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Estimators vs.
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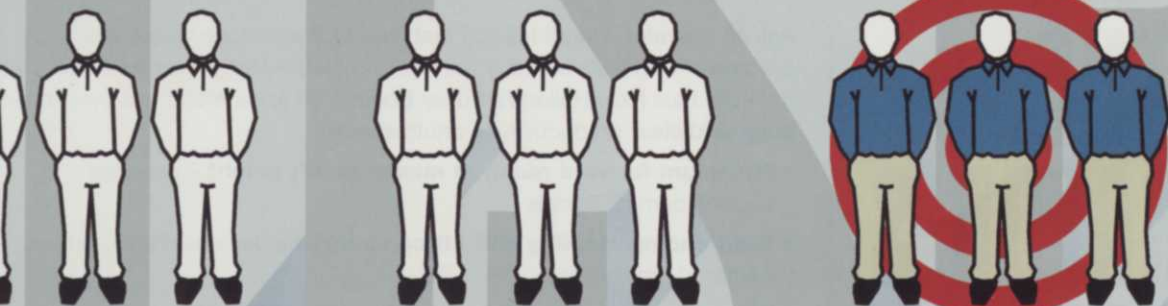
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Circle 101

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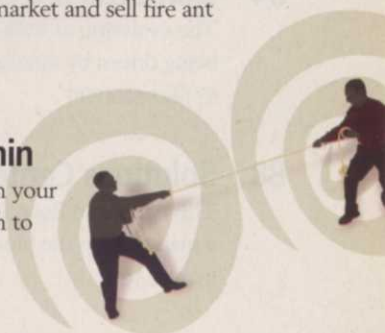
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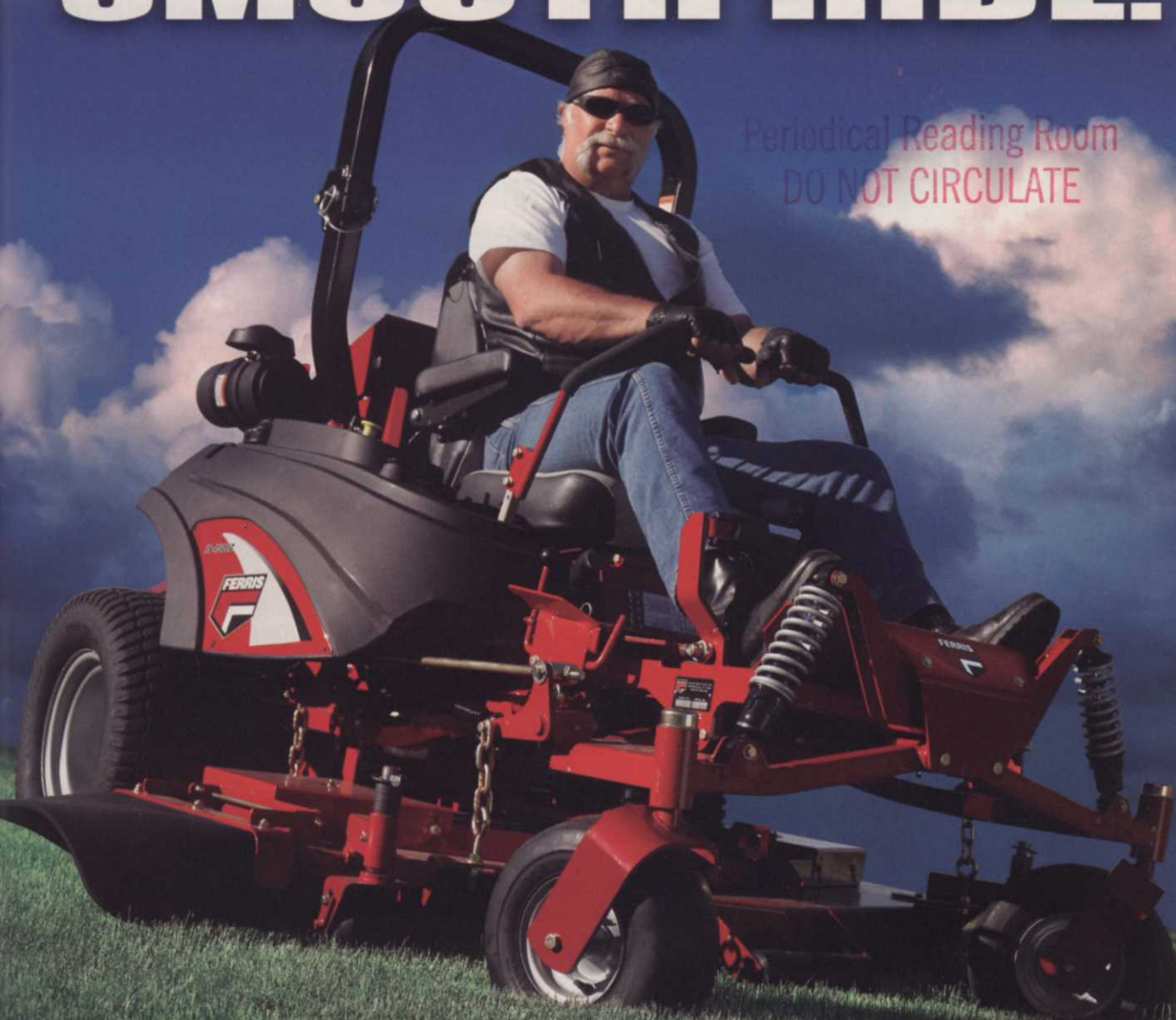
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Disney gig was no drag

Preston Courtney (blue shirt), and his grounds crew show how they prepare the stadium baseball field at Disney's Wide World of Sports, Inc. Attendees at the recent STMA Conference enjoyed the demonstration. Read more about the session at www.landscapemanagement.net.

» Readers respond

A business is always beating the bushes for new customers if it wants to grow. There's a snappy name for this process: marketing. Inspired by our cover story on USP, LM asked online readers, **what is your company's most effective marketing tool?** Here's what you said:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| ◀ 44% Word of mouth (referrals) | 6% Direct mail |
| 23% Yellow Pages | 4% Web site |
| 12% Door hangers | 2% Print newsletter |
| 7% Signage on trucks or at job site | 1% E-mail newsletter |

Want to weigh in? Our survey question changes every month and we publish the results here. Visit www.landscapemanagement.net to voice your opinion.

» Overheard

"This is like money falling from the sky"

— Todd Pugh, president of the Louisville, OH-based Enviroscapes, on observing an Ohio snowfall through his window.

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BUSINESS

WHO'S WHO IN LM



For more than 25 years, **Craig Cowden** has made a career of building and managing businesses in the landscape industry. He is currently working with Vila & Son Landscape, the leading firm in Florida, and dealing with crazy Florida drivers every day. Check out his interesting take on the communications gap that occurs

between estimators and field supervisors on page 58. The idea came from a paper Cowden submitted as part of his M.B.A. degree program.

Sean Gallagher is the copywriter/research analyst for Lawn Doctor, Inc. in Holmdel, N.J., and he has been a member of the company's marketing team since 2004. Working with the largest franchise system in the Green Industry, Gallagher has developed and implemented numerous advertising and public relations initiatives for Lawn Doctor's more than 475 franchises coast-to-coast. He is also a freelance writer out of Toms River, N.J. Check out his article on marketing fire ant control on page 54.



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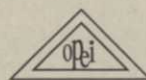
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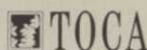
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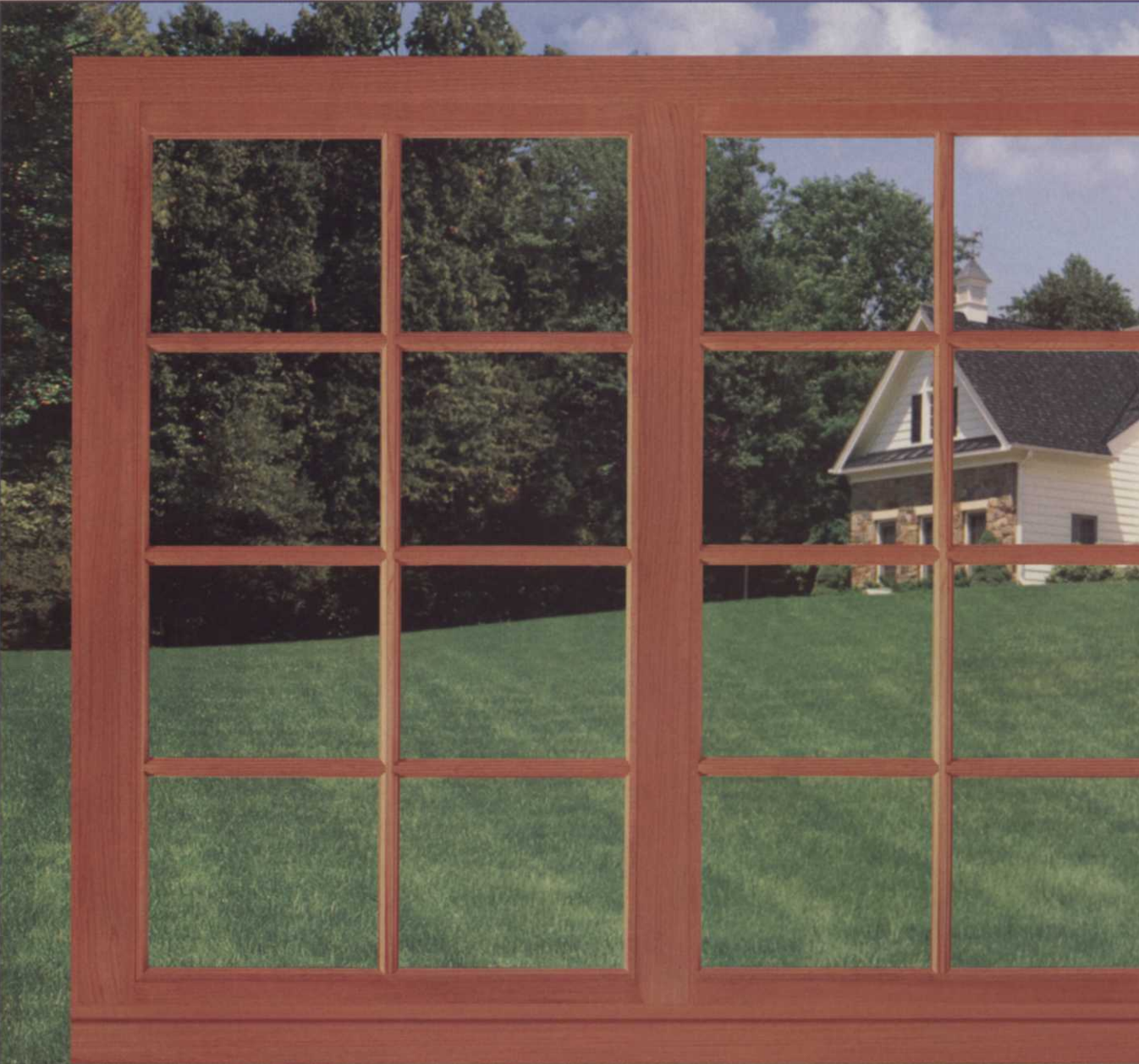


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Time, the ultimate gift

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

Consider these numbers: 60, 24, 7, 52 and 12.

What do they have in common? They're all measures of time, of course — minutes in an hour, hours in a day, days in a week; you get the message.

The last time I checked we all get 1,440 minutes each day. No more, no less. It's the same for everybody. But the value each of us places on these minutes ... well, that's another matter.

When it's most appreciated

For example, my kid brother Danny probably views time in a different light than I do. In fact, like most of us. He's afflicted with a blood cancer, multiple myeloma. He's been battling the disease for the past eight years. The effort has ravaged him, physically that is. This cancer, although incurable, is treatable. But it's a sneaky, insidious disease. It attacks bones.

With the disease seemingly in remission, he picks up a bag of groceries, a bone in his arm snaps. Doctors patch him up with a metal rod. He walks to his mailbox in front of his house and a bone in his leg snaps. He gets another metal rod.

Don't pity Danny. He doesn't feel sorry for himself. In fact, he's in great spirits thanks to his supportive family and daily visits from his first grandchild, three-year-old Evelyn (Evie), whom he adores.

Danny and I visited several weeks ago when I was attending a turf conference near his home in Florida. I was heartened, although not surprised, to see him enjoying life as he's always enjoyed life.

This was the same Danny that I always see in my mind's eye. The same tough little teammate on the Little League team that dad coached. Playing shoulder to shoulder with me on the football team at our tiny, rural Ohio high school.

When Vicky and I marry, I see him handing me the keys to his prized 1965 white LeMans convertible so that we, with just the money we'd received as wedding gifts, can honeymoon in Chicago. There he is waving and grinning as we drive away, the top down on his beloved polished and waxed Pontiac. Several years later when he and Judy marry with just the two families present in the reverend's home, he's chosen me to be his best man.

Make more of it? no way

Danny knows that the clock is ticking, and he's accepted the fact that the mechanism on some clocks wear out or break down faster than others.

So you can understand how little worth that he, and now I, place in phrases such as "saving time," or "make the time."

Hey, we all get 1,440 minutes every day and they only flow in one direction, so let's make the best use of them, be it family, friends or business.

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Hey, we all get 1,440 minutes every day
and they only flow in one direction.



There's a fine line between overselling extras and selling enhancements that create value.



Enhancements — show value

BY BRUCE WILSON

Most maintenance companies sell enhancements as a key part of their businesses. They make up a large percentage of their sales and add to the profit earned from a customer. Since this is such an important profit piece, many companies really push enhancements.

Most customers want companies to recommend improvements to their properties. This sounds like a win-win relationship. What could be better?

Many companies have relatively inexperienced people interacting with customers trying to sell enhancements. They know they're expected to sell something, but they don't always know what to sell.

The fine line

There's a fine line between overselling extras and selling enhancements that create value. Customers can lose trust easily, leading to the beginning of the end of the relationship. Not good!

Keep these points in mind:

- ▶ Treat the customer's money like it's your own. Acid test: *Would you do this on your own property?*
- ▶ Empathetically engineer solutions to the customer's problems. Acid test: *Does it solve the customer's problem?*
- ▶ Provide long-term solutions. Beware of doing an enhancement that needs to be re-enhanced in a year. Acid test: *Is it a real solution or a temporary patch?*

▶ Provide counsel. Guide the customer investment process. Help the customer understand the value of the proposed enhancement. Acid Test: *Does the customer really understand the value of what is being proposed?*

▶ When it's possible, show customers a return for their investment. Acid Test: *e payback time?* If they spend \$1,000 on a new controller to save water, how much water and how much money can they save? How many years till they get the investment back? Most customers expect a relative short payback period, three years or less.

Proven ideas

The best ideas for enhancements help create value. Think about ideas that:

- ▶ Save the customer money in the long-term include water saving modifications to their irrigation system,
- ▶ Solve a safety issue, for example, include the pruning or removal of plants blocking line of sight leading to possible accidents,
- ▶ Improve curb appeal add monetary value to properties,
- ▶ Reduce long-term maintenance costs offer easily understood savings, or
- ▶ Update an aging landscape improve market value of a property in addition to providing added pleasure for occupants.

— 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 Symbiot Landscape Network. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.



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If you don't devote significant time and resources to building and administering a serious teaching program, providing effective training isn't easy.



Building a training culture

BY BILL HOOPES

Iwant this column to help small businesses that want to develop a training culture. Two facts are important. First, untrained people typically fail or at best under-perform. Their mistakes and omissions lower your service level, damage your image in the marketplace and eventually, cost you money. Second, if you don't devote significant time and resources to building and administering a serious teaching program, providing effective training isn't easy.

Designate someone who cares. Training is a management responsibility. Still, managers may not always be available to deliver training. Rather than try and fail because you are too busy, use training as a development tool for your most quality oriented team member. Choose someone who shares your beliefs about doing the job right. This is the person who will build your training program.

Plan training in "small bites." Spend time up front re-formatting important but often boring information. Emphasize most important points and critical knowledge in concise, easy to understand bites or learning modules. New hires cannot and will not absorb extensive information.

Initial training must teach what new hires need to know to begin, period. Do not attempt to create a subject matter expert in a week or two.

Organize topics in "need to know" sequence. Limit initial training objectives. Begin with the job description. Teaching in a logical-use sequence, according to

job requirements, will improve retention.

Information that I'll call "nice to know," while often more interesting to the trainer, tends to reduce clarity for new people and can be confusing.

Use available, inexpensive resources. In the Green Industry, whatever your business, the information you need is out there. Your new trainer should network with established and respected companies. Take advantage of the work others have done to pull together necessary information. Here are other great resources:

- ▶ Pesticide safety/use topics — OSHA Web site and state extension services.
- ▶ Driver safety — National safety council, local/state police and for profit training producers.
- ▶ Equipment and product use — Manufacturers provide this info in video and written form.
- ▶ Plant/pest relationships — Your state extension service is a great resource and all information is free.
- ▶ Sales/customer service — "Train the Trainer" seminars equip your trainer to deliver these topics.
- ▶ Finally, join and use the extensive training and networking resources of the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET).

Provide and protect a training location. It is important that training tools are maintained in a clean, quiet location. This is the site where all classroom training should take place in a well-prepared setting.

Many operators have used training to help build a culture of quality and professionalism. Join the club.

— The author is founder of Grass Roots Training in Delaware, OH. Contact him at hoopes@columbus.rr.com.

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In the Know

BUSINESS

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Make your boss look good

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

ORLANDO, FL — Want to get ahead in grounds management? Certainly, do all the usual things: learn your trade, work hard, be honest and ethical. But, don't forget one other critical key to success — making your boss look good.

That was, in essence, the heart of the message that Dr. Andy McNitt presented, kicking off the Sports Turf Management Association (STMA) conference here Thurs., Jan. 19. Grounds and turf professionals filled the huge conference room for the opening presentations at Disney World's Coronado Springs resort.

Make your boss look good. Simple, right?

Well it's more like getting on the

same page with your boss, getting in tune to his or her responsibilities and concerns. And, (if you can stand another cliché) speaking their language.

Step Number One is being able to talk to your supervisors and administrators concerning matters that are most important to them. In their world, it's budgeting, planning, and other administrative or management matters. They're happy to leave the turfgrass management to you.

"Learn to speak the language that your boss speaks. Don't expect them to speak your language," said McNitt, assistant professor of soil science at Penn State University and an ardent supporter of the sports field industry.

Do these things, he said, and build your career in grounds management:

► **Dress professionally.** For business meetings with owners, administrators or managers that means a sport coat for men, conservative business garb for women.

Dr. Andy McNitt encouraged STMA attendees to build professional relationships. Yes, that includes the boss.

► **Develop a 3- or 5-year management plan** for the facilities under your care. Give it some thought. Make it look professional. Go to Kinkos and get some help to make it look nice.

► **Become a communicator.** Your technical knowledge of turf, soils and irrigation likely resulted in you landing your position. Your ability to convey the importance of what you do will get you promoted.

► **Put together a newsletter** to give to your coaches, owners and administrators, informing them of what's going on with

the sports fields under your care. Consider doing at least one a year, perhaps prior to the start of the busy season.

► **Be a mentor to someone else.** There are no secrets in maintaining sports fields, so don't be stingy or secretive with your knowledge.

► **Keep learning.**

New equipment, new turfgrass varieties, new materials and there are always new challenges.

► **Network. Network. Network.** You'll need friends and advisors to get ahead in sports field management. You'll need colleagues for support and to trade experiences and ideas with. Begin building your network now.

What do all of the above recommendations have in common? They're all aimed at making you, the field manager, a more effective part of a larger team and making the job of your boss easier.

"Be a relationship builder," concluded McNitt. "Getting ahead in this profession is all about building relationships with other people."

