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Zero-turn
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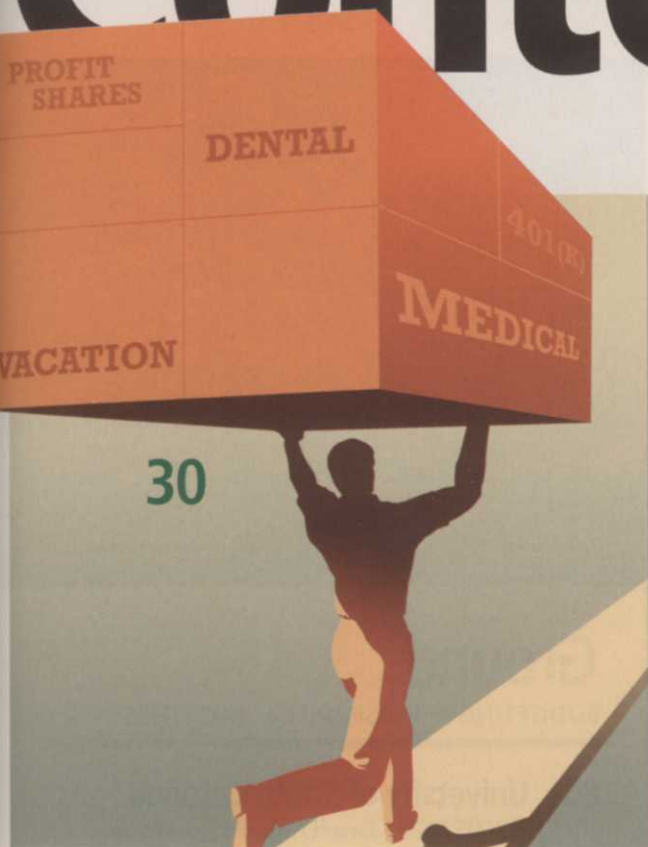
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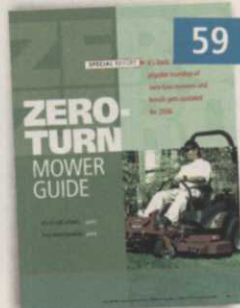
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»Online now



Mr. Greenthumb

Garden expert and author Stan DeFreitas signed books at a recent Bayer "Healthy Lawns; Healthy Business" summit. Read more about it online this month.

»Readers respond

Health insurance, retirement plans, benefits, oh my. Inspired by this month's cover story, LM asked online readers, **what's your philosophy on providing employee benefits?**

- 51%** Benefits keep good employees with us, so we have a good benefit package.
- 37%** We'd like to provide more, but it's expensive and we don't know where to find better deals.
- 7%** We offer 'other' benefits like employee lunches, trips to sporting events and incentives.
- 5%** We try to have as few employees as possible on our limited benefits plan.

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

"Keep a healthy level of *paranoia* in order to move forward."

— Michael Canic, Edge Consulting Services, to the PLANET Executive Forum in Lake Las Vegas, NV, last month.

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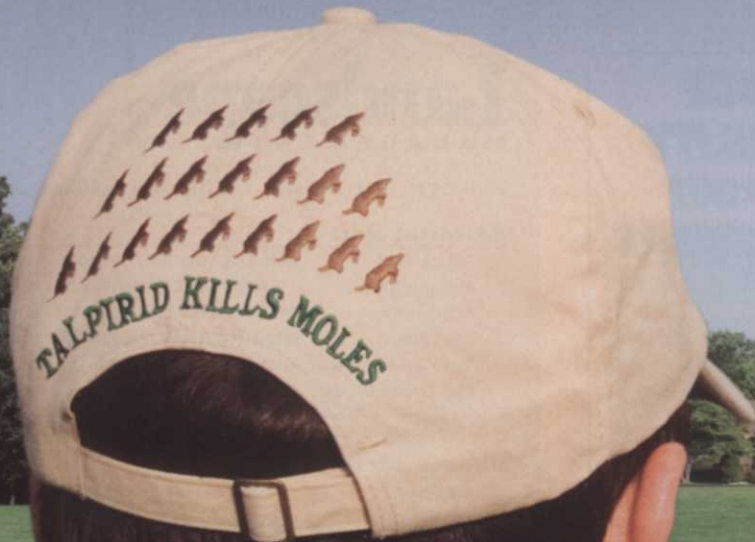
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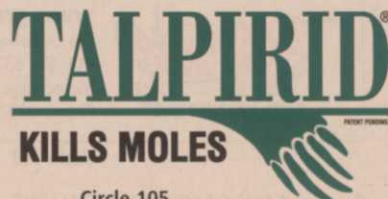
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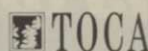
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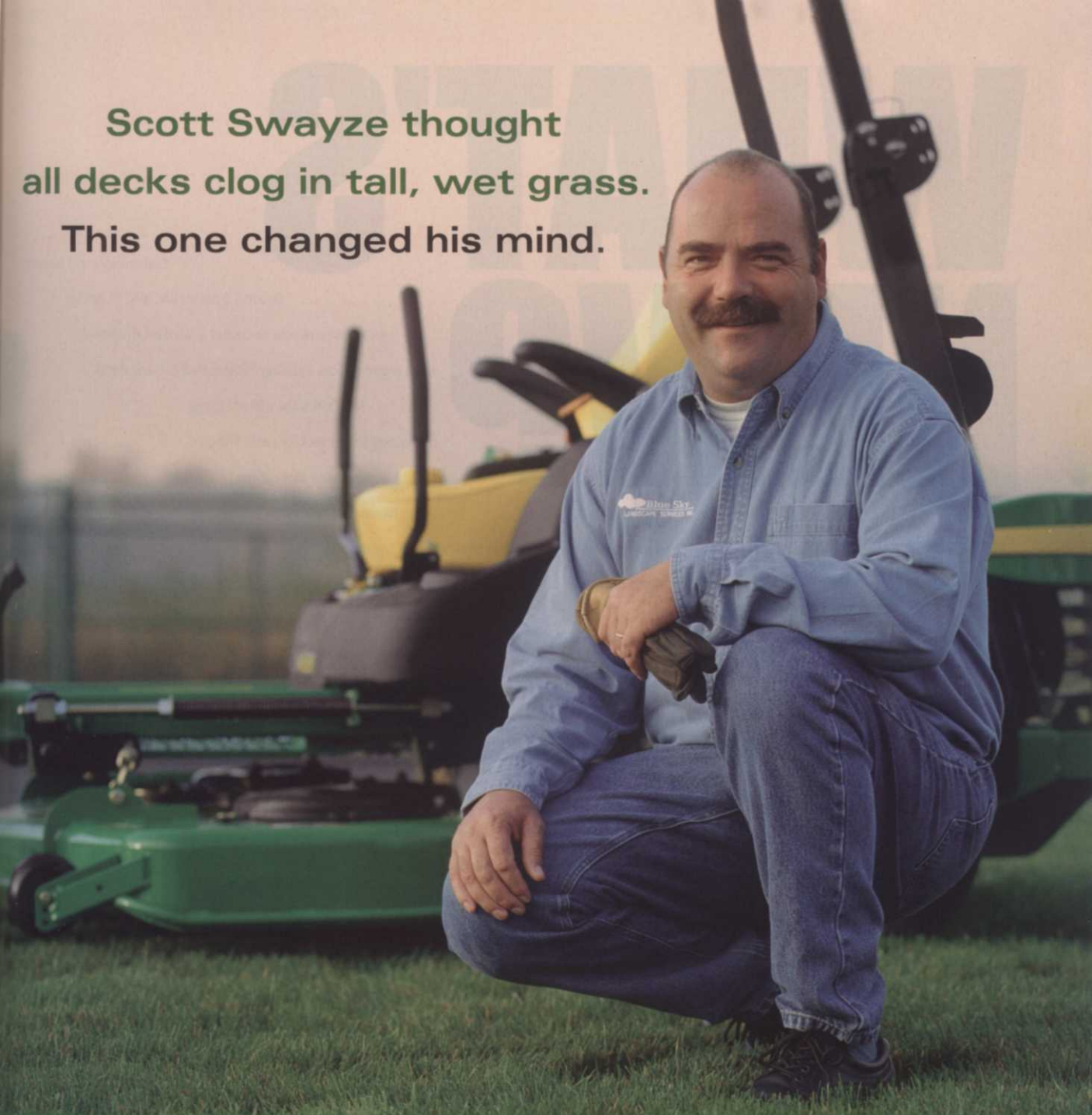


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Scott Swayze, Blue Sky Landscape Services, Inc., Puyallup, Washington



See more of what Scott Swayze has to say at www.mowpro.com



JOHN DEERE

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Three proven image builders

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

This column contains three powerful suggestions for improving your image as a professional who provides valuable services for your clients. Steal them. Use them. Make them your own.

These image builders are not mine. I jotted them down at a recent "Healthy Lawns, Healthy Business" summit sponsored by Bayer Environmental Science in Tampa, FL. A panel of successful lawn care pros shared them with about 100 of their colleagues at the event.

My friends, we're in the image business. Why else does a property owner become your client?

But, what about *our* image?

We're not the bad guys

In many parts of Canada and the United States our industry is under siege. Our critics are working to limit the scope of the services we provide customers. They're painting us as irresponsible business people. Or worse. They say that the chemical pest control products we use harm the health of the people in our communities, including by implication family members, friends and neighbors.

What they're saying is that our efforts to build our companies are more important to us than our concern for our customers, our communities.

Of course this isn't true. How many of us would be in this business for a minute if we thought otherwise?

Certainly, let's respond to unsubstantiated or misleading statements concerning our services. Our bigger challenge, however, is to improve our image

within our communities and the markets where we work. The powerful magic of the following suggestions will boost your reputation and help shield you against misguided criticism:

► Each sales person at Arrow Exterminating Services, based in Sarasota, participates in at least three community activities, says George Pickhardt, Ph. D. "Our community service is a reflection of our people," he says. Serving on community boards and participating in service is also good for networking because a lot of the company's customers and many more prospects participate in these activities too.

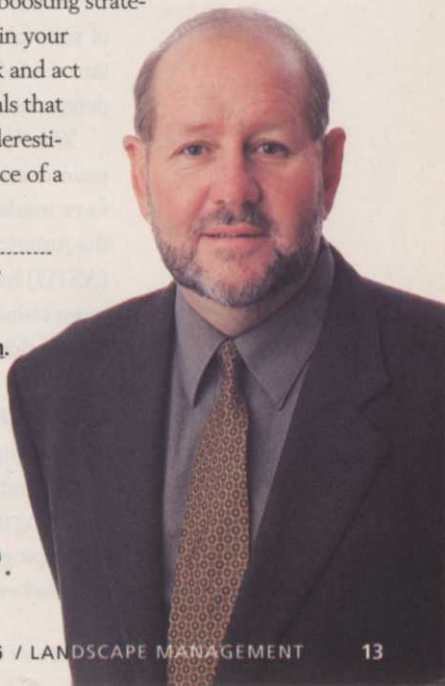
► Managers from ABC Pest Control offer one-hour presentations to grade school students at local schools, says Mike Grzesiakowski. The demonstrations include attention-grabbers such as tarantulas and hissing roaches and end with company personnel passing out informational coloring books. The students are delighted by the visits, he says.

► Turf Master Services is a stickler about delivering its services in clean, well-maintained service vehicles with attractive signage, says Craig Deveraux. The public equates clean vehicles and technicians in neat uniforms with professionalism, he says.

Practice image-boosting strategies. Stay involved in your communities. Look and act like the professionals that you are. Never underestimate the importance of a positive image.

Contact Ron at 216/
706-3739 or e-mail
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Never underestimate the
importance of a positive image.



Training Room

BUSINESS

THE DIFFERENCE MAKER

Training is not a rite of passage,
it is an investment smart managers
make in their teams.



Spring training: Do it right

BY BILL HOOPES

Atention trainers! It's March, the month during which your spring training will begin to help your company maximize productivity and profit or prove a poor investment. Did you catch the word 'investment'? Training is not a rite of passage, it is an investment smart managers make in their teams, a company decision to begin building the skills necessary to succeed. Investments that don't deliver a satisfactory, measurable return are typically not repeated. Effective training should reduce turnover and lead to a higher level of productivity.

So don't be complacent. Instead, get moving. Out of your fake leather, high-back manager's chair and into the field, where your success or failure is always determined.

Whether your business focus is landscaping, maintenance or lawn care, the requirement to reinforce inside training on the job is very real. In fact, the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) has shown in numerous studies that classroom training not reinforced on the job fails to significantly change behavior.

Mix in OTJ coaching

Here is a tip; as the weather breaks and you head outside, substitute the word 'coaching' for 'training.' Coaching is the reinforcement of learning aimed at developing productive habits. That means all trainers are coaches, all coaches train.

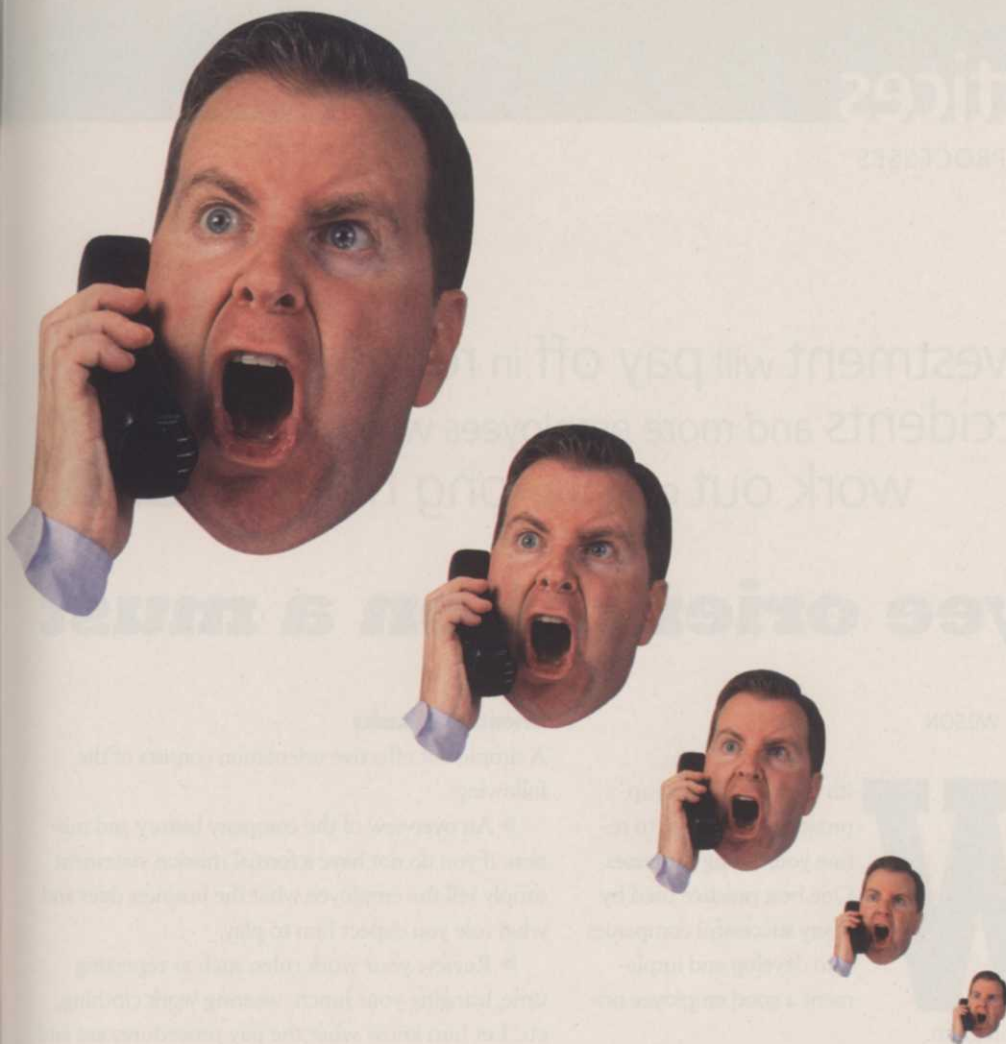
Managers who can only succeed through others should be with those people in a 'hands-on' coaching/training situation on a regular basis. Newer employees require more frequent, positive reinforcement. Keep your coaching simple; concentrate on just what the new person needs to know now. Don't overload new hires. You want each new hire to be successful early and often. Early success is motivating. Lower turnover will result. Failure to succeed quickly on the job can devastate a new person.

Don't forget the veterans. While you may not be actually teaching new skills, you must reinforce fundamentals. If you do not, productivity gaps will develop and efficiency will drop. Veterans left alone too long can begin to feel neglected and unappreciated. Over time, boredom can set in followed by the search for a more challenging job.

Do it now:

- Confirm field coaching responsibilities and assignments.
- Prepare all coaches to keep it simple. Demonstrate first, then critique performance and repeat as needed. Emphasize what is done right.
- Follow up to make sure coaching 'ride alongs' are happening.
- Evaluate the progress and needs of new hires no less than weekly.
- Don't neglect veterans. When appropriate enlist their help as mentors and coaches.

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



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The investment will pay off in reduced accidents and more employees who will work out over the long haul.



Employee orientation a must

BY BRUCE WILSON

With the hiring season approaching, it is time to refine your hiring processes. One best practice used by many successful companies is to develop and implement a good employee orientation program.

It has been proven over time that taking the time up front to see that a new employee is given a new employee orientation before going to work results in a higher success rate for the employee in terms of longevity, and in reduced workers compensation or liability claims from accidents.

I think many companies do not go through this process because they think it is complicated and they have not had the time to develop the plan or program. It is another one of those times when you don't have time to do it right, but you do have time to suffer the consequences of more rehires and disruptions due to accidents.

Take the lead and go over company and safety basics during employee orientation.



Orientation basics

A simple but effective orientation consists of the following:

- An overview of the company history and mission. If you do not have a formal mission statement simply tell the employee what the business does and what role you expect him to play.
- Review your work rules, such as reporting time, bringing your lunch, wearing work clothing, etc. Let him know what the pay procedures are and what to expect as an employee. Let him know your expectations. Let him know what needs to be done to keep the job and earn advancement and increased pay.
- Review the safe practices you expect the employee to follow. Demonstrate equipment safety for any equipment that he might use. Review potential unsafe conditions that might crop up. Many companies show new employees safety tapes obtained from their trade associations or suppliers.
- Introduce him to key employees in the company. Make sure he knows who to talk to about employment-related issues.

This does not have to take long. It can easily be done in a couple of hours. You will find that it is time well spent and the investment will pay off in reduced accidents and more employees who will work out over the long haul.

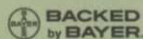
— The author is a partner with entrepreneur Tom Oyler in the Wilson-Oyler Group, which offers consulting services. He is also the director of the Symbiot Landscape Network. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.

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In the Know

BUSINESS NEWS YOU CAN USE

Gibson takes PLANET reins

BY STEPHANIE RICCA / Managing Editor

LAKE LAS VEGAS, NV — It was all about people as the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) gathered here in early February for the 2006 Executive Forum.

The Forum is the traditional time for officers from the previous year to hand the reins over to new people, and for awards and honors to be celebrated.

At this year's event, the first PLANET president, Dan Foley of D. Foley Landscape in Massachusetts, passed the gavel to incoming president John Gibson of Swingle Tree, Lawn & Landscape Care in Denver, CO.

"I would absolutely do this over again," Foley said. "I have met some of the best friends of my life here."

To celebrate his year in office, Gibson presented Foley with several tokens of appreciation, including a plaque and a few joke presents, like matching Boston Red Sox and New England Patriots



championship banners.

When Gibson took the gavel in front of the group for the first time he credited his first mentor Tom Garber, along with his wife and family.

"Thanks for the opportunity to give back to the industry that's given so much to me," he said to the crowd.

PLANET also honored platinum event sponsor Ariens/Gravely/Stens with the organization's Partner in Success Award.

Philip Morris, USA's Richmond, VA, campus received the Landscape Contribution Award, and Jim Martin of James Martin Associates was named a new AEF Ambassador.

2006 PLANET LEADERS

President: John Gibson, *Swingle Tree, Lawn & Landscape Care*

President-elect: Peter Howe, *Engledow Group*

Treasurer: Jason Cupp, *Highland Outdoor*

Secretary: Bill Hildebolt, *Nature's Select*

Immediate Past President: Dan Foley, *D. Foley Landscape*

► KEY RESULT AREA DIRECTORS

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Products & Services: Richard Wilbert, *Robert Howard Associates*

Certification: Matt Triplett, *Willamette Landscape Services*

Industry Development/Advocacy: David Snodgrass, *Dennis' Seven Dees*

Marketing: Jeff Korhan, *Treemendous Landscape Co.*

Business Development: Peter Korda, *Scotts LawnService*

Leadership & Staff Development: Maria Candler, *James River Grounds Mgmt.*

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Ron Marcellus, *Ariens Co.*

► ASSOCIATION STAFF

State & Allied Regional Association

Director: Barbara Scheibe

Interim CEO: Tanya Tolpegin

Kluznik named Lifetime Leader

PLANET lauded Kurt Kluznik, past ALCA president and founder of Ohio's Yardmaster, with its 2006 Lifetime Leader Award.

Last year's winner Debra Holder said, "Kurt has been a part of every aspect of this industry's initiatives. He is a strong proponent of the voice of the Green Industry to Congress."

In his years of involvement with industry associations, Kluznik was part of ALCA's first CLP certification class, and he served on ALCA and PLANET boards of directors, the Crystal Ball Committee and PLANET Trailblazers.

2006 Lifetime Leader Award Winner Kurt Kluznik receives his award from past winner Debra Holder



PLANET supports H-2B extension

HERNDON, VA — The Professional Land-care Network (PLANET) is asking its members to support a new Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act.

Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD) recently introduced legislation to enact a three-year extension for the Act. Senators joining as co-sponsors include: Paul Sar-

banes (D-MD), John Kerry (D-MA), Tim Johnson (D-SD), James Jeffords (I-VT), Judd Gregg (R-NH), Susan Collins (R-ME), John Warner and

George Allen (both R-VA). Congressman Charles Bass (R-NH) introduced a companion bill in the U.S. House.

PLANET is asking its members to contact their senators and representatives and urge them to support the Act (see sidebar for action tips).

The original Act, signed in May 2005 by President Bush, is set to expire on Sept. 30, 2006. It exempts returning seasonal workers from counting against the national cap of 66,000 people, contains new anti-fraud provisions and splits the allocation of H-2B visas among spring and summer employees.

The first cap exemption provided significant relief to the landscape industry, which relies heavily on seasonal workers.

"I promised small businesses they could count on me to keep fighting until we had a solution and they had the seasonal workers they needed to stay in business. My promises made are promises kept," Mikulski said. "This extension is necessary to make sure that small, seasonal businesses don't run into the same crisis they faced last year — unable to get the workers they need to survive their season. Without these seasonal workers,

many businesses could be forced to limit services, lay off permanent U.S. workers or, worse yet, close their doors."

Mikulski took up this cause after learning that many businesses across the country, and particularly in Maryland, were unable to obtain temporary, documented, seasonal, foreign workers through the H-2B program. For the second year in a row, the H-2B visa cap of 66,000 was reached just a few months into the 2005 fiscal year.

STEP UP

Take these PLANET-recommended steps to make yourself heard:

- ▶ Phone, e-mail and fax your support of this bill to your U.S. representative and your two U.S. senators. After sending your letter through the PLANET Web site (www.landscarenetwork.org), print it out on your letterhead and fax it. Personal letters are more meaningful, so try to add some personal information on how the lack of H-2B workers affects your business.
- ▶ Call your legislators and ask to speak to the staff person in charge of immigration issues.
- ▶ Write to your governor, and call his/her office and speak to the staff person in charge of immigration issues. Ask that person to encourage the White House and Congress to address the H-2B issue.
- ▶ Motivate your employees to personally contact their members of Congress and senators.
- ▶ Talk to other employers and your suppliers in your area and motivate them to call and write Congress.

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*Jonathan Rigsbee
GrowinGreen
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Pesticide bylaw a costly proposition

HAMILTON, ONTARIO — In spite of a report from a consulting firm showing little public support for a ban on the "cosmetic use" of pesticides, some city councilors in Hamilton aren't giving up. This after the first round of public hearings conducted by the consultants in 2005 cost the city an estimated \$30,000.

This past December councilors in this city of more than 550,000 people (the 10th largest city in Canada) debated spending another \$60,000 on a media blitz "to educate" its citizens away from pesticide use. And more recently, councilors reopened the issue of a pesticide ban for the City and seemed to be moving in the direction of scheduling more public hearings.

Concurrently, city officials are looking at similar pesticide bylaws passed in cities such as Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax for ideas

about how to implement it, and also how to afford it assuming it becomes a law.

It's been reported in the local media that the city estimates it will cost \$130,000 annually to administer and

manage a bylaw restricting the use of pesticides on private property.

The most vocal supporters of a bylaw is the four-year-old group called

the Hamilton Coalition on

Pesticide Issues (HCPI). It claims

to represent more than 20 charity and non-charity organizations. "The HCPI is dedicated to the phase-out of non-essential outdoor use of chemical pesticides in the City of Hamilton in a coordinated effort with the community," according to its Web site.



