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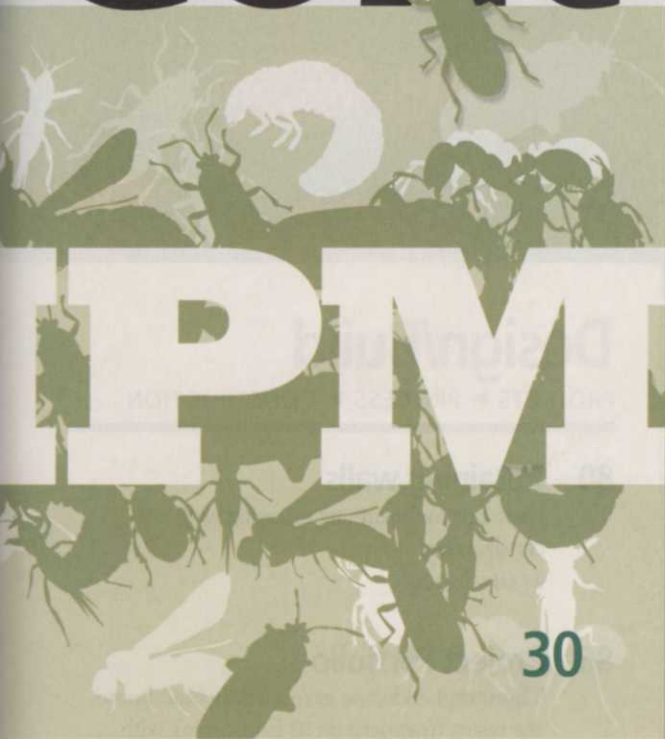
**50**  
YEARS  
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**CORRECTION** In the "Skyscaping," article appearing in the January issue the author neglected to mention that Weston Solutions was project manager. William McDonnough + Partners served as the architect. Roofscapes, Inc., was the project designer and provided construction supervision. The water consultant was Atelier Dreiseitl, the structural engineer, Halverson & Kay, the energy consultant, JT Katrakis & Associates and the MEP Engineer, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates.



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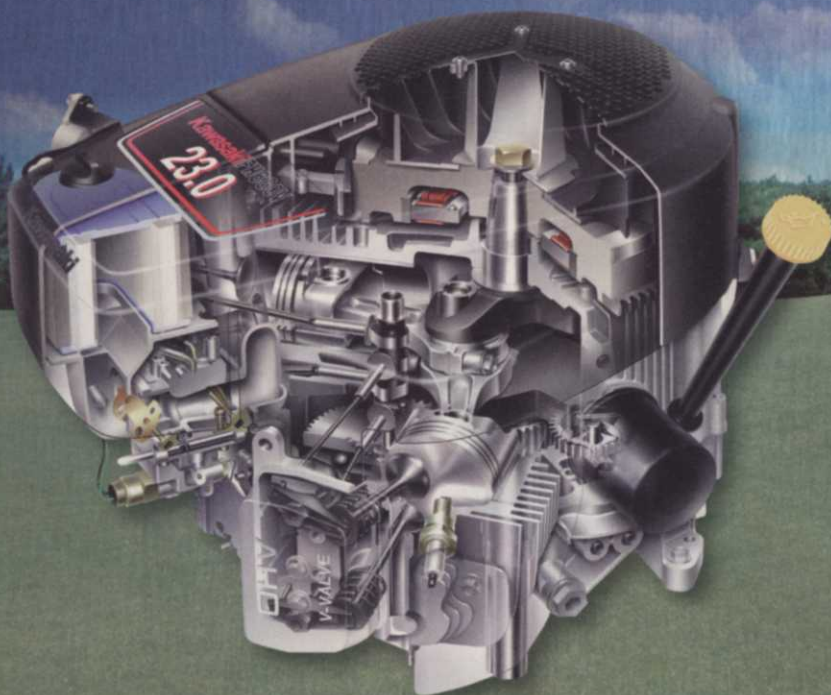
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How Jeff Bowen turned a passion into a business

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS





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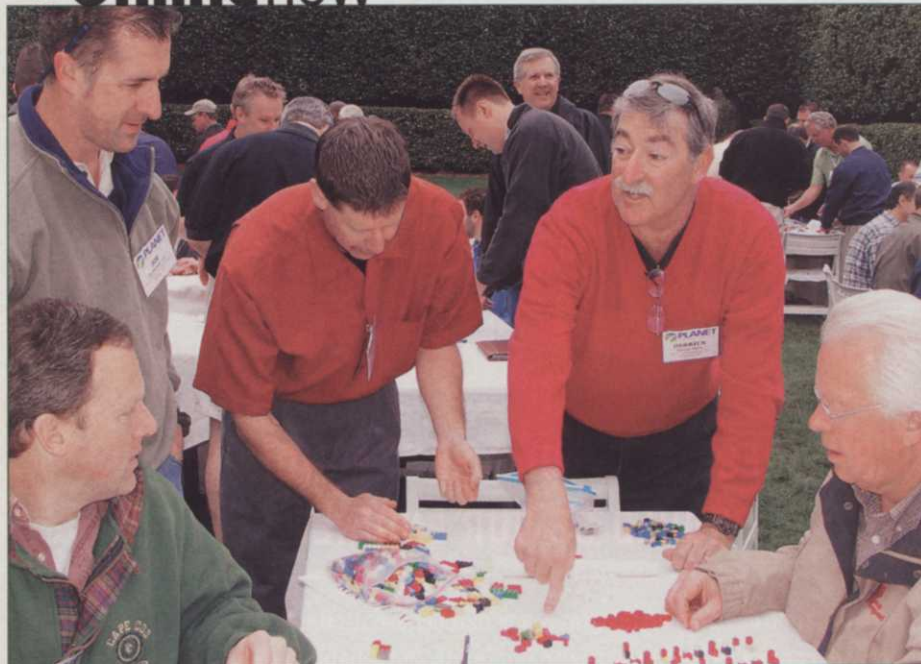
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### "You call that a gazogle?!!"

What's up with these landscape company owners and managers building small, plastic, skyscraper-like toys ("gazogles") out of LEGOs? They're competing to see which team can build them most efficiently at PLANET's recent Executive Forum.

## »Overheard

**"If you don't ask for referrals, you don't get referrals."**

— Mel Kleiman, president of Humetrics, speaking at the Bayer Healthy Lawns Summit, Cleveland, OH.

## »Readers respond

The spring season can make or break a landscaping business. **What are you most concerned about for your business as we move into spring?**

**58%** Finding quality labor

**9%** The weather: droughts, floods, water restrictions, snow, etc.

**18%** Competition and customer retention

**3%** Energy and fertilizer prices

**12%** The economy & slowing housing market

Want to weigh in? Our survey question changes every month and we publish the results here. Visit [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net) to voice your opinion.

## »Special issue

Landscape Management's Green Industry search engine Green-Seeker.com provides you with a listing of suppliers, distributors, associations and more online. Visit [www.green-seeker.com](http://www.green-seeker.com) for the most comprehensive compilation of industry resources.

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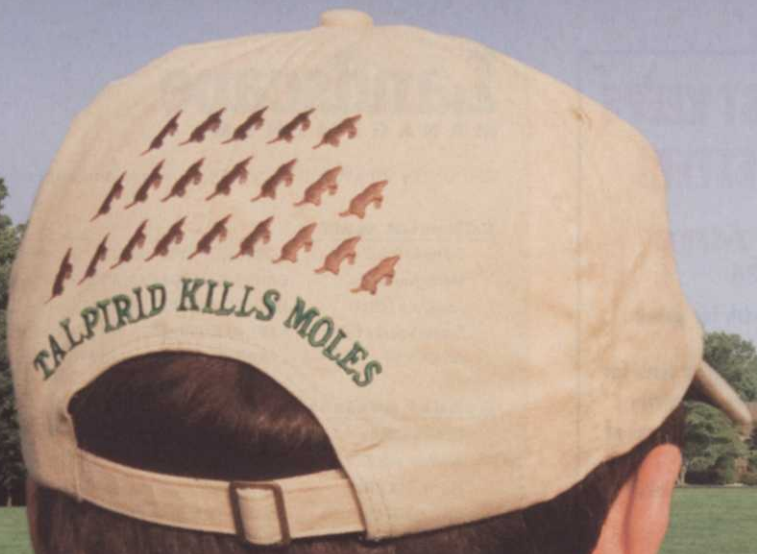
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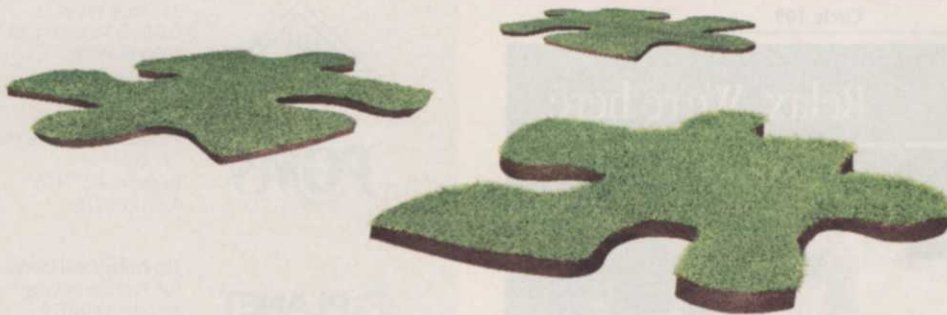
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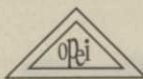
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## A greener look at business?

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor

**A**bout a month ago, I was shocked by a survey that showed 13% of Americans had never heard of global warming. Regardless of whether you believe global warming is real or not, you'd have to have been squatting in a cave for the last five years to completely avoid this topic. No newspapers, TV, movies or books. Nothing. Even cave dweller Osama Bin Laden probably has a bootleg DVD of Al Gore's *"An Inconvenient Truth."*

For the rest of us not living in caves, the environmental movement has grown strong, to the point of President George W. Bush calling climate change "a serious challenge" in his State of the Union address.

### Spare the doom and gloom

Shortly after Bush's speech, I attended a presentation given by architect/author/environmentalist William McDonough at the ANLA Management Clinic in Louisville, KY. I thought to myself, "Oh no. Not another doom-and-gloom, we're-all-going-to-die sermon." But, I was shocked. He didn't talk about cities 30 feet underwater, like in the movie *"The Day After Tomorrow."* He didn't talk about a world where we've exhausted our supply of fossil fuels.

McDonough was optimistic, energetic and realistic — talking about using technology and the human spirit to find solutions, like:

- ▶ A 10-acre "green roof" at a Ford plant in Dearborn, MI, that benefits the environment and lowers energy costs.
- ▶ The Gap's headquarters buildings in San Bruno, CA, that are topped with native soils to blend in

with the surrounding hills, reduce stormwater runoff and dampen noise from jets.

▶ An entire city in Liuzhou, China, that relocates farmland to the roofs of buildings to deal with overpopulation.

These ideas are not science fiction. They're reality.

### Real solutions to real problems

I was drawn to McDonough's lessons because I see how these new ideas benefit all of us — through lower energy costs and better fuel mileage in the cars that we drive, for example. That's the same reason businesses like Ford and Gap have adopted these ideas. The government isn't forcing them. They do it because 1. It's the right thing to do and 2. It saves money.

What this means to us in the Green Industry is that we must remain in the forefront in addressing environmental sensitivity. It means seeking greener ways to design/build, providing landscapes requiring less maintenance, investigating alternative fuels for our vehicles and equipment, and using our lawn care products precisely where and when they're needed.

We can either stay on the vanguard of the environmental curve and reap the benefits, or we can try to catch up later — if we can.

And by then, our only customers might be the 13% of Americans living in caves with their heads buried in the sand.

Contact Mike at 216/  
706-3764 or e-mail at  
mseuffert@questex.com

I thought... "Oh no. Not another doom-and-gloom, we're-all-going-to-die sermon."





There are some restricting factors that drive managers CRAZY in trying to balance efficiency and customer satisfaction.



## Superior route managing

BY BRUCE WILSON

**W**e're approaching the time when many companies tend to develop or modify the season's maintenance routes. Some companies are clearly better at it than others. Here are some of the best practices that I have seen and experienced in my career:

### Factors to consider

- 1. Density.** Decreasing travel time and miles driven lowers costs, increases production time and makes supervision easier.
- 2. Crew skills.** Some jobs are more complicated requiring more attention to detail or responding to customer preferences, etc. Newer, less experienced crews may flounder on more demanding jobs, which could offset any density advantage.
- 3. Equipment pallet.** Having equipment that is too small to efficiently mow a property or too large so it is under-utilized, limits some route options. Swapping equipment between crews may be a solution, but that could lead to accountability issues when it comes to properly caring for the equipment.
- 4. Crew size.** If you run large crews they may be very inefficient on small jobs and visa versa.

The larger your company is the more flexibility you have in running optimum size crews, properly equipped, without sacrificing density. For smaller companies, the options aren't always that easy and much study and creativity is necessary.

### Restricting Forces

In a perfect world, you can prioritize all these factors and come up with the ideal routes. However, none of us live in a perfect world. The reality is, the following factors can drive managers crazy when they try to balance efficiency and customer satisfaction. Have you encountered any of these?

- 1. Familiarity.** Customers preferences for a particular day of the week or their preference for a certain crew leader with whom they have grown comfortable.
- 2. Continuity.** Customers often do not want new crews every year.
- 3. Job saturation.** Not having enough jobs in a new area creates some challenges in trying to work them into otherwise pretty good routes.

If you allow the restricting forces to dominate your thought process, you end up with what can be an inefficient, difficult-to-manage operation. Then, to bring costs in line, you end up cutting hours and quality on the jobs. This is not a good scenario.

Most companies negotiate with themselves over how to balance the conflicting priorities. The best companies make the tough decisions on the restricting factors and attempt to manage the customer through excellent communication and close supervision, making sure to smooth out the customer experience and, therefore, maintain the optimum utilization of their workforce.

— The author is a partner with entrepreneur Tom Oyler in the Wilson-Oyler Group, which offers consulting services. Visit [www.wilson-oyler.com](http://www.wilson-oyler.com).



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It takes eight times longer to break than form a habit.



## Coaching better than telling

BY BILL HOOPES

**A**tention managers. Reorder your priorities, now. Get in the field with your people and be a hands-on coach. If your business is predominantly landscaping, I don't have to tell you now is a critical time with your crews. What they do and how they do it is entirely controllable but not with memos and 'tailgate' training session. You have to be there.

Transferring learning to desired behavior and the right habits is accomplished through timely repetition and positive reinforcement. Adults learn as a result of processing what they're convinced is logical, sensible and reasonable instruction. You can talk all you want in a classroom, but until the learning is reinforced in the field, you have basically been stopping at first base.

Let's go through the coaching process:

1. Manager delivers training instruction. It must make sense for adults to accept and to support the instruction. So, seeing it work is vital.
2. Manager becomes a coach. He/she provides regular reinforcement on the job.
3. With coach observing, employee carries out the task.
4. Manager critiques and demonstrates corrections as necessary.
5. Employee repeats task.
6. Manager confirms proper process and applauds.

Here is an easy way to remember the basic moves; I call it the AC/DC process.

- ▶ Activity performed
- ▶ Critique provided
- ▶ Demonstration of any corrections
- ▶ Critic of activity repeated

Is this what you do, or do you get new hires through the classroom portion of the training process, show them the ropes in the shop and then turn them over to a veteran to train in the field?

Far too many of us allow the latter option to become our habit. We tell ourselves, "There is simply not enough time to get out with my people. But I sure wish I could."

For now, do whatever you have to do to join your crews in the field, and do it on a regular schedule.

A couple of rules we all need to recognize:

1. Timely repetition of the proper process is the process by which we learn.
2. Proper performance, reinforced quickly and often after initial training modifies behavior and builds habits.
3. A failure to reinforce satisfactory performance for any length of time leads to what psychologists call "extinction," which means all the time you spent teaching the right procedures is dismissed as unimportant and replaced by whatever learning has occurred most recently.
4. It takes eight times longer to break than form a habit. The right habits, if reinforced vigorously and often, stick for a long, long time.

— The author is founder of Grass Roots Training in Delaware, OH. Contact him at [hoopes@columbus.rr.com](mailto:hoopes@columbus.rr.com) or visit [www.grassroots-training.com](http://www.grassroots-training.com).





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Mike Dykstra, Dykstra Landscape Services Inc., Grand Haven, Michigan



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**JOHN DEERE**



# In the Know

BUSINESS

NEWS YOU CAN USE

## Sen. Mikulski renews commitment to H-2B fix



Hank Lavery of Save Small Business seeks permanent fix to H-2B

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD) met with business owners during a National “H-2B Fly-in” Day Feb. 13, organized by Save Small Business, for supporters of her effort to extend the H-2B visa returning worker exemption. The crucial provision from her Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act, which saves small and seasonal businesses from a devastating cut to their workforce, received a last minute one-year extension as part of the 2007 Department of Defense authorization bill, but expires on September 30, 2007.

“I have been fighting for years to help good guy businesses and workers wade

through the unfair procedures that were part of the H-2B visa process. I will not give up until my fix is permanent,” said Mikulski. “I told 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. Without these seasonal workers, many businesses would not survive — forced to limit services, lay off permanent U.S. workers or, worse yet, close their doors.”

Mikulski’s H2B extension:

- ▶ Protects our borders by rewarding immigrants who play by the rules — returning to their home countries after finishing their jobs.
- ▶ Protects American workers by requiring employers to recruit American workers before hiring immigrant workers.
- ▶ Keeps small and seasonal businesses open by guaranteeing the labor supply needed during their peak seasons when they can’t find American workers to take the jobs.

## A message from Save Small Business

BY HANK LAVERY, President of Save Small Business

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — The February 13th Save Small Business Fly-In was a success. Nearly 70 small and seasonal business leaders braved the cold, snow and ice to meet with their elected representatives and senators regarding the need for a permanent fix to the H-2B program. Thank you one and all to those who managed to come.

As I write this, key Senate and House staff members are meeting to work out language on an H-2B bill that should be filed sometime after Congress comes back to work from its President’s Day break. As soon as we learn the details of the final bill we will let all of you know. Until the bill is ready, please continue to urge your elected officials to support efforts to create a permanent extension of the H-2B Returning Worker exemption and the other key components of a permanent H-2B fix.

*[Editor’s note: Because of the snowstorm that hit much of the East Coast Feb. 13, preventing many business owners from making the trip, Save Small Business held a second Fly-In March 6.]*

## Practicing ‘green’ business

**ORLANDO, FL** — Nanak’s Landscaping has made saving the environment a priority by installing a 20.1 kW Solar PV System at its Orlando corporate headquarters. The commercial landscape company has also invested in a fleet of Prius Hybrids for regional and operational managers. The fleet will save 15,000 gallons of fuel this year alone. Nanak’s was able to install the solar powered system thanks to a grant from Florida’s Alternative Energies Technologies Grant Program.

## Cub Cadet and Yanmar create C.U.T.

**VALLEY CITY, OH** — Cub Cadet and Yanmar announced a joint venture to market a full line of compact utility tractors and implements in the U.S. and Canada. The joint venture led to the formation of C.U.T. Supply Co., headquartered in Valley City, OH.

## HRI grants \$350,000 for research

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — The Horticultural Research Institute Executive Committee considered granted \$350,000 to 24 projects and four scholarships in 2007. The committee selected research focusing on industry priority issues resulting in problem-solving solutions and techniques. HRI’s vision is to become the nursery and landscape industry’s research and development (R&D) national leader. Visit [www.anla.org/research](http://www.anla.org/research).

[CLIPPINGS]



**GIVE YOUR GUYS THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB.**



**WEEKLY TIMECARD**

NAME: Bill Owen DATES: 9-13

	START	LUNCH	END	JOB CODES	JOBSITE/PROJECT	HOURS
Mon.	7:00	1/2	3:30		Brentwood	8
Tues.			3:30			8
Wed.			4:00		↓	8 1/2
Thurs.			4:00		Crestview	8 1/2
Fri.	↓	↓	4:00		↓	8 1/2

SIGNATURE: Bill Owen TOTAL HOURS: 41 1/2

**GIVE THEM THE JOBCLOCK.**

**Employee Report**

**Owen, Bill** Date Range: 4/9/2007 through 4/13/2007

Day	Date	Jobsite	Start	Stop	Cost Code	Hours	Total
Mon	4/9	Brentwood	7:08 AM	12:05 PM	Irrigation	4:57	7:38 hours
			12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Irrigation	2:41	
Tue	4/10	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Irrigation	4:55	7:35 hours
			12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Irrigation	2:40	
Wed	4/11	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:50	7:53 hours
			12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Irrigation	3:03	
Thu	4/12	Crestview	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Planting	5:02	7:58 hours
			12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Planting	2:56	
			7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Planting	4:54	
Fri	4/13	Crestview	12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Planting	2:55	7:49 hours

Signature: Bill Owen Owen, Bill **Total 38:53 hours**

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**DOZENS** of cost codes?  
 Crews on the **MOVE?**

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**PocketClock™**

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Circle 118

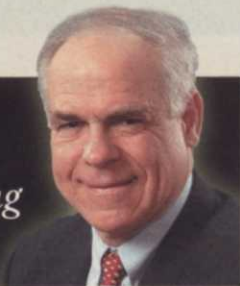
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## In the Know

### LEGALLY Speaking



BY KENNETH D. MORRIS, ESQ. L.L.C.