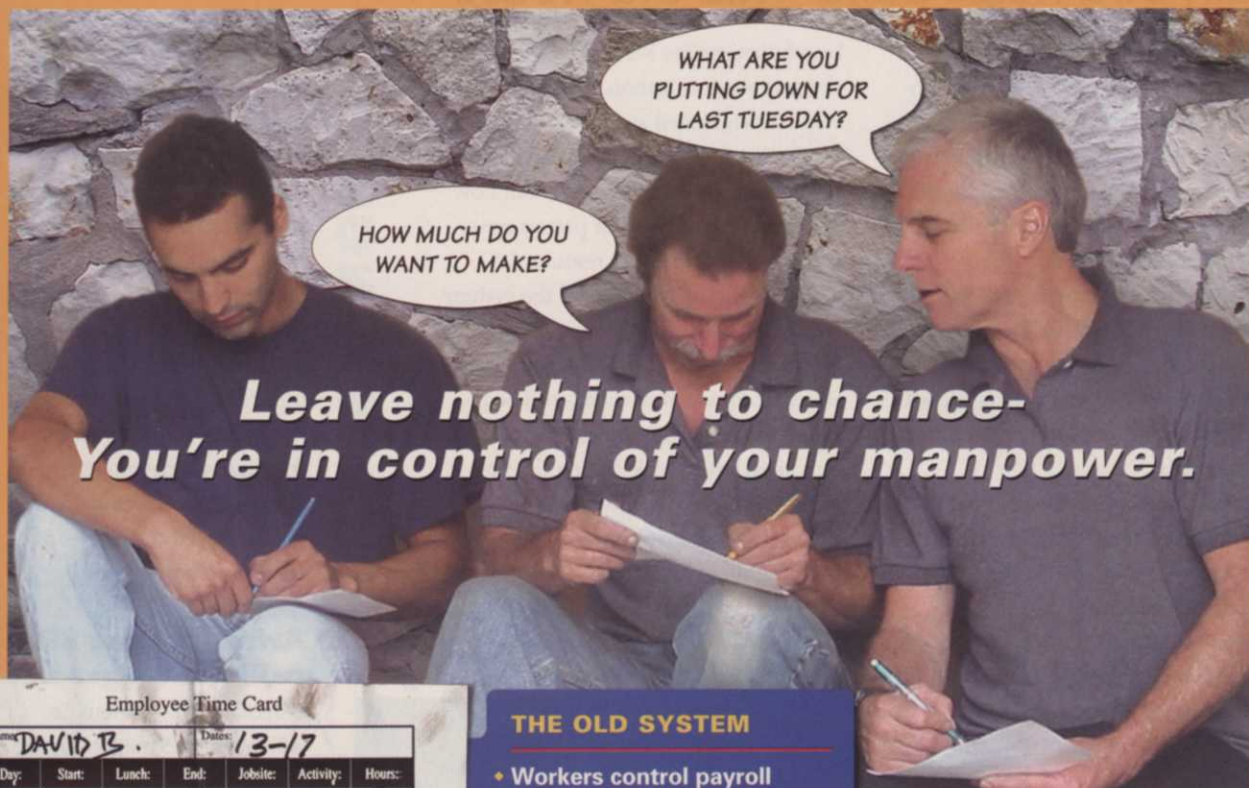
And, of course, that includes a positive relationship with your boss.

"Learn to speak the language that your boss speaks."

— Dr. Andy McNitt



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Employee Time Card

Name:	DAVID B.			Dates:	13-17	
Day:	Start:	Lunch:	End:	Jobite:	Activity:	Hours:
Monday	7	1/2	3:30	Morris Gen		8
Tuesday	7	1/2	3:30	'	'	8
Wednesday	7	1/2	4	'	'	8 1/2
Thursday	7	1/2	4	'	'	8 1/2
Friday	7	1/2	4	'	'	8 1/2

Employee Signature: *David B.* Total Hours: **41 1/2**


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- ♦ Illegible handwritten timecards
- ♦ Cannot verify locations or hours
- ♦ Accuracy based on workers' memories
- ♦ Impossible to verify overtime



Employee Report

David Burns

Jobsite Name: Morris Property			Date Range: 2/13/2006 through 2/17/2006	
Day	Start	End	Activity	
Mon 2/13	7:06 AM	12:05 PM	Irrigation	4:57 hours
	12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Irrigation	2:41 hours 7:38 hours
Tue 2/14	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Irrigation	4:55 hours
	12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Irrigation	2:40 hours 7:35 hours
Wed 2/15	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:50 hours
	12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Irrigation	3:03 hours 7:53 hours
Thu 2/16	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Planting	5:02 hours
	12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Planting	2:56 hours 7:58 hours
Fri 2/17	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Planting	4:54 hours
	12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Planting	2:55 hours 7:49 hours
			Employee total	38:53 hours
David B. Moore Project Manager				

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In the Know

Rain Bird helps build 'This Old House'

GLENDORA, CA — Rain Bird Corp. is teaming up with the pioneer home improvement series *This Old House* to design a ground-breaking, gray water irrigation system for the program's first-ever contemporary-style project located in historic Cambridge, MA.

Rain Bird's irrigation system will run almost exclusively on reclaimed water. In this case, rain runoff captured during spring and winter storms will be stored and then pumped out for irrigation during dry spells.

"*This Old House* is the gold standard of home improvement shows, and we were more than happy to take on the task of designing and implementing such a complex and challenging irrigation concept for their latest project house," said Jennifer Riley-Chetwynd,

brand manager for Rain Bird. "We hope the gray water irrigation system paves the way for heightened awareness of the need for water conservation in the lawn and garden and sparks discussion about how homeowners can do their part to conserve our most precious resource."

The defining elements of the system are two massive water tanks, which hold a combined 2,500 gallons of reclaimed water from rain and irrigation. The installation of the gray water irrigation system aired nationwide during the first weeks of January on PBS. Visit www.thisoldhouse.com for programming details.



► At a recent *This Old House* taping, Ed Marchant of Trinity Irrigation (far right), a certified Rain Bird installer, explains to *This Old House* landscape contractor Roger Cook (middle) the unique elements of the gray water irrigation system. The *This Old House* Cambridge project episode featuring Rain Bird aired nationwide on PBS the week of Jan. 5.

► Two immense concrete water tanks are lowered into the ground at the latest *This Old House* project, a 1950s contemporary-style house in Cambridge, MA. The two tanks, which will hold a combined 2,500 gallons of water, are the keystone of this state of the art gray water irrigation system, designed by the professionals at Rain Bird and *This Old House*.

Toro gives aid to employees

BLOOMINGTON, IL — The Toro Co.'s executive chairman and former CEO Ken Melrose established an "Employee Critical Need Fund" with a personal contribution of \$1 million. The company will match the donation. The fund is aimed at providing short-term, emergency assistance to employees affected by a natural disaster, a life-threatening or serious illness, injury or other circumstance outside the person's control. Toro said the idea was developed in 2004 after wildfires in California destroyed the homes of some Toro employees.

Ariens plans \$6.5 million upgrade

BRILLION, WI — Ariens Co. will invest \$6.5 million for manufacturing plant upgrades and a new production and engineering training facility. The company said its goal is to reduce delivery times for its walk-behind power equipment products, including its line of Sno-Thro machines. Additionally, when the training facility is complete, each of the company's plants will hold independent learning centers.

Half-million milestone

CARY, NC — A gleaming new cab-model John Deere 4720 compact utility tractor recently rolled off the assembly line at the John Deere tractor facility in Augusta, GA, marking the 500,000th compact utility tractor built there.

[CLIPPINGS]



DON'T COUNT ON THIS.

FROM THE FIELD:

More ANLA/PLANET merger talk at Mid-Am

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor

CHICAGO — The 2006 Mid-America Horticulture Show in Chicago Jan. 18-20, sponsored by the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, Illinois Nurserymen's Association and the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation, brought together more than 12,000 professionals from all sides of the Green Industry, both on the lawn care/landscape design side, as well as nursery retailers.



From left, the ANLA's Teresa Jodon, Sara Dalcher and Buzz Bertolero

In the spirit of the show, *Landscape Management* couldn't help but ask the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) and the Professional Landscape Network (PLANET) about the latest developments in the two organizations' proposed merger.

"The merger would bring together the entire Green Service Industry in a true integration of two great organizations, not the acquisition of one by the other," said Buzz Bertolero, ANLA president. "This is a case where the strength of one organization is the weakness of the other and vice versa. And to bring together the landscape side with the production side, it just makes a lot

Merger FAQ's

Q How would individual PLANET or ANLA member business benefit from such a merger?

Members would benefit in at least four ways: **1.** access to more business-building association programs and services; **2.** more direct opportunities to build supplier and customer relationships; **3.** a stronger industry voice to the public and government; and **4.** the elimination of duplication and/or competition in association activities that increase dues and service fees.

Q What are the potential disadvantages to the individual member should this merger take place?

Bigger is not always a guarantee of better. Merger efforts can distract organizations from delivering key services provided by the former ("legacy") associations. New faces and combining association traditions can lead to a loss of a sense of community or familiarity that existed before the merger.

— Provided by ANLA and PLANET

of sense for where this industry is going."

Bertolero admitted there are a lot of questions about the merger (see sidebar), but the meetings at trade shows like Mid-Am is where those differences are being talked about and hopefully resolved.

In February and March, both association boards will consider preliminary approval to merge. Once that happens, from March through May a Joint Task Force would develop a formal merger agreement.

"There is resolve on both sides to get this done," Bertolero said.

Iveco powers up with Rainbow

CAROL STREAM, IL — Fitzgerald, GA, -based Rainbow Irrigation Systems agreed to partner with Iveco Motors of North America, Inc. to power their centrifugal irrigation pumps, with Iveco Motors NEF 4NA, NEF 4TC, NEF 4TAA, NEF 6NA and NEF 6TAA engines.

ASLA finds an ACE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) has joined the ACE Mentor Program as a national sponsor and partner. The ACE program targets young adults to introduce them to the challenges and rewards of a career in design and construction. ASLA will work with the ACE program to introduce high school students to career opportunities in landscape architecture and other design and construction professions.

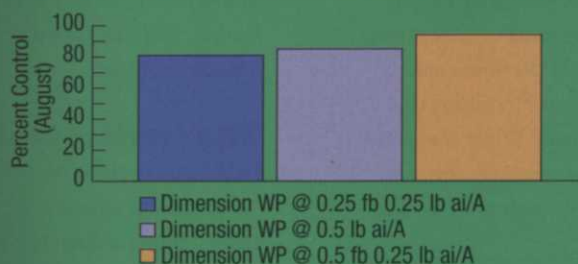
Oregon partners with ARI

PORTLAND, OR — The Oregon Cutting Systems Group of Blount, Inc. has signed an exclusive deal with ARI to make Oregon catalogs, parts lookup and online ordering available to its authorized distributors and dealers using ARI's software and services. Under the three-year agreement, ARI and Oregon Cutting Systems are working to publish the first online catalogs for viewing using EMPARTweb, which will be followed up by a CD version using ARI's PartSmart.

[CLIPPINGS]

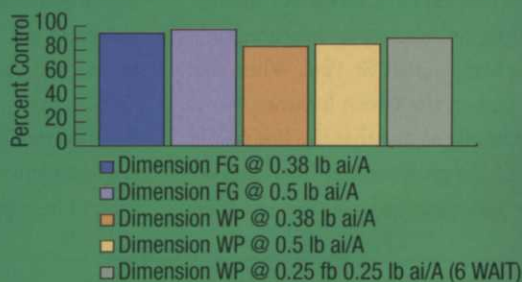
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In the Know

Phosphorus ban finds few opponents

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor

ANN ARBOR, MI — Ann Arbor's city council is expected to pass an ordinance restricting the use of phosphorus in lawn fertilizers in early February, although the law will not go into effect until 2007, according to a recent article in the *Ann Arbor News*.

The restriction is designed to help meet a federal mandate to cut the amount of phosphorus in the Middle Huron River in half in order to avoid possible Clean Water Act violations. The ordinance, four years in the making, received a good reception from the City Council and citizens will comment on it Feb. 6 before the final vote, the newspaper reported.

Ann Arbor would be the largest municipality in Michigan to have such a rule if it passes, said Ann Arbor's Environmental Coordinator Matt Naud, who added the rule is not the first of its kind, but it is still relatively unusual.

For instance, in 2002, Minnesota state legislators banned fertilizers that contain phosphorus in the seven-county area surrounding Minneapolis/St. Paul. When that law was passed, the Green Industry responded loudly, saying that the law would hurt lawn care professionals, there was no scientific foundation for this legislation and

that healthy and well-maintained turfgrass prevents runoff and reduces pollution into lakes and streams.

This time, however, there has been little to no resistance to the ban,

Tom Smith, executive director of the 1,600-member nonprofit Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, told the *Ann Arbor News* that his organization supports the measure and many members already formulate their fertilizers without phosphorus. He said the problem with local ordinances is that many require a registration fee, which adds up quickly when applicators are working in dozens of different communities. He pointed to one community that charges a \$150 registration fee with an additional \$100-per-truck fee.

The city has not yet determined if it will charge a fee, Naud said.

Some area retailers say they have no trouble with the rule, either. They already offer phosphorus-free fertilizer, and the ordinance does not limit what they are permitted to sell. Mark Hodesh of Downtown Home and Garden told the newspaper, "We do carry a number of fertilizers that don't contain phosphates. While it's an important plant nutrient, generally the soils around here provide enough of it," he said.

LESCO donates to Rutgers

CLEVELAND — In 2005, sales of LESCO's Padre Tall Fescue and Glenmont Kentucky Bluegrass have resulted in a \$239,000 royalty-based payment from LESCO to Rutgers University. As part of the partnership between the university and lawn care supplier, these two varieties were developed by Rutgers University professors and then licensed to LESCO for sales and marketing purposes.

Girard sells residential division

SANFORD, FL — Girard Environmental Services Inc. of Sanford, FL, sold its residential fertilization and pest control division to TruGreen Chem-Lawn Inc. Girard will maintain its landscape construction and management divisions, which largely serve commercial clients throughout Central Florida, said Rick Girard, chief executive officer.

The 'write' stuff

PAULSBORO, NJ — Aquatrols' Third Annual Scholarship Essay Contest is open to children of turf management professionals who will be attending an accredited college in 2006-07. Entrants will compete for a first-place scholarship of \$2,000 and a runner-up scholarship of \$1,000. The topic of the essay is "The role of surfactants in enhancing water use and/or irrigation efficiency." Complete instructions are posted at www.aquatrols.com. Essays must be received by March 1.

[CLIPPINGS]



A big check is always a good sign

ST. LOUIS — The St. Louis Rams offensive linemen donated \$14,000 to the St. Louis Public High School League Inc. (PHL Inc.) to help with the renovation of football and other sports fields for inner-city St. Louis public high school sports teams. To learn more, read the story behind the renovation in the September issue of *LM*.



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Project EverGreen fact sheets promote green space benefits

NEW PRAGUE, MN — Project EverGreen recently released three fact sheets that can help landscapers and lawn care professionals communicate the value of well-maintained turf and landscapes to the public and policy makers.

All three fact sheets can be downloaded from the Project EverGreen Web site, www.projectevergreen.com.

Economic Fact Sheet: The Financial Benefits of Green Spaces

Environmental Fact Sheet: How Green Spaces Benefit the Environment

Lifestyle Fact Sheet: How Green Spaces Benefit Lifestyles

"It's important for homeowners to realize that green is much more than just a

pleasing color," said Den Gardner, executive director of Project EverGreen.

"In looking at university and government research we found strong support for the practical advantages of maintaining and enhancing green spaces."

Some of the benefits documented include:

- Landscaping can increase home value by as much as 11.3%.
- Trees can reduce attic temperatures by 40 degrees, resulting in lower energy costs.
- Proper landscape maintenance can protect water supplies by reducing runoff and preventing leaching into the soil.

► Readers can also put links to HTML versions of these fact sheets on their companies' own Web sites.



Mowing height vital for IPM

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

ORLANDO, FL — Want to be get your Integrated Pest Management (IPM) off to a good start, especially when it involves cool-season grasses? Do these two things:

1 Establish the turfgrasses (species and cultivars) most appropriate to your location, purpose and/or activity. Refer to the results at the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program, which evaluates all commercially available species and cultivars of turfgrass for a range of desirable characteristics. Review the results of the testing location nearest your location. You can find the results at www.ntep.org. (Be aware, however, that if you're looking for grass that can take a beating and keep on ticking, i.e. sports turf, only a few locations test for traffic tolerance.)

2 Next, mow the turfgrass you maintain as high as the owner, field user and/or conditions will allow.

These two factors are vital for a successful turf IPM program, Dr. Roch Gausson said in a presentation to about 100 turf managers at the recent Sports Turf Managers Association Conference here on Jan. 19. Getting these cultural practices right will go a long way to provide a turfgrass better able to withstand stresses, such as heavy sports play, while also significantly reducing weed pressure.

"When you increase the mowing height, you increase turfgrass rooting, and rooting is the foundation of the field," said Gausson, who described proper mowing as "the ultimate IPM tool."

In support of this, Gausson gave a

down-and-dirty review of a number of research studies showing the beneficial effects of higher mowing heights on rhizome production in Kentucky bluegrass, turf leaf area and photosynthetic capacity, evapotranspiration and weed pressure.

What about the 1/3rd rule? For decades turf managers have been advised not to remove more than 1/3rd of the leaf blade at a cutting.

Instead of that, Gausson, professor of agronomy and horticulture at the University of Nebraska, advised the audience to concentrate on keeping the grass mowed at an optimum height and frequency and to mow with sharp blades.

"If you can boost the height of cut as little as 1/16th of an inch, you will increase rooting," Gausson said.



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In the Know

People & companies



Nufarm Americas, Inc. of Burr Ridge, IL, promoted **Sean Casey**

(above, left) and **Keith Hern** within the company's Turf and Specialty group. Casey will be Nufarm's vice president of Sales, Turf & Specialty. Keith Hern is the new vice president of Sales, IVM and Forestry.

BioSafe Systems LLC promoted **Lucie Chambers** to aquatics segment manager. Chambers will oversee aquatic sales and distribution promoting growth in both the na-

tional commercial industry as well as the retail Home & Garden industry. BioSafe also welcomed **Angelique Levesque** as Aquatics/Home & Garden sales rep.



Lance Elliott (above, left) and **Carlos Galan** joined the sales force at **Hunter Industries**. Elliott will work in the California region, handling territory covering western Ventura County, Santa Barbara County,

and San Luis Obispo County. Galan will handle the territory that includes metropolitan Los Angeles and eastern Ventura County.

The **New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA)** elected **Michael Maffei**, from Back O'Beyond, Inc. president for 2006. Other new officers include vice president **Owen Regan**, owner of A T Sales Associates and secretary/treasurer **Greg Chorvas**, superintendent at Cantine Veterans Sports Complex.

John A. Chassard, director of grounds at the Lehigh

Country Club in Allentown was selected as president of the **Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council** for 2006. **Jeffrey L. Fry**, of the Lebanon Country Club in Lebanon, was named vice president while **Matt Shaffer**, of the Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, was named as secretary-treasurer.



BASF Corp. hired **John Bresnahan** as sales representative for its New England territory.

Aquatrols appointed **David Syck** as Pacific Northwest territory manager.

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USDA using natural predators to combat fire ants

SAN ANTONIO — It's like King Kong vs. the Tyrannosaurus Rex, only on a much, much smaller scale. And instead of Skull Island, the battleground is Texas.

There, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is pitting the tiny phorid fly, newly imported from Brazil, against the current reigning champion pest, the fire ant. The bout was recently featured in the pages of *National Geographic* and the *San Antonio Express News*.

As described in the *Express News*, "These phorid flies are natural predators of fire ants and can dispatch them with the grisly efficiency of a science fiction monster — implanting eggs in their little ant chests that then hatch into larvae and eat their little ant brains." According to the articles, experts say the phorid fly will almost certainly not wipe out the fire ant, but could cut local populations up to 30% and make them more vulnerable.

It's like King Kong vs. the Tyrannosaurus Rex, only on a much, much smaller scale.

Molly Keck, a program specialist with Texas A&M's cooperative extension service, has been trying to get the phorid flies established in the city-owned Walker Ranch Historic Park. She uses a cattle prod to zap the ground to get the ants moving. She then opens the tubes, releasing several dozen flies that immediately swoop and pounce on the ants below. This leaves them momentarily stunned as the flies insert their eggs.

"They just dive bomb them. It's a split-second attack," Keck explained to the *Express News*. Over the next four days, the fly larva will eat its way into the ant's head,


actually severing it from the body. The larva eventually emerge as a full-grown fly intent on starting the process over again.

