifamily complexes. Hogan will report to ValleyCrest President Richard Sperber.

Lois Shindelbower leads Site Works, a 25-year-old boutique landscape architecture firm. The firm specializes in corporate office projects, retail, college campuses, healthcare facilities, parks and condominium/apartment complexes. Shindelbower will report to William Leathers, vice president of ValleyCrest Landscape Development based in Florida.

Brickman workers help renovate home



BALTIMORE — Brickman, headquartered in Gaithersburg, MD, this winter partnered with the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) to renovate a 3-story, 2,500-square-foot row house here.

Twelve Brickman employees helped install joists, pour concrete, remove bricks and old plaster at the row house, a project sponsored by Sandtown Habitat for Humanity. "Each hammered nail and board is

a key factor in completing the project," said Danny Waid, volunteer coordinator of the the Sandtown effort.

This isn't the first time Brickman has worked with Habitat. In 2005, employees helped landscape a Baltimore park.

"It's great to be able to give back to communities where we work," said Ray Gustin, a Brickman production specialist who worked on both projects. "It feels good to be able to share our talents and skills."

"I've been impressed with Brickman's dedication to service," said John Raver, a Brickman plant health care specialist. "I feel proud to be part of an organization that values this kind of service, and who gives us the opportunity to put our normal work aside for a day to give a little back."

"You get to build relationships with people who you wouldn't come into contact with otherwise," said Daniel Punnett, the homeowner of the Sandtown project.

[CLIPPINGS]

New England Grows helps fund research

BOSTON, MASS. — New England Grows awarded \$30,000 in grants to the six New England state cooperative extension systems at its winter conference in Boston. The grant monies will be used to sponsor research studies, surveys, scholarships, plant trials and valuable publications for Green Industry pros.

Storm water workshops

BUFFALO GROVE, IL — *Land Development Today* magazine and Profile Products are partnering to present 18 Applied Low Impact Development Workshops between now and November. The workshops will teach landscape architects, engineers and environmental scientists an integrated way to specify storm water management and land planning techniques. For more information visit www.LDBreakthroughs.com or www.profileproducts.com.

Hunter earns 'best buy' rating

SAN MARCOS, CA — Hunter Industries received three 'Best Buy' ratings from *Consumers Digest* magazine following a comprehensive comparison of irrigation sprinklers, controllers and rain sensors. The rating is awarded to less than 3% of competing models in any given product category. The results appear in the April issue.

People & companies



Mark Urbanowski returned to **Dow AgroSciences** as the new senior marketing specialist for Turf, Ornamental

and Technical Products. He replaces **Scott Eicher**, who has elected to return to the field as a sales representative.



Rob Neill has been named vice president of **Syngenta Professional Products** for North America.

Hunter Industries announced the resignation of

Jeff Carowitz, the company's vice president of marketing, effective May 1. He will continue to consult with the company.

In a planned transition, **Roger Underwood** and **Jeff Becker**, co-founders of Becker Underwood, announced they will step back from management responsibility and promoted former president **Peter Innes** to CEO.

CropLife America announced the departure of two staff members. **Pat Donnelly**, formerly executive vice president and COO, will

join the consulting firm C&M Capitollink. **Rich Nolan**, former vice president of governmental affairs, will join the staff of the National Mining Association.



The Brickman Group named **Timothy H. Pease** (above, left) its chief financial officer, replacing **Charles Silcox**, who will retire in 2007. **Don Smith** (above, right), formerly of Omni, also joined the com-

pany as regional manager for Atlanta.

Husqvarna named **Andy Stanush** product manager for its line of chain saws and powercutters.

Profile Products of Buffalo Grove, IL, welcomed **Frank Lauro** and **Karen Cseh** to the company. Lauro will focus on market development for Profile Erosion Control Solutions for the Western U.S., and Cseh is Profile's executive sales assistant.

Kane Lawn and Landscapes added **James Newton** as operations manager for the company's Lawn Care and Maintenance Division.



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Pavers

► This contractor scores big with a hardscaped basketball court

BY STEPHANIE RICCA

"We will work for almost anybody, anywhere, anytime," says Bob Oster, founder of Outside Design Ltd., a Northeast Ohio-based residential and commercial full-service landscape, snow removal and design/build contractor. He and his team built their business by keeping a close eye on competition to learn how to exceed their clients' expectations.

"We are disinclined to compromise on price," Oster says. "We want to offer the client more value for their money."

His company's newest value-added venture: Using pavers to build functional outdoor basketball courts that add aesthetic appeal to the surrounding landscape.

Concrete surface texturing and staining was part of Outside Design's regular menu of services. When the company recently got a basketball court project, the original plan called for a large, multi-use terrace constructed of stamped and colored concrete.

Pavers play in

"The homeowner had some issues with the look and textures. I tried to research the reality of using pavers for the surface, but I was unsuccessful with manufacturers and suppliers," Oster explains. "So we made the bold decision to go on our own and provide a perfectly stable base for the installation of pavers."

Oster says he selected Unilock pavers for their ability to match the existing pavement and landscaping within the residential setting. It took 1,400 square feet of pavers in two colors to cover the surface, complete with a three-point line, key and foul line paved in a contrasting color.

The foundation was the most difficult and time-consuming part of the job.

"The excavation took one full day, which surprised us because of the amount of subsoil that had to be moved and sculpted behind the actual court area," Oster says.

Then the Outside Design team used a combination of filter fabric, #57 limestone, #411 limestone, screenings and sand to create the base.



The Outside Design crew excavated (1), cut and laid pavers (2, 3) over a two-and-a-half week period to create the finished court.

After some research they chose a granular base rather than a concrete pad.

"We were responsible for all aspects of the project, including setting the hoop and the backboard," Oster says. Start to finish, the project took two and a half weeks.

Trends in hardscaping

"I am hoping this project is the first of many," he says. "Most manufactured sporting surfaces are unsightly. The natural texture and color of pavers is much more pleasing than other comparable surfaces."

"The hardscape market is aching for something new," he

says. "I hope pavers and natural stone will be used outside the normal realm. Companies have been laying pavers for years and the smart contractors have perfected it. I'm happy we found an excellent process for excavation, preparation and installation of hardscaped areas."

But how does the court play?

"We have played on this court many times since its completion," Oster says. "We're confident that anyone who thinks it may make for an uneven playing surface would be pleasantly surprised. We are proud of this project." **LM**

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Valves

PESB-R Valves

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Controllers

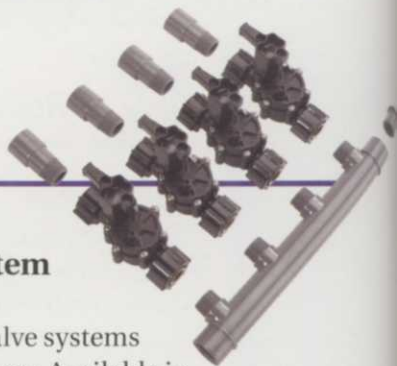
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Pump Stations



Controllers



Valves



Landscape Drip



Rotors



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Resources



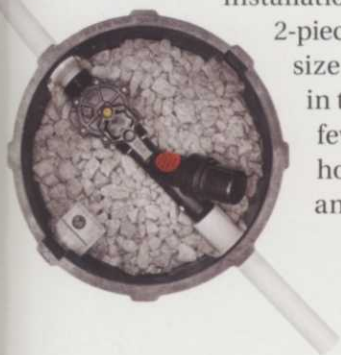
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Landscape Drip

Control Zone Kits with Pressure Regulating Filters

Filter and pressure regulator are now combined into one unit for fast and simple installation. Pre-assembled, 2-piece kits are a compact size so more kits fit in the valve box. Dig fewer holes or smaller holes, saving time and money.



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Accessories

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Resources and Training

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A QUESTION OF LABOR

The migration of foreign laborers continues at a pace that hints at far-reaching but as yet dimly understood social, political and economic changes within the United States. The size of the migration alarms many American citizens. Their concern is forcing federal lawmakers to agree that something must be done.

But what?

Amnesty for those that are here without authorization but are established in the U.S. economy? Guest worker programs or not? Tighter border controls? Actions against employers that hire so-called "illegal" workers?

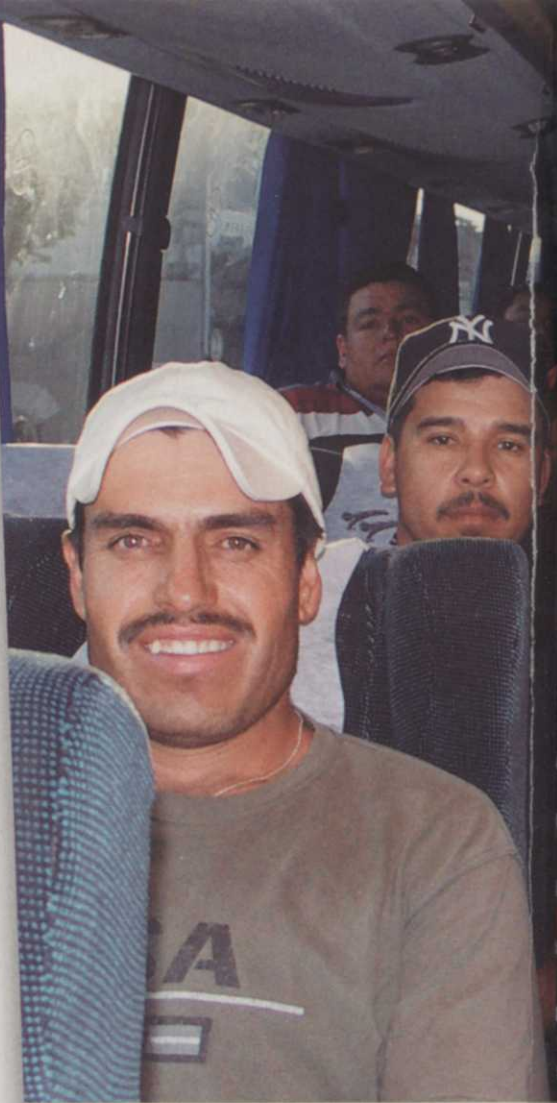
As legislators wrestle with these and other immigration issues, more immigrants arrive daily. The Pew Hispanic Center, a research organization based in Washington, D.C., reports there are 11-12 million unauthorized migrants in the United States. Most of them arrive here with calloused hands and seeking jobs but with few skills and little formal education.

By contrast the U.S. government will likely approve only 200-300 thousand visas for unskilled workers for jobs in the United States this year. These are "legal" workers. The continued availability of these documented immigrant seasonal workers is vital to the health and continued growth of the landscape contracting industry, says the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), one of many industry groups lobbying for more foreign-born workers. In fact, they're campaigning to expand guest worker programs.

Employers say they need guest workers to fill jobs that are increasingly difficult to fill with domestic help. That migrants will work for modest wages, at least by U.S. standards, is attractive to employers as well. Critics of large-scale immigration, including the guest worker programs, protest that the availability of cheap labor takes jobs away from U.S. citizens, keeps wages artificially low, burdens social services and delays mechanization within industries.

In the coming months Landscape Management will tell you what the availability of these foreign workers (both documented and undocumented) means to the Green Industry, and what it could mean to each of you.

We start at ground zero — *in Mexico.* ➔



Spring

IN THE PRE-DAWN GLOW OF THE security lights on Monterrey's Ocampo Street, the hopefuls arrive, lugging duffel bags and pulling small suitcases behind them. Many spent the previous night in a nearby hotel. For \$12 each they get a clean place to sleep four to a room and a couple of simple but filling meals.

The overnight stay is needed because the work visa process here in this northern Mexican city usually takes two days. The first day the applicant visits the consulate for fingerprints and to deliver paperwork. The next day each applicant appears before a sharp-eyed consular official for a short interview.



Hopeful Mexican workers start gathering before dawn to earn their seasonal work visas. Most leave the same evening for a bus ride to the United States.



road trip

BY RON HALL
Editor in Chief

While legislators focus on the growing immigration problem, the landscape industry welcomes yet another crop of foreign-born workers

They must "pass" the interview to get a much-coveted work visa, their ticket to an often physical job of long hours that may pay as little as \$7 an hour.

But there's never a lack of takers.

They gather in small groups on the sidewalk in front of the LLS International offices and on the steps of the bank building across the street. When the bank opens they'll be shoo'ed off the steps.

Almost all of them are returning H-2B workers, the so-called H-2R or "preferred" workers. They're preferred because they've been trained by their U.S. employers and have been requested.

H-2B is the 15-year-old federal program that allows U.S. companies to hire seasonal unskilled foreign labor. The landscape industry is one of the most enthusiastic users of H-2B. Mexico is by far its

largest source of these workers.

In the morning darkness, LLS employee Elias Bonilla barks out orders and more than 200 men and two women follow him on the five-minute walk to the U.S. consulate where they line up. All are hopeful of getting their passwords stamped with work visas. They wait for hours outside the consulate. There is no cover when it rains and little shade when temperatures soar into the 90s here in the plaza where they wait. Fortunately, the morning is unseasonably cool and the sky is cloudless.

By day's end, all but four workers are interviewed and approved. Elias says he doesn't enjoy telling a worker that he's been turned down. But that's part of the job, he says with a shrug.

LLS International is one of many companies that facilitate the hiring of H-2B guest workers. But, in some respects it's

more high-tech. For example, it maintains a database, built over the past eight years, of the names of more than 20,000 foreign workers and prospects in Mexico and Central

To work, this passport must show a visa too.



America. The database contains a photograph, personal data, employment history, education, English proficiency and work status of each worker. This allows LLS clients — labor agents, immigration attorneys and business owners — to check on the status of workers they're expecting to return for the coming season as well as review the qualifications and availability of new candidates.

Jeff West, who lives near San Antonio, TX, and has been operating in Mexico since 1998, is the president and owner of LLS, which is one of the largest movers of

H-2B workers to U.S. employers. The company has five offices in Mexico.

Practically adjacent to the consulate is another company specializing in processing H-2A seasonal agricultural workers. It's part processing office, part cantina. And even at this early hour it's bustling with men hopeful of farm jobs up north.

The business of recruiting, processing and transporting workers to the United States is fiercely competitive and lends itself to mixups and even fraud, starting with in-country recruiters who have been

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Mexico's guest worker visa factory

MONTERREY, MEXICO — When Megan Larson and Jim Zix carpool to work each morning they see a city of people within a city. Their place of employment is the U.S. consulate, a two-story building along a busy highway here about 10 city blocks from the city center. It serves the state of Nuevo Leon and the surrounding region in northern Mexico.

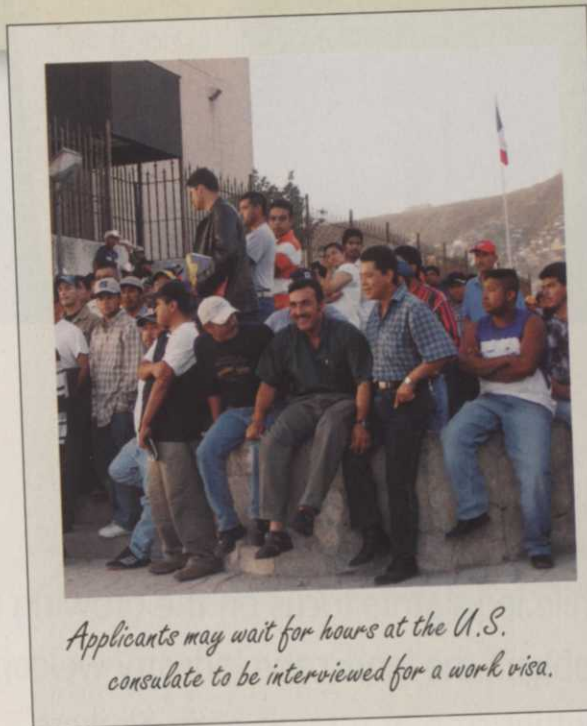
There are nine consulates and 13 consular agencies in the country. But for Mexican citizens seeking to travel or work abroad, the consulate in Monterrey dwarves the others in activity. It is either the third or fourth busiest U.S. mission for processing visas. That's in the world, not just for Mexico.

"The biggest challenge we have are the numbers," says Larson. Within weeks she will complete a six-month stint as director of the "H" seasonal guest worker programs here. Zix, a vice consul who has been assisting her, will then assume that post.

The waiting game

Hundreds of Mexican citizens are lined up, sitting in small groups, or in a few cases, stretched out on the grass on a two-acre, grassy plaza adjacent to the consulate. Some have traveled more than 16 hours to get to Monterrey. This city, located about 120 miles south of the Texas border, is the third largest city in Mexico. About three million people live here or in surrounding communities.

The people outside the consulate, some arranged in neat lines by stern-faced state police and others gathered into larger or smaller groups, await their chance to go inside and be interviewed for either a tourist visa or a visa to do seasonal work for U.S. companies. They're surprisingly patient even after waiting for hours. If their interview is successful (and it's far from guaranteed), visas will be stamped



Applicants may wait for hours at the U.S. consulate to be interviewed for a work visa.