**Q** I recently found an employee sleeping on a job site, so I fired him. Now he wants unemployment. Does he have any legal right?

**A** Probably not. Under the prevailing theory of "at will" employment (in the absence of an employment contract or a contract of employment which may be implied through the company's literature or policies) a termination for cause will likely end the employee's right to unemployment compensation.

Since the right to unemployment compensation is a function of state law, you should consult the Web site of your state's unemployment office. States usually have excellent Web sites with loads of information. In New Jersey, for example, if your employee was fired for cause, or "misconduct," he/she may well be disqualified from receiving benefits.

If the employee was fired because he/she was convicted of a crime, he/she may lose his/her right to unemployment compensation indefinitely—subject to possible reinstatement under certain conditions.

Kenneth D. Morris, a Philadelphia-based attorney with more than 30 years corporate and law firm experience, offers information on industry legal issues in each issue of LM. Contact him via [www.kenmorrislaw.com](http://www.kenmorrislaw.com).

**Note:** *The above should not be interpreted as offering legal advice in any jurisdiction where such practice is not authorized. Engage competent counsel familiar with your jurisdiction when legal issues arise.*

## Deere to acquire LESCO; merge it with JD Landscapes

**MOLINE, IL**— Deere & Co. and LESCO announced Feb. 19 that they entered into a definitive merger agreement for Deere to acquire LESCO for \$14.50 per common share in cash.

Cleveland-based LESCO, a distributor of fertilizers, seed and chemicals for lawn care professionals and golf course superintendents, will become part of John Deere Landscapes, which will more than double its locations with the addition of 332 LESCO stores.

"This plan is consistent with Deere's growth aspirations," said Nate Jones, president of its Commercial & Consumer Division. "We seek business opportunities that bring new customers to John Deere and that offer new products and services to our existing customers. We have a strong commitment to serve professional landscaping and golf course customers."

Wall Street analysts expect Deere,

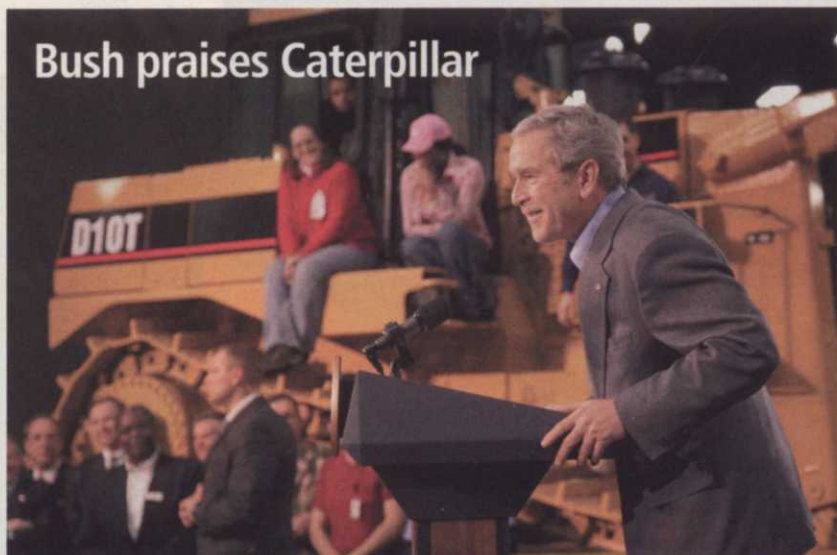
based in Moline, Ill., to post about \$22 billion in 2006 sales.

"We believe it enables shareholders to receive the benefit of our efforts to increase shareholder value," LESCO president Jeffrey Rutherford said in a prepared statement. "In addition, customers of both LESCO and John Deere benefit because of this decision."

The combination of LESCO and John Deere Landscapes will boost sales, expand customer base for both LESCO and John Deere Landscapes products and services, and it will complement John Deere's work in the Golf & Turf One Source business, which focuses on bringing total solutions to those who maintain golf course properties, according to Deere.

The deal is expected to close in June pending approval by LESCO shareholders and regulatory agencies.

## Bush praises Caterpillar



Caterpillar recently hosted President George W. Bush at the company's manufacturing facility in East Peoria, IL, where he commended Caterpillar for demonstrating that U.S. companies can successfully compete on the world stage.



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Circle 115

 **NEW HOLLAND**



## In the Know

### Connecticut legislator seeks school pesticide ban

**HARTFORD, CT** — A Connecticut state representative is pushing to eliminate the use of pesticides on all school properties within the state, not just for preschool and elementary schools, a measure that went into effect this past Jan. 1.

State Rep. Livvy Floren is a co-sponsor of the bill introduced to the General Assembly's Environment Committee. She said the bill has broad bipartisan support and is hopeful it will be passed by the full assembly this session.

Floren was instrumental in

the 2005 passage of the original ban, eliminating the use of pesticides on the properties of preschools and elementary schools, child day care centers and group day care homes.

"Pesticides are known to be detrimental to humans of all ages, and I do not want to see them used in areas that affect our young people. Future generations of children should be able to learn and play at school without threat of breathing in pesticides," Floren is quoted in the Feb. 8 edition of the *Greenwich Post* newspaper.

### Florida plans restrictions on turf fertilizers

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** — State and local regulatory bodies across the nation are taking aim at turf fertilizers as contributors to water quality problems. Restrictions on certain types of fertilizers started in Minnesota and are now reportedly just around the corner for Florida.

Restrictions on fertilizing any non-agricultural plots of turfgrass could go into effect in Florida as early as April. The state is targeting fertilizers containing phosphorus, and is proposing to limit the amount of nitrogen. The goal is to limit the amount of chemical fertilizers running into the state's waters.

The state wants to limit a single fertilizer application on 1,000 sq. ft. of lawn to no more than a quarter-pound of phosphorus and a half-pound of nitrogen. Over a year, the combined amounts would be limited to a half-pound of phosphorus and 5 lbs. of nitrogen.

Source: Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel

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# MLB groundskeepers rebuild San Antonio high school sports fields

**SAN ANTONIO** — More than 30 volunteers stormed Brackenridge High School's baseball and softball fields to renovate the worn out playing surfaces on a single, rainy day in January.

Sports turf managers from 24 Major League Baseball (MLB) teams joined forces to completely overhaul the school's sports fields as a community service project. With materials and equipment donated by The Toro Co., Covermaster Inc. and Turface Athletics, this dream team of skilled groundskeepers made short work of both the baseball and softball fields, transforming them into beautiful landscapes worthy of the school's promising athletic teams.

The sports turf managers from the United States and Canada rebuilt the pitcher's mound, bull pen and batter's box, mowed and edged the turf, dragged the infield and incorporated field conditioner into the playing surfaces — all in one day.

"We were impressed and grateful to have more MLB guys than ever before," said Bob Christofferson, head groundskeeper for the Seattle Mariners and the organizer of the event. "We have 24 teams represented here with around 38 people. There is so much that goes into a project like this, but when you see the end result, it is all worth it."

Brackenridge High School is near downtown San Antonio. Due to limited resources and high traffic, the baseball and softball fields had not received the attention needed to maintain high-quality playing conditions. When the school's administration learned they would be the site of a renovation, they were ecstatic.

This field rebuilding event was held in conjunction with the 9th Annual Major League Baseball Groundskeepers Conference, which followed the 2007 Sports

Turf Managers Association (STMA) Conference and Exhibition on January 17-20 in San Antonio.



Brackenridge's baseball field gets some professional care.

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Circle 117





**BEFORE**

**Problem** In spring, the client is unhappy with the appearance of the turf along the road and sidewalk edges. What is the problem? What do you suggest?

**The cause** The reason for the dead turf is that the client has a no-slip policy on the site and wants to see blacktop by 5:00 a.m. The plants along the edges are being damaged by snow melting products combined with sand or other grit for traction.

- Solutions**
1. Some products cause significant damage to plant materials. Can you use a different product that is not as harmful to the turf?
  2. Check the spreader's throw pattern. Can it be adjusted to reduce damage?
  3. If you're using rock salt, apply 20 to 50 lbs. of gypsum per 100 sq. ft. to the road and sidewalk edges prior to applying any rock salt.
  4. (Photo below) We excavated the soil and took the natural components already on the site. This is more expensive, but it is a permanent fix that lasts for years.



**AFTER**

Every day you see horticultural problems. Sometimes the solution is obvious, but others are much more difficult to solve. Brickman Group Senior Horticulture Specialist H. Bruce Hellerick tackles these issues each month in Problem Solver. He can be reached at [Hellerick@BrickmanGroup.com](mailto:Hellerick@BrickmanGroup.com)

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Circle 119



Instead of shrinking its way to lean, this team won by increasing production.



## What can 'gazogle' teach us? Plenty it turned out

**ESTERO, FL**—“LEAN” is *not* an acronym Layoff Every Associate Now.

The object of lean is to work more efficiently, and to deliver more value to customers. Consequently, the lean company will grow, not shrink.

So said Kevin Van Dyke, president of Skinner Nurseries, Jacksonville, FL, and the spokesperson for the winning team at the recent “lean” games at the PLANET Executive Forum in Estero, FL.

And, boy did his team demonstrate exactly that in a simple contest that made this year's Professional Landcare Network's program one of its best ever.

### A different approach

While most of the 180 or so landscape owners and managers at the Forum attempted to win the Forum exercise by dispensing of employees in a spiraling quest to become ever more efficient, the winning 11-member team (and it won by a huge margin) went the opposite direction — by convincing its buyer to take more product, realizing it could produce more with its employees it had.

The name of the game in question is “Gazogle,” pronounced ga-zah-gul. It's the brainchild of Elliott N. Weiss, a professor at the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia. He's been using it to teach business efficiencies since 1989, but he said that the PLANET group was the largest to ever play it.

The game of Gazogle involved the assembling of identical simple structures, called, surprisingly enough, gazogles. You make them using tiny Legos blocks.

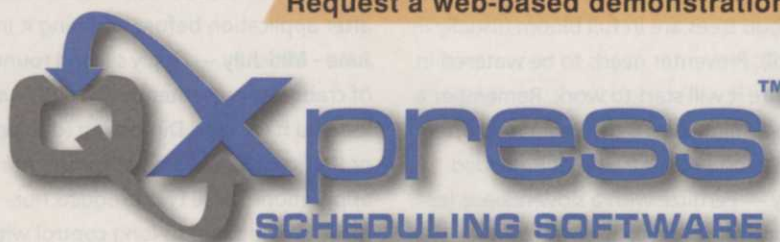
While most of the 14 teams approached the game by laying off assemblers and other team members to gain efficiencies, one team went the opposite route; it convinced its customer to increase his orders substantially and ended up blowing away the other teams.

“If the game had run a little longer we would have put half the companies out of business with a lower price,” said Van Dyke, spokesman for the winning team.

Van Dyke's team won the contest by


seeking out and creating win-win situations with its supply chain and customer in addition to boosting production. “The whole point is to fulfill your capacity and not to shrink,” said Van Dyke.

**Request a web-based demonstration!**




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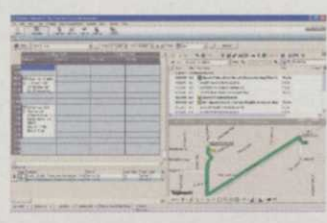
## QX Mobile v2.0

QX Mobile is the most advanced PDA software available for Windows Mobile Pocket PCs. Take QXpress with you in the field to track start times, stop times, materials used, look up customer information, and sync *wirelessly* with the office. New in v2.0 is the ability to customize your own data entry screen, and print templates designed in QXpress.





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Every extra hour your crews spend behind the wheel, is an extra hour they are not generating revenue. Using Microsoft MapPoint, QX Mapping greatly reduces wasted drive time by optimizing routes and printing driving directions.



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Circle 120



# In the Know



## Lawn calendar for cool-season grasses

The following suggestions are for cool-season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass or tall fescue. zoysiagrass, Bermudagrass and buffalograss are warm-season grasses and require a different maintenance regime.

**March** — Spot treat broadleaf weeds.

Treat on a day that is 50 degrees or warmer. Rain or irrigate within 24 hours of application reduces effectiveness.

**April** — Apply crabgrass preventer when redbud trees are in full bloom (usually in April). Preventer needs to be watered in before it will start to work. Remember a good, thick lawn is the best weed preventer and may be all that is needed.

**May** — Fertilize with a slow-release fertilizer if turf normally doesn't go drought-dormant during the summer. If there are broadleaf weeds, spot treat with a spray or use a fertilizer that includes a weed killer. Rain or irrigation

within 24 hours of application will reduce effectiveness of the weed killer but the fertilizer needs to be watered in. If you are using a product that has both fertilizer and weed killer, wait 24 hours after application before watering it in.

**June - Mid-July** — Apply second round of crabgrass preventer by June 15 — unless you have used Dimension (dithiopyr) or Barricade (prodiamine) for the April application. These two products normally provide season-long control with a single application. Remember to water it in. If grubs have been a problem in the past, apply a product containing "Merit" or "Mach 2" during the first half of July.

This works as a grub preventer. It must be watered in before it becomes active. Late-July through August — If you see grub damage, apply a grub killer. Merit and Mach 2 are grub preventers and may not be effective on late instar grubs. The grub killer must be watered in within 24 hours or effectiveness drops. **September** — Fertilize around Labor Day. This is the most important fertilization of the year. Water fertilizer in. **November** — Fertilize. This fertilizer is taken up by the roots but is not used until the following spring. Water fertilizer in. Spray for broadleaf weeds if they are a problem. Spray on a day that is at least 50 degrees. Rain or irrigation within 24 hours reduces effectiveness.

— Information courtesy of Ward Upham, horticulturist with Kansas State University Research and Extension





# People & companies



The **Davey Tree Expert Co.** promoted **Pat Covey** and **Steve Marshall** (left) to executive vice president/operations. **Nick Sucic** and **Tom Country-**

**man** have been named vice president and chief information officer, respectively. Davey also named **Richard Foote** vice president, operations for residential/commercial services, and **Ross Williamson** as regional vice president for the Alberta region.

**The Turfgrass Council of North Carolina** has presented **Jim Monroe** its Outstanding Service Award for 2007. Monroe manages the N.C. Extension Service office in Charlotte, which operates as part of the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department.

**Vermeer** has expanded its executive management team to include three new

members: **Steve Heap** was named senior director of international sales and operations; **Mike Byram** will serve as senior director of environmental solutions; and **Dave Wisniewski** has been appointed senior director of underground installations and global accounts.

**The American Nursery & Landscape Association** (ANLA) recently presented **Frank Fernicola, Jr.** of **Fairfield Garden Center** in Fairfield, NJ with the 2006 Retail Rising Star Award. This award recognizes an individual or individuals with the type of passion, talent, and vision that will be critical to sustaining and growing the independent garden center industry into the future.

**Horizon**, a full-service supplier of landscape and irrigation supplies, announced that **Neb Keeton** will become Horizon's sales manager for its Southern California and Las Vegas turf sales team.



**Mark Ferguson** will serve as **Fecon's** Southwest Regional sales manager and market specialist in mulcher applications for wildfire prevention and management.

**Steve Spain** takes over as head of Lawn & Garden Commercial Operations for **Syngenta Professional Products**. **Scott Reasons**, formerly senior brand manager for insecticides, will now lead Lawn & Garden Strategy. Also, **Jose Milan** was named head of marketing for Syngenta Professional Products.



Irrigation equipment manufacturer **Weathermatic** appointed **Ward Slaton** the new regional sales manager for the southeast region.

**Jacobsen**, a Textron company, hired **Joe Cunningham** as vice president of marketing.

## Your window of opportunity for controlling grubs just got bigger.

**ARENA™** is the only preventive and curative grub control product proven to provide maximum application flexibility.

Unlike other turf insecticides, ARENA™ Insecticide with clothianidin lets you apply from early spring to early fall and still get unsurpassed white grub control. Plus, ARENA offers proven performance against sod webworms, chinch bugs and other damaging pests. To learn more, contact your turf products supplier, log on to [www.arystalifescience.us/arena](http://www.arystalifescience.us/arena) or call 1-866-761-9397 toll free.

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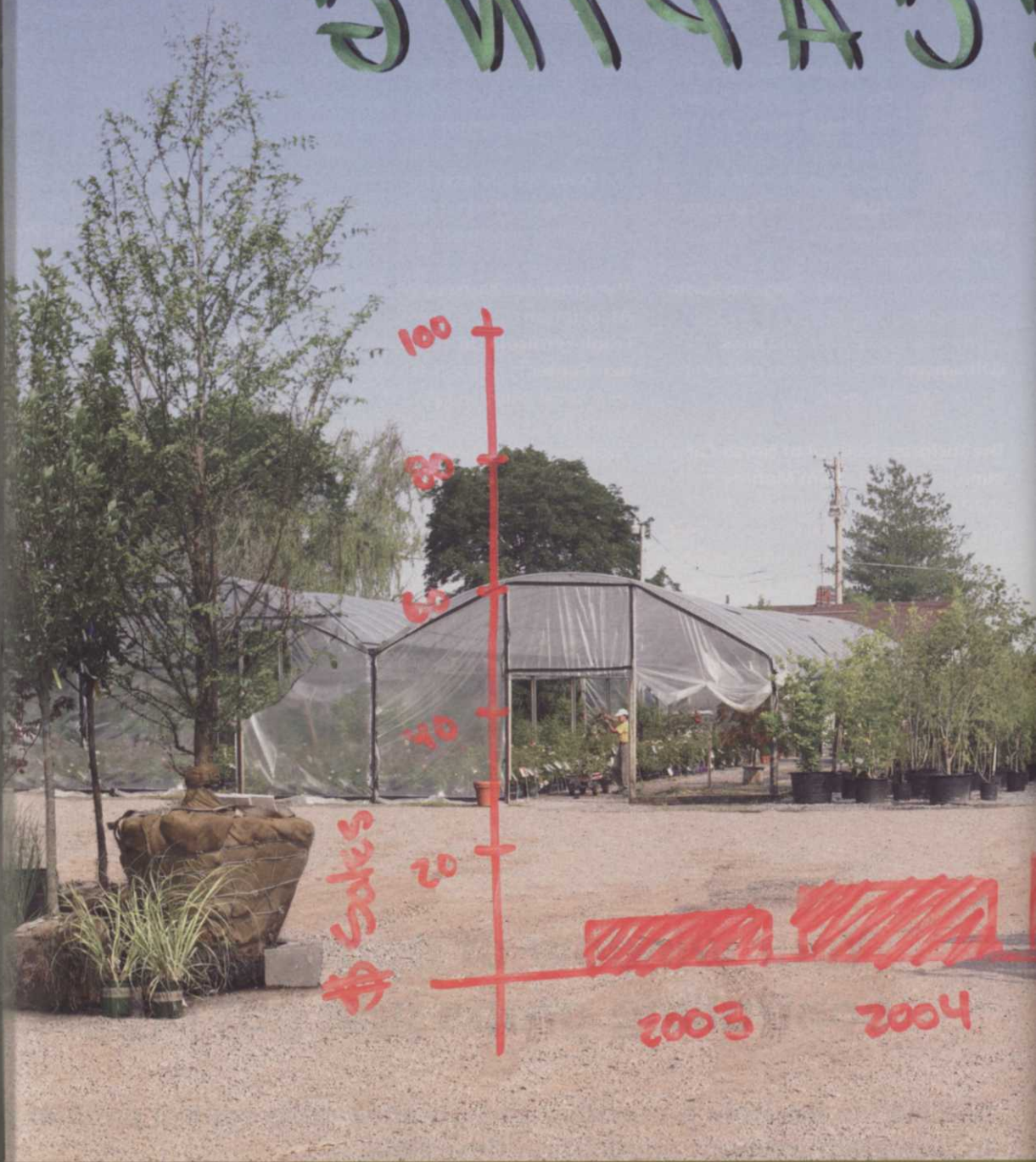
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# Add-On Biz

BUSINESS NEW REVENUE STREAM

## Emergency sprinkler repair

► Late nights and cold weather can be the norm for those willing to take on 24-hour service

BY JANET AIRD

**W**e've all seen it: a geyser shooting up from a broken sprinkler head, water gushing down the street to the nearest drain. It's bad enough for homeowners when it happens during landscapers' working hours. When it happens overnight or on weekends, homeowners don't know whom to call, says Mike Underwood, of Underwood Landscape in Agoura Hills, in Southern California.

If, like Underwood, you don't mind going out in the middle of the night and walking around on muddy ground, adding 24-hour emergency sprinkler repair could be a good addition to your landscaping business.

