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Jacobs Field is dead... long live Progressive Field

Spring is in the air and baseball is back. But that doesn't mean everything will be the same this spring. Associate Editor and Cleveland-homer Mike Seuffert laments that after 14 years, seven Central Division titles, two trips to the World Series and thousands of memories, Jacobs Field is now Progressive Field.

» Readers respond

How is your 2008 sales season so far?

14%

We're right on budget so far

20%

Not as good as we had budgeted

11%

Things are looking pretty bleak at this point

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



» Special issue

The snow and ice season is done, and landscape and lawn care pros are busy as can be right now. But don't forget the Snow & Ice Management Symposium in Buffalo, NY, in June. Get the complete schedule and some great articles in our Snow & Ice Guide in the May issue.



» Overheard

"Landscape architecture is a fundamental mode of human expression and experience."

— John Dixon Hunt, professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, in his book, "Greater Perfection: the practice of garden theory"

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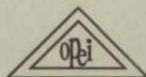
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Nothing fake about this trend

BY RON HALL / Editor-at-Large

I have seen the future of turf (at least an increasingly larger part of it), and that future is artificial turf, synthetic turf, poly grass or whatever else you want to call it.

Plastic grass is here, and it's here to stay.

It's sweeping through the sports field world like a brush fire in a Santa Ana and replacing turfgrass on sports fields at an astonishing rate. Now it's a

growing part of the landscare world, too, a landscaping option for our clients — residential, commercial, industrial or governmental.

I saw again in mid March at a regional home and garden show in northwest Ohio the appeal artificial turf has

with consumers. A synthetic putting green at one of the three indoor model landscapes seemed to draw more attention than the adjacent flowers and beautiful stonework. It was the first time I had seen a synthetic turf product for a home lawn marketed in my neighborhood.

The unexpected appearance of synthetic turf there reinforced what I had seen at the Landscape Industry Show in Los Angeles several weeks earlier. More than a dozen companies at that show were promoting artificial turf.

That didn't surprise me. After all, water districts in Southern California and elsewhere in the arid Southwest offer rebates to homeowners who replace their turfgrass lawns with synthetic turf.

They buy into claims by suppliers that:

- ▶ artificial turf doesn't need to be watered and it doesn't require mowing or fertilizers/pest controls,
- ▶ artificial turf can be used for everything from dog runs, to heavily shaded backyards to highway median strips. Anywhere, in fact, where it's difficult to grow or maintain turfgrass.

I'm not suggesting that those of us making our livings in lawn care or turf maintenance pack our bags and line up for jobs at north Georgia carpet mills where most of this stuff is manufactured.

I'm a turfgrass guy myself. Some of my most cherished memories, apart from participating in high school and college sport on turfgrass, involve playing with my kids (now grown) on the soft, cool turfgrass in our backyard, with former Detroit broadcaster Ernie Harwell calling a Tigers' game on a tiny transistor radio as a backdrop.

Even so, why ignore opportunity? For example, consulting company Applied Market Information Ltd. is offering a detailed study of the global synthetic market. Demand for artificial turf is growing 20%, said the report's promo. (For 6,000 Euros you can get the report at isn@amiplastics.com.)

By almost every measure turfgrass is more aesthetically pleasing and environmentally enhancing than synthetic. In my book anyway. But as a business opportunity plastic grass is something many homeowners and commercial property owners find increasingly attractive. Don't ignore it.

Contact Ron via email at rhall@questex.com

Mr. McGuire (Walter Brooke): "I want to say one word to you. Just one word."

Benjamin (Dustin Hoffman): "Yes sir."

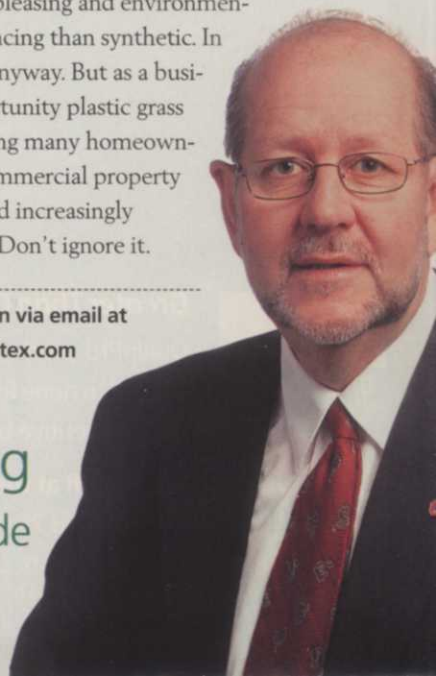
Mr. McGuire: "Are you listening?"


Benjamin: "Yes, I am."

"Plastics."

— The movie "The Graduate," 1967

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Best Practices

BUSINESS

BETTER SCHEDULING

There is always a stiff penalty for not planning, so creating and using a calendar system is a simple, effective tool to help manage in this business.



Getting out of your routine

BY BRUCE WILSON

In landscape maintenance, you have two types of tasks: routine tasks, which your maintenance crews do each week, and non-routine tasks — ones they do periodically.

Non-routine tasks can disrupt the flow of work for a maintenance crew, and many of these jobs are time-sensitive. Examples include spring clean-ups, irrigation start-ups or tune-ups, annual color plantings, mulching, fertilizer applications, and herbicide and plant growth regulator (PGR) applications.

I recommend putting these on a calendar. Frequently, people object to such a formal move, saying that weather makes it impossible to schedule things. But I disagree. There is a window when these things should be scheduled, and it may last weeks. The reason for formally scheduling these tasks is so you can plan for the manpower required to do them correctly. Sometimes you have the maintenance crews carry out these tasks, and other times it takes specialized crews. In either case, timing is important.

To everything, there is a season

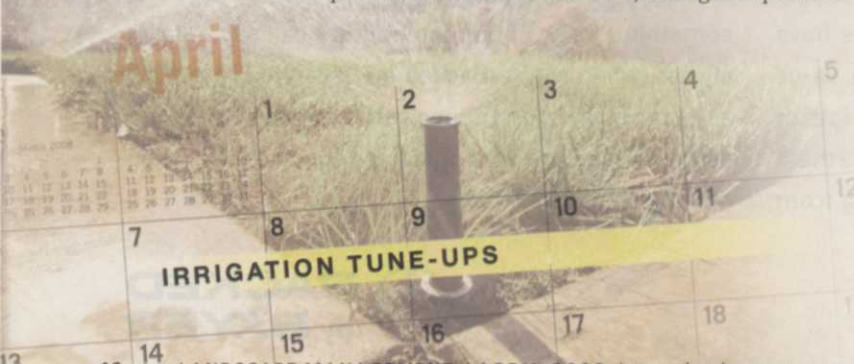
It's important to make sure any time-sensitive tasks get done in the right window. For instance, pre-emergence herbicides must be put down before the weeds germinate. If you miss the window, you've wasted the money spent on the herbicide — not to mention the labor required to make the application or to remove the weeds.

When companies do not schedule non-routine tasks, they tend to pile up on each other. This is especially true in the spring. And when they pile up, you either do not get them done on time, or you run lots of overtime trying to get them all done. If maintenance crews end up doing them in an unplanned way, routine maintenance gets skipped or not done completely. The quality suffers and overtime is necessary to catch up.

Many companies lose enhancement opportunities because the non-routine work piles up, and they simply can not "get to" the extra work. There is always a stiff penalty for not planning, so creating and using a calendar system is a simple, effective tool to help manage in this business.

An added benefit of creating a calendar is that it can be used as part of your sales packet, showing your schedule of services and when they are to be done. The calendar is also helpful in communicating your work sequence to customers, so they know there is a method to your approach to maintaining their properties.

— The author is a partner with entrepreneur Tom Oyler in the Wilson-Oyler Group, which offers consulting services. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.





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JOHN DEERE

Business Benchmarking

BUSINESS DRIVE LEVERAGE HIGHER

Divide your 2007 total revenues by your Dec. 31, 2007 balance sheet's net equipment value, and presto — there's the ratio.



Factor your equipment ROI

BY KEVIN KEHOE

As a smart buyer you're going to examine your business and review key ratios to establish the multiple and the value of your business. The three primary inputs in your business are investments in equipment, labor and overhead. Let's discuss equipment and its accompanying leverage ratio — how it is calculated, what it means, the industry high-profit benchmarks, and the best-in-class performance practices that drive it.

Like any investment, when you buy capital equipment you want a return on that investment. The overall return is measured by a ratio called

equipment leverage. The calculation is revenue dollars divided by net equipment value. Divide your 2007 total revenues by your Dec. 31, 2007 balance sheet's net equipment value.

The equipment leverage ratio measures the revenue dollars earned for every dollar

of equipment purchased. For example, a ratio of 8.00 indicates that each investment dollar yields \$8 of revenues annually. Your goal is to drive this ratio higher. Is a ratio of 8.00 good? That's determined by comparing it to high-profit benchmarks.

Use the data in Table 1 to assess the ratio by region. The general rules for this ratio are:

- 1. Location:** The further north you are, the heavier the equipment, the shorter the season and the lower the ratio.
- 2. Lease:** The more you lease, the higher the ratio.

You drive ratios higher by keeping equipment running more minutes per day, more days per year, and for more years. Or else buy less and hope your guys are faster than a mower or a trencher. Obviously, you want to maximize the uptime and life of each piece of equipment.

Do this by: 1) training employees to use equipment the right way, 2) smart shop management and tracking of repairs by machine and foreman, and 3) practicing preventative maintenance.

These management systems pay off. The difference between a ratio of 8.00 and 10.00 for a \$1 million business running four crews every year is \$25,000 more to the bottom line. Or the difference between \$1 million/8.00 and \$1 million/10.00.

To achieve this best-in-class performance, would you be willing to spend \$6,250 or \$1,600 per foreman (25% of the \$25,000) for training? Would you be willing to invest another \$6,250 to track equipment repairs so you can hold the foreman accountable, and know when to replace equipment whose repair cost outweigh the cost of a new? You might, and it would be worth it on the bottom line. More importantly, management practices like this add to the long-term value of your business.

— The author is the owner-manager of Kehoe & Co.
Contact him at kkehoe@earthlink.net.

EQUIPMENT LEVERAGE

	Design/ Build	Grounds Maint.	Const.
Northeast	7.00	8.00	6.00
Mid Atlantic	8.00	9.00	7.00
Southeast	9.00	10.00	8.50
Midwest	8.00	9.00	8.00
Northwest	8.50	9.50	9.00
Southwest	10.00	11.50	9.50

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One Tough Animal

In the Know

BUSINESS NEWS YOU CAN USE

Marty Whitford takes the reigns of *LM*

CLEVELAND — Marty Whitford has joined the *Landscape Management* editorial team as Editor-in-Chief.

Whitford has been an integral member of the staff on *LM*'s sister publication *Pest Management Professional* for the past three years where he has worked to improve the editorial position of the publication in the market.

He has played an important role in the name change and editorial repositioning of the publication and headed up the successful launch of *Wildlife Management Professional*.

Whitford's first column can be found on the back page of this issue.

Ron Hall will continue to be an integral member of the editorial staff. In his new role as Editor-at-Large, Hall will be on the road bringing his 24 years



of experience to bear as he focuses on in-depth photojournalistic reporting, speaking engagements on behalf of *LM* and helps lead the publication into the event world.

Marty can be reached at mwhitford@questex.com or 216/706-3766.

[CLIPPINGS]

Treemendous merges with Great Impressions

PLAINFIELD, IL — Treemendous Landscape Co., has merged with Great Impressions, the residential division of Sebert Landscaping of Bartlett, IL. "This partnership blends two common philosophies to create a stronger company that is positioned to competitively serve the increasingly sophisticated customers in our markets," said Treemendous owner Jeff Korhan.

Husqvarna to acquire Jenn Feng products

CHARLOTTE, NC — Husqvarna is acquiring Jenn Feng Co.'s operation in outdoor products, including chainsaws, lawn mowers, high-pressure washers and generators. In 2007 Jenn Feng's outdoor products division reported sales of approximately \$120 million, about half of which came from Europe. The acquisition gives Husqvarna access to the McCulloch brand in the North American market. Husqvarna already owns the rights to this brand in the rest of the world.

Super Lawn Trucks relocates

FORT VALLEY, GA — Super Lawn Trucks moved its manufacturing facility and offices to Fort Valley, GA. The move allows SLT to expand its manufacturing capabilities to meet the growing demand from landscape and lawn care firms. "This move is allowing us to double our output capacity in 2008," Tony Bass, founder and president of SLT.

ASIC to host Spring Conference in Napa Valley

ROCHESTER, MA — The American Society of Irrigation Consultants (ASIC) will host its National Spring 2008 Conference May 17-19 at the Napa Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center in Northern California. The show, with the theme "Rescuing Resources," features original educational sessions, interactive panel discussions, area tours and more examining urban water resources.

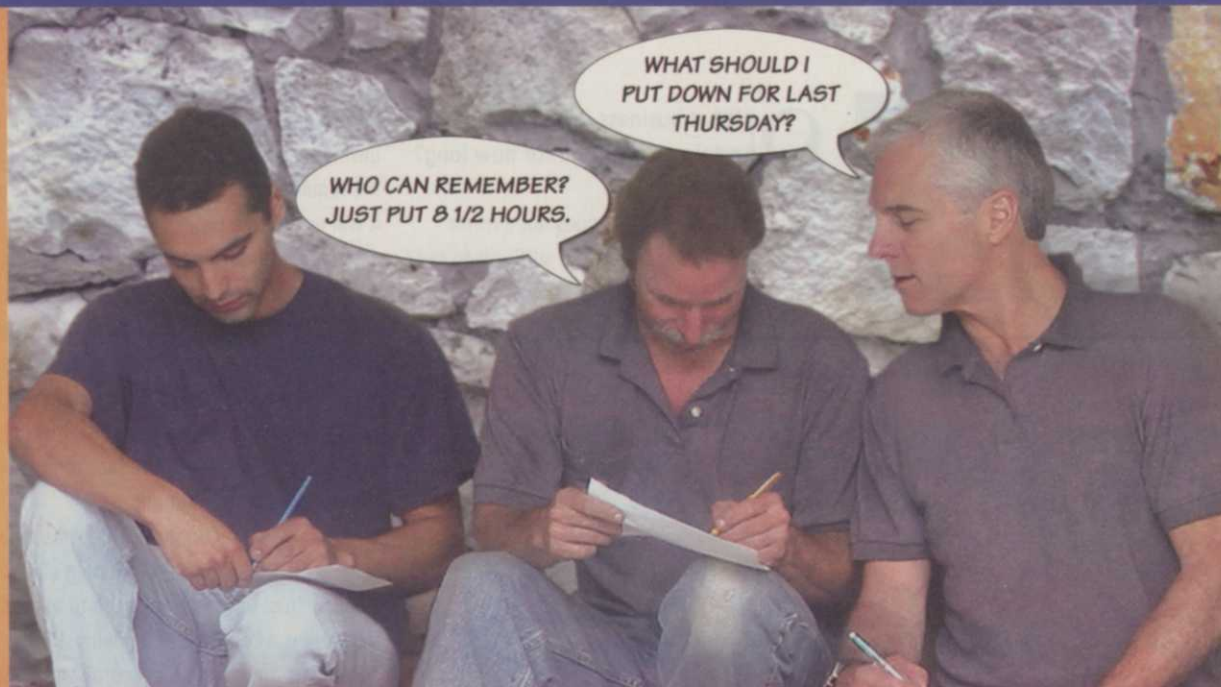
Educational speakers and topics include:

- ▶ Golf Course Consultant **Mike Huck**: The Effects of Alternative Water Sources
- ▶ **Heather Kinkade-Levario**: Maximizing LEED Point Potential
- ▶ **Janet Hartin**, UC Cooperative Extension; and **Kelly Kopp**, Utah State University: Current Water Requirements for Turf and Ornamentals
- ▶ Landscape Architect **Susan Weiler**: Green Roof Design; and much more.