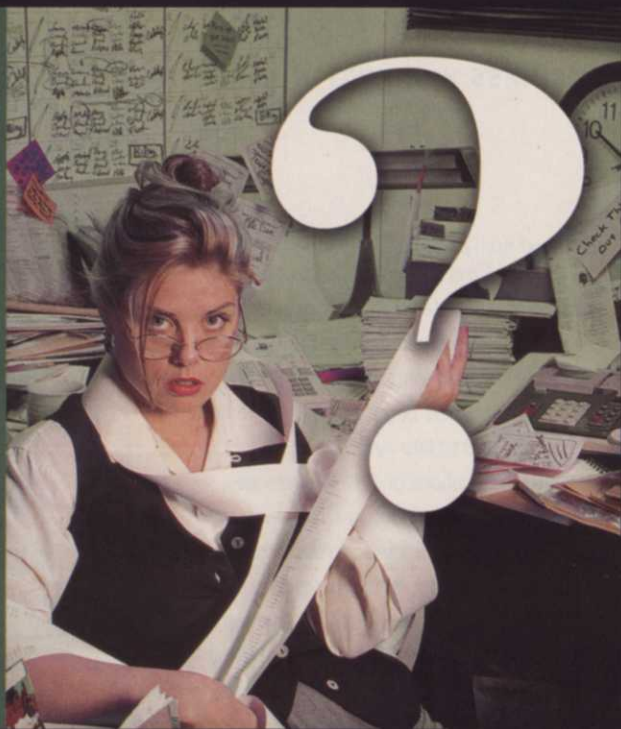
into their passports and they'll be on their way. Most of the seasonal "H" workers will leave for the United States later the same day.

H-2A, H-2B, H-2R

Seasonal guest workers, the so-called "H" workers, fall into two broad categories — H-2A visas for those working in agriculture and H-2B visas for those recruited for non-agricultural jobs north of the border. This year, for the first time, there is a sub-classification of the H-2B workers; it's the H-2R worker, a worker that's been a part of the H-2B program any of the previous three years and is not counted against the federally mandated cap of 66,000 visas.

continued on page 34

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BUSINESS WORKING IN AMERICA

continued from page 32

Almost all the visa hopefuls this Thursday morning in early March (those not seeking tourist visas) have been recruited to work for landscape companies in the United States. Agricultural workers begin arriving in greater numbers in mid to late April.

Both classifications of "H" workers are vital to the U.S. Green Industry. The H-2A workers because, in addition to doing much of our U.S. farm labor, tend wholesale ornamental nurseries and sod farms. It's then up to the non-ag H-2B employees to plant the ornamentals, lay the sod, operate the commercial mowers and install the pavers as employees of landscape companies.

The process

The consular staff consists of 18 American foreign service officers (or diplomats) and more than 35 locally hired staff. Together they regularly interview and process in a single day more than 2,000 visa applicants. Mid winter to late spring is busiest. It's not uncommon for staff members from mid winter through the spring to put in 13-hour workdays.

"We have a phenomenal group of people. They know their work and they stay on top of it," says Larson. She describes the staff as "the institutional memory" of the H programs.

"I have worked with a lot of great teams; this team is one of the best," adds Zix, a veteran government officer.

The visa approval process at the consulate takes two days, and that's after officials receive applicants' petitions, which must be submitted 48-hours prior to their scheduled arrival date. On the first day, applicants submit the necessary documents and are fingerprinted. The



The faces of men that will be mowing your clients' properties and laying their pavers

hopefuls return the second day for face-to-face interviews before experienced consular officers.

"The whole process has to move like a ballet," says Zix. "It requires a tremendous amount of teamwork."

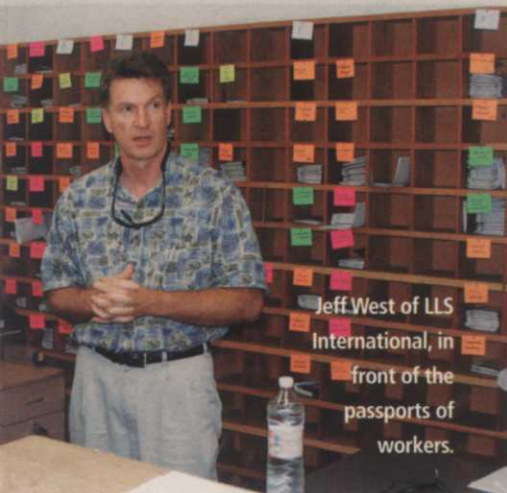
Even so, the process must become even more efficient if it's going to keep up with the crush of applicants, Larson and Zix agree. The passage of the Save our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act in 2005 allows the return to U.S. employers

of workers who have participated in H-2B in any of the previous three years. It will more than double the number of H-2B visa applications this year. If Congress approves and extends the Act again this spring, it could, by the 2008 season, quadruple the number of H-2B visas. Without the Act, only 66,000 could be issued.

"This is the first year for the R's (H-2Rs) and nobody knew how many there would be," says Larson. "We're still trying to figure out how best to manage it."

Her post and others handling visa requests are making the visa application process as automated and transparent as possible. Electronic applications speed the process and result in fewer errors than handwritten document, adds Zix.

"Basically, what we want to do here is make sure we send good people up to good jobs in the United States," says Larson. "The people that come to our mission for 'H' visas have families and homes and they want to return to them. The money they send home is very important to their families." — R.H.



Jeff West of LLS International, in front of the passports of workers.

continued from page 32

known to charge exorbitant fees to eager-to-work compatriots. On the U.S. side employers have been gouged by unscrupulous agents as well.

"Company owners sometimes spend more time checking out a truck or a piece of equipment that they're thinking about buying than they do the agent they're hiring for these workers," says Jim Zix, an official at the U.S. consulate in Monterrey.

"We try to make the system as transparent as possible for the workers and for the

U.S. employers," insists West, a former golf course superintendent who first got involved with migrant labor when he built a golf course in southeastern Michigan in the mid 1990s. He says he was impressed by their work ethic.

It's 9 a.m. the day after the latest bus of workers rolled away from the curb in front of his Monterrey offices and headed north. West studies the wiggly line on his computer terminal in an empty upstairs. The line dissects a map of the state of Texas. It

continued on page 36

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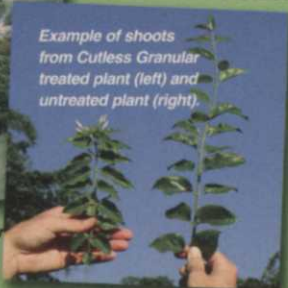
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Example of shoots from Cutless Granular treated plant (left) and untreated plant (right).



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continued from page 34

shows the progress of the bus filled with 45 Mexican workers processed just the day before. The line on the map displays where and how far the bus, equipped with a GPS unit, has traveled. West says that in addition to himself, company owners with workers on that bus can see where it is at any time, too.

““Company owners sometimes spend more time checking out a truck or a piece of equipment that they’re thinking about buying than they do the agent they’re hiring for these workers.”

— **Jim Zix**, an officer at the U.S. consulate in Monterrey.

“It’s a 13-hour drive to Dallas,” says West pointing to a spot on the map where the chartered bus has been tracked. It’s 9 a.m., which means it took the bus and the workers just 2 1/2 hours to cross the border. Not bad. Usually it takes longer, much longer, to cross.

The final stop for this particular bus, a modern charter with two drivers, is a landscape company in Columbus, OH.

Tomorrow there will be more buses from Ocampo Street filled with workers headed north. The day after that, yet others. **LM**

Faith, hope and a lightweight jacket

MONTERREY, MEXICO — Brothers Jose Silvano Patino Rangel, 23, and Ramiro Patino Rangel, 19, grew up in the rich agricultural valley near the city of Celaya in central Mexico. They lived and worked on the family’s small ranch.

The evening of March 12 they began a 40-hour journey that will change their lives and probably the lives of their immediate family as well. They and about 30 other Mexican workers boarded a modern bus on a busy street here.

The bus, as it winds its way northeast, will drop the men off, a small group at a time at employers’ businesses or prearranged housing, in U.S. cities and towns along the route. The Rangel brothers will end up in Philadelphia. This will be their first time in the United States, and also their first time working as a seasonal guest worker or in landscaping.

The older brother, Jose, talks for both. Ramiro stares impassively ahead.

No, insists Jose with stoic resolve, they’re not apprehensive about leaving their families and working in the United States for the next eight months. And, no, they don’t know what they’ll be doing, but they’re eager to start.

How did they find out about the Philadelphia company? A friend recommended it, says Jose. The friend said the company pays workers what it promises and treats them fairly.

What did the brothers take with them to Philadelphia?

Four pairs of pants and four tee shirts each and enough money, even after paying about \$150 each for the bus fare, to buy food for about a week. He says they expect (and hope) to begin working and earning money immediately after arriving.

When informed that Philadelphia’s weather can be brisk in March and they could see snow (something neither brother has experienced before), Ramiro shrugs his shoulders and holds up a light jacket. He says he’s ready. The look on his young face, however, suggests he’s not so sure. — **R.H.**



Jose Patino Rangel, left, and brother Ramiro Patino Rangel want to start work right away.

INDUSTRY LOBBIES FOR H-2B, PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 38 → →



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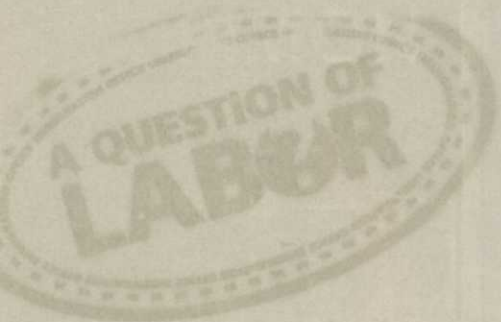
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Phillip Spector, from Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's office, met with Jim Flippo, Donna Gorjon and Arthur Edwards to discuss H-2B reform.

Legislative red tape

This year's H-2B Fly-In to Washington, D.C., to rally support for legislation opened participants' eyes to the reality of the system and its timelines

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Advocates for the Save Our Small and Seasonal Business Act of 2006 (bills H.R.4740 and S.2284) had one simple request for Congress at the second annual H-2B Fly-In March 15 in Washington, D.C. Change the number six to nine. Extend the already existing SOS Act from 2006 to 2009 to keep the H-2B guest worker program going for at least three more years, until a more permanent immigration solution is found.

Timing is everything

"There is one bill that keeps me from going out of business next year," said Hank Lavery, founder of Save Small Business, the organizer of the Fly-In. "Your representatives in Congress need to know how important the H-2B program is to you. As small business owners, we are more important on Capitol Hill than you can imagine."

With comprehensive immigration reform legislation introduced by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) being debated, there is concern that the H-2B bill may be overlooked. Even if a major immigration re-

form bill passes, there may be a period of time before it can be implemented.

Companies looking to use H-2B workers in 2007 need to submit their applications in July, which they can't do since the current legislation is set to expire at the end of 2006. If nothing is done, those companies will not be able to legally bring in guest workers, and will not be able to meet staffing needs for next year.

"We've tried to hire workers in our own area and we couldn't do it," said Chris Hayes, vice president of Ground-Masters, based in Loveland, OH. "We have 250 H-2B workers this year. We'd like 350 to grow the company. Without them, we're stuck."

Joe Drake, president of J.F.D. Landscapes in Chagrin Falls, OH, concurred. "I'd like to make some improvements to my business, spend some money on new equipment and upgrades. But I can't do that if I don't know if I will have any workers next year."

The process explained

The SOS bill will not likely be voted on

by Congress on its own. Most likely, it will be attached to another bill. But in order for that to happen, the bill needs to gain enough momentum to put it in front of hundreds of other bills. That happens by getting Congressmen to co-sponsor the bill, which was the key goal of the Fly-In.

Don Mooers, an attorney specializing in immigration and nationality law, said when enough legislators co-sponsor the bill, it can be attached to another bill through a simple voice vote (yea or nea) or unanimous consent. The bill that passed last year, for instance, was attached to supplemental funding for Iraq.

"There's three reasons why there should be no problem getting your Congressman on board," Mooers said. "It's simple, it's non-controversial and it's urgent."

"We have to change Congress's perception of this from a foreign issue to a domestic one," he added. "It's not about immigration. It's about small business. And there's no Republican or Democrat who isn't in favor of small business."

As of March 15, there were 18 Senate co-sponsors and 43 House co-sponsors.

Even if you were unable to attend the Fly-In, Lavery, Mooers and Tom Delaney of PLANET urge everyone who is concerned about this issue to contact their Congressmen, and push to get them to co-sponsor the bill.

See expanded coverage of the Fly-In at www.landscapemanagement.net. **LMI**

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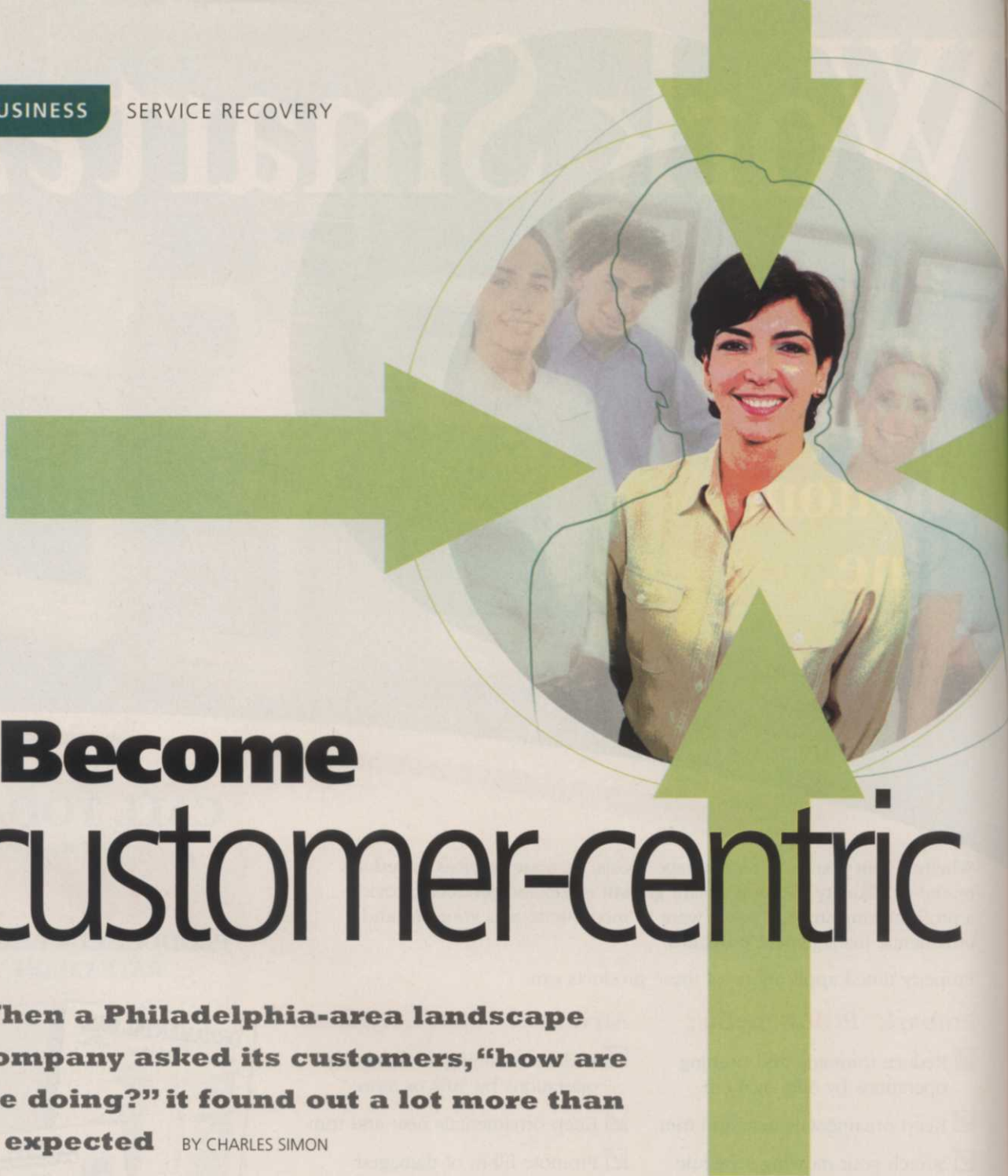
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Become customer-centric

When a Philadelphia-area landscape company asked its customers, "how are we doing?" it found out a lot more than it expected BY CHARLES SIMON

T

he customer's voice started out cool and restrained but soon escalated into a volcano of emotion as he recounted what had happened earlier that day. He said one of our workers, zipping his zero-turn around a corner of the property, sprayed his wife and her pet dog with grass clippings. "Unbelievable," is the last word the angry client sputtered be-

fore he hung up, and almost before I could croak out an apology.

Hard as it is to believe, customers do sometimes get upset with us. Screw-ups happen in the landscape business.

Thankfully most are not as dramatic as the above example, meaning we almost always get an opportunity to rescue a displeased customer. How we respond to customer dissatisfaction and, better

yet, discover and correct service malfunctions before they cause customers to cancel, profoundly affect our success.

Before we continue, let's all agree on certain points. First, we must have customers to be in business. Second, the

more customers ("good" customers) that we retain from season to season, the better our chances of being profitable and growing our company. When we lose customers it takes time, effort and money to replace them. Our goal then is to retain a high percentage of those customers that contribute to our success. Stable, profitable small service companies such as maintenance and lawn care companies generally want to retain at least 85% of their clients from one season to the next.

Get with the system

While we all recognize that the customer is our No. 1 focus, how many of us have systems to respond to complaints and service shortcomings?

How many of us take a proactive approach to customer care by gauging and monitoring clients' expectations and satisfaction?

Admittedly, most of us can't afford a full-time employee dedicated to customer relations. Even so, we can create simple systems to measure customer satisfaction. This gives us a chance to discover what they like about our services and also what they don't like before it's too late.