### Word gets around

"We always did it for our customers; then others called," Underwood says. His company, which has been in business for 14 years, also does landscape

design, sprinkler repair and installation, residential and commercial grounds maintenance, brush clearance, erosion control and hardscaping.

People do call 24 hours a day, but often Underwood can work out the problem over the phone. Sometimes it's a job for a plumber, he says. Plumbers, it turns out, are his main competition.

"I like making money, but I also like the work... It's not part of a normal job."

If it is an irrigation problem, most of the time, he can help homeowners figure out how to turn the sprinkler off without him needing to be onsite.

"If it's a real emergency, I'll go," he says. "If I can't

make it, the foreman does. At night, you want to turn off the sprinkler and keep the water on in the house. You go back and fix it in the morning." The problems are usually broken valves, pipes, pumps or controllers.

### All shook up

Usually emergencies happen because the system is aging or tree roots are pinching the main line going to the house, Underwood says. But sometimes they're triggered by an event. In 1994, an earthquake struck the nearby San Fernando Valley and people called the company from all over.

This past winter most of his emergency calls came after a week of highly unusual, freezing temperatures in mid-January. He got calls for weeks afterward.

Underwood hasn't had to change any of his business practices for this add-on. "If

you're a landscaper, you already have all the parts," he says. The company didn't even advertise the service until a few years ago. Now people find them online or in the Yellow Book. Some have seen the sign on the side of one of the company's trucks.

Underwood charges a premium for the service, but the profitability depends on the job, he says.

"I like making money, but I also like the work. It's troubleshooting; it's not part of a normal job. You have to figure out why something's leaking or why it burst, and where the shut off is. I also like educating customers by telling them how to shut the water off themselves." And, he adds, "If it's for our own clientele, they love us."

—The author is a freelance writer in Altadena, CA.

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# IPM

— still alive  
and well



Why integrated pest management remains relevant to the turf and ornamental industry and what it means to you



# T

he development of integrated pest management (IPM) almost 50 years ago was spurred by the need to escape the "pesticide treadmill." We were relying more and more on the use of synthetic pesticides. They increased yields, profits and the acreage that could be grown on farms. The impact of these chemicals on the industry was almost immeasurable.

However, with increased pesticide use, however, more concerns surfaced. As researchers studied the interactions of pesticide use and the environment, the potential of disruptive effects on the ecosystem became clearer.

The complex nature of an ecosystem, including turfgrass, is a challenge to understand. The interactions of organisms





## How new insecticides fit into IPM

Recent additions to the insecticide market challenge our approach to IPM and the idea of treating only when necessary. For example, Bayer Environmental Science and FMC Corporation jointly released a product called Allectus. It contains the active ingredients of two popular insecticides Talstar and Merit. There are several perceived benefits to this product including a broad-spectrum product that has the potential to control both surface and soil insects, as did some of the older chemistries such as diazinon.

The concept of a broad-spectrum historically meant a higher level of toxicity towards organisms in addition to insects. This could include aquatic organisms, birds, people and pets. Fortunately, when we combine two products that are modern chemistries to obtain a broader spectrum of control, we don't necessarily increase the hazard or risk. If the two insecticides used in the combination product have favorable environmental profiles, then it is likely that the overall concern won't be any greater than that of each product's individual characteristics. Likely we will see more combination type products.

A combination product is going to cost more than a product that contains only one insecticide or active ingredient. Therefore, turfgrass managers are going to take a hard look at such products and ask whether or not they are getting additional benefit from the use of such a product. The answer in some instances will be "no" and some other product that is less expensive will most likely be selected.

Where multiple pests are likely to occur and there's an economic incentive to manage more than one pest with a single application, turfgrass managers will look at such products as being valuable tools. For example, in a home lawn setting in the Southeast that has a strong likelihood of white grubs, mole crickets, fire ants, and chinch bugs, a combination product applied at the proper timing would be an excellent choice.

While we don't want to introduce new products that might be perceived as a step backwards as far as environmental protection is concerned, the value of a broad-spectrum insecticide for a number of turfgrass settings cannot be overstated.

We are also seeing more interest in the use of baits. Many fire ant products utilize the bait approach and some are very successful. These often are considered to be a key component in IPM as they tend to affect only the pest species and are put out only when the pest species are present and active. There are several efforts underway to go back and revisit baits for insects such as mole crickets.

Our industry continues to make good progress in developing the products that are less toxic to organisms other than insects, more environmentally friendly, yet still do a good job of controlling the insect pest. Our challenge is to develop ways to incorporate these new products into our programs, using them in a timely manner so they are effective, applying them only when necessary, and using our knowledge of pest biology to make sure timing of application is accurate. — RB

**Editor's note:** Next month Frederick P. Baxendale and John C. Fech of the University of Nebraska take a provocative look at today's insecticide products and how they fit into the broad definition of IPM and customer service.

BY RICK BRANDENBURG

and the environment are intricate and the balance can be upset easily.

### IPM takes shape

One particularly disconcerting discovery in agricultural systems was that the applications of many pesticides were reducing the populations of beneficial organisms. This resulted in one of two things happening. First, the target pest of the application would often "rebound" much faster than its natural enemies. Also, over-application often resulted in secondary pest problems with other species. When their natural enemies were eliminated, they



## Where **combo products** make sense

The use of fertilizers as insecticide carriers is another industry trend that challenges the IPM philosophy. It's an approach of convenience and cost. It's easy to apply both fertilizer and insecticide with one application, saves time and money. Also, fertilizers often make good carriers for insecticides since they release the products quickly with a little bit of irrigation or rain.

The ability to do two things at once saves time and money. The newer fertilizer/insecticide combinations are easy to apply and the fertilizer acts as a good carrier that readily releases the insecticide and allows it to get to work.

So what's the problem? IPM purists tell us that fertilizer/insecticide combinations commit us to treating for insects even if they're not present. Also, the timing that makes agronomic sense for fertilizer application may not make sense biologically

for good timing to control insects. This can effect cost and a product performance. For some pests, such as mole crickets and white grubs, that occur in certain areas on a consistent basis and treatment coincides with fertilizing warm-season turf, this may be a good approach. Evaluate these products and their role in your programs on a site-by-site basis.

While the application of fertilizer and insecticide at one time can be a big time saver, savings are only realized if you actually get something out of both products. If it makes agronomic sense to apply fertilizer, does it also make sense biologically to apply an insecticide? Insects may be present but are they at the life stage that is susceptible to the insecticide. In some cases, the timing may not allow the insecticide to be effective.

— RB

weren't kept in check. These scenarios created the pesticide treadmill situation — each application often seemed to create the need for a second application.

Scientists have spent decades studying various ecosystems from corn fields, to orchards, to hay fields, and even golf courses to understand the complexities associated with each system. They studied the natural enemies that help keep pests in check. They developed thresholds for treatment that helped avoid unnecessary applications, scouting and monitoring techniques that helped us stay on top of pest problems, and alternative strategies to manage pests that reduced the use of conventional pesticides.

This was the advent of IPM and it has been implemented in various forms around the world. One challenge in turfgrass is that our thresholds are not based on economics (like how many bushels of corn will be lost if no treatment is applied) but rather on appearance. This is challenging because beauty is often in the eye of the beholder and there are many standards for turfgrass appearance. This has been a challenge and we often tolerate little damage to turf.



Soil testing allows applicators to more precisely meet turf's nutritional needs and reduce chemical use.

We have made considerable progress in the development of alternative strategies for pest control that has included cultural practices, endophyte-enhanced turfgrass, biological control, forecasting and monitoring, and an improved understanding of natural enemies. However, despite all of this, we still rely heavily on conventional synthetic insecticides to control our insect pest problems. The effectiveness of these products is so good that in response to the

potential damage from insects, we accept them as the best way to do business.

For many years we used various scouting and monitoring programs to try to stay one step ahead of pests and apply insecticides only if we knew a real threat existed for turfgrass damage. This stayed in line with the IPM philosophy of using such products in a timely and "as-needed" basis. Many of the older organophosphate gave us a lot of flexibility. They were broad-spectrum and controlled many different insect pests and could be targeted

*continued on page 34*









*continued from page 32*

to nearly any stage of the insect. This gave turf managers a lot of flexibility and helped them operate in a reactive manner to insect problems.

### Guidelines get tough

However, regulatory, environmental, business and human health issues started to take their toll on a number of these older products, and that trend accelerated following the 1996 signing of the Food Quality Protection Act that looked at all potential exposures to a pesticide group rather than a specific product or use. Since many of the old organophosphates were used so extensively, the potential exposure was quite high. The registrations for use of these products began to drop for use in turfgrass. As new products came along, this flexibility seemed to erode.

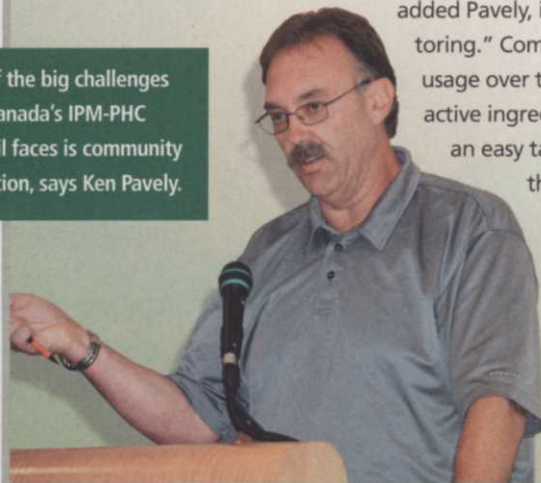
Two products that drew a lot of attention when they were first introduced about 11 years ago were Merit and Mach2.

Guidelines for these products called for using them in a preventive, rather than a curative, approach for white grub management. This almost seemed to counter IPM philosophy. In other words, we were indicating it was OK to go ahead and put down an insecticide before we even knew if a damaging grub population would occur.

These products and their recommended use patterns drew criticism. This was despite the fact that these products were applied at lower use rates as compared to the older chemistries, had lower toxicities to many animals like fish, birds and people, and actually worked better than most of the older products they replaced.

Over the past 10 years we've come closer to accepting Merit and Mach2 into IPM programs and are including the newer insecticide Arena into that same

One of the big challenges that Canada's IPM-PHC Council faces is community education, says Ken Pavely.



## IPM accreditation big in Canada

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

In much of Canada professional lawn care is spelled — IPM. You pretty much have to become IPM accredited through the IPM-PHC Council of Ontario to provide commercial lawn applications in a growing number of Canadian cities.

Leading Canadian lawn care companies in 2002 decided to put together the IPM accreditation program in response to aggressive activist campaigns directed at shutting down their businesses. Activists directed their efforts at local lawmakers. And they've been successful. More than 120 cities and towns in Canada have banned or restricted the use lawn care pesticides, with more localities considering similar laws.

"Our initial aim was to make it (the IPM program) good enough so that the provincial governments would take it and that would be our pre-emption for the industry," said Ken Pavely, program coordinator for the IPM Council at *Landscape Management's* Grassroots Forum in 2006.

That hasn't happened.

Even so, in addition to being environmentally sound, IPM provided lawn application companies with a program that many regulators see as "reasonable," said Pavely. This in spite of continued widespread ignorance about IPM among consumers and, too often, local lawmakers, he added.

IPM accreditation through the IPM-PHC Council is no "gimme." Earning the designation means completing a 4-step process — 1. an IPM accreditation examination, 2. a desk review audit, 3 an on-site audit and 4. IPM candidates must earn a minimum number continuing education credits annually.

The part of the program that has resonated most with local governments,

added Pavely, is "pesticide reduction monitoring." Companies track their pesticide usage over the year in an effort reduce active ingredient use by 50%. This is not an easy task, especially in localities that have restricted product use so severely that weeds are out of control.

To learn about the IPM Accreditation, visit the Web site [www.ontarioipm.com](http://www.ontarioipm.com).

group of products. (Editor's note: Syngenta most recently announced the launch of Meridian, another new broad-spectrum product.)

We know that with proper scouting, mapping and timely applications, these products can be used in an environmentally friendly and cost-effective way.

While our IPM philosophies often dictate the approach of treating only when an imminent outbreak is about to occur,

our ability to do this is often limited. The tradeoff is to treat preventively, but based on good records of high-risk areas where grubs consistently occur, and use products that have a more favorable environmental profile. That is consistent with IPM. **LW**

— The author is a professor and turfgrass entomologist in the department of entomology at North Carolina State University. Contact him at [rick.brandenburg@ncsu.edu](mailto:rick.brandenburg@ncsu.edu).



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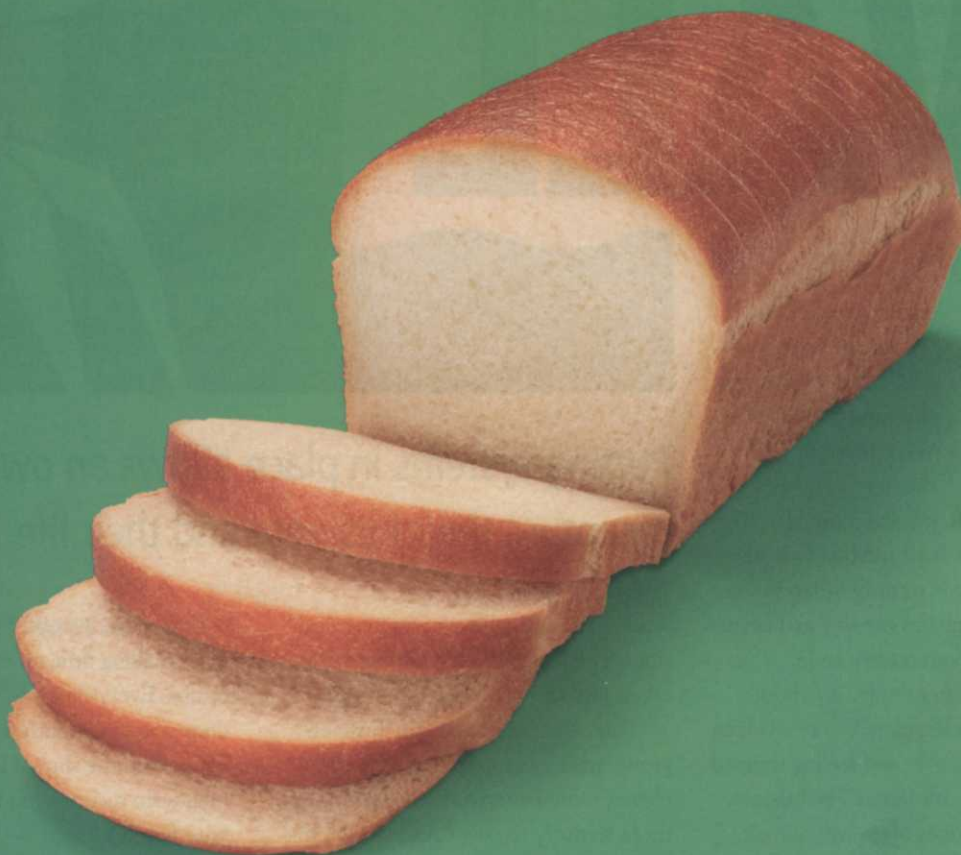
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**P R O V E N   S O L U T I O N S**



# HITTING THE WALL

**R**emember when you first started your business? It was probably a scary and exciting time. You worked up your courage, quit your old job and jumped in. The plan was to work hard and build a business that would provide security, independence and be big enough income so you'd never have to worry about money again.

A few years later, reality is painfully out of sync with the plan. You're working more hours than ever and feeling trapped in your business. It's ironic. The business you started in hopes of giving yourself freedom and independence is now taking away those very things.

Many contractors find themselves in this position. The good news is that the problem can be remedied. Your goal is to own a landscaping business that works for you, rather than the reverse.

Most landscape contractors build their new businesses on their trade skills. Good at what they do, they set themselves up as an independent business and sell their landscaping skills. But owning a landscaping business isn't just about mowing grass, building patios and installing irrigation systems. There's all that other management stuff: sales, estimating, ordering materials, getting the trucks/mowers/trimmers fixed, hiring employees, doing the books, checking

BY JAYME DILL BROUDY

## Putting systems in place allows an owner to recapture their business and their life

work, handling callbacks, making decisions. The list goes on. And these things creep into the nights and weekends.

Then, as time goes on the business grows, with more employees, more clients, more paperwork, more decisions, more territory to cover. And usually the owner is playing exactly the same role as in the beginning: the person who does it all. If the owner is still tending to every operational detail, he or she is probably overwhelmed and exhausted.

### The owner-dependent business

This problem is common among contractors. It's what happens when a business becomes dependent, to an unhealthy degree, upon the owner. Here are some problems of the owner-dependent business:

► **The owner limits growth and efficiency.** If your business depends on you for its day-to-day operations, growing your business inevitably means more work and hours for you and there's a limit to how much you can shoulder. Many owners hit this wall at about \$1 million.

► **If you stop, it stops.** That means getting sick or taking time off is usually not an option. Everything you've worked for can disappear in a month or two if you're not able to run the show. (This is not the long-term security you had in mind for your family).

► **Quality suffers.** As the owner nears his/her limit, the juggled balls start falling. Calls aren't returned and appointments are forgotten. The reputation you worked so hard to build begins to erode.

► **Limited business equity.** Owner-dependent businesses have little equity other than the depreciated value of the equipment, so don't plan on selling it to retire. Either sock money away as you go or plan to work until you keel over.

► **Dream? What Dream?** Probably most important, you started this business with a dream of abundance and freedom, but being consumed by your business saps your time, energy and optimism. This isn't what you had in mind for yourself or your family and you deserve better.

*continued on page 38*



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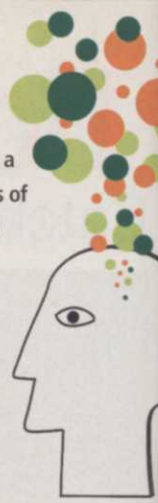
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RIDE THE  
wave  
petunias





Inside each owner's head is a process, a series of very clear steps

## BUSINESS LEARN TO DELEGATE

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### Here's a better way

Happily, there's a way to create a stand-alone, owner-independent landscaping business that doesn't require a huge investment or a fancy business school degree. The key is getting consistent results through other people.

The problem is that people, left on their own, are inconsistent. If you tell five people to do the same things, you'll get five different results. Well-documented systems or processes, however, are consistent. If you develop good procedures and systems and have people religiously follow them, they'll create consistent results. And they'll do it without you having to be there.

A great example of this is McDonald's that employs 16-year-old kids doing the same thing the same way every time and producing a consistent, profitable result. And they do this with a 300% annual turnover rate, without the owner being around. If you know a McDonald's owner, you know he or she doesn't spend time flipping burgers. A franchise is a package of proven systems and procedures that produce consistent, profitable results, and that's why good franchises cost a million bucks and have waiting lists. They're basically a license to print money. And while independent businesses have a dismal 5-year failure rate of 80%, franchises succeed at more than 90% for the same period.

Your landscaping business obviously isn't McDonald's, but the franchise concept shows how powerful systems are and how they can free owners from the daily grind of running a business. Almost all successful businesses of all sizes, in all industries are heavily systems-based. If you look at the struggling or failed businesses, you'll find most of them have few or no documented processes or systems. Look around your town, and prove it to yourself.

If you've been in business for a few years, you have systems and procedures. They may not be effective, obvious or documented, but they're there.

Take, for example, the procedure for estimating jobs. Inside each owner's head is a process, a series of clear steps that, when followed, lead to an accurate estimate. It's a logical system, similar to any found at McDonald's, except for this key difference: it's not documented; instead, it's stored between the owner's ears.

Of course, not every single thing depends on your personal participation. There are probably a bunch of rules that are like folklore. Traditional rules passed along from worker to worker. Usually by word of mouth: Never leave the trucks with less than a quarter tank of gas. No boom boxes on the jobsite. No personal mail in the postage meter. Sometimes the new guy gets these, sometimes not.