[CLIPPINGS]

Arysta Disarms problem weeds

SAN FRANCISCO — Arysta LifeScience North America will bring Disarm, its new fluoxastrobin fungicide, to the golf course, lawn care, sports turf and sod production markets, having recently received registration from the U.S. EPA. Disarm's active ingredient fluoxastrobin provides control of brown patch, summer patch, snow mold, target spot and southern blight. In 2006, Disarm research trials are being conducted on control of anthracnose, gray leaf spot and other major turf diseases.

Shindaiwa wins TruGreen contract

TUALATIN, OR — Shindaiwa Inc. entered into a national account agreement as a preferred supplier to TruGreen ChemLawn and LandCare. Shindaiwa was awarded the contract after an evaluation period that included field trials around the country, subjecting Shindaiwa's outdoor power equipment to harsh conditions and rough handling. The two companies plan to team up on development of safety and product enhancements.

Tanaka picks Gardner East

AUBURN, WA — Tanaka America, Inc. appointed Gardner East, a division of Gardner, Inc., as the Tanaka master distributor for its Northeast U.S. region. Gardner East is based in Cranbury, NJ.

LM goes digital

CLEVELAND — So you've got e-mail, a Web site, a BlackBerry and even a portable MP3 player. Why not up the stakes and try out the new *Landscape Management* digital edition? It's just like the magazine, only on a Web page instead of paper. "Flip" the pages of the digital

magazine to find your favorite columnist or this month's cover story — they're all right there where they should be, alongside ads for the products and equipment you're looking for.

The digital edition is completely interactive. Open to the table of contents and link to the article you're looking for. Companies mentioned in articles have live links to their Web pages, and advertisers do too.

Share the digital edition with others at

your branch. Type notes on virtual sticky notes to add to the pages before you pass it on.

"This digital magazine puts everything at your fingertips," says LM Publisher Kevin Stoltman. "E-mail editors after reading their story, or visit a Web page to check out mentioned or advertised products right away."

Try out the current digital edition of *Landscape Management* by visiting our Web site, www.landscapemanagement.net, and clicking on the icon there. Then let us know what you think.

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EMPLOYEE TIME SHEET

NAME: Bill Kemp DATES: 10-14

DAY	START	LUNCH	END	JOBSITE	WORK DONE	HOURS
Mon	7:00	1/2	3:30	Walby	Ext.	8
Tues	↓	↓	3:30	↓	↓	8
Wed	↓	↓	4:00	↓	↓	8.5
Thurs	↓	↓	4:00	↓	↓	8.5
Fri	↓	↓	4:00	↓	↓	8.5

Employee Signature: Bill Kemp Total Hours: 41.5



REALITY?

Employee Report

Jobsite Name: Walby Property Date Range: 4/10/2006 through 4/14/2006

Day	Start	End	Activity	Hours
Mon 4/10	7:08 AM	12:05 PM	Irrigation	4:57 hours
	12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Irrigation	2:41 hours 7:38 hours
Tue 4/11	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Irrigation	4:55 hours
	12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Irrigation	2:40 hours 7:35 hours
Wed 4/12	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:50 hours
	12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Irrigation	3:03 hours 7:53 hours
Thu 4/13	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Planting	5:02 hours
	12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Planting	2:56 hours 7:58 hours
Fri 4/14	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Planting	4:54 hours
	12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Planting	2:55 hours 7:49 hours

Signature: Bill Kemp Bill Kemp

Employee total 38:53 hours



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In the Know

Turfgrass is the U.S.'s largest irrigated crop

MOFFET FIELD, CA — A researcher with NASA's Ames Research Center estimates that lawns are the largest irrigated

crop in the U.S., beating out corn by nearly three times.

NASA researcher Cristina Milesi con-

The United States
has three times
more acres of
lawns than corn.

ceived of the research as a doctorate project at the University of Montana. She and her co-authors used satellite mapping techniques and statistical analysis to arrive at the figure of 32 million acres of commercial and residential lawns, golf courses and other turf-covered areas.

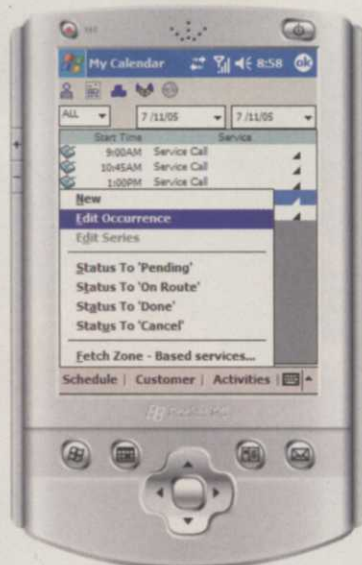
"Even conservatively, I estimate there are three times more acres of lawns in the U.S. than irrigated corn," Milesi says.

Milesi immigrated to this country from Italy in 1998 where lawns are not a big part of the culture. While living in Montana she noticed that some of the neighborhood's residential sprinkler systems would turn on even if it had just rained. As part of a class project she became interested in the fact that no firm data existed on how much surface area was devoted to lawns. So she submitted a research proposal to the NASA Earth System Science Fellowship Program to produce a national estimate of lawn area and the impact of those lawns on ecological factors like carbon and water cycles. Her research was published in the *Journal of Environmental Management* last summer.

One of Milesi's conclusions was that a well-watered and fertilized lawn is a carbon sink that can help mitigate the effects of global warming caused by pollution emissions. The study estimated that if people would let grass clippings decompose on the lawn, the U.S. lawn area could store 37 billion pounds of carbon each year, pulling the greenhouse gas out of the atmosphere.

Milesi's next project will be to extend this research to urban trees and the contribution of urban vegetation to cooling cities and removing pollution.

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The power of positive thinking

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor

COLUMBUS, OH — Jim Paluch doesn't mind if you think he's a little crazy, as long as you listen to what he has to say. And if he asks you to do things that seem a little odd, like rub the shoulders of the stranger next to you, you do them, because Paluch has more than 15 years of success as an author, speaker and motivator with JP Horizons.

Paluch had a few other unorthodox suggestions at Leadership Jam 2006, one session of which was held in Columbus, OH, Feb. 20-21 under the theme of Working Smarter.

"One day at the dinner

table, stand up and say to your kids, 'Watch this!' Pick up scoops of mashed potatoes and start juggling," Paluch said. "They might think you're crazy, but would you rather they think that, or see that you're so tense after work that they'll never want a job?"

Another tip was, "If anyone asks you how you're doing, say 'Awesome,' and

clap," Paluch said. "I'd rather have people think I'm crazy than just say 'Fine.'"

"How you act every day reflects on

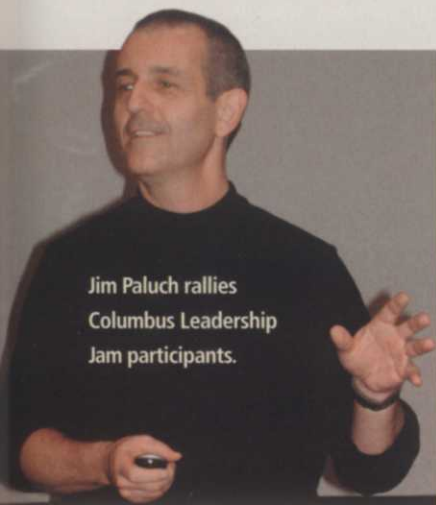
others," Paluch said. "If you have a good attitude about work, so will your employees, and everyone will benefit."



**MORE
INFO**

www.landscapemanagement.net

Visit for complete coverage of the 2006 JP Horizons Leadership Jam in Columbus.

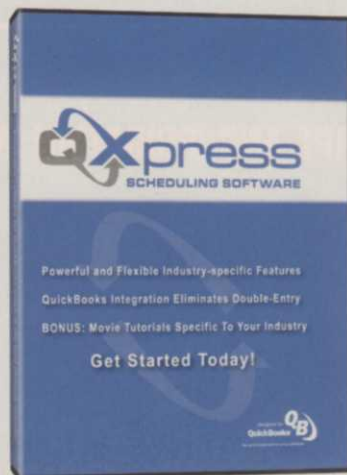


Jim Paluch rallies Columbus Leadership Jam participants.

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In the Know

People & companies



The **Midwest Regional Turf Foundation** honored **Bayer Environmental Science** sales representative **John**

Turner with its 2006 Distinguished Service Award. The MRTF, founded in 1946 for turfgrass research and education at Purdue University, presented the award to Turner for his continued commitment to the turfgrass industry.

Highland Outdoor of Olathe, KS, recently appointed **Chad Fulk** as president and chief executive officer of the Midwest



design/build and maintenance firm. Former Highland president and CEO **Jason**

Cupp has been named chairman of the board.



Dow AgroSciences named **Doug Van Vooren** (above, left) district sales manager and hired **Patrick Bell** (above, right) as a sales repre-

sentative for the turf and ornamental team. Van Vooren is responsible for managing the company's sales representatives and markets in the West District. Bell will handle the lawn care, golf and nursery industries in eastern Florida, south of Palm Coast, FL.

William M. Lewis, former vice president of Professional Products for **Syngenta Crop Protection**, has been named business unit head of **Arysta LifeScience North America**. Lewis replaces **Elin D. Miller**.

Garden Writers Association board member, **Linda Askey**



joined **Fafard, Inc.** of Anderson, SC, as home garden consultant. A writer and photographer, Askey served as a garden editor of *Southern Living* from 1979 to 2000.

Massey Services of Orlando, FL, named **Tony DiBerardino** manager of Massey's GreenUp Division. The company also promoted **Adam Scheinberg** to director of information systems.

The **F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Co.**, of Stamford, CT, promoted **Stephen J. Johnston** to vice president and Southeast Division manager.

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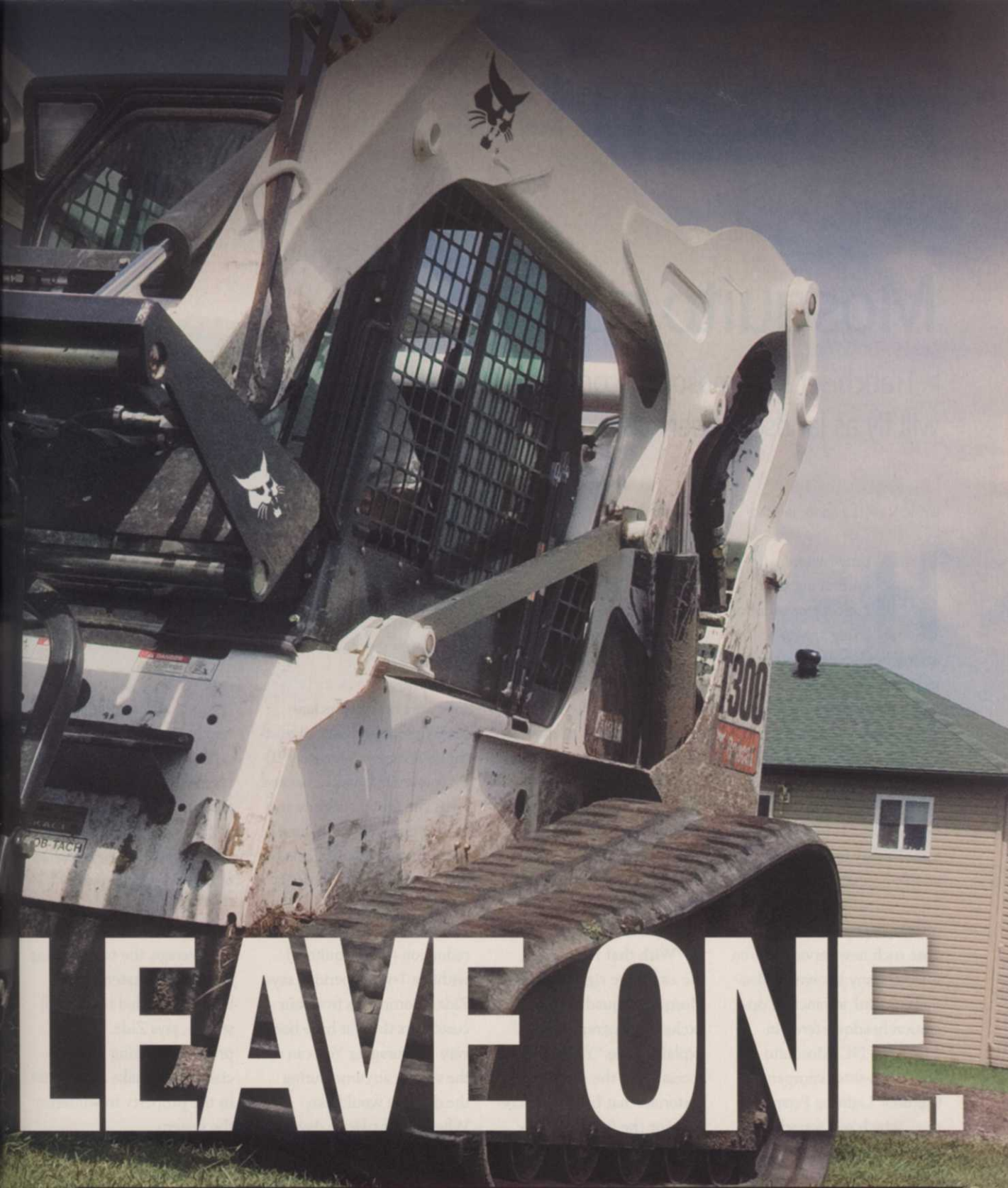


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Mosquito control

► Franchiser says mosquito control will fly as landscape service

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

Homeowners embracing the concept of outdoor living spaces are asking landscape pros to provide services beyond those typically defining their profession. While some contractors are content to concentrate on what they do best, others seek new revenue opportunities. Sometimes the opportunity comes dressed as a franchise

Misting system

One such new service add-on is a company known as Mosquito Squad, a franchise operation headquartered in Charlotte, NC. Mosquito Squad is a sister company to Outdoor Lighting Perspectives, which was founded in 1995 and now numbers more than 70 landscape and outdoor lighting locations within the United States.

"Consumers want to enjoy their outdoor living areas and the landscaping that surrounds it. This product allows them the ability to enjoy it all the

time without getting eaten alive by mosquitoes," says Scott Zide, vice president of Mosquito Squad.

Entering this spring, the company has 12 franchise locations in the United States and plans to have 10 more by the end of 2006 and an additional 15 in 2007.

The initial franchise fee is \$34,000 and, typical of all franchise agreements, franchise owners pay a percentage of sales to the franchiser to support marketing.

"With that fee you get the exclusive right to use the Mosquito Squad name in an exclusive geographic area," explains Zide. "You also have access to all the marketing materials that have been created for the franchise system. You also receive preferred pricing and ongoing technical support from our approved manufacturer. There is a 4-day training school in Charlotte, NC, that covers all the installation, marketing and sales aspects of the business."

How it works

In the Mosquito Squad system, a trained technician places specially designed misting devices approximately 10-12 feet apart around a desired area. The misters operate two to four times each day for 45 seconds at a time, according to information on the company's Web site.

"The goal is to have 90% reduction (of mosquitoes) within a 1-week period," says Zide. "Comments from our customers thus far have been very encouraging. You can run the system anytime during the day you would like. Whether it's twice a day or four times a day would depend on the problem you have," he says.

"It is programmed at the time of installation and can be changed. You can also manually 'fog' your backyard before entertaining for the evening.

In addition to homeown-

ers, this service could be attractive to restaurants with outdoor patios, day care centers, any commercial properties with outdoor seating areas and also to control flying insects during parties, receptions or other outdoor events.

Easy maintenance

On average, the tank holding the misting material will have to be filled twice each season, says Zide. In areas prone to freezing a technician would make a third visit to the property to winterize the system.

Be advised that since you are offering a pest control service, you would need to have the appropriate state licenses to install and operate this system.

For more information, call 704/752-3693 or visit www.mosquitosquad.com.



PACKAGE DEAL

BY STEPHANIE RICCA
Managing Editor

Your benefits plan can attract top-notch employees without costing too much time or money.

VACATION

Here are some shortcuts to figuring it out.

So you're interested in changing jobs and you answer an ad for a full-time management position. You get the job and on the first day in orientation the human resources manager talks at length about your new medical and dental benefits, plus the option you'll have in a year to join the company-matched 401(k) retirement plan.

Nope, you're not in a bank or an insurance office. You're at a mid-sized landscape company.

More and more small to mid-size companies are getting into the benefits act, offering medical and retirement packages as a way to attract and take care of valuable employees.

"The more we can offer, the better people we get," says Bruce Allentuck, president of Allentuck Landscaping in

Clarksburg, MD, of his company's employee benefits package. It's a popular strategy too, given the competition landscape companies face not only in gaining customers but also in attracting good employees who stick around.

Allentuck has about 45 employees at two branches in Maryland and Delaware. Eligibility for benefits at his company is based on length of employment. After three months, all employees get health insurance, personal leave, profit sharing and holiday pay. After six months they can opt in to the company-matched 401(k) retirement savings plan.

Wonder how your company's benefits package compares to your competition's? The majority of participants in a recent *Landscape Management* online survey say they consider their benefits package good.

"Benefits keep good employees with us," 51% responded.

Still, 37% of respondents agree that

they would like to provide more benefits, but the expense is a factor, and they're not sure where to find better deals. (For complete survey results, turn to page 4 of this issue.)

Three companies shared the details of their benefits packages with LM, offering insight into the pros and cons of the benefits process.

Education counts

When Bruce Allentuck started his company he knew that offering personal leave and vacation time was a no-brainer. Then, as his original staff matured and he added more people, those needs led him to adding medical benefits and a retirement plan.

Right now 10 of his employees take health insurance and eight participate in the 401(k). "That's smaller than I'd like to see," Allentuck says. "It's mostly the older guys."

An illustration of a person in silhouette, seen from the back, holding up a large, heavy block. The block is divided into three sections. The top-left section is labeled 'DENTAL' in large, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The top-right section is labeled '401(K)' in a similar font. The bottom section, which is the largest, is labeled 'MEDICAL' in large, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The person is standing on a light-colored surface, and the background is a mix of light and dark tones.

DENTAL

401(K)

MEDICAL

It's the same way at Michael Hatcher & Associates in Memphis. Of the 60 full-time employees there, 11 take medical benefits, nine take dental and 14 contribute to the company-matched 401(k).

"Our participation isn't that large, so we have to stick with the one plan," says Hatcher office manager Rose Willis, who manages benefits at the company. "We'd like to offer three or four more plans for families." Right now, the medical benefits are for individuals only.

However, Willis points out, participation in the plans seems to grow as the company does. "As we get more employees in management positions we get more people joining," she says, adding that the company competes with other companies that might offer higher pay but no company benefits.

The three companies we interviewed do as much as they can to educate their employees about their benefits.

Basnight Land & Lawn in Chesapeake, VA, employs a full-time human resource manager to administer benefits. "It's definitely a pro for a company like ours that is constantly growing to have an HR person on staff to handle benefits and many other things as well," says Wendy Anderson, the company's human resources rep. The full-service company employs 170 people during peak season

Health insurance legislative update

Laws pertaining to benefits coverage abound at state and national levels. One bill that's been working its way through Congress is the Small Business Health Fairness Act (H.R. 525). The bill, passed by the House of Representatives last July and awaiting Senate action, would allow small businesses to join together through association health plans (AHPs) to purchase health insurance for their workers at a lower cost.

The idea behind the bill, which is already supported by more than 175 groups including the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), is that it would increase small business' bargaining power with health care providers while lowering overhead costs.

According to PLANET's issue briefing on the subject, the legislation seeks to cover the more than half of uninsured Americans who are self-employed or whose families are employed by small businesses that cannot afford health benefits.

For more information and tips on addressing the issue with your state legislators, visit www.landcarenetwork.org.

and takes a traditional approach to training. New employees get letters and enrollment materials prior to their eligibility dates for health and retirement benefits, and the company's provider comes in for periodic updates.

Still, only 19 employees take part in Basnight Land & Lawn's 401(k) plan.

Retirement plans are a particularly hard sell. "It's hard for the younger guys to see the big picture of this," Allentuck says. When he started the program a year ago, his provider came on-site to train employees in English and Spanish on the benefits of a retirement plan.

But Allentuck's best benefits training program so far has been through Casa de Maryland, a state organization that provides job-related training for Central and Latin American immigrants.

"They came in for three days to explain personal finance and financial man-

agement for our Spanish-speaking employees. They covered everything from loans to checking accounts. It was absolutely amazing watching the guys' eyes light up and light bulbs come on. It was voluntary but everybody attended."

The seasonal situation

Most of Allentuck's employees are seasonal workers. These 10-month Spanish-speaking employees are just as eligible for the company's benefits as the year-round employees since eligibility is based on months of employment. "Our seasonal workers who return are eligible right away," he says.

Some immigrant workers do not choose to take the benefits. "If they're only here to send money home, they're not necessarily worrying about retirement. But it's there for them if they choose it," says Allentuck.

Investment terms

The more you know about investing, the smarter choices you make for your business and your personal portfolio. Here's a rundown of terms:

■ Individual retirement account (IRA):

These tax-deferred retirement accounts are designed to encourage working people to invest for the long term. If you earn income from work, or are married to someone who does, you can put up to \$2,000 per year in an IRA and postpone paying tax on any earnings. You must be at least 59 1/2, or qualify for an exception, to withdraw without owing a 10% penalty.

■ **Traditional IRA:** You can contribute to a traditional IRA regardless of your income, and some people, depending on their income and participation in an employer-sponsored retirement plan,

can deduct all or part of their annual contribution on their tax returns. Withdrawals from traditional IRAs must begin by age 70 1/2, and all earnings are taxed at your current tax rate.

■ **Roth IRA:** Withdrawals from Roth IRAs are tax-free after you reach age 59 1/2, provided the account has been open at least five years. In addition, Roth IRAs have no required withdrawals. To contribute, your modified adjusted gross income (AGI) must be less than the established annual limit. You may also be able to withdraw money earlier without penalty if you qualify for certain exceptions, such as using up to \$10,000 toward the purchase of a first home.

■ **Rollover:** If you move your assets from one investment to another, it's called a rollover.

Source: Morgan Stanley

37%

Respondents to an LM online survey who say they would like to provide more benefits, but the expense is a factor, and they're not sure where to find better deals.

Extra benefits

Not all definitions of "employee benefits" are black and white. More and more, companies are expanding from traditional (and traditionally expensive) benefits into performance-based incentive benefits.

Employees at Michael Hatcher & Associates and Allentuck Landscaping Co. get a share of the profits when the company reaches its goals for the year.

"We also reward safety and OSHA [compliance]," Willis says.

"We pay out in profit shares every year that we hit our mark," Allentuck explains. "We make the profit, they get the money. We're looking for ways to be efficient, and we're trying to help our employees understand that every decision they make in their day makes their checks bigger."

These three companies see the value of investing in benefits.

Adds Basnight Land & Lawn's Wendy Anderson: "On paper, benefits may look like an expensive cost, but I don't believe they are. By keeping qualified, trained employees on staff it helps our bottom line. Things run smoother. Our customers are happier and more likely to be repeat customers."

"It is expensive, but I wouldn't want to be in business and not be able to take care of people," Allentuck agrees. "Also, if we don't take care of them, they're not going to take care of our customers."

"Customers tell me all the time about how great our staff is and how friendly and well trained they are. It comes full circle. It's expensive, but it's more expensive not to have it." LM

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Tony Bass, President Bass Custom Landscapes Bonaire, GA



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8 TIPS FOR BETTER E-MAILS

A recent report estimated that more than seven trillion e-mails were sent worldwide last year. Spam messages are jamming in-boxes and the average e-mailer now gets between 60-200 messages a day.

Here are eight tips that will make your e-mail communications more effective. Use them in both your personal and professional lives. Your friends, business associates, vendors and customers will appreciate it.

1 Be clear and concise with your message: You'll save time, yours and the reader's.

- Use bulleted points to clearly express your thoughts.
- E-mail communication works best if you clearly outline the points you're trying to get across in an easy to understand format.

Investing extra time while authoring an e-mail pays big dividends by giving your reader a clear understanding of your message. Remember, if your e-mail is written with the purpose to educate, inform or

Avoid mistakes like "reply all" with these handy guidelines

BY DAVID FRIEDMAN

persuade, then making sure to get your point across is even more critical.

2 Before sending, always read your message and double check for grammar and misused words: It's obvious to most of us to use spell check after we've composed our message. Make it standard procedure to re-read your entire message before sending.

3 Copy back salient points when replying to an earlier message: It's dangerous to assume your recipient will remember your earlier exchange. This problem is largely avoidable by copying a portion of the original message alluding to the context.

4 Use specific subject lines: Since many e-mail messages go back and forth several

times, it's important to accurately describe what the reader will find inside.

A subject line such as, "What do you think" doesn't tell the recipient much. "Need your suggestions for options re: acct#45619 – Robinson Inc." is more specific.

5 Realize that once your message is sent, there's no getting it back: People can literally ruin their career or lose a customer for life with a single 60-second lapse in judgment, by sending the wrong message to someone.