In a couple of months, Keck will return to see if the phorid fly population

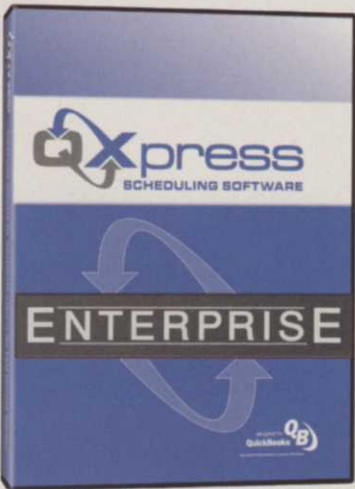
has grown. Keck said the flies are superior to insecticide because they attack nothing except fire ants.

There are six Southeastern states and Texas involved in the phorid fly program.

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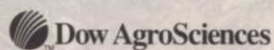
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► This additional service is pretty for your customers, pretty for your bottom line

BY LM STAFF

Any service you can offer that keeps customers happy and gives you reasons to visit the site has to be a pretty good one, right? If that service helps differentiate your business and grow profits, all the better. Maybe it's time to add some seasonal color to your portfolio.

"There are many low-maintenance annual varieties on the market that can make things easier for landscape crews," says Barb Terrell, landscape program manager for Ball Horticultural Co. in West Chicago, IL. "The key is putting the right plant in the right place."

With seasonal color it's vital to learn which plants thrive best in your climate and in the property micro-climates you serve. Under the wrong conditions, all plants can fail.

Business benefits first

Arm your employees with the right mix of technical expertise. It requires well-thought-out and systematic procedures, in this instance, for bed prep, installation, fertilization,

mulching and pest controls. This type of work generally is performed best by employees who are detail-oriented and efficient.

Color Burst, founded in 1987 and operated by Joe Burns, plants more than 1.9 million flowers annually for a range of clients, both commercial and residential. Based in Atlanta and with branch locations in Birmingham and Huntsville, AL, and Charlotte, NC, it provides bed design, and seasonal flower installation and maintenance services across most of the Southeast.

Clients primarily include property managers, commercial properties and residences.

"Sometimes we like to do the unusual," Burns says. For instance, his company does the beds at Jordan-Hare Stadium, home field for the Auburn University Tigers football team. Burns, a graduate and season ticket holder, sees that the beds sport the university's orange and blue, with T-I-G-E-R-S spelled out in flowers, of course.

The more profitable end of the service usually turns out to be maintenance. Even the

best-prepared bed will need tidying and weed control.

Plan change-outs

"In the North, spring through summer is prime time for annuals. The cooler temperatures in early spring and autumn provide the opportunity for additional change-outs to include cool-weather annuals like pansies, dianthus, snapdragons and mums," says Jessie Atchison, industry communications manager at Ball.

Terrell advises landscapers that they don't have to wait for an annual bed to look bad before changing it, especially when they're looking for ways to improve the bottom line. "Many clients are receptive to the idea of changing colors to reflect the season," she says.

Arm yourself with info

Consider several critical factors when choosing annuals, advises Terry Howe, product representative and station manager with PanAmerican Seed. "One is sun versus shade. Then pay attention to watering regimes, like heavy versus light, for example. Many landscapers struggle

with watering zones or timing that can be in conflict with what they're used to doing for turf. Landscapers also need to know the most appropriate season for the annuals they choose. Cool versus hot season is important in the South, and hardiness, or frost tolerance, is crucial in the North."

Contact your state association to find professional grower associations for tips on what works best in your region.

New for this year

If you want to wow your customers this year, offer deep, bold colors like burgundy and black, or brights like yellow, orange and fuchsia. These are upcoming color trends, say the experts at Ball. "Foliage is very popular too," Atchison says. "More and more annuals are coming to market that are grown for their foliage rather than their flowers, so it's easy to add big color to plantings without relying on the plants being in bloom." Two Ball brands, Wave petunias and Fanfare spreading impatiens, remain popular for their weather tolerance and growth rates, Atchison adds. **LM**

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Evergreen Forest Products
Wilmington, North Carolina



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Jerry Hodgson
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- | Own | Interested | Own | Interested | Own | Interested |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Skid-Steer Loader | | Compact Excavator | | Toolcat™ Work Machine | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Compact Track Loader | | Telescopic Tool Carrier | | Compaction & | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Portable Power | |
| Mini Track Loader | | Utility Vehicle | | Products | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| All-Wheel Steer Loader | | Loader Backhoe | | | |

2. Please provide me with information on attachments for the following applications:

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping - Nursery | <input type="checkbox"/> Buildings and Grounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping - Contracted Maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Site Development/Land Clearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping - Design, Build and Install | <input type="checkbox"/> Excavating and Grading | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snow Removal | <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete and Asphalt | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining |

3. Would you like someone to contact you regarding:

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration | <input type="checkbox"/> Price Quote | <input type="checkbox"/> Rental | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade-In | <input type="checkbox"/> Used Equipment |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|

4. What is your purchasing time frame?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immediately | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 6-12 months | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 12 months |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|

5. Are you a current customer of a:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bobcat dealer who handles Bobcat equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other compact equipment dealer | <input type="checkbox"/> Have not previously purchased compact equipment |
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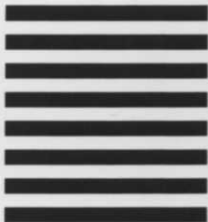
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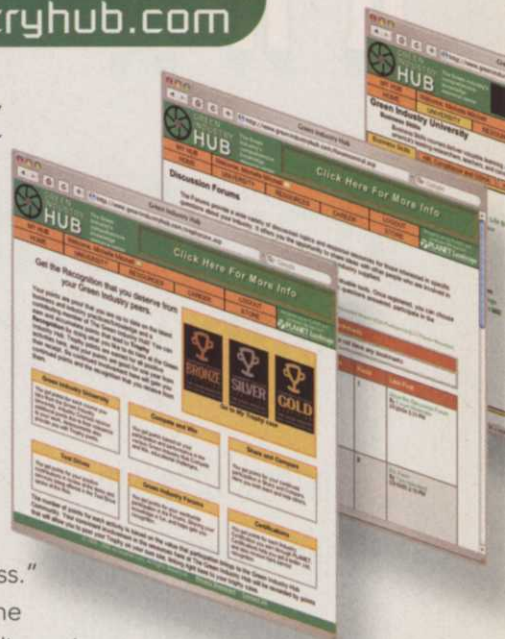
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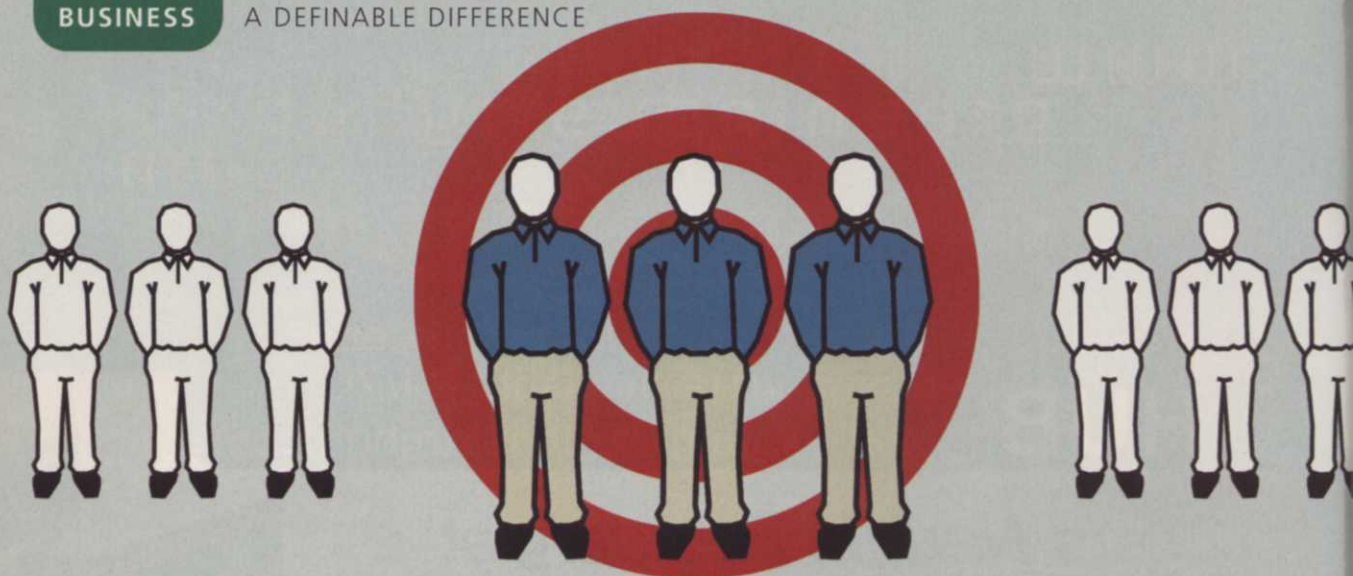
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Landscaping gets off
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BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

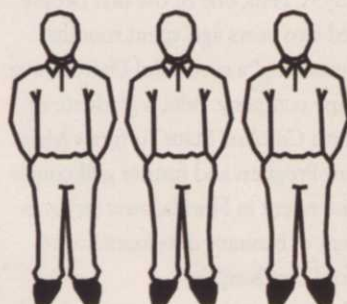
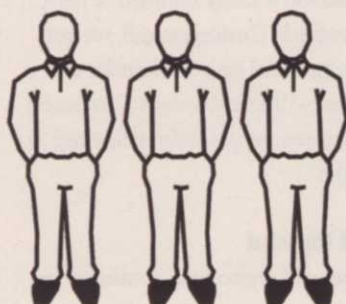
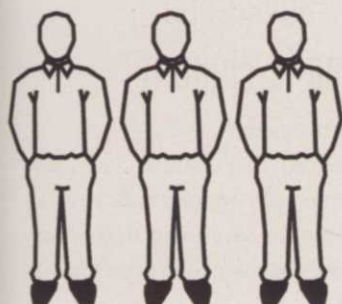
"We do what we say we're going to do."

It's a simple, direct selling proposition. There's no room for misunderstanding or compromise.

Founder Blake Crawford and the rest of his management team at 19-month-old Crawford Landscaping, Naples, FL, have been building operating and administrative systems into their young company.

They've also been scrambling to meet the challenges of remarkable growth. And, in spite of the damage that Hurricane Wilma caused to customers' properties this past fall, they still confidently tell customers, "we do what we say we're going to do." Then they deliver that promise.

Crawford and his team have found the golden ticket — their unique selling proposition.



If you're not familiar with the term, also known as USP, you should be. Matt Shooner, founder with his wife Irene of the Cincinnati-based Focal Point Communications, a Green Industry marketing and advertising firm, encourages landscape companies to find their USP and capitalize on it.

So what's the definition, you ask?

"It's that definable 'something' that your company offers customers that distinguishes it from competitors," Shooner explains. It's a claim of uniqueness, supported and reinforced by advertising and marketing that delivers an over-riding easy-to-understand customer benefit.

Crawford Landscaping's USP — "We do what we say we're going to do" — meets Shooner's top criteria: "It must be believable," he says. "You must be able to deliver upon the promise of the USP."

Consider your own company. Is your USP your low, low price? A claim to great service (with testimonials)? Client retention? Awards received?

Shooner says the USP concept is critical to any marketing strategy and basic to clear, effective advertising.

It's all in the delivery

Crawford's message is resonating in Florida's Collier and Lee counties. This year it's budgeting revenues of \$3.5 million. Early renewals and sales show that \$4 million might be closer to the mark.

How has the company turned its USP into profit-generating action?

"Doing the things the way that we have promised to do has created great word of mouth," says CEO Crawford. "It's catapulted our business. Our promise is to offer best-in-market, quality service, and so far the market has responded."

Crawford, like so many other transplants to Naples, one of the fastest growing cities in the country, came from the industrial north. In fact, he's a decade removed from a career in Detroit's automotive industry, with a stop in between to manage apartment communities in Bloomington, IN, and Orlando and Tallahassee, FL. These experiences taught him many business lessons, but he puts two to use in particular in the day-to-day operations of his landscaping company.

Lesson #1: Companies with efficient systems to perform repetitive, time-sensitive services will out-perform companies without similar systems.

Lesson #2: It's not enough to strive for quality and customer satisfaction; you have to constantly monitor and measure it as well.



AT A GLANCE Crawford Landscaping

CEO: Blake Crawford

President, Business Development: Timothy Felts

Market: Collier & Lee counties, FL

Founded: 2004

Budgeted 2006 revenues: \$3.5 million

Fulltime employees: 40

Services: maintenance, enhancements, pest control, lawn care, horticulture, design/install, landscape lighting, water features, irrigation, home services

Mission: To provide superior full service landscaping and related services by building relationships predicated on quality, reliability and professionalism: To maximize the value of our clients' investments by enhancing profitability, appearance and function.

▼ Crawford Landscaping management team: Tim Felts, blue shirt center left; Blake Crawford, blue shirt center right



Timothy A. Felts, one of the first people he hired two years ago, spent months "benchmarking" a successful Detroit-area landscape company. Felts, a graduate of the North Carolina State Turfgrass Management Program and former golf course superintendent in Florida, now serves as president of business development for Crawford Landscaping.

"We started with one account, a hotel. We're now up to nearly 300 clients, counting all bundled communities," says Crawford of his company's start in Naples.

How'd they do it?

Crawford Landscaping's distinctive red trucks are a common sight in the region's multi-family communities, commercial properties and even many single-family homes.

"We said, 'If we simply do what we say we're going to do and do it to the best of our abilities, we will differentiate our company and people are going to be impressed,'" Blake says.

That's USP talking.

Crawford Landscaping is a full-service landscape company, offering turf maintenance, horticulture, pest control and fertilization, irrigation maintenance, small and large scale landscape installation, as well as landscape lighting and water features. Included among its offerings is one that's unusual, at least for a landscape company — home services.

This particular division has been a wonderful relationship builder with customers, many of which are property managers, says Felts, who spends 80% of his time in the field meeting and working with prospects and clients. Home Services, staffed by several uniformed experienced tradesmen, performs a host of property services, from home repairs, to power washing and installing holiday decorations.

"To get this quality of service in such a

timely fashion is really unheard of here," says Crawford. "Customers call, we get the job scheduled on a work order and completed within a few days. Customers love it because we get it done fast and done right."

Move it forward

As Crawford Landscaping continues to grow, its managers are focused on applying the concepts that form its USP into new business benefits.

The CEO estimates he spends 50% of his working day going from job to job and meeting with clients. "My responsibilities right now are divided between administration and leadership," explains Crawford. "There's no substitute to actually being out in the field, being able to see how things are working and auditing the quality end of the process."

While he's on the road, he's also implementing the company's "quality operating system," which he describes as very similar to a ISO 9000 Quality Management System (www.iso.org).

"Basically everything we do will be reduced to a procedure with supporting documents, which are called quality system documents, QSDs. I want to make sure that when I do extract myself more from the field that we have the right procedures in place that can ensure that what we do is repeatable and measurable," Crawford explains.

"We're looking at our company as a long-term investment. When you take the long approach, you devote the time to develop and implement comprehensive systems. You realize that the only way to ensure quality and service is to incorporate solid operating systems."

continued on page 48

Your advantage: Name it, claim it

By Matt Shooner

The concept of a USP is crucial to any marketing strategy and basic to clear and effective advertising. Recognize any of these companies from their USPs?

- ▶ "Have it your way." (Burger King)
- ▶ "A 15 minute call could save you 15 percent or more." (Geico)
- ▶ "Guaranteed for as long as you own your car." (Midas)

Each of these is tightly focused on a single benefit or characteristic of a product or service. That's why they're so memorable.

It's easy to try and say too much about your company and, in the

process, dilute the message of your key strength.

In other words, the first step in putting together a killer marketing plan is to identify something unique about your company. Find it. Name it. Claim it. Use it — everywhere and all the time.

— The author and his wife Irene founded Focal Point Communications, Cincinnati, in 1987. Their company provides a range of marketing and advertising services and

products to Green Industry professionals. E-mail him at

mshooner@growpro.com or

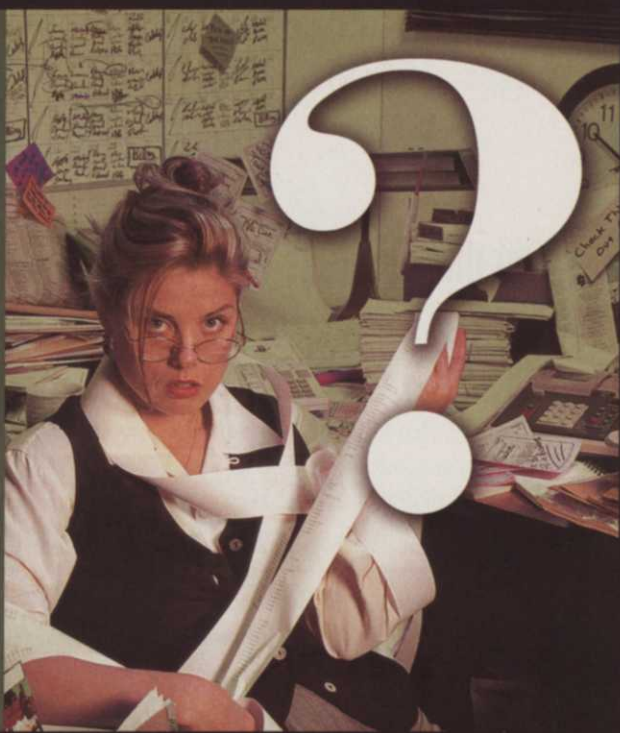
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USP explained

1. It's one sentence.
2. It's clearly written, so that anyone can understand it.
3. It should be believable.
4. It's composed of one benefit that is unique solely to your company or product.

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Selling the 'different' service

Besides offering a product or service that appeals to a segment of the buying public, to sell successfully with a good unique selling proposition (USP) you have to a) be believable, and b) be likeable.

Alec McClennan, a personable young entrepreneur scores on both counts, one reason behind the growing market presence in Northeastern Ohio of his Good Nature organic lawn care company. McClennan found his USP early by deciding to go organic.

McClennan founded Good Nature in 1999. It provides organic lawn, tree & shrub and pond care to a mostly residential clientele.

He takes the low-key approach to selling that relies heavily on word-of-mouth referrals. Beyond that he's ben-

efited from positive press from the area's dominant newspaper, *The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer*, which profiled him and his company in a recent major feature article. You can't buy that kind of endorsement.

"Women tend to be more interested in organic lawn care than their husbands," says McClennan of his selling target.

His main (and unique in the Cleveland market) selling point is his company's reliance upon fertilizers made from feed grade ingredients and, of course, its pesticide-free approach to plant health.

McClennan admits that, at least initially, going organic won't match the results of a traditional lawn care program. His lawns, he tells clients, generally take a week or two

longer to green up, but in the longer term they catch up in appearance.

"There will be some weeds, and if the grass types you are treating are poor there could be a lot of weeds," he adds. But, by using products based on corn gluten meal, molasses or sugar beet extract (products possessing proven herbicidal activity), he can eventually get a lawn into good shape. Often this also calls for seeding or reseeding.

The foundation of any healthy and attractive lawn is selecting the right species and varieties of turfgrasses. McClennan favors grasses with high levels of endophytes, which provide a measure of pest insect control. He adds that research out of The Ohio State Wooster ATI education/research station is showing that reducing insect

damage in turf also reduces the number of weeds.

But, ultimately, the key to building a successful niche business like an organic lawn care service is being able to sell the concept.

"You have to devote the time to understand the type of clients who might be interested in this type of service," says McClennan. "Then you have to get them to understand what to expect in terms of results.

"Obviously, you want to get your clients excited about going natural, but to do that you have to educate them that a few weeds in their lawns are ok." —R.H.



continued from page 46

Nothing's guaranteed

In spite of the rapid start, or maybe because of it, Crawford Landscaping faces some big challenges.

So far the company has met its managerial needs by promoting from within. Felts says that will remain the preferred method to build the company's management team. However, he admits the company will have to begin recruiting supervisory talent if it continues to grow as planned. He's looking at partnering with schools and universities, hosting student interns and participating in job fairs, such as PLANET's Student Career Days.

Another possible hiccup in Crawford

Landscaping's continued growth is the availability of quality plant material.