### Systems — put 'em in writing

The point is that your business has dozens of systems in place right now. They're in the form of rules, procedures or checklists that are probably not written down. The task is taking the existing processes and putting them into a form everybody can use. This can be as simple as a 3 x 5 card that details how to load the trailer, to a 3-ring binder on creating a residential landscape plan, to a computerized order entry and billing system. What form these systems take isn't important. What is important is that they be accurate, complete, and understandable by the users. You'll go through a few versions of these as you learn the amazing ability of people to misinterpret your process steps and your own tendency to assume a level of knowledge in your em-

*continued on page 40*



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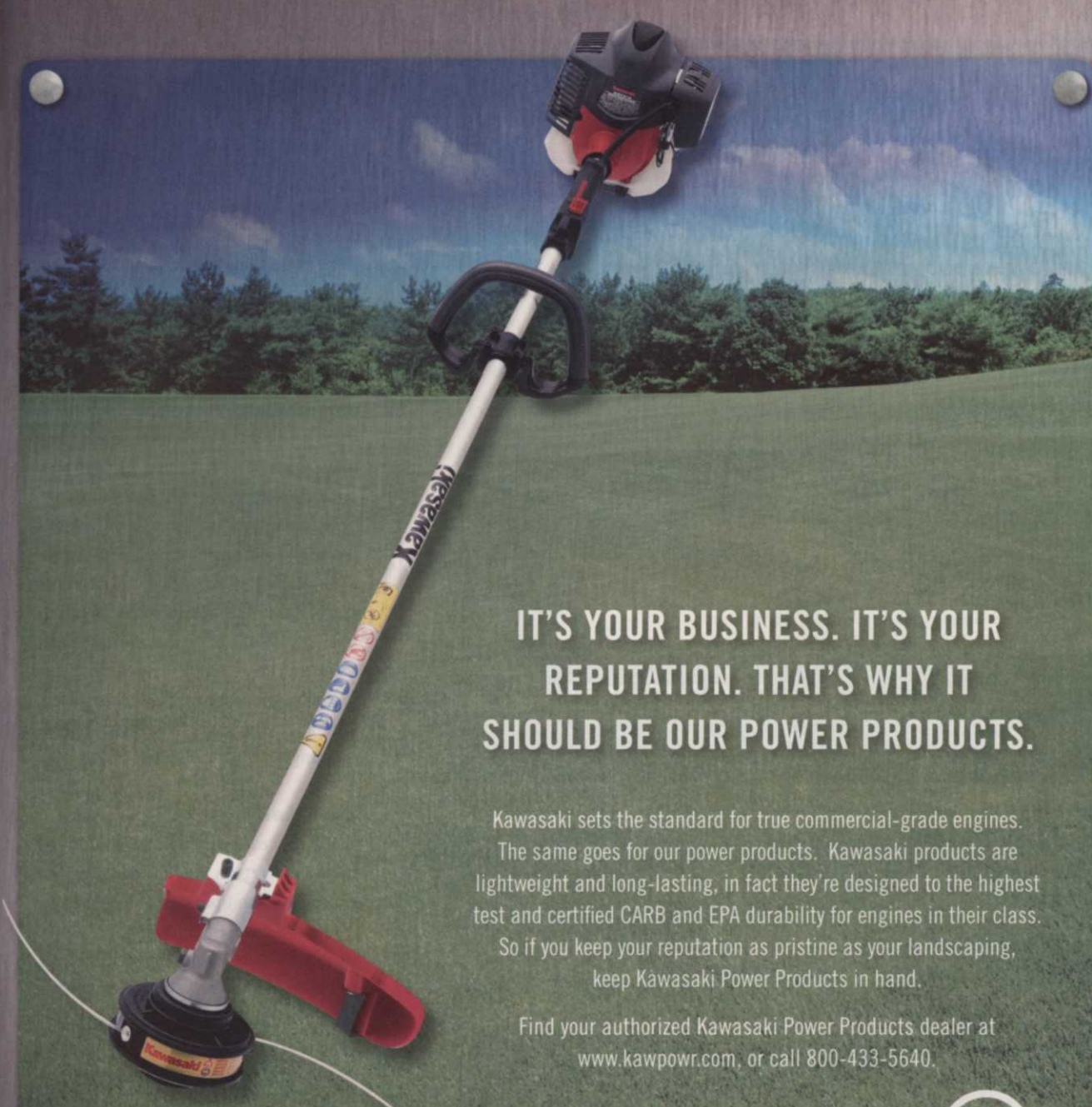


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## BUSINESS LEARN TO DELEGATE

*continued from page 38*

ployees that doesn't exist. After a few tries, however, you'll be an expert.

There are three important keys to complete your systems-building process.

1. Once you put a system in place, it becomes the law: Your employees (and you) must do it by the book every time. If employees ask you something that's in a process, you always refer them to the process. Pretty soon they'll start leaving you alone and refer to the book instead.
2. If you do it by the book, the book better be right. This means you'll need to track the results of your systems to determine they're getting the results you want.
3. Revise and improve your systems as you find better ways to do things. Systems building is an evolutionary process.

### Enjoy the results

Every process in your business isn't going to be easy to turn into a system that your employees can operate without you. There are some functions that an owner simply can't delegate. But almost every function in almost every business can be delegated. When other people are doing 80% of the work, your life will become profoundly different and better, and your business will be free to grow.

Owning a landscaping business does not have to mean 80-hour weeks and stressing out about keeping a million balls in the air. You (and your family) deserve more. Surprisingly, it's not hard or expensive to put the systems and structure in place that will let you sit in the captain's chair and steer the ship instead of being chained to an oar. **LM**

— Jayme Dill Broudy is the founder and president of Contractor's Business School, a specialized training, consulting and coaching business that works with contractor firms. For more information, call 800 527-7545 or visit the Web site at [www.contractorsbusinessschool.com](http://www.contractorsbusinessschool.com).



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2



## 2 Turns on a dime

Barreto Manufacturing's new zero-turning-radius steerable walk-behind trencher – the 1324 ST – is capable of zero radius turning for superb maneuverability and easy, one-hand steering. Precise wheel control helps eliminate drifting, making the 1324ST perfect for trenching uneven terrain or hillsides. Long, arching curves are now possible with virtually no extra effort on the part of the operator. The Barreto 1324 joins the family of all-hydraulic walk behind trenchers and tillers from Oregon-based Barreto Manufacturing.

For more information contact Barreto Manufacturing at 800/525-7348 or [www.barretomfg.com/](http://www.barretomfg.com/) / circle no. 251

3



## 3 Enhanced overseeder

The Turfco LS-22 is designed to deliver maximum seed germination, while delivering less strenuous operation for landscape professionals. Optimized 1.5-in. blade spacing and micro-screw depth adjustment provides quick, accurate blade adjustments for optimal seed-to-soil contact. A new seed window allows users to reference seed levels. Large pneumatic tires easily roll over uneven terrain. An updated layout puts the positive open/close seed flow control, lift bail and blade clutch controls on the handle, within easy reach.

For more information contact Turfco at 800/679-8201 or [www.turfco.com/](http://www.turfco.com/) / circle no. 252

4



## 4 N-Series

Isuzu Commercial Truck's new N-Series trucks offer a more spacious cab. This results in more seat travel, as well as increased headroom, shoulder room and legroom – on both standard and crew cab models. The N-Series meets the more stringent emissions standards that went into effect in January. The new models also provide more modern dashboard with a full complement of easy-to-see gauges and warning lamps. It features a 5-in opening for optional equipment as radios, GPS systems and rear view cameras. The new model comes in a gas or a diesel model.

For more information contact Isuzu Commercial at 800/785-5445 or [www.isuzucv.com/](http://www.isuzucv.com/) / circle no. 253





**COMMERCIAL POWER**

**Keep the power going with this quick checkup of your electrical systems**

As you ready equipment for spring use, it makes sense to maintain the electrical system. A few simple procedures performed now can save a lots of time and effort once you get into the heat of the season.

The battery is the primary electrical power source for equipment while running, so it's important to maintain the battery. Remove any corrosion on the battery and/or cable connectors with a solution of baking soda and water. Be careful not to get any of the solution into the battery cells. After cleaning, fill each battery cell with distilled water and charge it — SLOWLY. The battery will have a longer service life if charged on a 2-amp trickle charger for several hours, versus a higher amperage charge rate. Finally, coat the battery terminals and any other electrical connections exposed to external elements with die-electric grease to seal out moisture and prevent corrosion.

Annually, remove the negative battery cable from the equipment side and clean the cable and connection point. Remove any paint or corrosion to expose bare metal. If paint cannot be removed, use a star washer between the cable and equipment to create an improved ground path.

Inspect all wire connectors for secure connections, ensuring that no wires are pinched. Interlock switches should be checked and replaced if faulty. In fact, immediately replace any non-functioning switch, or switch with .5-Ohms or more of resistance.

Finally, be safe when servicing batteries. **ALWAYS** wear eye protection and rubber gloves. Remove loose jewelry, and wear long sleeves and pants. Wear old clothes because external battery acid is nasty stuff. And never lay tools on top of the battery. It could contact both terminals, creating a high-amperage short.



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

# From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY ALWAYS THINK AHEAD

You need to continuously cultivate new supervisors, just as you plan replacements for your customers' flower beds.



## Growing foreman

BY HARRY SMITH

**I**t happens to everyone. A valuable supervisor or foreman quits, gets sick, retires or finds a job with someone else. Now, who is going to run the crew? You go frantically down your list of suspects and pick someone. With a wave of your magic wand you have a crew leader. Or do you?

Replacing supervisors is a challenge. Supervising a crew requires a completely different set of skills. The best operators, sometimes, make the worst supervisors. The first order of business is usually where and how to train an operator or another crewmember to be a competent supervisor. Actually, this should not be your first consideration.

**Before the need arises**

Preparation for succession should have begun long before the loss. You need to continuously cultivate new supervisors, just as you plan seasonal changeouts for customers' color beds. You need a plan for growing replacement supervisors.

The first rule of a good management succession plan is to watch and listen. Watch for potential leadership qualities. Don't assume that the most popular crewmember makes the best supervisor.

Respect is more desirable than popularity. And there are basic skills that can be learned.

**Develop their skills**

Learning how to listen to crewmembers, team building, conflict resolution and protecting the crew's self-esteem are essential, trainable skills. You need to consider how management skill training is done? If you have a large company this may be an in-house proposition. For smaller companies the fastest, most effective way to impart these skills is through "packaged" training. This is sometimes called off-the-shelf training.

Since most of the skills needed by new supervisors or managers is the same from industry to industry, there are some excellent pre-packaged training modules available from a number of sources. A quick Internet search for "new supervisor training" yields nearly nine million hits. Some well established names in the supervisory training business are SkillPath, Developmental Dimensions International, Dale Carnegie and Achieve Global. Training is also available through local community or junior college and many others sources.

— *The author is turf equipment professor at Lake City Community College, Lake City, FL. Contact him at [harry\\_smith@juno.com](mailto:harry_smith@juno.com).*



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YOU CAN'T GET ANY BETTER.™



New operating systems and software are much more stable after the first set of bugs are found and fixed.



## A view to Windows Vista

BY TYLER WHITAKER

**B**y now you've heard the hype surrounding the Windows Vista operating system. Vista is the first new version of Windows since the 2001 release of Windows XP. And if that was not enough, Microsoft is also releasing a new version of its ever-popular Office 2007 productivity suite.

But what does this really mean for you and your business? Should you upgrade?

The first thing you'll notice about Windows Vista and Office is that the interface has changed. By all accounts, the new Aero interface is visually stunning.

Microsoft has spent millions of dollars upgrading the user experience of the platform. This advance comes at the cost of requiring newer and faster graphics cards. To take full advantage of the new look and feel, you'll need to upgrade older PCs. To see if your PC will run Vista, Microsoft created a tool to evaluate your computer. It's called Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor, and you can download it at [www.windowsvista.com/upgradeadvisor](http://www.windowsvista.com/upgradeadvisor).

At the recent product launch for Office 2007, a Microsoft employee told me 80% of customer suggestions and requests for this new version of Office were for features already buried in the current version. This new release hopes to solve that issue. With Office comes "Ribbon," a new toolbar interface that should help your employees more easily find and use the product's features. I was impressed

by how easy it was to find the features.

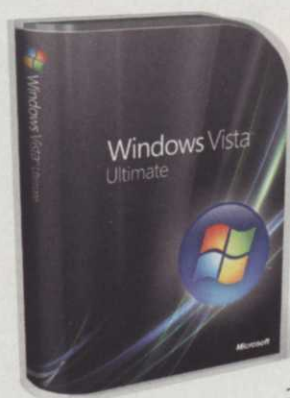
A better user experience is the major theme in both products. Vista has an integrated desktop search functionality to help you find information on your computer or the Internet very quickly. Office has been redesigned to make it easier to put spreadsheet-based graphs and charts into your documents and presentations.

Vista comes in a number of versions. Selecting the right version for your needs may be tricky. My suggestion is to narrow the choices down to the following three: Home Premium, Business and Ultimate. Home Premium gives you some advanced media center functionality and parental controls. The Business version provides better networking and data backup. And Vista Ultimate gives you the best of both worlds, along with some advanced hard drive security. If you're a power user like me, select the Ultimate version.

So let's get back to the question of upgrading from your current version of Windows. Windows Vista and Office 2007 offer improvements over Windows XP. But neither really falls into the category of compelling. They are "nice-to-haves," not real business needs. Now, if you've got to have the latest-and-greatest technology, the choice is to upgrade. But my suggestion is to wait for the first set of bugs to be found and fixed.

But when you do upgrade, I think you're going to like it.

— *The author is a freelance technologist focusing in business automation. Contact him at 801/592-2810 or visit his blog at [www.tylerwhitaker.com](http://www.tylerwhitaker.com).*







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# Solutions Center

TECHNOLOGY

REAL ANSWERS TO REAL CHALLENGES

## On the right track

**Y**es, there really is a Chattanooga Choo Choo.

Made famous by song and the 1941 Sonja Henie movie hit, "Sun Valley Serenade," featuring the Glenn Miller Orchestra, the colorfully painted locomotive is a hit with children and favorite backdrop for photos at the Chattanooga (TN) Choo Choo Holiday Inn. It's a rare example of the engine that pulled the first train in from Chicago in 1909.

But, equally appreciated by guests are the beautiful flowers, greenery and water-scapes that tie together the numerous features of the 24-acre site. They can thank Lori Martinez, director of grounds, for these beautiful surroundings, which prior to the opening of the hotel and resort in 1973, was the city's Terminal Station. Its elegant passenger waiting room with its

**Well-designed chemical program keeps Chattanooga Choo Choo property as colorful as its history** BY HAL G. DICKEY

large, interior dome became a grand hotel lobby while other parts of the spacious terminal building have become restaurants, bars, retail shops and a working model railway museum.

Trading in her desk job and doing a complete career changeover more than 20 years ago, Martinez says she followed her heart in selecting her life's work.

Martinez has been managing the grounds at the Choo Choo since 1992 and knows its history. Originally, 14 sets of tracks came into the station. Eight of these were removed to create the gardens with their dozens of formal beds, gazebos, pools and fountains.

Roses have been the featured species in the beds at the Choo

Choo Gardens almost the entire time since Martinez took charge of the hotel's grounds. For several years, the gardening had been contracted and the lack of adequate care was painfully visible, she says.

In '92 only four beds had roses; now there are 36 rose beds. "They looked like overgrown briar patches," recalls Martinez. She called a rosarian for advice, followed the recommendations and the roses recovered. "Soon everyone around the hotel was asking why we couldn't have more roses," she recalls. Now there are 800 roses there, and the Choo Choo is an All America Rose Selection Garden.

There are five acres of plant material on the property, almost entirely ornamentals except for small strips of tall fescue

High view of gardens with pool and sculpted hedge in foreground: To the right can be seen some of the 24 sleeping cars, while beyond the pool is the All America Rose Selection garden in which new releases are previewed each year. This is a favorite setting for weddings, receptions and other events at the Chattanooga Choo Choo Holiday Inn.



lawn in front of the Convention Center. Ornamentals around the three hotel buildings and the pools on the back of the property, such as Otto Lyken Laurels, can have an attractive "natural" appearance with only one deep pruning and one trimming each season. On the street side in front of the terminal, Ligustrum globes and hedges have always required three or four trimmings per season. "More would be better," the grounds director says, "but I'm hoping to get by with just a couple of shearings this season by using Atrimmec plant growth regulator."

Problems can arise, and this past May, thrips were going after the roses, attacking the lighter color blooms with terrific pressure. Martinez sprays them with an organic insecticide, Azatrol EC, an

azadirachtin formulation. It has shown good efficacy on chewing and sucking insect pests, quickly stopping damage to foliage; yet it's noted for its low environmental impact.

"I prefer using an organic product like Azatrol that doesn't harm honeybees, ladybugs, predator wasps, or other beneficial insects," she explains. There's also less time required of her in dealing with undue concerns from guests, given the spray's low, almost pleasant, odor and the label's "caution" signal word. Many weddings and receptions are held among the roses in the beautiful gazebo area of the All America Rose Selection garden. "Also 48 of our 360 rooms are in sleeping cars plus there's a functioning dining car, all virtually right here in the garden," Mar-



**"Before our LESCO rep recommended Embark plant growth regulator, the Dwarf Yaupon Holly hedges required at least four or five shearings in a season," says Martinez. PGR use keeps the hedges neat and trim with just two shearings during the season.**

inez says. "They're just steps away from plants that may need to be sprayed."













"And our visitors do take time to smell the roses," she adds. **LM**

— The author is with PBI Gordon, Kansas City, MO. [www.pbigordon.com](http://www.pbigordon.com)

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

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## Backhoe loaders



### ◀ John Deere

In the 14-15 ft. dig depth category, John Deere has the 310SG. A turbocharged John Deere Powertech diesel delivers 84 hp and 38% torque rise. Its 36-gal-per-minute tandem-pump-powered, open-center hydraulic system delivers increased loader and backhoe breakout and lift capacity. The 310SG can be equipped with options, including limited-slip mechanical front-wheel drive, and a cab with multi-position tilt steering wheel and air-suspension armchair seat.

For more information contact John Deere Construction at 800/503-3373 or [www.johndeere.com](http://www.johndeere.com) / circle no. 254

### Kubota

Kubota Tractor Corp. introduced its B-series Tractor Loader Backhoe (TLB) compact tractor with added horsepower, loader-lifting capacity, backhoe digging power and depth. The B26 TLB has a sleek, modern design that improves operator visibility. It also offers a skid-steer-type quick coupler for convenient attachment of a variety of implements. The 26-hp Kubota diesel engine increases power by 23% while offering a combination of high torque rise, low noise and vibration, and cleaner emissions. In addition to the high-output, liquid-cooled engine, which conserves fuel, the B26 features a reinforced, integrated

*continued on page 54*

### Buying tips

Landscape contractors are choosing backhoe loaders because they fall in the middle of a range of digging and loading equipment, bringing more power than compact machines without the expense of full-sized excavators. You should consider whether a backhoe loader is the right choice for the bulk of your digging and earthmoving needs.

▶ The first consideration when choosing a backhoe loader is how deep you'll need it to dig. For full size machines, 14 ft. depths are by far the most common. Compact backhoe loaders are great if most of your work is less than 10 ft. deep — they're less expensive, easier to ma-

neuver and easier to transport than full-sized backhoes.

▶ Engine horsepower doesn't directly impact the capabilities of the attachments: digging and lifting are powered by the backhoe's hydraulic systems, not the engine. Be aware of horsepower ratings when comparing models, but don't let them drive your decision.

▶ If you need to use multiple attachments, look for a backhoe that includes a quick coupler or integrated tool carrier (ITC). These are industry-standard connections for various types of construction equipment, and include hookups to the loader's hydraulic system for powered attachments.

*continued on page 58*







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# LM Reports

continued from page 52

main frame for an uncompromising ability to take on repetitive loader/backhoe work.

For more information contact Kubota Tractor Corp. at 888/4-KUBOTA or [www.kubota.com](http://www.kubota.com) / circle no. 255



## Allmand

The 3,115-lbs. Allmand TLB-220 heavy-duty compact tractor loader backhoe features a Robin EH65D air-cooled gasoline engine generating 20.5 hp at 3,600 rpm. TLB-220 features 2,875 lbs. digging force as well as an 8-ft., 4-in. digging depth. The backhoe's dual cylinder, 180-degree hydraulic cushioned swing allows precise work in tight areas. The unit's loader has a lift capacity of 1,700 lbs. and 2,600-lbs. breakout force. With a maximum loading height of 90 in., the 1/3-cu.-yd. loader bucket is able to dump loads where other compact tractors cannot reach.

For more information contact Allmand at 800/562-1373 or [www.allmand.com](http://www.allmand.com) / circle no. 256

## Caterpillar

The Caterpillar 450E backhoe loader delivers increased performance, enhanced operator

comfort, superior control, emissions regulations compliance, easier maintenance and functional styling. The 450E has 124 net hp and a backhoe digging depth of 17 ft. 3 in. Loader productivity is improved due to a larger bucket, increased hydraulic flow and stronger rimpull for faster cycle times. New combined-function auxiliary hydraulic lines on the backhoe enable the 450E to support all 1-way and 2-way hydraulic work tools, such as hammers, compactors, thumbs, augers and tilting couplers.

For more information contact Caterpillar at 888/OWN-A-CAT or [www.cat.com](http://www.cat.com) / circle no. 257

## JCB

JCB offers a selection of backhoe loaders, ranging from the 20.5-hp Mini CX, with dig depth of 8 ft. 4 in., to the 100-hp 4CX 17 FT, with dig depth of 17 ft. 7 in. The compact Mini CX weighs only 3,373 lbs., making it easily towed on a trailer. The backhoe utilizes proven mini-excavator components giving instant availability of a wide range of attachments. The 4CX features 4-wheel drive, 6x4 autoshift high-speed transmission, limited slip-steer drive axles front and rear provide exceptional traction by utilizing four equal sized tires and three steering modes provide maximum flexibility for varying job conditions.