Keep in mind that sending a message to one person can eventually be viewed by many other unintended parties. Always double-check the recipient line before sending any e-mail. Horror stories about messages accidentally copied to "all" are becoming routine.

6 Practice the 24-hour rule when you're upset: It's never a good idea to send an e-mail when you're angry. If you compose an e-mail in anger, wait a predetermined period of time before sending it. If your emotions are legit,

then your issue will still be there tomorrow. But in 95% of the cases, you'll be glad you waited and toned things down after you've gained the perspective that can only come with some additional time.

7 Avoid sh-cuts and abbr. in biz e-mail msgs.: Cutesy short cuts and misspellings are ill advised to use in any corporate context, no matter if your customer is external or internal. Since a casual message to a coworker could easily be forwarded, it's best to practice the same high level of professionalism no matter whom you're writing to.

8 Don't forward viruses: Unlike obvious computer viruses that involve actual destructive code, many messages are viral in nature: They are purposefully crafted so you'll send them on to friends. Although not usually harmful, these e-mail traps are easy to fall into.

While there may not be a silver bullet that saves us from an onslaught of never-ending messages, common sense practices can make our business e-mail correspondence more effective and productive every working day. **LM**

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Designing and installing landscape gardens in major flower shows is expensive and time consuming. These two landscape pros say it's worth it

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

Best in *show*



Two relatively new landscape companies run by talented young designers took top honors at this winter's Southeastern Flower Show in Atlanta.

"These types of events showcase our work and our talents," says Alex Smith, Alex Smith Garden Design LTD. His garden, complete with a chic restaurant/bistro motif overlooking a full-sized bocce ball court, was selected as best in the Large Garden division.

"Somebody has to raise the bar when it comes to creativity and imagination," says Matthew Klyn, president of New Leaf Landscape Group/Matthew Klyn Design

Group. His team's 900-sq.-ft. garden, *Moderno*, took top honors in the Medium Garden category.

Even so, would you spend \$20,000 or more in labor and materials and assign yourself and your employees almost a week of physical labor to exhibit and compete in one of these events? And did we mention calling on your suppliers for support and materials as well?

Putting together a themed landscape garden at a juried show is a big decision that takes months to plan and execute. It's definitely a team effort.

Push the envelope

In fact, not many landscape

company owners are bold enough to conceive, build and display a landscape garden in one of the dozens of themed "flower" or "home and garden" shows that brighten homeowners' winter spirits in major U.S. cities every year. Even so, this small fraternity of landscape pros say the effort is worthwhile, and often for reasons beyond market visibility and increased sales.

Smith and Klyn began preparing designs and lining up materials for the flower show months before its one-week February run at the huge Georgia World Congress Center.

"To pull your whole group together and create something really amazing gives your whole team an incredible feel-

ing," says Klyn. "It's almost impossible to describe the camaraderie that the company feels on a project like this, especially when the awards start coming in. It lifts everybody's morale."

Klyn, who grew up in the nursery business in northeast Ohio, says his team's creative drive is the biggest factor in its rapid growth. Beginning its seventh season, his company is

▼ No, the water isn't flowing from this metal fixture. It's bubbling up from the pool in Matt Klyn's award-winning '*Moderno*.'



◀ **Alex Smith Garden Design**
LTD's bistro theme struck just the right note with its massive 3,500-sq.-ft. garden entitled 'Alfresco.'

just breaking through the \$1 million barrier.

His goal at this year's show was to "push the envelope as far as we could push it," he says. And he did, with an ultra-modern design that featured a fireplace, hip furniture and cool music. But it was the terraced walkway made from mammoth slabs of rock that masons cut on site and a huge funnel-shaped metal container suspended over a fountain that fascinated visitors and excited judges.

"I'm all about architectural elements and accessorizing in my gardens," he says. "We're not one of those companies that do the same stuff the same way every year."

Participating in one of these annual winter events is not for the typical mow, blow and go contractor. And it's definitely not for the timid or meek design/build contractor. But, for professionals willing to make

the effort, and to do it with energy and creativity, the payoff in terms of positive publicity and visibility, at least among the public that's into the "gardening" side of the landscape industry, can be enormous.

Klyn says the key to success in an event like the Southeastern Flower Show, apart from the all-important creative aspect to the design, is attention to detail. "You have to be impeccable when you install a small garden. Your attention to detail must be precise," he says.

Payoffs are worth it

Alex Smith's winning Large Garden entry, entitled 'Alfresco,' garnered positive mentions in Atlanta newspapers for three straight days. It's impossible to buy that kind of welcome publicity, he admits.

"We had a good crowd all week and we got lots of good feedback," says Smith. "A lot of people come to the show to see our garden because they know we're going to do a good job."

His 3,500-sq.-ft. entry, the largest landscape garden ever exhibited at the show, featured a bistro café overlooking a turfgrass area surrounding a full-sized bocce ball court. Ornaments that Smith felt were appropriate for an Italian-themed garden, including native cedar trees, Italian cypress, rosemary, lavender, even tomato plants boosted the European theme.

Smith, a graduate of the Art Institute of Atlanta with

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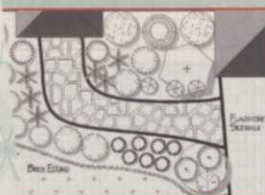
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a degree in landscape design, broadened his skills as a designer both in Atlanta with another company and during the two summers he spent in England working with noted garden designer Rosemary Verey. This was the sixth garden he has built and exhibited at the Atlanta show.

"It's a showcase for our work and our talents," he explains. "We do residential garden design and installation, and we've built a very good reputation for doing high-quality, detail-oriented work. With 40,000 people that come through the doors at the show, it's worth a lot to

us. We do no other forms of advertising."

In Smith's case, which is probably typical of most landscape garden displays, he asked for and received materials and support from his suppliers. "We have a great relationship with our vendors. They know that if we do well at the show it means more business for them," says Smith, who gives them signage at his garden.

So, how much business does a landscape design/build company get from participating in one of these types of events?

Both Smith and Klyn say it's impossible to put a dollars-



and-cents figure on it, or to precisely measure the return on investment.

"The phones have been ringing quite often since the show ended," says Smith. "Yes, there's a lot of money involved in being a part of it and it takes a big time commitment, but it's always been a good marketing tool for us."

Adds Klyn: "You get a lot of leads that aren't the leads that you necessarily want. These

▲ Masons cut huge stone slabs on site to complement the terraced walkway of Klyn's design.

aren't projects you want or will do, but I'm expecting to get three, four, maybe five good clients out of it.

"What you're looking for is for people to come to us and say, 'I really, really want your company to come and build our garden.'" **LM**



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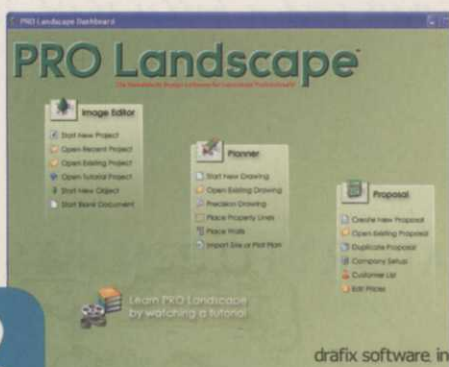
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For more information contact FMC at 215/299-6000 or visit www.fmc.com / circle no. 250

2 Easy-to-use design software

Version 12 of PRO Landscape software simplifies and enhances landscape designs and proposals. It includes more than 5,000 images and layout plans, including irrigation. PRO Landscape Version 12 aids customers in envisioning a project's progression and final appearance. The software displays before and after images and a growth meter that shows plant material's development through maturity. The software features wizards and a tutorial CD, videos of a sample project and free technical support.

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3 Irrigation with more smarts

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For more information contact Hunter at 760/744-5240 or visit www.hunterindustries.com / circle no. 252

4 Articulated dump truck

Hydrema launched two new dump truck models: the 922C and the 912C series 2. The 922C articulated dump truck features cross-country capabilities even in soft terrain, low fuel consumption and stability. It's equipped with a hydraulic system with four separate hydraulic pumps allowing fast tipping times. The 912C series 2 is a small 2-axle articulated dump truck for difficult terrain and confined working areas. It's available as a MultiTip version, capable of unloading in an angle of 180 degrees during the tipping process.

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Spring Maintenance

The owner's manual of your engine is a valuable document. Follow its recommendations when performing these pre-season maintenance procedures on your equipment:

1. Change the engine oil (and filter if equipped). Warm the old oil to operating temperature before draining it.
2. Check the engine air filter for dirt buildup and proper sealing. Replace it if there is any doubt of a restricting airflow or if it looks dirty.
3. Replace spark plug(s) annually and after 100 hours of use. Set the proper gap of the plug.
4. Use the proper fuel and make sure it's fresh. If the unit has a fuel filter replace it annually.
5. If the engine is an Overhead Valve configuration, set the proper valve lash clearance every 300 hours of use or annually.
6. Check that the muffler has no leaks. Check all guards or shields.
7. Clean the engine and use compressed air to clean out engine cooling fins. (Be sure to wear safety glasses!) If the engine is liquid cooled, check that the radiator coolant will be effective for the proper operating temperature range.
8. Check that the engine RPM is set to the correct top no-load speed.
9. If the unit has a manual starter, check for any cuts or frayed portions of the rope.
10. Load test the battery. Check cable connections for corrosion, including the battery ground cable. Test all interlock switches.
11. Sharpen any blades or attachments. Check drive belts for cracks, and drive lines for proper lubrication and alignment. Be sure all guards and safety warnings are in place.
12. Inspect hydraulic lines for any wear points, and for leaks. (Be sure to wear safety glasses, gloves and use a piece of cardboard to run over the hydraulic hoses so fluid cannot penetrate the skin!)



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

From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY DEFEATING NOISE

I don't foresee any insurmountable technical problems involved in producing a hybrid riding rotary mower.



The quiet revolution

BY HARRY SMITH

There is increasing demand on the landscape maintenance industry to reduce noise. Many communities have adopted noise standards that are putting pressure on contractors and subsequently their equipment manufacturers to produce quieter lawn maintenance equipment.

The shrill whine of backpack blowers, the staccato rhythm of weed trimmers and the growl of mowers have been progressively lowered over the last few years. Equipment is becoming quieter but at the same time many communities are establishing "quiet hours" that severely restrict contractors from operating gasoline-powered equipment during these periods. These restrictions on hours can have a huge impact on scheduling and profitability.

Golf industry adapts

The impact of these restrictions was first felt in the golf industry. Golf course community property owners want early tee times, early morning quiet plus beautifully maintained fairways and common areas. The golf turf equipment manufac-

turers first responded with quieter gas and diesel equipment. They are now turning to battery/electric technologies to further reduce the noise.

Battery powered triplex mowers were introduced several years ago. Riding bunker / trap rakes are now available with battery power. Even walking greens mowers can now be purchased with battery power.

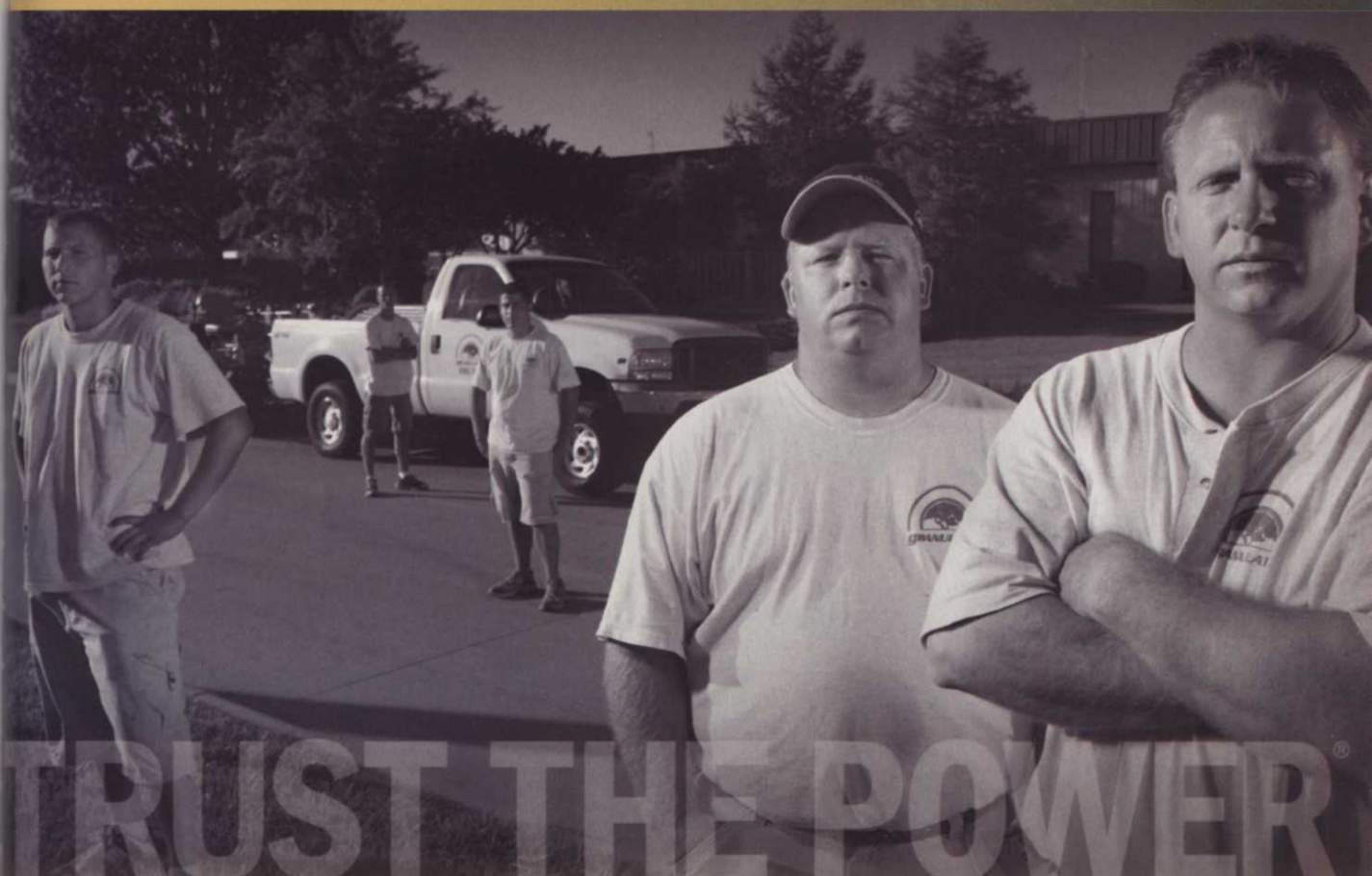
At the leading edge of this technology are prototype hybrid reel mowers that can quietly mow several greens under battery power and then switch to their gasoline engine for the remainder of the mowing day.

Is landscaping next?

What are the implications of this emerging technology for the landscape equipment industry? Is there a hybrid zero-turn mower or other equipment in our future? I don't foresee any insurmountable technical problems involved in producing a hybrid riding rotary mower. The next frontier is electric / battery or hybrid weed trimmers and blowers suitable for our industry. Those may be a little tougher technological challenge. The future will tell.

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

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Technology is built on logic. Problems with technology have logical answers.



Use a little common sense

BY TYLER WHITAKER

I once worked with a sales rep who thought he knew it all. You know the type of guy who always has an opinion and rarely meets his sales quota. But what really clued me in to his lack of common sense was when he suggested that we didn't need surge protectors. His solution: Tie a knot in the power cord to stop any power surge from reaching the computer. He was living proof that common sense can be a key asset when it comes to technology.

Technology is predictable

What I like most about technology is that it's predictable. There is always a rational explanation for any technology trouble. Sometimes it's a challenge to find that explanation, but using a little common sense can take you a long ways toward finding the solution. I've collected a short list of common-sense technology guidelines that anyone can use.

1. When in doubt, give it a try: We all get nervous about "breaking" our computers. The problem is we stop short of figuring out our technology problems due to apprehension and concern. The good news is that as long as you're not "deleting" or "formatting," most things can be solved quickly with a good backup. So backup your data regularly and go ahead, give it a try. You'll be surprised how much you can really figure out.

2. Got a problem? search for the solution: I love the Internet. You can find answers to nearly any tech-

nology problem if you know where to look. Back before the World Wide Web existed and spam was still some unrecognizable meat product, the best thing on the Internet was Usenet Newsgroups. It was a place where people could ask their questions and others could provide answers.

Today, those newsgroups are still going strong and they're searchable. Just go to www.google.com and click on the Groups link. By searching for an error message, the name of the software, or a simple question, you'll be amazed what you can find.

3. If your computer is making strange sounds, fix it: Most of the components in your computer don't have any moving parts. A couple of exceptions are the hard drive and CPU fan. As with anything mechanical, these components can wear out and fail. But before they go, you may hear some grinding sounds. If that happens, don't pass go, don't collect \$200. Get it fixed quickly before more permanent damage is done and you lose data.

4. Use the help menu: My Boy Scout training taught me to call for help when I got in trouble. Luckily 99% of all software has some form of help menu. It's packed with all kinds of good stuff designed to make you as productive as possible. Best of all, it's free.

Technology is built on logic. Problems with technology have logical answers. Don't be like my friend the sales rep who once asked for more memory because he wanted to download the Internet. A little common sense, that's all it takes.

— 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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New herbicide technologies make weed management in cool-season turfgrass easier

BY DAVID GARDNER

Cool control

Perhaps not since the early 1990s have we seen as many promising new chemistries for selective weed control in cool-season turfgrass. In addition, more materials are in development and will likely receive registrations soon. Beyond just having new herbicides for our weed control arsenal, many of these new materials offer selectivity and timing options that, as recently as five years ago, we thought would likely never be possible.

Control at establishment

One of the difficulties of establishing turf from seed is competition from weeds. This competition is compounded by the fact that almost all existing herbicides will also damage or kill the germinating turfgrass.

Most herbicides state on the label that the turf requires mowing three times before it is mature enough to safely withstand the herbicide application. With fall seeding operations this is perhaps less of a problem, since crabgrass and other annual grass germination pressure is minimal. Also, with an August or early September establishment, the grass



Crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*)

has usually been mowed three times by November, which is the primary month for perennial broadleaf weed control in cool-season grass regions.

However, with establishment in spring, there is often not enough of a difference in the germination time of cool-season turf and that of crabgrass or annual broadleaf weeds. The competition from these weeds

can make it difficult to nearly impossible to establish turf in the spring.

Two products labeled for control of weeds in newly seeded cool-season turf are the traditional choices: siduron and bromoxynil. Neither of these products is as effective as other herbicides used in cool-season turf, but their safety to turfgrass seedlings makes them a good option.

However, research conducted at major universities shows that a recent introduc-

tion, carfentrazone (sold as Quicksilver by FMC) provides safe and effective control of germinating broadleaf weeds in a newly seeded stand of either Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) or perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*). The label for Quicksilver has been updated to allow application to these species seven days after emergence. Carfentrazone is a fast-acting contact herbicide that is recommended as an addition to systemic herbicides, such as 2,4-D or triclopyr, in order to hasten burndown of the weed. Note that since carfentrazone is a contact herbicide, it effectively controls germinating annual broadleaf weeds in a newly established turf. However, it's not as effective against mature broadleaf weeds during an overseeding operation.

A further promising development for

springtime weed control at establishment is with quinclorac (marketed as Drive by BASF). Quinclorac is labeled for application any time before or after establishment of tall fescue. Research shows that quinclorac can safely be applied to either Kentucky bluegrass or perennial ryegrass as few as seven days after seedling emergence.

Results of recent tests at The Ohio State University also indicate that not only can a combination of quinclorac and carfentrazone be applied to 7-day seedlings of either of these species, but that delaying the application to 14 or 21 days after emergence results in decreased weed control. Likely, the herbicides become less effective as the weeds become more mature and capable of competing with the germinating turfgrass.

There was some slight phytotoxicity

with the 7-day application, but the turf outgrew this by day 14. It appears that competition from weeds should be less of an issue during springtime establishment than it has been in the past.

Selective control of perennial cool-season grasses

Normally desirable turfgrass species growing in an inappropriate environment, such as creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis palustris* syn. *A. stolonifera*) or common types of tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) growing in a Kentucky bluegrass/perennial ryegrass lawn are difficult to control.

Chlorsulfuron is labeled for the selective removal of tall fescue from Kentucky bluegrass. It is effective, but usually requires time and multiple applications. Until recently no other herbicide

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chemistries were available that could selectively remove one cool-season turfgrass species from a stand of another.

A recent introduction, Bispyribac-sodium, (marketed as Velocity by Valent U.S.A.) is intended for the selective removal of annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) from fairway height creeping bentgrass or for the selective removal of rough bluegrass (*Poa trivialis*) from perennial ryegrass. It is also thought to have some activity against broadleaf weeds and this is being tested in university trials. It is in the pyrimidanyloxy benzoic acid chemical class and is an acetolactate synthase (ALS) inhibitor.

Another ALS-inhibiting class of herbicides used in turf is the sulfanylureas, including sulfosulfuron, which is being marketed as Certainty herbicide in the

South by Monsanto, but should also be registered for use in the northern United States as well. Sulfosulfuron has good activity on yellow nutsedge and can selectively remove tall fescue from warm season turf and as a selective control of rough bluegrass in

creeping bentgrass. This product appears to hold considerable promise for selective removal of perennial grasses and it also appears to have activity against certain broadleaf weeds, such as dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) and clover (*Trifolium repens*), if applied in the fall. This is still being tested at various universities.



Dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*)

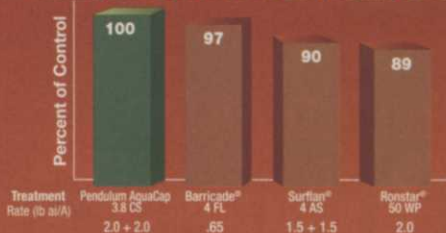


Selective control of crabgrass and broadleaf weeds

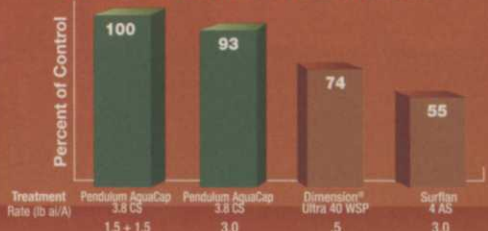
Its been a long time in coming, but the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has concluded a 17-year study and now states that 2,4-D does not pose a health risk when users follow the product instructions. Some earlier studies had linked



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Crabgrass Control In Tall Fescue²



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1. Oklahoma State University, 2004. Evaluated 168 days after first application in March. Partial Data Shown.
2. North Carolina State University, 2003. Evaluated 145 days after first application in March. Partial Data Shown.



White clover (*Trifolium repens*)



2,4-D to lymphoma and other cancers. While there are some products that replace 2,4-D with MCPA, 2,4-D remains an important herbicide in our arsenal.

Fluroxypyr was introduced a few years back, first as the stand-alone product Spotlight by Dow AgroSciences that was intended for tank mixing with a 2,4-D or triclopyr-containing herbicide. However, fluroxypyr is now appearing in formulations with other herbicides. It replaces clopyralid in non-golf course situations and has excellent activity on clover, but should be tank mixed with 2,4-D or triclopyr to improve control of dandelion.

Fluroxypyr is rainfast within one hour of application and visual symptoms may appear within 24-48 hours.

Carfentrazone appears either as FMC's Quicksilver, or in PBI/Gordon's 4-way formulations Speed Zone and Power Zone. An important change to the Quicksilver label is that it is now registered for control of silvery thread moss (*Bryum argenteum*) on creeping bentgrass fairways and greens. Since this is a fast-acting contact herbicide, some concern has arisen that carfentrazone could actually decrease control by preventing downward translocation of systemic herbicides it is tank mixed with. However, research data shows that car-

fentrazone acts in synergy when applied at low concentrations with herbicides such as 2,4-D and MCPP.

Another triazolinone herbicide, sulfentrazone, has recently been introduced and is a component in the herbicide Surge from PBI/Gordon. Both carfentrazone and sulfentrazone are contact membrane disrupting herbicides used in low concentrations. Like carfentrazone, when sulfentrazone is formulated with other broadleaf herbicides, it causes faster burndown of broadleaf weeds, particularly dandelion. Unlike carfentrazone, sulfentrazone appears to have some activity against sedges as well.

When quinclorac was released in 2000, it received widespread accolades for its ability to control crabgrass (*Digitaria* spp.), even if it was mature. It con-

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tinues to be a good herbicide for post-emergence crabgrass control. However, in recent years there has been some attention paid to its ability to control broadleaf weeds as well, particularly dandelion, clover and speedwell. One of the reasons

fall is recommended for broadleaf weed control is that herbicide translocation to below ground parts and therefore complete control are more likely than with springtime broadleaf weed control. When attempting to control perennial

Next month, Shawn Askew at Virginia Polytechnic Institute will discuss new **weed control in warm-season turfgrass.**

broadleaves in the spring, regrowth of the weed can sometimes occur after about 50-75 days. In trials at The Ohio State University investigating springtime broadleaf weed control, quinclorac in combination with dicamba was not only effective, but the treated plots were clean for 90 days after application.