Crawford and Felts expect the number of plant nurseries in their market to dwindle as rising land prices cause owners to cash out. Partly for this reason and partly because it would complement the landscaping business, Crawford is considering buying property and starting a company-owned garden center and nursery.

Neither of these cause company management sleepless nights. In fact, they're confident they're building the right kind of company. They realize that management's role is to support its employees in servicing the company's customers. That means responding to the employees' need

for quality equipment, professional training and adequate staffing. It means the implementation of standardized systems and procedures that document and measure performance.

"Tim and I are accessible to our employees and to our customers. We're there for our workers every morning; we start the day with them, and we certainly end the day with them," says Crawford.

What does the future hold for Crawford Landscaping? Opportunity, Crawford says. Southwest Florida is one of the fastest growing regions in the United States.

For Crawford Landscaping that means many more promises made — many more to keep. **LM**

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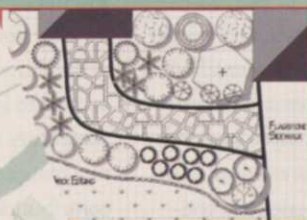
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**Build a strategy
that helps you gain
profits, even if you
lose some bids**

BY MICHAEL KAY

For contractors, correctly estimating and pricing potential jobs raises age-old questions: "How much should I charge for this job? What's the customer-accepted rate for this service? Can I go by what I hear or only by whether I'm getting jobs or not?"

Not only are these common questions, they're also vital to running a successful business. In fact, correctly estimating and pricing jobs has been identified in recent research as one of the three key problem areas new or inexperienced contractors face. The two other areas are knowledge of customer sales skills and understanding the business' finan-

cial numbers to become a successful company.

In the first part of this series (Oct. '05, pg. 52), we presented the difference between pricing and estimating. In the article, we explained that estimating ensures that the rates you charge cover the costs and meet profit margins on individual and collective jobs throughout the year.

In the second article (Jan. '06, pg. 36), we discussed the importance of knowing business costs and tracking key financial ratios. This way you can monitor your company's financial health. We revealed how tracking financial data aids business owners to learn about those ratios that profitable companies use to bid correctly by setting the correct margins, and to use the ratios to improve gross, contribution and net margins.

Read on to find out how this same data can assist in setting pricing guidelines, to determine typical pricing for your market and to help you feel more confident about the quantity of jobs you're getting, which will help determine pricing accuracy.

continued on page 52

** This article is the third in a series of bidding and estimating articles contributed by this author. To see the first two, "Pricing vs. estimating," and "Financial terms 101," visit www.landscapemanagement.net and search for the headlines in our search box.*



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continued from page 50

Break-even costs

Let's assume here that you're at the point where you have a set and consistent method to track all the costs associated with your business. That means that you know how much it costs to put each one of your workers in the field on the job on a per-hour basis. Why is that so important? Because what you, as for example, an irrigation contractor, sell is not irrigation systems — it is really labor hours. When contractors break down their costs for any given job, the products (hardware) they install in the ground represents a small percentage of what it costs to get the "system" installed. The bulk of their costs are associated with labor. That's why it is so critical to understand the costs as completely as possible. Once you know your true labor

cost per hour (usually referred to as a realized rate or loaded labor rate if profit margin isn't included), you'll have the basis for bidding your job successfully.

A recent national survey showed loaded labor rates vary from as low as \$20 per hour in the far Southwest and Southeast to as high as \$45 per hour in the Northeast. Success is defined here as getting jobs that overall net contractors the profit they expect to make — not on winning every bid. By taking the time to uncover and effectively track costs, contractors can determine their bids with much greater accuracy



Closing more than 75% of your bids generally means you're taking jobs you shouldn't.

and know how much they can potentially cut their pricing without paying customers for the privilege of installing their systems!

Most contractors eventually learn (sometimes the hard way) how to correctly lay out most systems so they know what and how much material to buy

for the job. From there it's fairly straightforward to determine the time it should take your crew to get the job installed. (You'll only underestimate the length of a job once or twice before learning that lesson!)

These two pieces of information are vital to determining break-even costs:

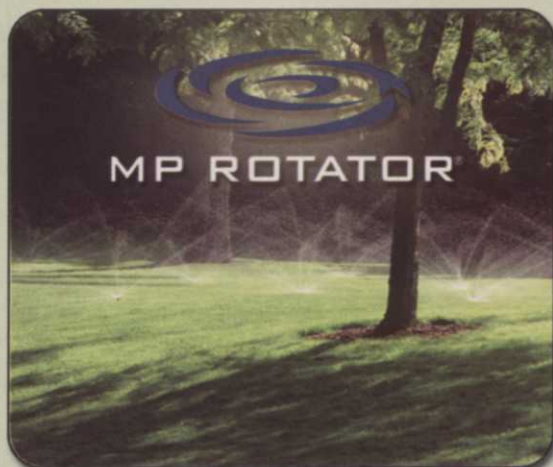


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Bid smart

The next question then becomes whether that price will lead to the successful bid. Unfortunately, that answer often is no. Contractors may be outbid by someone who doesn't know their costs and consequently underbids jobs. How can these contractors stay in business by continually engaging in these practices?

Answer: They can't for very long. Underbid projects are usually the result of using inferior methods or poor designs. As a result, your competitors may end up working for not much more than they pay their crews at the end of the year.

But not getting certain jobs does not mean your business will fail. Look at the variety of jobs you do throughout the year and you'll almost always find some jobs that were more profitable than others. Knowing you will get some jobs with a higher margin allows you to tactically lower your bids on those highly competitive jobs to win your fair share.

Learning effective sales techniques will also increase the number of bids you win. Success here is not getting everything you bid, but ending the year with the profits you budgeted. Closing ratios (the percentage of successful bids to the total number of bids) are variable throughout the country and even, often, within a local market.

Recent national research shows that closing ratios above 70 to 75% generally means you're taking jobs you'll later wish you hadn't.

Be aware that many successful companies that close less than 25% of all the jobs they bid. They know when to walk away from a competing bid that's way

below their break-even point, and learn effective sales techniques to win bids by convincing customers that they offer the best value. Bid your jobs on your company's strengths that your competitors can't offer. You'll sleep better at night. **LMI**

— The author is associate training program manager for Rain Bird Services Corp. and a facilitator for Rain Bird's Regional Improvement Training Camp (RITC) events held throughout the country. For more information visit www.rainbird.com.

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Cooling the **BURN**

**Here's how
the experts
market and
sell fire ant
control that
pays**

BY SEAN GALLAGHER

In today's ever-advancing marketplace, most southerners know there are plenty of products and methods to fight red imported fire ants (RIFA). The question for today's land care company owner isn't, "How do I kill RIFA?" It's "How do I market and profit from killing them?"

Many experts favor capitalizing on consumers' emotions, building trust, fostering personal contact and guaranteeing results. Often an expensive service, ridding customers' properties of RIFA can be a strain on their wallets. But when the benefits of the service are positioned right, it may prove to be an easier sale than most.

"The key is listening to the customer and figuring out how he thinks," says Mike Ratcliff, owner of Lawn Doctor of Benton-Bryant and Hot Springs, AR. "My area has a large population of older people. They don't want to get bit

and they don't want their grandchildren to get bit."

The threat of being bitten by RIFA is tangible for southerners in the fire ant belt, most of whom have had at least some experience with these painful pests. Recognizing and relieving consumers' fears of being trapped indoors is an effective means of

selling the emotional relief RIFA control can provide. Your consumers want to be able to have a barbecue outdoors, watch their kids play outside and not be afraid of letting the family pet out of the house. All of these are emotional needs that a land care company owner can capitalize on.

Sell professionalism

With so many consumer products on the market for people to purchase and apply themselves, it's a company owner's responsibility to do more than just sell the need for RIFA control. They must also sell the consumer on using a professional service, rather than a do-it-yourself product. A general





◀ Show customers potential problem spots for fire ants on their property to boost sales.

dissatisfaction with the results of do-it-yourself treatments has come to light throughout much of the Green Industry. RIFA control is no exception, so it's your job to inform consumers that your service is the most beneficial investment, despite the increased cost.

"I think most people are tired of buying over-the-counter products and getting limited results," Ratcliff says. "They're just tired of it, and they look at me and they say,

'If this person can come out here and do a good job and guarantee it, it's worth it.' Most people are tired of fighting fire ants by themselves."

First and foremost, a professional land care company must provide a solution to its customers' problems, but almost as importantly, professionals must provide the peace of mind of a guarantee. If you can convince customers that your service is trustworthy and guaranteed to work, clos-

ing the sale is the easy part.

"People don't want to do the treatments anymore," says Shawn Stiles, district sales manager for Orkin. "They expect the Orkin person to come out and take care of their problem with a money back guarantee. All of our service is guaranteed."

Personal contact works

Building credibility with consumers is also an indispensable part of selling RIFA control. Effective communication can help build your credibility, so keeping people abreast of RIFA concerns is an integral part of promoting yourself as

the solution to a consumer's problem. Think about your own purchasing decisions. Wouldn't you be more likely to purchase a car from someone who appears knowledgeable about what's on the lot? RIFA control is no different. For consumers to trust you to take care of their problems, you have to prove that you're an expert.

"It's an education to sell the customer," says John Buechner, director of technical services for Lawn Doctor. "Personal contact is the best way to sell fire ant control. People have to understand the product and the program."

Stiles agrees that commu-

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nicating with your consumers directly is the most effective way to sell RIFA control.

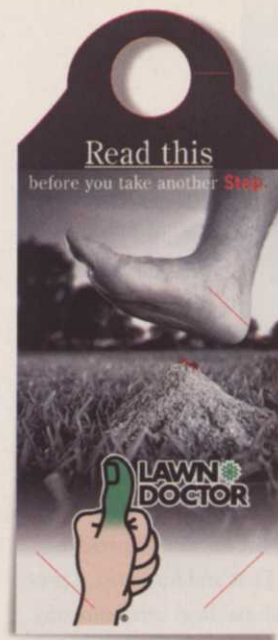
"The biggest effectiveness that I've seen so far is to mail to a customer and have a presentation," Stiles says. "It requires going outside and showing the problems or taking pictures and showing it to them. You can't expect door hangers to do the business for you."

Customers are everywhere

Although personal contact may be the final catalyst to closing a sale, you have to use marketing materials to get your name in front of consumers first. Make sure your promo-

tional materials do more than sell a service. Consumers have to understand that you have the right tools and know the right techniques to relieve their problems and guarantee their satisfaction. These messages can be communicated using many mediums, so be sure to have it on all your mailings, door hangers, ads, press releases and any other materials you send to consumers.

"We've put well over one million pieces in the marketplace," says Bryan Gooch, insecticides business manager for Bayer Environmental Science. "Lawn signs have been successful, as have home-



◀ Lawn Doctor promotes its fire ant services on marketing materials like door hangers.

consumers, it's essential that you choose the most effective means to communicate your message. According to some industry leaders, local, grass-roots marketing efforts have gained significant popularity.

"We have indications from larger companies that they're going back more toward guerilla tactics, knocking on doors and really getting out there," Gooch says.

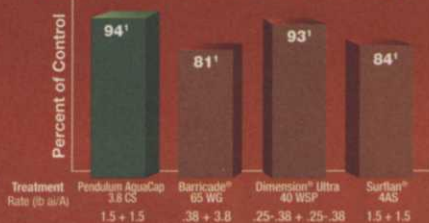
owner brochures and door hangers. The key is really hitting home with the revolutionary technology. It's worth the extra money."

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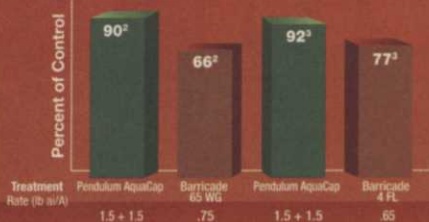
One important demographic that many land care company owners have successfully marketed RIFA control to is their existing customer base. These consumers have already expressed an in-



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1. North Carolina State University and Clemson University (mean from two locations), 2003. Evaluated 146-164 days after application of first treatment in March. Partial Data Shown.
 2. University of Maryland, 2004. Evaluated 145 days after first treatment in March. Partial Data Shown.
 3. Penn State University, 2004. Evaluated 130 days after application of first treatment in March. Partial Data Shown.

terest in either beautifying their property or keeping it pest-free, so controlling RIFA should be part of a natural progression.

"If you get [your existing] customers to trust you, then they'll sign up for fire ant too," Ratcliff says.

Residential properties certainly aren't the only areas at risk of RIFA infestations. According to Gooch, if you're interested in serving commercial properties, you'll probably be most successful targeting athletic fields, hospitals, nursing homes and other areas where RIFA could inflict significant injuries on humans. Office

The question for today's land care company owner isn't, "How do I kill RIFA?" It's, "How do I market and profit from killing them?"

parks and other commercial properties may not be as viable of targets, based on cost and the fact that people are less likely to walk on the turf at these locations.

Gooch also recommends that RIFA control be treated not as a one-time curative treatment, but as an ongoing preventive service.

"Once you have a cus-

tommer on a fire ant program, treat it as a prevention program," Gooch says. "Keep it ongoing as more than just a one-time deal or when you see fire ants. This allows for a steady stream of revenue at a pretty high profit level."

RIFA are clearly more dangerous than most insects. Unlike spiders or crickets, these pests can be more than just a

nuisance — they can be an extremely painful problem requiring immediate attention. This opens up your market of potential consumers dramatically, according to Buechner.

"Anybody that has a fire ant problem is a potential customer," Buechner says. "Fire ants don't discriminate between residences and commercial properties, or top and bottom income bracket. They're all potential customers." **LM**

— *The author is the copywriter and research analyst for Lawn*

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The Struggle within



Eliminate conflicts within your team — you have enough to deal with outside of it

BY CRAIG COWDEN

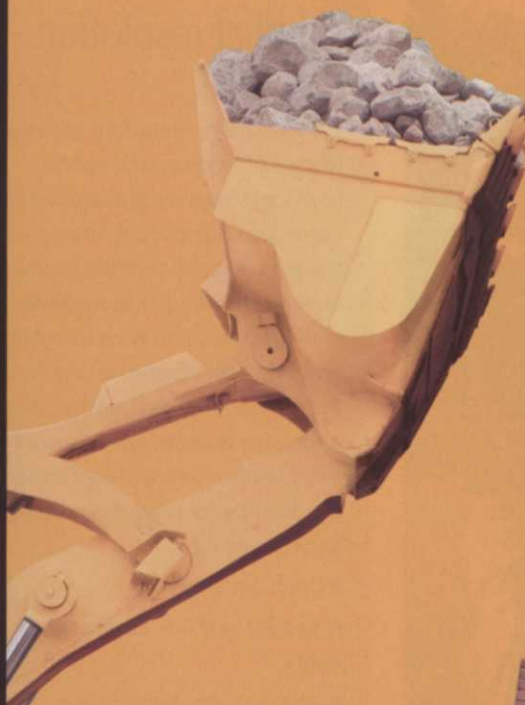
Challenges happen every day in the Green Industry. Maybe the competition has been stealing away your company's best employees. Perhaps the weather is playing havoc with your schedules. Quite possibly, a truck hauling trees has broken down miles from the job while a crew waits to begin planting. Each day brings new snags and obstacles to success that a good manager must learn to maneuver through. We expect these from outside sources, but what we usually don't expect, and sometimes don't even recognize, are the obstacles coming from within our own company.

Estimators vs. field supervisors

One internal problem to keep an eye out for is the battle between your estimating department and the field supervisors charged with completing a project within estimated budget allowances. Have you ever heard comments like, "It looks like the estimators bought another job," or, "They missed something again."? How about, "Those field guys need more experience; they can't even read a blueprint."

Estimators and supervisors should work toward a common goal but instead they often point fingers and try to place blame when something goes wrong, rather than search for a constructive way to reduce errors in the future. Many factors can contribute to these errors, and

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one possibility is that managers simply have not taught these two groups how to work together.

The landscape business is fluid with constantly changing variables that require quick decisions made on the fly. This can make preparing perfect bids difficult for estimators. Factors such as material delivery changes, plant or pipe shortages, absent laborers, inclement weather and equipment breakdowns are nearly impossible to predict. A miscellaneous cost factor for these unanticipated problems can be included in the bid, but if the estimator adds too much, he may risk losing the job for the company.

This is where better communication with field supervisors could help the estimators do a better job at predicting job costs. Managers should be the ones to help facilitate this communication. If managers create an atmosphere where communication is open and appreciated, estimators can draw on the experience

Vila & Son General Manager Charlie Lockerson and Project Supervisor Scott Campbell review a demolition plan with estimator Ivan Vila.

of the field personnel to prepare a more accurate estimate.

Communication goes both ways

It works the other way around too. In some instances, the sales and estimating department may have information that would help the field workers perform better.

Here is a situation that comes to mind: The salesman on a particular project has agreed to complete a small project for a new client at cost, in exchange for the promise of a larger upcoming project. The field workers, seeing there is a tight budget, but not having the inside knowledge as to why it's so tight, may push hard to bring the project in within budget rather than do their typical, high-quality

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Conflict resolution checklist

We have many important duties as leaders of landscape companies. Managers must recognize communication lapses and repair them. Once there is recognition of the issue and an understanding of its magnitude, a manager must find ways to improve communication between any opposing groups, with the goal to develop a cohesive team. In *Win Management*, author George Fuller suggests a procedure for resolving mistakes between groups:

- Don't get angry.
- Identify why the mistakes were made.
- Don't unfairly assess blame.
- Understand that everything is a learning process.
- Realize that faulty communications can cause errors.
- Beware of false accusations.

Fuller also suggests some useful tactics managers can use to facilitate better group cooperation:

- Don't interrupt and cut off people, even if their suggestions are of no use.
- Don't let discussions become heated when there is disagreement.
- Try to be low key about stating your opinion.
- If you have to veto a suggestion, be sure to explain the reasons why.
- Express your appreciation.

Good group interaction is critical to maintaining a competitive advantage. Resolving the conflict between the field supervisors group and estimators/sales group will eliminate one obstacle to maintaining this advantage.

— C. C.



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job. The new client thinks this rushed job is typical for the company and withdraws his offer for future work. If the estimator had communicated the big picture to the field group superintendent, the super probably would have bent over backwards to impress this new client, and there likely would have been a better result.

It's human nature that when a mistake is made, a person first looks for causes other than himself. In the above scenario, the estimators will point at the field personnel and the field personnel will point at the estimators. Facing reality can be hard, and when conflict arises many managers subconsciously avoid dealing with the problem.

A company culture that sweeps problems like these under the rug can be a big part of the problem. It is important for an organization to develop a culture where shared company values are evident and everyone's concerns can be voiced without fear of retribution. In order to build a sense of common values, management must develop methods to tie company values to group and individual actions.

Perception problems, communication breakdowns and organizational culture failures are the result of leadership problems and it is this leadership malfunction that is the root cause of group conflict. Educating our managers is a key to resolving this conflict.

Talk it out

If these occurrences are allowed to continue without management's intervention, the consequences will be damaging to the company in several areas. Most of these consequences have an effect on the bottom line of the company evidenced by lower employee morale, excessive production mistakes and the discouragement of clients caught in the middle.

To be proactive in heading off these



negative scenarios, managers should hold a meeting of the combined groups and facilitate a discussion to learn their perception of the problem. Here they can discuss their problems openly and work out strategies for improving the groups' relationships.

One idea is to hold a "mirroring" meeting, where the groups meet face to face with open interaction intended to help members understand the other side's point of view. A review of current procedures and company expectations with both groups involved in the discussion will help bring the groups closer together. This review of perceptions and open communication serves to establish goals and an action plan for implementation of change.

Another method for bringing these two groups together as a unified team is to initiate a series of "ride-alongs," where for example, the members of the estimating group ride along for a day or two with a member of the production group. This is in effect a "walking in my shoes" ap-

Vila & Son Estimator Chrissy Santiesteban reviews a bid with General Superintendent Ken Catalano.

proach. By giving the field supervisors an opportunity to use the computer estimating program and a chance to participate in compiling and estimates, it helps them better understand the challenges faced by the estimating group.

At Vila & Son Landscape Corp.'s West Palm Beach, FL, location, Branch Manager Charlie Lockerson has recognized the potential for conflict and taken some interesting steps to ensure team cohesiveness before any conflicts can get out of hand. His idea of monthly "On The Deck" meetings, which include the entire office staff, estimating department and field supervisors, gives everyone a chance to air it out.