Interspersed with focused educational programs will be interactive panel discussions examining roles and expectations among consultants, contractors and water managers, as well as business development and management presentations.

For full conference agenda and details, visit www.ASIC.org.

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Employee Time Card

Name: **DAVID B.** Dates: **14-18**

Day:	Start:	Lunch:	End:	Jobsite:	Activity:	Hours:
Monday	7	1/2	3:30	Brentwood	Gen	8
Tuesday	7	1/2	3:30	"	"	8
Wednesday	7	1/2	4	"	"	8 1/2
Thursday	7	1/2	4	Crestview	"	8 1/2
Friday	7	1/2	4	"	"	8 1/2

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

WHEN YOU CAN HAVE THIS.

Employee Time Card
Displays the total time worked by each employee

David Burns
Time card for: Monday, April 14, 2008 - Sunday, April 20, 2008

Mountain View Landscape

Jobsite Name	Cost Code	4/14	4/15	4/16	4/17	4/18	4/19	4/20	Total
Brentwood Job	Irrigation	7:38	7:35	3:31					18:44
Crestview Job	Planting			4:22	7:58	7:49			20:09
		7:38	7:35	7:53	7:58	7:49			38:53

David Burns

Total Regular Hours:
 Total Overtime Hours:
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LEGALLY Speaking

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



Q | What business documents must I retain on file? And for how long?

A | Time and space does not allow a full answer here, but suffice it to say that records management is crucial. Not only

does proper record management ensure the business keeps the necessary documents for the required time periods, but also because it will establish a procedure for proper destruction of documents and safeguards for preservation of documents in the event you reasonably anticipate a claim or lawsuit. Everyone has read about businesses or executives who are charged with obstruction of justice or other charges related to premature destruction of records in the face of imminent or existing claims or litigation.

While your reaction to such events may be to keep all documents (including electronic records) "just in case," you need to appreciate there is a cost associated with storing documents and electronic records long past the time when they need to be preserved. You will pay for extra physical space for hard copies, as well as incurring the cost for extra electronic storage capacity.

If you have a record retention program in place that provides for the periodic and routine destruction of documents and records, which is done in the ordinary course of business operations, the key then becomes having a solid procedure established for placing "holds" on the destruction of records when you reasonably can anticipate claims or lawsuits arising. Thus, a records retention program is just as much about policies and procedures as it is about setting out the various time periods necessary for retention of specific documents and records. After all, different types of documents require retention for different periods, depending on state and/or federal regulations, as well as business practice and custom.

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.

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.

55°

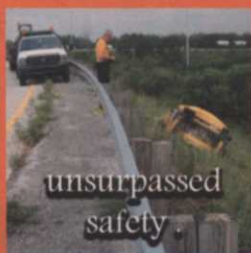
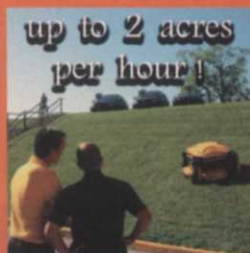


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AFTER

future weed seed germination) at the same time. By using a pre-emergent herbicide after you kill the noticeable weeds, you should not have any weed seeds germinating in the crack and curb areas for several months.

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

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In the Know

PLANET: Curb appeal crucial to selling a home

HERNDON, VA — For people thinking of selling their homes, spring is a very important time to do a major cleaning out and sprucing up. This includes focusing on the yard and the landscape, giving Green Industry professionals the opportunity to position their services as a way to significantly increase home value.

"Curb appeal is extremely important in this housing market," said Jim Martin, who just stepped down as president of the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). "If buyers can't bring themselves to even stop, you have no chance of their ever seeing the inside of the house or the backyard."

In this market, fewer homeowners engage in big remodeling jobs. A

recent e-mail survey by the Zoomerang research company found that about two-thirds of homeowners said they were deferring their home improvement projects until the market improved. That leaves many looking for more inexpensive ways to give their home a makeover.

"One of the key components to making a good first impression on potential buyers is to show off a neat, healthy, and attractive yard," said Jason Cupp, president of PLANET.

Another factor in the decision to maintain or improve a home's landscape is to stay competitive with other properties. A survey that was conducted in June 2007, by Harris Interactive Inc. for the National Gardening Association, found

that the amount of money spent on lawn and landscape services has increased from \$24.5 billion in 2001 to \$44.7 billion in 2006. With 27 million households hiring lawn care and landscape maintenance services, that means there are many more well-landscaped and well-cared for properties on the market.

Whether people hire a professional or have the skills and tools to do it themselves, the association for lawn care and landscape professionals, PLANET, offers ways to improve a home's lawn and landscape.

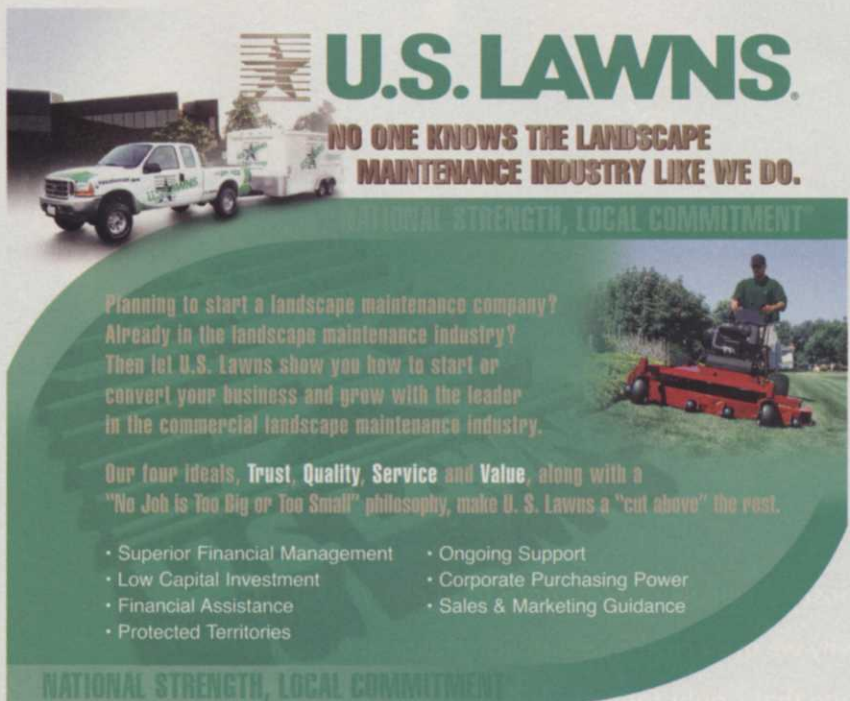
► **Clean up** — Weeding, edging, planting beds and mulching goes a long way toward improving a yard's look.

► **Add Color** — Planting annuals in beds, in pots around the house and patio, really makes a house look cared for and cozy.

► **Add plants** — To solve problems or add interest, plant new trees and shrubs to create focus areas, camouflage foundations and old fencing, or unsightly views.

► **Do the maintenance** — Have trees and shrubs professionally pruned, fix brown spots in the lawn, and remove or replace any diseased plants.

For homeowners who want some help with their lawn, hiring a professional firm to do a walk-through is a good way to start. A professional can assess the health of the lawn, plants, trees, and shrubs and offer recommendations for improvements and fixes.



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In the Know

People & companies

Agrium Advanced Technologies added **Bryan Gooch** as marketing manager for coated products in the company's Sylacauga, AL, location.

The **Wisconsin Turfgrass Association** has elected **Dan Biddick** to a three-year term as president.



Floragem promoted **Lisa Heredia** to marketing manager. Her new responsibilities will deal with all company marketing communications.

Yanmar America appointed **Thomas H. Calhoun** to president and COO. Calhoun succeeds **Akihiko Nakaoka**, who will remain as senior special advisor.



The **Massachusetts Association of Lawn Care Professionals** recently recognized **Jeff Weld**, the lawn and landscape specialist for

Bayer Environmental Science in New England and New York, for his continued contributions to the lawn care industry.

Lawn Doctor's Vice President of Marketing and Franchise Development **Scott Frith** was elected vice-chairman of the International Franchise Association's marketing and PR committee.

Don Davis has joined **Seago International Inc.** as a manufacturer's representative.

New study compares environmental impact of propane lawnmowers

WASHINGTON, D.C. — To document the effectiveness of new propane-fueled mowing equipment, the Propane Education & Research Council and the University of Tennessee will launch a two-year study of the benefits of propane-fueled riding mowers. The research will compare the emissions, economics and performance of both gasoline and propane-fueled mowers.

"Due to the harmful emissions and nearly year-round use of lawnmowers, this industry may need alternative-fueled mowers to meet the demands of numerous lawns, golf courses, campgrounds, and parks," said Dr. John Soročan, associate professor of Turfgrass Science & Management, University of Tennessee. "Propane is a logical choice because it releases fewer greenhouse gas emissions than other leading fuels and is readily available."

The new comparison study will monitor the lawnmowers' emissions, as well as performance, efficiency and operation costs. Evaluation parameters include mower performance at several cutting heights and speeds. Digital image analysis will record turfgrass quality, color and percentage of green cover to determine mower performance. In addition, an in-field, side-by-side comparison will be done by a professional lawn and landscape contractor. Each mower will operate between five and eight hours per day for at least five days per week during the study.

Propane has several unique benefits that make it an efficient and environmentally friendly fuel choice for many existing applications. It is clean-burning and doesn't leave significant deposits on the engine that can cause premature wear. Propane fuel may also be stored for long periods of time without breakdown or deterioration.

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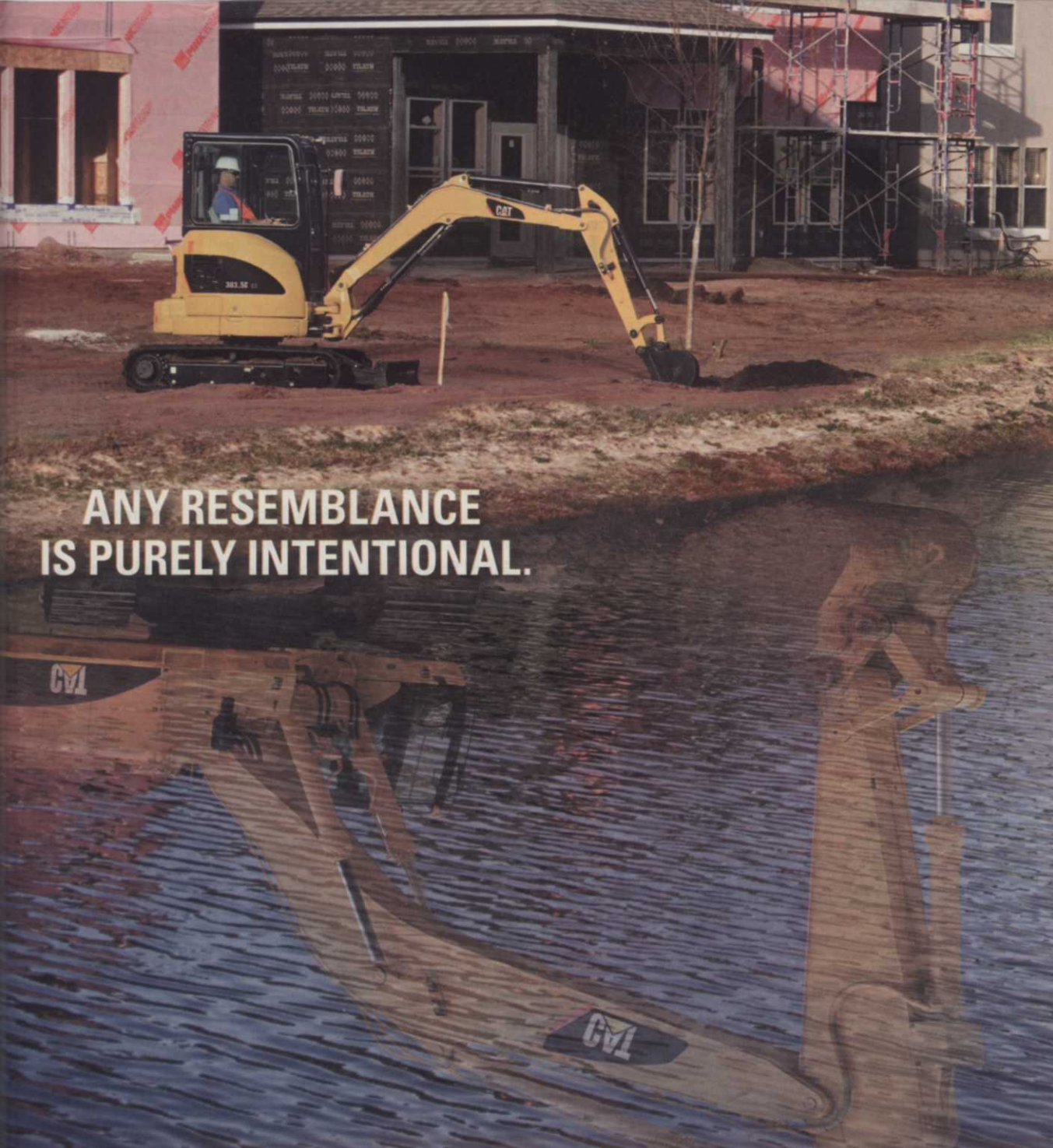
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In the Know

FIELD REPORT

California dreamin'

BY RON HALL

LOS ANGELES — Flowers of every color. Ornamental trees in full leaf. Beautiful night lights illuminating trade show booths. A stunning 75-ft. by 150-ft. garden with a gurgling waterfall at its entrance. The California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) 2008 Landscape Industry Show in Los Angeles offered just what this winter-weary, son of the Great Lakes needed to thaw his road-salt-crusting spirits.