Sometimes it's easy to know why a customer is upset. Grass clippings spraying all over a woman and her poodle is a good reason. Most of the time the reasons aren't so obvious.

The system that we use in our company is simple but has several compo-

nents: We each send each customer an annual survey; we include a quarterly "How are we doing?" insert with our invoices; we respond quickly to calls; and we send each customer an annual "thank you," either a gift or a special message.

Survey says

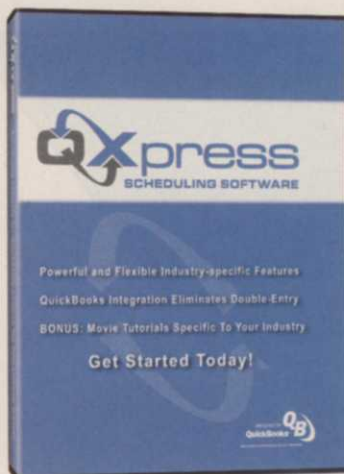
The survey responses have been instructive and in some cases surprising. We're using them as a road map for better customer relations.

Before we began surveying our cus-

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tomers we took it for granted that we were doing a great job. The responses told us that, in most respects, we were. That encouraged us. More than 95% of our clients told us they were satisfied with our landscaping work. But the survey told us that three other areas within our company needed work — prompt return of customers' calls, customer communications and invoicing, which several clients described as sometimes inaccurate, arriving late and being poorly detailed.

We heeded the survey results and went to work.

First, instead of allowing calls to go to the answering machine and trying to return them at the end of the day, we hired a person to

staff the office and respond to callers.

Next, we scrapped our homemade invoice system based on Microsoft Works and installed Quickbooks and a lawn service database package to provide detailed and consistent invoices. The office person entered the work completed each day into the system so our invoices were accurate and got mailed on time.

We also learned that several customers were uncomfortable with the appearance of our field staff. That hadn't been high on our list of priorities. After all, our guys work hard, long days and we weren't too concerned with their pierced jewelry, tattoos, beards and clothes.

Seeking to make customers more comfortable with our employees, we decided on company uniforms and required workers to remove or cover piercing jewelry, and cover tattoos if possible.

On-time performance also needed improvement. Because we didn't have backup machines, we sometimes had to postpone services on a property for a day or two until we could get equipment repaired. In addition to disrupting crew schedules, it bothered some customers. Clearly, they wanted (and deserved) consistent, predictable and reliable service.

We now keep a backup string trimmer and blower on each trailer and maintain a spare riding and rotary mower on our lot. We've also streamlined our mower fleet, replacing four brands with a single brand. Now when there's a breakdown, the worker is accustomed to the replacement mower because it's the same make and model as the normal mower. The service remains the same for the customer. The lawn is mowed in the same manner as always with no turfing or scalping that sometimes occurs when getting accustomed to a new type of mower.

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Would you recommend us?

The results of the survey also hinted that our range of services was too broad, making it difficult for clients to make easy choices. We simplified our service offerings and grouped them into three categories: "Basic" landscape care; "Normal," maintenance plus fertilization; and "Superior," which includes seasonal color as well as the other services.

Several of our longtime clients didn't fit into any of the three categories. Instead of trying to convince them to change, we added a special personal gardener service just for them.

While a survey can illuminate things you do well and things you don't do well, the most important information you can get from it is from one simple question — "Would you recommend us?"

The results of the survey hinted that our range of services was too broad, making it hard to make choices.

If a customer doesn't respond with a "yes" to this question it means they're dissatisfied and probably looking for another service provider. You can make one of two choices in this case: Ask how you can make them happier with your service or let them go.

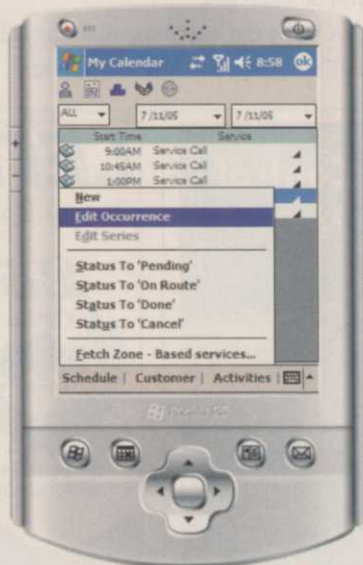
Every company has chronic grumblers and we're not immune. We had several that called to complain about something almost weekly. When we got the surveys back it wasn't difficult to pick them out by their comments. Eventually, we decided the time we were devoting trying to satisfy them could be better spent on other clients. We sent each one of them a

letter asking them to find another service provider. We drafted the letters as tactfully as we could. That simple act lifted everybody's spirits, especially the workers.

As I mentioned, we send customers a reply card survey form along with invoices

three times a year. We ask, "How are we doing?" The responses allow us to correct any problems during the season. Most of the time the checkmarks are "excellent." When there is a problem we move quickly to fix the situation.

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Circle 119

Walk the walk

Another excellent way to get customer feedback is to walk their property with them. What could be simpler? In addition to building trust with the client and gaining new work, a walk-about is often the best way to clear up misunderstandings. For example, while walking with a client last season, we both noticed a dead shrub. Our workers thought the customer was going to replace the shrub, and the customer assumed that we would and, in fact, was wondering what was taking us so long.

Of course, we replaced the shrub within days and sent him an invoice. The misunderstanding was resolved and the client was happy. We try to walk with a client on their property at least once per year because we know it's time well spent.

Customers don't always understand

how important they are to us. Occasionally we let them know with a handwritten note with their invoice. We also send clients small plants or other appropriate gifts once a year as a token of our appreciation for their loyalty.

We're convinced that customers generally don't want to change landscapers, especially if don't give them a reason to want to change. You can make sure you don't let them get away by keeping the lines of communication open with a simple program consisting of customer surveys, quarterly service checkups, walking their properties with them annually and sending the occasional thank you or small gift.

Oh, by the way, remember the lady and her pet poodle that our worker

Customers don't always understand how important they are to us. Occasionally we let them know.

sprayed with grass clippings? After our worker explained what had happened, we sent flowers with a handwritten note of apology to the woman. The following day the husband received a credit notice for the day's service.

They're still customers, glad to say. **LJM**
 — The author is a manager at a Philadelphia-area landscape contracting company. Contact him at charles@charlessimon.com.

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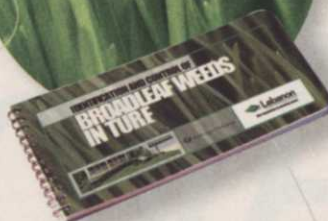
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LEGAL BRIEF:

Avoid litigation

Many lawn care companies are just one lawsuit away from bankruptcy. Protect your business with the following four tips

BY KEN MORRIS

If you are like most business owners trying to develop your customer base, promote your business and expand services, you do not have the time or money to fend off lawsuits filed by unhappy customers or state or federal regulators. But if you're not careful, you may find yourself in the courtroom defending your processes, employees, services or products.

The National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) reports that the cost to defend an average lawsuit can run you \$100,000 or more. This means many small businesses are just one lawsuit away from bankruptcy. Review your processes today to ensure you are doing everything you can to protect yourself. Start with the following four considerations:

1 **Develop a "transparent" customer relationship.** Understanding the needs of your customer can go a long way to developing a satisfied customer, whether your customer is an individual homeowner, a chain of commercial properties or a government entity. The fact is, satisfied customers rarely sue.


The first step is to interview the customer and get to know his/her needs. This includes both the customer who pays your invoice as well as your customer's customers. For example, investigate the needs of a homeowners association's property manager, and also the

continued on page 49



BUSINESS PROTECTION

This article continues the series *Landscape Management* started last fall on business protection. These articles, which will run every few months, give tips on protecting your business and your self from all types of internal and external theft. Check back throughout the year at www.landscapemanagement.net for the complete series.



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**BACKED
by BAYER.**

continued from page 46

needs of the homeowners themselves. Overlooking the expectations of your customer's customers can lead to problems down the road. And, of course, always investigate the property's turf problems and diseases, process complaints or sensitive issues. In today's litigious society, where lawsuits have tripled in the last 30 years, this due diligence is just as important for a hundred-acre resort as it is for a single homeowner.

Next, develop a written agreement with the customer. The aim here is to make your relationship with the customer as transparent as possible. This agreement needn't be overly formal or written in legalese but must spell out, in clear English, what specific services will be provided, what treatments will be performed, how often, over what areas or acreage, and at what cost.

Make sure that the services you perform are accurately and clearly reflected in the written agreement. The customer also needs to be able to easily cancel the service if he/she is not satisfied.

Maintaining transparency also means providing literature about the products you will apply. Leave behind an easy-to-locate, simple document describing the chemicals used, how they're applied, and how they interact with the lawn or property, even if no one is at home at the time of your application.

This document alerts the homeowner to the treatments and also manages their expectations. For example, suppose your market covers one or more of the southern states where fire ants are a problem. If your customer has contacted you seeking an application to control those fire ants, it will be important to provide written communication to the customer after your treatment that describes what he or she can expect. Does the product immediately kill all fire ants or does it take sev-

eral days? Are there precautions the customer should take? When will retreats be needed? If you don't take steps to communicate this information to your customer at the time of treatment you're opening yourself up to complaints, confusion or worse.

In addition, always follow up with the customer within a week to 10 days. Follow up ensures they received the leave-behind materials and catches any problems before they snowball.

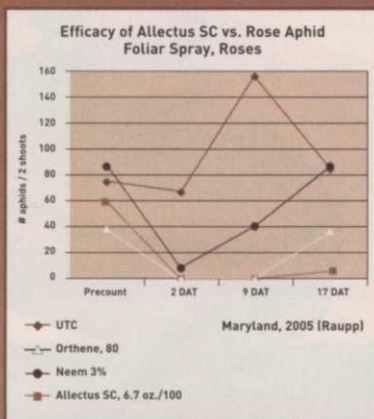
In today's litigious society, where lawsuits have tripled in the last 30 years, due diligence is just as important for a hundred-acre resort as it is for a single homeowner.

In general, strive for candor and fair dealing and, when discussing chemical products, always base your statements about what will be done within the four corners of a product's label. Under no circumstance should you misrepresent what the product will do or claim it will control a particular pest or disease that is not on the label. Use the same words the manufacturer uses on your customer communications.

If a claim arises, you will want to have preserved the opportunity to tender that claim to the manufacturer. And you cannot do that if you misrepresent what the product will do, what services you will provide or alter the product in any way.

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Avoid group discussions about prices for services or the costs of the products applied.

2 **Lean on your suppliers.** Having a good relationship with your supplier or distributor is essential, but don't forget that the manufacturer who produced the product is the real expert on its performance. Typically, the manufacturer provides product training and has literature describing the products in detail. In many cases, this is the literature that can be left behind with the customer to describe the product and service performed. It not only provides credibility for you, but also promotes a better understanding of the service performed.

By the same token, manufacturers will typically maintain comprehensive insurance programs — either self-insured or through a variety of carriers so you are ensured extra protection. Vendor endorsements are typically provided for

PHOTO BY DREAMSTIME.COM



distributors who resell the product in the form in which it is received. Where you can, substantiate that you have purchased the product as delivered, used it for its intended purpose and followed label directions exactly, you will preserve the opportunity to tender any claim to your supplier.

3 Use your association's resources.

Your association can be an important part of avoiding litigation, since it provides valuable resources on new products, new application techniques and local turf problems.

But be careful when speaking on certain topics with fellow members in the association. Avoid group discussions about prices for services or the costs of the products applied. While everyone likes to gripe

with fellow business owners in the same boat, be aware that both federal and state antitrust laws generally make it just as illegal to conspire with your competitors on the prices you charge for your services in the area as it is to jointly determine to boycott certain suppliers or attempt to induce a supplier to discriminate in the price of the product sold to you.

The best advice to follow when you hear such talk is to immediately leave the discussion—preferably after loudly exclaiming that you cannot participate in such a discussion, spilling your coffee, or doing something else that others will remember (and be able to testify about if they are ever deposed!). Association meetings can be spots where conspiracies are hatched (even unwittingly) and you will want to make sure you are not pres-

ent at the creation. Having said that, however, the association can provide information on state or federal developments, or point you to the appropriate manufacturer's representative for more information about the product and its applications.

4 Proper internal controls and documentation is your best defense.

No matter how busy you are or how quickly you are growing, documentation on each and every transaction is your best defense. Documentation that substantiates (1) what you promised, (2) what service you actually performed, and (3) the agreement you signed with your customer will go a long way to ensure a transparent operation.

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records accurately define the full scope of your activity — the treatments, their frequency, the chemicals or fertilizers used, and the technicians who applied them. This also includes a customer's remarks or complaints. Remember that what you create in writing — whether in the form of hard paper copy, or in the form of e-mails and electronic documentation — is all discoverable in the event of a claim or lawsuit.

Having internal processes and controls also means documenting employee training. Your employees need to have proper training in the application of specific products and when they should be used. The law varies from state to state but as a general rule, as long as the application is overseen or performed by someone with a license, then it is lawful. Check with

No matter how busy you are or how quickly you are growing, documentation on each and every transaction is your best defense.

legal counsel for more specifics.

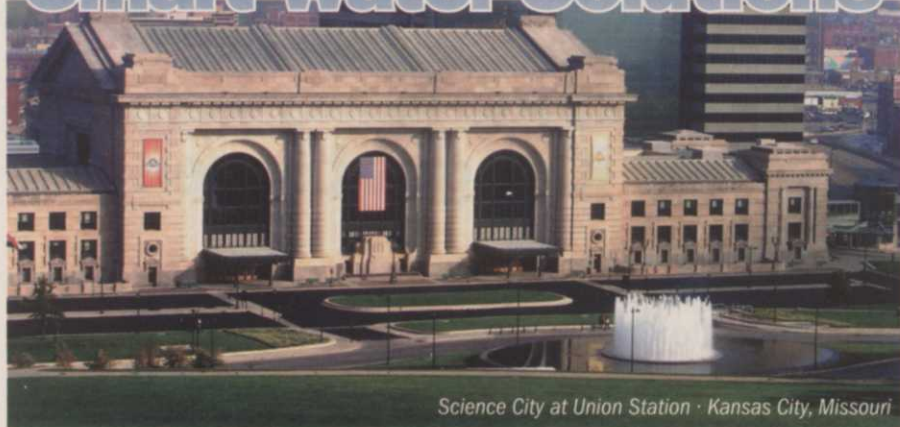
If you are employing immigrants or other non-resident aliens, you will want to make sure they present proper documentation (a green card or other U.S. Customs form like a work visa.) The time spent to train employees in the application of the products and in characteristics

of the various lawn diseases, weeds and documentation practices will be an important step in ensuring satisfied customers. After all, having satisfied customers is the best way to avoid claims and litigation in the first place. **LJM**

— *The author is an attorney specializing in Green Industry issues. Contact him at www.kenmorrislaw.com.*

NOTE: This article should not be interpreted as offering legal advice in any jurisdiction where such practice is not authorized. When legal issues arise, competent counsel familiar with your jurisdiction should be engaged, as your situation may vary depending on the facts and local statutes.

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SUPERVISORY

You're a longtime landscape contractor who has a written safety program on the books. Yet one day, you realize that your workers' compensation pre-

mium costs are continuing to rise more than you think is warranted. You investigate and find that:

- Your top managers really don't understand what they can and can't control to bring these costs down; and, as a result,
- Your supervisors are getting "mixed messages" about your safety program.

Supervisory buy-in to a safety program is critical in order to manage rising costs and to keep your employees safe, several safety professionals interviewed by *Landscape Management* agree. But how to achieve that buy-in can be tricky, particularly when supervisors are responsible for getting jobs done quickly

Take it from the top

"It has to start at the top," Bob Bogel, risk manager at Cagwin & Dorward in Novato, CA, says. "You have to have the owners of your company behind you with a solid commitment. They have to be willing to let people spend the time working on safety. If safety's not important to the owners, it won't be to anyone else."

"The thing that people don't realize is that managers and supervisors are never told by their bosses to work safely. They are told to get that message across to their employees, and that accidents are always the result of what the employee does. But that's not true," says Gregg Jauert, safety/risk manager at Bachman's nursery in Minneapolis.

safety

Get your supervisors to buy into your safety program and create a positive safety influence

BY BARBARA MULHERN



Jauert, who oversees safety at the company's landscape, greenhouse, nursery and retail garden center operations, adds: "You need to let supervisors lead by example, and you need to give them safety objectives in a tangible form. Managers' and supervisors' main responsibility is to get the product to the customer. So give them safety practices that they can in turn get to their internal customer — the employee."

At The Bruce Company in Middleton, WI, Safety Manager Laurie Bishop says that "many times, safety is an area where assumptions are made. Training isn't focused on supervisors because assumptions are made that they know all of this. Yet they are a very critical element to train if you're going to have enforcement of your safety rules. They are another set of eyes for incidents that might occur."

More potential barriers

There are a number of other reasons why it may be difficult to achieve supervisory buy-in to your safety program. "Many times, people who are direct supervisors got there because they were really good at doing that particular job. Yet their whole adult work experience might have been in a culture that's not very safety-oriented," says Mark Purschwitz, a former cooperative extension service agricultural safety specialist.

Purschwitz, now an agricultural safety research scientist at the National Farm Medicine Center in Marshfield, WI, adds that "hopefully, you have supervisors who can be trained to understand" that over the long run, taking time out for safety will result in even greater productivity because there will be fewer injuries and less employee turnover.