For more information contact JCB at 800/PICK-JCB or [www.jcb.com](http://www.jcb.com) / circle no. 258



## Volvo ▲

The Volvo backhoe loaders have gone through rigorous tests to prepare it for the day-to-day assault of deep trenching, heavy lifting, loading, craning, roading and more. Because the Volvo Backhoe was designed and built from the ground up, it functions as a unit to make you more productive than ever. The 86 hp BL60 offers lifting capacity of 5,077 lbs. and bucket digging force of 11,915 lb. ft. The 90-hp BL70 offers lifting capacity of 6,953 lbs. and bucket digging force of 13,296 lb. ft. Both provide digging depth of 14-ft. 5-in. to 17-ft 11-in.

For more information contact Volvo at 828/650-2000 or [www.volvo.com](http://www.volvo.com) / circle no. 259

## Terex

The Terex line covers six backhoe loader models in its compact equipment range. The newly upgraded TX760B and TX-860B backhoe loaders are at the small end of the range with 10,485 and 12,291-lbs. breakout force at the loader and 14.6-ft. dig depth with the standard backhoe attachment. Terex improved the TX760B and TX860B by including new drivetrain components, including a new centered driveline, larger torque converter, transmission-mounted hydraulic pumps, power boost brakes, front axles with power integrated track rods and new loader and backhoe control valves.

For more information contact Terex at 203/222-7170 or [www.terex.com](http://www.terex.com) / circle no. 260

## Terramite

Terramite's T5C compact tractor loader backhoe features a sloped hood, improving loader visibility. The operator's compartment has been ergonomically improved by relocating the brake lever and redesigning the fenders to provide more foot room. A landscape loader bucket is now included as a standard feature. The T5C's standard 20-hp

continued on page 56

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# LM Reports

continued from page 54

Kohler command gas engine is compact enough to fit in many areas inaccessible to larger machines.

For more information contact Terramite at 304/776-4231 or [www.terramite.com](http://www.terramite.com) / circle no. 261



## Compact Power Inc. (CPI) ▲

The design of the Powerhouse TLB-325 tractor loader backhoe from CPI ensures a rugged, dependable backhoe with phenomenal digging power and big machine features.

Engineered with operators, owners and servicemen in mind, the

new TLB-325 Tractor Loader Backhoe offers long life, exceptional performance and easy serviceability. Faster cycle times, a roomy operator area and precise, easy joystick controls put a passion for power at your fingertips.

For more information contact Compact Power at 800/476-9673 or [www.cpiequipment.com](http://www.cpiequipment.com) / circle no. 262

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Circle 134

## Komatsu America Corp.

Komatsu America's WB156-5 and WB156PS-5 backhoe loaders are equipped with Tier 2 Engine and feature operating weights between 16,530 -18,780 lbs. These models, in the 15-ft. backhoe class, feature a spacious operator station redesigned to provide comfort for any size operator. The standard backhoe Pressure Proportional Control (PPC) joysticks and adjustable control towers with integrated wrist rests allow the operator to achieve maximum comfort and control. The standard backhoe control pattern change valve allows the operator to choose either backhoe style or excavator style control pattern.

For more information contact Komatsu America at 866/513-5778 or [www.komatsu-america.com](http://www.komatsu-america.com) / circle no. 263

## Case Construction Equipment

Case's M Series 2 loader/backhoes includes the 580M, 580 M Turbo, 580 Super M, 590 Super M, and the 580 Super M+ models. These five models range from 76 to 98 hp with loader capacities from 6,182 to 7,327 lbs. New engines and a new low-effort pilot control options have been added to all M Series two models. Features include: pilot control option with in-cab pattern switch and backhoe performance improvements.

For more information contact Case Construction Equipment at 262/636-6011 or [www.casece.com](http://www.casece.com) / circle no. 264

## Yanmar

Yanmar's CBL40 compact backhoe loader is designed with a heavy-duty durable, single frame. The machine is built from the ground up for the professional customer seeking high

continued on page 58



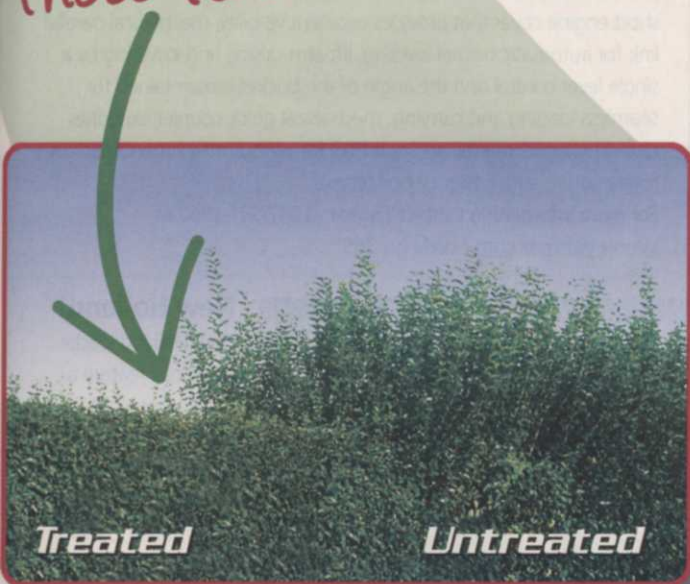


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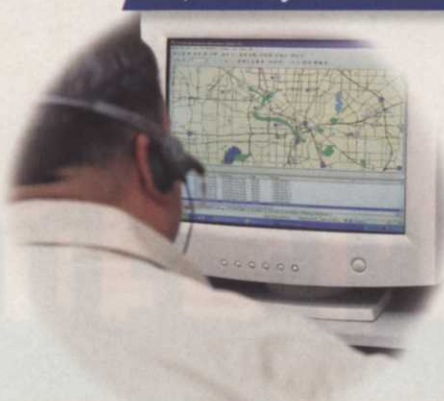
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Circle 136

## LM Reports

continued from page 52

- ▶ Since many backhoe loaders spend most of their working lives on muddy, loose ground, the extra cost of 4-wheel drive can be a good investment.
- ▶ On crowded job sites, 4-wheel steering offers greatly improved maneuverability: Turning the front and rear wheels in opposite directions greatly reduces turning radius.
- ▶ Many different types of attachments can be used on a backhoe loader. The front of a backhoe loader can be outfitted with forks, grapples, snow blowers and powered brooms. The back can use hammers, thumbs and grinders.
- ▶ Talk to others about what types of equipment they're using and where they got it. Hands-on experience is by far the most valuable information you can use in your purchasing decision.

— Information found on BuyerZone.com

continued from page 56

performance in a compact, easy-to-transport unit. Features include: short engine cover that provides excellent visibility, mechanical parallel link for automatic bucket leveling, lift arm raising and lowering by a single lever control and the angle of the bucket is maintained for seamless loading and carrying, mechanical quick coupler expedites changing attachments, and rear PTO for various attachments such as a rotary cutter, auger, tiller or box scraper.

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# Mole **SUCCESS** changes everything

**A MERE THREE YEARS AGO**, Curt Vander Wall would have taken a mole call with a slight groan. His experience was that perimeter sprays weren't effective, and steel traps were so labor-intensive that his profits would take a hit.

Those days are gone. Vander Wall is now so enthusiastic about mole service that he recently changed his Ludington, Mich.-based company's name from Turf Care Lawn Service to Turf Care Mole Man. The difference: Talpirid Mole Bait from Bell Laboratories.

"We started using Talpirid two years ago when it first hit the market," Vander Wall recalls. "I went to a seminar in Grand Rapids in September 2005 and started with it soon after."

The initial rollout was simply by word of mouth. Vander Wall would tell existing customers with mole problems that he had a new product he could try out for them. In the process, he fine-tuned his expertise in placement and inspection — for example, Turf Care's policy is to not let customers knock down tunnels until three days after baiting, giving the moles time to encounter and eat the bait.

By 2006, mole control became part of the firm's core services.

"We went from just having a one-time baiting service to now also offering a full-season program from March to November," Vander Wall explains. "People are

signing up on the full-season like crazy, because it's such a good value."

The northern Michigan sandy soil is conducive to moles, Vander Wall says, and his company treats both residential and commercial accounts for the pest.

"It's inevitable that the mole will re-invade, especially in wooded areas, so we make sure to educate the customer: Talpirid takes care of existing moles, but we have to be vigilant about new populations moving in," he explains.

## Future looks bright

Vander Wall is Turf Care's primary "mole guru," but he makes sure that all five of his technicians are cross-trained. They also have Talpirid on their trucks in case they can be of service on the spot.

"I try to be the expert, but the more you do it, the better you are at finding the tunnels," he says.

Besides literally changing the company's name, the success of Talpirid has also changed Turf Care's mission. Vander Wall expects to transition one of his technicians to be the designated outdoor pest control and mole control specialist. He also just had one of his trucks redone to emphasize the mole service, and plans call for converting the whole fleet to the

**“One of my main selling points is simply that it works,” he concludes.**

**“The product does work.”**

— CURT VANDER WALL

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





*Placing the Talpirid bait saves on both time and labor, compared to other, less-effective techniques.*

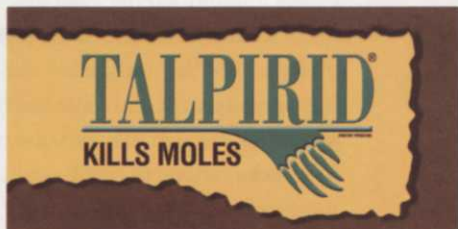
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new graphics. The new phone directory ads play up Turf Care's mole service as well.

"We're excited about it," Vander Wall says of the changes. "This second season, we're really going to move forward."

Vander Wall chalks it up to being in the right place at the right time. He was looking for an add-on service, and believes he got one — in spades. Because the bait controls moles underground, there's no return visits to collect carcasses, only a checkup to ensure no new moles have invaded from neighboring properties not yet protected by Talpirid. As his customer base grows, however, Vander Wall is setting out to change that, too.

"One of my main selling points is simply that it works," he concludes. "The product does work." •



[www.talpirid.com](http://www.talpirid.com)

## More about Moles...

- Moles are insectivores. They are not rodents. They will consume grubs and insects, but get the vast majority of their dietary needs from earthworms.
- Moles have an incredibly high metabolism. This means that they have an insatiable appetite and are always on the lookout for food. In fact, they consume 80% to 100% of their body weight every day.
- Moles create and use tunnel systems as the means to locate food. They can move rapidly through existing tunnel systems, but can also create up to 100 feet of new tunnels in a day — causing extensive lawn and landscape damage.
- Moles do not hibernate and are active year-round.
- Moles are anti-social and typically do not coexist within the same tunnel system. The one exception is for reproduction. Moles typically breed in late winter/early spring. After the young are weaned (seven to 12 weeks after breeding) you are likely to see the highest levels of activity.
- Moles live their lives underground, rarely coming to the surface. Expected life span for a mole is approximately two to three years.
- Moles will reoccupy a vacant tunnel system if food is abundant.



## Just the Facts

- Turf Care Mole Man of Ludington, Mich., was founded in 1984 as Turf Care Lawn Service. President Curt Vander Wall purchased the company in 2003.
- The six-employee company is 70 percent residential/30 percent commercial.
- Beyond moles, other services the company offers include aeration, lawn fertilization, leaf care, lime application, thatch management, root feeding, soil testing, and vegetation, weed and pest control.
- Online at [www.turfcarellc.com](http://www.turfcarellc.com).

*Curt Vander Wall has even changed his company's name, all thanks to Talpirid.*



# Rotors & spray heads

**The size of the property, topography and available water pressure determine whether to use rotors or spray heads.** BY JIM BORNEMAN

**W**hether you have made the commitment to add an irrigation professional to your staff, or are going to partner with an independent irrigation contractor, the fact remains that irrigation is a specialized discipline with a unique set of rules.

As new home construction in the United States slows, consumers are staying put and investing more disposable income upgrading their properties. Because of this, much of the irrigation work you will initially encounter will be retro-fit or repair work on existing systems.

Before beginning any work, determine what kind of a system you're dealing with — specifically the types of sprinkler heads. Nearly all systems use one of two types of heads: rotor or spray. Generally, the head type is dictated by the size of the area it is irrigating (e.g. commercial or residential), topography and available water pressure.

Today's rotors and spray heads provide years of reliable service, but as with any mechanical device, they will only deliver maximum performance if they're installed and maintained properly.

## Rotors — the basics

Rotors have superior performance characteristics because they're designed to be spaced further apart, and distribute water evenly over large turf. Ideal for commercial properties, sports fields, public green spaces and other large turf areas, rotors throw water a distance of 20 to 60 ft. or more, and need a minimum of 40-50 lbs. of water pressure to operate properly (public utilities provide about 60 lbs. of water pressure from the main line).

Gear-driven rotors are the most popular and are likely what you will encounter. Usually featuring a "sealed" design to guard against debris, a gear-driven rotor operates when pressurized water enters at the base and drives a series of internal gears to rotate the head. Reliable and durable, gear-driven rotors can easily deliver a lot of water over very wide areas — which can present a

problem if too many heads are used to irrigate a small area. (This occasionally happens when inexperienced designers and installers try to reduce the number of heads in a system).

Probably one of the greatest attributes of today's rotors is the ability to interchange nozzles to create throw pat-

terns for specific needs.

Though nozzle interchangeability has helped designers truly customize systems, a problem arises when inexperienced installers misapply nozzles in hopes of stretching the rotor's performance beyond its design specifications. Issues also arise when they try to re-



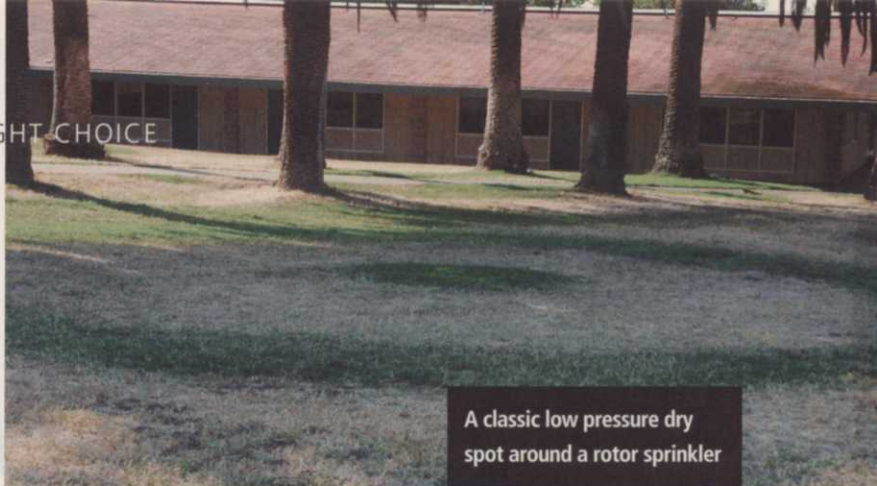
Testing working nozzle pressure at a spray head, this pressure is so low at 12 psi that the sprinkler won't fully pop up.



duce the throw too much (if too many rotors were installed in too-small of an area).

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sure is a common problem if too few rotors are used to irrigate a very large area, or the piping in the system is not appropriate for the site.

To determine the cause of low water pressure, you may have to conduct an audit of the entire system and go through a process of elimination:

- ▶ Turn on the system and go to the rotor furthest from the main.
- ▶ Using a Pitot tube attached to a liquid pressure gauge, measure the stream coming from the head (a Pitot tube is a tool used in the aircraft industry to measure air speed. It costs about \$30 and should be in every irrigation installers' toolbox). The differential of pressure between heads on the same valve circuit should never be more than 10%.
- ▶ Once you get an accurate water pressure reading, determine the size of the nozzle and consult the manufacturer's performance chart to its performance specifications. Often, poor rotor performance is because the nozzle is either too small or too big for the application. Replace with the best option for the condition.

▶ Open the nearest valve box and note the size of pipe feeding and discharging the valves. Two-inch pipe, which is fairly common in irrigation systems, is designed to carry 50 to 55 gpm. If the system predominately uses 2-in. valves, the 2-in. discharge pipe is probably undersized. Very often, because 2-in. valves can accommodate a larger amount of water than the pipe, inexperienced designers and installers make the mistake of specifying and installing a pipe on the discharge that is too small (which actu-

continued on page 64

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*continued from page 62*  
ally cuts down on water pressure). A 1-1/2-in. pipe would increase flow, water pressure and rotor performance.

If the audit reveals the problem is the result of low water pressure from the main supply line (e.g. municipal), consider installing a centrifugal booster pump to boost the flow.

Though a booster pump will increase pressure by 10% to 15%, you may have to re-evaluate the system piping to make sure it can handle the increased flow. Increasing water pressure dramatically without thinking through how

it will affect the entire system could have disastrous and costly affects.

If there are any issues you can not easily solve, do not hesitate to contact the original designer or landscape architect.

**Spray heads**

For most people, when they think of irrigation heads, they think of spray heads. Smaller than rotors, spray heads are commonly used for most residential applications. Also used in some commercial settings for specific applications like small turf spaces or ornamental beds, the primary difference between rotors and spray



A 4-in. pop-up spray head is blocked by the turf, a 6-in. pop would be preferable here.

heads lies in how they are spaced and distance of throw. Spray heads are rarely spaced more than 15 ft. apart.

Spray heads utilize a removable nozzle with a filter that is attached to a spring-loaded plastic spray body with pop-up heights from 2 to 12 in. When the irrigation valve opens and energizes the line, the water pressure causes the risers to pop-up. Once the irrigation cycle is complete, the valve shuts off than the riser retracts into the

spray head housing.

Expanding your business to include irrigation services will be challenging, both in terms of staffing and marketing to customers. But, if you make a commitment to understanding the basics and dedicate yourself to educating your staff on system installation and repair, the rewards can be significant. **LM**

— *The author is vice president of educational services Ewing Irrigation Inc. Contact him at [jborneman@ewing1.com](mailto:jborneman@ewing1.com)*

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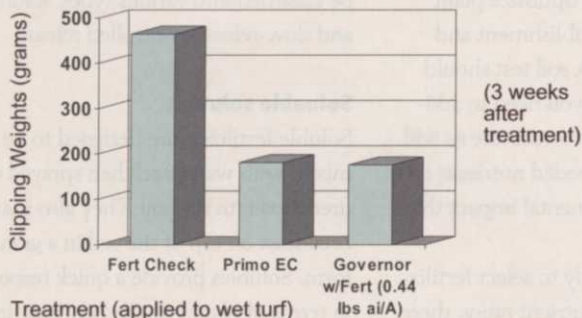
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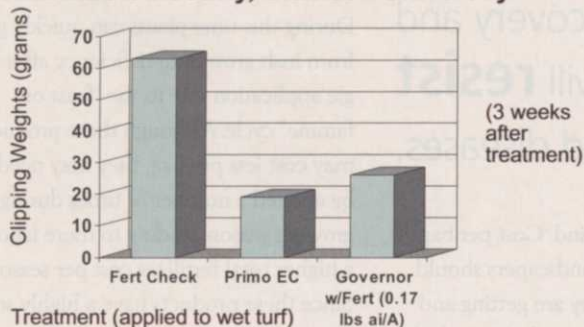
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# FOCUS ON

There are many factors to consider before choosing the right product for the property

BY FRED HULME

**S**electing the correct fertilizers for landscape installations and on an ongoing basis can be very confusing. There are a multitude of products to choose and some may be labeled for

specific crops or uses. Mineral soil types are different from site-to-site and any one site may contain a variety of plant types that need to be fertilized at the same time including turf, trees and shrubs, herbaceous annuals and perennials as well as containers. To avoid improperly selecting and using fertilizers, it is best to understand the make-up of a product beyond the N-P-K analysis or the name on the bag.

The first step should be to conduct a comprehensive soil test. Mineral soil has a tremendous influence on plant nutrition. It can store, transform and supply nutrients to plants, as well as affect the avail-

# fertilizer

ability of applied fertilizers. The goal in deterring a fertilizer program should be to add only those nutrients that are lacking in order to optimize plant growth during the establishment and maintenance phases. A soil test should identify the nutrients you need to add and guide you on the correct rate to add them. Supplying unneeded nutrients can have adverse environmental impact that should be avoided.

When you are ready to select fertilizers with the correct nutrient ratios, there are other fertilizer product properties that

you should keep in mind. Cost per bag may be a factor, but landscapers should examine the value they are getting and consider the entire seasonal cost, including labor, when comparing product costs. Some may be lower cost but more labor intensive, while others may cost more per

bag but are easier to apply and provide longer-term benefits. Another key factor is how soluble the fertilizer is. Fertilizers can be classified into various types: soluble and slow-release/controlled release.