Since California is where many trends (both the good and the not-so-good) often start, here's what was hot at this year's CLCA event:

1 Landscape lighting. I counted 15 lighting vendors at the trade show, and another 20 or so booths that offered lighting or lighting-related products as part of their lineup. LED was a big deal at several of the booths. Others showed colored lights for different effects. Most of the displays promoted low-voltage lighting. Why is landscape lighting becoming a bigger deal with homeowners? Think about it: When do most people



The CLCA Show featured this 70-ft. by 150-ft. pond and waterfall at its entrance.

enjoy their landscapes? After they come home from their busy jobs, right?

2 Synthetic turf. One of the speakers at this winter's Sports Turf Managers Association Conference said that 700 new synthetic sports fields were installed in the United States in 2007. He remarked that particular segment is still growing 10% to 15% annually. Heck, that's nothing. The market for installing synthetic lawns, dog runs, road medians and (this seems to be particularly hot) backyard putting greens is growing even faster. At least six suppliers touted the virtues of their various synthetic turf products at the Show. This category has legs, especially in the Sunbelt because of concern over fresh water supplies.

3 Irrigation. Irrigation. Irrigation. You couldn't turn a corner at the South Hall of the Los Angeles Convention Center without running into products to make the irrigation of turf and ornamentals more efficient. Hey, we're talking Southern California, the heart of the U.S. irrigation industry. What Californians already know about irrigation and irrigation technology, the rest of us will be finding out sooner rather than later.

4 Hardscapes and green plants. The California lifestyle puts a premium on plants, pavers, decorative concrete, garden art, huge urns and statuary, and plants, lots of plants. The Show featured a surprising amount of annual color and a handful of booths with 15 ft. to 25-ft. specimen trees.

5 Water as a landscape feature. Apart from the beautiful pond and waterfall at the Show's entrance, water made a big splash, at the CLCA annual event, too. There seemed to be a large interest in designing, selling and creating water features as evidenced by the nice turnouts at two lengthy show-floor

symposiums given by Steve Sandalis and partner Aaron Blubaugh. Sandalis is the owner/founder of Mystic Water Gardens, a popular LA-area installer of landscape water features. Several dozen contractors attended each of the two demonstrations that the two water feature experts put on during show hours. The booths displaying a variety of urns, stoneware and fountain statuary got more than their fair share of traffic, as well.

Visit www.landscape-management.net and click on podcasts for our interview with Steve Sandalis on water feature trends and opportunities.

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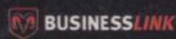
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THE HIDDEN COSTS

Whether it's deciding how much to charge or wondering why you're barely scraping by, many owners don't understand how much money it takes to run a business.

“It's the economy, stupid.”

Bill Clinton famously used those four words in the run up to his successful presidential election in 1992. Business owners can use a similar mantra as a guide to building and growing a profitable enterprise — “It's the money, stupid.” Of course, it's not that simple.

Fuel prices are going up. OK, that's not much of a shocker, but when planning your budget last year, did you account for the increase? How about the rise in electricity and natural gas prices also attributed to the rising cost of oil?

These are just a couple of the costs of running your business, and they

pose a significant challenge for business owners looking to maintain their profit margins and arrive at the proper pricing. Some overhead expenses, while difficult to predict, are easy to identify. Others are flat out sinister in the way they creep into and eat away at a company's profits. The problem is not an easy one to keep track of — even when you're just starting out in business and the numbers are smaller.

“Keeping your overhead as low as possible is absolutely paramount,” says Jeff Korhan, former owner of Tremendous Landscape Co., which he recently

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS
Managing Editor

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merged with Great Impressions, the residential division of Sebert Landscaping. "Most of us start out with low overhead, but it becomes insidious as you acquire things along the way. You're paying on them as long as you're profitable, no problem. But everybody runs into a bump in the road at some point or another."

Even when business is good, not knowing your costs can cause problems.

"Our business last year was as good as any other year," Korhan says. "Hidden costs like fuel and insurance rates can go up dramatically. I definitely see this happening in the future."

Hidden costs

To some owners, identifying them and dealing with them seems endless. Equipment, general and administrative costs are wide-ranging terms that include: insurance, utilities, office personnel, advertising, and much more. Then there's warranty work, repair or replacement costs, training and education, vacation time and paid holidays to consider as well.

"There are a ton of those things," says Jim Huston, president of J.R. Huston Enterprises. Business owners just don't have a set method for recovering those costs, he says, so they usually "just shoot in the dark."

"It's guessing," Huston adds. "They have a pricing method; it may be putting out a square foot price or putting out a man-hour rate for maintenance. But they're



Jeff
Korhan

really not sure if that price is accurate. They usually grab it out of the marketplace because everybody else is charging that amount."

And while there's a lot of validity to maintaining a fair market price, an owner can't know what their profit margins are if they don't know what it costs to do jobs.

"We definitely know our numbers," says Brian Beeler, general manager of Salmon Falls Nursery & Landscaping, Berwick, ME. "We know exactly where we need to be. We can run a job at zero if we wanted to and know we'll be able to make things work. We can get whatever profit we want. What we do is really go to the salesmanship of explaining why our company is better, then provide them with the service, quality and longevity homeowners are looking for."

Beeler says he can do that because the company has spent a lot of time examining every aspect of the business. If you're not accounting for every bit of outgo, it's hard to see where all of the money is going. Small amounts can add up to a lot over the course of a year.

"We're members of several associations, and that costs money," says Korhan, who has worked on the board of the Professional Landcare Network. "You've got to make sure you're getting value out of them. We got smarter over

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BUSINESS MONEY MANAGEMENT

the years. If an association is not giving value, we're not going to participate. Fortunately, these days I've found great value in the organizations we're members of. It's these little costs of things that are more apparent to me now."

A couple hundred dollars to be a member of an association or \$20 a month for some service may not seem like a lot of money at first, Korhan says.

"It's not going to break anybody's back," he adds. "But now that I'm out of the business, they seem huge because there is no revenue coming in. The cumulative effect of them is pretty daunting. I'm trying to unravel them as quickly as possible. You don't recognize that when the revenue is coming in.

"It's the waste of running a business.

We're beginning to drive the waste out of running our businesses. I see that as the future."

Budget

The key to beginning to understand your overhead—and therefore to getting better pricing—is to start with a budget.

"We want to know where every number comes from in our pricing, how we get it, and we want to make sure we can analytically justify it," Huston says. "(Business owners) should be putting budgets together and reviewing them every six months.

"For my clients for the upcoming year, I'll put that budget together in July or August of the preceding year. Then

continued on page 40

DAMAGING THE INDUSTRY IMAGE

Brian Beeler, general manager of Salmon Falls Nursery & Landscaping opened a local telephone directory and filled the front and back of a legal-sized piece of paper with Green Industry businesses within a 45-minute radius of his Berwick, ME, operation.

Having a lot of competitors often means dealing with inexperienced contractors willing to undercut prices just to get a client's business. It has a big impact not only on competitors, but also on the industry as a whole.

"It's definitely important; the big issue our industry faces is a lack of professionalism, and that's based on a lack of business understanding," Beeler says. "This industry is made up of (people) that just love landscaping, being outside, trees, shrubs. It's not an industry full of business owners trained (to be) business owners."

That's one of the reasons Beeler goes back to his alma mater every year to teach classes on the money side of the equation.

"If we can get more people to understand what business is, then we can have better pricing, more consistent pricing, elevate the image of the industry to something that high schools actually would push, a career in the Green Industry," Beeler says. "Instead of what you did because you couldn't go to school now becomes what you go to school for." —DGJ



Brian Beeler



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we get to the end of the year and the January/February/March timeframe and we review it, tweak it and make sure it is accurate," he adds. "You want to look at it every six months, make sure nothing significant has changed."

According to Huston, overhead runs about 25% of a business' sales. A typical business accumulates enough of a gross profit margin to equal the overhead budget for the year by the end of September or the beginning of October.

For example, for a business doing \$1 million in sales, overhead will be \$250,000. "There is going to be \$250,000 of gross profit above material costs, labor costs — all your direct costs," he says. "You haven't made any profit, but you've broken even."



Keeping track of overhead can be a frustrating and daunting task for any business owner.

Highly profitable companies reach that breakeven point sooner; some take much longer.

"I've seen companies that need 13 or 14 months to reach it," Huston says. "Others reach it in late August."

Knowing when you reach that point is important because after that, anything above your direct costs on jobs goes

straight to the bottom line, which of course is what you're working for.

"You can get really creative with your pricing at that point if you need to," he says. "If you have a big construction job that comes up and it's the end of October, if you bid it with your normal amount of gross profit — say 30% — chances are you won't get that job. If you've already made your breakeven point, you can bid at maybe 15% or 20% gross profit without hurting yourself. That's why knowing that number can be important. You've covered your costs."

Getting an education

Every year, Beeler returns to his alma mater, the University of Maine, Orono, and delivers a senior-level seminar — usually over three or four periods — on bidding and estimating. And, of course, he talks about all of those hidden costs.

"The exposure I was hoping to have them get is to the whole side of business that none of the schools seem to teach: the looking at the numbers and how those numbers get made up," Beeler says. "How you take what it costs you to do business and translate it into estimates that you can then send out to clients."

It was a lesson he learned as a young designer.

"When I got into the business, I didn't know anything about that," Beeler says.

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"I could ID pretty much any plant and I was a strong designer, but I had no understanding of what the costs would be."

Beeler recalls putting plans together because they "looked good" and it was what he thought the projects needed — only to find out they were three times the budget of what the homeowner wanted.

"That made for a lot of wasted hours of drafting and designing," he says. "I wanted to see something where a student coming out of there (Orono) would get a taste of the business side, the side they don't typically see.

"I try hard to work with them to make them understand that no matter what direction you go, if you don't know how it's going to price out, you're not going to be worth much," Beeler continues. "In my mind, you're a factory worker if you don't have a concept of 'What am I doing, and how does that factor into the overall business?'"

Some students get it right away. For others it takes awhile, sometimes not until they're out in the real world.

Willing learners

"Two years ago, I had a student call me and say 'I'm so glad you came up here. I originally had no clue. When I got into this company, it all clicked.'

"One of the employees we have is from that class. He's getting a real hands-on at what I was talking about. Instead of his eyes glazing over, he says, 'I get it now. I see what you're talking about. This make sense to me.'"

Beeler runs into former students at trade shows where he often hears comments like: "I know I was a pain in the ass in your class and didn't really pay attention and thought nothing was going to come out of it, but you were right.' That's a real good feeling."

New Green Industry executives may

FINDING A CONSULTANT

The good news is you never have to go it alone. There are plenty of highly qualified, talented and knowledgeable consultants who have dealt with the difficult issues Green Industry business owners struggle with every day.

The bad news is there are bunches who can't really help. The challenge is finding a good fit, someone who understands your operation and your budget.

"It's very important to be careful with the consultants you pick on your business," says Brian Beeler, general manager of Salmon Falls Nursery & Landscaping. "Listen to them, stick with them, but be cautious with how many and who you pick. That's a hidden cost that we've felt the burn a couple of times by making the wrong choice and sticking too long with a consultant that wasn't really geared to what we needed."

Learning from mistakes is good, but sticking with a mistake too long isn't. Trial and error have lead the company to find the right consultants.

"We know who we need. We needed a professional CPA to review our books. It was a good experience for us to have a professional HR firm come in and review our processes, but it wasn't necessary for us to keep them on board for five years."

not always understand how to account for all the details, but even veterans can get hung up when expectations don't mesh with reality.

When times are good

"That is where the little guy gets in trouble, even the big guys too," Korhan says. "When times are good, we all think they're going to keep being good. All you've got to do is watch the stock market to understand we're so driven by emotions."

While you don't necessarily need to assume the worst, the idea is to hedge your bets a bit.

"When the going is good, prepare for a change because you don't know when it's going to change," Korhan says. "Right now, things kinda suck. We've been in a rough stretch for the better part of a year. Is it going to last another year?"

Huston tells clients not to get distracted.

"My mantra for contractors is 'Let's keep this thing simple,'" he says. "Meet

your budget for the year.'

"You can have the best prices in the world, but if you don't have the correct amount of volume, you're in trouble."

Huston uses a very simple formula.

"Price it right, produce it right and produce enough of it," he says. "Owners need to focus on that, and then build teams that get all of the details done. That needs to be their main priority.

"It's like real estate — buy low and sell high. It's overly simplistic, but if you do it consistently, you make money."

Huston does offer this caution: "I see people get so wrapped in the minutia they miss the big picture," he says. "Life gets awfully complex. We've got to keep it simple and focused. Strategic focus is absolutely critical for these contractors. In this market, where there is so much uncertainty and you're getting so much bad news from all directions, it's critical that you have analytical guideposts, road maps to navigate through this stuff. Objective reference points, it make all the difference in the world." **LJM**

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Lawn care growing (slowly)

The majority of professional lawn care operators (LCO) depend heavily on the manufacturers and suppliers of chemical products, such as fertilizers and pest controls.

Some of these products are marketed as "natural" products. Their number is increasing because of growing consumer demand. Even so, the majority of professional application companies rely upon synthetically manufactured chemical products, which they say are less expensive and result in faster and more noticeable results on customers' lawns.

Ultimately, homeowners want green, weed-free lawns, and they trust lawn care companies to provide them in an efficient, affordable way, and using approved and tested products.

LCOs should be heartened to know that major chemical suppliers remain optimistic about the industry's future. They see continued growth (albeit mod-

Lawn pros offer green, weed-free landscapes for homeowners



Major chemical suppliers see the industry on a modest but steady growth pattern heading into the next decade **BY RON HALL / Editor-at-Large**

est growth) for lawn care. They promise continued support:

- ▶ in the national regulatory/legislative arena,
- ▶ on the technical front, with actives and combinations of products. And with advice and training on how to use these products effectively and safely, and
- ▶ in some instances, they offer business management training.

Because suppliers see continued industry growth at least into the next five to 10 years, LCOs can expect new chemistries. Every basic manufacturer we spoke to said they have unique new products in their pipelines.

"It's a myth that there are no new chemistries being discovered or developed," says Toni Bucci, Business Manager BASF Turf & Ornamentals. "The challenge is finding the chemistry that meets the specific needs of lawn care operators and their clients and that can satisfy the EPA."

Satisfying the EPA is just part of the reason why most new molecules coming into the professional market will carry the U.S. EPA's "reduced risk" designation. Other factors involved in the development of more benign chemical



Toni Bucci

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pest controls include advancements in chemistry, a simplified registration process and, of course, consumer concerns.

Even so, most of the products, even newer brands, that technicians will use this season and into the foreseeable future will be mixtures or combos of familiar chemistries. This is due, in part, to popular compounds coming off patent.

"What we're seeing in the market is new formulations and new presentations of existing products or actives. And we're starting to see several combination or mixture products," says Mike McDermott, Global Business Leader, DuPont Professional Products.