Other potential barriers to supervisory buy-in include:

- Pulling supervisors off of their daily duties for training. "Having them pulled

TIPS FOR supervisory buy-in

▶ **Hold your supervisors accountable for safety.** "Set it up so you're holding them accountable for their crews exhibiting safe behaviors. Measure compliance with these behaviors, not just numbers of accidents," Bob Bogel, risk manager at Cagwin & Dorward in Novato, CA, suggests. "Are they measuring their people on their behaviors, regardless of the accidents? Because it's the behaviors that will matter in the long run."

▶ **Have reasonable expectations so time is budgeted for safety training.** "Make sure your supervisors realize they are supposed to take the time to do safety training — that they aren't supposed to skip it to get more work done," says Mark Purschwitz, a former cooperative extension agricultural safety specialist.

▶ **Consider implementing a "safety incentive" program.** At The Bruce Company, Safety Manager Laurie Bishop requires documentation from crew leaders that four tailgate training sessions have been presented each month. "At the end of each month, we hold a drawing, and seven of them get \$50 cash awards. We also give out cash awards at the end of the season for the people who have turned in their documentation every time, have given me safety suggestions, and who have had no injuries," she says. All crew members who have received the tailgate training (as well as their crew leaders) are eligible for the cash awards.

▶ **Continuously communicate safety to your supervisors.** Just because you have communicated with them once or twice about their responsibilities to enforce safe work practices "does not mean they will forever understand that requirement. The message needs to be communicated constantly and consistently to supervisors, along with training them in recognizing and responding to unsafe conditions," says attorney John McLachlan of Fisher & Phillips LLP in Oakland, CA.

▶ **Invest in a safe work environment.** Supervisors will not be motivated to implement safety programming if your company is not willing to provide well maintained, safe equipment, or does not provide quality personal protective equipment, Purschwitz says.

▶ **Lead by example.** "Safety has to be part of your company's culture and it really does have to start at the top," Purschwitz says. "If your supervisors think you're just pushing it off on them — or that you don't practice what you preach — they won't do it. People pay a lot more attention to actions than to words. — B.M."

off means there's no supervisory function going on that day," Bishop says. "We do much of our [supervisory] training during the winter months. They get so busy with other things that having it trickle down from them to the next level, our crew leaders, can be difficult."

- Not understanding how your supervisors think. "You need to talk with them and find out what they think," Purschwitz says. "Don't just assume they'll buy in. You may have to get back to the real basics on why

this is important and what it can achieve."

- Failing to talk with your supervisors in terms they can relate to. It's important to clearly tell them that rushing and taking shortcuts are two major reasons why accidents occur, and that a serious employee injury means they will lose even more time (finding and training a replacement worker; being tied up in interviews with OSHA, insurance investigators; etc.) than if they had taken a few minutes to

continued on page 72

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continued from page 70

do safety training or enforce safety rules to begin with.

Bogel says it's critical that all management personnel — starting at the top — clearly understand why it's important to focus on safety and what's in it for them. For example, he says, when discussing workers' compensation costs, show your top managers exactly "where they have control" in bringing those costs down.

"The control they have is in the claims, and you have to focus on behavior, because claims are behavior-driven," he says.

Implementing safe behaviors that will result in fewer accidents, then measuring those behaviors, is an effective way to bring job-related injury costs down, Bogel says. "People will do what they're being measured on. That's why you need

your owners to put safety ahead of production. Your supervisors have to know that your owners will back them up on doing things safely," he says.

Supervisory buy-in to your safety program isn't just a good idea, it's critical if you want to have a profitable operation, says attorney John McLachlan of Fisher & Phillips LLP in Oakland, CA. In addition to workers' compensation, "some states have statutes which enable injured workers to receive even greater benefits for injury than normally provided under the workers' compensation framework where it can be shown that there was serious and willful misconduct on the part of management."

In California, for example, he says, compensation for an injury can be increased by 50% if the injury resulted

from the employer or his/her managing representative violating a safety order "or ignoring a condition that was obvious and created a probability of serious injury where failure to correct the condition constituted reckless disregard for the probable consequences.

"These types of statutes also suggest that supervisors should take employee complaints about unsafe conditions seriously, and immediately investigate so as to show the employer's concerns about providing a safe environment," McLachlan says. **LM**

— The author is PLANET's safety specialist and a freelance writer who lives in Belleville, WI. Contact her at bamu100@aol.com.



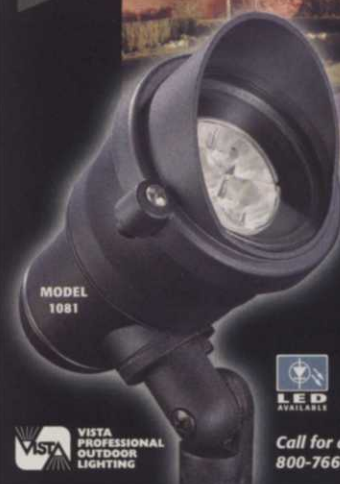
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Your turf equipment deserves to have daily inspection checks. Perform this inspection every day before the equipment is taken to the job site. Here's a checklist for major equipment:

- Check engine oil level.
- Check fuel level.
- Check coolant level.
- Check hydraulic oil level.
- Look for any signs of fluid leaks, including fluid markings on the floor. If there is a leak, determine where it is coming from.
- Ensure there are no restrictions to engine air filter inlets, inlets for engine cooling air, or the muffler outlet.
- Visually check belts or hoses for cracks or breaks.
- Check that shields or guards are in place and securely fastened.
- Visually check that cutting blades are sharp and without damage.
- Check that the engine interlock system operates correctly for starting and during operating procedures.
- Check that brakes operate and hold correctly.
- Check for correct tire pressure.

Be sure to consult the equipment owner's manual for the complete list of daily inspection items along with their proper procedures. In most cases, an equipment technician is a good teacher to demonstrate the daily inspection routine and what to look for. All of these checks can be completed in less than five minutes. The time investment will be small, but the ability to avoid equipment down time and problems will be huge. There's no excuse for not completing a daily inspection “Just Do It!”



By Mark Nelson, Master Instructor, Briggs & Stratton Customer Education

From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY CLIENT REQUESTS

You have your crew trained well on the equipment, but what about the rest of the job?



Speaking English

BY HARRY SMITH

Your crew looks sharp in the customer's yard. You think you have all the bases covered. You have done everything possible to maximize customer satisfaction. You have trained your crews carefully. They know how to mow, blow, edge and trim with precision. They operate the equipment safely and effectively. You have even shown the crew the equipment manufacturer's operator videos.

You have tested them on their knowledge, not just asked them if they know how. Your insurance agent barely grumbles. You instituted a “to do” checklist system for the contracted tasks at each account. Your crew sports neat and visible uniforms. Your complaint calls have dropped dramatically over the last few years. You are feeling pretty smug. You have done everything you can do.

Uh oh, maybe you have not. You have your crew trained well on the equipment, but is that all they need to know? What about the rest of the job? Does your crew leader know how to sell additional services, handle complaints

and take referrals? What if your crew leader does not speak the same language as your customer? What do they do to overcome the language barrier? What if the crew leader is accosted with a complaint? Is your customer service policy on your contract?

Maybe you have more to do to create that “perfect crew.”

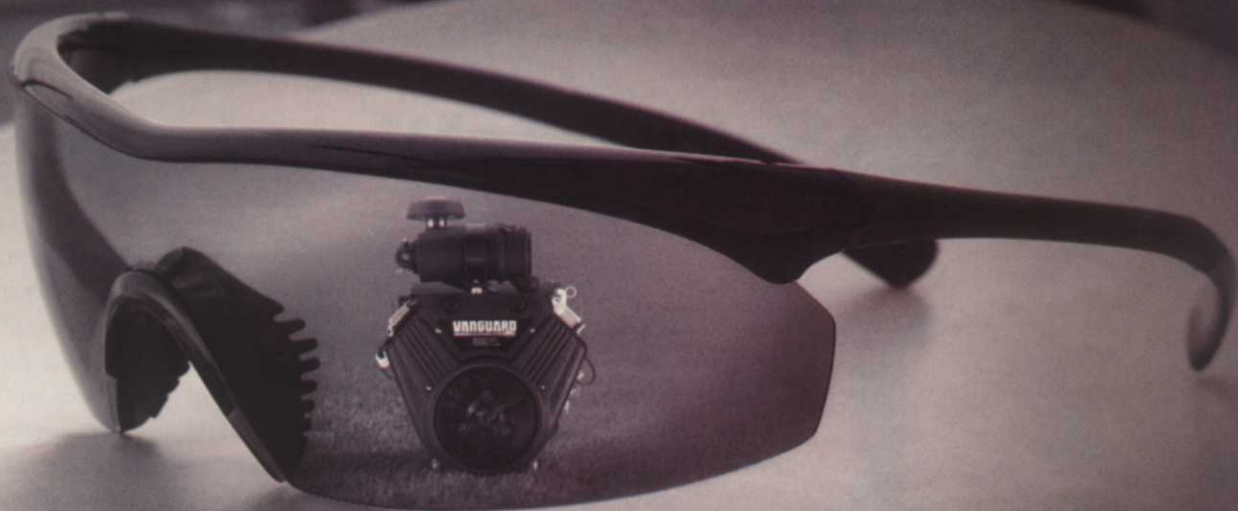
Train your crew leader to address complaints. Empower him to take corrective action immediately whenever possible. Do not kill the messenger.

When the crew leader calls in with a problem, help instead of harangue. If you have to send out a crew without an English-speaking crew member, equip everyone on the crew with your business cards. Have a clear message on the card indicating that the employee does not speak English and how to contact you with complaints or requests for additional services.

If you are not training your employees to speak English, start doing so. English has become the worldwide language of business. Be sure that your workers understand that they are more valuable employees when they can speak English. Prove it with more pay as they learn.

— The author is turf equipment professor at Lake City Community College, Lake City, FL. Contact him at smith@lakecitycc.edu.

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As your business grows and expands, the need to manage the life cycle of your computers increases.



Use the 'waterfall' process

BY TYLER WHITAKER

I've been playing with computers for years. Nothing tells that story better than the collection of old and obsolete computers I've collected. Let's face it, every year you can find a new reason to upgrade. You always need more RAM, more disk space, or a faster CPU to run the latest software. But what can you do with those older machines? The answer is plenty.

As your business grows and expands, the need to manage the life cycle of your computers increases as well. The typical life span of computer hardware is three years. Or at least that's the generally acceptable length of time you should be depreciating them as assets. Any time over that should be seen as a bonus. Managing these resources to maximize the productivity of your business should be your goal.

Rank computer users

A computer is only as productive as the person using it. For this reason consider establishing a "waterfall process" for handling your computer needs. The basic idea behind this approach is to put the best or fastest machine in the hands of the employee who can use it the most. The power of the waterfall process is that once defined, you can trickle new technology down through the organization knowing that it's in the best hands to use it.

The first step is to rank your computer users. Power users crunch a lot of numbers, use high-end graphic design programs, or are paid enough that

small improvements in performance translate to saved time and money. On the other end of the scale are normal users who may need e-mail and word processing capabilities but nothing special.

With your list of users defined, you're ready to get started. Give the new computers to your power users. Then distribute their old machines down the list to your normal users. Eventually the oldest machines come out the other end of the process. This way you know everyone in the company is being upgraded in the most productive way for your business.

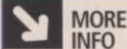
Options for used machines

This leaves one last question: "What do we do with all these old computers?" The good news is that you have a lot of options. "Employee-only" sales can be a great benefit and a chance to recoup some of the purchase price. Donating them to your favorite charity, school or church group is a great way to help others and possibly get a tax break. Throwing them away is always an option, but computer recycling is a better long-term environmental choice.

Another alternative is the Freecycle Network (www.freecycle.org). It's an Internet-based, non-profit way to give (and receive) all kinds of free stuff. Millions of people give away "used but not abused" items, all free of charge.

Get organized to maximize your purchases. Managing turnover is a simple matter of planning.

— *The author is chief technology officer for the Symbiot Business Group. Contact him at 801/307-0730 or twhitaker@symbiot.biz. Visit his blog at www.tylerwhitaker.com.*



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Warm control

Hard-to-control broadleaf weeds like Virginia buttonweed can be controlled with new herbicides.

your ability to diagnose chronic problems in the environment that limit turfgrass growth is vital to achieving long-term weed control solutions. The first step of a weed control program is to correctly identify the weed. This first step is sufficient for many crops but not for turfgrass. The first step in a turfgrass weed control program is identify the problem that has limited turfgrass competitiveness. Then you must the problem.

If the underlying problem that has allowed weeds an opportunity for invasion is not fixed, new weeds will invade the area after the current weeds are controlled. Be aware that some environments are not suited to turfgrass. That's when you discuss alternatives with your client.

New directions in weed control for warm-season turfgrass

BY DR. SHAWN ASKEW

Demand for professional turf care and expectations for weed-free turfgrass have increased in recent years. Fortunately, the number of herbicides that turf car pros can use has also increased. Understanding the nuances of where herbicides can be applied and which weeds they control is a daunting task. The following discussion will summarize several new options for weed control in warm-season turfgrasses and hopefully increase your tools for success.

Most southern weed control problems can be broken into three categories:

1. Crabgrass, Poa and other

annual grasses

2. Broadleaf weeds

3. Nongrass plants like sedges, rushes and wild onion/garlic

Professional lawn care companies often offer crabgrass and broadleaf weed control as standard. The client usually pays extra for sedges or unusual or difficult-to-control weeds. From the turf care professional's perspective, herbicides should be safe for use on most turfgrasses and control a broad range of weed species. In the "old days" products were applied at high-use rates to achieve that end. Changes in

product lines, release of generic products and government restrictions on pesticides make it difficult for professionals to find the solution they need in just a few products.

Turf weed control basics

The golden rule of turfgrass weed control is this: The majority of turf weeds are controlled by good cultural practices, such as cultivar selection, fertility and mowing, which promote a healthy turfgrass canopy.

You must be able to grow grass, not just kill weeds. Also,

Crabgrass, Poa and other annual grasses

► Pre-emergence Herbicides

— The foundation of turfgrass weed control is pre-emergence herbicides for crabgrass control. In fact, crabgrass (*Digitaria* spp.) is one of the world's most economically important weeds because of the money spent on controlling it in turfgrass. That hasn't changed over the years.

The second most common grass weed in warm-season turfgrass is annual bluegrass or

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continued from page 82

Poa (*Poa annua*). Poa differs from crabgrass in that it requires pre-emergence herbicide treatments in the fall, not spring. The most common pre-emergence herbicides for crabgrass and Poa control will contain at least one of the following ingredients: Atrazine, benefin, bensulide, dithiopyr, pendimethalin, proflam, oryzalin, oxadiazon, siduron, simazine and trifluralin. These chemicals vary in their effectiveness for crabgrass control and turfgrass selectivity and information is readily available to differentiate them.

New Direction — One of the

newest issues related to pre-emergence crabgrass and Poa control is availability of generic products. The trade name versus generic debate is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it say that generic products may or may not perform as well as trade name products. There are several ways to save money; consistency of weed control that avoids customer complaints is one of them. Reducing the bottom line on chemical costs is another.

► **Post-emergence Herbicides**

— Plant size at application is the primary factor for weed control failures when treating



Large crabgrass (left) and smooth crabgrass (right) are currently emerging in Southern lawns. Several new herbicides are available to deal with these pests.

crabgrass, Poa or other annual grasses with post-emergence herbicides. Herbicide ingredients that have long been available for crabgrass control include DSMA, fenoxaprop, fluazifop, MSMA and sethoxydim.

New Direction — Quinclorac (Drive 75DF from BASF) was registered for use in turfgrass within the last six years. With continued use, our understanding of how best to apply

this product has increased. For example, Drive can be applied at seeding time of several turfgrass species including the newer fine turf seeded Bermudagrasses. Drive can also be used during sprigging of several warm-season grasses. Drive controls crabgrass and several other annual grasses but it does not control goosegrass (*Eleusine indica*) or Poa. Drive also controls several broadleaf species, such as

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white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and suppresses nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*). For post-emergence treatments, Drive requires a crop oil concentrate or methylated seed oil adjuvant for best effectiveness.

When used at seeding, simply mix Drive with water.

Foramsulfuron (Revolver from Bayer) is a new herbicide for control of Poa and other cool-season grasses like fescues, bluegrasses and ryegrass. Revolver is also excellent for goosegrass and dallisgrass (*Paspalum dilatatum*) control but only suppresses crabgrass. Revolver is safe to use at nearly any stage of Bermudagrass or zoysiagrass development but may not be safe on all warm-season grasses.

Trifloxysulfuron (Monument from Syngenta Professional Products) will control young crabgrass plants and provide residual control for one to four weeks. Monument

is best used for controlling cool-season grasses like Poa and sedges but also has activity on broadleaf weeds, dallisgrass and wild garlic to name a few.

Broadleaf weeds

Most broadleaf weeds in turf are controlled during dormancy with glyphosate or with selective post-emergence herbicides during active turfgrass growth. Products that contain one or more of the following ingredients have been available for many years: 2,4-D, dicamba, chlorsulfuron, clopyralid, MCPP, metsulfuron and triclopyr. These products often require repeat treatments for hard-to-control weeds like Virginia buttonweed (*Diodia virginiana*) and ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*). In addition, hormone herbicides like 2,4-D and triclopyr can injure Bermudagrass and other warm-season

Relative effectiveness of several new herbicides for weed control in warm-season turfgrass.