Perhaps the most interesting herbicide in development is mesotrione. It appears to be effective against crabgrass when applied either pre- or postemergence. It also has good activity on dandelion and clover when applied either pre- or postemergence. In addition, mesotrione has shown selective activity against a variety of difficult to control perennial grasses, such as creeping bentgrass growing in Kentucky bluegrass, nimblewill and orchardgrass.

It appears to be more effective if applied twice on 4-6 week intervals compared to a single application. It also seems to perform well in tank mixes with other herbicides, and this tends to result in an increase in effectiveness and control period. More testing is scheduled to be conducted on this herbicide this year and registration may occur as early as 2007.

There are more herbicides for use in turf that are in advance stages of development or that have been recently released than perhaps at any other time. Many of these materials promise to allow the turf manager selectivity that even five years ago we would not have thought possible. Weeds will still present challenges. However, these new herbicides should make control easier than in the past. **LM**

— The author, assistant professor of Turfgrass Science at The Ohio State University, can be contacted at gardner.254@osu.edu.

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Selling benefits amid technology

Focus on your customers' wants and not on technology to sell more irrigation installs and services

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

Letting prospects see and touch products lets them judge the quality of what you'll be installing.

Irrigation technology is accelerating. Few product categories in the professional landscape market can match the advances being made by irrigation product manufacturers. Every week seems to bring with it another innovation

or product improvement.

This is welcome news, and it comes none too soon. The availability and cost of irrigation water threatens the continued growth of the Green Industry. It affects everybody in the industry's chain — growers, retailers, distributors, designers, installers and grounds pros.

Cities from Daytona Beach, FL, to Greeley, CO, to Raleigh, NC, to Santa Fe, NM, are implementing water use restrictions. One of the first targets is always landscape irrigation.

While water restrictions dampen Green Industry activity, they spur irrigation product manufacturers to innovate. Restrictions also challenge contractors to keep abreast of product advances so that they can install and maintain systems that irrigate efficiently, systems that conserve water and save their clients' money. Of course, that's the contractor's goal whether water is plentiful and inexpensive or whether it's being rationed.

An even bigger challenge for professionals is the competition of selling their expertise and the value of their services with other contractors attempting to do the same.

Customers don't buy technology

Successful sales people realize that customers and potential customers, especially homeowners, don't buy technology. They buy the contractor's promise to



deliver beautiful landscapes. That's where knowledge (technical and business), integrity and, ultimately, salesmanship come in. The pro sells beautiful, healthy, growing turfgrass and ornamentals, not the latest controller or sprinkler.

Realizing that nothing happens without a sale, and that technology is the contractor's friend but sales are their business lifeblood, here are some pointers to help you get more residential jobs.

First impressions matter

You're probably not the only contractor calling on a prospect offering an irrigation system or major upgrade. But you want to be the one who is remembered and who gets the job. That's not a difficult thing to do with some planning.

continued on page 57

Listen and sell more

Price. It raises its ugly head in every sales discussion. But price often isn't the sales bugaboo you think it is. A customer's buying decision is more often (much more often than you might realize) determined by perceived value.

This is as true in selling irrigation as anything else. How can you improve your close rate in your sales presentations? Start with one simple technique — listen.

The more attentively you listen to what prospects have to say, the better you'll be at answering their questions to their satisfaction.

Keep these four pointers in mind in prepping for that next sales call:

1 Identify customer needs and wants. Ask your prospect what they're looking for. Then adjust your sales pitch to showcase what you can provide that will satisfy their needs. Often this will allow you to show and offer top-of-the-line products. Sell a potential customer what they want to buy, not what you want to sell.

2 Sell benefits, not simply features. Yes, the products and service you can deliver are the latest and the greatest. But, what customers want to know is what a product does for them. Those are benefits. Maybe they're interested in protecting their landscape investment. Maybe they want more convenience. You won't know exactly why they're listening to you until you listen to them. Only then can you explain how

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


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continued from page 55

and why partnering with you is better than hiring someone else. Let them know your qualifications. Show them the benefits of you.

3 Fine-tune presentation techniques. Cover the topics important to homeowners. What you might take for granted, a homeowner might find brand new and exciting. For example, nearly half of the customers in a Hunter Industries' survey (48%) said that contractors making a bid failed to look at the water meter, and nearly as many (44%) said that contractors failed to offer references. Contractors also neglected to demonstrate the products they use, did not explain the system's benefits, and did not explain or offer rain sensors. And, according to the Hunter survey, 19% of the homeowners said that the contractor making the bid did not even explain their services well.

4 Follow up your presentation. Amazingly, many contractors never get back to prospects after making their pitch. Sure, customers don't want to be pestered, especially from someone that's overly aggressive, but they don't want to be forgotten either. Find out when they will make a decision and call them before that time. A follow up call or thank you note will express to the homeowner your gratitude for the time they gave you for a presentation. Since many of your competitors will fail to perform this simple act, it will often tip the buy decision in your favor.

—R.H.

continued from page 55

Apart from showing up on time for appointments and dressing and acting professionally, consider these suggestions:

Put together a product presentation bag to carry samples of the products you are going to propose to use in their installation. Let your clients handle what



Some customers like being a part of the planning process.

you're demonstrating. Your goal is to involve the prospect as much as possible in the system's design process without confusing them.

Inside a high-quality presentation folder, organize appropriate marketing material, including testimonials from real customers. If they feature neighbors or friends of the prospect, better yet.

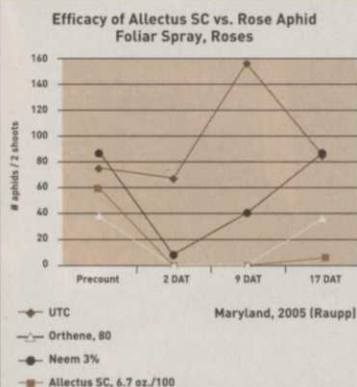
Talk up the benefits of the installation or major service, what it means in terms of building curb value, enhancing the prospects' enjoyment of the property, perhaps water and cost savings, if that's the case.

Once you've sold the job, give the client a DVD to help answer questions about their system. **LM**

—Editors note: Thanks to Hunter Industries, headquartered in San Marcos, CA, for help in preparing these articles. For more information visit www.hunterindustries.com.

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SPECIAL REPORT

It's back. Our most popular roundup of zero-turn mowers and trends gets updated for 2006.

ZERO-TURN MOWER GUIDE

► Zero's still a hero **p60**

► Zero-turn roundup **p64**



Zero's still a hero

Fuel efficiency, horsepower, productivity and safety mean these trendsetters keep clearing new paths

BY HEATHER GOOCH

Zero-turn mowers continue to be popular among professional landscapers, but increasingly, homeowners are seeing the value of this type of equipment as well. That trend is a bit of a double-edged sword for manufacturers, because

while it ensures the future of zero-turns and aids in the research and development of ever-evolving safety features, fuel efficiencies and other factors, it also means there are more model choices on the market — many of which are smaller and less expensive than the typical professional-grade model.

Landscape Management spoke with three leading manufacturers recently to get their views on the state of zero-turns. Randy Harris, senior marketing manager of The Toro Co., for example, believes there are four major trends in this market: fuel efficiency, higher horsepower, improved productivity and safety. All of the four, he notes, are relatable. Improved productivity is a byproduct of doing more mowing tasks quickly and safely. And both fuel efficiency and horsepower muscle is attained by Toro's new diesel engine model, the Z Master Z593-D.

Increased efficiency

"Fuel efficiency was the No. 1 concern among operators in a recent survey," Harris says. "And while the diesel engine has a lower horsepower than gas-powered models, it has the power when you need it — which on average is only 15 to 20 percent of the day. Why pay more for a higher-horsepower, less-fuel-efficient mower?"

Kevin Lund, product manager, commercial mowing for John Deere Co., also sees a trend toward diesel and other alternative fuels. While his company is researching this aspect heavily, and does have the 31-hp 997 Diesel Z-Trak on the market already, he notes that alternative fuel models "have to be able to demonstrate clear advantages in productivity for our customers."

"There are currently many types of machines that can demonstrate reduced fuel costs per acre mowed, such as fuel-injected engines, or, even better, diesel engines," he says. "Those technologies are not new, but they are expanding in the zero-turn mower market, and they offer customers some visible advantages in terms of their input costs. At the same time, we're also seeing proliferation in air-cooled, gas engines up to 1,000 cc with horsepower ratings in the mid-30s. While

continued on page 62

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Many major manufacturers are now offering Rollover Protection Systems (ROPS) as standard equipment on their zero-turns.



continued from page 60

these engines don't offer fuel savings over smaller displacement engines per hour, they do offer the professional ways to reduce the time they spend cutting grass — and an opportunity to reduce their overall dollars spent per acre mowed."

Erik Memmo, general sales manager of Ferris Industries, notes that his company has been at the research forefront of another fuel alternative: liquid propane.

"Our relationships with Enviroworld and Briggs and Stratton Corp. have put us in an excellent position to be a leader in this industry segment," he says. "Our field work and market research have been fueled by President Bush's [State of the Union] speech referencing our need as a country to be independent of fossil fuels, plus other local and regional alternative fuel trends."

Memmo also sees enhanced integrated suspension systems as a continuing trend for 2006, particularly because of their contributions to higher productivity.

"Since introducing our early versions nine years ago, we have continued to refine the ride," he says. "Unlike suspension seats that only offer limited benefits, a true IS suspension delivers productivity, performance and comfort for the operator and the machine. Suspension continues to be 'discovered' by commercial cutters and has undoubtedly set a high bar as the technolog-

ical development of mowers."

Productivity is the name of the game for John Deere too.

"We've concentrated on innovative solutions that improve the productivity of our customers, like our Mulch-on-Demand deck, and our next-generation 7-Iron II deck," Lund explains. The Mulch-on-Demand feature allows operators to change from side discharge to mulching with the throw of a lever. This not only reduces the risk of thrown objects when mowing around public areas, but also reduces the amount of material that needs to be cleaned up at the end of the job.

"For 2006, we've matched this deck with our material collection systems to allow those professionals to dial in the amount of material that they collect when using such systems," Lund continues. "This reduces the amount of material that needs disposal at the end of the day, reduces the number of times that the collection system needs emptying and returns more nutrients to the soil while still leaving an optimum appearance."

Safety counts

Many major manufacturers are now offering Rollover Protection Systems (ROPS) as standard equipment on their zero-turn models. Besides being an early supporter of this concept, Toro is one of two manufacturer sponsors for the National Safety Council's new training program to

instruct commercial lawn care equipment operators on the safe operation of zero-turn mowers. The Commercial Equipment Operators' (CEO) Safety Training Program is designed to protect landscaping workers and prevent accidents by promoting safe ZRT mowing techniques. Designed for field or classroom use, the training package includes laminated "tailgate" training flip charts (featuring both English and Spanish text) with a trainer's script on the back of every page; an instructional DVD to guide trainers; and handouts to reinforce the lessons learned in each module.

Harris hints that additional safety and operator comfort accessories for Toro are in the works. In the meantime, Toro's new Turbo Force adjustable deck design is garnering a lot of attention, thanks to its adjustable front baffle that lets operators fine-tune their cut.

"For example, you could create more space to mow wet spring grass and improve productivity, and reduce the space when you want to 'micro-mulch' an area where you don't want to double-cut," he explains. "We started featuring Turbo Force on our zero-turn mowers, and we're migrating toward our intermediate walk-behind line, so there's a lot to look forward to this year." **LM**

— The author is a Northeast Ohio-based writer. Contact her at 330/723-3539 or heather@goochandgouch.com.

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BY HEATHER GOOCH

Zero-turn roundup

Bad Boy Mowers

Lightning Z models, featuring speeds of up to 12 mph, are now available for your favorite college team. These officially licensed mowers are available in 52- and 60-in. cutting widths. Available teams include Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, North Carolina, LSU, Georgia and Oklahoma. Coming soon are Florida, Florida State, Arkansas State, Kansas State, Iowa State, Iowa, Ohio State, Texas A&M, Mississippi State, Illinois, Clemson, South Carolina, Vanderbilt, Wake Forest and NC State. Contact Bad Boy if you don't see your favorite team listed.

Contact Bad Boy at 866/622-3269 or www.teammowers.com / circle no. 254

B&H Manufacturing

As the first in a new series of zero-turn mowers, the Jazzer TerraPro 51 is designed for high performance. It features a Honda GXV-20 engine with a 20-hp vertical shaft, a rubber deflector and a 51-in. deck with three blades. Its 7-gal. gas tank allows for all-day operation with no refueling stops.

Contact B&H at 800/240-3288 or www.bhmfg.com / circle no. 255

Bob-Cat

The Bob-Cat Predator Pro delivers power in a line that offers up to a 33-hp Generac gas engine. Its ergonomically designed, easy-access operator controls reduce fatigue, while its standard full suspension seat increases operator comfort. Predator Pro's competi-

tively larger fuel tank and 12cc Hydro-Gear pumps offer higher productivity. Available in 52-, 61- or 72-in. decks, the line offers an adjustable cutting height from 1.5 to 4.5 in.

Contact Bob-Cat at 888-922-TURF or www.bobcatturf.com / circle no. 256

Bunton by Jacobsen

The Bunton BZT 2000 Series offers premium features and plenty of power. Horsepower ranges from 19 (on the BZT-2190) to 26 (on the BZT-2260 EFI). All models feature 9.5-gal. fuel capacity, top-mounted 1-in. diameter spindle shafts on maintenance-free ball bearings, 10-gauge steel deck construction with 7-gauge reinforcements and side skirts, and deck options of 48, 52.5, 61 or 72 in. A deluxe high-back seat with armrests and operator weight adjustment ensures comfort and higher productivity. Options include a striping kit, ROPS system, knobby tread tires and wheel, and an eco-plate mulch kit.

Contact Bunton at 888/922-TURF or www.bunton.com / circle no. 257

Bush Hog

A new steel Two-Post Roll Over Protection System (ROPS) as well as other accessories have been added to the M2000 Commercial Series. It can be

repositioned without tools for convenience in moving on and off enclosed trailers and for storage. A more economically priced Rigid Two-Post ROPS is also available for operators not needing clearance in enclosed trailers or storage. Other, easy-to-install Bush Hog accessories include striping rollers and a hitch kit.

Contact Bush Hog at 334/874-2700 or www.bushhog.com / circle no. 258

Country Clipper

The new JAZee Pro is rugged enough for the toughest chore, yet fun enough to make it easy for anyone to use. It features a choice of engines (19-hp V-twin Kawasaki, 20-hp Kohler Command or 23-hp Briggs & Stratton Vanguard); HydroGear's IZT transmission with an integrated charge pump; a patented stand-up deck and a pivoting front axle and deck. It's designed for comfort, with 20-in. drive tires, an upgraded operator's seat and joystick or dual-lever controls.

Contact Country Clipper at 800/344-8237 or www.countryclipper.com / circle no. 259

Cub Cadet Commercial

Z-Force 48 and Z-Force 60 join Z-Force models 44 and 50, all of which feature a 23-hp Kohler Command engine, steel

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BAD BOY



BOB-CAT



BUSH HOG



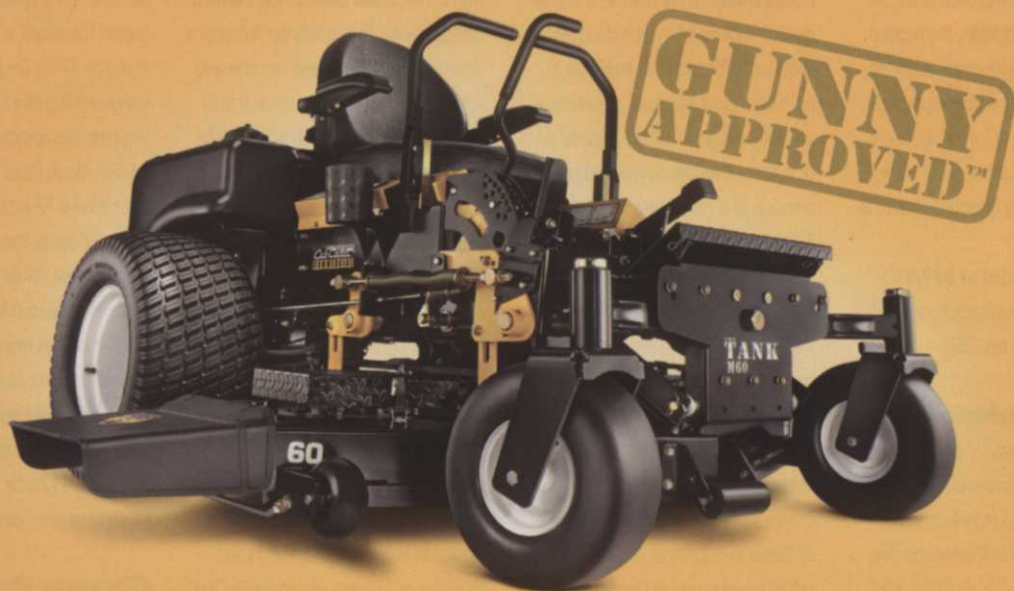
COUNTRY CLIPPER



BUNTON

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ZERO-TURN MOWER GUIDE



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frame, pivoting front axle, semi-floating deck and many more options designed for a dependable, easy-to-manuever and smooth ride. The Z-Force 48 also features a durable, fabricated deck, while the Z-Force 60 rider offers a 60-in., triple-blade stamp deck at a competitive price. In addition, the rugged Tank line of zero-turn commercial riding mowers is now endorsed by new spokesman R. Lee "Gunny" Ermey, a Marine sergeant-turned-actor currently hosting the History Channel's Mail Call military series.

Contact Cub Cadet at 877/835-7841 or www.cubcadetcommercial.com / circle no. 260

Dixon Industries

The Grizzly ZTR mower offers three premium twin-cylinder engine choices: the 24-hp Honda and the 25- or 27-hp Kohler Command Pro. It's available with 52- or 60-in. HFS cutting decks with 18-position positive-lock deck lift system and foot assist, both featuring Dixon's Tunnel Force design. Hydro-Gear 12cc pumps with cooling fans and Parker TJ wheel motors come standard, as does the smooth-riding Big Rig seat suspension system that raises for easy access to belts, pulleys and for cleaning. Attachment options include two- and three-bag grass catchers, mulch

kits, ROPS and snow blade.

Contact Dixon at 800/264-6075 or www.dixon-ztr.com / circle no. 261

Dixie Chopper

The Dixie Chopper Propane LP 3000 is not a conversion kit, but the first production mower of its type designed specifically for propane. Available in both 60- and 72-in. cuts, it features a specially designed 30-hp Generac engine that offers the power and compression of a gas-powered mower: A 72-in. deck model can still cut a football field in less than 10 minutes.

Contact Dixie Chopper at 765/CHOPPER or www.dixiechopper.com / circle no. 262

Encore Power Equipment

Encore's popular X-Treme line is now available in deck sizes of 48, 52 and 60 in. Designed for power and versatility, the X-Treme line features bigger tires, heavy-duty pumps and wheel motors powered to mow at 10 mph. They are available with 19-, 23- and 25-hp, air-cooled Kawasaki engine options for respective deck sizes, as well as an economical Briggs & Stratton in 20- or 25-hp versions.

Contact Encore at 800/267-4255 or www.encoreequipment.com / circle no. 263

EverRide

The EverRide Briggs Hornet features a 25-hp Briggs & Stratton engine and is available with a 48-in. deck. It also has an ultra-tough clutch with 150 ft.-lbs. of torque, a tunnel deck with a 70.4-sq. in. discharge area, a fixed front axle and a 1-in. blade overlap. The EverRide Briggs Hornet Briggs Warrior features a 26 hp Briggs & Stratton® engine and is available with a 60-in. deck. It also has an ultra-tough clutch with 200 ft.-lbs of torque, a tunnel deck with a 149-sq.-in. discharge area, a pivoting front axle and a 1.5-in. blade overlap.

Contact EVERRIDE at 402/274-8600 or www.everride-mowers.com / circle no. 264

Exmark

The Lazer Z series now features the 1 high-capacity cutting platform. All components of the Triton platform are designed to work together for greater flexibility in a variety of conditions. The Triton series includes the Lazer Z and the Lazer Z XS, with decks of 60, 66 and 72 in., as well as the Lazer Z HP, with decks of 46, 50 and 56 in.

Contact Exmark at 402/223-6300 or www.tritoncuttingplatform.com / circle no. 265

Ferris Industries

The Independent Suspension (IS) series offers new features at every level. Roll

Over Protection Systems (ROPS), with retractable seat belts, are standard, even for the IS 1500Z line. The IS 2000Z series is a new mid-size line to expand the firm's lineup, while Ferris' most popular model, the IS 3000Z, now features upgraded four-wheel suspension and a choice of a 26-hp liquid-cooled Kawasaki, a 30-hp Kohler Command or 32-hp Briggs & Stratton Vanguard Big Block engine. It also offers Hercules spindles and the option of a 61-in. deck. Ferris' IS 4500Z line features a new 72-in. deck option, with a 35-hp Briggs & Stratton Vanguard Big Block engine, while the IS 5000Z line features upgraded four-wheel suspension, as well as more horsepower, improved operator comfort and convenience, and easier service access.

Contact Ferris Industries at 800/933-6175 or www.ferrisindustries.com / circle no. 266

Gizmow Power Lawn Equipment

Mow closer to walls and fences, tighter around trees and plantings, and faster over rough and uneven terrain: The Gizmow Formula is the first and only commercial Mid-Z mower with the added control of front-wheel steering, the company says. The patent-pending system links the front wheel angle with the independent rear wheel power. The

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mower delivers unprecedented hillside control without crabbing or sliding. With its intuitive control system, turf tear is virtually eliminated.

Contact Gizmow at 866/463-2628 or www.gizmow.com / circle no. 267

Grasshopper

The new 16-cu.-ft. Model 16FM Power-Tilt collector empties from the operator's seat with the flip of a switch. Just stop, tilt and mow. Its sleek, low-profile design mounts on all 700 and 900 Series Grasshopper mowers. All PowerVac systems are designed with superior air flow to pick up grass clippings, leaves, pine straw and other debris, leaving a manicured appearance. Other Model

16FM features include a removable sight window for easy cleaning, removable debris screen and "down and out" air flow for extra clean operation. The deck-driven PowerVac systems are simple to install and operate, and they remove quickly and easily for side discharge or mulching applications. No auxiliary motor is required.

Contact Grasshopper Co. at 620/345-8621 or www.grasshoppermower.com / circle no. 268

Gravely

The new line of Extra Durability zero-turn mowers (XDZs) is designed to improve uptime for contractors. With an overall 30% increase in durability, the new XDZ units are available in the 144, 148, 152 and 160 models of the

Gravely 100 Series; and the 252, 260 and 272 models of the Gravely 200 Series. The XDZs feature improvements to the subsystems critical to commercial cutters: ground drive, electrical, deck drive and deck. The result is cooler hydraulic temperatures that aid in longer pump and motor life, longer belt life, increased durability to the deck in high-wear conditions, and electrical systems that eliminate corrosion and downtime. **Contact Gravely at 800/472-8359 or www.gravely.com / circle no. 269**

Howard Price Turf Equipment

The Blazer line features 52- to 80-in. cut widths and 23- to 36-hp engines. The new 360Z features a flexible 80-in.



GIZMOW



FERRIS



GRASSHOPPER





GRAVELLY



HUSTLER

wing cutting unit and mows up to 6.4 acres an hour at 8 mph about 34% better than a 60-in. deck. The 21-in. wing can reach under trees and shrubs to do trim work.

Contact Howard Price at 636/532-7000 or www.howardprice.com / circle no. 270

Husqvarna

The new EZ series features a rigid, one-piece steel frame, premium serviceable hydrostatic transaxles and air induction stamped or fabricated steel cutting decks for durability all backed by a three-year consumer warranty. With five models in the EZ series lineup, engine options include Briggs & Stratton ELS, Honda and Kawasaki. Deck sizes range from 42 to 54 in. All feature

high-back pan-style seats with armrests and easy-access control panels. The foot-activated height adjustment allows for an adjustable cutting height of 1.5 to 4.5 in. The ergonomic steering levers include foam padded hand grips and adjust to two positions.

Husqvarna is now offering a new XP package on select models of its intermediate (IZ) and large frame (LZ) commercial zero-turn mowers. The package includes a deluxe full suspension seat, custom foot pad area and larger horsepower-to-deck ratios.

Contact Husqvarna at 800/HUSKY62 or www.husqvarna.com / circle no. 271

Hustler

The new XR-7 mowing decks offer

side-discharge, mulch or catch, and mow tall grasses like Bahiagrass beautifully, and fine grasses immaculately, the company says. There's even an optional striping roller. The patent-pending FreeFlow deck technology minimizes clumping and build-up under the deck, producing a better finished appearance and improved productivity. The new, flat blade design also features blades that are sharpened to the center, improving cut quality. The molded-rubber discharge chute is tough, but gentle on objects. The decks are available in 54-, 60-, 72- and new 66-in. widths on Super Z and Hustler Z.