"Everything is fair game at these meetings," Lockerson says. "If anyone has any complaints or conflicts it gives them

continued on page 64

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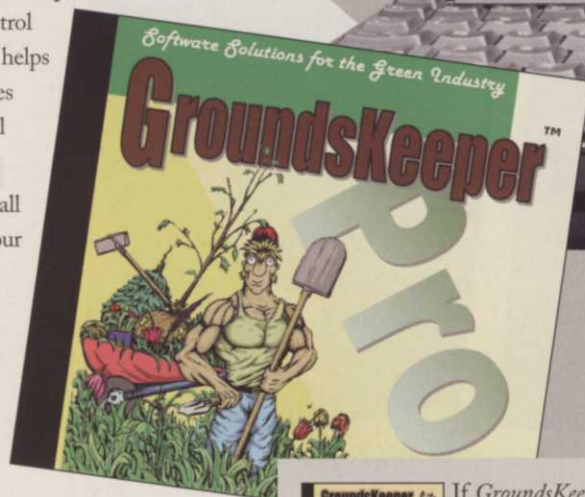


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continued from page 62

the opportunity to bring it out into the open. On the flip side we make an effort to pass out some compliments and 'atta-boys' when people deserve some extra appreciation."

Some people are tentative about opening up so Lockerson prompts them to speak up by offering prizes and rewards for participation.

"It's all about communication," says Yordi Rivero, director of human resources

at Vila & Son. "The simple fact that people recognize there is an issue that needs resolution is the hardest part. Sometimes having an open mind is all it takes to get the ball rolling toward a solution," he says. "At Vila & Son we use job-shadowing methods similar to the ride-along in many departments. Even our branch managers shadow each other from time to time."

Try some job mixing events to provide a better understanding of the challenges the conflicting groups encounter on a day-to-day basis.

What to do?

Some conflict is normal in any company and constructive conflict is good for a group; but too much conflict can handcuff an organization and keep it from being productive. If you suspect this may be happening right now in your company, initiate a series of combined group meetings to develop an action plan to prevent conflicts. Then try some job mixing events to provide a better understanding of the challenges the conflicting groups encounter on a day-to-day basis.

Insightful leaders will take this opportunity to strengthen their company. Running a business is so much easier and profitable when everyone within an organization works together to reach a common goal. So take a good look around. How united is your team? **LM**

— The author is with Vila & Son Landscape Corp. Contact him at CraigC@VILA-N-SON.COM.



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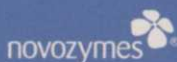
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Irrigation tech training

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BY STEPHANIE RICCA / Managing Editor

Training is a word thrown around a lot in the Green Industry. Generally the most common training taking place over a normal work year covers issues like safety, OSHA, customer service, upselling, you name it. Don't let technical training get lost in the shuffle, especially when it comes to irrigation.

"It's a challenge finding qualified irrigation technicians," says Tom Heaviland, president of Heaviland Enterprises, a full-service company headquartered in Vista, CA, that handles commercial accounts from two branches in the San Diego area. "We've trained most of the people we have now from the start."

That's a typical irrigation technician scenario. Heaviland employs four irrigation techs at a given time devoted 100% to irrigation services for the company's commercial clients in the dry southern California area. The challenge becomes twofold: Finding good people, then getting, and

keeping them up to speed.

Whether your company employs four irrigation techs like Heaviland's or just one, this is one segment of your business where technical training can't fall by the wayside. Take the time to build a good training program, keep your irrigation staff aware of new technologies and rely on the resources available internally and externally.

Do what Bernie Smith and his irrigation team at Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care in Denver, CO, do. On the Colorado Front Range, their market, irrigation season runs from the last week of March through the first week of November. Smith, Swingle's irrigation manager, keeps six service technicians and two 2-man installation crews as full-time employees. During the season, everybody works on irrigation install, maintenance and retrofitting.

Irrigation, primarily for residential properties, makes up about 5% of the company's revenues.

"For our service crews we look for



Heaviland Enterprises irrigation tech Alejandro Chonteco works on repairs.

some level of irrigation familiarity," Smith says. "They don't have to have 10 years of experience, but some is helpful."

Potential candidates go through exams and interviews for Smith and Irrigation Supervisor Pat Dillon to see if the person is a qualified fit. Swingle's irrigation team boasts a roughly 90% retention rate.

"There's a saying that irrigation techs tend to be a nomadic tribe," Smith says. "But I have a theory as to why they stay here, and I think it has a lot to do with our philosophy on treating people."

That philosophy begins with the company's internal irrigation training program.

Internal training

"We do a little bit of external training, but

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continued from page 66

we found we had the greatest success with developing our own training program," says Smith, who has been with the company since 1994. He developed a training manual for the irrigation department about a year into the job and another revision is in the works.

The manual includes chapters and appendices on everything from technical training to customer relationships, conduct and key company policies. Smith distributes it to the irrigation for a full week of training every March before the season starts.

Smith and Dillon conduct the five-day training workshop and every chapter of the manual in the classroom and in the field. The training is effective in part, Smith says, because it covers company policies as well as irrigation.

TARGETED INFO

Association training

Take advantage of training offered by regional and national irrigation associations. If you're in a dry region like California, local associations and water boards offer plenty of opportunities. On a larger scale, the industry's two major national associations, the Irrigation Association (IA) and the American Society of Irrigation Consultants (ASIC) offer training to their membership.

The IA offers classes and different certification levels for irrigation contractors, designers and auditors, as well as a major annual trade show. IA's bookstore in particular is a good resource for both training manuals and software. Visit www.irrigation.org.

ASIC educates its network of independent irrigation consultants. For more information visit www.asic.org.

"When we go over OSHA, we bring in a supervisor from another department who had extensive background in OSHA," he adds.

Smith also holds informal weekly meetings for his irrigation team to discuss business and to do loose training, often based on information he culls from customer feedback cards left at each job.

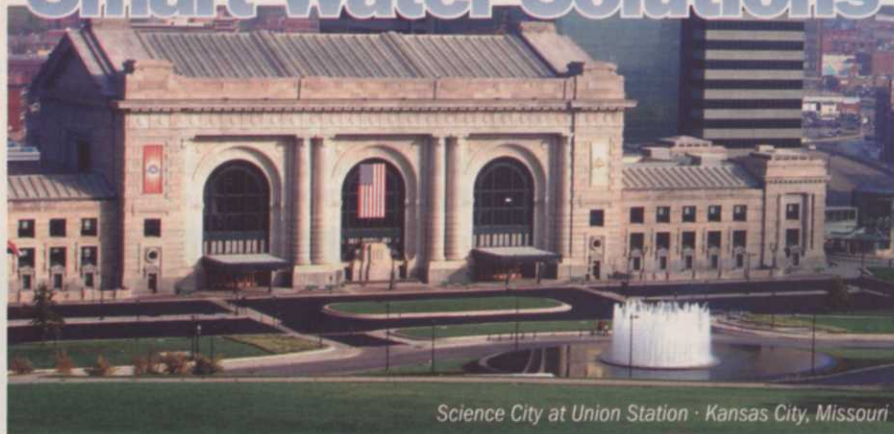
External resources

Other companies, like Heaviland's, rely on a combination of internal and external training resources.

"We do in-house training to run parallel with the Certified Landscape Technician (CLT) test," Heaviland says. He also takes advantage of several supplier training programs.

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STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE

Manufacturer training

continued from page 68

Heaviland has the added bonus of free technical irrigation training conducted by his local irrigation district. (Visit www.lib.berkeley.edu/WRCA/district.html for a list of all California districts.)

"The irrigation district that our Vista, CA, branch is located in offers a free training class called Protector Del Aqua, conducted in Spanish, which we need. Water here is such a scarce resource that the irrigation districts train landscapers."

Heaviland sends his irrigation crews for formal training, whether it's through a supplier or the county, usually twice per year."

Smith adds, "Training is such an integral part of our company. If you haven't planned or trained, there's no way you are going to execute." **LM**

Both Tom Heaviland of Heaviland Enterprises and Bernie Smith of Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care say their irrigation crews spend a lot of time retrofitting and maintaining existing irrigation systems. They have to know the details of many different manufacturers' parts.

Irrigation system suppliers have met this need by ramping up their own technical training, making it easy for contractors to attend supplier-specific training in their area, or download training materials from the Internet.

Topics range from residential design to estimating and bidding, system service and troubleshooting.

Heaviland and Smith advise forming professional relationships with your irrigation manufacturers and distributors to find out the most current training information and materials they have.

Through the Hunter Industries Institute of Irrigation, the company offers training at conferences and on-site with Hunter distributors. The company makes specific resources available online through the Hunter Preferred Contractor Program, says Marketing Manager Diane Noecker.

"Reference guides and other materials by established experts, like 'How to Price Landscape and Irrigation Projects' by Jim Huston and 'Troubleshooting Irrigation Control Systems' by Bill Derryberry, may be purchased through our Preferred Contractor Program," she says.

Rain Bird Corp. is well known for its comprehensive Rain Bird Academy, a full schedule of regional training sessions that range from half-day to two-day intensive sessions.

Rain Bird conducts all its training in person and the company has recently branched into business offerings for contractors.

"A lot of what we do is promote professionalism in the industry," says Rain Bird Senior Technical Trainer Robert Pfeil. "We have a dedicated staff that works on nothing but training and we put a lot of resources toward developing materials and curriculum."

Both Hunter Industries and Rain Bird offer Spanish-language training, a must for today's diverse crews.

The companies mentioned here are just a few. Ask around to your distributors and manufacturers for specific information to include in your own irrigation training.

MORE INFO
www.hunterindustries.com
www.rainbird.com
 Visit for information on the training resources available from these suppliers.

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WaterMark by Little Giant Pump Co. has a new line of water gardening and Koi pond products. Little Giant has collaborated with water garden owners and installers to identify common challenges, and used the feedback to design products that simplify installation and reduce pond maintenance. The WaterMark lineup features vortex pumps, pond skimmers, biological water-fall filtration units with BioVort technology, energy saving programmable LED lighting and a line of fish food, water treatment and pond cleaning products.

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3 ASV track loader

ASV's new rubber track loader, the SR-80, is built on a new ISR-4 undercarriage with 20-in. rubber tracks, a multi-level suspension and four wheel carriages on each side that flex independently. The SR-80 has an overall width of 72 in., an all-new chassis and a 125-in. lift height for the bucket. The cab has an adjustable suspension seat, split lap bar with gauge package and an optional slide up door. The company also launched a smaller model, the SR-70 (not shown), with 15-in. tracks on a 66-in. machine. This model is built on the same chassis and cab as the SR-80. They can travel at max 7 and 12.5 mph.

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If your business already has a good technician, remember that he/she also needs his/her own maintenance program to gain the knowledge needed to keep the newest pieces of equipment up and running. With all of the new engine lines that are being produced comes new educational opportunities for technicians. Briggs & Stratton Central Distributors now provide regional educational classes aimed at the commercial technician. These classes feature a practical hands-on approach, and are typically one or two days in length.

With access to the Internet, technicians have two options to research classes. If you already have a relationship with one of our Briggs & Stratton Central Distributors, you can go to www.thepowerportal.com. This Web site requires a log in and password. Once in, click on the technical information tab, and then the education link on the drop down menu. From here, click on the Class and MST Exam Schedules.

If you do not have a relationship with our Distributors, then the other option is to visit www.commericalpower.com. Click on the Contact Us link at the top of the home page. Then either type in your city or click on Distributor Territory Map, which will provide you with a map and contact information for the Briggs & Stratton Central Distributors across the United States. Call and ask for the Educational Director who can supply you with the upcoming class schedule.

Taking advantage of educational opportunities provides great benefits for both your technician and for your operation.



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

From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY SMALL ENGINE ISSUES

Technology continues to meet the emission and efficiency challenges.



2-cycle vs. 4-cycle

BY HARRY SMITH

Which is better: 2-cycle or 4-cycle engines for small handheld power equipment like blowers, trimmers, edgers, pole trimmers, hedge clippers and hover mowers? The answer is not simple.

Once upon a time there was only one answer, 2-cycle. That's because 2-cycle engines were light in weight, high in horsepower per pound and could operate in all positions. Their drawbacks were relatively high fuel consumption and high emission output.

Stricter regulations

Nothing is permanent, though. In 1998 the California Air Resource Board demanded cleaner off-road engines. The Federal government echoed C.A.R.B.'s standards. Momentarily in the Los Angeles (South Coast) basin 2-cycle engines were effectively banned.

This created a mad scramble by lawn maintenance contractors. Suddenly there were generators mounted in every conceivable location on service trucks. Miles of extension cords were purchased and under-powered tools led to frustration and cost.

The engine manufacturers responded with cleaner 2-cycle engines and small, lightweight 4-cycle engines.

New technologies

Was this the end of the story? Definitely not. Emission standards become more stringent each year. Thankfully, 2-cycle engine manufacturers have generally been able to meet the requirements, but a few have decided to put their technological resources elsewhere. Two that have hedged their bets are Stihl and Shindawa. They have designed engines that blend the best of 2- and 4-cycle technology.

Both designs have valves and cam gear like a four stroke but use an oil/gas mix. Several major benefits are derived from this technological marriage. These engines have a more bearable "4-cycle sound," lower emissions and very good lower rpm torque. My students describe them as "gutsy" when they try out one of these engines on a stick edger. They're hard to stall and sound as though they are running at a lower rpm than a comparable 2-cycle engine.

This is not the final answer of course. Technology continues to meet the emission and efficiency challenges.

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

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The Web with all of its vast information and great searching capabilities is now putting the power to publish in everyone's hands.



To blog or not to blog?

BY TYLER WHITAKER

Do you ever have the feeling that your company memos are just wallpaper for the break room bulletin board? Is the area surrounding your company time clock the main distribution point for company goals, strategy and culture?

All too often we find ourselves spending time looking for memos, answering questions that have already been answered, and repeating meetings with the same old announcements. If this sounds familiar, you might want to start blogging.

It's all about communication

In a labor-intensive industry like ours, employee communication is a critical success factor. That's why we spend so much time in meetings, training sessions, reading e-mail, reviewing company memos and the list goes on. But are we as effective as we could be? What happens when someone misses the meeting or loses the e-mail? When in a meeting, who keeps track of the key points and new policies discussed? From personal experience I've found that the hardest question of them all is: Where can I find all of this information when I'm ready to review it? The answer is: the Internet.

In the past, if you wanted to publish information on the Internet, you needed a Web page and a fair amount of technical skills to make it happen. Businesses got in on this concept by creating "Intranets" or internally focused Web pages to communicate.

Author your own Web site

The Web with all of its vast information and great searching capabilities is now putting the power to publish in everyone's hands. It's called blogging. The word blog is short for "Web log," similar to an online journal. But with the latest blogging software, you can now create full-scale interactive Web sites that allow your staff to post thoughts, pictures, exchange comments, and collect information, all on an easily accessible Web site.

You don't need to be technical to make it work. If you can send an e-mail or edit a document, you can blog. And best of all, in the time it takes to type in your information, you can have it available online for anyone to read, search, and most importantly make comments. Blogging really does two revolutionary things. First it provides an easy way for anyone to publish information on the Web. And second, it empowers the reader to type in their comments in response to your information.

I know what you're thinking, "How can I get started? We don't even have a server." Here's where blogging really shines. Simply put, you don't need a server. Several Web sites out there provide everything you need to get started. Just sign up, give your blog a name and start adding content. Check out these Web sites: www.blogger.com, www.wordpress.com, www.typepad.com. You can literally get started in a few minutes.

— The author is chief technology officer for the Symbiot Business Group. Contact him at 801/733-6900 or twhitaker@symbiot.biz.



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PUMPING UP THE pipeline

Encouraged by continuing growth, control product suppliers promise a continuing stream of choices for '06

BY RON HALL /
Editor in Chief

Basic manufacturers and formulators continue to focus on turf & ornamental (T&O) where they see continuing modest growth.

Also encouraging, proven chemistry is coming off patent. It promises a growing selection of generic T&O pest control choices from companies such as Phoenix Environmental, the two-year-old

Georgia-based chemical supplier with experienced formulation expertise.

Professional landscape and lawn care operators are fortunate to have basic manufacturers searching for and developing new chemistry.

"We're starting to screen earlier on non-crop products," says Toni Bucci, business manager of turf & ornamentals for BASF. "We have an active discovery process for herbicides, fungicides and insecticides. They all get screened on turf."

The same can be said, to varying degrees, for other basic suppliers, such as Syngenta Professional Products, Bayer Environmental Science and Dow AgroSciences.

This past year saw the arrival of new players in T&O — DuPont, Arysta Life-

Science and aforementioned Phoenix Environmental.

The following is a quick rundown of what to expect from these and other chemical control product suppliers.

Insecticides

A 2004 collaboration between Bayer Environmental Science and FMC Corp. resulted in the development of Allectus insecticide containing Bayer's imidacloprid and FMC's bifenthrin. It controls surface and subsurface insect pests in turf. The U.S. EPA approved Allectus with fertilizer this past December. Look for product this spring.

Meanwhile Bayer continues to tout the efficacy and long-term control of its still relatively new TopChoice fire ant bait (A.I. fipronil). But the newest insecticide in its portfolio is Forbid, a miticide (A.I. spiromesifen) that can be

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R. Lee Ermey, USMC veteran, TV show host, film star

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sprayed on the leaves of ornamentals and is effective against mites and whiteflies at all life stages. It was unveiled in July 2005.

Arysta LifeScience, which moved its U.S. operations to Cary, NC, in 2005, offers its insecticide Arena (A.I. clothianidin). Continuing field trials show that it offers excellent control of most major surface and subsurface insect pests (white grubs, chinch bugs, sod webworms) at low rates at standard timing, providing a better bargain for end users. Applying it at the labeled rate for early or curative treatments offers equally good control, says Arysta's Dr. Doug Houseworth.

DuPont Professional Products is finding early success in the turf pest control market on the back of its proprietary indoxacarb molecule, the A.I. in its Advion granular fire ant bait. Mike McDermott, DuPont global business manager, says the product has been providing users with a 24 to 72 hour knockdown of fire ant colonies and excellent residual control. The company has more plans for the versatile molecule, he says.

Also, look for DuPont to come out with several more insecticides with unique chemistry, including a product targeted at white grubs, McDermott says.

BASF's ramped-up insecticide discovery efforts will produce a fire ant bait for the

Basic manufacturers continue to search for and develop new chemistry.

2007 season. The yet-to-be named product will contain the A.I. metaflumizone and will replace Amdro Pro.

"Amdro Pro is a tried-and-true technology. It's been around a long time and we're ready to freshen things up a bit," says BASF's Buccì. "We're bringing in a new proprietary BASF chemistry."

Herbicides

Meanwhile, BASF's Pendulum Aquacap pre-emergent herbicide (pendimethalin) has been a success in lawn care, and the company plans to develop other products in a similar ultra-thin capsule formulation, Buccì says.

This spring look for PBI/Gordon's new 4-way mixture (quinclorac, sulfentrazone, 2,4-D and dicamba). It's targeted for post-emergent control of crabgrass and broadleaf weeds. The com-

pany will release its name soon.

"It's different in that it's not a single product for post-emergent grass and post-emergent broadleaf control," says Bill Brocker, vice president of marketing. "The new product is very strong on nutsedge and crabgrass post-emergent. It has decent activity on goosegrass, plus it has traditional excellent activity on spurge, wild violets, English daisy and the regular perennial and annual lawn weeds."

Monsanto's new Certainty turf herbicide (A.I. sulfosulfuron) is labeled for control of sedges (purple nutsedge, yellow nutsedge, Kyllinga) and tall fescue in common or hybrid Bermudagrass and other warm-season turfs. It can also be used to control *Poa annua* in highly managed Bermudagrass.

Other newer herbicides that came to our attention these past few months include:

Polaris herbicide from Nufarm Americas Inc., is a broad-spectrum product for industrial vegetation management.

Nufarm's new Razor Burn, a liquid pre-mix formulation of glyphosate and diquat offers broad-spectrum non-selective control of many annual and perennial weeds, woody brush and trees.

SedgeHammer herbicide

from Gowan Company controls both yellow and purple nutsedge in cool- and warm-season turfgrass. The product replaces Manage herbicide by Monsanto, which Gowan acquired the rights for last year.