HERBICIDE	WEEDS			
	CRABGRASS	POA	BROADLEAF	SEDGES
CERTAINTY	Fair	Fair-Good	Fair-Good	Good
DISMISS	Not labeled	Not labeled	Good	Good
DRIVE	Good	Not labeled	Fair	Fair
MONUMENT	Fair-Good	Good	Fair-Good	Good
QUICKSILVER	Not labeled	Not labeled	Good	Not labeled
REVOLVER	Fair	Good	Fair	Not labeled

Fair = suppression only or controls relatively few species
Good = controls the weed in most cases or controls most species

grasses when applied during greenup.

New Direction — Sulfosulfuron (Certainty from Monsanto) is excellent for post-emergence control of several broadleaf species. When using Certainty for sedge control, keep in mind its effectiveness against broadleaf weeds.

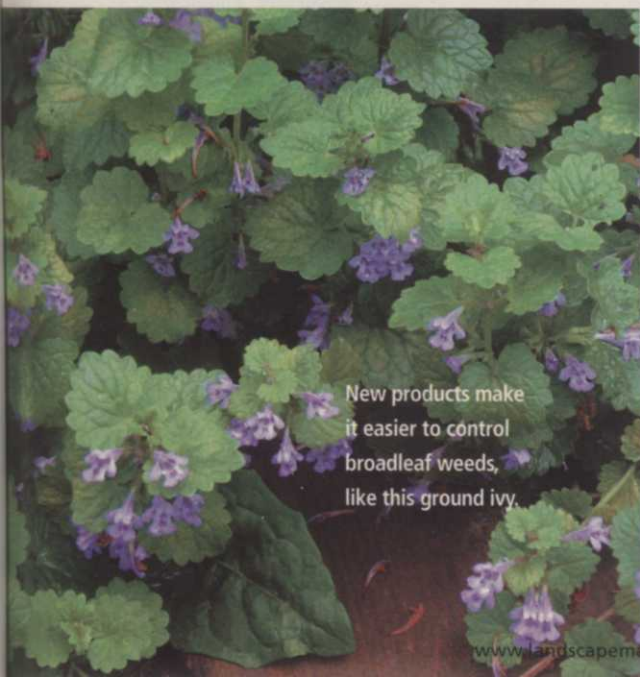
Quinlorac (Drive 75DF from BASF) is excellent for white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and speedwell (*Veronica arvensis*) but misses several broadleaf weeds. However, it is good to read up on its broadleaf activity when you plan to use Drive anyway for postemergence crabgrass control. You may save considerable money if your broadleaf weeds are taken care of by Drive during the crabgrass treatment.

Carfentrazone (Quicksilver T&O and SpeedZone from PBI Gordon.) is a new herbicide for control of seedling broadleaf weeds and to improve speed of activity for other herbicides. For example, SpeedZone is a mix of hormone-type herbicides and

carfentrazone. Quicksilver only has carfentrazone and is safe to use on seedling turfgrass to clean up seedling broadleaf weeds. Few people know of this use for Quicksilver as it is usually marketed as an additive to give quick "burn" symptoms and improve spectrum of weed control with other herbicides.

Monument was mentioned for Poa and crabgrass control but this herbicide has appreciable broadleaf control potential. Monument works well on Virginia button weed and some other hard-to-control broadleaf weeds.

Sulfentrazone (Dismiss from FMC Corp.) is a new herbicide for control of sedges and broadleaf weeds in cool- and warm-season turfgrass. We are still learning about this herbicide but it is known to control several broadleaf weeds when applied post-emergence. Its preemergence activity on a wide range of weeds is less understood. This product offers much more than sedge control and is worth a try.



New products make it easier to control broadleaf weeds, like this ground ivy.

Sedges and other non-grass plants

The number of sedge control products has grown in the past few years. In years past, MSMA, bentazon and halo-sulfuron took care of most of our sedge problems. These products have been used successfully for several years but seldom control all sedge species and often require repeat treatments.

New Direction — Sulfosulfuron (Certainty from Monsanto) is excellent for post-emergence control of a wide range of sedge species. This herbicide is relatively safe for use within a few weeks of

Certainty, Dismiss and Monument are three new herbicides to deal with sedge problems in warm-season turfgrasses.

Bermudagrass seeding or sprigging and will be helpful to combat sedge problems that occur in conjunction with a "grow in" situation.

Trifloxysulfuron (Monument from Syngenta) is extremely effective for post-emergence control of several sedge species, rushes and wild garlic.

Sulfentrazone (Dismiss from FMC Corp.), like Certainty and Monument, raises the bar for sedge control compared to our old industry stan-



MORE INFO
www.landscapemanagement.net
 Missed last month's article on weed control in cool-season turfgrass? Click on the March issue cover from our home page to access "Cool control" by Ohio State's Dr. David Gardner.

standard herbicides. These three herbicides have all been marketed within the last three years and increase or effectiveness for sedge control considerably. These new herbicides should increase your ability to maintain southern turfgrasses. This article was not intended to cover all possible scenarios for weed control in warm-season turfgrass and mention of a

particular product was not meant to exclude other suitable products that may be used for the same purpose. Always read and follow label instructions when using any pesticide. **LJM**
 — The author is an assistant professor and extension turfgrass weed scientist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Contact him at saskew@vt.edu.

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Turbo TeeJet® Induction 	---	Excellent		Turbo TwinJet® 	Excellent	Excellent	
AIC TeeJet® 	Good	Excellent		XP BoomJet® 	---	Very Good	

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Propane mowers gain fans

Grounds pros claim that alternative-fuel commercial mowers have power and big potential

BY JAMES GUYETTE

Propane-powered commercial mowers, although still rare, are rolling off assembly lines. Chances are you may see and per-

haps operate one on environmentally sensitive properties near you soon. Propane's clean-burning properties make these mowers a functional "green" alternative to gasoline- and diesel-powered units.

Pollution-conscious companies, communities, universities and other institutions can contribute to protecting air quality while at the same time saving green energy through better fuel efficiency and fewer oil changes.



Dixie Chopper expects to sell 500 to 1,000 propane-powered mowers this year.

Sloshes, splashes and spills of gasoline are eliminated along with potentially harmful vapor releases. Plus, pilferage is reduced at locations where stored gas cans invite "fuelish" thievery.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has stated that a typical 4-hp gasoline lawnmower engine generates nearly six times as many volatile organic compounds per hour of use as the family car. Compared to a gasoline-

powered mower engine, a propane version reduces emissions of ozone precursors by one-third; fuel economy is boosted 14%, claim propane equipment manufacturers.

Propane's potential

"We're excited about the market and it's potential," says Jessie Johnson, vice president of sales and marketing for Blossman Gas, Ocean Springs, MS. He encourages propane

continued on page 90

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A 30-hp Generac engine powers Dixie Chopper's new LPG mowers.

Compared to a gasoline-powered mower engine, a propane version reduces emissions of ozone precursors by one third, claim manufacturers.

continued from page 88
suppliers to "do research in your market and talk to potential users. Assist the landscape equipment suppliers to get the equipment into your market."

Johnson says the market for propane-powered mowers appears "huge" in Texas, California, Arizona, Georgia and Florida. In cold-weather states, like Ohio and Michigan, the most promising uses for propane vehicles, apart from regional transit, will be for snow removal, he says.

For years, Blossman personnel have been building propane mower prototypes and converting mower brands to run on LPG (commercial propane), including a converted Toro zero-turn model with 48-in. deck that it sent to the University of Richmond in Virginia to test against a similar gasoline-powered model.

At the test's conclusion, the university kept the LPG mower and returned the other. It has since purchased three propane-powered utility carts and is adding two more this year.

"Obviously, we're pleased with propane," says Steve Glass, horticulturist and landscape manager at Richmond.

He adds that operators preferred the LPG mower over the identical gasoline unit for several reasons.

The unit seemed to have more power than the comparable gasoline unit. Also, operators of the Blossman-modified Toro unit liked having the cool-to-touch fuel tank near the driver's position. "On a hot summer day [operators] lay their arm on the tank and it stays cooler," Glass says.

Propane means green

In addition, students and faculty committed to "green" causes feel that the alternative fuel is a better fit with the campus environment.

Environmental considerations are at the top of Tom LaMuraglia's list at Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC, too. He's the landscape superintendent there.

"Everything we have is either propane or biodiesel," he says. In his equipment building are units by five different commercial equipment manufacturers.

He says fuel costs to mow the 12 acres of turfgrass at the campus are the same for gasoline and propane mowers, and he sees little performance difference in equipment

using either fuel.

Both he and Glass agree that the oil in their propane-powered mowers stays cleaner than similar gasoline-powered units. They feel this many mean longer engine life and fewer repairs for their propane equipment.

Also unique to Warren Wilson College, every student contributes 15 hours of employment to the institution each week, whether it's in an administrative office or in the field.

"All my crew members are students, and the longest I'll have anybody is four years," says LaMuraglia. He said students find the mowers easy to operate and propane tanks on the units easy to exchange.

The Propane Education and Research Council (PERC) recently earmarked \$125,000 toward its Propane Commercial Mower Development Program in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy. It seeks to promote propane's role as a mower fuel for professional landscapers and the owners of large properties.

"There's a great opportunity here," says Brian Feehan, PERC's managing director of engine fuel programs. "It has a very good potential for the propane industry to introduce new gallons into the market," he explains. What makes it attractive to the propane industry is that most of the demand for mower propane would

continued on page 92

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continued from page 90
 occur in the summer when demand for the fuel falls off. "Each commercial mower will burn 900 gallons to 1,000 gallons of propane per year," Feehan forecasts, noting that Dixie Chopper anticipates selling 500 to 1,000 propane models in 2006.

Manufacturers step up

Along with Dixie Chopper's spring debut, Envirogard /Onyx is rolling-out a line of propane mowers. Other well-known commercial mower manufacturers are studying the technology as well and have tested prototypes, but

they're still under wraps.

"There seems to be a big demand," reports Jim Coker, Envirogard's president, citing market research and solid pre-orders. "They're being sold before they're even built."

Several companies, in fact, are building zero-turn radius mowers that operate with propane. Envirogard has a 31-hp, 61-in. wide model equipped with a propane-dedicated Briggs & Stratton engine. A 17-hp converted Kawasaki powers the 42-in. version.

A 30-hp Generac propane engine powers the Dixie Chopper units available in 60-in. and 72-in. cutting widths.

Be advised, you'll be paying about 10% more for propane mowers than for identical gasoline models.

The 72-incher can mow a football field in about 10 minutes, the company says.

"It's a natural for state and national parks, campgrounds, RV parks and mobile home parks, places that already have propane on hand," says Eric Bernsee, Dixie Chopper's public relations director.

The company that boasts of making "the world's fastest lawnmower" became interested in propane a few years ago after seeing the crowds surrounding a Blossman-built LPG prototype fashioned

from a competitor's mower at a RV Park Owners Association trade show in Savannah, GA.

As the first commercial units start showing up in dealers' showrooms, be advised you'll be paying about 10% more for them than for identical gasoline models.

Even so, with gasoline hovering in the \$2.50 range this spring, contractors might pay the extra cost. **LM**

— *The author is a longtime writer and editor for the Green Industry. Contact him at jimguyette2004@yahoo.com.*

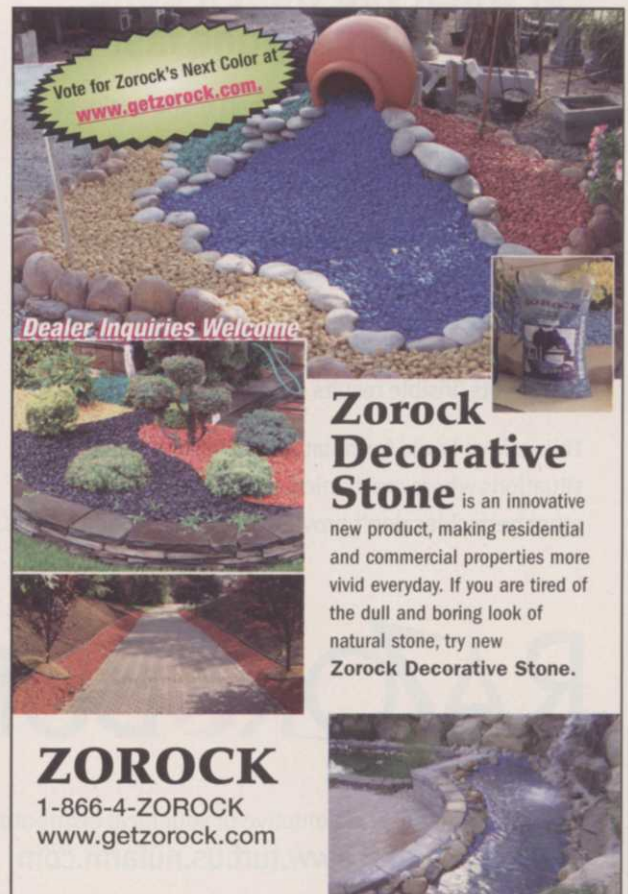


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The Walker Hi-Dump® offers another grass handling option for Walker Mower Models MD and MT with 9.5 bushel catchers. Raising the catcher box up 67 inches (170 cm) and dumping into a truck or trailer is easily completed in a 20-second cycle. Powered by a 12-volt electric/hydraulic system (operating two hydraulic cylinders), the lifting and dumping functions work independently and are controlled by two toggle switches from the operator seat. Adds only 3 inches (7.5 cm) and 150 pounds (56 kg) to the overall tractor height and weight and may be ordered as a factory installed option or installed in the field with minimal labor.

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Circle 145



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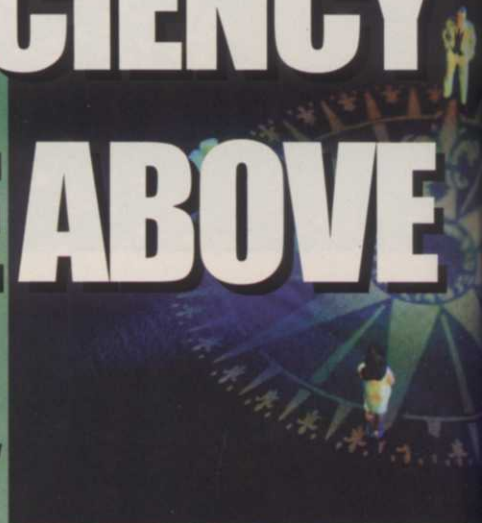
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*Kurt & Angie Hughes
Hughes Landscaping,
Colorado*



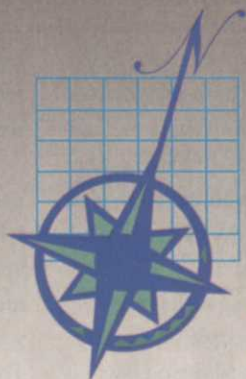
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Become a good scout

As public concern over pesticide use grows, customers expect professionals to identify a need for a chemical solution before an application BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

Scouting and identification form the basis of any successful turfgrass insect pest control program. In other words, we have to find out where the pests are doing their damage on the property, (or where they're likely to do their damage) and which evildoers are to blame. Then, of course, it's just a matter of applying the right product to solve the problem, right?

Oh, if it were only that simple.

In fact, many factors complicate our best efforts to provide clients with attractive, healthy turfgrass, one component of which is controlling turf-damaging insects.

So what could make our pest control efforts tougher? Let's start with the weather that's rarely the same from season to season. Mix in unforgiving production schedules, the arrival of new or unexpected pest species, customer cooperation (especially when it comes to irrigation)

and growing public concern over the industry's use of chemical control products. Controlling turfgrass pests goes way beyond putting product in a sprayer or a spreader and treating a property.

Indeed, the public's perception of the professional lawn care industry should be a vital concern to all professional application companies. While not a major problem in most regions of the United States, anti-chemical activism in Canada has resulted in more than 70 towns and cities passing laws to ban or severely curtail pesticide use on lawns. Activists there, making statements that our industry disputes and disregarding or downplaying the benefits of well-maintained turfgrass, say that human health and environmental risks of pesticide use are too great a price to pay for "cosmetic" purposes.

What's perhaps not so well understood by many of the people supporting efforts to outlaw chemical use on lawns is that professional applicators:

1.) are licensed and trained to use these products and

2.) use their products according to label directions, meaning they use just enough product to get the desired result. Chemical controls, especially the newest products, are not inexpensive.

The growing anti-chemical sentiment in Canada has fundamentally altered many lawn care companies' treatment programs. The watchword there is IPM, which of course stands for integrated pest management, a term you've probably heard explained many times so let's just return to two of its cornerstones — pest scouting and pest identification.

A growing number of lawn care companies keep detailed records of when and where particular turf-damaging insects appear on clients' lawns. They're also required to record chemical product use — when, where, conditions and how much. This is easy to do with most customer-

continued on page 98



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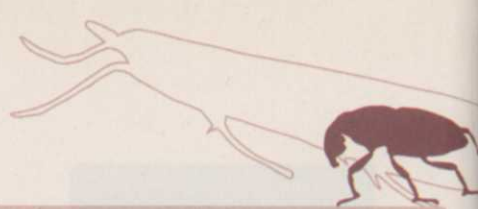
No miticide performs as well as Floramite® against key mite pests in all life stages. It pounds tough pests like two-spotted and spruce spider mites with hard-hitting contact action. Then, it gives long residual control, up to 28 days, to get those late hatches.