Adds Bob Goglia, Lawncare Market Manager for Syngenta:

"Having access to one product that helps a LCO treat multiple issues in one application is very much like giving him or her a cell phone or PDA that can be used to make calls, check emails, browse the Internet, take pictures and play music. "It's not only convenient, it can boost efficiency and profitability."

Lawn pros need every efficiency they can find in light of present challenges, which include regulatory and public perception issues, higher fuel and product costs, and, of course, consumer-rattling distress in the housing market.

"There clearly are some challenges with the slowing economy, and with water restrictions and other factors, but I'm optimistic," says BASF's Bucci. "We can't expect double digit growth, but the lawn care market will continue to be a healthy viable market in the medium to long term."

Says John Spaulding, Product Manager Professional Turf & Ornamental PBI, "The people that can afford lawn care still very much want it."

And the chemical industry, challenged by and responding to the world's growing population and ever-increasing demand for food, will continue to come up with new pest controls, says Spaulding. It has to. Some of these new actives for agricultural will eventually be used in turf.

These suppliers predict that well-established



Mike McDermott



John Spaulding

Lawn care's 5 big challenges

When asked to list what they felt were the biggest challenges to the lawn care industry this season and into the next decade, here's what representatives from supplier companies offered:

- 1 Finding and retaining good employees and technicians.** Lawn care is more than turfgrass fertilization and pest controls for many companies. They also need employees to mow, aerate, trim and treat small trees and other ornamentals, and do tasks such as spring and fall cleanups.
- 2 Rising costs of doing business.** While most homeowners understand rising fuel costs since they're also affected, they can't see that their LCO is paying almost double for fertilizer what they paid just four or five years ago. And, of course, other costs continue to rise. Service providers are having a hard time raising prices.
- 3 Misinformation about the industry.** Industry critics claim the products most LCOs use are not safe, and they work to take these tools away from LCOs. Suppliers defend the industry and its products at the federal level, but public opinion is formed locally. LCOs must inform and educate their markets about the beneficial aspects of their services.
- 4 The worst housing market in decades.** Whether we're in an official recession or not, the Green Industry overall is anticipating just modest gains this season.
- 5 Unfavorable weather.** Nothing can slow a lawn care company in the north like a cold, wet, late spring, or in the south like a lingering drought. Business owners have to do what they can do and to be ready to take care of business when conditions change. And they will. — RH

companies with solid business plans and focused marketing can reasonably expect to continue growing 3% to 5%, or more . . . even in this economy.

"As everyone's lives get busier people don't mind paying for a service like lawn care rather than doing it themselves," says DuPont's McDermott. "Also, people are spending more time at home. As their household incomes rise, they spend more money on having nicer indoor and outdoor environments."

Syngenta's Goglia likewise "is very positive" about the industry thanks in large part to the 70 million or so baby boomers and the younger two-wage-earner householders. Neither group will have the time to do it on their own, never mind the inclination or the expertise, Goglia believes.

Jim Fetter, Manager Central Sales Region, Bayer Environmental Science, believes the industry's continuing growth will come from companies expanding beyond lawn applica-

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 tion services." I see the industry recreating itself somewhat," says Fetter. "The smart players are concentrating on differentiation and diversification. They're providing more services to their existing customers." These services could include ornamental

care, irrigation, turfgrass aeration, lighting, mowing, perimeter pest control or shrub/tree care, to name a few.

Even so, fertilization and weed control will remain its core with additional service opportunities arising as the spectrum of landscape pests shift and change. For example, Fetter sees growing demand for emerald ash borer control in the Upper Midwest and for preventative fire ant services in the South.

The issue of sustainability or "green" is top of mind for chemical suppliers, as well.

"The first step in understanding what sustainability is to define it," says BASF's Bucci. "If our industry doesn't get involved in defining sustainability, then it's going to get defined for us," she says, adding that the definition should encompass environmental, social and economic factors, and not focus narrowly on specific product categories.

"Probably the biggest threat to the lawn care industry is from local activists that are misinformed about our products," adds Roger Storey, Vice President Turf & Ornamental, SePro. "Our challenge is to have them see our industry as environmentalists that are responsible for keeping our needed urban green spaces healthy."

Goglia offers that nobody knows "when the line will eventually be drawn" on fertilizer, chemical and water usage. "Reaching consumers with environmental, economic and lifestyle benefits messages about managed green spaces will be crucial to the long-term health of LCOs," he says.



Bob Goglia

"We're seeing more awareness and more demand for effective products that are more safe and environmentally friendly," McDermott continues. "That demand is going to continue to grow."

Chemical suppliers, confident of ongoing industry growth, say they'll continue to support professional



Roger Storey

Support goes both ways

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Mark Urbanowski, Senior Marketing Specialist Turf & Ornamental, DowAgroSciences, looks at industry support as a two-way street.

Manufacturers support the industry with new chemistry, resulting in the development of proprietary products. Developing new molecules is a decade-long process and the costs are enormous. Given that, basic manufacturers do lots of homework to determine the probable market value of any new products.

In other words, as long as the market allows them a fair return on their investments they can respond with new products. When popular actives go off patent and become "commoditized," value for basic manufacturers falls in the segment of the market where these products are used.

"This (product development) is all driven by the value we can generate in the lawn care segment," says Urbanowski, who warns that lawn care business owners run a risk of devaluing their industry and discouraging ongoing product development if they insist on lowest-cost prod-

ucts. He adds that major manufacturers bring value to their products in many ways, such as cutting-edge formulation and ongoing technical support.

Everybody needs to get involved and be more proactive in their communities."

— Mark Urbanowski

ucts. He adds that major manufacturers bring value to their products in many ways, such as cutting-edge formulation and ongoing technical support.

In a related matter, he says that lawn care pros can help themselves and their industry immeasurably by actively promoting their industry and the good things it does.

"Many people don't recognize the value of the grass on their lawns, parks, school yards and sports fields. Everybody needs to get involved and be more proactive in their communities," he says. — RH



lawn care with new chemistry, new formulations, new combinations of products and other innovations. They also promise ongoing support with technical and with regulatory issues.

All of this they promise, of course, as long as the lawn care market allows them a fair return on their investments in product discovery and development. In this regard, they're no different than any other business. **LJM**

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Bob Ottley »

Owner, One Step Tree and Lawn Care BY JAMES E. GUYETTE



As the owner of One Step Tree and Lawn Care in the Rochester, N.Y. area, Bob Ottley has been an industry leader since founding the business in 1976. Soon to be 53 years old, he has been married for 27 years and has two children.

Bob enjoys watching wildlife and hunting, plus ballroom dancing with his wife and golfing. He has begun brewing his own beers – taking pride in the quality of the results.

Of his tenure at One Step, he observes, "I would say that this business has met my expectations very well."

What are some of the key lessons you learned about the industry through your 1999 presidency of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA)?

The reason I got involved with the PLCAA board was because I had learned so much about managing my business that I wanted to give something back to the industry. What happened was that I really gained much more from my involvement on the board than I could have ever given back.

You are a member of your town council. Has that attracted customers to your business or otherwise offered you insights into serving your clients? I don't believe that it has helped my skills as a businessperson. Perhaps it has worked

the opposite: I can utilize my business skills to help run our government. It has not been very helpful in attracting new customers to my business because as an elected official you usually do not have any more supporters than the first day that you were elected.

I have had a couple of very trying years (politically) that being an elected official definitely hurt my business — but in the end I feel that it is a duty of all of us to do what we believe is right even if it is not the most popular decision.

What are some of the important lessons you've learned through owning a business that others in the industry can benefit by?

It is really not that hard. Work hard, show up on time, return phone calls, give a fair price and treat the customers and employees the way you would like to be treated. Also, live within your means and be prepared for the ups and downs as the business grows.

You're known for doing charitable deeds and being active in industry organizations. How has that assisted your business success and your personal fulfillment?

I feel blessed to have been successful in my business, and when I can, I enjoy giving something back to others. I always get something more than what I am giving back. You meet such great people with great ideas and you learn so much.

GETTING STARTED

- Business founded in 1976.
- Pioneer in the 1980s of Integrated Pest Management practices
- President of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America in 1999
- Innovator in 2003 of providing free lawn care to active duty U.S. military personnel
- Was saluted with the 2004 PLCAA Community Service Award
- Volunteers for the Lawn Care Trailblazer program from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), which provides onsite, personalized mentoring to a fellow PLANET member
- Participates in PLANET's Renewal and Remembrance Committee to enhance Arlington National Cemetery and Historic Congressional Cemetery.
- Recognized on the Inc.com business advice Internet site for implementing One Step's customer service survey program; was able to cut customer attrition rate in half by collecting useful feedback.
- Member of Riga, NY town council since 1998

What are some of the main challenges going forward that you see confronting the lawn care/tree care industry as a whole? (There are) two major issues: Government regulation and finding and keeping good employees. Perhaps the first item is the reason for the second item. **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer in Newbury, OH. Contact him at jimguyette2004@yahoo.com.

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The wisest kid on the block

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / Managing Editor

It's a little intimidating to wake up one day and realize your child is smarter than you.

I don't know how many of you have had that experience, but I can tell you it's humbling, disconcerting, thrilling and just a little bit scary all at once.

My son, Josh, is 14 now, but I recognized long ago his brain power far exceeds mine. At the age of five, Josh identified the four-footed gray creature creeping its way across our backyard as a ring-tailed lemur. He immediately corrected himself, explaining it couldn't be a lemur because they are nocturnal and, of course, native to Madagascar. Then there was the time he appeared on the game show *1 vs. 100* hosted by Bob Saget (He didn't win any money and was knocked out after several rounds by a question he really knew the answer to. Even geniuses make the occasional bone-headed mistake.)

Granted, there are a lot of things he doesn't know yet, and emotionally he's still a teenager, but his talent for grasping concepts and remembering facts and figures is astounding as test after standardized test has proven. Oddly, he can't seem to remember to do the dishes when he's supposed to or take the garbage can to the curb on Sunday nights. But that's another issue.

In school Josh is a pretty good student, though he's often bored by the limitations a structured classroom puts on him. And we've found three kinds of teachers — those who are intimidated by

kids like Josh, those who are indifferent and those who are excited by the obstacles and opportunities he presents. The first two are usually where my son faces challenges. But when the subject and the teacher combine in just the right way, it's a lot of fun to watch Josh soar.

Those teachers, I imagine, are a lot like business executives. Much in the same way small business owners run their operation, teachers are in full control of their classrooms. Teachers who encourage their students to explore their interests and contribute to the lessons make the education process better for all of the students. Executives who do likewise with their employees make their businesses better.

I've spoken with hundreds of entrepreneurs over the years, and while there are no absolutes, there are certainly some common themes. Most of the really successful entrepreneurs are the first to admit they're not the smartest guys in their companies. They generally have more drive, enthusiasm, guts and charisma than anyone else, but they know their limitations and find people who fill those gaps.

Leaders set the visions for their companies, but knowing when to let others take the reins is easily as important. Not only will it lead to more satisfied employees. It will give you a better chance to grow your business — today and tomorrow.

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Leaders set the vision. Knowing when to let others take the reins is important. It gives you a better chance to grow your business.



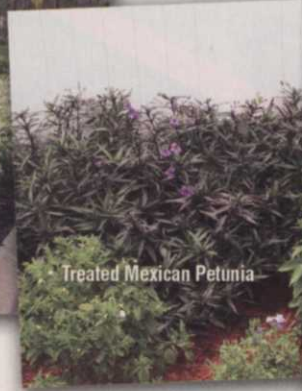
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Steam Plant Courtyard

» BILLADEAU-RUBIN RESIDENCE

Phase One Landscapes turned an old Air Force steam plant into a modern outdoor living space while still paying tribute to its historic underpinning.

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor

The steam plant at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver was built in 1941 by the Army Corp of Engineers to supply heat to numerous buildings and hangars on the base. Lowry AFB was closed in the mid-90s, and in 2003 the steam plant began a renovation that would create 14 one-of-a-kind high-end residential lofts that would win the



BEFORE

The owners of this ground-floor loft installed pea gravel (above) before “partnering” with Phase One Landscapes for a more functional backyard (left).

they could explore the opportunities that they were sure could be realized, despite some pretty tight space limitations.

It was up to Phase One Landscapes to transform their vision into reality.

“The owners were interested in creating a functional, action-packed space that included water, fire, a hot tub, barbecue area and entertainment areas while hoping to enhance the architectural and historical significance of their unique home,” says Dave Graham, president of Phase One Landscapes.

“The clients are the guiding force behind every space we create,” Graham continues. “By listening and working together, we create unique, personal environments that cater to their lifestyle and become an integral part of their home. This project is an excellent example of what we can do when the clients and our team are working on the same page.”

2004 Historical Preservation Award for Denver’s Most Exceptional Preservation Project of the Year.

It is fitting then that the award-winning construction project also houses an award-winning landscape. Denver-based Phase One Landscapes’ work in transforming one of the new Steam Plant Lofts and Patio Homes’ courtyards was

recently honored with an Excellence in Landscape Award by the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado in the design/build category, projects \$75,000 to \$150,000.

After the initial construction of their loft, the owners of the Northeast ground floor loft initially installed pea gravel to cover the dirt in their courtyard — until

Combining elements

The size of the courtyard is between 14-ft. and 18-ft. wide and 70-ft. long, enclosed with a 4-ft.-high unfinished concrete wall.

“We developed the theme to use unfinished concrete-formed walls for the proposed elements early in the design concepts,” says Graham. “The challenges



BEFORE



The spa was set into the patio to minimize its impact. The installation of easy-to-maintain plants soften its effect.

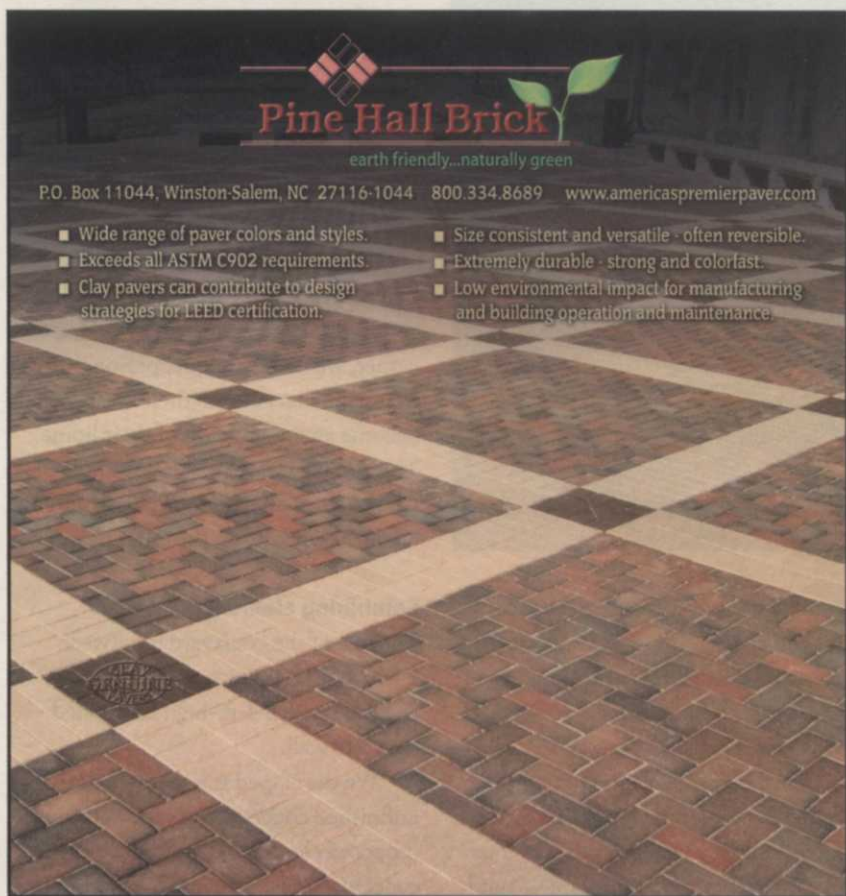


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in the design were to combine all the design elements into a small space, creating different rooms yet have everything be a part of a unified whole."