Contact Hustler Turf Equipment at 800/395-4757 or www.hustlerturf.com / circle no. 272



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SELF-GUIDED SYSTEMS



SIMPLICITY



SNAPPER PRO

John Deere

The new John Deere Mulch-on-Demand Deck allows operators to switch from side discharge to mulch mode by simply moving a lever from their seat. Available as a factory-installed option for both the 757 and 777 Z-Trak mower, the feature's patented moveable baffle system not only blocks the discharge opening, it also separates each individual cutting chamber to ensure the grass clippings circulate, mulch and drop quickly. The Mulch-on-Demand flexibility also allows operators to switch into mulch mode to mow safely near parking lots or other pedestrian areas without worrying about thrown objects or "dusting" cars; and highly landscaped areas can be tackled quickly without sending another crew member to remove clippings from mulch beds or sidewalks.

Contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.johndeere.com / circle no. 273

Kubota

Kubota offers a full line of zero-turn mowers in its ZD (diesel) /ZG (gasoline) Series. The diesel engine models offer 18 to 28 hp, while the gas-powered engines range from 20 to 23 hp. All are equipped with shaft-driven transmission and mid-mount mowers (48 to 72 in.), including a convenient hydraulic deck lift and a cutting height

adjustment with a twist of the dial. Shaft drive means more direct power to the mower blades, and maintenance is minimized.

Contact Kubota at 888/458-2682 or www.kubota.com / circle no. 274

Rich Manufacturing

The Convertible is a zero-turn rider that converts to a hydro walk-behind. You don't have to walk but the option is there in case you need it. This mower has always been different and unique, but the new 2006 low-profile model looks just like a typical zero-turn rider. Its engine is now in the rear instead of under the seat, and there are several types of engine to choose from. Tires and fuel tank are larger, and the walk-behind component is shorter for operator convenience.

Contact Rich Manufacturing, Inc. at 765/436-2744 or www.convertiblemower.com / circle no. 275

Scag

The Turf Tiger Zero-Turn Rider now offers "Big Block" power: Choose from the new 35-hp air- or liquid-cooled Briggs Vanguard Big Block engines, paired with a 61- or 72-in. cutter deck. The Turf Tiger offers 16cc hydraulic pumps, auxiliary oil coolers, double

tube steel main frame and a driveshaft powered cutter deck. An ultra-low center of gravity and wide stance ensure positive traction and stability over a wide variety of terrain. Ground speeds up to 12 mph allow more production in less time.

In addition, the "Command-Comfort" operator station includes adjustable "Quick-Fit" steering levers and adjustable deck lift pedal for comfortable, ergonomic operation. The torsion spring suspension seat can be fine-tuned to accommodate a wide range of operator weights, and features an adjustable back rest and armrests to minimize fatigue.

Contact Scag Power Equipment at 920/387-0100 or www.scag.com / circle no. 276

Self-Guided Systems

The SGS Hybrid-Z38 is the first zero-turn robotic mower designed for the professional landscaper. Powered by a 9-hp Honda engine, it has three 12.5-in. blades and a mulching deck that can cover an acre per hour. The 4.5-gal. tank gives 12 hours of mowing time. Sensors detect obstacles and the unit moves around them. It stores that part of property in memory so it can avoid them next time.

Contact Self-Guided Systems at 248/853-1001 or www.selfguidedsystems.com / circle no. 277

Simplicity

The new Javelin is offered in three models: a 20-hp unit featuring a single-cylinder Kohler Courage engine with 38-in. mower deck; a 20-hp Briggs & Stratton Intek OHV with a 44-in. mower; or a 22-hp Briggs & Stratton Intek OHV with a 50-in. deck. The line features a sealed dual hydrostatic transmission from Hydro Gear, with forward speeds of zero to six mph (zero to three mph in reverse). It also features a cast-iron front axle that pivots for a smoother ride and better traction, as well as ride-dampening shocks to increase operator comfort.

Contact Simplicity Manufacturing at 262/377-5450 or www.simplicitymfg.com / circle no. 278

Snapper Pro

The newest addition to the Snapper Pro 2500 Pro Series is a twin-stick model featuring a 25-hp Kawasaki engine and a 52-in. mowing deck. The new unit is one of seven heavy-duty, commercial quality zero-turn mowers that will be included in the 2500 Pro Series (formerly the FastBack line) for model year 2006.

All models in the 2500 Pro Series feature a high-performance engine, two independent hydrostatic drive systems, a seven-gauge steel mower deck and frame, three field-serviceable spin-

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TORO



WOODS

YAZOO/KEES



SWISHER



WALKER

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dies, two seven-gal. fuel tanks and infinite forward speeds of up to 10 mph (8 mph for joystick-controlled models).

Contact Snapper Pro at 800/935-2967 or www.snapper.com / circle no. 279

Swisher

The Z-Max XZT's 360-degree turning radius and 60-in. triple blade floating cutting deck greatly reduce mowing time on even the biggest jobs. It also features a 24-hp Briggs & Stratton Intek OHV engine; dual 2-gal. fuel tanks; eight-position cutting height range from 1.5 to 5 in.; deluxe adjustable high-back seat with armrests; a standard hour meter; electronic fingertip blade engagement and automatic parking brake. Other zero-turn mowers by Swisher, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary, are available in 36-, 42- and 50-in. mowing deck widths.

Contact Swisher at 800/222-8183 or www.swisherinc.com / circle no. 280

Toro

Toro's new 52- and 60-inch Z Master Z593-D zero-turn riding mowers feature a durable, 23-hp Kubota liquid-cooled diesel engine able to power through conditions that would strain conventional gas mowers. The ma-

chines offer 12-gal. fuel capacity and 11 mph ground speed to help operators stay in the field and productive all day long. Engine performance is enhanced with a top-mounted radiator that ensures the cooling system is drawing cooler, cleaner air than vertically mounted systems. The design also makes the radiator less vulnerable to impact, and the costly repairs that can go with it, the company says. In addition, Toro's Turbo Force deck features a patent-pending, adjustable baffle that lets operators fine-tune performance for a variety of grass conditions.

Contact The Toro Co. at 800/348-2424 or www.toro.com/professional / circle no. 281

Walker

The new Model MB's simple, clean design uses the same principles as the original Walker Mower, including tilt-up body, zero-turn maneuverability, low center of gravity and operator comfort in an even more compact configuration. The tractor design is simplified and is more economical for non-catching applications by eliminating the provision for the built-in Grass Handling System (GHS) used on other Walker Mowers. Two independent Hydro-Gear transaxles are matched to Walker's control system, using a forward speed control and two steering levers to make an agile, easy-to-operate tractor

with ground speed of up to 8 mph. The 18-hp Briggs Vanguard engine, in conjunction with a Warner electromagnetic clutch, provides efficient delivery of power to the mowing deck. The Model MB uses Walker's gear-driven side discharge and mulching decks up to 56 in. while maintaining the same deck tilt-up feature standard on all Walker mowing decks.

Contact Walker at 800/279-8537 or www.walkermowers.com / circle no. 282

Woods Equipment Co.

The rugged Mow'n Machine RZ-Series (RZ1848B, RZ2052B and RZ2552BE) features decks constructed of two durable layers of heavy-duty 10-gauge steel, with 7-gauge skirts and double-sealed ball bearings on the spindles. Models range from 17.5 to 25 hp and 48- to 52-in. cutting decks. Powered by a smooth, quiet, responsive Hydro-Gear drive and a powerful premium-performance, air-cooled Briggs & Stratton engine, the RZ-Series will mow up to four hours on a 5-gal. fuel tank.

The RZ-Series was designed with a low center of gravity for superior stability. Cutting heights adjust easily from 1.5 to 4.5 inches. Other features include wide turf tires, a high-backed comfort seat and a cup holder, as well as a limited two-year warranty.

Contact Woods at 800/319-6637 or www.woodsequipment.com / circle no. 283

Yazoo/Kees

The Max2 series of large frame, mid-mount zero-turn riders has expanded for 2006 to include two new models. The new ZVKH72302 and ZVKH61302 include all the Max2 premium features with the added benefit of 30-hp Kohler V-twin engines. The rugged, full-floating cutting deck is constructed of 10-gauge steel with 7-gauge side skirts and a rolled front edge. Reinforcement plates add strength to the spindle area, while baffles improve performance and reduce blowout. The heavy-duty blade spindles feature greaseable tapered roller bearing construction for longer life, the company says.

In addition, all Max2 mowers offer a low center of gravity and wide wheel stance for increased stability and smooth performance. The units feature quick-lift cutting height adjustment with standard foot assist, dual 5.6-gal. fuel tanks and up to 10.5 mph ground speed.

Contact Yazoo/Kees at 877/368-TURF or www.yazookees.com / circle no. 284 LM

—The author is a Northeast Ohio-based writer. Contact her at 330/723-3539 or heather@goochandgooch.com.



Thanks to Talpirid,
Earthscapes
is going on

Mole Patrol

From no service to new service

EARTHSCAPES LANDSCAPING INC., in Stevensville, Mich., has always offered mole control for its customers — but it was hardly something the company wanted to promote. President and Founder Odie Williams recalls that since EarthScapes' inception in 1997, he had tried several mole methods. What he got in return were poor results, unhappy customers and profits eaten away by callbacks.

"We would do it if a customer wanted it, but ultimately, in business you have to make the customer happy and make money," he says. "We weren't doing either one with mole service."

That all changed in early 2005, when Williams' LESCO representative gave him a sample of Bell Laboratories' Talpirid mole bait. Williams was skeptical, so he personally tested it on several accounts — including on his own lawn.

"I had a bad problem with it, so I decided to do it by the book in my yard," he explains. "I haven't had a mole in six months."

Williams has been so impressed by the results that he has decided to start up Mole Patrol of Michiana, a division of EarthScapes. To ensure word gets out, he is not skimping on the marketing plan, either, which includes T-shirts and a billboard boasting the tagline, "Got Moles? Call the Mole Patrol;" a vehicle sporting mole decals; radio spots; yard signs; and appearances at local home and garden shows not as EarthScapes, but as Mole Patrol.

"There might be 10 landscape companies with booths at those shows, but we'll be the only mole removal company," Williams explains. "We usually do high-end landscaping, and people at the home and garden shows are not looking for that. This is what's going to get interest. Even a person who has never hired a lawn service will hire somebody to take care of a mole problem."

Growing the business

While EarthScapes is about 70 percent residential, Williams notes that Talpirid has made his commercial customers happy, too: "We have done some fairly large commercial accounts that are in ravine and wood settings, and we've had great results."

EarthScapes technician Doug Haley, who has been with the company about five years, has been designated Mole Patrol's first full-time employee. Williams believes he won't be alone for long, though.

"We've already taken out an ad in a South Bend

(Ind.) paper for another technician," he says. "Even if Mole Patrol starts off slowly, we'll have enough landscape business to keep the new person busy. However, I don't think it's going to be slow at all, based on the interest already."

Williams points to Bell's comprehensive CD and color brochure as terrific ready-made selling tools for customers. He is already using them during his in-person renewal visits for existing customers.

"We've had customers ask us to come back and reseed because their moles are gone, but their damage isn't."

— ODIE WILLIAMS

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However, he adds, the results are the true sales pitch.

"I show them the brochure and explain how I'm going to offer mole treatment this year," he says. "The feedback has been along the lines of 'You're telling me you can really kill my moles? This is wonderful!'"

The primary species invading the southern Michigan market is the common eastern mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*), which seems to become the peskiest in early summer after the litters are born (see box, "The Mole You Know"). However, Williams believes that on mild winter, spring or fall days, mole control treatment with Talpirid is still viable.



EarthScapes technician Doug Haley is Mole Patrol's first full-time employee, but President and Founder Odie Williams believes he won't be alone for long.

"This past January, I hadn't seen snow on the ground for weeks, but I did see mole damage — everywhere," he says. "They can be aggressive in the late winter and early spring because they are mating, so I believe this could easily be a year-round service when there is no snow on the ground."

Williams, who started in the lawn care business as a "13-year-old pushing a mower down the street" and now has 30 employees, is excited about this new venture — mainly because of the untapped mole market.

"I've done market research, and there's not one company that will even offer anything to do with moles," he says, adding that another big benefit is the additional business it can bring: "It's the perfect addition to our lawn maintenance, landscape, fertilizing and irrigation services. We've had customers ask us to come back and reseed because their moles are gone, but their damage isn't. And we can take care of that, too." •



The Mole You Know

The eastern mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*) is the most common species of mole pest management professionals encounter at their accounts in the Northeast and Central states. Other North American species include the star-nosed mole (*Condylura cristata*); the hairy-tailed mole (*Parascalops breweri*); the broad-footed mole (*Scapanus latimanus*); the coast mole (*Scapanus orarius*); and the Townsend's mole (*Scapanus townsendii*). The *Scapanus* species are primarily found in the Western United States, while the others are more concentrated in the Eastern regions.

Eastern moles, also known as common or gray moles, are active underground all year long. They are covered in grayish-brown fur, with a pointed nose, a short tail and large, "spade-shaped" feet for digging. Adults average about 6 inches in length and weigh less than 3 ounces. Their eyes are covered by fur, which is why the taste, smell and feel of Talpirid — and its strong resemblance to their primary food source, an earthworm — come into play.

Eastern moles usually mate in early spring, and five to six weeks later, a litter of between two to five young emerges. The young can leave the nest as early as four weeks to forage for food. At around 10 weeks old, they begin to establish their own nests and tunnel systems, increasing damage to properties.

A report in the journal *Nature* last year gave moles the title of fastest-eating mammal, taking only 230 milliseconds to identify and consume individual food items. At that rate, it's easy to see how they can consume between 70 percent and 100 percent of their body weight in food each day. They need to eat this much to support their high energy demands.

FUN FACTS

- A 3-ounce mole consumes 45 to 50 pounds of worms and insects each year.
- Moles can dig surface tunnels at approximately 18 feet/hour.
- Moles travel through existing tunnels at about 80 feet/minute.
- Moles contain twice as much blood and twice as much hemoglobin as other mammals of similar size. This allows moles to breathe more easily in underground environments with low oxygen.

SOURCES: BELL LABORATORIES; WIKIPEDIA; THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



LESCO ▲

The LESCO High Performance Spreader with oversized hopper, sulky-style riding platform and ergonomic controls can be used as a fertilizer, grass seed or lime spreader. Key features include articulated frame for optimum maneuverability, oscillating hopper agitation to prevent damage to fertilizer coating, rear-wheel drive for increased traction and 6-hp Kawasaki engine with recoil start.

For more information contact LESCO at 800/321-5325 or www.lesco.com / circle no. 286

Gandy

Gandy's Spike n' Seed Seeder overseeds and aerates in a single pass. Unit has 1,220 replaceable steel spikes that give 693 vents per square yard. Hopper is 42 in. wide and can handle 100-125 lbs. of seed. It seeds a 44-in. width.

For more information contact Gandy at 800/443-2476 or www.gandy.net / circle no. 287

JRCO, Inc.

The JRCO Electric Broadcast Spreader fits commercial riding and walk-behind mowers as well as utility vehicles. Features include a



molded hopper base with stainless steel gate controls, fan and vibrating agitator. The polyethylene hopper holds 120

pounds. Electronic speed control adjusts fan speed for spread widths of 5-24 feet.

For more information contact JRCO, Inc. at 800/966-8442 or www.jrcoinc.com / circle no. 288

Herd

The Herd 2240 spreader is designed for 3-pt. hitch Cat. 2 tractors. It has standard hydraulic remote control. The 14-gauge steel hopper has 2,440 lbs. capacity. The unit comes equipped with a heavy-duty independent stand and carrying frame. Heavy cast iron gearbox is standard for 540 rpm. Rotating agitator and heavy-duty aluminum fan with

Spreaders & sprayers

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor



replaceable steel blades. Spreads three to 1,000 lbs. per acre.

For more information contact Herd at 574/753-6311 or www.herdseeder.com / circle no. 289

EarthWay

The EarthWay Products line of Ev-N-Spread private label spreaders includes the C25 Series Professional Tow Broadcast Spreader. It has a 3,350 cu. in. hopper, will hold up to 100 lbs. of fertilizer. Features include adjustable height hitch, heavy-duty axle supports, jumbo 13-in. diameter turf tires and Ev-N-Spread Dual Port shutoff system with right and left side adjustable throwing ports that allow spread pattern adjustments.

For more information contact EarthWay Products at 574/848-7491 or www.earthway.com / circle no. 290

LM Reports

C&S ▶

The Turf Tracker Stealth from C&S Turf Care Equipment covers up to 240,000 sq. ft. of liquid application and carries up to 400 lbs. of granular product, while providing extra stability on tough terrain. Features include zero-turn twin hydrostatic drive, four mph treating speed or 10 mph transport speed, 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.csturfequip.com / circle no. 291



BBI

BBI's Cricket, a 2-3 ton fertilizer and lime spreader, is designed for precision dry material application. With a narrow wheel track width, it can steer through narrow paths. Wide flotation tires minimize compaction.

For more information contact Barron & Brothers, Inc. at 800/282-3570 or www.barron-bros.com / circle no. 294

Gregson Clark

The Gregson-Clark Spreader-Mate is a self-contained "drop-in" sprayer that can be installed in most commercial broadcast spreaders for turf and ornamental applications. The 9-gal. polyethylene tank fits into most commercial spreaders. Low drift, low volume nozzles allow up to 30,000 sq. ft. of coverage per fill up.

For more information contact Gregson-Clark at 800/706-9530 or www.gregsonclark.com / circle no. 295



Agri-Fab

The Agri-Fab 45-0329 broadcast spreader features 15-in. pneumatic turf wheels with ball bearings for higher speeds, a raised flow control handle accessible from the seat and 175 lbs. capacity. Removing a drive pin disengages the drive shaft allowing higher speed transport when re-filling or changing work areas.

For more information contact Agri-Fab at 217/728-8388 or www.agri-fab.com / circle no. 292

Turfco

Turfco's WideSpin 1530 multi-functional topdresser has a hopper capacity of 21 cu. ft. and spreads up to 30 ft. light and 15 ft. heavy at speeds of up to eight mph. Twin spinners provide uniform application at any speed, and the spinner angle is adjustable for maximum penetration.

For more information contact Turfco at 800/679-8201 or www.turfco.com / circle no. 293

SnowEx

Designed for use with pickups (8-ft. beds or larger), flatbed trucks and dump-bed trucks, SnowEx's V-Maxx 8500 bulk spreader features a multi-angle, 2-cu.-yd. hopper combined with an inverted-"V" salt/sand baffle and attached vibrator that allows for continuous flow. Spread width varies 5 ft.-40 ft.

For more information contact Snowex at 800/725-8377 or www.snowex.com / circle no. 296



BEFCO

Befco Turbo-Hop pendular spreaders are constructed for long life, with a tubular steel frame and polyester resin powder paint coat for corrosion resistance. The hoppers are made of reinforced fiberglass. The spreader spout is made of nylon and reinforced fiberglass with the dispenser disc made of stainless steel. The spout can be adjusted to spread only to the left or right by rotating the spout's tip, with a swath between 17 ft.-47 ft.

For more information contact BEFCO at 800/334-6617 or www.befco.com / circle no. 297



Earth & Turf

Earth & Turf LLC MultiSpread Model 320, is a 1-cu.-yd. topdresser with wide-spread beater for athletic fields, schools, universities, golf courses and large estates. It spreads topdressing materials, infield mix and grass clippings. Can be pulled with a small compact diesel tractor, heavy-duty utility cart, compact pickup truck or a large ATV.

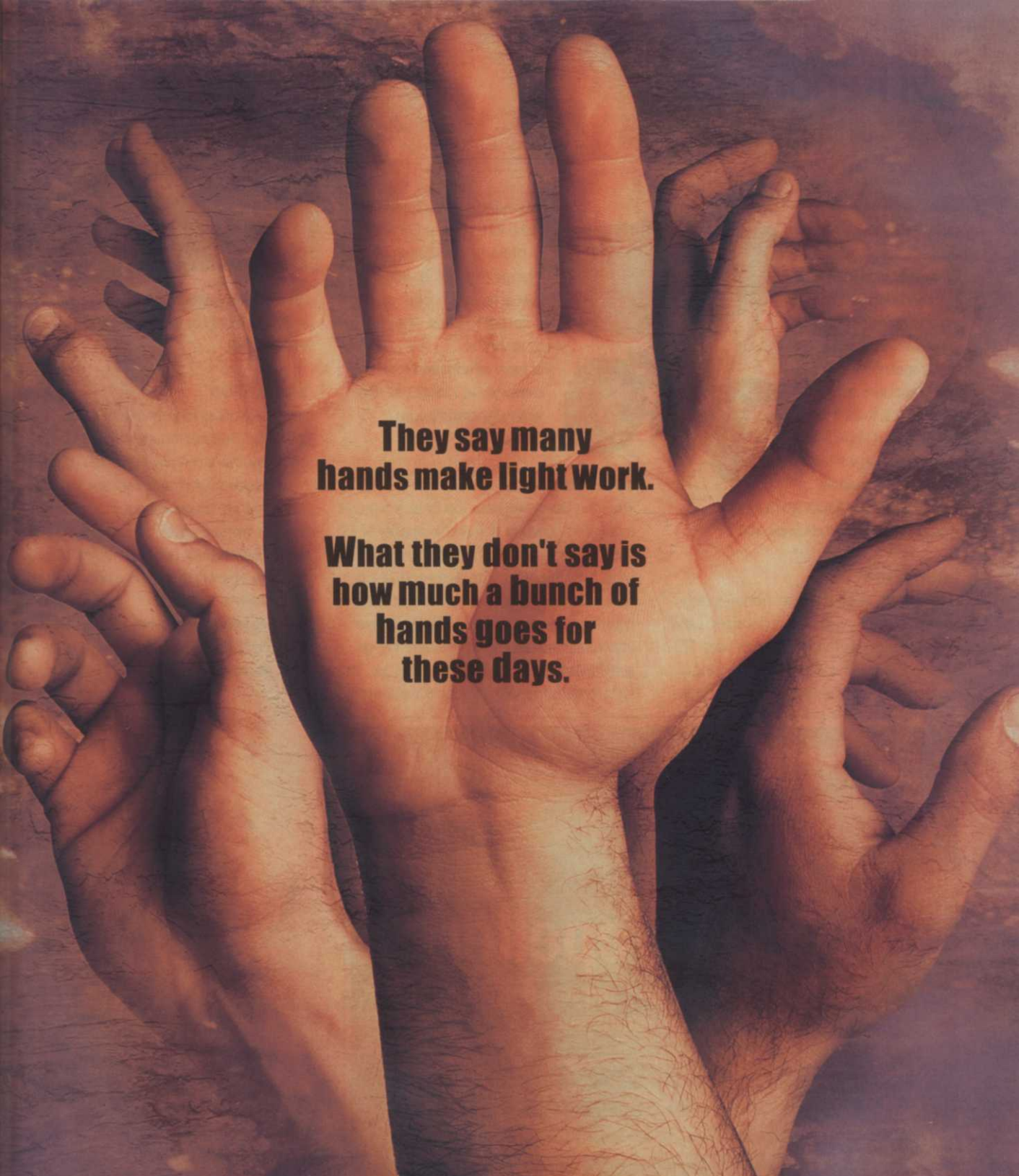
For more information contact Earth & Turf at 888/693-2638 or www.earthandturf.com / circle no. 298

T.I.P.

Overseed and aerate in one pass. Choose 3-pt. hitch, the GS-48 pull type or self-propelled 16-in. walk-behind Spiker seeder. Creates thousands of shallow, closely spaced holes for dropping seed at the proper depth.

For more information contact T.I.P. at 715/592-4650 or www.tipinc.net / circle no. 299

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**They say many
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**What they don't say is
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hands goes for
these days.**

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Fact is, hand-weeding can strangle your profits in no time. Maybe that's why so many nursery operators are opting for the proven, long-lasting weed control of Gallery® specialty herbicide. Gallery effectively controls 95 species of broadleaf weeds – including chickweed, spurge and oxalis – for up to eight months. And Gallery can be used on 440 field-grown and 230 container-grown ornamentals. Gallery can also be applied in an over-the-top application on more than 400 ornamentals. This year, take a hands-off approach to weed control with Gallery.

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Spyker ►

Spyker offers a full line of walk-behind, tow-behind and electric spreaders and accessories for turf professionals. The 15 professional spreader models have capacities ranging from 40 lbs. to 220 lbs. for all-season applications, including winter.

For more information contact Spyker at 888/8-SPYKER or www.spyker.com / circle no. 300



ery is adjustable to spread on the left, right or full width of 54 ft. Application rates range from 44 lb.-890 lbs. per acre, and hopper capacities keep filling and clean out to a minimum.

For more information contact Landpride at 785/823-3276 or www.landpride.com / circle no. 301

Landpride

Featuring an all-steel frame, frontal splash plate and three available hopper sizes, Land Pride broadcast spreaders fit most uses. The 14-gauge hopper is manufactured using a spin process for 1-piece construction. Deliv-

John Deere

The John Deere ProGator Top Dresser features a seamless conveyor belt and a capacity of 19 cubic feet. Its wide stance gives it excellent stability. Available in 23.5-hp diesel and 26-hp gas versions, it comes with a five-speed, synchronized transmission. The HD300 Sprayer attachment has an impact-resistant 300-gal. polyethylene spray tank for extended use. Jet agitation ensures tank solution is well mixed.