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continued from page 96

data systems. Unless conditions change dramatically from one season to the next, some places on properties are more prone to suffer insect damage than others. Monitor these areas closely. The process need not take long. And for most pests it's relatively easy to determine if problems are developing.

Testing is simple

To find out if chinch bugs, adult billbugs and caterpillars including armyworms, cutworms and larvae of lawn moths (sod webworms) are the source of your turf problems, do a simple drench test. Mix about two ounces of dishwashing liquid in a gallon of water and apply the liquid to one square yard of the suspected infestation. Within 10 minutes (about the time it will allow you to complete many lawn applications), you will see insects move to the surface.

If none appear and you're still suspicious that insect pests are at work, examine the crowns (where stems and roots come together) of the turfgrass and dig beneath the thatch and examine the soil. The problem could be white grubs, black turfgrass atenienus larvae or billbug larvae.

It's usually apparent when white grubs are at work, especially if there are a lot of them. In addition to areas of dead grass you may see where an animal, such as a skunk or raccoon, has been digging in the turf looking for a meal. If you suspect white grubs, pull up a portion of the damaged turf and dig around a little bit. If they're there you'll find them.

One of the most valuable tools for pest scouting and identification, apart from a small digging tool, is a magnifying loop to examine and identify the insects that you find. This is especially useful in identifying the different species of white grubs.

Southern cinch bug a problem child

Want to catch some chinch bugs? Buy yourself a small hand vacuum and put some fine mesh material across its opening. If they're in the turfgrass you will suck them up. Their presence may explain the damage in that yard that you're maintaining.

The southern cinch bug, with its piercing, sucking mouthparts, is the most important pest to St. Augustine turfgrass. One female can produce 300 eggs during her lifetime, depositing them on the blades or leaf sheaths of turfgrass. While there might be a single generation of these pests in the Middle Atlantic, south Florida may experience as many as six or seven in a year.

Dr. Jeff Michael, field development and technical service specialist for Bayer Environmental Science in Florida, says that certain areas in Florida, particularly near the Palm Coast, are reporting chinch bugs that are resistant to the pyrethroid, bifenthrin, one of the treatments of choice for this pest.

Michael says that if you're having trouble controlling chinch bugs maybe it's time to consider rotating the products you're using. He suggests a program starting with Sevin (carbaryl), following that with Allectus (a combination product containing imidacloprid and bifenthrin) and finishing up with Dylox (trichlorfon).

Chinch bugs are rarely evenly distributed over a lawn, says Michael, so monitoring is always a good idea. Cinch bug damage can mimic drought stress.

The key to controlling the pest is "to get the product to the bug," says Michael. Apply the product in the right volume of water (mix water with a pH below seven for Dylox and Sevin) and with equipment that allows for adequate coverage of the infested site. Using an adjuvant may help the product to penetrate thatch, he says. A successful application should show visible signs of control within 24 hours.

To learn more about chinch bug resistance to chemical controls visit the Web site www.fcla.edu/FlaEnt/fe88p219.pdf.

Look carefully because treatment options, as described on product labels, may be different for different grub species.

There are good bugs too

Also, not every small critter you discover is harmful to the turfgrass or surrounding landscape. Many in fact are beneficial. They prey upon pest species and their eggs. Beneficial arthropods in a landscape include ants, spiders and ground beetles. There are many varieties of all three. You don't want to kill the "good" insects even if you find a few "bad" insects. Why make an application if the number of unwelcome insects is not enough to damage the turf enough to make it unsightly?

Many companies establish pest thresh-

olds to determine when to consider chemical treatment. Turfgrass experts suggest the following treatment thresholds for some common insect pests: billbugs, 1 per sq. ft.; sod webworms, 15 per sq. yd.; southern cinch bugs, 20 per sq. ft.; white grubs, 6 per sq. ft.; and black turfgrass atenienus, 40 per square foot. Circumstances, including the health of the turfgrass and customer expectations, should figure into treatment decisions as well.

It can be debated that in some instances preventive applications of product to areas prone to infestations each season is probably a better option than curative treatments. Even so, IPM is on the rise, and insect scouting, identification and monitoring are key to its success. **LJM**



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A step in the right **DIRECTION**



Too many plant replacement calls? Take a lesson from this Maine company BY JEFF HOWARD

◀ Anderson Landscaping uses biological technology to give its customers healthier plants and lower maintenance costs. The company benefits too with fewer callbacks.

have a general idea of what they want."

The company recently put together a "Plant Book," that containing photos and descriptions of all available plants and trees. That helps a lot.

"It's like a dictionary," says Kristy LeClair, an Anderson Landscaping office manager who embraced the project. "People can see what a plant or a tree will look like; there are only so many ways to describe a leaf."

Photos of buds and blossoms, as well as the whole plant, are included, in addition to a size description. There's also a note about the roles different plants serve, such as a focal point or as an attractive border plant.

"After a client chooses what they want, it's up to us to make them look good," says LeClair.

Chris Benn, one of the owners of North Yarmouth, ME's, Anderson Landscaping, knows that healthy plants lead to happy customers. Through an innovative mix of conventional planning and cutting-edge biological technology, Benn's suburban Portland business has found a

method to reduce the amount of maintenance needed to keep plants healthy.

Anderson Landscaping's secret to success begins with customer consideration.

"We start by choosing what plants and trees we'll be installing," Benn says. "Some clients have every single item picked out, but others just

Of course, each planting environment is unique. While sunlight is often a first consideration, other factors are taken into account before planting. Anderson Landscaping believes thoroughly analyzing the soil is vital, since it will have dramatic effects on the plants.

LeClair gives an example with hydrangeas.

"A more acidic soil will make the flowers more blue," she says. "Depending on what color you want your flowers, we can add elements to the soil to affect [things like] that."

The Problem: Ornamentals often need heavy maintenance or replacing

Commercial clients make up 40% of Benn's business. "With commercial clients, no one's going to be taking care of these plants and trees unless we send a crew," she says. "We guarantee our plants for a year, so we have to send back crews to water and replace the plants that start to look unattractive."

The company looked for ways to keep plants healthier.

"I tried soil moisturizers," she says, "but they hold so much water that it gives the plants root rot. I also used a liquid root stimulant, but it was really expensive. It would bring back a plant great, but the plant would still wilt and stress."

The Solution:

A versatile biological

The company found that the

use of biostimulants and mycorrhiza can improve a plant's chances of survival. Mycorrhiza improve soil nutrients and moisture uptake and increase the plant's tolerance to a wide variety of environmental extremes, even in less-than-ideal soil types. Biostimulant technology improves plant growth and health by helping to supply the plant with the nonnutritional resources needed to grow, stay healthy and remain vigorous. Both technologies help plants establish and enhance roots and increase stress tolerance.

One product in particular has helped Benn and her team keep plants looking great.

Last year, Benn began using Transplant 1-Step, a product from the Novozymes Biologicals, Inc. Roots Plant Care Group, on every job. Transplant 1-Step is a biological aid that reduces planting and transplanting losses by helping roots retain moisture while enhancing root growth and stress tolerance — a tough task in chilly Maine. The product is formulated with organic-based fertilizer, mycorrhiza, biostimulants and water-holding gels.

Incorporating Transplant 1-Step into the planting process was relatively straightforward for Anderson Landscaping:

- Dig a hole, twice the size of the root ball.

- Add a seafood compost.

- Sprinkle half a package of Transplant 1-Step into the



◀ The conifer on the left shows the positive effects of Roots Transplant 1-Step on the root mass.

bottom of the hole.

- Put the plant in the hole.

- Sprinkle the rest of the 1-Step onto the plant.

- Water and add soil, compacting as you fill the hole.

"I never expected it to be as good as it is," says Benn.

"The plants have established more quickly," she says. "It's really saved me time. It's easy to use, so anyone on a crew can do it; and because it's so effective, I don't have to send crews back to water so much."

Benn had initial reservations about trying another biological aid but was quickly won over.

"With Transplant 1-Step, my plants and trees look as good as they did when I put them in," she says. "I've used Transplant 1-Step on perennials, trees, bareroot perennials, everything," she says. "I'm really happy and I certainly intend to keep using it."

Transplant 1-Step has

saved us maintenance time and money, allowing us to cut our maintenance trips down by about two-thirds," she adds.

That's big savings for Benn's business and offers a way to give her clients better value.

"Usually by fall, I have to replace plants," which results in a loss of time and money for the extra labor and materials, she says. "But not this year. And nothing ever went through that 'wilty' stage."

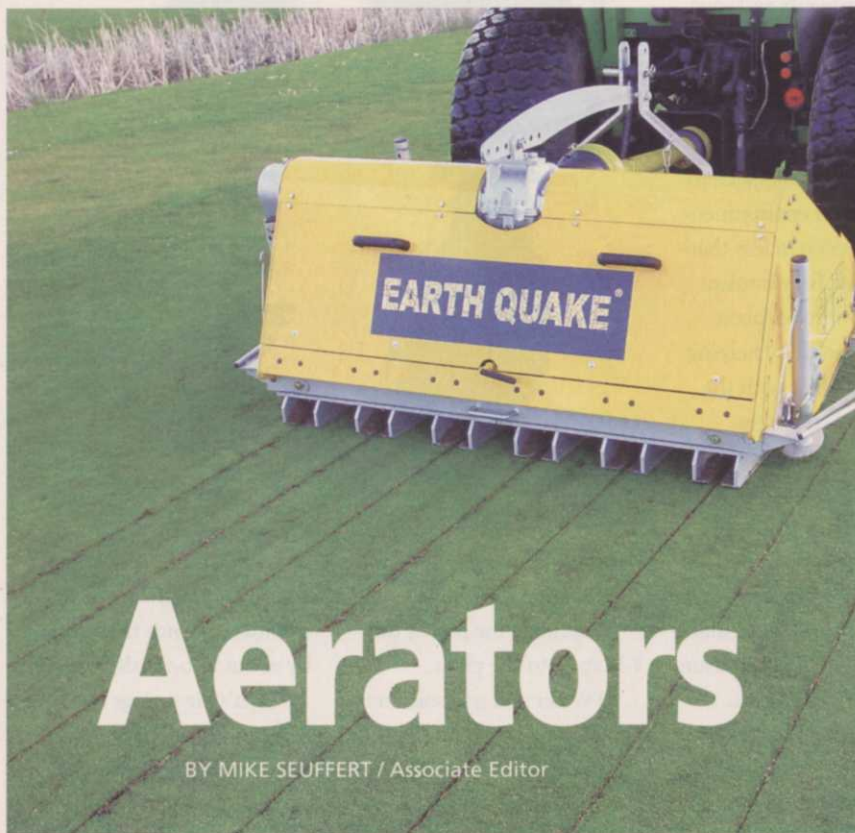
This system — with a foundation of solid planting techniques, the best materials, and a true concern for customers — has enabled Anderson Landscaping to become one of the largest landscaping companies in southeast Maine, serving residential customers as well as commercial landscapers and golf courses. **LM**

— The author is marketing manager for Roots Plant Care Group, a division of Novozymes Biologicals, Inc. Visit www.rootsinc.com.

LM Reports

TECHNOLOGY

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH



Aerators

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor

GA-24-OPC self-propelled aerator is powered by an 8-hp Briggs & Stratton Intek Pro engine. It offers four tine sizes for proper core aeration anytime under varying soil conditions, as it creates 2-in. x 2-in. aeration pattern. The 548 aerator/seeder improves germination with precisely placed seed in aerator slit furrow.

For more information contact

Textron/Ryan at 888/922-TURF or

www.textronturf.com / circle no. 255

Wikco Industries

Model 300 or 600 core plug aerators can be pulled by an ATV, garden tractor, turf truck, tractor or commercial mower. Available in 30- and 60-in. widths, they aerate a maximum of four in. Each unit has replaceable tine wheels (four on model 300, eight on model 600); each section has 10 tines. All-steel construction for commercial and professional use.

For more information contact Wikco Industries at 402/464-2070 or www.wikco.biz /

circle no. 256

Reist Industries

The Reist AeraSeeder is a two-in-one tool for aerating and overseeding. It comes standard with CAT I and II mounting, for hook up to any size tractor. It features a newly designed sectional cone spike roller, with 72 in. of working width (67 individual spike rollers, cast) with 860 perforations per single roller. A self-adjusting full width brush sweeps fine seed off the top of the grass down into the ground.

For more information contact Reist Industries at 877/467-3478 or

www.reistindustries.com / circle no. 257

Agri-Fab

The Turf Shark spike wheels provide the perfect amount of penetration and soil plug removal without mess associated with plug aerators. With a path 40-in. wide, 60 curved spikes penetrate up to 3-in. aeration depth.

Earthquake ▲

The Earthquake Tremor Rotary Decompactor pull-behind-tractor unit fractures the soil beneath turfgrass through the action of rotary blades, each of the six rows of blades offset from an adjacent row. As the blades on one row displace the soil in one direction, its neighboring row displaces it again, fracturing the soil even more. Three models available in working widths of 30 to 87 in.

For more information visit Earthquake at

www.earthquake-turfcare.com /

circle no. 254

Textron/Ryan

Ryan's GreensAire aerators come in four models. The GA-30 riding aerator has 6-mph transport speed and aerates up to a depth of 3.75 in. The GA-60/GA-60 PT aerators are towed behind a 25- to 45-hp tractor with PTO, with 1-2 mph aeration speed and 60-in. wide swath, coring up to a depth of 4 in.; the





The enclosed weight tray holds up to 100 lbs., and the single-lever transport handle is easy to reach from operators seat. Spiker and plug aerators are also available.

For more information contact AGRI-FAB at 217/728-8388 or www.agri-fab.com / circle no. 258

Classen/ Little Wonder

The Little Wonder Stand-Aer SA-25 Aerator from Classen permits the operator to steer, turn and aerate non-stop without raising tines out of the ground. Features include: hydrostatic forward and reverse drive, aerating speed of 4.7 mph, ZTR turning radius (non-aerating), 24-in. approximate turning radius (aerating), and tine and tire drive with separate throttle controls.

For more information contact Classen at 877/596-6337 or visit www.littlewonder.com / circle no. 259



John Deere

The 2006 model of the John Deere Aercore 800 aerator features a belt-drive coring system, a mechanical transmission and an electro-hydraulic lift / lower system. The Aercore 800's Flexi-Link coring system increases productivity by absorbing the forward motion of the aerator, keeping the tines perpendicular

to the turf while the machine is moving. The Aercore 800 uses a mechanical transmission with four aerating speeds and a 31.5-in. coring width.

For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.deere.com / circle no. 260

Ferguson

Plug aerators are available in models from 3 to 8 ft. Choose between 3-pt. hitch and trail-type hitches. Units create a five-eighths in. plug to a depth of three inches. Sturdy construction with heat-treated tines. Fill plug on the drum allows adding additional water



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LM Reports

weight for hard-to-penetrate soil.

For more information contact Ferguson Mfg. Co. at 757/539-3409 or fermfgsu@nettek.net / circle no. 261

Land Pride

Land Pride's 25 Series core aerators are designed to relieve soil compaction and allow air circulation in grassy surfaces such as lawns, soccer fields, football fields, baseball fields, municipal parks and golf course fairways. These aerators use replaceable case hardened closed spoons mounted on weighted rotating discs, and the spoons pull cores up to three in. in length from the soil profile every seven in. of forward travel. Pulled cores are deposited on the surface for subsequent drying, pulverization or removal.

For more information contact Land Pride at 785/823-3276 or visit www.landpride.com / circle no. 262



SISIS

The SISIS Aer-Aid System gives the turf a blast of air as it aerates, combating surface compaction. The cam trigger system ensures that the air is always expelled at the bottom of the tine penetration, ensuring a targeted, precise and constant working depth, variable up to a maximum of five in. Working at 6-in. spacing, the air is introduced at a rate of three cu. ft. per minute.

For more information contact SISIS at 864/843-5972 or visit www.sisis.com / circle no. 263

Toro

The ProCore 648 is an walking aerator from Toro. The rear wheels are within the 48-in.



aeration swath of the machine so the tires are not running over the freshly aerated turf. This eliminates the problem of smashing the cores into the holes, preventing topdressing from filling the holes. And easier cleanup produces a savings of time and labor.

For more information contact Toro at 800/803-8676 or www.toro.com / circle no. 264

L.T. Rich products

L.T. Rich Product's Z-Plug zero-turn aerator has ground speeds up to eight mph, covering more than 100,000 sq. ft. per hour. The full floating tine head can maneuver around trees and beds while engaged. A 2,000-lb. hydraulic lift picks the tine head up in 2.5 seconds. It features 36- and 46-in. tine heads, 70- and 100-lb. individual weight blocks, up to 3.5-in. core depth and 5- to 8-in. tine pattern

For more information contact L.T. Rich Products at 877/482-2040 or visit www.z-spray.com / circle no. 265

First Products

First Product's AERA-vator stirs and loosens the soil beneath the sod without destroying the turf on the surface. The AE-80 has a 80-in. swath for golf courses, athletic fields and larger landscapes. The AE-60 has a 60-in. swath for mid-size jobs, like a baseball field and larger landscapes. The AE-40L has all the features of the larger ones yet it's the most compact, with a 40-in. swath. The AE-40E features an open frame for better tine and rotor visibility.

For more information contact First Products at 800/363-8780 or www.1stproducts.com / circle no. 266

Husqvarna

Husqvarna's AR 19 aerator has a 48-cm. wide deck with five tines, while the AR 25 has a 65-cm. wide

deck with seven tines. Both are easy to maneuver even in tight turns, due to the free-wheel design for the outer tines. The center of gravity is located directly over the tines, which means that the aerators remove plugs of a maximum length, approximately 7-8 cm. The capacity of the AR 19 is up to 2,300 sq. meters per hour, while the AR 25 can cover approximately 3,700 sq. meters per hour.