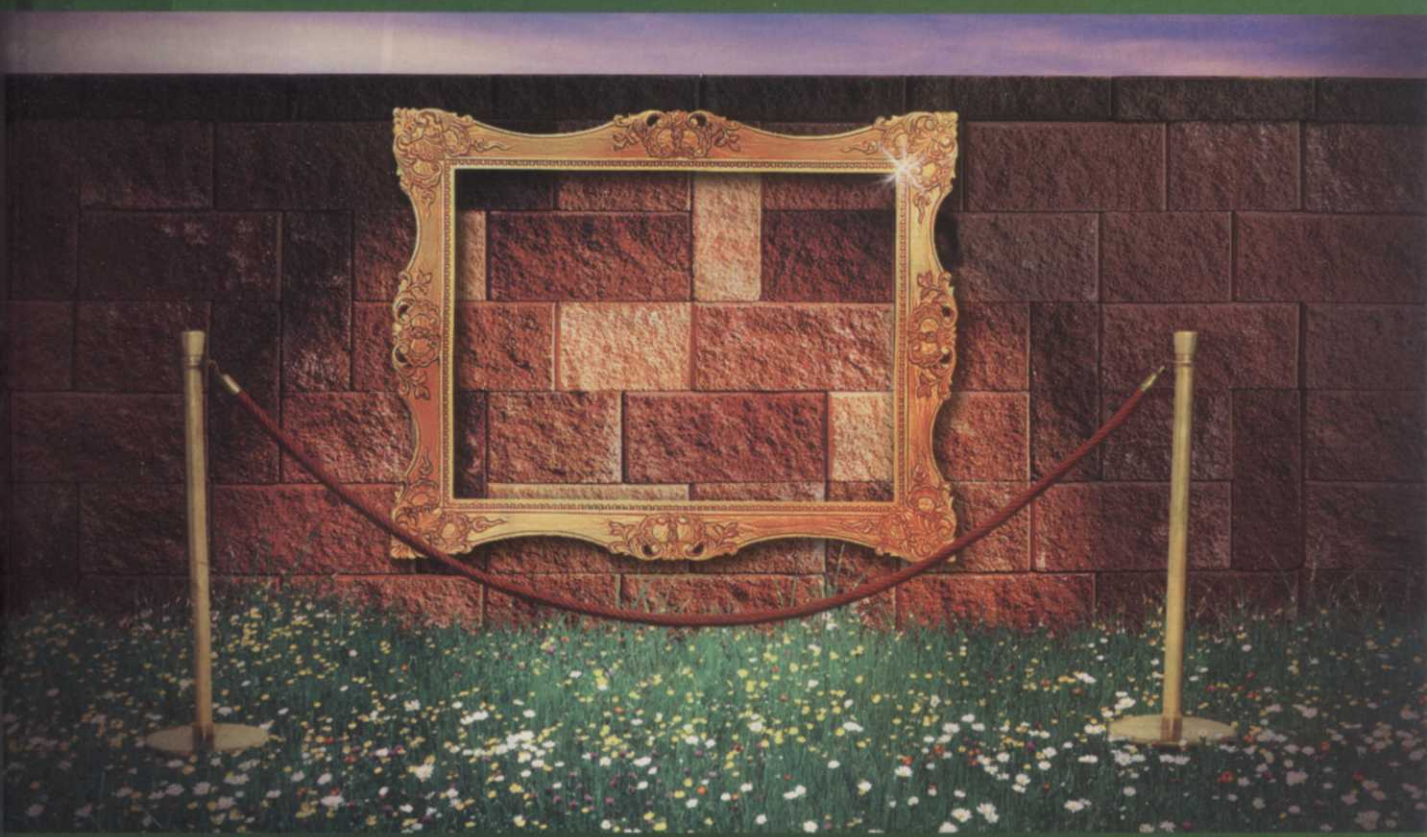
The use of stone paving details in the front walk and patio define the entry to the front door yet still allow for a table seating area by the new barbecue, Graham explains. The water feature is part of the entry, yet provides interest for the patio and the seating area by the fireplace. The three galvanized water spouts mimic the galvanized tubes that create the awning over the main building entrance.

A striking feature is the fireplace. It's actually a simple concrete box centered below a cantilevered arm.

"The fireplace provides intrigue and interest while subtly separating the public area of the courtyard from the more private area where the hot tub is," Graham says. "It's enjoyed by both areas equally — being a center gathering place during entertaining while providing quite ambience for the spa."

continued on page 60

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continued from page 58

The spa is set into a masonry pit, with hand cut stones supported by angle iron to make the void for maintenance. A simple path leads to the north door where the master bedroom and office is located.



Premium space

Space was at a premium in this small courtyard and was handled through careful planning. Plantings were incorporated into the levels of the water feature and between the cantilevered fireplace arm to soften every possible space with greenery.

Phase One Landscape's design offers many entertainment options in a small space.

The water feature equipment is housed in a vault that appears to be a bench beside the pool, and is used as a platform for potted plants. The spa was set into the patio to minimize its impact and impart a more open feel.

"The finished product is a contiguous whole that appears to simply grow out of the steam plant and perimeter walls," says Graham. "We're really proud of what we were able to accomplish, blending the new features with the historic legacy of the building. The spaces created exceed the owners original expectations, and have functioned exceptionally for entertaining."

"A few guests have asked what the fireplace structure was used for during the steam plant's original days. That's a compliment they did not realize they were giving." **LM**

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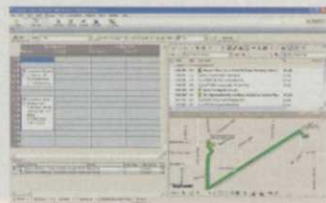
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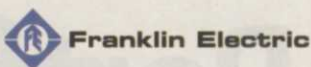
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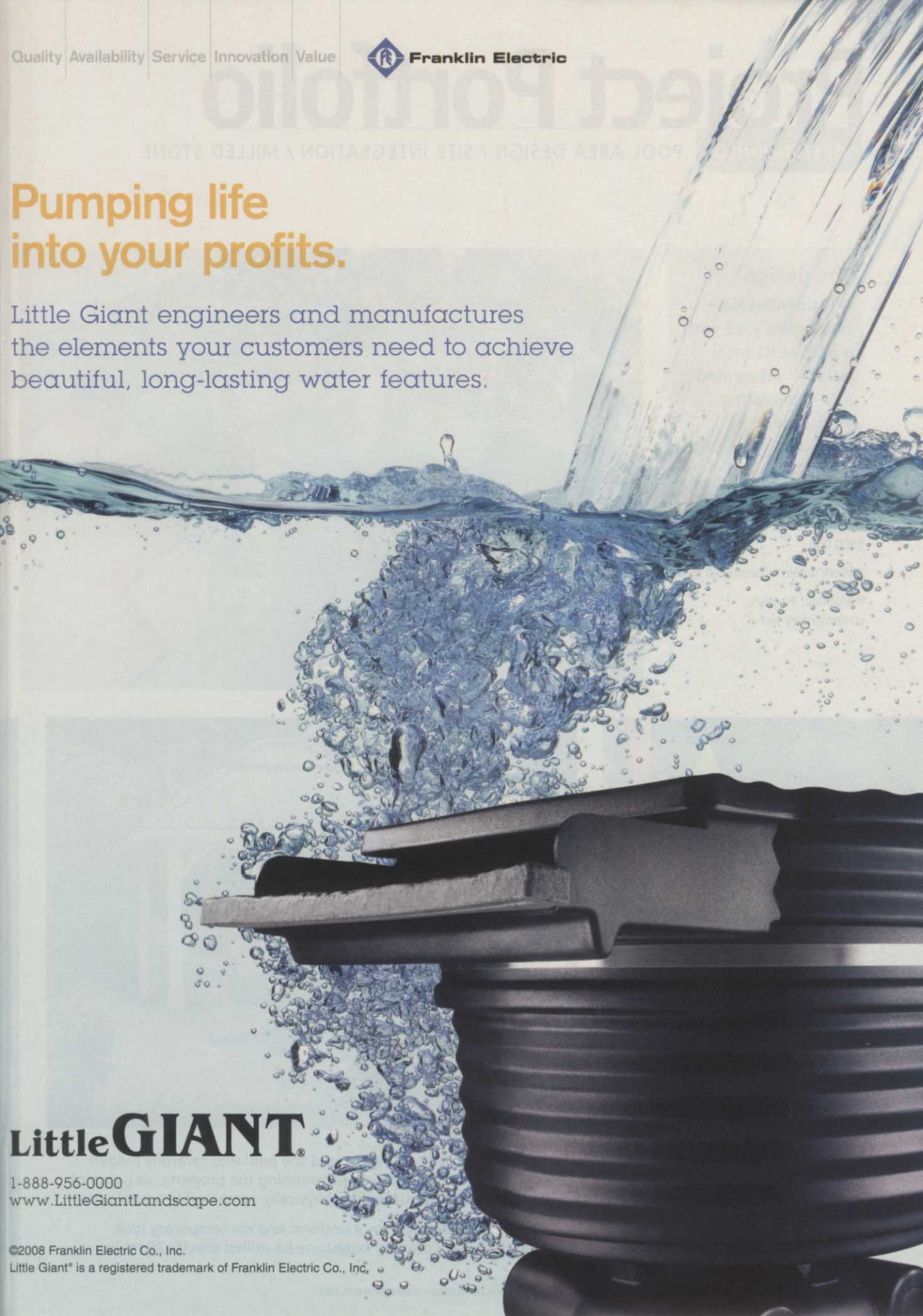
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Project Portfolio

DESIGN/BUILD

POOL AREA DESIGN / SITE INTEGRATION / MILLED STONE

The design

A residential New Hampshire yard with a pool as its focal point — integrated into the existing landscape.

Project Requirements

- Budget range: \$100,000 to \$500,000
- Work within a constricted space
- Maintain an open, contemporary feel



Project Specifics

Meet the owner expectations as well as those of local regulations

ABOVE The required fencing around the pool was carefully hidden among the existing vegetation surrounding the property, so peace of mind is achieved without feeling physically contained in a pool area.

LEFT The clients' decision for a uniform and contemporary look required that every piece of bluestone be milled exactly 29 sq. in.



ABOVE With the construction setbacks identified, the pool was moved to the north side of the property to maximize the solar potential for the patio on the south side. A site inventory and analysis indicated an extensive ledge occupied the proposed pool location.

INSET Both a very tight finished site and a multitude of town regulations essentially dictated the specific location of the pool, but not its orientation, either horizontally or vertically.

LEFT Because access to the area was through a completed landscape, several site protection measures were taken to negate the need for a new fence or reconstruction of the basketball court.



Project Principals

- Designed by Greg Grigsby and Brian Muchow, Pellettieri Associates, Warner, NH, www.pellettieriassoc.com
- Pool installed by Yankee Pools; other suppliers include Millican Nurseries, Chichester, NH, and Flynn Stone, Lakewood, PA.
- Pellettieri Associates offers a full range of consulting services in site planning, landscape design, and construction administration.

This project was a Distinction Award winner in PLANET's 38th annual Environmental Improvement Awards program. For more information on the program, visit www.landcarenetwork.org.

Hardscape

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Increased awareness of the impact of stormwater runoff on lakes, rivers and streams is being translated into more stringent rules to control runoff from developed areas.

To reduce pollution discharged to lakes, rivers, streams and estuaries from paved surfaces, for example, federal stormwater management rules under the federal Clean Water Act were upgraded in 1999 to include construction activity that disturbs between one to five acres of land. Many state and local governments also are enacting rules to reduce stormwater runoff.

These regulations often specify certain "best management practices," including permeable pavers, to achieve the goals of reducing runoff volume and pollution.

"Permeable pavers have been used in a variety of applications in which stormwater runoff was a concern," says Burt Plett, product manager for Willow Creek Concrete Products in Kimball, MN. Willow Creek is the exclusive manufacturer of Aqua-Loc Permeable Concrete Paving Stones in the Upper Midwest. "City streets, sidewalks, parking areas, driveways — any area that requires a pavement surface can be designed with permeable pavers."

More than meets the eye

While on the surface, permeable pavers don't look much different than



The future of interlocking concrete paving stones is green, and it's spelled **p-e-r-m-e-a-b-l-e.** BY KARL BREMER

traditional concrete interlocking paving stones, the similarities end there. It's what's underneath that counts.

Installation of permeable pavers is more complex than the traditional method of laying them on a 6-in. compacted-aggregate base topped with a layer of bedding sand.

Employing what is known as the Bio-Aquifer Storm System (BASS), these pavers permit storm water to drain

through aggregate-filled voids between the pavers into a subsurface retention area. There, water is directed through a series of aggregate and stone filtration layers before filtering through the subsurface or discharging to an eco-swale or irrigation system.

"The paver base, retention and drainage components are integrated into a single system," Plett explains. "The depth

continued on page 66

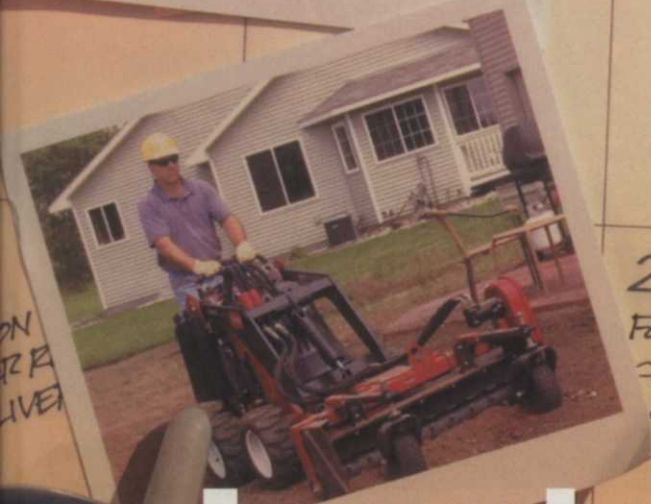
2
AUGER 6 TREE HOLES
BRING 30" BIT



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& HAMMER
& BUCKET

7
INSTALL
IRRIGATION
SYSTEM AT
JOHNSON HOME

18
ATTACHMENTS NEEDED:
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* TRENCHER
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Count on it.

continued from page 64

of these filtration layers in the subsurface retention area may differ depending on the type of application — residential or commercial — and the expected loads. But adherence to the system's design is

critical for it to function properly.”