For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.deere.com / circle no. 302

Shindaiwa

Shindaiwa offers four models of its broadcast spreaders. Features include a spring loaded on-off mechanism, convenient rate adjustment, welded steel frame construction, Delrin axle bushings, rotary agitator stirs material without excess drag, single port delivery system and wide track stance for better stability. Available accessories include a hopper cover and side deflector shield.

For more information contact Shindaiwa at 800/521-7733 or www.shindaiwa.com / circle no. 303

geese deer rabbits snakes moles voles

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Circle 153



Echo

The Echo MS-100 manual sprayer has a 4.5-gal. polyethylene tank with UV inhibitors and 20-in. brass wand with adjustable nozzle. The safety check valve prevents leaks if tipped. Solid steel pump handle folds for transport and storage. Spray pistol comes with brass shut off pin and double O-rings for durability.

For more information contact Echo at 800/432-ECHO or www.echo-usa.com / circle no. 304

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PSB

The PrizeLAWN BigFOOT HVO (High Volume Output) applies PennMulch, topdress, sand, salt, limestone and fertilizer. A hinged plate configured for normal fertilizer applications, flips out to expose the mass flow port. With 13-in. pneumatic tires and a 1.75 -cu.-ft. hopper volume, it holds up to 100 pounds.

For more information contact PSB at 614/228-5781 or www.psbcompany.com / circle no. 305

Permagreen

The Permagreen ride-on Magnum spreader seeder runs on a Honda 6.5-hp wet-clutch horizontal-shaft engine. It features a hopper with a 150-lb. capacity, 12-gal. spray tank with two-gpm pump and two Hypro Ultra low drift nozzles.

Contact Permagreen at 800/346-2001 or www.permagreen.com / circle no. 306

Dakota

Designed for wet and dry materials, Turf Tenders from Dakota Peat & Equipment spreads sand, gypsum, grass seed, compost and others. With its chemical resistant PVC belt, the Turf Tenders can safely spread fertilizer without damage. An interactive calibration program allows the operator to spread materials accurately without costly trial and error.

For more information contact Dakota at 800/477-8415 or www.dakotapeat.com / circle no. 307

Smithco

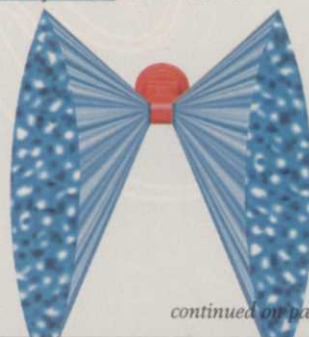
The Smithco Spray Star 1000 low-profile sprayer's hydrostatic drive and turning radius allows maneuverability around tight areas. It comes with precise controls for spray application, hydraulic power steering and choice of computerized or manual spray.

For more information contact Smithco at 877/833-7648 or www.smithco.com / circle no. 308

Spraying Systems Co.

The Turbo TwinJet spray tip is designed to apply fungicides, insecticides and pre- or post-emergence herbicides where good leaf coverage and canopy penetration are required. The TTJ features a dual outlet orifice design. Identical front and back flat spray patterns are produced with a 60 degree included spray angle to optimize spray coverage.

For more information contact Spraying Systems Co. at 406/388-3120 or www.teejet.com / circle no. 309



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MackKissic Inc.

Mighty Mac power sprayers come in five models ranging from 14-gal. to 50-gal. tanks. The big PS 350T-10 is a 50-gal. trailer unit powered by a 5.5-hp B&S Intek engine. Hydro twin-piston pump delivers 10 gpm at 300 psi.

For more information contact MackKissic at 800/348-1117 or www.mackkissic.com / circle no. 310

Solo

The SOLO backpack sprayer model 473P offers durability and ultraviolet protection with its high-density polyethylene tank and UV inhibitors. Providing up to 90 psi, the 3-gal. sprayer's lightweight design and low-effort piston pump system ensure consistent pressure and pat-



terns, efficiency and reduced user fatigue.

For more information contact Solo at 757/245-4228 or www.solousa.com / circle no. 311

Mill Creek

Turf Tiger spreads wet or dry sand/peat, compost or infield mixes evenly over a 12-ft. swath. The Saber Tooth attachment is standard equipment, applying a consistent, uniform pattern from eight to 12 feet. Spinner attachment is ideal for applying light applications.

For more information contact Mill Creek at 800/311-1323 or www.millcreekmfg.com / circle no. 312

Demco

Demco's full line of sprayers includes the 55-gal. spray team. The 12-volt continuous duty motor, diaphragm pump with Viton valves will deliver 1.4 gpm, and draws 4.7 amps at 30 PSI. The Hydro four roller pump

with 3.5-hp Briggs & Stratton engine delivers 6.6 gpm at 2,600 rpm and 50 psi.

Hydro twin diaphragm pump with 3.5-hp Briggs & Stratton engine will deliver six gpm maximum at 275 psi.

For more information contact Demco at 800/543-3626 or www.demco-products.com / circle no. 313

Andersons

The Andersons' SS-2 Drop Spreader's stainless steel frame, hopper and fasteners provide durability and corrosion resistance. It features a 13-in. Turf Saver, two pneumatic wheels and extended ergonomic handles for an easier push, spreading up to 36 in.

For more information contact Andersons Golf Products at 800/225-2639 or www.andersonsgolfproducts.com / circle no. 314

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The 8-30' MP Rotator® product line can lower installation costs on the next system you design or install. For example, the adjustable MP2000 delivers 1/3 the flow of a 15' spray. **So choose:** reduce the size of the valves and piping; **or** run more heads per zone to reduce the number of valves, wiring and controller stations required. Since the flow rate on every MP Rotator automatically changes whenever the arc or radius is adjusted, nozzle trees are eliminated — and so is the installation labor. For more ways to lower your installed costs, visit the MP Rotator website — www.mprotator.com. **Save water, solve problems.**



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Circle 130

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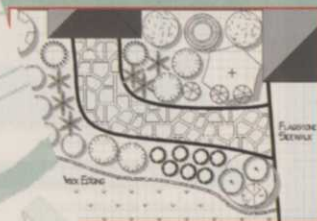
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Brett Seltz, Enterprise Construction, Inc.

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Mike McQuay, Stark Bro's Nursery

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Toro

Toro's new spray boom for all Multi-Pro and Heavy Duty Workman 200 Gallon

Spray systems uses a triangulated truss design for nozzle protection. The operator can change the booms from spray mode to transport mode without leaving the driver's seat. Double lobe/breakaway cams return boom to spray position after impact with obstacles during forward or reverse machine travel.

For more information contact Toro at 612/888-8801 or www.toro.com / circle no. 315

Ryan

The Ryan Mataway overseeder can be adjusted to provide the proper flow for all types of common grass seed. The 2-in. spacing of the Mataway overseeder makes it possible to



overseed with one pass. Operator can adjust the depth of the seed delivery for maximum germination.

For more information contact Ryan at 888/922-8873 or www.textron.com / circle no. 316

Wikco

Wikco Spraymate ATV sprayers are outfitted as either pull-behind or skid-mount sprayers with 25 gal. or 50 gal. capacity. The 65 psi, electric diaphragm pump can handle most liquids, including gritty suspensions. Wheel kits and spray booms are optional.

For more information contact Wikco at 866/464-8893 or www.wikco.com / circle no. 317

SP Systems

SP Systems' 3 Point Hitch Sprayer comes standard with four filtration points for preventing

the tips from clogging. The sprayer is controlled from the command area of the tractor with a set of hydraulic valve controls and gauges that come standard. The unit has a maximum pressure of 580 psi when used with a Udor Kappa-40 pump.

For more information contact SP Systems at 800/457-3440 or www.spsystemsllc.com / circle no. 318

Broyhill

Broyhill's AccuSpeed walking turf spray boom features a digital speedometer and top-mounted pressure gauge, high-quality spray gun with trigger lock and .5-in. couplers for easy operation and quick disconnect and standard 80-in. stainless-steel boom with eight diaphragm-check nozzle bodies for drip-free operation.

For more information contact Broyhill at 800/228-1003 or www.broyhill.com / circle no. 319

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

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Circle 147

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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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Univ. of South Carolina

2005 Grand Award Winner for Urban University Grounds

Property at a glance

Location: Columbia, SC

Landscape Manager: Tommy Fallaw

Category: Urban University Grounds

Total budget: \$1.4 million

Year site built: 1801

Acres of turf: 80

Acres of display beds: two

Total paved area: 60 acres

Total man-hours/week: 1,500

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Aging utility infrastructure
- ▶ Tree and vegetation protection/preservation
- ▶ Sidewalk and driveway maintenance
- ▶ Construction coordination
- ▶ Vandalism

Project checklist

Completed in last two years:

- ▶ Established university grounds as an arboretum
- ▶ Completed work on Pickens Street, Osborne Administration Building, President's House Garden
- ▶ Implemented campus GIS project

On the job

- ▶ 40 full-time staff, four licensed pesticide applicators

Old Southern charm is in bloom in the heart of modern-day Columbia, SC, at the University of South Carolina.

There, Landscape Manager Tommy Fallaw and Thomas Knowles, assistant director, have developed a landscape that reflects the early 19th century period from the university's earliest days.

The campus has grown from one building in 1801 to 155 facilities on more than 400 acres of land, with about 80 acres of turfgrass and two acres of display beds made up of pink begonias and magnolias. These flowers accentuate the university's Southern heritage and blend into the historic scenery. Aged brick walls and colorful mixes of ornamental grasses and plants dampen city noises to create quiet retreats on the campus grounds.

Tree preservation is a particular challenge for the campus. Some of the first seedlings planted when the university was founded now tower over the landscape. The campus is dotted with stately oaks that provide an umbrella of shade

and serenity around the campus. The campus contains more than 4,000 trees representing 75 species. In 2005 it was designated as an arboretum by the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta.

In 2004 the university began using a geographic information system (GIS) to help manage the landscape program. A tree inventory and site amenities inven-

tory was completed and mapped to identify and carry out essential functions.

Also in 2004 the landscape department partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green-scapes Program. As a partner, the unit plans to increase its

composting, use more insecticide alternatives such as insecticidal soap, use less fertilizer and incorporate more rain sensors into irrigation systems.

"We've been composting leaves and grass clippings for several years, but we want to step up our efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle," said Knowles. "We want every task to reflect a commitment to wise use of resources."



Tommy Fallaw

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

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Ornate iron gates and old brick walls are common around the campus, as many of them were installed in the early 20th century. The landscaping and plantings around each building have been designed to complement the early 19th and 20th century architecture.



STMA CEO: *Get ready for change*

BY LYNNE BRAKEMAN

Agronomic expertise alone will not guarantee career growth and success for athletic field managers in the next decade. Translation: it's not just about growing great turf anymore.

That was Kim Heck's take-home message at the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation's conference in December, where the CEO of the Sports Turf Managers Association delivered a presentation on "The Future of the Sports Turf Industry."

Heck says athletic field managers who want successful careers also need to master a range of "soft skills" including:

- ▶ people management
- ▶ resource management
- ▶ financial management
- ▶ leadership techniques

Heck identified 10 major trends that

will reshape the sports turf industry over the next decade:

TREND 1: Water scarcity

Heck noted that seven states mandated watering restrictions last summer. She points out that population growth and housing development will continue to put pressure on water resources. As potable water becomes scarcer and more expensive, the demand will grow for turf managers to find ways to use effluent water on athletic fields.

TREND 2: Labor scarcity

Competition from other industries will make recruitment and retention of qualified workers challenging. As the Baby Boom generation ages, the U.S. Census projects that the available labor pool will continue to shrink.

TREND 3: Technology advances

Manufacturers will make mowing equipment lighter, engines more efficient and vehicles more environmentally friendly, she predicts. Meanwhile turf researchers are developing improved turfgrass varieties that will be more drought, pest and disease resistant, requiring less irrigation and chemical manage-

ment. Improvements in synthetic turf will continue to change the industry, and most field managers will care for both natural and synthetic turf fields.

TREND 4: Environmental regulations

Heck predicts turf managers will face ever more stringent federal, regional and local regulations and product restrictions. She shared the experience of her home town of Lawrence, KS, where citizens pushed the city government to install a pesticide- and fertilizer-free park as a pilot project with volunteer help. The same group intends to urge the city to extend the chemical-free regime to the city's athletic fields too.

TREND 5: Outsourcing

The phenomenon of athletic field management companies is on the rise, according to Heck. Schools and governments will outsource athletic field management to companies with both the equipment and expertise in the specialized area of sports turf.

TREND 6: Consolidation

She also believes that the industry will see the consolidation of sports field management companies into regional operations.

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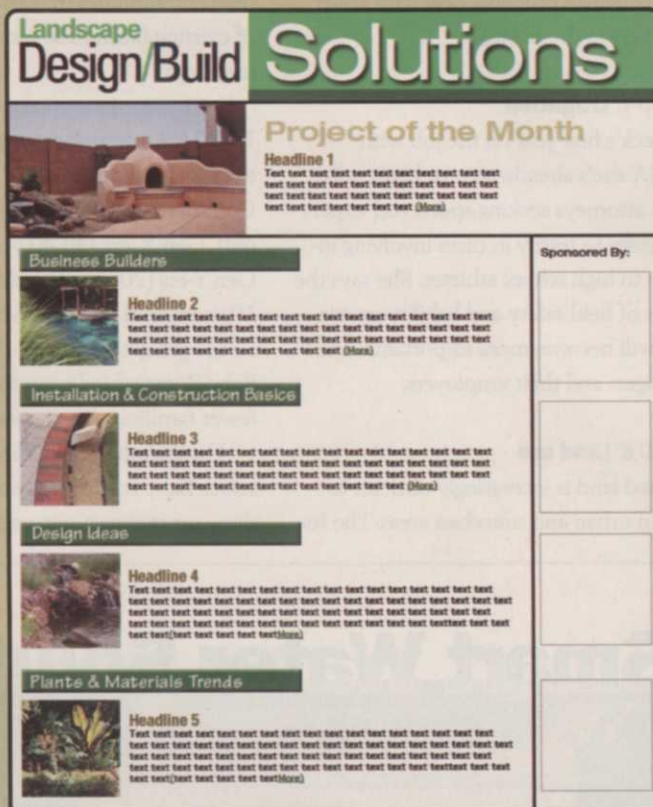
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She also expects to see consolidation among vendors and manufacturers of products and equipment, meaning field managers will probably deal with fewer suppliers in the future.

TREND 7: Litigation

In Heck's first year on the job with STMA she's already received two calls from attorneys seeking sports turf expert witnesses to testify in cases involving injuries to high school athletes. She says the issues of field safety and liability protection will become more important to turf managers and their employers.

TREND 8: Land use

Unused land is increasingly difficult to find in urban and suburban areas. The fu-

ture promises a stronger emphasis on the health benefits of recreation, but fewer open spaces will exist to create parks and athletic fields. Field managers will need to help communities maximize the benefits of existing facilities so more people can use them.

TREND 9: Communicating with diverse populations

Consider Baby Boomers (41-60 years old), Gen X-ers (30-40 years old) and Gen Y-ers (20-29 years old). In the next 10 years, field managers will interact with all age groups. Heck says the aging of the Baby Boomers indicates there will be 5% fewer families with children in 2025.

On the other hand, the fitness conscious Baby Boomers themselves will show up at community recreational facili-

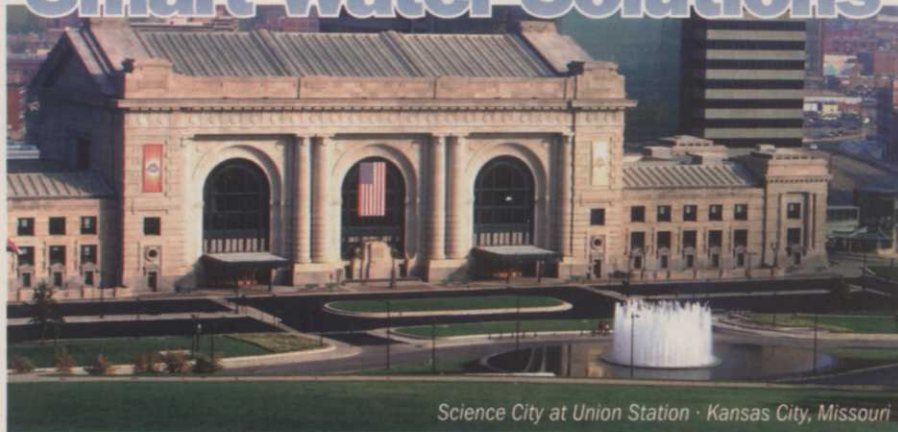
ties. The family-focused Gen X-ers will be the parents attending school games. They'll also be the people hired to help maintain fields and facilities. The fun-seeking Gen Y-ers will expect several activities scheduled around a single athletic event so they can take their entire group with them. Heck says sports field managers will need strategies to work with people with such different attitudes.

TREND 10: Do more with less

Heck says the development of new technologies as well as the pressure created by scarce land and water resources will drive employers to demand that field managers deliver great sports fields even while cutting budgets. At the same time, the public will see more professionally maintained

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fields on cable television sports channels, raising expectations for the aesthetics of their home town fields.

The bottom line

"Expertise in agronomy and soil science will not be enough," Heck says. "Sports field managers will need to develop success qualities to cope with these changes. They will need to become part of their facility's strategic 'think tank.'"

According to Heck, the successful field manager will need to know how to:

- ▶ build relationships
- ▶ manage resources and finances
- ▶ demonstrate leadership
- ▶ solve problems
- ▶ learn continuously
- ▶ achieve goals

The STMA can help field managers develop these skills, Heck says, particularly through the group's annual conference held each January. Attendees can choose from more than sixty hours of technical and management-oriented sessions.

In addition, STMA is working to raise the visibility and status of sports field managers by partnering with associations that serve their employers, including the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA), the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

"We want to work with organizations to earn recognition and respect for the job done by sports turf managers," Heck says. "Our aim is to get the turf manager

on their radar."

Heck says one of the organization's top initiatives is the STMA certification program, which is

patterned after the successful certification program created by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). There are now more than 60 STMA-certified sports field managers.

Heck told attendees that one of STMA's initiatives in the next year will be to field a definitive study of the sports turf industry that will help the organization establish the key role of the athletic field manager. **LMI**

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



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The new Redexim Charterhouse, Inc. Verti-Quake models 2516 and 2521 de-compact the soil using a set of rotating steel blades. As these blades cut through the soil they create a wave action that breaks up compacted areas and opens up the subsoil. The Verti-Quake is available in five different models and can work at depths up to 22 in. with little or no surface disruption. The Verti-Knife 2516 and 2521 both work to a depth of 10 in., but now are available with a new direct drive system and individual shear bolts are no longer used on the blades.

For more information contact Redexim Charterhouse at 800/597-5664 or visit www.redexim.com / circle no. 322

Razor Burn post-emergent herbicide

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

moves through the plant from the point of foliage contact into the root system to provide complete systemic control. The effects of this post-emergent herbicide can be visibly noticed on most annual weeds within one



day and on most perennial weeds in two days. Razor Burn has no soil residual activity and may be applied through most standard sprayers after dissolution and thorough mixing with water according to label instructions.

For more information contact Nufarm at 708/754-3330 or visit www.turf.us.nufarm.com / circle no. 323



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The SISIS OSCA 3 comprises a pair of oscillating brush units for brushing in top dressing or maintaining rubber crumb and sand-filled synthetic pitches and hard porous areas. The OSCA is equally effective on natural and synthetic turf. The brushing action disperses top dressing quickly and evenly, preventing excess material being left on the surface. On synthetic surfaces, keeps infill mobile, preventing surface compaction and loss of porosity. The infill level is kept at a constant depth, giving consistent playing characteris-

tics, and preventing pill damage caused by reduced infill levels. The SISIS OSCA requires fewer passes than conventional drag brushes, causing less compaction.

For information contact SISIS at 864/843-5972 or visit www.sisis.com / circle no. 324

50% more power

FECON, Inc.'s FTX130-FM Track Carrier forestry mulcher, with 130 hp, offers almost 50% more horsepower than any other compact mulcher. Equipped with the BH85FM mulching attachment the FTX130-FM weighs 15,100 lbs. Other features include a severe-duty hydraulic cooler, reversing fan, travel speed up to 4.5 mph and 69 gpm hydraulic flow at 6,000 psi. It can be used for land clearing, vegetation management and more.

For more information contact FECON at 800/528-3113 or visit www.fecon.com / circle no. 325



Easy auger

Tanaka America, Inc.'s new one-man auger features the S-Start system and a 32 cc, 1.6 hp two-stroke engine. The S-Start system reduces the amount of pull force required by 60%. The Tanaka TIA-350S replaces the TIA-340 in the lineup and contains many performance and safety improvements over the previous model. Other features include tall wrap-around handles to protect the engine from damage, Tanaka's Sound Reduction System, primer for fast starting, large throttle lever for more control, increased fuel efficiency and easy access to the air filter.

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Circle 154

Products

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On the prow!

Encore Power Equipment's Prowler comes in front cut and mid cut models. The Prowler front cut, in 52-, 61- and 72-in. deck sizes, mows under tree branches with ease, making it a fit for schools, sports fields, farms and parks. The front cut offers out-front reach and visibility, side-to-side articulating floating deck, PTO driveshaft drive blade system and flip-up deck. The mid-cut is offered in 61- and 72-in. decks. The Encore mid cut delivers versatile design, the most options in engine

selections, collection systems and mulching. It is developed to "keep the cut" on uneven ground, this offering minimum scalping and maximum stability.

For more information contact Encore Power Equipment at 800/267-4255 or visit www.seriousred.com / Circle no. 326

Washing machines

Kärcher has 11 models of new electric-powered, diesel-heated hot water pressure washers, which feature a hand truck design and tubed pneumatic tires for maneuvering around a wash facility. The models feature electric motors from 1.5 to 7.5 hp and have cleaning power ranging from 2.0 to 3.9 gallons per minute and from 1,000 to 3,000 PSI. Models come in many electrical configurations, including 120V, 230V and 460V. All models feature a low-maintenance tri-plunger high-pressure pump. Six of the models are equipped with a belt-drive system



connecting the pump and motor, which translates into longer life due to vibration absorption and reduction in revolutions required of the high-pressure pump. The other five models are direct-drive, or where the pump and motor are coupled directly to each other.

For more information, contact Kärcher at 888/805-9852 or visit www.karchercommercial.com / circle no. 327

Hauler and Über Hauler

At only 24 in. wide, Haulz-All's Über Mover 200BB two-wheeled power brick and block carrier is designed for hardscapers that work on tight job sights. The hauler has a payload capacity of up to 650 lbs. on hard level surfaces, and can carry stackable objects, as well as large boulders or other bulky items. It runs off of twin 12-volt rechargeable batteries to provide 24-volt DC



power, requiring no gas and emitting no fumes.

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motor, high ratio, high-torque gearbox, electromechanical park brake, and electronic controls. The system reduces back strain and allows the operator to control the load while in motion. Drive speed is variable up to 3 mph. Run time is up to 6 hours and the maximum recharge time is 4-6 hours.

For more information contact Haulz-All at 866/428-5925 or visit www.haulzall.com / circle no. 328

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

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Circle 155

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Products

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Stop pest geese

Bird-B-Gone, Inc.'s Goose Chase Super Sonic sound deterrent sends out goose distress and alarm calls, mixed with predator calls to deter geese from your problem area. Different modes and sound combinations can be chosen to baffle geese. The Super Sonic can be used in golf courses, lake front homes, parks, campuses or anywhere experiencing pest geese problems. Each weatherproof unit can cover up to an acre of land, with options to add additional speakers for more coverage.

For more information contact Bird-B-Gone at 800/392-6915 or visit www.birdbgone.com / circle no. 329

Lightbar guidance ▲

The Mid-Tech CenterLine 220 system offers turf professionals full GPS lightbar guidance features at a price comparable to foam markers. CenterLine 220 features two modes of



operation: straight-line (parallel) and curved AB. The unit's large graphical display shows off-track direction and distance along with swath number, ground speed, selected guidance mode and whether a return point has been stored. An alternate map page shows a bird's-eye view of the vehicle position and heading in relation to the desired path. A small external GPS antenna connects to the unit and is mounted on the vehicle roof. Set-up takes seconds when it is connected to a power source. Additionally, the unit provides a GPS-derived vehicle speed as a RADAR compatible ground speed signal for use with other control systems.