## Soluble solution

Soluble fertilizers are designed to be mixed with water and then sprayed or drenched into the soil. They also may be broadcast on top of the soil in a granular form. Solubles provide a quick response in terms of plant growth, but their impact is rather limited over time (Fig. 1). After a soluble fertilizer is applied, it has a residual effect of only two to three weeks. During this time plants can quickly go from lush growth to deficiency after a single application due to the "feast or famine" cycle. Although these products may cost less per bag, they may need to be applied a number of times during the growing season, leading to more labor and a higher total fertilizer cost per season. Since these products have a highly soluble nature, they may be more prone to run-off with excess water. Additionally, solubles have a higher potential to burn

Nitrogen is needed for **growth**, recovery and to encourage dense growth that will **resist weeds**, traffic, insects and diseases.

ability of applied fertilizers. A measurement of soil pH and nutrient status is essential. If pH is too high or low, added nutrients such as iron may be ineffective. If a soil already contains a high level of a specific nutrient (e.g. phosphorus), there is little need or advantage to plants in

you should keep in mind. Cost per bag may be a factor, but landscapers should examine the value they are getting and consider the entire seasonal cost, including labor, when comparing product costs. Some may be lower cost but more labor intensive, while others may cost more per

*continued on page 68*



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continued from page 66

plants especially in the heat of summer, and the best strategy when employing solubles is to apply lower rates/more frequently for optimal plant growth.

### Sustain the gain

Slow-release fertilizers (SRF) and controlled-release fertilizers (CRF) supply sustained nutrient feeding with a single application. Some SRFs may require some soil microbial action to convert nutrients into a plant available form. Controlled-release fertilizers are typically coated with technologies that tie nutrient release with soil temperature.

While these fertilizers typically have a higher cost per bag compared to solubles, they can supply a much longer nutrient residual response (12-16 weeks) with a single application. CRFs provide the greatest degree of plant safety and have a much lower potential to burn plants. CRFs also ensure a consistent and predictable supply of nutrients over the period of time as defined by the label, and they don't generally produce the excessive initial surge growth that solubles can.

SRFs and CRFs can be applied at higher rates and much less frequently than solubles. Full-season feeding can actually be achieved with a single application of CRF.

### The right nutrients

Based on plant demand and soil fertility, nitrogen (N) is typically the most limiting nutrient in a landscape. Since nitrogen is an integral component of plant proteins and of chlorophyll, plants deficient in nitrogen will be stunted with yellow foliage. Nitrogen applications will green-up turf and aid in growth, recovery and to encourage dense growth that resists weeds, traffic, insects and diseases. Nitrogen can be mobile in the soil and it

## THE GROWTH PATTERN OF TYPICAL WATER SOLUBLE BLENDED FERTILIZERS

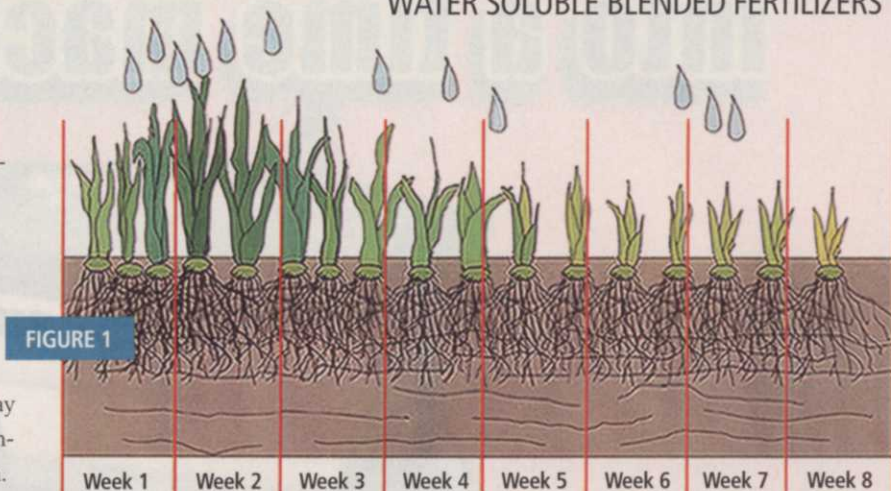


FIGURE 1

Solubles provide plant growth early on, but their impact is limited over time.

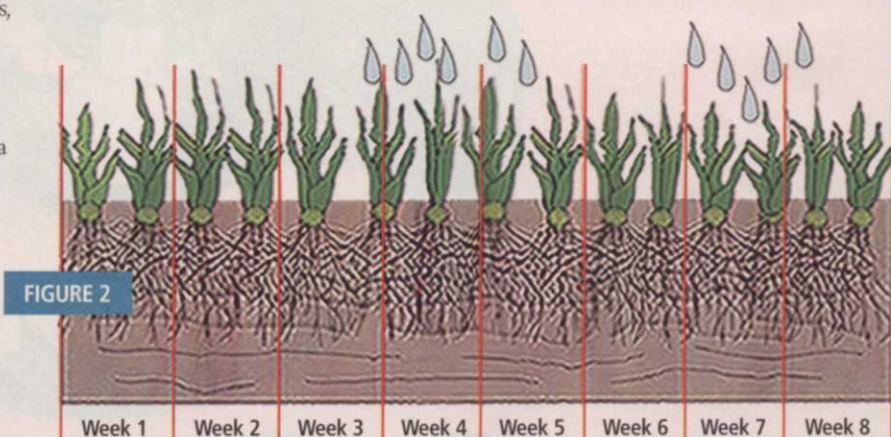


FIGURE 2

Controlled release fertilizers provide sustained feeding over a longer period of time.

can leach into the ground water.

When you examine landscape fertilizers, a number of products are available that control the release of nitrogen via chemical make-up or coatings. The use of slow-release and controlled-release nitrogen can result in more uniform plant nutrition throughout the growing season and reduce environmental impact. If you examine the guaranteed analysis of a fertilizer label that contains SRF or CRF, you will notice the "Slow Release Nitrogen %" statement right below the "derived from"

statement. This tells you how many units of the total nitrogen will provide sustained, longer-term feeding. Generally, the label will also state the expected longevity of the slow-release components under average climactic conditions.

Other important fertilizer properties include: nutrient content (aside from N-P-K) such as percent magnesium (Mg) or iron (Fe), quality of raw materials and uniformity of particle size (for spreading). If soils are lacking in Mg or Fe,

continued on page 70





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*continued from page 68*

plants will respond quite positively to fertilizers that contain these essential elements. If nutrients are derived from components that are readily available to plants, there will be a much quicker and more effective response than if they're derived from poor-quality, unavailable sources. Products whose raw materials are sized more uniformly will tend not to segregate as much and are able to be applied in a more consistent and uniform manner.

Bags labels should clearly state suggested rates and expected coverage per bag. Bag rates may vary significantly between different products and it is best to calculate the amount of nutrients you actually need to apply per unit area to sustain plants based on soil tests (i.e. lbs. of

nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft.), instead of blindly following a recommended rate. Bag rates tend to be generic and actually rates may be impacted by factors, such as weather, irrigation timing and frequency, desired plant quality, species/cultivars growth differences, soil texture, organic matter content, whether clippings are removed or recycled. Insufficient fertilizer rates will result in hungry, stunted and poorly developed plants. Excess nitrogen can result in: rapid growth, frequent mowing, more thatch development, reduced stress/disease and insect tolerance, root dieback, shallow root system and weak sod.

Landscape **fertilizers** when selected properly can help maintain and **extend the beauty** of high quality plantings.

Properly selected landscape fertilizers help maintain and extend the beauty of high quality plantings. Selection criteria should include: all required nutrients in a quality form that are not supplied by the soil sustained for the period of time suited to the total maintenance program. The utilization of fertilizers containing controlled release fertilizer should be considered where labor costs are significant and where a long lasting and uniform nitrogen supply is advantageous. **L.M.**

— *The author is director of technical services for The Scotts Co., Professional Horticulture Group. He can be reached at [fred.hulme@scotts.com](mailto:fred.hulme@scotts.com)*

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GOLF



LAWN



# Stand-on mowers stand up



Stand-on mowers, like this John Deere model, save operators time on the jobs site.

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / Managing Editor

**W**illiam Wright read a magazine article that scared the living daylights out of him. In essence, the writer explained that business owners must make their own products obsolete before someone else does. Wright turned to Jim Velke, the mechanic he'd hired several years earlier, and the man largely responsible for the ride-on sulky that attaches to walk-behind mowers.

"I told Jim, 'This is going gangbusters,'" says Wright president and CEO of Wright Commercial Products. "These sulkies are selling really well, but what happens if somebody figures out a way to make it obsolete? That would be bad for us."

"We both agreed that we should try

to invent something to make that product obsolete. Two or three weeks later, I set up a lunch meeting at a Wendy's down the street from our factory. We both had drawn diagrams of our best ideas to make obsolete our own product. And when we turned them over the pieces of paper, it was the same thing. It was stand-on the mower instead of a sulky. That was in 1993."

And while ride-ons and sulky's have yet to go the way of buggy whips and dodos, stand-on mowers have made gains ever since.

"There's a significant portion of our industry that is not easy to persuade to use this technology," Wright says.

For that reason, Wright makes a variety of mowers. But he believes the future is stand-ons. Those mowers do have some advantages over their more popular coun-

Ride-on and walk-behind mowers have their place, but it might be time to consider a stand-on.

terparts. They tend to be cheaper than the riders and, as counterintuitive as it may seem, less brutal on the body.

"The stand-on piece fills a real nice niche for us," says Mark Naperala, director of marketing, Ariens Co. "It does hit a very aggressive and attractive price point. They are very compact units. They don't take up much trailer space."

On a 16-ft. trailer contractors might be able to load one ride-on and one walk-behind. The same trailer probably has room for three stand-on units. More mowers leads to more efficient cutting, which translates directly to the bottom line, argue stand-on proponents. Ariens launched four stand-on models in January. They use a design similar to Wright's original patent, which he licensed originally to Dane Scag, founder of Great Dane, but

*continued on page 76*



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continued from page 74  
only after successfully  
defending a patent  
infringement lawsuit  
and receiving dam-  
ages from Scag.

"The reason that  
standup mowers came  
into being was because peo-  
ple who mow grass for a living needed a  
smaller, lighter machine or a lower-priced  
machine that is still commercial grade,"  
says Gilbert Pena, business-to-business  
strategy manager for John Deere. "They  
need a lighter machine, a smaller machine  
or more economical machine to start  
with, or to mow certain properties.

"A standup unit is easier to load, mean-  
ing quicker, to load and unload on a trailer  
than a sit down unit. Because landscape  
contractors load and unload many times a  
day as they change properties, they are  
saving additional minutes as they add  
numbers of properties. The number that  
we hear from people who become con-  
verts (from commercial walk-behind with  
attachments or from sit-down mowers)  
claim numbers like 33% more efficient,"  
Pena says. "The reason is that the design  
of the standup unit allows for these time-sav-  
ing pieces to add up to more time to de-  
vote to other chores or more time to add  
more work, more revenue."

William Wright invented the  
concept of the stand-up  
mower in 1993 and  
received a patent  
a year later.



Ariens/Gravely entered the stand-up  
mower market with four models this year.



## Buying tips

Like a new car, a mower looking shiny and new in the show-  
room is often hard to resist. But when it's time to put the  
blade to the grass, how well will the machine perform.

Most dealers will gladly show customers the differences  
in models in the showroom and even, possibly, on a demo  
track. But the best method is on the job site, says John Deere's Gilbert Pena.  
Somebody considering any mower should ask the dealer to bring it out for a real  
world test drive. Pena offers these tips when looking for a stand-on mower:

- 1 **Does the machine have a rigid deck or a floating deck?** Some stand-on mowers have fixed or rigid decks attached to them. A floating deck is preferred because it more easily follows the contour of uneven ground.
- 2 **How easy is it to adjust the height of cut?** When moving from property to property, means you're not always cutting at the same height. Looking for ease of height-cut adjustment.
- 3 **What is the overall length of the machine?** If you have a pickup truck with a short wheelbase, you get a rougher ride than on a long wheelbase. The same is true for these machines. The shorter they are the more likelihood that you're going to bump around on uneven ground versus a longer machine. Look for overall size relative to the properties that you mow.
- 4 **How well does the machine climb a curb?** Loading and unloading means lots of curb climbing. Machines should be tested for their ability to climb a curb going backward, going forward, at an angle or straight in.
- 5 **What is the fuel capacity?** You want to have a large enough tank that will last you all day mowing. You want to look for fuel capacity. It will vary by the size of the machine.

Factor in the fact that stand-ons limit  
the stress and body fatigue and it's easy to  
see why they are becoming more popular.

Stand-on mowers do come with a couple of disadvantages. They tend to have smaller bagging capacity than ride-ons. And the larger machines can sometimes have difficulty with slopes, depending on the design, Pena says.

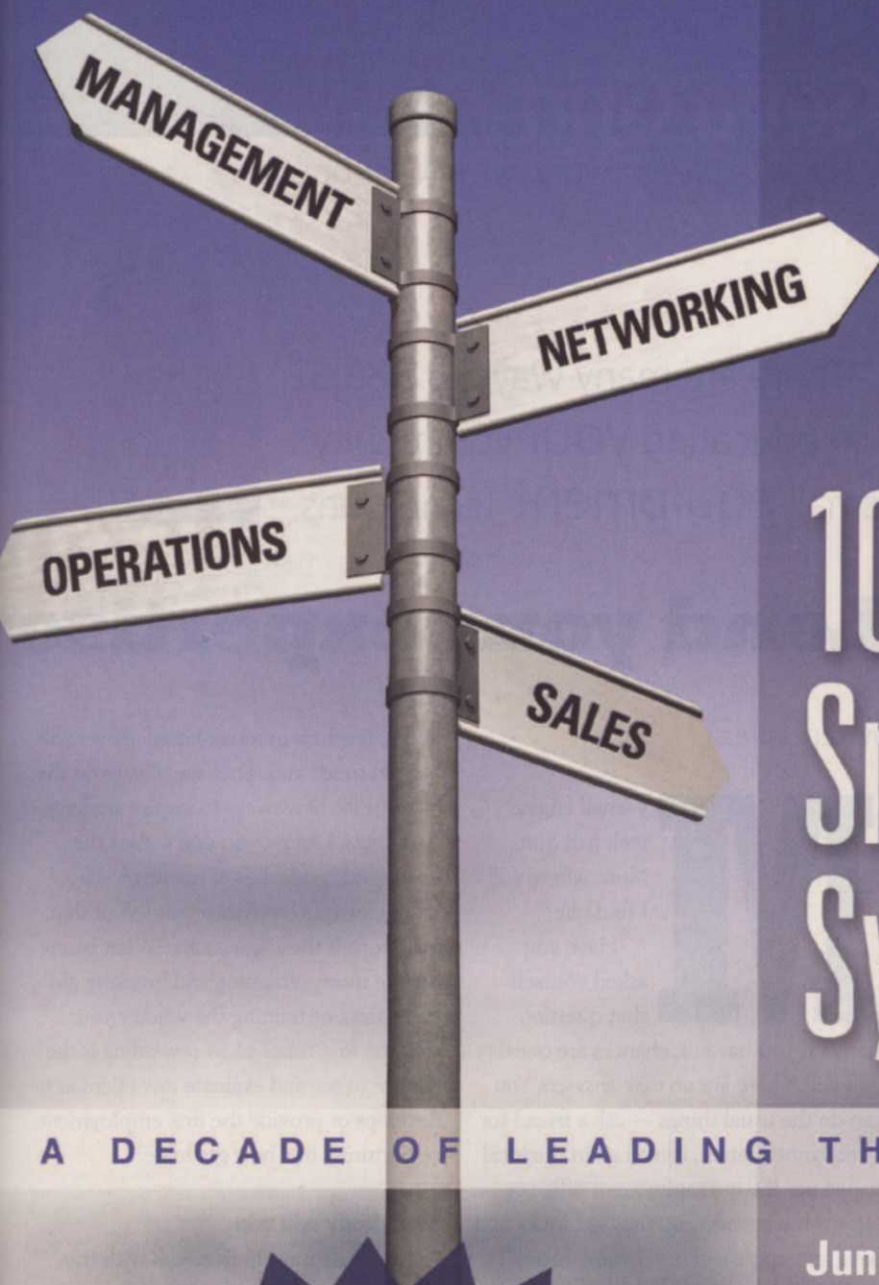
That's not an issue for Wright's Velke machines, Wright says. Because of those license changes he forced on Scag early in the process, the balance isn't quite the same on the

non-Wright mowers.

Whatever disadvantages it might have, the efficiency and savings more than make up for them.

"One of the things that I hear repeatedly from people who use a standup mower is totally counterintuitive," Pena says. "People that switch to standup mowers, from one of the other two, will profess that the operator is less fatigued at the end of the day than he used to be. You think you would be at rest when you're sitting down. Actually, the fact is that your back is taking the bulk of the stress when you are mowing on uneven ground, loading and unloading." **LJM**





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# Get a Grip

TECHNOLOGY WORK WITH A SCHOOL

There are many ways to assist in educating YOUR community's small equipment technicians.



## Lend your expertise

BY ALLEN SPENCE

**"M**y small engine tech just quit. Now, where will I find one?"

Have you asked yourself that question lately? If you haven't, chances are one day you will. There are no easy answers. You can do the usual things — ask a friend for a recommendation, run an ad in the local paper, use the unemployment office or tap a temp agency. You may get lucky and have an unpolished jewel walk through your door, but don't hold your breath.

### Here's where we come in

There is a small engine technician shortage, so finding a good one is going to get even harder real soon... unless we, as an industry, make some changes. I have no miracle answers, but I do have an idea to consider.

Go to your local community college or high school training center. Talk to the counselor there, and offer your assistance. Students there can definitely use it. Many schools offer classes with work options where students attend school half a day and work the other half. These classes require the student to work a set number of

hours. Teachers in repair-based classes will be glad to see you. They are always on the lookout for new ways to inspire students.

I know, I know, you don't want the hassle and headaches of training a school kid. Before you convince yourself of that, ask yourself these questions. "What benefits me more, retraining and breaking old bad habits, or training the worker your way the first time? How rewarding is the chance to see and evaluate raw talent as it develops or provide the first employment opportunity to a new graduate?"

### Everybody will win

As your relationship develops with the teachers, so will your opportunities to be a positive influence on your community. You may serve on curriculum development committees where you can have input into what is taught and the manner it's presented. You can donate old equipment to the program.

There are many ways you can assist in educating your community's small equipment technicians, and the result is that everybody benefits. If you can't find a suitable school close by, notify me, I may be able to assist you.

— The author is turf equipment management instructor at Hinds Community College in Raymond, MS. Contact him at [haspence@hindsc.edu](mailto:haspence@hindsc.edu).





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## Basic tips for beginning retaining wall construction

# Build a great

Improperly constructed retaining walls are not only unsightly when they fail, they can be dangerous. Gravity and water will combine to bring down a poorly constructed wall. To make sure that doesn't happen, contractors need to know the physics involved in retaining walls, whether they're constructed of segmental blocks, bricks, poured concrete, boulders or timbers.

### An object in motion ...

Retaining walls are used to hold back sloping earth. While the ground just behind that slope isn't moving very fast, it is in motion. That motion will continue unless a retaining wall is capable of resisting the force that gravity places on the sloping ground. Soil can weigh more than 100 lbs. per cubic foot. That's a lot of weight to hold back. To counteract it, retaining walls need to be built the right way, and that starts with a good base.

The first course of a retaining wall

can't just be set on top of the ground. It needs to be buried. What's more, it needs to be placed on a well-compacted base.

"We always try to use at least six inches of road mix compacted to 95% to get a building pad to set the base course on," says Curt Gallegos, landscape division manager at Leatham Landscaping in Boise, ID. "Depending on what you're trying to retain, sometimes you have to bury the whole block or more."

Site conditions and wall materials will dictate the depth of the base material, but in general it should be buried 1/10th of the wall height. A good base will prevent



the forces pushing against the wall to kick out the base of the wall over time.

"Soil types can have a big impact on wall construction," says Richard Poynter, president and CEO of Poynter Landscape and Construction in Wildwood, MO. The clay soils in his area will support walls up to six feet high without calling in an engineer. But in some parts of the country, walls more than two feet high require an engineer, as per local regulations.

"In most cases, the soil type doesn't affect the base construction unless you run into plastic soils," Poynter says. Plastic soils are those that can be molded or permanently deformed by moderate pressure. "On plastic soils, we end up removing a





PHOTOS COURTESY : KEYSTONE RETAINING WALL SYSTEMS, INC.

# wall

BY JAMIE GOOCH

percentage of it below the footing. We excavate 12 to 18 in. and replace it with compacted rock."

The site also impacts the base course. "If you have a slope in front of the wall as well, then you'll want to excavate the trench for your base down farther so you have two feet from the base material to daylight," suggests Gallegos.

Once a good base has been established, the wall setback and level must be maintained during construction. Setting back the wall, basically leaning it back into the slope, helps it to retain the slope behind it.