The BASS system reduces runoff volume by 90% or more, but it also serves other equally important ecological functions, says Plett.

“It filters out a high percentage of

pollutants from runoff, which can contain contaminants such as nitrite, phosphate, nitrate, phosphorus, metals and ammonium,” he says. “And it reduces the temperature of runoff water — the

continued on page 68

Aqua-Loc installation basics

To begin, **1** excavate to a depth of 21 in. for a commercial installation. The system should be installed on an undisturbed subgrade. If an eco-swale is in the system's design, excavate a sufficient area beyond the paver installation area to accommodate that as well.

Depending on the soils or drainage requirements, a geosynthetic underlayment fabric may be required to line the excavated area. Also, perforated drain pipe may be required to collect water from the retention area and discharge it.

Lay 4-in. drain pipe in the excavated space under the pavers or beneath the eco-swale, sloped for proper drainage. Fill the excavation with 12 in. of 1.5- to 3-in. open-graded stone with no fines (AASHTO #1). Make one pass over this sub-base with a vibrating-plate compactor.

Next, **2** place 4 in. of 3/4- to 1-in. open-graded stone with no fines (AASHTO #57) on top of the sub-base. Rake it level, and compact again with a single

pass of a compactor.

Then, place 2 in. of 1/4- to 3/8-in. open-graded stone with no fines (AASHTO #8 or #9) on top of that base and screed it level.

Install edge restraints around the perimeter of the project area and proceed **3** to cut and then **4** lay Aqua-Loc pavers as you would any other paver. Lay the first paving stones against the longest section of edge restraint, starting at a 90-degree corner if possible. Begin at the low end of the grade and work uphill to keep paving stones from shifting during construction.

Select paving stones at random from different product pallets to get good color distribution. Place paving stones directly next to each other.

The ribbed edges on the paving stones will ensure proper spacing. Work alternating from right to left, then left to right, completing one row at a time and ensuring that they are firmly locked in place between one another.



When the installation of paving stones is complete, set the remaining edge restraints and compact the entire project area again. Sweep 1/4- to 3/8-in. open-graded stone with no fines (AASHTO #8 or #9) into the voids between the pavers, and compact one final time.

Aqua-Loc Product Manager Burt Plett notes that these permeable pavers also

can be installed mechanically.

“Last year, a new transit station in Shakopee, MN, was partially paved with Aqua-Loc permeable pavers. Nearly 14,000 sq. ft. was laid in a herringbone pattern using a motorized-clamp paver machine,” he says.

“The entire installation took less than a week. Sections of pavers approximately 9 sq. ft. were placed as fast as the machine could deliver them.” — KB

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continued from page 66

'heat island effect' — to several degrees lower than water running off asphalt surfaces, which benefits fish such as trout and other aquatic life sensitive to temperature fluctuations."

A low-maintenance choice

Properly installed, permeable pavers require little maintenance over their lifetime. A periodic visual inspection of the pavement surface should be conducted to ensure the voids between the pavers



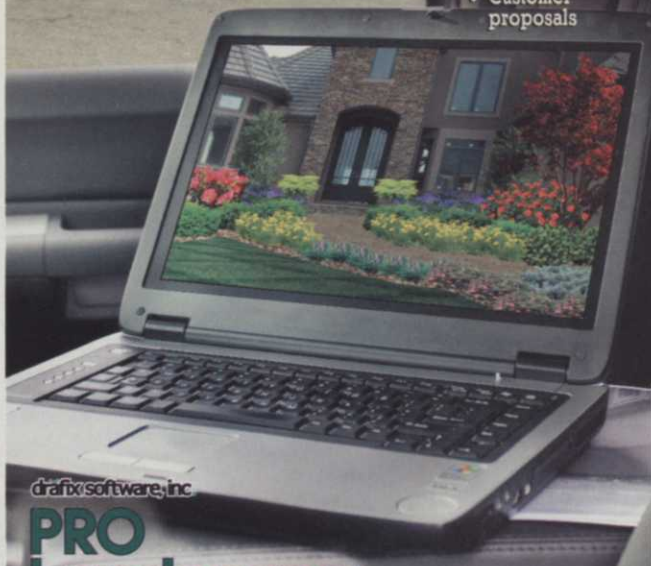
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do not become clogged. Also, the pavers should be swept with a dry vacuum annually to remove debris that may have collected in the voids, such as sediment, leaves or grass clippings.

Plett recommends against using pressure washers to clean voids. Be sure to replace any aggregate that is lost during the maintenance process.

Permeable pavers are rapidly gaining favor as a preferred stormwater management practice, particularly over more costly, space-consuming retention ponds, Plett says.

"In some areas, the number of qualified permeable paver installers lags behind the market demand," he notes. "In Minnesota, Patio Town has begun offering free installation seminars on Aqua-Loc permeable pavers at its landscape supply stores for small residential projects done by homeowners. We plan to establish contractor training programs in this system as the permeable paver market expands."

Permeable paver product lines also are expanding to meet growing demand, including Willow Creek, which is expanding its line later this year.

"It's a new way of thinking about paved surfaces that's here to stay," Plett concludes. **LM**

— The author is a communications specialist for Willow Creek Concrete Products, Oakdale, MN. Contact him at kbremer@versa-lok.com.



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A 2-person crew can easily install a beautiful pondless water feature in a single morning.

WATER FEATURES FOR TOUGHER TIMES

Smaller, easier-to-install projects can deliver a hefty profit for contractors willing to take the plunge BY JENNIFER ZURI

As the economy crunches the housing market and drought conditions affect various regions of the country, landscape company owners are doing all they can to keep their revenues from drying up.

Despite economic and environmental challenges, some landscapers are turning to water gardening services and products to add to their revenue stream.

A few short years ago, mid- to large-sized ecosystem ponds were the bread and butter of the water gardening industry, offering profit margins up to 65%. Full-fledged ecosystem ponds with all the bells and whistles — waterfalls, streams, plants and fish — carry price tags of \$5,000 to \$10,000 or more, depending on size and complexity of design. Threats of a recession are making consumers hesitate before purchasing big ticket items, and there's no guarantee the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 will motivate taxpayers to spend their rebate.

Homeowners may be curtailed from buying and moving into a bigger house. Instead more want to improve their outdoor living quarters. They're turning to their own backyards for beautification. Smaller water features such as pondless options and decorative fountains are increasingly popular. The cost to install a smaller feature is attractive to consumers and therefore provides a viable option in today's market.

Jeff Duggins of H2O Designs Inc., Lancaster, KY, says 60% of his business in 2007 came from pondless waterfall installations. Decorative water features such as fountains and bubbling urns made up 20% of H2O Designs' business late last year, but Jeff expects this percentage to increase considerably in 2008 since customers with space con-

continued on page 73

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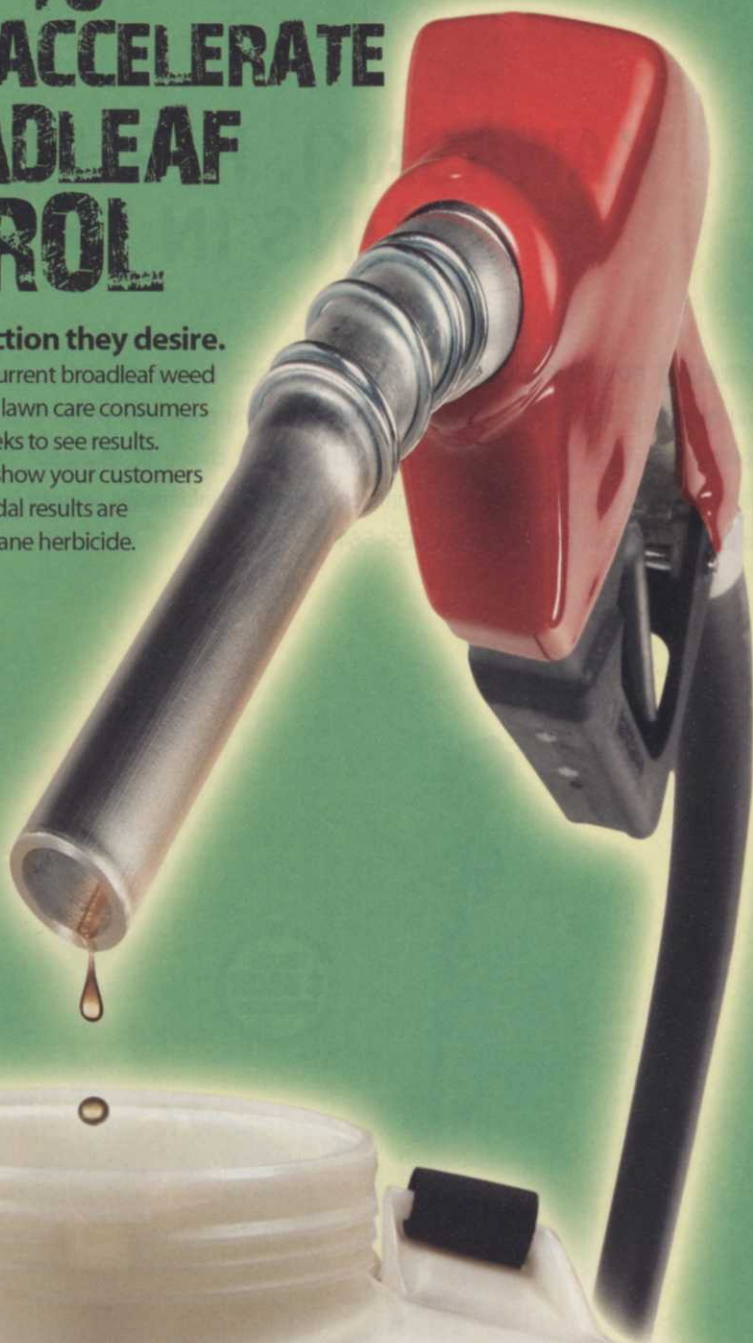
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Because water is recirculated consumers have few qualms about installations in regions with water restrictions.

continued from page 70

straints often opt for decorative fountains and bubbling urns.

Duggins says he hasn't seen a slow down in water feature installations despite economic concerns and watering restrictions. The majority of his customers are 45 to 60 years old and live in more established residential communities, therefore the mortgage crisis hasn't affected them.

Duggins notes that customers don't shy away from water features once they realize the water re-circulates and doesn't require constant refilling. He's noticed an increase in the DIY market, too. Sales from his retail store reflect this trend. In fact, both his installation and retail sales have grown more than 200% since he entered the water garden market six years ago.

A former software manager, Dug-

gins experienced water feature sales of approximately \$60,000 his first year working part-time in the industry. The year after becoming a Certified Aquascape Contractor, his company's sales grew to \$180,000. For 2008, Duggins is predicting \$600,000 in water feature sales, up 60% over last year's \$350,000 figure. After three years dabbling part-time with water features, he converted to a full-time operation complete with a retail location. With the rise in popularity of smaller water features, he doesn't see an end to the growth of his business any time soon.

Show it and sell it

Mark Carter of Carter's Nursery, Pond and Patio, Jackson, TN, has 10 water feature displays at his retail location and doesn't know how anyone could sell a pond or decorative water feature without a display. Water features comprise approximately 30% of Carter's entire business, and he says he yields a better profit margin with them. "It's easier to sell water features at the price you want," claims Carter. Unlike lawn maintenance services that are price competitive, water feature installations are considered custom work, and Carter finds the majority of his customers want some type of water feature.

Carter says his customers repeatedly attend his pond tour or visit his garden center to ask more about water features, and even though they may not purchase immediately, eventually they'll save enough money.

He explains that it takes half a day for two crew members to install a decorative fountain or large bubbling urn that sits atop a reservoir or basin. A pondless water feature can be installed in one day with three to four crew members. Both features yield a 50% profit margin or more, he says.

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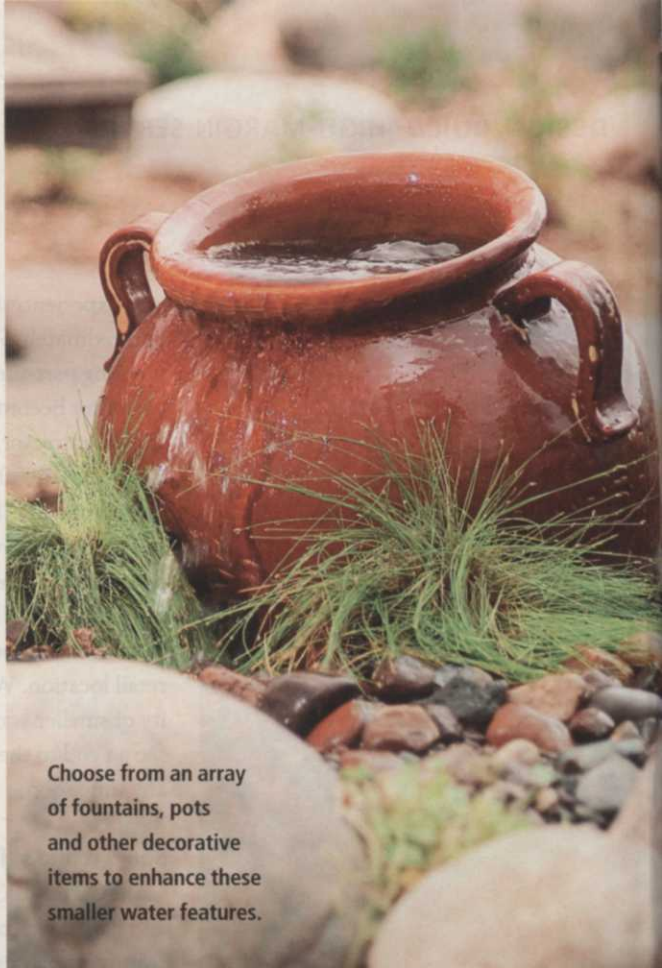
Jeff Duggins has been capturing a healthy profit margin with water features. Smaller decorative fountains and urns return up to 60% profit, he says, while pondless features come in just slightly below that figure.

Duggins credits his success in water garden sales and installations to his ability to create attractive, natural features. He markets his products and services by offering water gardening seminars in his store, producing a newsletter for customers and always returning customer calls.