Surflan WDG specialty herbicide by United Phosphorus Inc. controls 50 annual grasses and small-seeded broadleaf weeds. UPI says it is the market's only water dispersible granular oryzalin herbicide.

QuickSilver T&O herbicide from FMC controls weeds seven days after emergence of turfgrass in newly seeded, sodded or sprigged areas and also broadleaf weeds on stone-covered yards.

And, from Chemtura Crop Protection, there's a botanical nematicide for the suppression of turf and ornamental parasitic nematodes, including lance, sting and stubby root nematodes. The company is expecting federal registration for the product, Junica, in the first half of this year.

Fungicides

Syngenta is preparing the launch of a pair of fungicides that combine the best of pre-existing products.

Headway, targeted for almost all turf diseases, will suit everyone that had already been using Heritage or Banner. "Banner picks up dollar

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TECHNOLOGY T&O CHEMISTRY

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spot, which Heritage misses, and Heritage picks up pythium, which Banner misses, and they complement each other on many of the other diseases," says Dr. Dave Ross, Syngenta's T&O technical manager. "It's a high-quality formulation. The two products enhance each other when you put them together."

Syngenta's Instrata, a combination of three active ingredients, controls snow mold. "There are about four different pathogens that cause snow mold across the northern tier," says Ross. "No single active gives complete control and many superintendents are using tank mixes of several products. This is one single product to control all of those pathogens."

Bayer is preparing a new fungicide as well, including a new product promising excellent control of anthracnose in cool-season turfgrasses.

Arysta LifeScience in January received federal registration for Disarm (fluoxastrobin), a material it licensed from Bayer CropScience. "It's a strobilurin chemistry comparable to Heritage," says Tom Kroll, Arysta LifeScience's product manager of fungicides and T&O products.

The launch of Disarm will be limited this season to establish the performance of the labeled diseases and to determine the activity on other species. "We will be confirming 2005 results that illustrate the material is effective on pythium," Kroll adds.

Cleary Chemical is marketing two launches, 3336 Plus and 26/36 Fungicide, the later product being a combination of iprodione and phiophanatemethyl that Bayer and Cleary jointly produced. It's focused on dollar spot and brown patch.

"We put these two together to enhance spectrum, especially in some areas where we may have dollar spot resistance," says Rick Fletcher, Cleary's technical and regulatory manager. "It's the most concentrated formula on the market today."

BASF plans on offering a new herbicide by 2008 and a new herbicide and fungicide, both featuring new chemistries, by 2010, according to reports. **LM**

Editors note: Although efforts were made to contact all valuable suppliers to the industry, it's inevitable and regrettable that some will be missed. Companies not receiving but desiring coverage should contact Editor in Chief Ron Hall at rhall@questex.com. Helping with this report was

Thomas Skernivitz, managing editor of Golfdom magazine.

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Don't call it a comeback

Sometimes it seems that zero-turn mowers get all the attention. They're young, they're fast and they're sexy. They are the Paris Hiltons of the lawn care world, though probably more deserving of their fame since they do actually, you know, work.

But while zero-turns have gotten all the attention, the steady walk-behind mowers did not disappear. In fact, they have rather quietly grown into stars in their own right. They are faster, more productive and give a better cut than ever. And while the zero-turns may still grab all the headlines, walk-behinds will always remain an integral piece of equipment for any lawn care operator.



INDUSTRY SHIPMENTS WALK-BEHIND CT MOWERS

■ 200588,112
■ 200494,076
Change-6.3%

SOURCE: OPEI

Evolution

"The evolution of the walk-behind is driven by the evolution of the ride-on," says Gilbert Pena, commercial segment strategy manager for John Deere. "Everybody was on a productivity kick, about how ride-ons were more productive than walk-behinds, until the landscape started

continued on page 86

The evolution of walk-behind mowers is being driven by innovations in zero-turns

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor






**Eight straight months of hand-weeding
around the Clock can take its toll on
the average Worker.**

Granular GRASS AND BROADLEAF PREEMERGENT Herbicide

It won't do your bottom line any good, either. Research shows that hand-weeding can knock your profits for a loop in no time. Maybe that's why so many nursery operators and landscapers are choosing the superior control of Snapshot* specialty herbicide. Snapshot can be used over-the-top of more than 413 field-grown and 235 container-grown ornamentals, for control of 111 broadleaf weeds and annual grasses – for up to eight months. That's more than any other preemergence product on the market. Plus, it's gentle on ornamentals. This year, knock out weeds and grasses – instead of your workers – with the proven performance of Snapshot.

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Exmark's hydro-powered Turf Tracer reaches 6.75 mph with a 60-in. cutting deck.

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to change from a construction standpoint.

"When real estate prices went up, lots became smaller. With the smaller lots, you couldn't use ride-ons, so you had to go back to the walk. Even for sites like office buildings and subdivisions, they are being designed with long berms in front, landscaped with trees and bushes. Somebody has to mow that and there's no way you can do that effectively with a ride-on," he continues.

But after experiencing the improvements and innovations in the line of zero-turns, operators didn't want to go back to the same old gear-driven walk-behinds. They wanted a mower just as productive as the ride-ons.

"Once you put a hydro-static transmission on the walk-behind and you put on an engine with sufficient horsepower, you allow the operator to walk when he has to walk or attach a riding attachment when he's in wide-open spaces," Pena says.

Combined with the innovations made in mowing decks

over the years, such as John Deere's stamped 7-iron deck, also first introduced on the zero-turns, Pena says today's walk-behinds can match the productivity of the zero-turns.

Advantages

Walk-behinds offer operators a number of advantages over ride-ons, including a lower weight, easier maneuverability and better trim ability. They can be gentler on turf and fit through gates and into other restrictive areas. Plus they are easier to load and unload from trucks. There's also some fuel efficiencies on the walk-behinds as well, but that's not a primary reason for going back to them.

"Walk-behinds have always been a staple for landscape contractors," says Edric Funk, landscape contractor product manager for The Toro Co. "Some customers may have gotten caught up with the speed and novelty of the zero-turns, but later found that for a lot of their properties, walk-behinds were a better fit. Especially on residential lots and smaller properties, there's places where walk-behinds

make more sense."

Funk says safety is also a concern, which is driving the growth of walk-behinds, since there are places, such as around lakes and ponds, where zero-turn riders should not be used. So even if a contractor is primarily using a zero turn, that contractor still needs to have a walk-behind handy to finish up any problem areas.

That is why Funk says Toro integrated its zero-turn Turbo Force cutting decks into its walk-behinds as well. The deck features an adjustable baffle, a wide rubber discharge chute, and an under-the-deck skid plate that reduces hanging up on trailers or scalping when traveling over uneven terrain.

Comfort

Not all the recent improvements in walk-behinds were first passed down from zero-turns. For instance, design innovations have also made walk-behinds more comfortable to control. Paul Blankenfeld, regional sales manager for Exmark, notes the company's Enhanced Control System pis-

tol grip mowers allows natural positioning of the hands, arms and back for greater comfort and less stress on the body. Exmark also integrated its ride-on attachments into the mower, instead of operators attaching third-party equipment. "I'm just as comfortable using this as I am sitting down," he says.

Hustler Turf Equipment added its XR-7 cutting decks to its Trimstar Hydro-drive Walk Behind, along with its H-Bar Steering System, which makes the mower turn like a bike, simplifying controls.

Husqvarna just released its W21SB commercial walk behind mower, part of a new line of 21-in. mowers designed for those tight landscaped areas where ride-ons can't fit.

Though zero-turns still are sexy, and may lead the way in innovation, the walk-behinds will always be, well, right behind them.

"As soon as we showed our mulch-on-demand decks to customers, they started asking, 'When can I get this on a walk-behind?'" says Pena. **LM**



Zero-turns still have a speed advantage, but walk-behinds are priced considerably cheaper, Toro's Funk notes.

HELP SOLVE THE H-2B CRISIS JOIN "SAVE SMALL BUSINESS" NOW

America continues to face a critical shortage of seasonal employees willing and able to work in the Green Industry. Businesses have turned increasingly to the H-2B visa program for help.

Because Congress set a nationwide cap of 66,000 H-2B visas per year, there were not enough to go around in either 2004 or 2005. Reaching the H-2B cap threatened to shut the doors of businesses just like yours from coast-to-coast.

In partnership with others, America's small and seasonal business owners teamed up to form **Save Small Business** to help find a way to solve the 2005 H-2B cap crisis. And solve it we did. But Congress only fixed the H-2B crisis through September 2006. They must act again this year.

If we can't find workers, many of us may have to curtail services or even face the prospect of being driven out of business.

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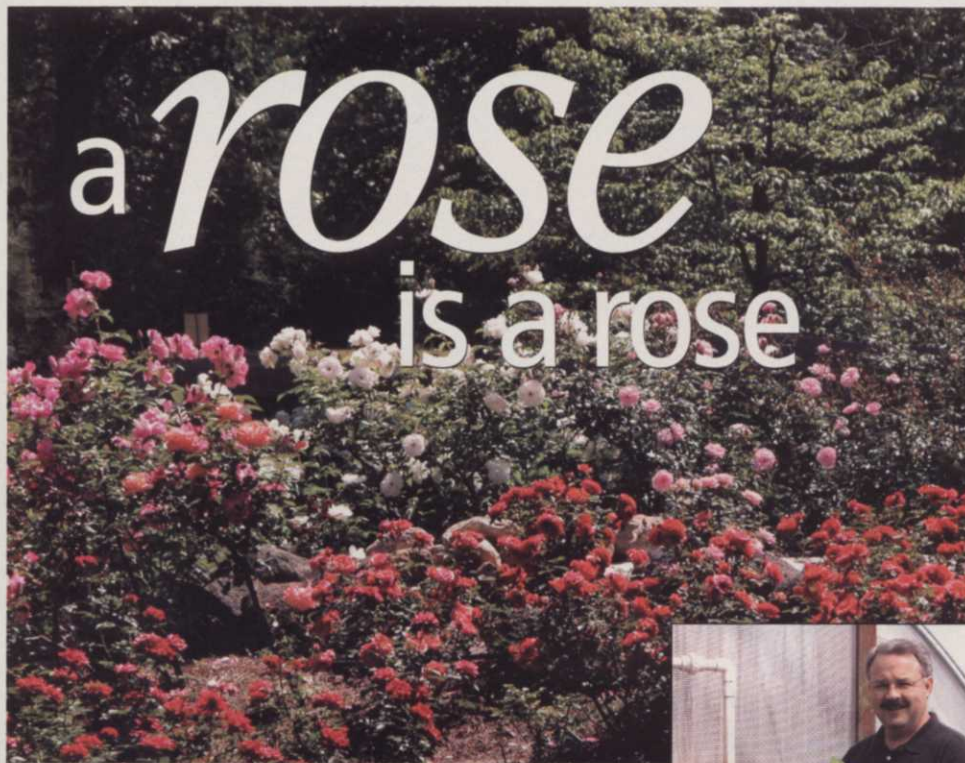
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REAL ANSWERS TO REAL CHALLENGES

a *rose* is a rose



This American Rose Society member developed a plan to keep the blooms fungus-free

BY KATE TOY

Robbie Tucker, partner at the rose care mail-order company Rosemania, played a valuable role in arranging the donation of Compass fungicide to the Gardens at the American Rose Center.

The average homeowner may have a rosebush or two; the average lawn care professional may have a garden or two. Then there's Robbie Tucker, who developed a treatment plan for 22,000 rosebushes at the American Rose Center (ARC) in Shreveport, LA. Headquarters of the American Rose Society, the ARC is the nation's largest garden de-



voted entirely to roses.

Founded in 1892 as a non-profit, educational resource for rose lovers nationwide, the American Rose Society (ARS) has grown to almost 400 local chapters, with more than 20,000 members. The ARC Gardens are a sprawling 42-acre stretch of land with a flowing stream, rustic bridges,

winding pathways and cascading fountains. Nearly 400 varieties of roses are grown there; some originated in the 1500s, while newer, hybrid versions are not yet on the market.

The problem:

Blackspot and spider mites were taking over

The Gardens were not always in the beautiful condition they are in now. When members of the ARS got together to prune the Gardens for an upcoming

convention of all ARS affiliates, they realized the Gardens required structural repairs, cleanup, replanting, and in some sections, a complete overhaul. The roses had also suffered from waves of damaging blackspot and spider mites.

Enter Robbie Tucker. A rose enthusiast and ARS member, Tucker began renovating the Gardens last fall. Tucker is a partner at Rosemania, a mail-order supply company of rose care

products located in Franklin, TN. The company, in its sixth year of business, caters to more than 12,000 nurseries, rose care companies and rose hobbyists throughout the country. In addition to products for roses, Rosemania offers products for dahlias, daylilies, camellias and giant

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pumpkins. Tucker's background is in the chemical industry, so it is only fitting that he develop a spray and fertilizer program for the roses at the ARS headquarters.

"The biggest obstacle seemed to be the absence of a good preventive spray program coupled with a modern feeding program," he says. With Tucker's input and aspirations for the Gardens motivating caretakers to action, new care methods have been put in place to keep the roses healthy, thriving and aesthetically pleasing to the 200,000 visitors who come to the Gardens each year.

Roses are susceptible to fungal diseases like blackspot, powdery mildew, rust and downy mildew, with

blackspot being the most universal problem. It is caused by the fungus *diplocarpon rosea*, which infects the leaves of the plant. When roses are diseased, the leaves fall off and the plant does not grow new blooms.

Because of tight budgets, the ARS Garden staff was not always able to obtain the volume of disease control products necessary for the large numbers of roses in the gardens. For the same reason, the Gardens could not take advantage of newer rose care products, which were more effective and less labor intensive.

The solution:

Fungicide rotations

To combat blackspot, Tucker began using Compass, a preventive fungicide that works by entering the tissue of the

rose plant and putting up a barrier against common fungus diseases.

Tucker used this method because, "it is always easier to prevent blackspot than to get rid of it once it has invaded any garden," he says. Tucker explains that in the past, blackspot preventive fungicides that had to be sprayed on less than a seven-day schedule simply did not exist.

Now, Compass can be rotated with another fungicide, Banner Maxx, on a 14-day spray cycle. Tucker sums up the benefits of this nicely, "Less chemical, less work, less pesticide exposure." He was also impressed with the low toxicity of Compass.

Tucker worked to coordinate a donation of Compass to the ARS in March 2005. About a month later, his efforts paid off. The fungicide was shipped from the manufacturer, Bayer Environmental Science, directly to the Gardens in Shreveport, where Tucker supervised the application he had designed.

The ARS began using Compass in April and was pleased with the results. The Gardens started looking better than they had in recent years and the closely followed care schedule yielded healthy rosebushes. The roses continued to thrive even in the difficult summer months. **LM**

—The author is with Tierney Communications in Philadelphia. Contact her at kttoy@tierneyagency.com.

The American Rose Center in Shreveport, LA, showcases 400 varieties of roses.



Compact equipment

BY CURT HARLER



Buying tips

- ▶ Consider the suspension system of the equipment for the terrain where you will operate it.
- ▶ Make sure your equipment isn't too wide to fit in your trailers or work in tight spaces.
- ▶ Undercarriages can be suspended or rigid. Consider terrain and rider comfort before buying.

Boxer ▲

The Boxer Brute's smaller stature (42.5 in. wide, 69 long, and 49 high) allows it access to any project. The 27-hp Kohler Command Pro boasts 875 lbs. operating capacity, 30% more than any other wheeled unit. It can handle all full-size attachments, including a 36-in. auger, with ease. It travels at a full 4.5 mph speed, with a ground clearance of 5.6 in. Based on 10 years of industry research, it has a ride on plate, finger-tip controls, a crawl speed valve and a safety stop plate.

For more information contact

Boxer at 800/476-9673 or www.boxer-equipment.com / circle no. 254

Caterpillar

New line of mini excavators, the C-Series has 22% more digging force and greater than 10%

more stick digging force than the previous models. Increased lift capacities add to versatility and flexibility. The 301.6C and the 301.8C have 18.1 hp, increased hydraulic flow and pressure. The engine meets US EPA Tier 2 and EU Stage II emissions standards. New, variable displacement hydraulic pump eliminates stalling and enables the excavators to dig through the toughest conditions. Operating weight of the excavators is 3,792 lbs. (1,720 kg) when equipped with a cab and 3,548 lbs. (1,610 kg) with a canopy. 500-hour oil and filter change interval helps keep operating costs down. Independent swing boom lets machine work next to a wall or obstruction. 200-degree bucket rotation ensures good material retention at height as well as flat trenching capability.

For more information contact Caterpillar at 888/OWN-A-CAT or www.cat.com / circle no. 255

Dingo

The Toro Dingo TX 420 compact utility loader is powered by a 20-hp Kohler air-cooled engine. It offers 35 quick-change attachments: auger, trencher, vibratory plow, hydraulic breaker, backhoe, leveler, tiller, cultivator, hydraulic blade, power box rake, adjustable forks, tree forks, two-stage snow thrower, rotary broom, buckets. They make it ideal for applications such as tree planting, material hauling and handling, preparing seedbeds, pond building, constructing decks and fences, demolishing structures, and installing irrigation systems.

For more information contact Toro at 800/344-8676 or www.toro.com / circle no. 256



Volvo

Volvo has a range of seven tracked excavator models with digging depths ranging from 6.75 to 12.5 ft. and weights from 3,164 to 11,130 lbs. The mid-range EC-25 has a 27.2-hp engine and 6152-pound operating weight. Standard features include a control pattern change lever to convert from excavator-style to backhoe-style controls. Drop-down counterweight and fully opening engine cover provide ease of daily checks and maintenance.

For more information contact Volvo at 828/650-2000 or www2.volvo.com / circle no. 260

ASV

ASV's line of rubber track loaders includes the two new SR-Series machines designed on the company's new undercarriage and available in track widths of 20 in. (SR-80) and 15 in. (SR-70). See page 72 for more information. The company's RC-50 Turf Edition is designed for golf course, parks and other turf surfaces. It features a 50-hp, 2.2-liter, 4-cylinder Cat 3024C diesel engine and an operating weight of 5374 lbs., but only 2.7 psi ground pressure. Its 15-in. green rubber tracks give good traction and stability with 1,770 sq. in. of ground contact.

For more information contact ASV at 800/346-5954 or www.asvi.com / circle no. 258

Bobcat

Bobcat's lineup of compact equipment includes the MT52 and MT55 mini rubber track loaders. Both have optional ride-on platforms and attachment options including a bucket, angle broom, auger, snow blower, trencher, soil conditioner and more. According to the company, landscapers use Bobcat's mini hydraulic excavator to plant trees and shrubs, install irrigation systems and build retaining wall systems.

For more information contact Bobcat at 888/922-TURF or www.bobcat.com / circle no. 261



John Deere

Ranging in size from 3-5 metric tons, the 30-hp 35D, with 10-ft. dig depth; and the 40-hp 50D (shown) with 11.75-ft. depth, are zero-tail-swing compact excavators. They provide reduced cycle times and better comfort with updated controls and cab. Lower operating costs come from the auto-idle, plus 500-hour engine oil change, 500-hour greasing, and 2,000-hour hydraulic oil change intervals. The D-Series is powered by Yanmar large displacement, Tier II-compliant engines. Worksite Pro attachments for the 35C and 50C work with these machines.

For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.deere.com / circle no. 257

Case

Three minimum-swing-radius excavators excel at digging and lifting in the tight work areas. The Case CX75, CX135 and CX225 models feature 52-141 engine hp, bucket digging forces up to 31,698 lbs. and tight swing radiuses — as little as four feet. The CX75 can literally dig right up against a building, lot line or other obstruction thanks to its optional offset boom. Fully adjustable seat comfortably accommodates any size operator.

For more information contact Case Construction at www.casece.com / circle no. 259

Yanmar

The Ultra-Mini B80-3 features a variable undercarriage that extends from 2.25 to 2.75 ft. for better stability on the job, but is easier to maneuver through tight gates. Track rollers have outer flange for better stability, the company says. Individual boom swing and auxiliary hydraulic pedals. Weighs 2,337 lbs.