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The LEIT-Micromet Plant Demand Technology irrigation control system offers the freedom of remote scheduling to the user. The LEIT-Micromet system is comprised of the LEIT field controller and Micromet's Plant Demand Technology (PDT), an ET drive. The LEIT controller and Micromet's PDT drive are linked together using Internet access via a paging system. The LEIT-Micromet designs irrigation schedules according to its analysis of site data, weather information, its record of past watering and its programmed knowledge about the physical requirements based on the plants physiology. No longer must one go to the site to adjust watering programs. Any number of LEIT controllers equipped with the Micromet PDT systems can be accessed and managed via the Internet. The LEIT-Micromet PDT system responds to environmental conditions, watering only when

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The Hydro-Ax 764 site prep tractor from Blount, Inc., with a 220 hp Tier 3 Cummins engine and 90-degree articulation, has the power and maneuverability for a variety of land clearing and development projects. A 260 hp model is also available. The tractors' load-sensing hydraulic system is engineered to provide smooth hydraulic power while consuming less fuel. A new feature, the Hydro-Ax Quik-Flow selection system, allows the operator to quickly and easily install and operate a variety of attachments, and the Hydro-Ax Quik-tach system can simplify and shorten the time needed to switch attachments. Non-powered attachments can be hooked up without leaving



the cab, while an improved hydraulic quick coupler bulkhead system in the front frame makes the hookup of powered attachments simple and quick.

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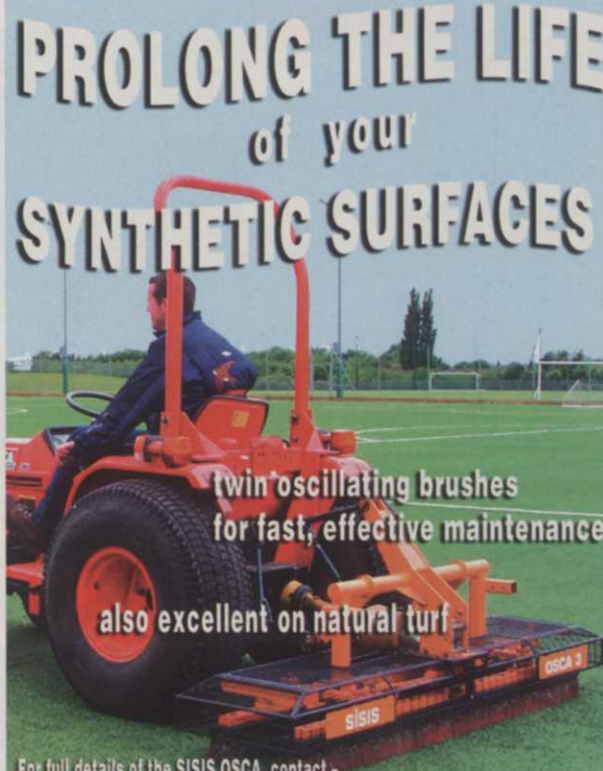

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Products

continued from page 100

over time. It also inhibits weed growth, moderates soil temperatures and prevents soil compaction. As EnviroSCAPE is impermeable and does not absorb water, it controls soil erosion and enables the soil and the root structure of adjacent plantings and foliage to stay moist longer.

For more information contact EnviroGLAS at 888/523-7894 or visit www.enviroglasproducts.com / circle no. 334

Cool-season grass herbicide

PBI/Gordon Corp. has received EPA approval for Q4 Turf Herbicide, a herbicide for grassy and broadleaf weed control. The formulation contains the protox inhibitor sulfentrazone in combination with quinclorac, 2,4-D and dicamba. The new formulation is designed for use on cool-season turf. Q4 offers a single product control option for yellow nutsedge suppression and grassy and broadleaf weed

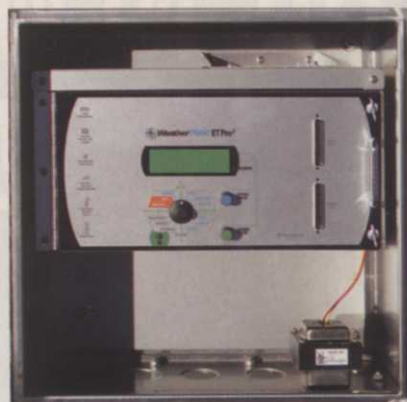


control in established turfgrass areas, and reduces phytotoxicity on cool-season grass species. It also offers the enhanced speed of a protox inhibitor benefitting the golf, lawn care and landscape markets. Grassy weeds, such as crabgrass and foxtail will turn ghostly pale prior to the reddening which precedes weed death.

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Events

RESOURCES WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

April

6-8 Equipment & Engine Training Council Annual Conference / Charlotte, NC; Sponsored by Equipment & Engine Training Council; 262/367-6700; www.eetc.org

8 MAC-ISA Tree Climbing Championship / Glen Dale, MD; Sponsored by Mid Atlantic Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture; 703/753-0499; www.mac-isa.org

9-13 NRPA Southeast Regional Conference and Trade Show / Louisville, KY; Sponsored by National Recreation and Park Association; 800/626-6772; www.nrpa.org

23-26 NRPA Midwest Regional Conference and Trade Show / Dickinson, ND; Sponsored by National Recreation and Park Association; 800/626-6772; www.nrpa.org

29 - May 1 ASIC Annual Conference / San Diego; Sponsored by ASIC; www.asic.org

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May

3-4 TOCA Annual Meeting /
Napa Valley, CA; Sponsored by Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association; 952/758-6340; www.toca.org

11-12 Greening Rooftops for Sustainable Communities Conference / Boston; Sponsored by Green Roofs for Healthy Cities; 416/971-4494; www.greenroofs.org

17 Turfgrass & Nursery Field Day / Stillwater, OK; Sponsored by Oklahoma State University; 405/744-5404; www.okstate.edu

June

8-10 Super Floral Show / Salt Lake City; Sponsored by Super Floral Show; 617/728-0300; www.superfloralshow.com

13-14 National Lawn & Garden Show / Rosemont, IL; Sponsored by National Lawn and Garden Show; 888/316-0226; www.nlgshow.com

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Grounds Technician: Primary responsibilities include clean up of assigned areas including litter and trash pick-up, general park maintenance and assisting with special events. Experience with outdoor maintenance and operating small power equipment is required.

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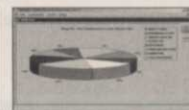


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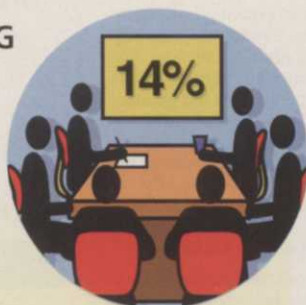
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Statistics

RESOURCES INDUSTRY TRENDS BY THE NUMBERS

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

The vast majority of *Landscape Management* readers who responded to a recent survey from us say their employees get the most training on the job. Here's how other training options stacked up:



On the job	73.9%
Company-offered classroom	14%
Off-site classroom	8%
Other	2.8%
Web-based training	1.4%

SOURCE: 2005 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKING SURVEY

RIDER SALES RISE, SLIGHTLY

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) conducts a monthly shipments research program that represents more than 75% of all commercial turf care shipments based on several product categories.

For the 2005 model year, OPEI estimates that just over 291,000 commercial turf outdoor power equipment units were shipped – a contraction of 1.9% from last year. A slight increase in total riders comes partly from double-digit growth in the front-mounted riding units. This is significant because this is the first year mid-mounts have decreased in many years. This decrease in commercial mid-mounts may be attributed to the growth trend in consumer mid-mounts.

Front-mounted riders showed a nice bump in sales in '05; sales of mid mounts dropped.



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

VEHICLE CRASHES CAUSE CLAIMS

The most costly lost-time workers' compensation claims by cause of injury are for those resulting from motor-vehicle crashes. These injuries averaged more than \$32,900 per workers' compensation claim filed in 2002 and 2003.



SOURCE: NATIONAL COUNCIL ON COMPENSATION INSURANCE

H-2B CAP UPDATE

At last count (Jan. 25, 2006), the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services was in the process of approving H-2B visas for about 16,000 seasonal workers for the second half of 2006. The cap is set at 33,000 for this time period.

CURRENT H-2B CAP COUNT

	H-2B 1st Half (FY 06)	H-2B 2nd Half (FY 06)	H-2B FY 06
Cap	33,000	33,000	66,000
Beneficiaries Approved	–	5,633	54,079
Beneficiaries Pending	–	10,861	13,191
TOTAL	Cap Reached	16,494	67,270
Date of last Count	12/15/2005	1/25/2006	1/25/2006

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Understand your customers' demographics

As a Baby Boomer, I've watched succeeding generations with some confusion, until last week. The preferences younger homeowners show for high-impact homes and surroundings, brand name style and "do-it-for-me" services seems sometimes foreign to me. I like nice things too, but am a little slower to open my purse. Those folks will spend freely, and quickly.

These trends made more sense after I attended an eye-opening seminar presenting customer demographics, held as part of the American Nursery & Landscape Association's annual Management Clinic. The presenters, Kip Creel and Ian Baldwin, debuted some new research on how younger homeowners look at services, spending, landscapes and home improvement services.

The 'now' generation

Creel and Baldwin contend that the younger generation of homeowners is looking for a lot more than do-it-yourself solutions at big box or small garden centers. They want style and they'll pay for it. This trend, which Creel and Baldwin have documented, means more money will flow into landscape services in the future. Add those dollars to the continuing growth of professional landscape services, and you'll see an industry with ever more opportunities to prosper. This trend also offers a huge opportunity to garden centers who can adapt to it.

Evolve now

Creel and Baldwin's message to an audience of many garden

center owners was "change or else."

Their research says younger homeowners will spend serious money on landscape consulting, design, construction, installation and maintenance services. When garden centers start focusing on this package, they'll benefit widely.

Pay attention, landscape contractors. As more garden centers get this message, they'll offer stiff competition. They've spent years building an image of knowledge and good advice on plants, installation and care. You'll have to compete on other elements within your areas of expertise: expert design, smooth project management skills, construction and installation expertise, and other advantages you bring to your market.

Everyone seems to have a different dollar amount in mind when they talk about the "high-end" client they want to reach. This get-it-done generation of homeowners adds a new dimension to "high-end," and can offer long-term good business for you.

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CIRCLE NO. 102

Get data smart

A good database is a must for green professionals

By Judith M. Guido / Columnist

A database can increase your free time, help you understand sales trends, enable better customer communications and increase sales.

It's more than a glorified mailing list. A database is a targeted list of sales leads waiting to happen. It is a collection of records on customers, prospects and defectors that can and should include:

- Name, address, e-mail and phone numbers
- How and when the prospect contacted you
- Sales potential
- Past purchase activity
- Demographics, psychographics, buying characteristics (i.e. hobbies, profession, buying preferences)
- Past marketing material they've responded to or have been sent
- Current supplier (if a prospect or defector)
- Specific customer needs
- Notes on property
- Criteria they use to select a design-build contractor.

You get out what you put in

The great part about a database is that the more questions you ask of your customers and prospects, the more you can build your database. There is a direct correlation between



Use your data

Here are a few great applications for a database:

1. Send out routine mailings (direct or e-mails) to qualified candidates every two to three months. Your database will tell you who to mail and what to send to them.
2. Send thank you gifts and promotional offers to your best customers.
3. Determine when customers are due to order a specific product or service and call them in advance. This reduces your sales costs and minimizes your chances of losing to the competition.
4. Run a special campaign directed only at prospects who are customers of your competition.
5. Contact customers whose sales have been declining and find out why.

what you put into your database and what you get out of it. The more you put into it, the greater the competitive advantage and the greater the sales revenue you'll reap.

Once you build a database, you can segment it and target specific customers who are more likely to buy a certain product or service over another. For example, if you want to host a seminar on waterscaping, nightscaping or hardscaping, you can decide which of the characteristics in your database will make someone an ideal candidate, then pull those names. With a mailing list, you might mail out information to everyone (wasting time and money). With a database, you can mail out (or send electronically) fewer pieces to targeted customers.

Building a database today is inexpensive and easier than ever before to use, so there's no excuse not to have one. If you see your competition driving home early, it probably means they are already using a good database. ■

Judy Guido is principal of Guido & Associates, a company that has been helping green companies grow their people and profits for over 20 years. She can be reached at 818/800-0135 or jmguido@sbcglobal.net

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Never close a sale

If you'd like your profits to grow, stop trying to close sales

By Jim Paluch / Columnist

Notice I didn't say "stop selling." What I'm suggesting is shifting the focus from closing a sale to validating a relationship. Nobody wants to be "closed." In fact, this language makes it sound like we're manipulating others to get what we want, and right from the moment of the "close," we've invented an adversarial relationship.

That's not what professional sales people do. The pros focus on building mutually supportive relationships. Instead of closing the sale, good sales people enter into long-term relationships. People want to buy from others they trust and respect. Why not be that person?

Eddie Padilla, sales representative at Heads Up Landscape Contractors in Albuquerque, NM, sets lofty goals and then works hard to build long-term rela-



tionships. "Setting and tracking my goals helps me produce for the company," he says. "But the biggest pay off is in my repeat business. Clients keep coming back because they trust me. They know I may not always be the cheapest, but they know they don't have to worry when I'm working for them. Because I meet my personal sales goals, my clients can meet their goals as well. We help each other, and that's what building relationships is all about."

What is a success?

Like Eddie, do everything you can to hit your monthly sales goals. You have control over setting those goals. It doesn't matter if you focus on achieving a certain number of renewals or signed agreements or increased billings. Choose something and then come up with a plan to get there.

Next, separate yourself from your competition. You don't want to be a basic commodity. People want to do business with you because you have a unique identity that will help them in their pursuits.

Make sure you understand your clients' anticipated experiences. What does your potential client want from working with you? Articulate the vision back to potential clients by showing how working with you will exceed their anticipated experience. If you've succeeded in this regard, then there's only one thing left to do: Validate the relationship.

Ask your prospective clients if you've done everything possible to help them move forward. Most people never validate the relationship because they don't ask. If both you and your prospect have agreed that you could benefit each other, then ask him or her to sign the agreement to enter into a business relationship.

For the past seven years, we've held Sales Jams where we've taught these relationship-building concepts. People who use these ideas report increased sales success. Eddie is one of those people who blew past his sales goal for 2005. By setting and tracking sales goals, successful salespeople are aware of the things that propel them to greater victories. They look at clients as fellow humans who will benefit from a relationship, not as prospects waiting to be "closed."

To ensure your sales success, quit trying to do something *to* people. Instead, do something *for* people. Be a professional, build relationships and watch your career take off. ■

Jim Paluch and the JP Horizons Team have helped individuals and companies across the country grow their sales success. To find out more about their Sales Jams call 1-877-JPH-JAMS, e-mail beth@jphorizons.com or visit www.jphorizons.com.

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It's Good to be King

Increase profitability by separating yourself from the competition

By Jeff Scott / Contributor

It is often said the best margins are made by one of two opposing business strategies: either become the low-cost producer (like Wal-Mart) or the highly differentiated company (like Starbucks). We are going to explore the latter: How can a small company gain a big advantage and higher margins by differentiating themselves from their competitors?

On the playground, children play King of the Mountain by scrambling over one another. The ones who

INCREASE PROFITS, PART 1 of 2

When you create a market niche that no one else owns, one that is special and desirable in the client's mind, you can charge higher margins and fend off low-ball competition.

Mountain climbing

I learned how to play the business game at my family's firm, Glen Gate Pool & Property. We identified and conquered a niche in the marketplace that no one else had, and by doing so we became king of a very specific mountain. This has given us a great competitive advantage and above-average margins. Glen Gate started off more than 30 years ago as a gunite swimming pool company and has evolved to where landscape-based sales make up 50% of sales.



In our analysis a few years ago, we realized we were only No. 4 in the swimming pool market in our service area, and No. 5 in the landscape market. We were one of 15 players in the landscape architecture business, and one of 20 players in the maintenance market. We also service hundreds of swimming pools, but we are barely in the Top 10. We could not compete head-on in any of these markets, let alone in all of these markets.

So we decided to stop.

We stopped advertising these products separately. We stopped calling ourselves a pool company or landscape company. We carved a brand new mountain for ourselves — the Pool & Property mountain, where we design, build and maintain pools and properties for residential homeowners. On this mountain, we have the highest market share, and we have become known as the best and perhaps the only company to offer this type of one-stop-shop service.

Continued on page 8

CHOOSING a niche, such as water features or hardscapes, can focus your company on success.

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Plan for success

To be "King of the Mountain," you must satisfy three criteria as best you can:

1. You must have a unique selling point (USP).
2. Your firm must have the highest market share in that niche.
3. You must fill an unidentified need in the marketplace.

In this article we will explore USPs; in the next issue we will look at market share and need.

When you define your USP, avoid the terms "service" and "quality." Every company claims these as its strengths, so by definition, they are not unique. Creating a USP is hard work and takes time, introspection and discussion. Consider the following:

Make it relevant. Can you simply be



IF YOU ARE a "David" up against "Goliaths" in your market, focus on the select services and relationships only you can offer your clients.

known as the company with the bright green shirts? Or the company that imports banana trees? Or the company that drives red Volkswagen Beetles? Your USP must be desirable for the consumer, who probably doesn't care what car you drive or shirt you wear.

First to the top wins. If you can be the first company to reach the mountain's peak, then you have the best chance to defend attacks from all flanks — and the best chance to become known for miles around as the king of

that specific mountain. When other companies copy you after you have entrenched yourself, they will claim they do what you do but better, cheaper, etc. If this happens, everyone will know you are the original and (hopefully) the best. Take Toyota, for example. It is clearly staking a claim for itself in the emerging hybrid car and truck market. Its first-mover status should give an advantage over the also-rans.

There is one caveat to this, however, and that is when a competitor is





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CIRCLE NO. 106

much bigger than you. Think of Microsoft vs. all the other computer software providers in the industry as an example. When you are a "David," your best chance to succeed is to tighten your niche even further and add services and relationships that "Goliath" can't copy.

Personality perks. If you are a very small firm, there is one source from which you can always create a unique niche that no one can copy: your own personality. What makes you lovable, memorable, attractive or interesting? These traits alone will likely not create a new mountain, but they can be used to differentiate your business. Even larger companies can capitalize on the charms of their leaders. Take, for example, the marketing success the fast-food chain Wendy's enjoyed under the leadership and persona of its late founder, Dave Thomas.

CULTIVATE a list of strengths to help find your unique selling point (USP).

What's in a name? Does your company's name have to state your niche? Not necessarily. "Glen Gate" does not say what we do. It's our tag line, "Pool & Property," that states which mountain we are king of. You can always change your tag line with a new strategy; but think it over carefully before considering changing your name.

Take action

After considering the above factors, identify a list of products, services skills, assets and other strengths that make you unique in the marketplace. What strengths have made you successful so far? What strengths have supported you the longest? What things do you do that your competitors don't?

Then, identify the strengths and USPs of your main competitors, everyone who has more market share than you and those competitors you



believe to be making the best margins. In the next issue, we will explore how these two lists can catapult you to the top of the mountain. ■

Jeff Scott is co-owner and president of client relations for Glen Gate Pool & Property, Wilton, CT. He has his MBA and regularly speaks on "The Six Marketing Secrets You Won't Learn in Business School." Contact him at JeffS@glengatecompany.com.

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Touch Someone

Effective communication keeps customers happy — and loyal

By Brian Albright / Contributor

David Thorn knows the value of keeping in touch with customers. Thorn's company, Chagrin Falls, OH-based DTR Associates, makes an extra effort to keep the firm's name fresh in the minds of its residential clients using a combination of reminder mailings and good publicity. But when Thorn went looking for a new facility to house his \$1.7-million landscape design firm, he stumbled upon an even more innovative marketing op-



DAVID THORN
DTR Associates



M. NICHOLAS LAWRENCE
Watters & Associates

portunity — a winery in nearby Aurora that could serve as a showcase for the firm's designs, as well as provide new business opportunities.

"Our design offices will be there, with the production facility in the back," Thorn says. "This will be a backdrop for our main business. We can get people to come to the winery and see landscapes they wouldn't otherwise see. It will be like a home and flower show year-round."

When ThornCreek Winery & Gardens opens next year, Thorn plans to host a grand opening party for customers. In addition to selling wine, the company will also rent the facility out for wedding receptions and other events, giving even more exposure to DTR's design work.

Not every firm can lure more customer business with fine vintages, but other companies are finding new ways to mine business from their existing clients with a mix of company newsletters, direct mail pieces, e-mail campaigns and user-friendly websites. In the process, they're building better relationships with their customers and providing better service.



POSTCARDS, like these from Watters & Associates, are one way to add to your client pool.



Keeping customers in the loop

While DTR doesn't yet have its own client newsletter, other companies leverage this tried-and-true marketing tool to remind their clientele about seasonal maintenance, and provide updates on new services. Rome, GA-based Watters & Associates Landscape mails a quarterly newsletter to its 500-plus customers. The glossy, folded newsletter includes profiles of recent projects, maintenance schedule reminders, and even staff wedding and baby announcements.

Watters is a \$3.5-million firm with 60 employees that services northern Georgia. The client mix is about 70% residential (largely design-build) and 30% commercial. "We target the newsletter mainly toward our maintenance clients," says M. Nicholas Lawrence, vice president of the design team at Watters. "Sometimes there may be another phase of work we can get out of them."

Borst Landscape & Design in Allendale, NJ, recently changed its customer newsletter from a monthly to a quarterly publication. "We can stay in front of people that we may not do monthly or weekly services for," says founder and President Mark Borst. "We want them to see our name every three months."

The \$5.5-million firm employs 70

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CIRCLE NO. 109

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people during peak season. Borst uses an outside company, Focal Point Communications (www.grow-pro.com), to put the newsletter together. The newsletter, which is also available on Borst's website, reaches 1,500 clients and costs the company about \$6,000 per year.

Wauconda, IL-based ILT Vignocchi sends its newsletter to 500 existing clients and 400 prospects the company culls from the *Haines Directory*. Vignocchi produces the front-and-back printed newsletter in-house. "People just want to be communicated to," says President Donna Vignocchi. "I don't think you need to spend a fortune on a newsletter. People get a lot of newsletters, and often they just go in the trash. You have to differentiate yourself."

Friendly reminders

Direct mail is a good way to let clients know when they're due for seasonal maintenance services. Watters recently sent out a series of color postcards to customers as part of a new campaign. The company sent out 500 cards in three waves, a month apart, with different cards focusing on its install, maintenance and irrigation services.

Watters used an address directory available on the Rome, GA, website to target homes that were nearby current clients.

Direct mail is a good way to let clients know when they are due for seasonal maintenance **services**.

"It's been pretty effective so far," Lawrence says. "We've gotten some good leads. We ask everyone where they hear about us, and keep a running tally of what's working."

DTR takes a direct approach by using printed door hangers. While work is being done, the com-

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NEWSLETTERS, like these from Borst Landscape & Design, are a great way to keep your name in front of your clients, and show your expertise to potential clients.

pany provides pre-printed door hangers to clients that they can use to communicate with the foreman when they're not home. Later, if crews are working in a nearby neighborhood, DTR staff put door hangers on past client's doors with treatment or maintenance notes on them. "We want them to know that we still value them as customers," Thorn says. "And it puts our name in front of them."

ILT Vignocchi presents its customers with a detailed budgeting tool at the beginning of a contract, which allows them to prioritize services based on their budget. Later in the year, Vignocchi re-issues those proposals with suggestions for additional services. Often, these are tailored for unusual weather conditions, such as the drought that Chicago experienced this year. "Because of the drought, we got around 75% of those proposals back, signed," Vignocchi says. The company also conducts a customer satisfaction survey twice per year, which gets a 35% response rate.

Continued on page 14

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YOUR WEBSITE should be an important part of your marketing efforts. A well-designed site can be used to collect client and prospect contact information, and are often a prospective client's first impression of your company.

Continued from page 12

The electronic frontier

The Internet has provided even more client communication options. Many firms communicate with clients before, during and after a project using e-mail and text pagers, and several are experimenting



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with e-mail marketing campaigns.

"E-mail is working wonderfully," says Lawrence at Watters & Associates. "Most clients love to communicate by e-mail, because they can answer our questions or access us whenever it's convenient for them."

The company asks each prospective client for their e-mail address and preferred method of communication, and more and more customers are agreeing to provide e-mail information.

Using e-mail as a client marketing tool still has its pitfalls, though. Many customers are reluctant to provide e-mail information because of concerns about spam. When ILT Vignocchi asked its customers whether they wanted to receive the company newsletter via e-mail, more than three quarters of them said no. "I think some people miss paper," Vignocchi says. "You have to find something else besides technology to make an impression. E-mail is not going to do it."

Good publicity

Not every interaction has to involve a sales pitch, of course. There are plenty of ways to get your firm noticed, generate publicity, and even perform good works at the same time. At Watters & Associates, many of the company's employees are involved in community organizations. Lawrence himself works with the local historical museum, Rotary, and Habitat for Humanity chapter.

Thorn tries to keep DTR's name in the news by participating in the National Home & Garden Show, and entering client sites in national and local competitions. "It's a great ego boost for our customers for them to know their project is a first-place winner in Ohio or nationally," Thorn says.