Segmental retaining wall systems

**1. A well-compacted base and backfill are a must for a properly installed retaining wall.**

**2. Segmental retaining wall systems come with blocks pre-engineered to set back into the slope. 3. Some manufacturers' blocks have hollow cores, making them lighter to work with during construction. The voids are filled with crushed stone as the wall is built.**

come with blocks that are pre-engineered to set back into the slope. By lining up each course with lips on the blocks or pins included in the system, contractors are assured of the proper setbacks. Segmental retaining wall systems also include

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## Rules of thumb

While local regulations, materials and site conditions will dictate the specifics, below are some generalities to consider when designing retaining walls.

- ▶ Walls should lean back into the earth being retained one inch for every foot of wall height.
- ▶ Consult an engineer for walls over 4 ft. high, for 3-to-1 or greater ratio slopes and when building in poor soils.
- ▶ Bury the base of the wall to a depth 1/10th that of the overall wall height.
- ▶ Compact backfill in 3- to 4-in. layers.
- ▶ When using "deadmen" as anchors on rock and timber walls, install one per 16 sq. ft. of exposed wall face.
- ▶ When terracing a hillside, the distance between the walls should be twice the wall height.
- ▶ Use landscape fabric to keep backfilled soil from clogging the drainage gravel behind a wall.



guidelines for determining the geogrid needed to tie the wall into the compacted backfill.

"With boulder materials, those predetermined measurements don't exist," says Poynter. "So if we're building a boulder wall more than three feet high, we bring in an engineer, especially if there's a slope above or below the wall."

Neither Poynter nor Gallejos construct many timber walls, due to a lack of client demand and issues with them rotting over time. However, the same need for a stable base, set back and tying into the backfill is true. Long T-shaped timbers ("deadmen") are often used to tie the timber wall into the backfill, similar to geogrid.



### Water flows downhill

A carefully constructed base, properly set back and leveled wall, and compacted backfill with tiebacks can all be undone by erosion if drainage isn't handled correctly. Water that isn't led away by drainage will soak into the soil making it heavier and adding hydrostatic pressure to the forces a wall has to withstand. The

*continued on page 84*

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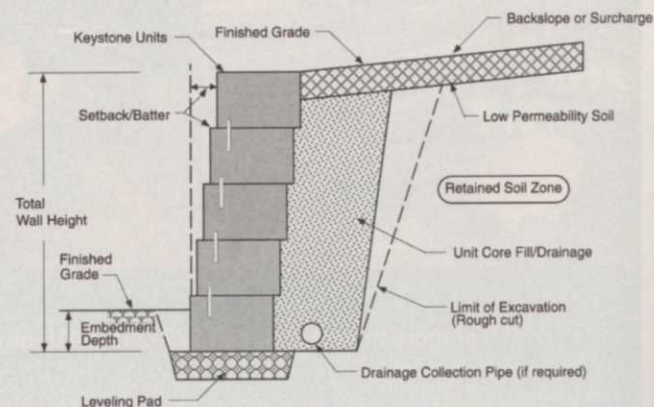
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*continued from page 82*

water has to go somewhere. If it isn't controlled it could eventually wash away the base of the wall.

"The biggest mistake I see is contractors not using drain rock behind a wall," says Gallegos. "They're just asking for failure."

Poynter agrees. "A segmental retaining



wall is designed to let a certain amount of water through the face of it," he says. "But gravel behind the wall allows you to relieve a lot of hydrostatic pressure. You have to manage watershed areas so that water is not allowed to build up in front or behind the wall."

In a well-constructed wall, compacted soil just behind the top course of the wall allows much of the rainwater to flow over the top of the wall. What water does seep down behind the wall takes the path of least resistance through the drainage gravel. It can seep through the face of the wall or down to the base where a drain-pipe leads it away.

With training and practice, contractors can build walls that last decades or longer. Most segmental retaining wall contractors make training available



"The biggest mistake I see is contractors not using drain rock behind a wall. They're asking for failure."

— Curt Gallegos,

Leatham Landscaping, Boise, ID

through their distributors. Industry organizations, such as the Professional Landcare Network ([www.landcare.org](http://www.landcare.org)), and the American Nursery & Landscape Association offer education specific to landscape contractors. Other associations, such as the Concrete Foundations Association of North America ([www.cfawalls.org](http://www.cfawalls.org)), the Mason Contractors Association of America ([www.masoncontractors.org](http://www.masoncontractors.org)) and the American Institute for Timber Construction ([www.aitc-glulam.org](http://www.aitc-glulam.org)) provide information for specific wall materials. **LM**

— The author also writes and edits the monthly LDB Solutions newsletter.

To receive it, visit the Web site [www.landscape-design-build.com/solutions](http://www.landscape-design-build.com/solutions). Contact the author at [jgooch@questex.com](mailto:jgooch@questex.com).



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# Project Portfolio

DESIGN/BUILD

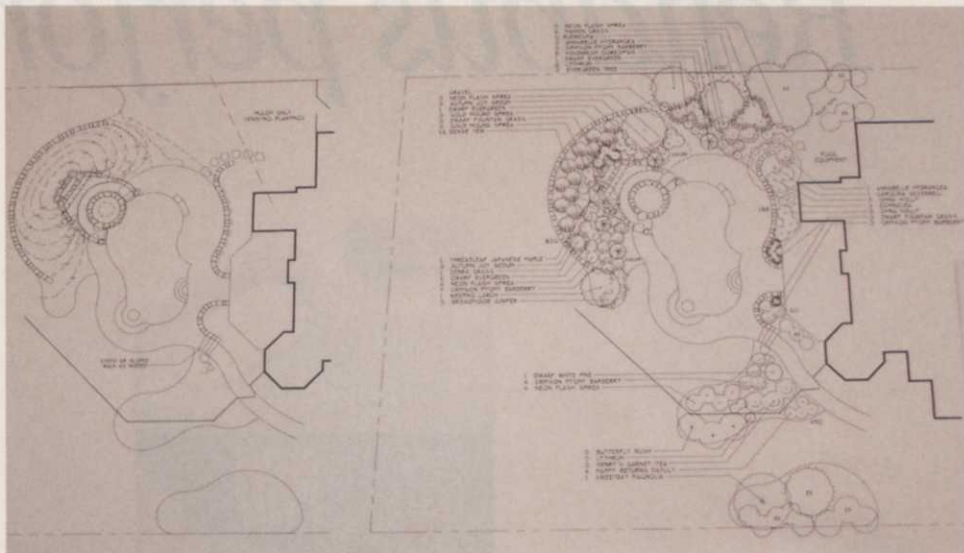
GOLF COURSE VIEW / NEW RESIDENCE / POOL / WATERFALL / HOT TUB

## The design

A newly built home receives the resort treatment on its landscaping, with equal emphasis on beauty and fun.

## The site before construction

Sparse and not focused on the golf course view



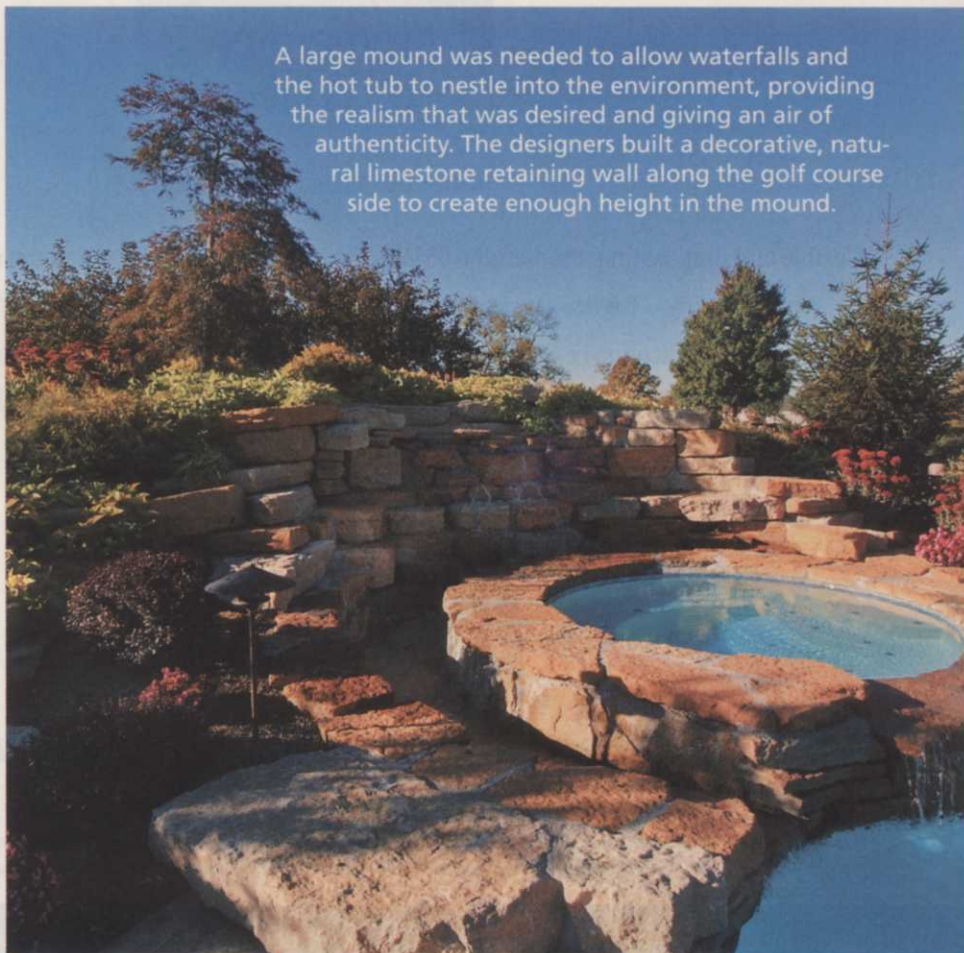
## Project Requirements

- Finish in time for a May wedding on the property, with the project commencing in December.
- Include private hot tub, moat and waterfall features.
- Make the atmosphere guest-friendly, while keeping the golf course view.

## Project Challenges

Given the large sunken areas, the designers soon found that either the golf course or the community developer used the client's and neighbors' rear yards as a bury pit for trees and debris.

A large mound was needed to allow waterfalls and the hot tub to nestle into the environment, providing the realism that was desired and giving an air of authenticity. The designers built a decorative, natural limestone retaining wall along the golf course side to create enough height in the mound.







**ABOVE** By design, the pool cannot be seen from the golf course. A limestone rock table is set on a gunite pedestal with underwater seating. Most importantly, the finished design satisfies the clients' desire to dine on their patio and have a scenic view of the fourth hole of the golf course.

**LEFT** This before shot shows the original space, which included this planting and a small circular patio inside the hedge.



**RIGHT** It was necessary to have the gunite pool form the reservoir and ledges for the rock to be attached. A moat was built around the hot tub to allow the water from the falls to flow back into the pool.



### Project Principals

- Thornton Landscape, Maineville, OH, [www.thorntonlandscape.com](http://www.thorntonlandscape.com)
- Rick Doesburg, president
- Larry Henry, landscape architect
- Services include design, installation and horticultural services
- Budget for this project: More than \$100,000

This project was a Grand 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](http://www.landcarenetwork.org).



# Stone Ridge

The entryway is flanked by ornamental grasses, spruce and colorful annual displays.

In spite of frequent landscape restorations caused by last-minute utility work, this northern Virginia company excelled.

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / Managing Editor

**W**hen Will Cullen's company took control of the landscape management at Stone Ridge, a 30-acre residential development in Stone Ridge, a multi-use development in Loudoun County, VA, owners and employees alike set out to transform the construction site into a showpiece in a short, 3-year span.

"Stone Ridge is the first property that I have seen evolve so rapidly," says Cullen, owner of Heritage Landscape Services LLC.

With a job of this size, HLS faced more than a few frustrating obstacles. For one thing, developers were still building on the site, which is common enough situation for a landscape company. The smart landscape companies get good and find creative ways to work with and around other contractors. They must if they hope to get anything done.

But the bigger headache turned out to be utility companies showing up without warning and digging up the work done by HLS crews.

"We were constantly dealing with utility easements and utilities showing up without warning," says Cullen, a 30-year veteran of the





Green Industry. "The utility companies don't coordinate with anybody. They just go in, do their work and leave it a mess. It becomes our responsibility. And It had to look pristine Saturday morning"

Through it all, HLS soldiered on. In fact, its workers went up and beyond the call of duty and earned the company a 2006 Grand Environmental Achievement Award from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). It earned the recognition in the commercial multi-purpose landscape management category.

"We would work late into the night on a Thursday and Friday to do whatever restoration needed to be done," Cullen says. "If they disturbed beds, we'd have to fix bed. You never knew when that was going to happen."

It may not be fair, but the task of making the property look good after construction or utilities destroying the grounds falls to the landscape management pros. They're expected to deliver miracles . . . and sometimes they almost do.

"As all landscapers can understand, it's always their maintenance responsibility because they're the last ones on the site," Cullen says.

And there are lots of people to keep happy. Not only does the site have thousands of homeowners, it also includes management and development offices, schools, commercial, retail and office space. New construction required daily site visits to ensure a clean and manicured property. Cullen also did weekly site tours with the management and developers to keep communications flowing.

Cullen does have one ace in the hole. "One of my employees actually lives on the site," he says. "That's like a set of eyes on the site 24/7. You're dealing with 300 clients when you have everyone that lives in the HOA and has a voice. We do monitor their message boards as to what's going on."

While the common grounds are always neat and colorful, it's the entryway into the development that really attracts appreciative comment by residents and visitors. The company describes the design as a "stone gazebo and fountain flanked by delicate ornamental grasses, stately spruce, and colorful annual displays. Natural pond features boast elegant fountains, and aquatic plants that require knowledge and care to maintain the necessary balance of water plants and a variety of fish. Families of ducks and blue herons make these ponds home, requiring the contractor to utilize natural and organic forms of maintenance.

That knowledge Cullen refers to means knowing which flora



The recreational complex, frequented by homeowners, business owners and property personnel holds special events such as summer evening concerts, cook outs and social events. These require HLS to keep the lawns and planting beds clean and maintained, repairing any areas that are damaged or replacing plant material immediately.



flourishes on the site's various areas. Some of the plant material used before HLS took over the site was suited to the area; some, as it turned out, wasn't. "Landscape architects don't always know the conditions, not only from an irrigated

site, but just from the exposure and microclimates that are involved," Cullen says. "We had to adjust for that and in some cases change out plant material that wasn't suitable for the environment. "We had dogwoods, which is an under-



Plant variety requires HLS have kept knowledge of horticulture, pruning, IPM, shrub and turf applications.

story tree, planted in full sun surrounded by concrete and expected to live," Cullen says. "That was

switched out with crepe myrtles, which are more suitable for that type of environment."

In non-irrigated areas Cullen used annual vinca and purple strobilanthes. In the irrigated beds his crews planted begonias and red pennisetum, an ornamental grass, and strobilanthes, which doesn't flower, but provides texture and a colorful backdrop, he says.

Cullen wanted the color to really pop quickly, one reason why he planted the larger 6-in. flowers rather than the more common 4-in. plugs. He figures the statement the beds make more than make up for the extra cost for the flowers. From a more practical standpoint, using larger flowers means you're also installing fewer flowers and reducing labor hours.

"As long as I maintain, I warranty plant material for life," he says. "Provided I am the maintenance provider (or if) an affiliate company planted it. It's a valued-added service that clients seem to like. If my flowers fail, I'll redo the flowers. I've

*continued on page 92*

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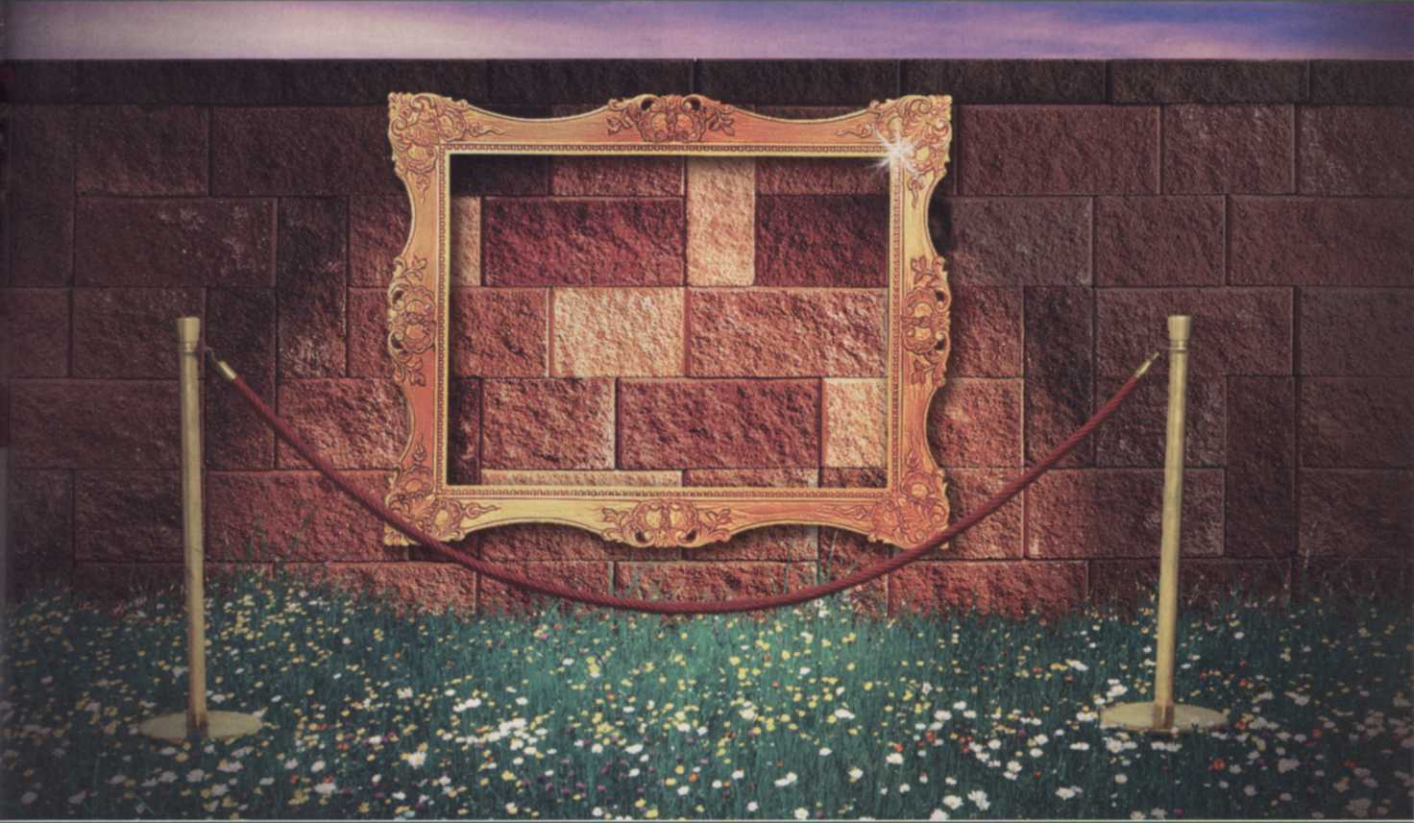
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continued from page 90  
done that several times on that site, due to exposure."

Doing things differently than some clients are used to seeing means that Cullen has to do his share of client education

"It's very important to tell them (customers) how we go about doing things and then what a long-term approach is going to be versus a short term," Cullen says. "A lot of times they want short-term turnaround, And they insist we get it done now or as soon as possible. In that case, Cullen tells them: ' OK, it's going to cost you twice as much."

In addition to the PLANET designation, the site earned honors from the Southeast Building Conference. The committee that awarded Stone Ridge the Aurora award, which honors the Southeast's most outstanding builders, planners, architects, developers, designers, interior merchandisers and other housing-related professionals within a 12-state region. **LMI**

Natural pond features boast fountains and aquatic plants calling for special care. Blue herons and ducks make the ponds home, requiring HLS to utilize natural and organic maintenance techniques.



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# Products

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## Instant aerator

The bucket-mounted TurfSaw will turn any front-end loader into an aerator capable of performing inverted aeration. Unlike other aerators, TurfSaws use the forward motion of your tractor (the faster you drive, the deeper you drive the blades in) combined with the front axle weight of the loader to apply a penetrating force in excess of a ton. TurfSaws can remove as much soil as a corer, leave no post clean-up of plugs, perform better at higher working speeds, and leave no bottom or lateral compaction due to their scooping action.

For more information contact TurfSaw Enterprises at 866/735-4437 or [www.turf-saw.com](http://www.turf-saw.com) / circle no. 267



## Broad-spectrum control

Syngenta's Meridian insecticide is now registered for commercial and residential use on turf by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Meridian controls a broad spectrum of soil and foliar pests with a wide application window. It has preventive and curative properties, is suitable for use on trees and shrubs, and has a reduced need for watering-in after application. Insects controlled include soil pests such as billbugs and white grubs, Japanese beetles, oriental beetles, and European, southern and northern masked chafer; and foliar pests such as aphids,

## Toro LPS spray heads

Toro's new LPS spray heads offer a spray head line equipped with the basic features ideal for residential applications. LPS Series fixed sprays are versatile enough to be used in most landscapes. The LPS features a compact body made with standard, high-impact ABS plastic. It can come with or without a pre-installed Toro Variable Arc Nozzle in 2- or 4-in. pop-up heights. The spray's one-piece molded body adds durability and the removable nozzle, screen and internal components allow for easy flush and service. An optional check valve part can also be purchased separately.