For more information contact Yanmar at 800/365-7260 www.yanmar.com / circle no. 262

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LM Reports

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Kanga ►

With compact power to handle the toughest of jobs, whether moving soil or mulch across the work site, trenching for an irrigation system or installing a fence. The 16-hp Honda, electric start Kanga Kid has more than 10 attachments, all with a quick attach mount plate. Unit weighs less than 1,000 lbs. and is 32 in. wide. Complete system trailer can be pulled behind a standard vehicle. Ride-on operator platform and fingertip controls minimize training.

For more information contact Kanga at 800/476-9673 or www.kangaequipment.com / circle no. 263

IHI Compact Excavator

NX series units have a hydraulic pilot joystick for higher responsiveness and zero tail swing. Mini excavator is powered by a 10-hp water-cooled diesel. Auxiliary hydraulics to front are standard, as is backfill blade. Has 5-ft., 2-in dig depth. Undercarriage expands from 27.5 - 37.5 inches.

For more information contact IHI at 800/538-1447 or www.ihcompactexcavator.com / circle no. 264

Vermeer ▼

The Vermeer S600TX comes with a spring-cushioned platform positioned within the framework of the machine, reducing the



need to walk through work site debris, mud, and uneven terrain. Two engine options are available to power the new compact skid-steer, including a 25-hp Kohler Command Pro gas engine or a 25-hp Kubota D905 diesel. Positioned 14.5 in. high, the platform allows greater visibility of the attachment and bucket edge. Strategically placed operator station console cushions provide added comfort and help reduce operator fatigue.

For more information contact Vermeer at 888/VERMEER or www.vermeer.com / circle no. 265



Gehl

The E-Series skid loaders, new for 2006, includes six units from the compact Model 3640E with a rated operating load of 1175 lbs. to the top-of-line Model 6640E with a rated operating load of 2900 lbs., TNV Series Yanmar diesel engines are featured in the 3640E and 4240E skid loaders. A 35-hp



naturally aspirated 3-cylinder engine is used in the 3640E, and a 46-hp naturally aspirated 4-cylinder in the 4240E. These Tier II certified engines are direct-injected and liquid-cooled.

Deutz 2011 Series diesel engines are used in the larger models. The All-Tach universal-type quick-attach system makes changing attachments fast and easy. Gehl also offers optional Power-A-Tach, letting users connect and disconnect attachments without leaving the seat.

For more information contact Gehl at 262/334-9461 or www.gehl.com / circle no. 266



Takeuchi ▲

Company's product line has models from 1,600 to 17,230 lbs. with dig depths of 5 to 15 ft. The mid-range TB125 has 22.5 engine hp, 6,151-lb. operating weight, 9.5-ft. dig depth and 15.5-ft. reach. Dump height is more than 10 feet. Unit combines 360-degree cab swing with 130-degree independent boom swing to make it easy working next to walls, etc. Rubber tracks are easy on ground.

For more information contact Takeuchi at 770/831-0661 or www.takeuchi-us.com / circle no. 267

Worksaver ▼

The 3-point adapter from Worksaver is engineered for loaders equipped with a universal quick-attach system. The adapter mounts easily to the front of the loader, allowing any Category I 3-point implement or attachment such as blades, landscape rakes, bale spears, bale forks to be quickly mounted to the skid steer. Bushing that allows Category II attachments to be used are provided with the 3-pt. adapter attachment.

For more information contact Worksaver at 217/324-5973 or www.worksaver.com / circle no. 268



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Circle 142

Surprise Rec. Campus

2005 PGMS Grand Award Winner for Athletic or Professional Fields

Property at a glance

Location: Surprise, AZ

Grounds Supervisor: Joe Kennedy III

Category: Athletic or Professional Fields

Total budget: \$897,920

Year site built: 2001

Acres of turf: 55

Acres of display beds: 47

Total paved area: 23 acres

Total man-hours/week: 870

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Irrigation and drainage issues combined with little rainfall and a demanding schedule of events
- ▶ Averaging between 5,800 and 6,500 athletic field preps per year

Project checklist

Completed in last two years:

- ▶ Transformed 16 baseball fields to football fields and back within a week
- ▶ Overseeding 55 acres of turf with less than a two week period of scheduled down time

On the job

- ▶ 18 full-time staff, two to 20 seasonal workers, four licensed pesticide applicators

Not long ago, Surprise, AZ, was a quiet farming town of one sq. mile in size about 40 miles northwest of Phoenix.

Now, Surprise is living up to its name as one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. In the 1990s, its size grew to 72 sq. miles and its population surged from 10,000 in 1995 to nearly 100,000 today. Projections say the city could reach 364,000 by 2020.

Helping fuel that growth is a jewel at the heart of the city: the Surprise Recreation Campus. The 170-acre, \$73 million campus consists of a 37-acre community park with a lake stocked for fishing, rec center, library and aquatics center. The centerpiece is the Surprise Stadium and surrounding baseball parks, which host the Kansas City Royals and Texas Rangers for spring training. The stadium hosts NCAA baseball tournaments, the Arizona State University men's baseball team and the independent minor league Golden Baseball League.

"We pay attention to detail in every aspect of our job, whether it's trimming a shrub, laser leveling a field, employee

training or saying, 'Hello,' to a patron," says Baseball Maintenance Manager Joe Kennedy III.

Seven youth baseball and softball fields are under construction to go along with the rec and aquatics centers. The campus hosts many community events, and the next project is DreamCatcher Park, a multi-use sports facility for physically and mentally challenged children.

Kennedy and his crew have overcome many maintenance challenges. The irrigation system was designed to accommodate the high demand for potable water in the Southwest, using non-potable or a blend of water. The stadium field is a sand-based soil system, with a USGA sand/peat blended field with organic material added to the soil profile.

At first, Kennedy explained, the sand-based fields showed an inability to retain moisture and nutrients, leading to poor growing conditions. The Surprise crews overcame this by using a fertigation system and foliar applications to improve the fields' organic profile.

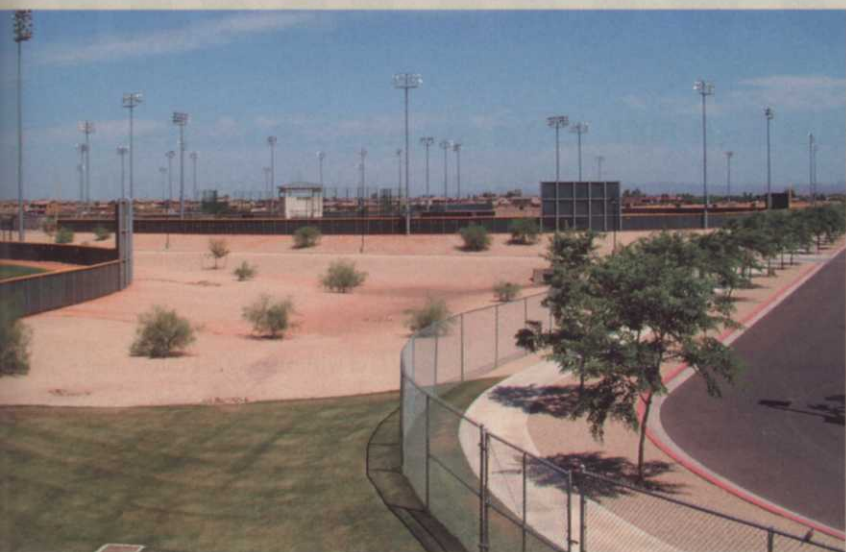
"We have a motto here is that grounds keeping isn't just a job. It's an adventure," Kennedy says.

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.,

PGMS

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The Surprise Recreation Campus hosts professional, minor league, university and community athletes at its year-round facilities.

SURPRISE RECREATION CAMPUS



Major league renovation

MLB and NFL field managers made over a worn out high school baseball field in one day BY JARED BODNAR



In January, more than 30 field managers from Major League Baseball and the National Football League donated one intense day of sweat equity and transformed Orlando, FL's William R. Boone High School's worn-out baseball field into a safe and beautiful facility for the school's student athletes.

This service event was held in con-

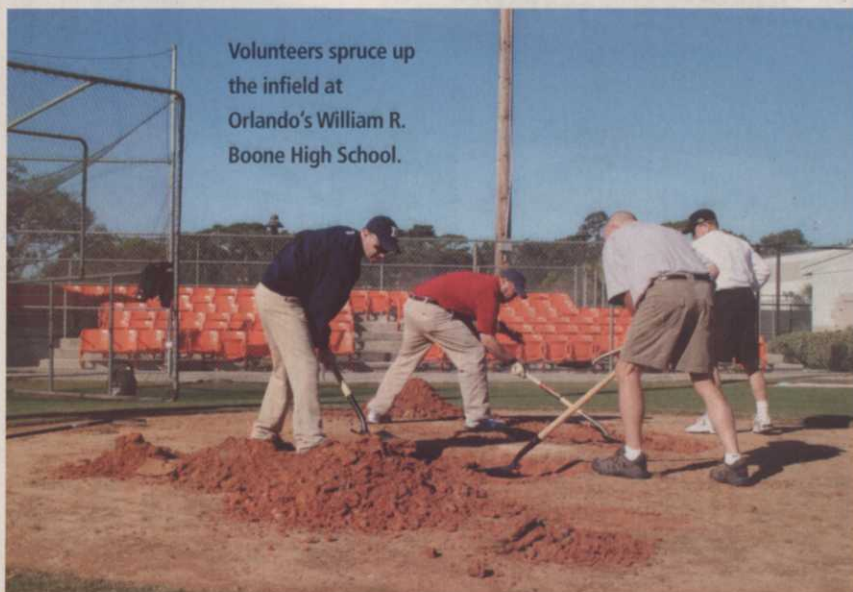
junction with the 2006 Professional Sports Turf Symposium, which preceded the 2006 Sports Turf Managers Association Conference. For the past three years, athletic field managers from professional teams have selected a distressed high school facility that doesn't have the funding to create top-quality playing conditions.

With the in-kind support of Toro, Turface Athletics and Covermaster, field managers from the Baltimore Ravens, Cincinnati Bengals, New York Jets, Pittsburgh Steelers, Chicago Cubs, Houston Astros, San Diego Padres, Texas Rangers and other professional teams spent the day putting their expertise to work.

When it was all over, the batter's box and pitcher's mound were perfectly symmetrical and top-dressed. The lines were all straight and the infield was masterfully groomed. The organizers are confident that the school will keep up these immaculate conditions.

Founded more than 50 years ago, William R. Boone High School is a Class 6A school with about 3,500 students. The school has high athletic and academic

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Volunteers spruce up the infield at Orlando's William R. Boone High School.

-
- The collage consists of three photographs. The top-left photo shows a yellow skid steer loader with a mulch bucket attachment spreading brown mulch on a paved area, with orange traffic cones in the foreground. The top-right photo shows two men working together to lay large, rectangular pavers on a prepared surface. The bottom-right photo shows a man wearing a white hard hat and a light-colored shirt, looking towards the camera.

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Circle 146

GROUNDS FIELD REHAB

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standards and was the Florida baseball runner-up last year. However, due to high traffic and low maintenance budgets, the baseball field was in poor shape.

"Our facilities are nice, but the field itself was in bad shape. It was probably in the worst shape it's been in 12 years," says Doug Patterson, athletic director for Boone High School. "We're absolutely thrilled that we were chosen for this. We take a lot of pride in our facilities here at Boone, so it's going to be great from an exposure standpoint. It's just excellent that we have somebody who's willing to put the materials and the effort forward to fix one of our fields."

"These guys take a real interest in this project because this is an opportunity for us to give back to the community," says Bob Christofferson, head groundskeeper for the Seattle Mariners



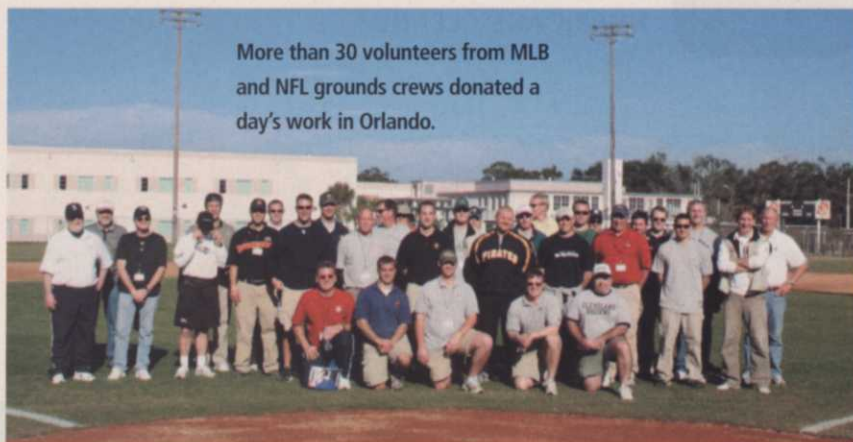
The pitcher's mound got
a complete makeover.

and the organizer of the event. "They are all great guys and they really enjoy what they're doing. This is just a lot of fun."

"We try to choose an inner-city school and we also look for a school that's going to continue to maintain what we've done," Christofferson says. "The coaches and staff here are dedicated and we think it's in good hands."

"Toro is proud to sponsor the Symposium," says Dale Getz, sports turf sales manager for Toro. "This is our third field rebuilding event and it keeps getting better and better. These are a great group of guys to work with, they love doing this, they love giving back to the community and it was another great success." **LM**

— The author is an account director for Canyon Communications. Contact him at jb@canyoncomm.com.



More than 30 volunteers from MLB and NFL grounds crews donated a day's work in Orlando.

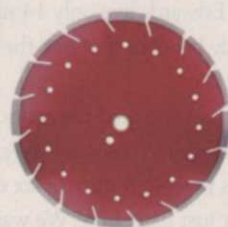
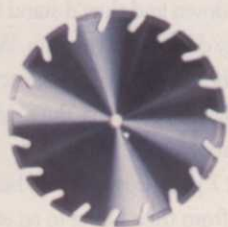


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Circle 144

BY LYNNE BRAKEMAN

Recovery effort keeps hurricane survivor busy

IN the early hours of August 29, as Hurricane Katrina lumbered ashore, Ken Edwards huddled with his wife and 12-year-old twins, Kendra and Keair, inside their boarded-up home in a leafy neighborhood of Gulfport, MS.

The Edwards live only 14 miles from the sandy beaches that line the Gulf of Mexico.

"We had watched the traffic jams all weekend on TV," Edwards says. "The option was to sit in traffic for six or eight hours or just hang here. We waited too late and just decided to stay."

Edwards manages two sports facilities — the city-owned Gulfport Sportsplex, which is part of the city's Dept. of Leisure Services; and two-year-old, \$3.2 million Goldin Sports Complex which is jointly owned by the city and Harrison County.

Before becoming an athletic field manager, Edwards spent 22 years with the army, so he was confident they could weather the storm. He had a battery-run radio and TV, about 60 gallons of gasoline for his electric generator, a propane stove and tubs filled with water.

"We will never stay again," Edwards says, six weeks after the storm. "It wasn't a good decision."

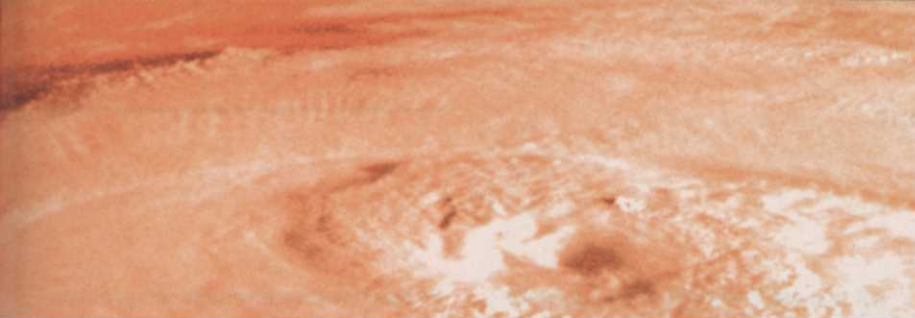
The Category 4 storm with winds up

to 175 mph blew for 13 hours — from about 4 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. He and his kids peered out at the yard through one half of a glass patio door that he'd left open.

"The kids and I watched big pine trees bend all the way over. Then the wind would slow down and they'd stand back up; then they'd bend down again. We could hear the crumble of trees, pecans, oaks and magnolias, all over the neighborhood," Edwards recalls.

At about 7 p.m., Edwards and his family emerged from their home to an unbelievable scene. Most of the trees in their 90-home subdivision were down. Every house was damaged. When they got the generator hooked up and the rabbit ears on the TV, they found out that four entire blocks of the 24-mile beach on the Gulf of Mexico was gone.





He experienced six weeks of chaos after Hurricane Katrina, but Ken Edwards lead the rally to fix damages at his community's major amateur sports complexes. He and his crews worked to protect the city's investment.

Things were bad but Edwards felt blessed. His house had roof damage and a little water damage, but the family was safe and sound. He knew his extended family in New Orleans — his mom, sister, and his two grown daughters — were all safe somewhere. It would be about a week before he would locate them in Madison, AL.

After getting everything working at home at the end of the first day, Edwards wondered what he would find at work the next day.

How bad could it be? Real bad!

On Tues., Aug. 30, as soon as it was light, Edwards rode a bicycle to the Goldin complex a few blocks from his home.

Every bit of infield conditioner on the baseball fields had blown into the outfields. The infields were right down to the

clay. All the scoreboards were on the ground, there was roof damage on every building and all kinds of debris from the adjacent apartment buildings littered the fields.

Edwards grabbed a truck and drove over to the Gulfport Sportsplex, where more than 54 weekend tournaments were booked last year pulling an estimated \$13 million in tourism dollars into the city's economy.

"I was worried because that's our big money maker," Edwards says. Goldin had been built to serve as an overflow facility for the Gulfport Sportsplex because it was booked with regional tournaments every weekend from March through November.

Edwards was hoping Gulfport might be in pretty good shape since it was located in a rural area and surrounded by fields.

He was wrong.



Ken Edwards (shown on opposite page) and his crew saw devastation at the two sports facilities they manage in Gulfport, LA, just days after Hurricane Katrina hit. Signs and fences were bent and the maintenance building at the Gulfport Sportsplex was crushed (opposite page.)



Ken Edwards spearheaded a cleanup and recovery effort at the two sports complexes. Members of his crew who hadn't fled the city pitched in to protect the city's investments in athletics. Opposite page: Edwards' own house sustained some damage, but he managed to protect his '66 Mustang.

Every scoreboard was down. All of the five control areas housing concession stands and scoring towers had roof damage. Every one of the hundreds of light poles at the facility was leaning at a crazy angle. They'd been built to survive a Category 3 storm, not a Category 4 storm.

Still, Edwards told himself, it's not that bad — it's all recoverable.

Then he turned the corner to face his maintenance shop. Half of it was on the ground. Underneath were thousands of dollars worth of equipment, chemicals and fertilizer.

"I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It was a steel and metal building. I had no idea it would fall down. And I had just

got that order of fertilizer and preemergent herbicide," says Edwards ruefully. "It was a big mess."

Some of Edwards' ten-person crew had scattered during the evacuation. But some of them had stayed in town and showed up for work the second day after the storm. Wearing chemical suits and face masks to protect them from the fiberglass insulation floating around Gulfport's collapsed maintenance building, they moved everything they could to storage at Goldin. By the time that was finished, all the crew was back and Edwards set them to work, one field at a time, removing debris to a staging area in the parking lots.

By Thursday, four days after the storm,



Edwards went in to work expecting to spend that day working with a backhoe operator to lift the collapsed roof so they could salvage more materials and equipment. He wasn't ready for what came next.

"Help" arrives

As Edwards pulled into the Gulfport front gate, he was met by U.S. Marshals who informed him they had commandeered the entire facility. It was now a staging area for FEMA administration and FEMA security. The agency had already commandeered 14 other parks around the city. Nevertheless, Gulfport's wide open spaces looked pretty good to them.

Edwards pleaded with the Marshals to

let his crew get a few more things out of the facility and power up the sprinkler system since the turf was already getting dry five days after the storm. No good.

"It took us two days," Edwards recalls. "My boss, the director of leisure services, had to get with the city council and the emergency management folks before the Marshals would allow us back into the facility to get water on the turf."

Once he got back in, Edwards noticed one of the Marshals was standing in the middle of the soccer field with a can of blue spray paint.

"So I just went up to him and said 'Hey guy... whatta ya doin'?' He said he was painting a helicopter pad."