Measuring the success of a client marketing campaign is difficult, and often relies on asking customers how they heard about the company or a new service. According to Borst, though, this type of client marketing does help generate business, and more

The company **asks each prospective client** for their e-mail address and **preferred method** of communication.

importantly, provides another opportunity to help customers keep their landscapes looking good. "The better the service that we provide, the more

they feel at ease with us," Borst says. "About 80% of our business is through referrals, and service is really a key element of that." ■

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CIRCLE NO. 111

Speaking of Color



When it comes to color, it's better to show than tell customers about it

By Heather Pittinger / Contributor

In this business, there's really no such thing as "too much" color in a landscape — although the array of choices available today can be daunting during the design process. Jessie Atchison, industry communications manager for west Chicago-based Ball Horticultural Co., notes there has been a trend in recent years toward dark, bold colors, like deep red or purple, as well as vivid hues such as yellow, orange and fuchsia. While pastels are still popular, she says, the deeper, more regal shades seem to give a sense of fun or luxury.

"Also, more annuals are being introduced that are grown for their foliage, not their flowers — so colors like silver, burgundy, rose and black can be brought into the design without relying on the plants being in

bloom," Atchison adds.

Barb Terrell, Ball's landscape program manager, points out that there are more mixes of impatiens, pansies, petunias and other annuals available today that offer a uniform flowering time and size across all colors.

"You can provide a multi-color look without worrying about certain colors flowering later than others, or some plants being shorter or taller than others," she says.

Container plantings continue to be popular for adding splashes of color to entryways and other spaces



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COLOR choices can be daunting to clients if they're not presented well.

To make the decisions easier, show samples of color usage from past projects, websites or magazines. Make sure you have a reliable supply of the latest colorful flowers and plants so that you can provide the latest and greatest varieties to your clients.

where large beds aren't practical. Atchison notes that they're also good for customers wanting to experiment with color because they are easy to move, change or switch out: "Annuals are ready-made for these situations," she says.

Shades of marketing

Changing out plants throughout the seasons, offering an array of color palettes in the process, is a great way to not only stay in contact with customers but establish repeat business, says Terrell.

"If you've already had a successful mixed or mono planting and can show that to your customer, it's easy to demonstrate how you can change the look to fit their needs by using differ-

It's so **much easier** to recommend colors or plant varieties to your customers if you have an **established supply**.

ent colors," she explains. "If you've had success with impatiens, for example, there's a huge range of colors, flower forms, plant habits and even foliage colors within impatiens that you can use to change the look. You can also use photos from websites or other sources to demonstrate good use of color to your customer."

In addition to using outside art sources, Atchison recommends taking photos of your accounts and building a portfolio to give both new and existing customers ideas of what's possible on their property. Organizing the photos with similar color families can help a customer who likes the color yellow, for example, see several variations on

the color theme and realize what all is available to them in their area.

It's important to be able to deliver on the look, however. Terrell advises establishing a relationship with a good wholesale grower so you can preorder and guarantee the availability of the best varieties for your area's climate.

"It's so much easier to recommend colors or plant varieties to your customers if you have an established supply," she says. "That way, you know you can follow through on your recommendations, and your customers will appreciate that they'll know exactly what they're getting." ■



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CIRCLE NO.107

INSTALLING DIFFICULT

Retaining Walls

By Gary and Cynthia Kinman / Columnists

If retaining walls are not difficult to install, then you're probably not retaining anything. Today's landscape design-build contractors install retaining walls for two reasons: for structural reasons to retain slopes and modify the site, or for aesthetic reasons.

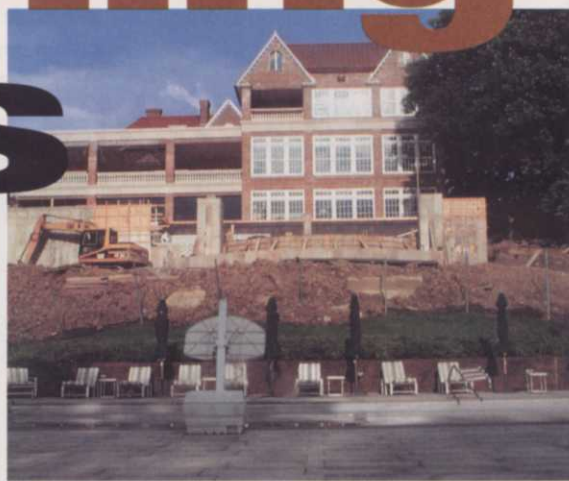
Adding structure

Gravity is why we need retaining walls. Typical gravity structures, such as rocks, walls or crib walls, rely on their own weight to counter slope movement. Cantilevered structures are anchored to stable soils that underlie slide material. Other types of retaining structures include tie-back walls and reinforced earth embankments. Retaining structures can be placed at the base, middle or near the top of a slope, depending on the nature of the potential landslide and the type of wall.

If you really need a retaining wall, then the site itself will be difficult to work on. Steep grades or drop-offs make site access hazardous, and may require a temporary plateau to be built up with soils so equipment can get to the area and maneuver. Don't underestimate how lack of site preparation will exponentially impact your profits and quality of the work your installation crew can do. Make the work area easy and safe to work in.

Good engineering is critical

Skilled installation and proper design is paramount. Retaining wall structures can be expensive, not from the materials and labor for installation, but because of the preparation and planning. Most landscape contractors cost out a job based on what their industry supplier suggests materials cost, plus labor. Some suppliers will even help you calculate how much of their product you will need for the



THIS SITE had a severe slope that didn't allow for construction accessibility. A temporary road was built so cranes, dozers and concrete trucks could get in. This was the slope previous to the temporary road being built.

wall based on what your dimensions are. Your supplier will not be held liable for the construction warranty, however. Many suppliers can become a fair-weather friend the minute a project goes sour and their product was used on the installation.

Good engineers and competent landscape architects can be your best allies. Their fees may be the best investment when designing retaining walls. They are a reliable source for making good decisions and recommending what materials to use, because they are not making a commission on a product sale. Their fee the first couple of times may seem like unnecessary expenses to a project, but what you will learn from their expertise you will carry with you on every wall you build after that. Remember, failures of retaining walls are relatively common and repairs can be far more expensive than the original work.

Dealing with drainage

Problems can occur when water builds up behind improperly drained structures, putting excessive loads on the wall or weakening it. Drainage systems are relatively simple. The goal is to prevent the build-up of water accumulating behind the wall. Areas where

Continued on page 21



Continued from page 18

freeze/thaw occurs can be catastrophic if water freezes and expands between the structure and a frozen hill of soil. Something has to give, and it will be the wall.

There are many standard drainage systems that can be found in manuals, books and online. You don't have to reinvent drainage systems. They are already designed — and sometimes prepackaged for the specific job you are doing.

Enhancing the site

Designing enhancement walls can be just as important as the structural needs of retaining walls, but for different reasons. Enhancement walls can offer benefits to the site or user just as much as structural retaining walls can secure the site's use.

Designing walls to extend the architecture; control pedestrian and vehicular movement; create outdoor rooms; or screen views can make the design succeed. The design of the walls' heights, depth and materials should be driven by form and function. The materials will be dictated by the existing architectural qualities of the dominant structure. You will want to relate them somehow.

Use your expertise to consider the owner's suggestions and draw inspiration from it, but don't be afraid to enlighten them to what would be more appropriate. When you educate them to their options, based on classical design principles and prevalent architectural elements, they will quickly see what is correct. In that same vein, don't be influenced by suppliers offering you inventory clearance or whatever is readily available from the warehouse. Choosing the right materials may require a week or two delay, or more money, but if it is truly the right choice, don't compromise.

In every project, you must be able to ask yourself why you are making the decisions about retaining walls. Is it from a design enhancement or structural decision? If you have ex-

plored your options, used the resources readily available to you, held to design principles and considered structural needs, then installing walls shouldn't be difficult. ■

THIS RETAINING WALL had a high level of difficulty because the backyard depth offered limited access. The extreme slope, and the existing mature white pine trees that the client requested remain, required the patio to be floated over the root systems so as not to compact the soil and eventually kill them.

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Project Portfolio #17

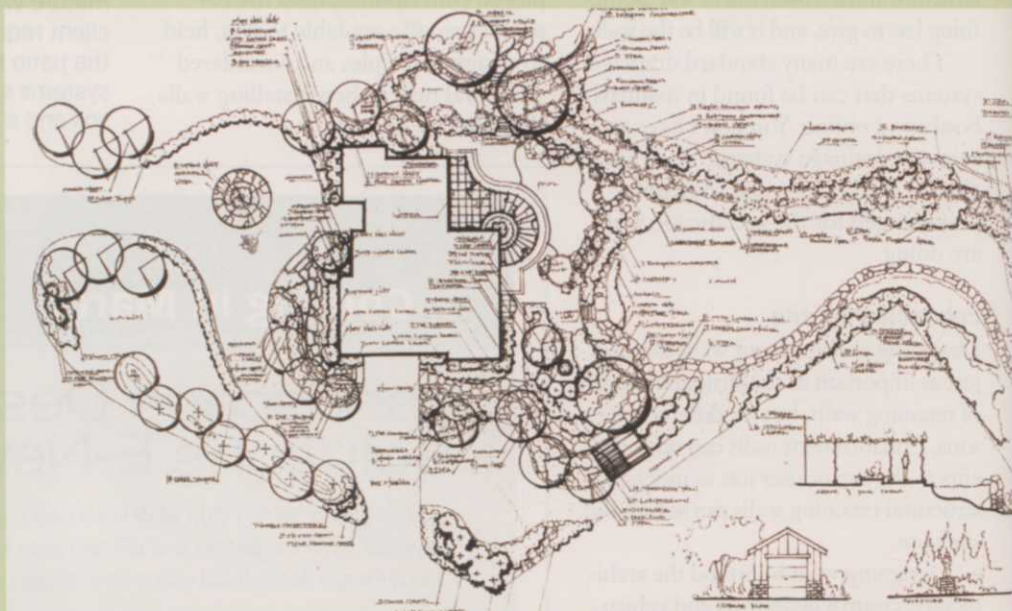
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The design

A waterscaped respite overlooking a lake for a Tennessee residence.

The site before construction

Relatively undeveloped land between the clients and their neighbors, who had some input on the budget and design.



Project Requirements

- Incorporate arbor on eastern exposure.
- Include negative edge pool, stone retaining walls, lighting and irrigation.
- Waterscape must feature a fish pond with waterfall and winding creek to the lake.

Challenges and Limitations

- Working with two clients on the same project with varying tastes, desires and budgets.
- Tennessee Valley Electric Association's flood elevation of 423 ft., which encroaches on the property and requires strict guidelines on natural planting and hardscapes.
- Drainage and grade change issues (solved with underground ADS N-12 pipe)
- Geology of the area created a shallow soil zone, causing problems during drainage and pool construction.



LEFT The site, shown here before work on the project commenced, lies on the clients' property line (the primary client's residence is in the background). Both clients requested a fish pond with waterfall and winding creek to the lake.

BELOW LEFT The arbor and pool plastering, under construction. Note the curved stone steps that coincide with the arbor curve.

BELOW The neighbor's sitting area by the fish pond. The negative-edge pool waterfall, stone wall, deciduous hollies and arbor are uplighted for viewing by passing boaters.





ABOVE The finished project incorporates a negative-edge waterfall, arbor, fish pond with waterfall (in background) and plantings to soften the natural stone wall.

RIGHT The kitchen window of the primary client offers a view of the terraced wall and plantings. The stone path gives access from the garage to the pool area.



Project Principals

- Michael Hatcher & Associates, Memphis
- Percent residential/commercial: 50/50
- 60 full-time employees
- 2005 revenue: \$6.5 million
- Designer for the project: Chris Reifers
- Foreman for the project: Shea Sullivan
- Lighting design created with the help of SPJ Lighting Inc., South El Monte, CA.
- Project budget: \$260,000

LEFT Standing between the two residences, one can view the upper fish pond, the waterfall and the bridge to the lake.

This project was a Merit Award winner in PLANET's Environmental Improvement Awards program. For more information on this program, or other services of the Professional Landcare Network, please call 800/395-2522 or visit www.landcarenetwork.org.

HOW TO Install Pavers

Clay and concrete pavers will last many years if installed properly. The first step is to prepare a good base. For more information on preparing a base for a paver walkway or patio, please visit www.landscapedesign-build.com/paverbase. The steps below explain how to place the pavers so they'll stay put.

This project was installed using PAVE TECH Inc.'s Pave Edge restraints and Probst tools and equipment. For more information, visit www.pavetech.com or call 800/728-3832.



1 Add a coarse, washed concrete bedding sand to the prepared base. The best way to screed sand is with 1-in. outside diameter metal pipes. Place the pipe on top of the compacted base, then cover the base with piles of sand to prevent the pipes from moving and sand from getting under them. Use a flat shovel to scrape the sand off the top of the pipes to obtain a visual idea of how much sand will be needed between the pipes for screeding. Fill the area between the pipes and pull the screed board across the top of the pipes to strike off the sand.



5 The goal of each work day is to complete the section of pavement laid. This means that the bond lines are straight, body pavers are cut, the soldier course laid, the edging is spiked in place, the pavers are compacted and the joints are filled with joint sand. String lines are pulled across the pavement in both directions to make sure that all the bond lines are straight. Make sure the bond lines are straight before any pavers are marked and cut.



6 There are many tools that make marking and cutting pavers easier. If you don't have a tool, such as PaverSCRIBE, you will need to hold a soldier course paver over the top of the body pavers and mark the cut. Make sure to mark an X on the part of the paver that is to be removed.



7 Use a tub style table saw with a diamond blade. Many saws can cut pavers wet or dry. Wet cutting eliminates the dust, but make sure that the pavers are rinsed well after cutting to prevent staining. Follow the safety recommendations of the saw you're using. After the body pavers have been marked and cut, the soldier course can be put in place.



2 After reaching the end of the screed pipe, slide the pipe across the top of the base and repeat step 1 until reaching the end of the base. After removing the screed pipes, fill and level the voids left from them. Try to only screed as much sand as can be covered that day: Rain or other disturbances can disrupt bedding sand not covered by pavers, requiring it to be re-screeded the following day.



3 Start by laying a soldier course, then follow with laying the body pavers. On this project, the body pavers were laid until they reached the approximate edge of pavement. When laying pavements that are curved, it is best to install the paver edge restraint first.



4 When the pavers need to be cut, setting the edge restraint first will help create a smooth curve. It also a good time for the homeowner to approve the design. PAVE TECH's Pave Edge Rigid and Flexible edging was used on this project. For straight edges on residential applications, spike every 2 to 3 ft. using 10-in. long by 3/8-in. diameter

steel landscape spikes. Don't pound the spikes all the way down until the curve is complete, in case there is a flat spot and adjustments need to be made. Spike the edging directly into the base material, never on top of the bedding sand. Before starting a curve, start straight for 2 to 3 ft., then curve. Make sure to maintain a smooth curve as the edging is spiked in.



8 Now that all the pavers have been cut and installed, it is time to do the first compaction on top of the pavers. First place a little sand between the soldier course pavers and the edging if there are any gaps. For larger gaps, such as by retaining wall block edges, fill the void with a little base material. Place a little sand between gapped soldier course pavers to prevent them from twisting during the initial compaction.



9 Finally, sweep off the entire pavement and start compacting. The first compaction of the pavement starts the interlock process and ensures a smooth surface. Any height deviations from paver to paver will be removed from the top of the pavement at this time. If this project only had concrete pavers, the 5,000-lb. centrifugal force compactor could be run directly on top of the pavers. When using clay pavers, attach a rubber mat to the bottom of the plate compactor to minimize chipping and cracking. Always start compacting the pavers along the outside edging, allowing the plate to hang over the edge of the pavers. Then make circles around the pavement, working toward the center. Always overlap each pass by a third of the plate width. Make three or four passes around the entire pavement and the first compaction is complete.

Continued on page 26

HOW TO Install Pavers CONTINUED



10 Fill the joints with a coarse, washed concrete sand. This sand takes more time to get into the joints, but is also more difficult to wash out. Do not use silica sand or mason sand. Use a joint sand stabilizer to bind the joint sand together.

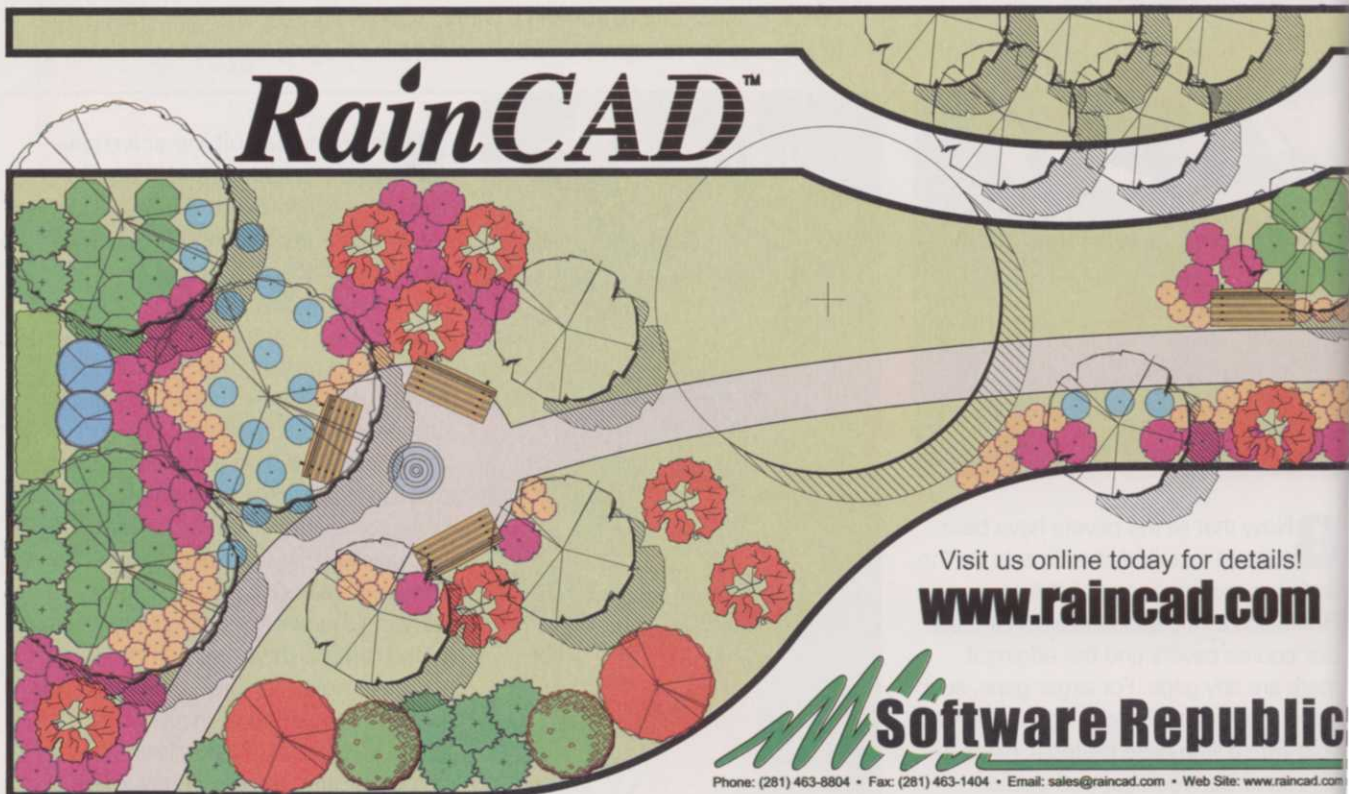


11 With the layer of joint sand spread, run the plate compactor again in the same method as the first compaction. Continue sweeping and compacting until the joints are full. Stop the compactor and spot check the pavement with a 2-in. putty knife. Push straight down with the knife — if the sand pushes down, continue sweeping and compacting.



12 Once the joints are full, thoroughly sweep off the entire pavement. Next, use a leaf blower to blow off any remaining sand and stabilizer from the surface. The joint sand should be at the bottom of the chamfer (the rounded top edge of the paver), not the top of the paver.

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CIRCLE NO. 108

Continued from page 27

multi-terrain loaders, as well as the 302.5, 303.5 and 303 CR mini hydraulic excavators. Recommended carrier weight is 5,500 to 9,900 lbs. The new hammer is compatible with the Caterpillar pin grabber quick coupler system. For expanded versatility, the H55Ds can be equipped with a chisel,moil, spade or compacting plate.

For more information, circle No. 198.

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Little Wonder's new Self-Propelled High Performance Vacuum (HPV) features a hydrostatic drive to power over any terrain with complete control. The unit is powered by a 6.5-hp Briggs Intek I/C engine, offers a forward variable speed of up to 4.8 mph, powered reverse and large tread rear wheels for added traction. The hydrostatic transaxle also features an automatic re-



turn-to-neutral feature when the control mechanism is released to ensure user safety. The unit is designed to handle the collection of rocks, bottles, cans, glass, paper, leaves, wet debris and fine material quickly and completely.

For more information, circle No. 197.

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tern, promoting moisture retention and release. A low-profile frame design offers good visibility of all working parts. With a 4-ft. width, the power box rake can efficiently manage small, confined space jobs or much larger jobs.

For more information, circle No. 196.

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Lifting/Moving Equipment

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Haulz-All introduces the Über Mover 200BB 2-wheeled power brick and block carrier. It features a 24-in. width that can handle a payload capacity of up to 650 lbs. on hard, level surfaces, an oak deck and dash and thick handles and legs. It runs on twin 12-volt rechargeable batteries, requiring no gas or oil and emitting no fumes or noise. It can run up to six hours continuously, with a recharge time of between four and six hours and a maximum speed of 3 mph.

For more information, circle No. 194.



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CIRCLE NO. 113

CIRCLE NO. 114

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CIRCLE NO. 115

Hire an 'A' player

By Kevin Kehoe / Contributor

At some point, every growing company will need to hire the right project manager. After years of selling, designing and overseeing installations, the owner-manager gets stuck. The owner can't grow the company any larger because he or she doesn't have the time to effectively do three jobs: sales, design and project management. The solution? Hire a manager to oversee the installation, and allow the owner-manager to focus on sales and design.

You could promote your best foreman into the position, giving him or

her a raise in pay. This might work without costing you a lot of money. Chances are, however, that this person will not succeed in the job — he or she is probably a "B" player, and this is clearly an "A" player hire.

Don't get me wrong. Companies need "B" players. "B" players are great employees. But "B" players are not "A" players. An "A" player is a manager. A "B" player is a doer. You pay the "A" player to figure out what needs to be done. You pay the "B" players to get it done. The problem is "A" players cost more money. In the long run, however, "A" players should save you more money than they cost.

As an example, let's assume the "A"

At or around \$900,000 in annual revenues, you need a project manager. And if you hire the right one, you can grow to \$2 million with the only other hire (aside from crew leaders and members) being a design/draftsperson.

player costs \$20,000 more per year than the "B" player. How much impact would he or she need to make to justify the additional \$20,000? Let's assume that one of the impacts of the "A" player is to reduce wasted labor hours through better job planning and management. In this example, the \$20,000 increase in overhead would have to be exactly offset by a \$20,000 decrease in labor. At an average wage of \$15, this equates to a reduction in labor hours from 12,667 to 11,333. The difference of 1,333 hours per year can be reduced to a needed savings of less than one hour per man, per day.

Do you think that an "A" player project manager could find you one hour per day, per man in labor savings? In my experience, they usually deliver twice that amount in the first year. Is it worth the money to get the right person? It's not only worth it, but it's a must for a company that wants to grow. ■

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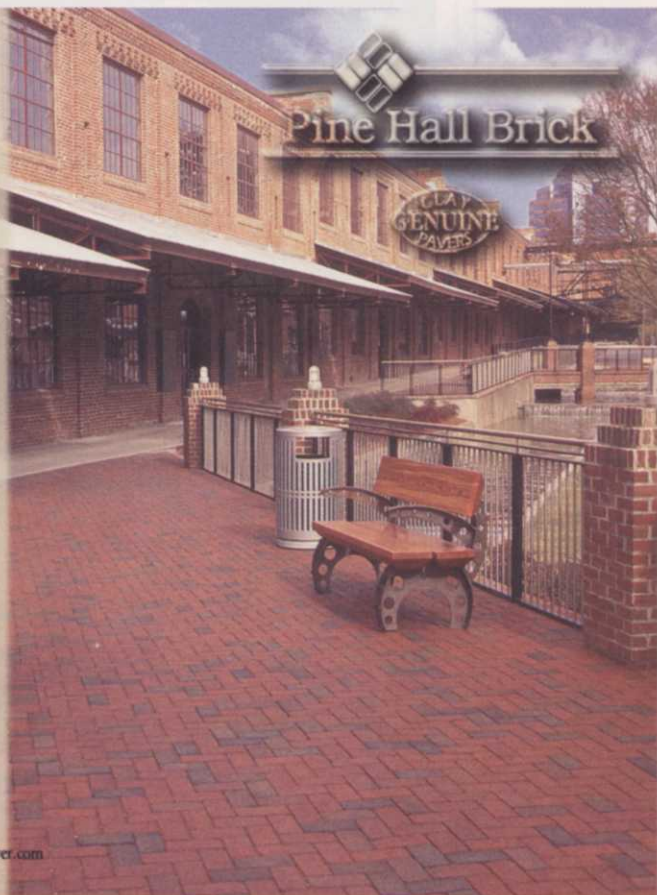
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