For more information contact Toro Irrigation at 800/664-4740 or [www.toro.com/watermgmt](http://www.toro.com/watermgmt) / circle no. 268



whiteflies, mealybugs and leafhoppers — among many others. Meridian also offers quick control of ants and other insect pests of trees and shrubs.

For more information contact Syngenta Professional Products at 866/SYNGENTA or [www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com](http://www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com) / circle no. 269

## Lawnmower washer

The new washer from Empire Products removes troublesome grass clippings that accumulate on the under-decks of today's powerful riding lawn mowers.

The washer is attached to a common garden hose and placed under mower that is turned off and with blades set at highest setting. The water is then turned on, the engine started and mower blades engaged to high speed. Clippings are quickly "power washed" away. The key to the design is multiple water jets that direct water to the center axis of spinning mower blades, and at a volume and angle that accelerates the velocity of the water. The washer is most effective when used immediately after cutting grass.

For more information contact Empire Products at 715/635-8197 or [www.empirewasher.com](http://www.empirewasher.com) / circle no. 270



## Provides a spark

The new Autolite Xtreme Start spark plug line for lawn care equipment, lawnmowers, chainsaws and snow blowers features an iridium-enhanced 0.6-mm finewire, which requires less voltage resulting in fewer misfires, improved emissions and power. Plus, the Xtreme Start spark plug has a more focused ignition vs. standard plugs for quicker "first-pull" starts. Engineered to offer faster fuel combustion and to help prevent fouling, Autolite Xtreme Start small engine spark plugs were designed to withstand the extreme operating temperatures experienced during a small engine's combustion as well as the extreme conditions they can be used in.

For more information contact Autolite at 800/890-2075 or [www.autolite.com](http://www.autolite.com) / circle no. 271

## TurfTech Endo

The TurfTech Endo formula is an enhancement of the original TurfTech formula that was developed to provide turf managers with an effective, broad-spectrum bioinoculant used as an alternative to chemical inputs. Studies showed 1. TurfTech's nitrogen-fixing organisms could replace some of the fertilizer needed by fine turfs; 2. TurfTech was an effective method of reducing soil compaction;

*continued on page 96*



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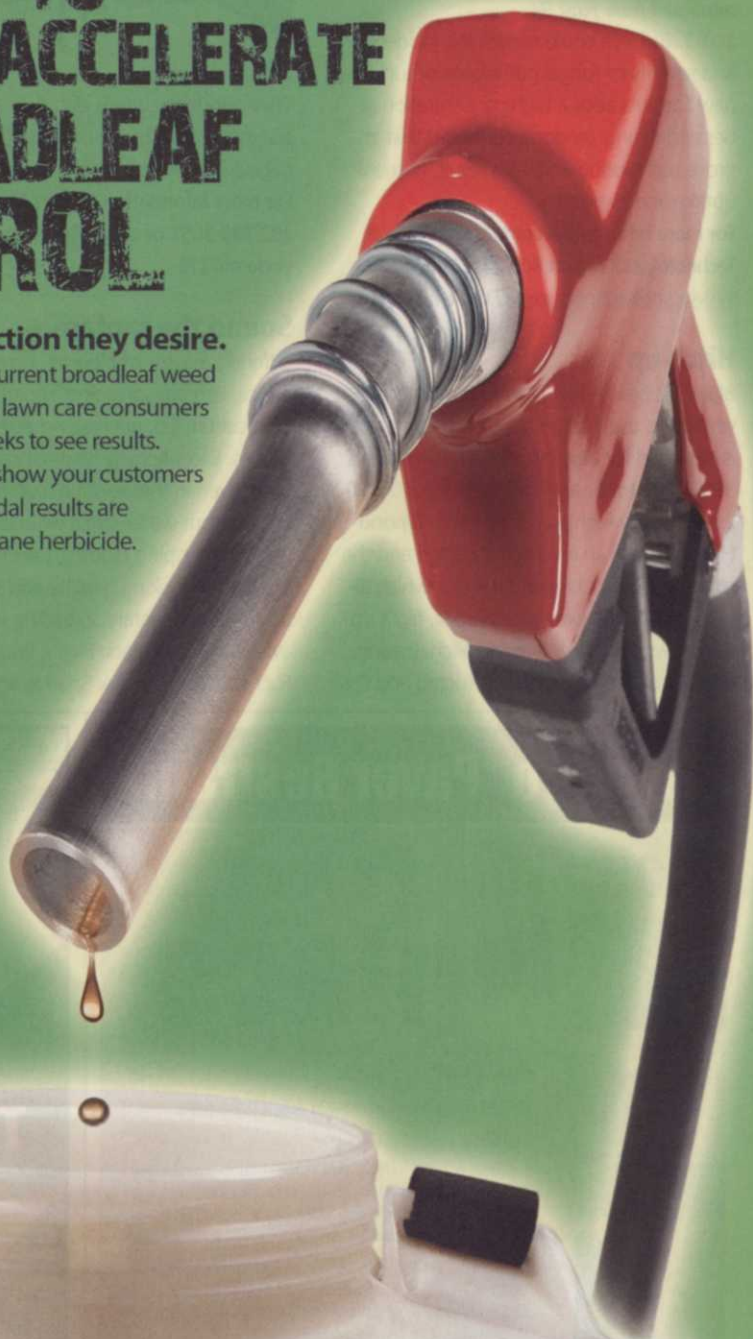


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# Products

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and 3. TurfTech could reduce the incidence and severity of fungal pathogens of turf. This new formula adds a high concentration of beneficial fungi (endomycorrhizae) that improve turf rooting and, as a result, nutrient uptake and availability.

For more information contact Soil Technologies Corp. at 800/221-7645 or [www.soiltechcorp.com](http://www.soiltechcorp.com) / circle no. 272

## Hitch up

Blue Ox's heavy-duty Diamond Hitch is convenient to use, has great safety features and is designed for easy installation. It handles a 30,000-lb. trailer and load, and it has 7,500 lbs. tongue weight capacity. The Diamond Hitch features an Inverta Ball design and the spring loaded locking ball system, which allows you to easily remove the ball, flip it upside down and store it in the hitch, leaving the bed of the pickup unobstructed and flat.



The spring-loaded locking system also eliminates any chance of forgetting to engage a fender well locking mechanism.

For more information contact Blue Ox at 402/385-3051 or [www.blueox.us](http://www.blueox.us) / circle no. 273

## Sound the fanfare ▶

Offering masses of blooms and easy maintenance, Fanfare spreading impatiens from Ball Horticulture Co. are ready-made for landscapes. Exceptionally heat-tolerant, they look great even in the height of summer. They rebound from water stress without shedding buds or dropping blooms, making it easier to keep them looking healthy and strong, all season long. Fanfare spreading impatiens are available in six colors: Blush, Bright Coral, Fuchsia, Orange, Pink Sparkle and, new for

2007, Orchid. Each plant grows 16 to 20 in. tall and spreads 12 to 16 in.

For more information contact Ball Horticulture Co. at 800/879-Ball or [www.BallLandscape.com](http://www.BallLandscape.com) / circle no. 274



continued on page 98

## EdgePro® Paver Restraint

Patent No. D378,857

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# Products

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## New edging option

Channel Guard can be used as a fence edging, a recessed splash guard for erosion con-

trol, or a mow strip around building foundations. The solid 15-in.-wide channel is a permanent barrier from weeds and grass. Channel Guard prevents equipment damage to your fence and building too.

For more information contact Channel Guard at 574/292-1342 or [www.LandscapeTimeSavers.com](http://www.LandscapeTimeSavers.com) / circle no. 275

## Grass catcher ▶

Protero's ruggedly designed PV 212 is an economical dump-from-seat alternative for commercial mowers. It works with the time-proven Protero universal blower, as well as major brand blowers, including Toro, Exmark, John Deere, Kubota, Ferris and Cub Cadet. The PV 212 works with power flow systems and passive chutes to replace conventional bag catchers. Adding minimal length to the mower, while retaining good



operator visibility, the PV 212 holds 12 cu. ft. / 9.5 bushel capacity. The dump lever is easy to pull and gives a secure and positive spring-like feel when the door is latched and locked into place.

For more information contact Protero at 866/476-8376 or [www.proteroinc.com](http://www.proteroinc.com) / circle no. 276

## Disease control

BASF's new Trinity fungicide offers broad-spectrum disease control in golf course, commercial and residential lawn care, sports turf and sod farms. Trinity fungicide offers excellent preventative and curative control



of patch diseases (brown, take-all and summer), anthracnose and dollar spot as well as pink and gray snow mold control in northern turf. Trinity fungicide is ideal for disease control on turf, including fairways. Tank mixing Trinity fungicide with Insignia fungicide gives users an economical broad-spectrum combination to control anthracnose, dollar spot, brown patch and other diseases. For effective dollar spot control and resistance management, Trinity fungicide can be used in rotation with non-Group 3 DMI fungicides such as Emerald fungicide.

For more information contact BASF at 800/545-952 or [www.turffacts.com](http://www.turffacts.com) / circle no. 277

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## Products

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### Moisture meters

Onset Computer Corp. added two new plug-and-play Soil Moisture Smart Sensors for use with HOBO Weather Stations. The new Soil Moisture Smart Sensors provide

high accuracy measurements of volumetric water content in soil, and integrate industry-proven Decagon ECH2O dielectric probes for precise, long-term soil moisture monitoring. The Sensors are suitable for use in a wide range of applications including agricultural research and irrigation management. Low sensitivity to temperature and saline effects broadens the range of soil types, including sandy and high-salinity soils, which can be monitored with HOBO Weather Stations. Compact form factor enables easy installation in pots, greenhouses and other environments. The Sensors work with Onset's 15-channel HOBO Weather Station and 4-channel HOBO Micro Station.

For more information contact Onset Computer Corp. at 800/564-4377 or [www.onsetcomp.com](http://www.onsetcomp.com) / circle no. 278

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Circle 165

### New Gehl pavers

Gehl Co. introduced two new power box asphalt pavers. Designed for commercial and municipal applications, the new 1448 Plus and 1648 Plus Asphalt Pavers feature fully-extendable screed extensions that allow the machines to be adapted easily to different job applications, such as driveways, recreational ball courts, bike paths and parking lots. A full-floating, adjustable and vibratory screed is standard on both Power Box models. The screed's 8-ft length and 13-in. width provides a solid foundation for smooth, accurate and finished asphalt mats. Other new features on the new Gehl Plus Asphalt Pavers include an electronic control module and reduced noise levels.



For more information contact Gehl Co. at 800/628-0491 or [www.gehl.com](http://www.gehl.com) / circle no. 279

### New engine = more power

Husqvarna's HUV4421G and HUV4421GXP gasoline-powered utility vehicle (HUV) models are ready to meet even more demanding applications with new Kawasaki FH680D 23 hp V-twin engines. The new engines will offer better overall performance and longer engine life. Operators will have 15% more horsepower and 21% more torque

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# Products

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for heavy duty tasks. In addition, durability is increased due to cast iron cylinder liners and an automotive-style valve train that requires less maintenance. The two-barrel carburetor is heated for improved cold weather performance and internally vented for better idle characteristics.

For more information contact Husqvarna at [www.usa.husqvarna.com](http://www.usa.husqvarna.com) / circle no. 280

## Sets new standards

The new Kubota Grand L40 Series of compact tractors offers three types of advanced transmissions, powerful 34 hp to 59-hp Kubota diesel engines and redesigned operator-station features that set a new standard for compact tractors in North America. Kubota's newly developed, electronically controlled hydrostatic transmission, which debuts in the Grand L40 series, makes operating a tractor as simple as driving a car. The HST Plus pro-



vides easy and optimal control of both the hydraulic pump and the drive motor, regulates the pump swash plate, and adjusts the motor swash plate between two stages, in both manual and automatic modes.

For more information contact Kubota Tractor Corp. at 888/4-KUBOTA or [www.kubota.com](http://www.kubota.com) / circle no. 281

## 700 club ▶

DIG Corp.'s new battery operated irrigation controller, the 700 series, is available in single and four station configurations. The new 700 series is powered by one 9-volt battery. The circuit board is sealed offering complete water-proof protection. The controllers

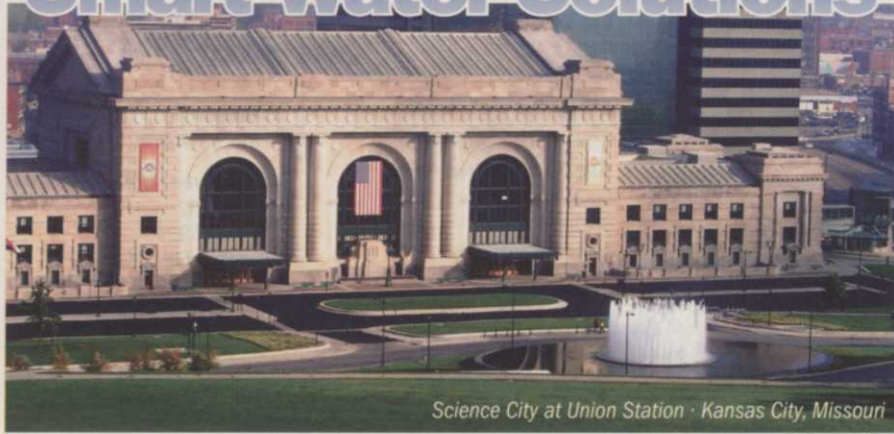
are more compact so they easily fit into smaller valve boxes. The new 700 series controller operates in conjunction with DIG's new 2-wire DC solenoid; model S-305DC, which has

all captive components. Adapters are available to attach the solenoid to most brand name valves available on the market. The four station 700 series uses two color-coded wires per station for easy installation.

For more information contact Dig Corp. at 760/727-0914 or [www.digcorp.com](http://www.digcorp.com) / circle no. 282



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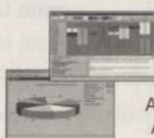
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## Images of Green Inc.

### How Jeff Bowen turned a passion into a business

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS /  
Managing Editor

Jeff Bowen's 12-year-old company, Images of Green Inc., Stuart, FL, is a full service landscape company doing maintenance, design/build, irrigation and a bit of pest control. Bowen, a Yankee by birth, a Floridian by choice, is second generation Green Industry. He learned landscape maintenance at his father's Chicago-area business.

He recalls his father saying: "Maintenance is the bread and butter of the industry; when everybody stops putting in plants, they're still going to have to cut their grass." But Images of Green isn't just about mowing grass. It's a whole lot more.

#### Fine-tuning the plan

"We modify our business plan every year it seems," he says. "Last year we gave ourselves a challenge to increase the design and installation part of it so there is a little bit more equality in the services we offer."



On their "4 by 4" quest Jeff Bowen, far right, and his management team. Who wouldn't be smiling in the warm Florida sunshine?

This year comes another challenge, the company's "4 in 4" campaign to grow to \$4 million in four years. (Bowen has budgeted revenues of \$2.3 million this year.) Central to the plan is an ambitious program to build the sharpest and most efficient team of employees in his market.

To do this, Bowen's company delivers a few perks most other landscape companies his size don't offer, such as tuition reimbursement, benefits, regu-

lar training and profit sharing. But, profit sharing can get tricky, says Bowen. He's had to rethink how his company provides it in light of his experiences with employee performance versus profit sharing expectations. The goal is to design a plan that rewards "consistent" performance, he says.

"We revolve it now," says Bowen. "No one can get paid on the profits that they may have saved until a year and a half later. Every quarter, we issue statements, just like a bank account to the guys,

where they are." If someone takes time off or if equipment is damaged or lost, it comes out of the crewmember's profits.

"We make them accountable," he says. "The things we do inside, the culture we've created, the sense of empowerment we've given our employees — from account managers to laborers — to make a decision has really affected the quality of our work positively."

#### Changing gears

At 53, Bowen knows he won't be doing this forever, and especially not at the pace he's been setting for himself. His approach to business is not only to make money for his company, but also to prepare the next generation to run the organization.

"What more can an employer ask for; what more can an employee ask for," asks Bowen? "I've been in both chairs. I just want to do it right. I'm not sure how long I'll want to get up at 5 o'clock like I've been doing for 30 years. We're trying to build it so that this company can continue on when I decide not to come in at six or seven o'clock. That's my goal over the next few years." **LM**

►► **Location:** Stuart, FL **Founded:** 1995 **Expected '07 revenues:** \$2.3 million **Business mix:** 75% maintenance, 25% design build, 5% irrigation **Fulltime employees:** 43-45



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to keep things rolling. Its Diamond Logic® Electrical System is fully programmable, giving added protection to both my crew and equipment. And with twice the frame rail strength and braking surface of the typical pickup, I've got the all durability I need for the toughest tasks. Add to that the support of the nation's largest dealer network, and you can see how job sites aren't the only place I'm seeing green. International DuraStar. Miles Ahead. In productivity and profits.

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## MILES AHEAD

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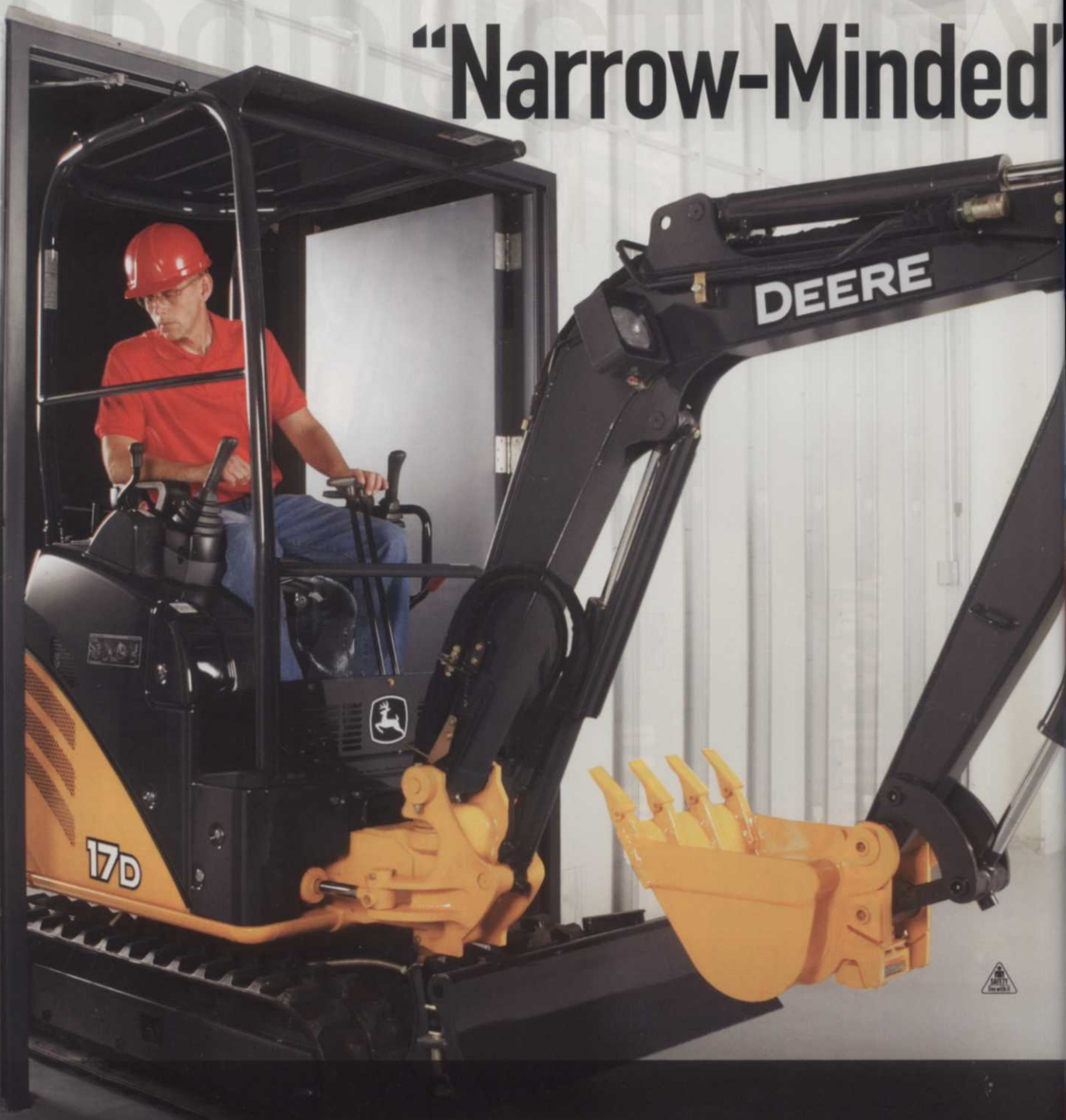
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