For more information contact Husqvarna at 800/HUSKY62 or visit www.usa.husqvarna.com / circle no. 267

Broyhill

Broyhill's AccuAire Core Aerator penetrates the toughest terrain. Its FlexWing design provides for proper ground contour coverage, and can be equipped with easy on-off aeration spikes or core spoons. The solid frame adds weight to penetrate compact soil and extra-wide racks hold additional weight. Available in 69- or 93-in. lengths

For more information contact Broyhill at 402/987-3412 or visit www.broyhill.com / circle no. 268

T.I.P. Inc. ▼

Turf Improvement Product's Greens Spiker / Seeder allows you to overseed and aerate in one pass. The replaceable stainless steel spikes give the proper seed depth for high germination rates. Choose 3-pt. hitch, the



GS-48 pull type or self-propelled 16-in. walk-behind Greens Spiker seeder.

For more information contact T.I.P. Inc. at 800/225-9727 or visit www.tipinc.net / circle no. 269



Turfco

Turfco Direct's TurnAer Chariot is built to withstand the commercial-duty use with a heavy-duty, low-profile steel frame. Wide-set pneumatic tires provide solid stability and a smooth ride, and the entire TurnAer Chariot quickly disconnects from the TurnAer 4 to offer enhanced maneuverability in tight spaces. TurnAer has the ability to turn with the tines in the ground, allowing operators to aerate properties in one continuous motion, increasing productivity.

For more information contact Turfco at 800/679-8201 or www.turfco.com / circle no. 270

Gandy

The Gandy 3-pt. hitch aerators, model 4972 and model 4996, are designed with dual-wheel coring heads which independently follow the ground contour, covering a 6-ft. and 8-ft. span, respectively. Interchangeable coring spoons or slicing knives allow operators to core or slice turf areas to reduce thatch buildup and soil compaction. For smaller areas, Gandy offers the Core Aerator-48.

For more information contact Gandy at 800/443-2476 or www.gandy.net / circle no. 271

BlueBird ▶

The BlueBird towable aerators, models TA10 and TA12, can cover more than three acres an hour and are designed to be towed by a lawn tractor with an 18-plus hp engine. The TA10 has an aerating width of 36 in., while the TA12 has an aeration width of 48 in. Both units aerate to a depth of up to three inches. Two independent tine rotors with interchangeable 1/2-in. closed-spoon tines help maneuver around corners and tight areas.

For more information contact BlueBird at 800/808-BIRD or visit www.bluebirdintl.com / circle no. 272

Southern Green

As the Soil Reliever deep tine aerification system is pulled across the turf, the deep-spading action fractures the soil into small particles, instantly relieving the pressure-packed



soil. The Soil Reliever's

chain driven tines are driven as deep as 16 in. The crankshaft design delivers maximum leverage by placing added weight directly over the tine heads. Its soil-fracturing action creates channels into the grass root structures allowing oxygen, the key ingredient essential in deep root development, water and nutrients to penetrate more quickly throughout the soil profile.

For more information contact Southern Green at 800/888-9883 or visit www.soilreliever.com / circle no. 273

New versatility meets same optimum performance.

The new Brillion LSS6 seeder features mounting capabilities for both skid steer loaders and tractors, adding flexibility to landscape management.

The LSS6 seeder uses Brillion's time-proven blade agitator metering system to provide accurate and reliable seed placement for a wide variety of seed sizes.

The LSS6 itself is 84 inches wide with a seeding width of 72 inches and a hopper capacity of 4 1/2 bushels.

To find out how the versatile new LSS6 Skid Steer Landscape Seeder can work for you, contact your local Brillion dealer or call Brillion Iron Works for more information.



Brillion Iron Works, Inc.
www.brillionfarmeq.com
(800) 409-9749



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Circle 147

LM Reports



Earth and Turf ▲

Linear aeration improves water infiltration and retention, turf and root growth, nutrient absorption and organic decomposition. The one-pass design of the Earth & Turf linear aerator assures maximum cultivation of turf on athletic fields, golf courses and polo grounds. The linear aerator permanently modifies soil and thatch restriction by cutting vertical grooves (1/2-in. wide, 3-in. deep), then filling with topdressing materials such as calcined clay, compost or sand. It has an aerating width of 58 inches.

For more information contact Earth and Turf at 888/693-2638 or visit www.earthand-turf.com / circle no. 274

Walker Manufacturing

The PerfAerator is a front-mounted aerator attachment designed for Walker mowers. The PerfAerator delivers a 41.5-in. path, and uses a camshaft design for driving tines 2.5 in. deep into soil with no added weight needed.



The PTO-driven tines engage and disengage easily to skip over sprinkler heads and side-walks without slowing down. The 12-tine set is also easily raised with a lever and locked in a secure transport position.

For more information contact Walker at 970/221-5614 or visit www.walkermowers.com / circle no. 275

BLEC

The Blec Groundbreaker relieves compaction down to 10 in. Available in 40-, 60-, 80- and 100-in. working widths, they are powered by a heavy-duty pto drive system with overload clutch. Pre-formed skids positioned between the blades minimize surface disturbance. Skids control blade-digging depth from 3-10 in., adjusted by screw.

For more information contact BLEC 888/325-BLEC or www.blec.co.uk / circle no. 276

Turf-R-Ator

The Turf-R-Ator features slicing spikes that have eight points, each 22 in. in diameter, and a solid 1/4-in. wheel. There are nine wheels, each spaced six inches apart with a slicing swath of 54 in. The nine wheel supports come with two grease fittings and 1/2-in. ball bearings. The unit is available in either a pull-behind that is raised and lowered hydraulically or as a 3-pt.-hitch model.

For more information contact Turf-R-Ator at 262/639-2516 / circle no. 277

Aerway

Aerway offers a full line of turf aerators in 3-pt. or tow-behind models. Operating widths vary from 45 in. to 15 ft. Four tine designs are available, including the AerWay Shat-

tertines. As the AerWay moves over the surface, the unique angles of the AerWay Shattertines crack and shatter compacted soil eight in. and deeper to open new channels for air and water.

For more information contact Aerway at 800/457-8310 or visit www.aerway.com / circle no. 278

Bannerman

Bannerman's Bat Wing Aerator is a tractor-drawn unit with right and left wings that can be raised and lowered hydraulically, expanding out to a maximum width of 152 in. It comes with two choices of tines: core and fracture. The Bat Wing aerates at depths of one to 7.5 in.

For more information contact Bannerman at 800/665-2696 or visit www.sportsturf-magic.com / circle no. 279

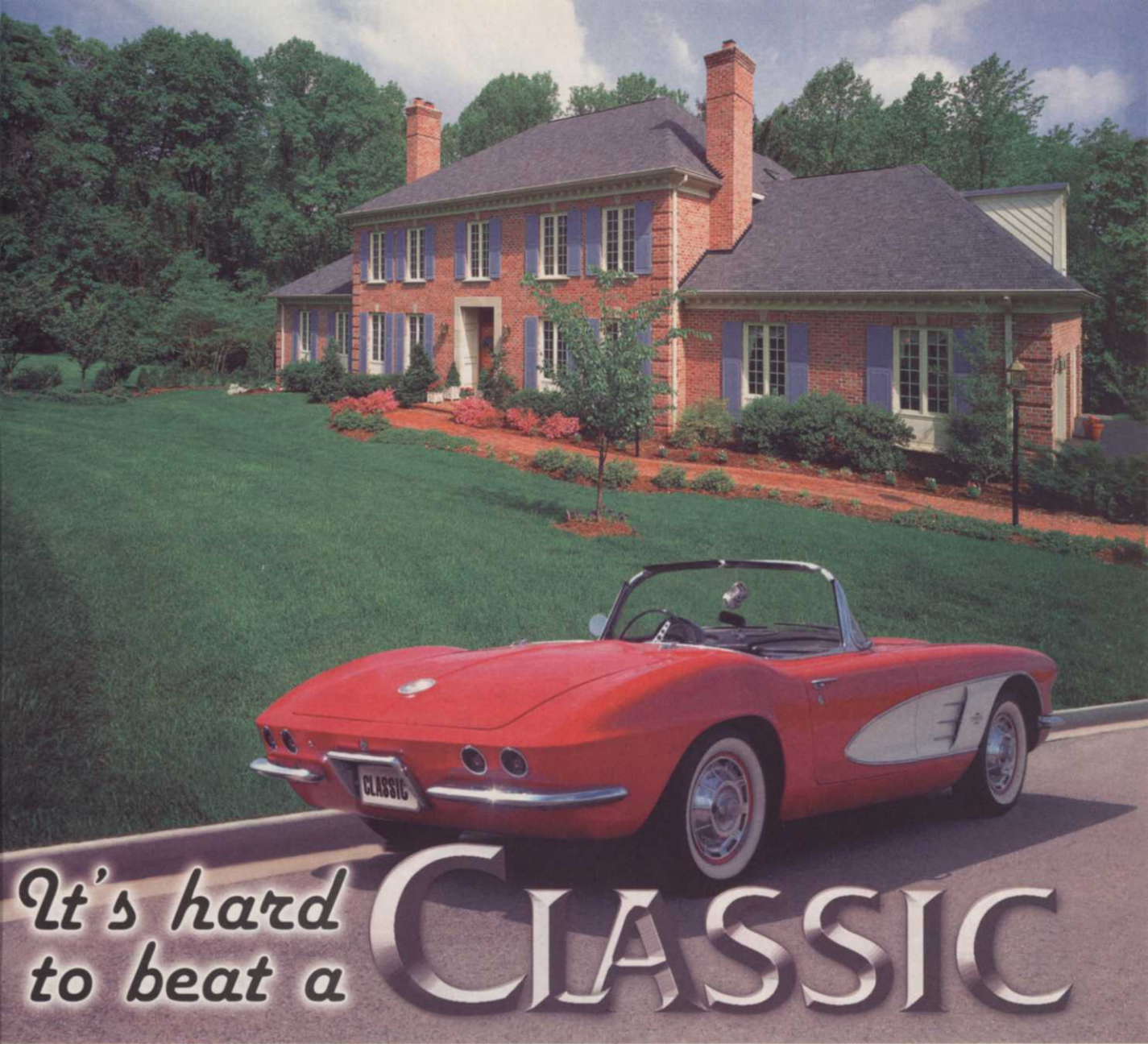


Woodbay ▲

The FDS 9200 Turf Dethatcher is 92 in. wide and has four separate sections. The tines are spring loaded to avoid catching on tree roots, rocks and other hard objects that may be encountered below the turf surface. The dethatcher can be used to even out the spread of root zone and other materials during sports fields and golf course construction. Its weight of 350 lbs. is suitable for pulling behind most sizes of tractors.

For more information contact Woodbay at 800/661-4942 or www.greensiron.com / circle no. 280

continued on page 108



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LM Reports

continued from page 106



Billy Goat

Billy Goat's AE core aerator provides thatch removal and core aeration to promote growth and soil drainage. Rugged folding handles and proprietary water tank (holding up to 50 lbs.) make the AE400H compact, light and easy to transport. Optimum weight placement makes lifting the tine assembly out of the ground easy and yields the greatest tine penetration. The low center of gravity makes this machine very stable during operation.

For more information contact Billy Goat at 816/524-9666 or visit www.billygoat.com / circle no. 281



Woods

Three heavy-duty core aerators operate with Cat 1, 20-hp to 65-hp tractors. The 48-in. PL48, 67.5-in. PL60 and 78.5-in. PL72 have a

reinforced carrier frame that holds up to 1,000 lbs. of weight to vary penetration down to 4.5 in. Greased journal bearings turn independently to help reduce lock-up. Case hardened, 1/8-in.-thick, closed spoons ensure uniform and frequent penetration even in heavy soil conditions.

For more information contact Woods at 866/TO-WOODS or www.woodsequip-ment.com / circle no. 282

JRCO, Inc. ▼

JRCO's tine rake dethatcher will give you a quick spring green-up by removing embedded thatch, leaves and combing up matted turfgrass while mowing. Flexible tines allow zero-turning while raking. The front-mount dethatchers are available in 36-, 46- and 60-in. widths and quickly attaches to the JRCO universal mount bar with clevis pins.

For more information contact JRCO, Inc. at 800/966-8442 or www.jrcoinc.com / circle no. 283



SourceOne

SourceOne's PL850 HydroPro Plugr has a powerful, single component, hydrostatic drive unit for self-propelled operator use. Adjustable operating speed allows aeration at a pace that is suitable for the terrain, landscape design and turf condition. Its design reduces operator fatigue on uphill grades, loose and sandy soils and highly cushioned turfgrasses. Available with either a 5.5-hp Honda OHV or 6.5-hp Briggs and Stratton Intek engine. For more information contact Source One at 888/418-9065 or www.plugr.com / circle no. 285

Wiedenmann

The Terra Spike XF gives deep aerification with hole spacings of 7.5 in. down to 8.5 in. depth. It is effective at speeds up to 3.6 mph. Even square hole spacings of 2.5 and 5 in. are possible at 1.2 and 2.4 mph. Also available is the

Turf-Aire

The Turf-Aire Pro-Aire aerator models 36, 48 and 60 are available from Bishop Enterprises as 3-pt.-hitch or tow-behind models. Units' working widths are 30, 42 and 57.5 in., respectively. Each of the tine wheels turn individually for short turns and the tensile strength of our 3/4-in. coring tines is unmatched. They drill up to nine holes per sq. ft. when single-tined, 18 holes double-tined. There are eight tines per wheel.

For more information contact Turf-Aire at 800/854-4851 or www.turf-air.com / circle no. 284

Greens Terra Spike for golf greens and other fine turfs, which aerates to a depth of 12 inches., and the Terra Spike XP which aerates and removes compaction down to 16 in.

For more information contact Wiedenmann at 866/790-3004 or www.terraspike.com / circle no. 286

Redexim

The Verti-Quake models 2516 and 2521 de-compact the soil using a set of rotating steel blades. As these blades cut through the soil they create a wave action that breaks up compacted areas and





opens up the subsoil. The Verti-Quake is available in five different models and can work at depths up to 22 in. with little or no surface disruption. The Verti-Knife 2516 and 2521 both work to a depth of 10 in., and are available with a new direct drive system.

For more information contact Redexim Charterhouse at 800/597-5664 or www.redexim.com / circle no. 287

Dry-Ject ▶

The Dry-Ject process aerates and amends soil on sports fields, golf courses or landscapes in one hour. Using high-pressure water, it creates half-inch aeration holes that are instantly filled with sand to improve soil quality. Penetrates to 10 inches. Allows deep-root injection of soil amendments, insecticides, fertilizers or fungicides while reju-



venating the lawn with water.

For more information contact Dry-Ject at 800/270-8873 or www.dryject.com / circle no. 288

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Circle 152

Post Gateway Place

2005 Grand Award Winner for Condominium or Apartment Complex

Property at a glance

- Location:** Charlotte, NC
- Grounds Supervisor:** Lee Ann White
- Category:** Condominium or Apartment Complex
- Total budget:** \$93,812
- Year site built:** 2001
- Acres of turf:** 0
- Acres of display beds:** 2,264 sq. ft.
- Total paved area:** 145,778 sq. ft.
- Total man-hours/week:** 24

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Irrigation installation and closely monitoring zones
- ▶ Covering large concrete structure with lush plant material
- ▶ Pedestrian traffic
- ▶ Pets and survival of groundcovers
- ▶ Vines — aggressive growers maintaining 20 to 30 ft.

Project checklist

- Completed in last two years:
- ▶ Taken streetscapes from initial overplanting to manageable planting
 - ▶ Installation of baskets on street lights to enhance curb appeal

On the job

- ▶ One full-time staff, one nine-week internship, one licensed pesticide applicator

A short walk to downtown Charlotte, NC, Post Gateway Place is one of the largest urban mixed-use developments in the Carolinas. Streetscapes and courtyard plantings are nestled throughout a mix of shops, restaurants, other businesses and 436 apartment units spread over 3.5 acres in the city's Gateway Village neighborhood.

Post Gateway, maintained by Post Landscapes and its Regional Gardener Lee Ann White, features four unique courtyards, planted with multiple cultivars of Japanese maples. Other outdoor amenities include two pools, bocce ball courtyard and a dog walk area. Each area boasts its own theme garden requiring a strategic grounds maintenance program.

White, the on-site gardener, specializes in perennial/annual maintenance, naturalistic pruning, annual design/installation, IPM and organic fertilization.

"We install extra color wherever we can," says White. "Each summer, we install 24-inch iron baskets overflowing with color to our pools and courtyards," White said. "In early December, we install 4,500 tulip bulbs."

Challenges for the property include 8,296 sq. ft. of color beds and 68 pots/baskets which require rigorous maintenance.

All of this color requires water, and that requires special attention to the irrigation system and its different zones.

White hand-prunes 23,166 sq. ft. of woody ornamentals, using techniques that promote natural growth. There are also 52 Shumard red oaks lining Post Gateway's frontage, which require structure and canopy pruning to allow 3,200 pedestrians to pass safely.

Residents can relax at five picnic areas, each decorated with splashes of color, including Pink and Purple Wave petunias and Pineapple Queen coleus. The property also includes five vine varieties that require maintenance. The vines can grow 20 to 30 feet and require ongoing care.