Water features aren't just beautiful and soothing to customers' spirits, but, with healthy sales and profit margins they're appealing to a contractor's bottom line, too.

Small water features are popular landscape choices in today's sluggish, uncertain economy due to their lower price point. The fact that these features also re-circulate water is an added bonus to those living in areas where water conservation is a concern. Water gardening is holding its own in a precarious economy, which is good news for contractors. **LM**

— The author is marketing manager for Aquascapes Inc., and can be reached at jjuri@aquascapesinc.com



Choose from an array of fountains, pots and other decorative items to enhance these smaller water features.

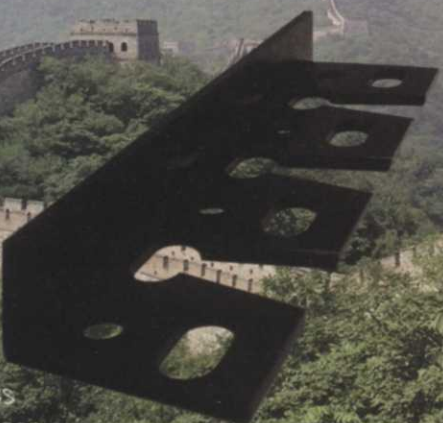


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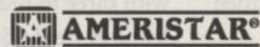


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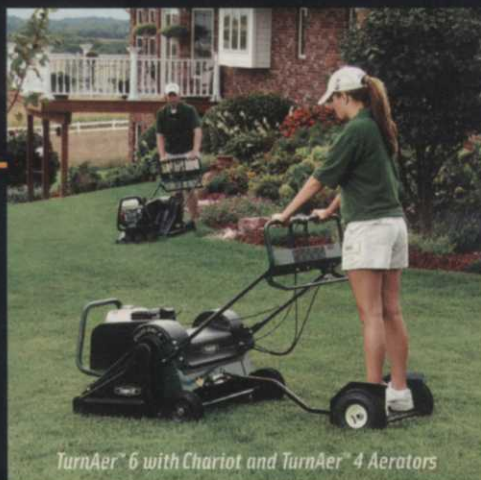
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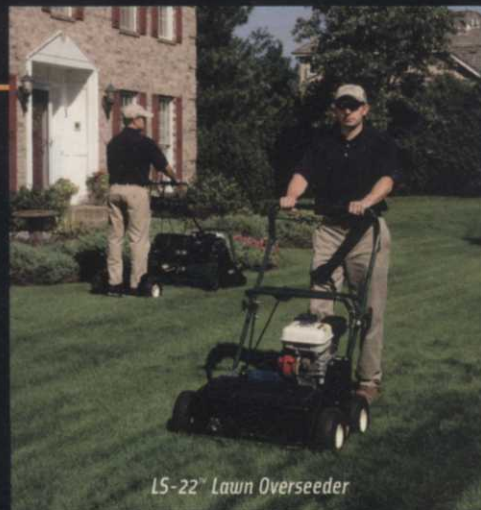
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Container gardens

BY HEATHER PITTINGER

There are few hard and fast rules in this blossoming discipline



CONTAINER GARDENS appeal to a broad range of customers including condo, home and business owners who have little or no land, but love and want plants.

Adding container gardens to your service repertoire can be lucrative, but time-intensive. Experts agree you should visit the account at least once, and maybe even twice a week for maintenance. However, there are third-party maintenance companies you can contract with that specialize in just that, says Dr. Terri Starman, Texas A&M Department of Horticultural Sciences, College Station, TX.

"They're really popular around pools, too," she says. "But having planters as focal points, in either the landscape or even the tabletop,

lets the garden become a 'living centerpiece' of an outdoor kitchen and patio."

Planters come in all shapes and sizes. Try to complement the color and architecture of the building, says Bobbie Schwartz, owner of Bobbie's Green Thumb in Shaker Heights, OH.

"There are also some great new planters out there that are very sleek and upright," she adds. "I think we'll be seeing them used much more as people learn about them."

The experts agree that designing a container garden offers a lot of freedom. With the exception of deep tap root or invasive plants, the combinations are endless. Schwartz advises looking for plants that are at least one or two zones hardier than where they'll be placed. **LM**



CONTAINER BASICS

While there is a lot of freedom in what can be done in a container garden, Greg Stack offers the following tips on the University of Illinois Extension/Urbana-Champaign Web site:

- ▶ **Combine** flowering plants with foliage or component plants in a ratio of three to four flowering plants to one component plant.
- ▶ Choose **contrast** or have **harmony** by the colors you select. The easiest high-impact color combination is the combination of red, yellow and blue.
- ▶ Maintain **proportion**. The basic guideline is for the plant material to be twice as tall as the visible part of the container.
- ▶ Don't forget **texture**. Combine different flower and foliage textures that complement each other.
- ▶ Use your **imagination** and have fun. Most times there are really no bad combinations. So, mix your leftover annuals together and enjoy the results of a "living hand-tied bouquet."

Containers come in all sizes and shapes. Select a container that complements the color and the architecture of the location.



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These insecticides can live up to the hype — if you use them appropriately.

BY DAVE SHETLAR, PH.D.



Get to know NEONICOTINOIDS

To hear some chemical companies' reps talk about their insecticides, it may appear that no insect can survive an application of a neonicotinoid. This is not what research shows.

Neonicotinoids are exciting replacements for the organophosphate and carbamate insecticides that we used in urban landscapes and ornamental plant nurseries from the 1970s through the 1990s. But each neonicotinoid has unique attributes and characteristics, including the range of pests it controls.

Evolution of an insecticide class

More than a decade ago, when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began to review the organophosphate and carbamate pesticides under the new Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) standards, it became evident

that most of these pesticides would be limited or removed from use — especially urban landscape use.

Fortunately, in the mid-1990s a new group of insecticides was discovered. They were originally called chloro- and thianicotinyls. However, several companies believed that these new insecticides didn't work very well because of their poor curative, or knockdown, action. But, when these insecticides were used in a preventive mode, they worked extremely well, causing manufacturers to change their evaluation protocols to discover the potentials of these molecules.

Imidacloprid (Merit) was the first of the neonicotinoids to reach the market. Over the last five years, several other neonicotinoids have also been registered. Unfortunately, many users believe that these newer products are "just another neonicotinoid." This is like saying that malathion and chlorpyrifos (Dursban)



Most neonicotinoids provide excellent control of wood-boring beetles, like the emerald ash borer.

are "just organophosphates." Neonicotinoids differ significantly, just as malathion and chlorpyrifos differ.

Meet the cast of characters

See the accompanying table for the neonicotinoid insecticides currently registered for use in the United States for control of urban landscape pests. This table also contains information on the chemical and toxicological properties of these molecules.

◀ Bagworms are usually poor candidates for control by neonicotinoids.

Efficacy research continues

At present, we are accumulating evidence of how long these neonicotinoids last in plant tissues indirectly, by observing the reactions of insect pests over time.

In ornamental plants, acetamiprid, dinotefuran and thiamethoxam appear to have short to moderate activity periods (20 to 60 days). Clothianidin and imidacloprid seem to have moderate to long activity (40 to 100-plus days).

In turfgrass, leaf-eating insects like cutworms and sod webworms are affected by imidacloprid and thiamethoxam for less than 20 days, yet clothianidin continues to act for about 30 days. This is probably a factor of the foliage of the grass plants being cut off, or dying and being replaced. If imidacloprid and thiamethoxam are bound to the thatch and are no longer being taken up by the plant, their residues will quickly disappear. On the other hand, clothianidin may be more available and is being taken up by the grass plants for a longer period of time.

The technical materials (100% rate) are generally in the EPA category of medium toxicity (oral LD50s of 51 to 500) to low toxicity (oral LD50s of 501 to 5000). However, notice that clothianidin reaches a unique level of being practically "non-toxic," the term that the EPA uses when a molecule has an oral LD50 greater than 5,000.

Of course, these insecticides, when formulated, are often less toxic than the technical materials. The exception is



Sawfly larvae, like these bristly roseslugs are easily controlled by neonicotinoids.

Arena, which has a formulated LD50 of 3,000 because of surfactants to make the formulation go into suspension.

An even more important feature is the water solubility of each neonicotinoid. Imidacloprid and clothianidin are only slightly soluble, though they retain the ability to be systemic in action within living plants. Thiamethoxam and acetamiprid are more soluble, supporting claims that they're more rapidly taken into the leaves of sprayed plants. Uptake by roots also appears to be faster.

If we look at the KOCs (coefficient of binding to carbon — organic matter), we see that most of the neonicotinoids have a medium binding affinity. This means that if you have obvious thatch layers in turf, you will likely not get good white grub control. Likewise, if you attempt to drench the roots of ornamental plants with a neonicotinoid, but there is a layer of mulch that has not been pulled back, you'll probably not get uptake by the plant. Dinotefuran should be the best of the neonicotinoids at getting through layers of organic matter.

When we look at the soil half-life data, it becomes apparent that acetamiprid dissipates rapidly, and is likely below active levels within two weeks of being applied. On the other hand, the other neonicotinoids have active residuals (in the soil or soil-thatch interface) that last

three to four months. This doesn't mean that these same residues are within a treated, living plant, however. There are several ways to determine the residual of a systemic insecticide. One way is to treat a plant and take foliage samples on a periodic basis. However, this is a costly process, and only a few of the neonicotinoids have been evaluated this way. (See "Efficacy research continues," at left.)

Pests controlled

The neonicotinoids seem to have very good action against beetles and beetle larvae, a wide range of sucking insects (plant bugs, lace bugs, chinch bugs, aphids, mealybugs, whiteflies and soft scales), fly larvae (especially dipterous leafminers) and sawflies. However, they differ significantly in their abilities to control caterpillars and armored scales.

Part of this stems from when applications are made to control the insect. For example, caterpillars are often not treated until the larvae are large and almost ready to pupate. How the insect feeds also affects the results. For example, soft scales feed within vascular bundles, while armored scales feed within cells or between cells.

We have performed numerous tests of imidacloprid, clothianidin, dinotefuran and thiamethoxam for control of cutworms and sod webworms. When we



Magnolia scales are easily controlled with neonicotinoids if you have patience. Mature adults are rarely killed, but newly settling nymphs are easy targets.

SOME PROPERTIES OF NEONICOTINOIDS REGISTERED FOR TURF AND LANDSCAPE USE.

	LD ₅₀ ^a	H ₂ O Sol. ^b	Koc ^c	Soil 2-life ^d	Neu. Hyd ^e
NITROGUANIDINE SUBGROUP					
Imidacloprid (Merit)	450	580	440	127	440
Clothianidin (Arena)	>5000	327	166	148	stable
Thiamethoxam (Meridian)	1563	4100	245	111	—
Dinotefuran (Safari)	>2000	39,830	22	82	stable
PYRIDYLMETHYLAMINE SUBGROUP					
Acetamiprid (TriStar)	217	2950	200	8.2	stable

^a Lethal dose (in mg toxicant/kg body weight) using rats and technical material.
^b Water solubility (at neutral pH), in mg technical material per liter water.
^c Koc - constant for binding capacity to organic carbon (the higher the number, the greater potential to be bound to organic particles in the soil).
^d Days for loss of one-half the toxicant in aerobic soil.
^e Days for loss of one-half the toxicant in neutral water (data not available).

monitor these caterpillars and make the insecticide applications when the larvae are in the first, second or third instar, we get excellent control. However, when we have fourth- and fifth-instar caterpillars (the big ones), only clothianidin appears to be able to take them down.

Unfortunately, because imidacloprid, clothianidin, dinotefuran and thiamethoxam have been so good at controlling various beetle borers, dipterous and sawfly leafminers and foliage feeding sawflies, many commercial applicators assume that they will also control caterpillars such as bagworms, mimosa webworms and fall webworms. This has not been the case, especially with imidacloprid.

While few commercial applicators want — or even have the ability — to spray tall trees because of the risk of drift, imidacloprid has not been a solution to this issue. Where leaf-eating caterpillars are a problem, and a systemic is desired, applicators usually have to resort to some of the older, standard systemics, such as bidrin, avermectin or acephate. Of course, foliar applications of one of the pyrethroids will quickly quell most caterpillar infestations.

Other neonicotinoid issues

Many homeowners and commercial applicators are used to applying a pesticide and seeing the pest “drop screaming” within minutes of the application. Because of the unique mode of action of neonicotinoids, this is not usually seen.

Basically, neonicotinoids block the insect neural action. In other words, affected insects often just sit around doing nothing until they desiccate, get sunstroke or become picked off by a predator or disease.

This issue becomes a real problem with insects like Japanese beetle adults. For example, if an adult beetle lands on a rose that has been treated with imidacloprid, it will take a little nibble out of a leaf or petal. The imidacloprid within the plant tissues rapidly gets into the beetle’s nervous system, so the beetle just sits on the plant. Now, the homeowner walks by and sees both the beetle sitting there and the little nibbling damage. The assumption is that the pesticide didn’t work, but if you come back tomorrow, the beetle will likely be laying upside down under the plant.

The neonicotinoids clothianidin and

thiamethoxam, seem to have more dramatic effects whereby the insects tend to “drop” more rapidly.

A few years ago, it was noticed that cotoneasters that were drenched or sprayed with imidacloprid for lace bug control were completely devoid of the lace bugs for the entire season. However, many of the treated plants were commonly attacked by spider mites.

Subsequent research found that the spider mites were unaffected by imidacloprid, but several of the predatory mites that were normally keeping the spider mites in check were being killed. We now know that these predatory mites, being in a completely different group of mites, are affected by neonicotinoids, and these mites periodically obtain moisture from plant leaves, where they get a dose of the insecticide.

Spider mite flare-up has been noted on other landscape plants, so many are not suggesting that neonicotinoids be used sparingly on plants that are normally “mite-prone.”

One last potential drawback: There has been some media coverage claiming that neonicotinoids are responsible for the recent plight of honeybees. While it is true that neonicotinoid insecticides can end up in the nectar of plants, and bees can be affected by these residues, there is no body of data to suggest that this is the major cause of the honeybee colony decline. However, this does suggest that we should use neonicotinoids wisely and avoid treating plants that are flowering and attract a lot of bees and butterflies. **LM**

— The author is an associate professor of urban landscape entomology at The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. Contact him at bugdoc@ag.ohio-state.edu.



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The crane fly, a common turf pest in the Pacific Northwest, gets a rude welcome in western New York State

Unwelcome VISITOR

BY STACEY HIMES

Twenty-five years after getting a summer job with One Step, Greg Adams is president of that same company, which is the largest, locally owned lawn and tree care company in Rochester, NY.

"I thought I was going to work at One Step for the season," says Adams, who took over day-to-day management duties from owner Bob Ottley in January 2006. "Bob gave me the opportunity to do some things from a business

standpoint I really wanted to do."