That helicopter pad was on a \$250,000 sand-based, Tifway 419 Bermudagrass soccer field. Edwards couldn't believe his ears. He pointed out that there were more than two acres of parking lots that would make a better surface for helicopters.

The Marshal simply ignored him and went on spraying.

This time, it took the Mayor's office and the civil defense director of Harrison County another two days before they got the helicopters off Gulfport's fields. There were some burn marks, but Edwards' crew has since repaired them.

"Although we got in there to get the sprinklers on, we still couldn't get back in to cut the grass," says Edwards. "Still, the worst was not over for us."

What could be worse?

Back at Goldin, Edwards and his crew spent the next two weeks picking up shingles, siding and other building materials from the surrounding apartment complexes. They left early on a Friday feeling satisfied they'd gotten the park pretty well cleaned up.

The next Monday, Edwards arrived to find the park overrun. A debris removal

contractor had been allowed to use Goldin's parking area to inspect his subcontractors vehicles. Bulldozers, dump trucks and tractors jammed the parking area. In principal, the subcontractors were supposed to drive in, get stickered, then drive out.

However, there were no hotel rooms to be had in Gulfport, MS. The subcontractors, who figured they'd be around for awhile, found a solution.

"All the equipment operators were in little pup tents all over the fields," Edwards says.

Since the contractor hadn't provided any portable toilets, the squatters were using the fields for latrines. Since there were no showers, they connected a hose to one of the faucets and rigged up an impromptu shower.

"Obviously the contractor had not informed these people they didn't have permission to camp out on the fields. So now I had to be the culprit and tell them they had to go," Edwards says.

Every day Edwards and his crew tore down the showers. Every evening the squatters put them back up.

After six days, the city's lawyers told the contractor he would be charged if any of his people were still living on the fields. The pup tents finally disappeared. They left behind dozens of broken-down vehicles, old truck tires, tarps, steel gates and doors and other debris, according to Edwards. After the city's lawyers told the contractor he would also be charged for hauling that trash away, things got better.

Six weeks after the storm, Edwards had one broken-down dump truck and one car still left in the Goldin parking lot.

Planning for next time

"The recovery effort threatened our fields more than the storm itself," says Edwards. "If I were involved in the big scheme of decision making, I would suggest that



they pick out three of our biggest sports complexes — Gulfport, Goldin and Bayou — and put them off limits to occupation by contractors, the national guard or anybody else."

Edwards says planners must protect the city's investment in these expensive facilities.

Edwards has special words of appreciation for one of his suppliers, Jerry Pate Turf & Irrigation, a Toro distributor based in nearby Pensacola, FL.

"Right in the middle of everything, they showed up with food, water and equipment, right when we needed it most," Edwards says.

Although Edwards says he will defi-

nately evacuate with his family next time a hurricane threatens, he admits that if he had left for Katrina, the fields at both Goldin and Gulfport would've been completely wrecked. Instead, on Tues., Oct. 11, just six weeks after one of the worst hurricanes in U.S. history, 500 kids kicked off City League Pee Wee soccer and flag football at the Gulfport Sports Complex.

However, there is still jeopardy in the future for both the sports complexes and the City of Gulfport. Since all the hotels have been destroyed, Edwards is unsure how the 2006 tournament season will play out. **LM**

— The author is Web editor for Landscape Management and editor of the online Athletic Turf News e-newsletter. For more information visit www.athleticturf.net or e-mail lbrakeman@questex.com.

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Products

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Ferris zero-turns

Ferris Industries introduced the new IS 3100Z and IS 5100Z series of full-sized zero-turn mowers. Both series upgrade Ferris' 4-wheel suspension that provides comfort, speed and productivity, as well as a consistent cut. Both also come with Ferris' folding Roll Over Protection Systems (ROPS) a standard feature.

The IS 3100Z series comes with a choice of 26-hp liquid-cooled Kawasaki, 30-hp Kohler Command or 32-hp Briggs & Stratton Vanguard Big Block engines. Other model options include a 61-in. double-top 10-gauge deck, Hercules spindles, deck lift adjusts height from 1.5 inches, twin 6-gallon fuel tanks with integrated cup holder and storage compartment and turf-friendly 24-in. drive tires and 13-in. front casters.

The IS 5100Z features 61-in. rear discharge and 72-in. side- or rear-discharge, double-top 10-gauge decks, 33.5-hp Caterpillar diesel engine, Hercules spindles, dual rear coil-over shock suspension, a deck lift that adjusts height from 1.5-in. to 6-in., twin seven-gallon fuel tanks with integrated cup holder, 12-volt charger and turf-friendly 26-in. drive tires and 13-in. front casters.

For more information contact Ferris at 800/933-6175 or visit www.ferrisindustries.com / circle no. 270

Waterproof Toro DDC

The Toro Co., Irrigation Division's DDC-WP is a battery-powered, waterproof digital dial controller designed to operate one to eight valves in areas where hardwire connections are impractical or during manual system upgrades. The DDC-WP system's digital interface provides the ease of dial-based programming, while minimizing the chance of mechanical failure. It also comes with three independent programs with three start times per program, and it can be programmed based on a 7-day week, in 14-day intervals, or on odd/even days. The DDC-WP is equipped with a self-diagnosing circuit breaker designed to protect the controller by identifying and reacting to irrigation faults. All DDC controllers are compatible with Toro's RainSensor Series.

For more information contact Toro Irrigation at 800/664.4740 or visit www.toro.com/ circle no. 269



Trusty companion

The Landscaper's Companion is now available in 8-oz. foil packs and in bulk 5- and 15-lb. E-Z Pails. The Landscaper's Companion is a versatile granular microbial for horticultural and landscape plantings, and can be used on deciduous trees, evergreens, shrubs, and landscaping materials including annuals, perennials, vegetables, baskets, pots and sod. It is ideally used during the plating process or incorporated into the soil for general maintenance of existing landscaped areas. Each pound of the product contains 64 billion colony-forming units of Bacillus, a beneficial rhizosphere bacterium. Other ingredients include kelp extract, 17 natural L-amino acids, humic acid and a natural wetting agent.

For more information contact Growth Products at 800/648-7626 or visit www.growthproducts.com / circle no. 271

Keep the Stealth on your radar

The Turf Tracker Stealth from C&S Turf Care Equipment is capable of covering up to 240,000 sq. ft. of liquid application and carrying up to 400 lbs. of granular product. It is designed to provide more stability and operator control, even on the tough terrain. The Turf Tracker Stealth offers features such as zero-turn twin hydrostatic



drive, four mph treating speed or 10 mph transport speed, a 200 lbs.-capacity, rear-mounted carry rack and rear-mounted 12 ft. break-away booms with 7-pattern spray selection.

For more information contact C&S at 800/872-7050 or visit www.csturfquip.com / circle no. 272

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Products

continued from page 106

Scratch that itch

IvyComplete from Hyland's Inc. is a 3-product kit for the prevention and treatment of poison oak, ivy and sumac. The kit features IvyBlock lotion, an FDA-approved product that can prevent the skin rash that accompanies contact with poison ivy, oak and sumac. The IvyComplete package has IvyCleanse, an alcohol wipe for removing the harmful oils that cause rash and itching and IvySoothe, a maximum-strength cream that's clinically tested for safety and effectiveness to ease the swelling and itching of poisonous plants, but also minor skin irritations and insect bites. Made for outdoor workers and enthusiasts, research shows professionals working outdoors reduced workers' compensation claims after using IvyBlock lotion.

For more information contact Hyland's at 651/228-9141 or visit www.hylands.com / circle no. 273



Hunter's popping up

Hunter Industries new 6-in. models of its I-25 and I-40 rotors, have a taller pop-up height for more efficient watering of landscapes with higher turf heights. The 6-in. versions have the same durable construction as the I-25 and the

I-40 used at sports complexes, parks and campuses. Other features include the ProTech safety system, with a small exposed cushioned rubber cover and boot to keep play areas safe, by keeping hard plastic away from the playing surface; heavy-duty ribbed cap and body, to withstand tough turf traffic; water-lubricated gear-drive; factory-installed drain check valve, to save water and reduce liability; optional opposing dual nozzles; stainless steel riser for durability and a deterrent against sprinkler vandalism; VStat self-adjusting stator and heavy-duty retraction spring.

For more information contact Hunter at 760/744-5240 or visit www.hunterindustries.com / circle no. 274



Walla Walla sprinklers sprinklers

Walla Walla Sprinkler Co. made three additions to the MP Rotator family of sprinklers. First, the MP1000 360-degree full circle model covers an eight to 15 ft. radius. It applies water more slowly and uniformly than conventional sprayheads, saving water and allowing significant installation and operational cost savings. Second, the MP Corner is designed to effectively irrigate tight corners in turf or landscape. Covering a 12-ft. radius at 30 psi, the MP Corner can be adjusted to distribute water down to an eight-ft. radius. Third, MP Riser is a solution for connecting sprinklers to polyethylene or PVC lateral lines in shrub areas, flower beds or temporary re-vegetative systems. The MP Riser has pre-assembled components for connecting to an MP Rotator sprinkler.

For more information contact Walla Walla at 509/524-7415 or visit www.mprotator.com / circle no. 275



Wright way to walk-behind

Wright Manufacturing's Velke walk-behind commercial mower is gear driven with adjustable axle, a 5-speed transmission and a superior Warner magstop clutch. The new mower has an integrated latch system for use with Wright's Velke drop down sulky. The operator can walk behind the mower in tight spots and, with the pull of a dashboard lever, ride on the straightaways. A 5.2-gal. fuel tank keeps the mower going and going with fewer refueling stops. Adjustable spring tension on the drive pulleys ensures that maximum power is getting to the drive wheels. The Velke mower, with pistol grip control, is offered with a 15- and 17-hp engine and a choice of 32-, 36- or 48-in. mower deck.

For more information contact Wright at 301/360-9810 or visit

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Add color in a Flash(Foam)

Morbark, Inc. is now offering the WizTech FlashFoam Coloring System for installation on a broad range of Morbark equipment, including tub grinders, horizontal grinders and whole tree chippers. In virtually any color desired, the FlashFoam System provides single-pass coloring on whole trees, stumps, roots, logs, wood construction debris, pallets or re-grind with a dry finished product coming off the discharge conveyor. The material is immediately ready to ship or bag. The benefits of the FlashFoam include low operating costs, versatility, a reduction in water usage, elimination of waste, mess and problems caused by runoff, and, because the mulch exits the equipment dry, the need for additional handling and stockpiling is eliminated. The foam coloring works on any type of wood.

For more information contact Morbark at 800/831-0042 or visit www.morbark.com / circle no. 277

Products



Tree transplanter

The ProLineTreeShovel is a productivity-enhancing skid steer attachment that enables the landscaper or small nurseryman to quickly, easily and safely dig small numbers of trees to either ball and burlap them or transplant them directly to another location on site. The ProLineTreeShovel is shaped like one-fourth of a standard, hydraulic tree

spade, and allows the operator to make three or four thrusts around the base of the tree to extract a uniformly shaped root-ball. The ProLineTreeShovel is also useful for pin-point placement of boulders, mulch and other landscape material.

For more information contact Heritage Oak Farm at 888/288-5308 or visit www.heritageoakfarm.com / circle no. 278

Husqvarna zero-turn an easy rider

Husqvarna's LZ6130TXP zero-turn mower provides a full suspension seat, custom footpad area and a larger horsepower-to-deck ratio. The LZ6130TXP enhancements include 12cc hydro pumps for increased performance and durability. The product features Husqvarna's TunnelRam deck design, low center of gravity, solid uni-frame construction and wide rear tires and oversized front casters. The LZ6130TXP is powered by the 30-hp Kohler V-Twin engine, with a 61-in. cutting width.

The standard foldable rollover protection system also features optional work lights.

For more information contact Husqvarna at 800/HUSKY62 or visit

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Hammer it home

The Caterpillar H55Ds hydraulic hammer features a simplified design that reduces the number of parts by almost half from the previous model for increased reliability and easy service. The new hammer also features a higher blow rate and 25% more power for



superior production from a 436-lb. work tool. The enclosed housing protects the power cell and reduces noise generated and the high- and low-pressure accumulator protects the carrier hydraulic system and assists the power stroke. The H55Ds is sized for use with all Cat skid steer and multi-terrain loaders. The H55Ds can be equipped with a chisel,moil, spade or compacting plate.

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Nufarm Americas' ProClipse 65 WDG is a water-dispersible granule containing 65% prodiamine for selective pre-emergence control of 30 grassy and broadleaf weeds in turf and ornamentals. ProClipse controls crabgrass, goosegrass, foxtail, *poa annua* and is effective on other problem grassy and broadleaf weeds. It can be applied in either in the spring to control weeds throughout the growing season or in the fall for early spring control. Nufarm also offers Menace,

its first insecticide. Menace uses bifenthrin to control a wide variety of insect pests, such as chinch bugs, sod webworms, mole crickets, ants (including fire ants), billbugs and mites. This synthetic pyrethroid has low to no odor and provides quick knock-down of insects. It can be used as a perimeter treatment for healthy turf and public environments.

For more information contact Nufarm at 303/956-9344 or visit www.us.nufarm.com / circle no. 281

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e-ride Industries' exv2 is a two-passenger neighborhood electric vehicle with optional removable windows, rear enclosure, tool boxes and removable tail gate. The environmentally friendly, reliable and virtually



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of settings, including campgrounds, park areas, golf courses, sports fields and neighborhoods.

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Products



Clean cut

The new hydrostatic-drive Quick 36 Super-Duty walk-behind mower from Better Outdoor Products features the company's Top-Link deck leveler system, extended oil drains, easy-service battery mounting, adjustable handlebars and a Briggs & Stratton

engine. The 36-in. 3-blade cutting deck provides push-mower quality at walk-behind speeds. The cutting deck of the Super-Duty is fabricated from one-eighth-in. steel sheet with a progressively larger discharge tunnel which uses the centrifugal fan action of the fully baffled blades to efficiently lift, cut and discharge the grass for a clean cut.

For more information contact Better Outdoor Products at 866/290-7295 or visit www.betteroutdoorproducts.com/ circle no. 283

Got the edge

The John Deere XT140SSELE professional-grade stick edger allows operators to maneuver neatly around beds and gives grassy

areas next to walks, curbs and drives that just-manicured look. The large guide wheel makes for fast and easy edging, and its straight 59-in. shaft provides twice the torque of the traditional curved-shaft edger. The extra power helps the eight-in. blade hack through tough turf, while the adjustable depth control lets opera-

tors cut as deep as 2.25 in. It is powered by a 25.6-cc, low-emission M-Series engine. For quieter operation, John Deere has added a low-tone muffler with glass-wool lining. Its cast-aluminum edger blade housing makes for increased durability. For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or visit www.Deere.com/ circle no. 284



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20 Demo Day & Knowledge

Network Series / Fayetteville, NC; Sponsored by Turfgrass Council of North Carolina; 910/695-1333; www.ncturfgrass.org

20-21 Ontario Turfgrass

Symposium / Guelph, Ontario, Canada; 519/767-5000; www.open.uoguelph.ca/ots/main.html

20-24 Turf and Landscape

Short Course / Louisville, KY; Sponsored by University of Kentucky Turf Research and Extension; 502/569-2344; www.uky.edu/Agriculture/uk turf/

20-21 Leadership Jam /

Columbus, OH / Sponsored by JP Horizons; 877/JPH-JAMS; www.jphorizons.com

21 Beacon Athletics Field

Maintenance Seminar / Ft. Myers, FL; Sponsored by Beacon Athletics; 800/747-5985; www.beaconathletics.com

22 - March 3 IN-IL Turfgrass

Short Course / Willowbrook, IL; Sponsored by Midwest Regional Turf Foundation; 765/494-8039; www.agry.purdue.edu/turf

23-24 Focus on

Professionalism: Landscape Design/Build Seminar /

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27 - March 3 NCSU Turf

Short Course / Raleigh, NC; Sponsored by North Carolina State University; 910/695-1333; www.ncturfgrass.org

28 - March 2 Western PA Turf

Conference and Trade Show / Monroeville, PA; Sponsored by Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council; 814/238-2402; www.paturf.org

28 Beacon Athletics Field

Maintenance Seminar / Irvine, CA; Sponsored by Beacon Athletics; 800/747-5985; www.beaconathletics.com

March

2-7 Canadian International

Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show / Vancouver, BC, Canada; 800/387-1056; www.golfsupers.com

6 NYSTA Western Regional

Conference / Amherst, NY; Sponsored by New York State Turfgrass Association; 800/873-8873; www.nysta.org

7 Professional Plant, Turf & Tree Conference /

Huntington, NY; Sponsored by Nassau Suffolk Landscape Gardeners Association; 631/665-2250; www.nslga.org

9-10 Leadership Jam /

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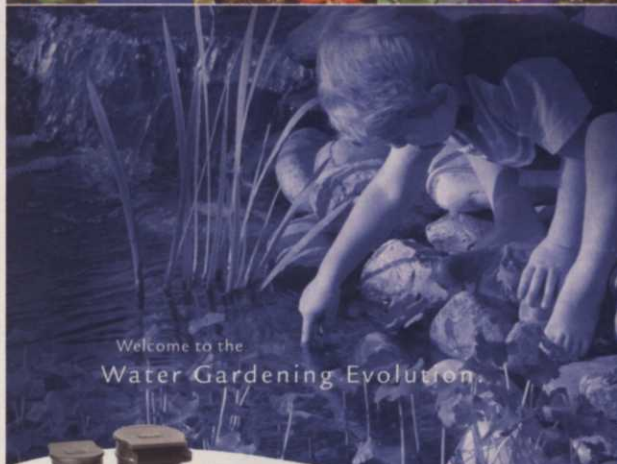
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- 3 Confidence.** You are the expert in your field. You can speak to the issue.
- 4 Competence.** Your training, experience and professionalism allow you to work with the customer on a mutually beneficial solution.
- 5 Control.** You, or your employees, have the training and proper systems and equipment to soothe your client's concern or solve their problem.

SOURCE: ERICA SANTELLA,
REGIONAL TECHNICAL
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M-I-C-K-E-Y, G-R-E-E-N

Walt Disney World is much more than Pirates of the Caribbean and long lines. The Lake Buena Vista, FL, resort has **2,000 acres of maintained turf** and a **horticulture staff of more than 600**. Here are a few other facts about Mickey's playground:

- **200:** Number of topiary. Pete's dragon is the largest shrub character, measuring 14 feet from head to tail.
- **2,400:** Total number of plant species represented. The species are gathered from every continent except Antarctica.
- **4,000:** Total acreage devoted to maintained landscapes and gardens. That's about the size of 3,000 football fields.

SOURCE: WWW.WDWMAGIC.COM

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Industry personal income paid
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Nevada size
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State population
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Industry jobs
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Contribution to state economy
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SOURCE: NEVADA
LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION

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The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) conducts a monthly shipments research program that represents between 60% and 100% of all **gasoline powered handheld equipment shipments**, based on several product categories.

During the just-completed 2005 model year (September 2004-August 2005), **shipments of total gasoline powered handheld products expanded 4.7%**, reaching 13.2 million units. Each product category experienced different market fluctuations with **some categories growing by as much as 27.9%** (pole pruners), and others shrinking by 4.8% (handheld blowers). Overall, most product categories experienced **solid growth** compared to the previous model year.

SOURCE: OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT INSTITUTE MONTHLY SHIPMENTS RESEARCH PROGRAM. VISIT WWW.OPEI.ORG.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT (ISSN 0894-1254) is published monthly (12 issues per year) by Questex Media Group, Inc., 275 Grove St., Suite 2-130, Newton, MA 02466. **Subscription rates:** one year, \$46, two years \$67 in the United States & Possessions; \$76 for one year, \$113 for two years in Canada and Mexico; all other countries \$148 for one year, \$220 for two years. For airmail delivery, include an additional \$70 per order annually. Single copies (pre-paid only): \$8 in the United States; \$10 in Canada and Mexico; \$15 all other countries. Back issues, if available: \$16 in the U.S.; \$20 in Canada and Mexico; \$30 all other countries. Add \$6.50 per order for shipping and handling. **Periodicals postage paid** at Duluth, MN 55806 and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send address changes to Landscape Management, P.O. Box 5057, Brentwood, TN 37024-5057. Canadian G.S.T. number: 840 033 278 RT0001. Publications Mail Agreement Number 40017597. Printed in the U.S.A.



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