The grounds at Post Gateway Place get a monthly inspection. This guarantees that the property is always safe, inviting, clean and beautiful.



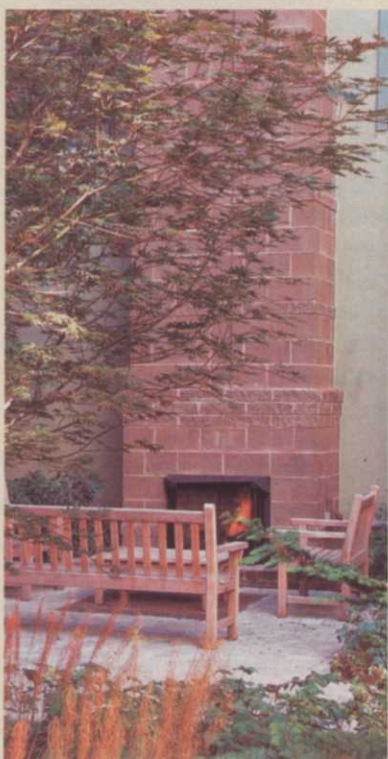
Editors' note: *Landscape Management* was the exclusive sponsor of the 2005 Professional Grounds Management Awards for outstanding management of residential, commercial and institutional landscape. Winners are recognized at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. To learn more about the annual awards program contact PGMS at: 720 Light St.,

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Planting and maintaining the annual beds at Post Gateway Place is a challenge for Master Gardener Lee Ann White, but the benefits pay off for residents and visitors to Charlotte's Gateway Village neighborhood.



Products

RESOURCES TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Cutting mowing jobs down to size

Billy Goat's FM finish cut mower can be used as a trim mower or for cutting small properties. With a 33-in. mowing width, the FM is 57% more productive than a standard 21-in. mower. The triple blade design keeps the wheelbase short for optimum maneuverability and handling. The FM features a heavy fabricated steel deck and a 5-speed transaxle with reverse gear, which allows the operator to match ground speed to cutting conditions. Three machined spindles come with sealed bearings for smooth operation and maintenance-free performance.

For more information contact Billy Goat Industries at 800/776-7690 or visit www.billygoat.com / circle no. 290



Making the grade

Although the DR Tow-Behind Power Grader was designed for resurfacing driveways, it also manages other grading jobs such as smoothing ball fields, sandy beaches and leveling and smoothing new lawn areas and golf course fairways. The DR Power Grader loosens and redistributes material using intelligent geometry, rather than horsepower. Weighing in at 225 lbs., the DR Power Grader can be towed by a lawn tractor, utility tractor or 4-wheel drive ATV. With its remote control and the shape of its side rails, which keep the scraper blade at a uniform height, precise adjustments to the unit can be made while riding.

For more information contact DR Power at 631/584-5808 or visit www.drpower.com / circle no. 291

More powerful irrigation controller

Hunter Industries new XC controller is designed to meet the most stringent irrigation requirements for a wide range of landscapes. With 1.0 amp of power, the XC enables the user to simultaneously operate up to two valve stations plus a pump start relay or master valve simultaneously. The XC offers a choice of 2-, 4-, 6- and 8-station models, and provides added scheduling flexibility, with three programs, multiple scheduling formats and the ability to select sensor input by station. The XC's expanded memory includes an Easy Retrieve memory feature that retains a favorite program for convenient recall.

For more information contact Hunter Industries at 760/744-5240 or visit www.HunterIndustries.com / circle no. 289



Pest repellents

Protect your lawn, plants and garden with The Liquid Fence Co.'s line of pest repellents. Liquid Fence offers 100% guaranteed protection with its Deer & Rabbit Repellent, new Mole & Vole, Snake and Goose Repellents. Liquid Fence products are environmentally friendly and typically require no additional licensing to apply. Liquid Fence repellents work in all four seasons, and can be co-applied with many pesticides and fertilizers, including the company's Speedy Grow organic plant accelerator. Products are available in sizes ranging from quarts to 260-gallon totes.

For more information contact Liquid Fence at 800/923-3623 or visit www.liquidfence.com / circle no. 292



New blooms for Ball

Ball Horticultural Co. added two new color choices to its Fanfare spreading impatiens series: Bright Coral, with salmon-orange blooms; and Pink Sparkle, with a two-toned pink pattern. Fanfare varieties grow vigorously in the landscape, reaching 16 to 20 in. tall and spreading 18 to 24 in. Fanfare varieties fill in fast and bounce back quickly from stressful conditions. Along with the two new colors, the Fanfare series includes fuchsia, orange, lavender and blush.

For more information contact Ball Horticulture at 630/231-3600 or visit www.BallLandscape.com / circle no. 293



Fleet maintenance software

Arsenault Associates introduces Customer Management, a new software module for Arsenault's Dossier Maintenance Software. Customer Management (CM) helps the fleet maintenance department control, track and report on external customer fleets for profit

or contract maintenance purposes. CM enables shop managers to enter vehicles into the system and assign them to a particular fleet customer. Shop managers can easily produce quotes and invoices for each fleet customer. Each customer has a separate file that includes contact and billing information. Accounts can be assigned their own unique billable labor rates, parts markups or discounts, and billing terms. Using CM satisfies the need to accurately track and report costs for internal fleet customers within an organization.

For more information contact Arsenault Associates at 856/767-6690 or visit www.arsenault.biz / circle no. 294

26/36 labeled for more disease control

Cleary Chemical Corp.'s 26/36 Fungicide label has been expanded to include 16 different diseases of more than 85 genera of ornamental plants. This label expansion means that 26/36 Fungicide can now be used for disease control in field, landscape and greenhouse ornamentals and conifer nurseries.

26/36 Fungicide, a combination of iprodione and thiofanate-methyl, is a broad-spectrum fungicide that can be applied to a wide range of container and field-grown ornamental flowering and foliage plants, either as a foliar spray,

drench or dip. The product provides effective, long-lasting control of a variety of plant disease types, including leaf blights, leaf spots and stem and root rot.

For more information contact Cleary Chemical at 800/524-1662 or visit www.clearychemical.com / circle no. 295

Dixon Grass Catching Attachments

Dixon Industries' two and three-bag commercial grass catching attachment systems increase the versatility and productivity of Dixon ZTR riding mowers. The Free Flow hood de-



sign directs clippings evenly to the bags while allowing sufficient air flow for maximum vacuum power. The hood is held open by a heavy-duty spring assist. High-density durable mesh fabric bags are tapered and have plastic bottoms with metal handles for easier dumping and trash bag removal. The blower is designed with a thick sand liner, long-life belts and a window to view the rotation of a fluorescent impeller indicator.

For more information contact Dixon Industries at 620/251-2000 or visit www.dixon-ztr.com / circle no. 296



Lift your feet

The Little Wonder Self-Propelled High Performance Vacuum (HPV) features a hydrostatic drive to power over any terrain with complete control. The Peerless 2000 series hydrostatic transaxle provides performance and durability and a 6.5 hp Briggs Intek V/C engine offers variable speed up to 4.8 mph. The HPV handles the collection of rocks, bottles, cans, glass, paper, leaves, wet debris and fine material quickly and completely. The cyclonic separator and bag design, with 90 lbs. capacity, ensures easy unloading.

For more information contact Little Wonder at 877/596-6337 or visit www.littlewonder.com / circle no. 297

Bag it up

Grasshopper's 16cu. ft. Model 16FM PowerVac collector empties from the operator's seat with the flip of a switch. With the PowerTilt



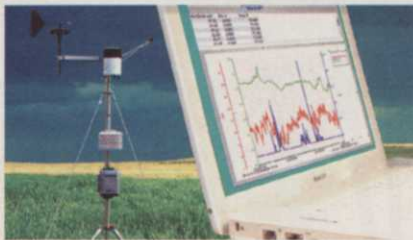
instant emptying system, just stop, tilt and mow. The PowerTilt collector mounts on all 700 and 900 Series mowers. Features include removable sight window for easy cleaning, removable debris screen and "down and out" air flow for extra clean operation. Deck-driven PowerVac systems remove easily for side discharge or mulching applications.

For more information contact the Grasshopper Co. at 620/345-8621 or visit www.grasshoppermower.com / circle no. 298

Nematode nuisance

Armorex is a new biochemical formulation that is used as a soil treatment to kill and control pathogenic nematodes, insects and fungus. Armorex is a unique blend of essential plant oils that includes sesame, which is highly toxic to nematodes. In addition, the formulation contains extracts of rosemary, clove, garlic and pepper, all of which are effective nematode suppressants. Armorex is used as a preventive or curative treatment for both endo- and ecto-parasitic nematode species. It is an EPA-exempt minimum-risk pesticide and is has no re-entry restriction. The Armorex label includes soil treatment uses on turf and ornamentals, vegetables, fruits, vineyards, nuts and nursery crops.

For more information contact Soil Technologies Corp. at 641/472-3963 or e-mail info@soiltechcorp.com / circle no. 299



Mac-compatible weather stations

Onset Computer Corp.'s 15-channel HOBO Weather Station and 4-channel HOBO Micro Station are Mac-compatible, research-grade weather stations. The stations record a wide range of environmental conditions, including temperature, relative humidity, rainfall, soil

Products

moisture, photosynthetic light (PAR), solar radiation, wind speed and direction, leaf wetness, and barometric pressure. Both stations record conditions via Onset plug-and-play smart sensors, which eliminate the need for complicated wiring, programming and calibration. Possible applications include climate monitoring on vineyards and farms, agricultural research and meteorological studies. To view and analyze climate data, Onset offers HOBOWare, a Mac-based graphing and analysis software package.

For more information contact Onset Computer Corp. at 800/564-4377 or visit www.onset-comp.com / circle no. 300

Power packs

Offering a power-to-weight ratio higher than competing pneumatic and electric systems, Atlas Copco hydraulic power packs efficiently power a wide assortment of hydraulic hand-held tools for construction, utility and demoli-



tion projects. A stainless steel frame protects the pack's internal components at the work site and inhibits corrosion and rust damage. The packs range in weight from the LP 9-20 P at 163 lbs, to the LP 13-20 DE at 256 lbs. The largest power packs are 28 in. in both length and width, with a height of 29 in. The LP 9-20 P and LP 13-30 P models, featuring 9-hp and 13-hp Honda gasoline engines, respectively, are equipped with a power-on-demand (POD) system that increases the engine speed only when a tool is engaged, thereby reducing fuel consumption and extending the service life. Three other models are available, all of which are electric start and are powered by gasoline or diesel engines.

For more information contact Atlas Copco at 413/746-0020 or visit www.atlascopco.com / circle no. 301

Here's a (spray) tip

Spraying Systems added a new 025 capacity (0.25 gpm at 40 psi per tip) spray tip to its Turbo TeeJet wide-angle flat spray tip product line. The 025 capacity tip is ideal for fungicide spraying when used with the QJ90 dual outlet adapter to produce two angled spray patterns for better canopy penetration and leaf coverage. The Turbo TeeJet (TT) can also be used for insecticide application and spraying of pre- or post-emergence contact or systemic herbicides. The nozzle's tapered edge and wide-angle flat spray pattern offers excellent spray distribution in broadcast spraying. Turbo TeeJet nozzles also feature a large, rounded internal passage to minimize clogging and produce larger droplets for improved drift control.

For more information contact Spraying Systems Co. at 406/388-3120 or www.teejet.com / circle no. 302



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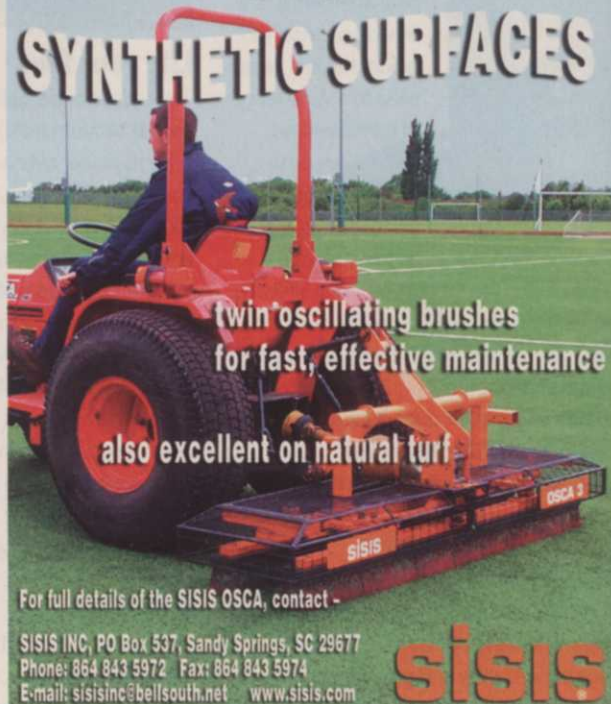


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29 - May 1 ASIC Annual Conference /

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May

3-4 TOCA Annual Meeting /

Napa Valley, CA; Sponsored by Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association; 952/758-6340;
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11-12 Greening Rooftops for Sustainable Communities

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17 Turfgrass & Nursery Field

Day / Stillwater, OK; Sponsored by Oklahoma State University; 405/744-5404;
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June

8-10 Super Floral Show /

Salt Lake City; 617/728-0300;
www.superfloralshow.com

13-14 National Lawn &

Garden Show / Rosemont, IL; Sponsored by National Lawn and Garden Show; 888/316-0226;
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14-17 Snow and Ice

Symposium / Hartford, CT; Sponsored by Snow & Ice Management Association; 814/835-3577; www.sima.org

21-25 ANLA Retail Roadshow /

New England; Sponsored by American Nursery & Landscape Association; 202/789-2900'
www.anla.org

21-24 Southeast Greenhouse Conference & Trade Show /

Greenville, NC; Sponsored by Southeast Greenhouse Conference & Trade Show; 8090/453-3070;
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22-23 ITODA Distributors Management Forum /

Long Branch, NJ; Sponsored by Independent Turf and Ornamental Distributors Association; 814/238-1573; www.itoda.org

22-24 OPEI Annual Meeting /

Carlsbad, CA; Sponsored by Outdoor Power Equipment Institute; 703/549-7600;
www.opei.org

July

12-16 ANLA Legislative Conference and Annual

Meeting / Vail, CO; Sponsored by American Nursery & Landscape Association; 202/789-2900;
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Submit a letter of inquiry, curriculum vitae, collegiate transcripts, and a list of three references prior to the May 1, 2006, closing to: Larry Steward, Search Committee Chair, Ohio State University-Agricultural Technical Institute, 1328 Dover Road, Wooster, OH 44691.

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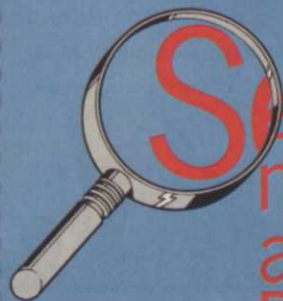
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Factor	Frequency	Percent
Fuel costs	281	66%
Insurance costs	228	53.5%
Ability to find labor	210	49.3%
Maintain adequate cash flow	174	40.8%
Keeping competitive pricing	162	38%
Ability to develop leaders	137	32.2%
Increased competition	137	32.2%
State of the economy	115	27.5%
Retaining employees	100	23.5%
Government regulations	69	16.2%
Unmanaged growth	67	15.7%
None of these	9	2.1%

Based on 426 responses

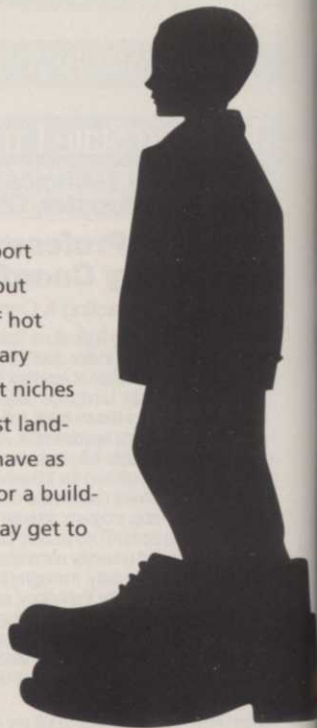
SOURCE:
2005 LANDSCAPE
MANAGEMENT
SURVEY



WHEN I GROW UP ...

In a recent U.S. News & World Report ranking, journalist Marty Nemko put **landscape architect** on his list of hot careers for 2006. "There are ordinary architects, and then there are neat niches like this," he writes. "Because most landscape architecture projects don't have as many components as the design for a building, young landscape architects may get to design entire projects. Also, the training is shorter: You typically can get a job with just a bachelor's degree and an internship of a year or less."

SOURCE: U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT



21%

DECKS AS "OUTDOOR ROOM" ARE HOT

While home building may not be as robust in '06 as it was in 2005, Garden, Deck & Landscape magazine reports that demand for new decks remains surprisingly strong. A recent survey by that magazine said that **21% of homeowners plan to build a new deck in the next year or two.**

The hot trend, according to editor Eric Liskey, is to treat a deck as an "outdoor room" designed as a living space.

SOURCE: DECKEXPO STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

TURFGRASS INDUSTRY ON THE GROW IN VA

An estimated 1.7 million acres of turf was maintained in Virginia in 2004. Home lawns account for the largest area of turf, at more than one million acres. That is an increase of 334,000 acres from 1998. Highway roadsides, at 298,000 acres, are the second-largest maintained turf area. About 42,100 acres of turf are maintained in state, regional and city park systems. Golf courses account for about 36,900 acres.

SOURCE: VIRGINIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION.
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