Adams, who has a master's degree in business administration from Rochester Institute of Technology, helped grow the business from just 600 clients in the early 1980s to more than 5,000, crediting the tutelage of Ottley, a horticulture expert and "master" with people.

"We believe in slow growth because we invest in existing customers," says Adams. For example, every customer is called the night before an applica-

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Pest crane fly basics

Daniel Peck, Ph.D., assistant professor of entomology at Cornell University, offers the following tips for identifying crane flies:

Timing: Cue into the adult emergence windows. The first generation adults of *T. oleracea* usually emerges in early May, while the second-generation adults, and adults of *T. paludosa*, emerge in mid- to late-September.

Numbers: At emergence time, look for "clouds" of flies flitting across the grass or perching on walls and vegetation. When larvae are active, uncover them in the thatch or top layer of the soil, or look for accumulations along roadsides after rain showers.

Anatomy: Adult crane flies resemble large (inch-long) mosquitoes. Unlike native species, the invasive crane fly species have dark-colored bands adjacent to light-colored bands along the top of their wings, with no other dark lines or patches. They also have gray-brown abdomens, while abdomens of the native non-pest species are orange.

Damage: Turf damage includes thinning as well as water stress and yellowing due to extensive disruption of the root zone. When adults emerge, they leave behind leathery pupal cases that look like twigs.

For more information on European crane fly identification and treatment, visit <http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/factsheets/turfgrass/default.asp>.

—SLH

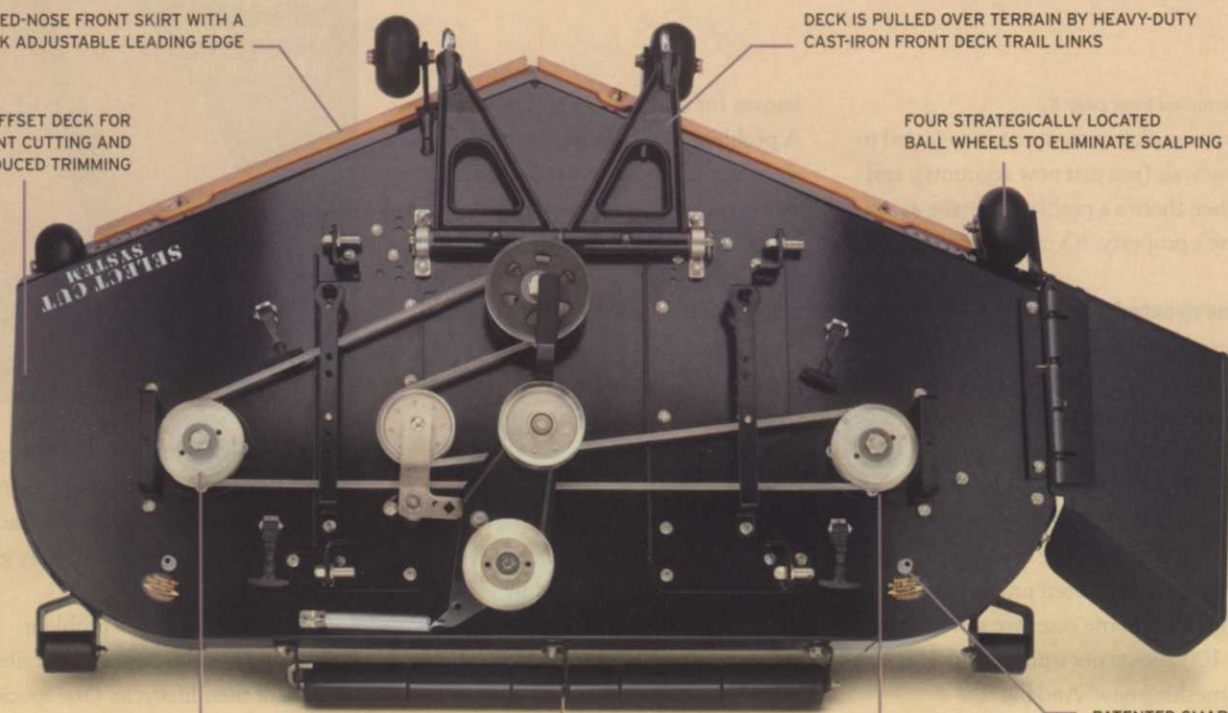
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continued from page 82

tion; employee compensation is tied to renewals (not just new accounts); and when there's a problem or issue at someone's property, it's attended to quickly.

Unexpected pest

In early 2007, this service culture was tested when Adams began receiving calls about unusual turf damage on properties. It was too early for grub damage.

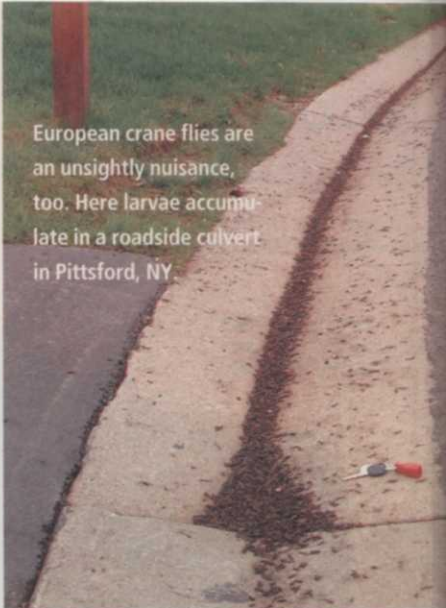
"There were bugs everywhere — all over the lawn, on the driveway, and filling the gutters of the road," says Adams. Damage varied from property to property but in some cases we saw as many as 100 insects per square foot. This was something new. And big."

What Adams found was the European crane fly, an exotic invasive pest

known for both its size and numbers.

A problem in the Pacific Northwest since the 1960s, it first appeared in northwestern New York in 2004, most likely introduced through infested soil from outside the state. Left untreated, under the right conditions, European crane flies (often called "leatherjackets" because of their tough larval shell) cause significant turf damage.

European crane flies are voracious eaters. In the larval stage, on their way to pupate into adults, they attack roots and root hairs. Most turf damage is evident in early May when the rapidly growing fourth instar feeds and attracts animals looking for food. Crane flies prefer mild, moist environments and frequently are found in areas of thatch build-up and poor drainage.



European crane flies are an unsightly nuisance, too. Here larvae accumulate in a roadside culvert in Pittsford, NY.

Daniel Peck, Ph.D., an assistant professor of entomology at Cornell University, says, "In some cases, they cause so much thinning, there is hardly any grass left," he says.

When they become a problem though they can be difficult to control because of their lifecycle. One species pupates in mid-to-late September while

continued on page 86

PHOTO COURTESY: DANIEL PECK, PH.D., CORNELL UNIVERSITY

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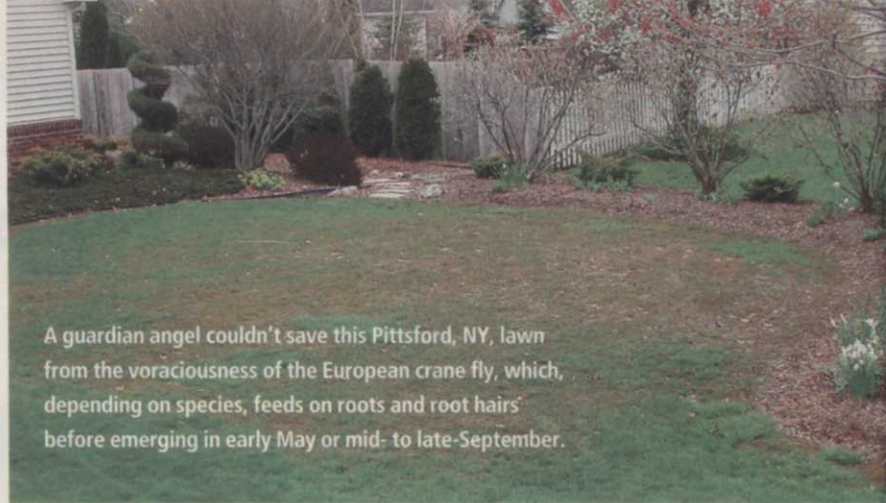
continued from page 84

the other emerges in both early May and in September. Given those emergence windows, the best time for control is before and after prime grub control windows, thus extending and complicating the New York turf pest season.

Lawn care operators have several control options — both curative and preventive, and cultural and chemical.

Controlling the frequency and amount of irrigation helps reduce populations. "If a crane fly egg goes even just a couple of hours without moisture, it will die," explains Peck. "So try to avoid irrigating between egg laying and the development of the first-instar larvae."

But because Adams needed to stop the pest in the spring when populations were high, a curative chemical applica-



A guardian angel couldn't save this Pittsford, NY, lawn from the voraciousness of the European crane fly, which, depending on species, feeds on roots and root hairs before emerging in early May or mid- to late-September.

tion was his best choice. After learning about treatments used by lawn care pros in Pacific Northwest, where crane flies are a common turf pest, One Step applied Sevin insecticide at labeled rates to infected lawns. "Within a few days, we saw control," Adams says. "Then it was simply a matter of seeing where we needed to repair and reseed."

Adams says he may also see some residual control from his annual applications of Merit insecticide, which One Step uses for white grub control

on 75% of customer lawns. He believes that a midsummer application of Merit — along with help from 2007's dryer conditions — may prevent any crane fly damage this spring.

"We'll be scouting closely and educating our customers so they let us know if they see anything," says Adams. "But our best defense is keeping their lawns as healthy as possible." **LJM**

— Stacey Himes is a freelance writer living in Philadelphia, PA. Contact her at staceyhimes@comcast.net.

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The Florida State Bluegrass Festival at the Forest Capital Museum State Park, Perry, FL, attracts more than 3,000 music lovers annually. One of its biggest attractions is the U.S. Navy Band known as Country Current. The festival's 13-acre park is dotted with 50-plus-year-old longleaf pines and, until recently, some very nasty guests — red imported fire ants (RIFA) and their unsightly mounds.

Attendees, stung by fire ants, regularly complained to festival officials looking for relief. As the festival approached in the spring of 2007, officials turned to David Sullivan, one of the local chamber of commerce directors and president of a local pest control company, The Roach Coach.

Sullivan felt pressure to resolve the problem. Specializing primarily in indoor pest control, he realized he did not have the products, equipment or experience to treat a 13-acre state park. He began by requesting product from a manufacturer, but when the product finally arrived about a week before the festival, the label indicated that ant control could be expected over a 14- to 21-day period. That just wasn't going to work.

Sullivan felt mounting pressure with the start of the festival only days away and no solution in sight. "I wanted to be the hero, not the goat," he recalls. Sullivan called his contact at distributor Univar where Jennifer Morton recommended DuPont Advion fire ant bait based on its ability to control fire ant colonies within 24 to 72 hours. And when the manufacturer learned that Sullivan did not have the right kind of spreader to use with the product, it shipped a spreader to him.



Festival freed of **FIRE ANTS**

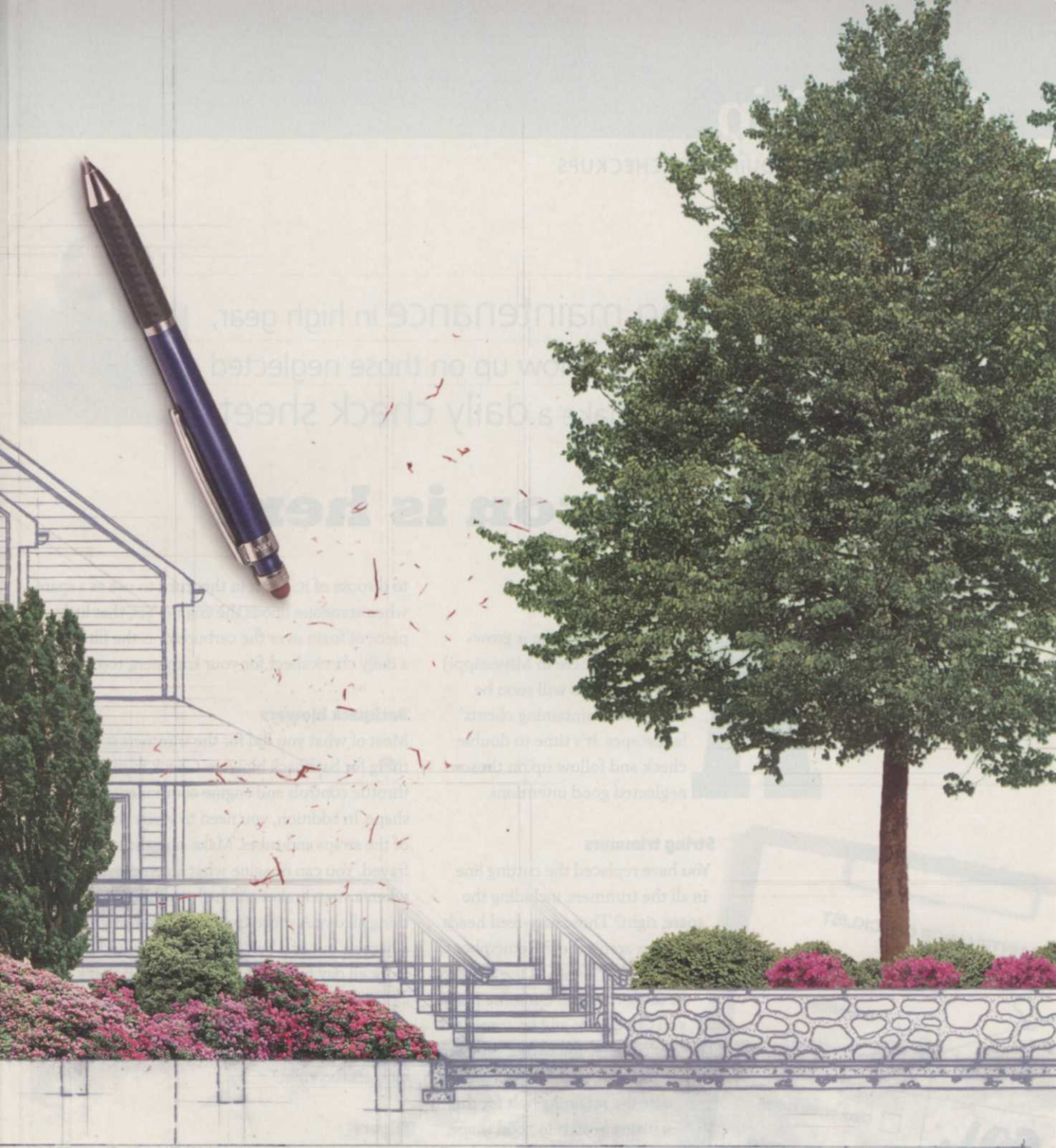
With barely a week before an event this contractor needed a fast way to protect fans from stinging pests. BY NANCY SCHWARTZ

Three days before the start of the festival, Sullivan treated the park with bait and his new spreader. It took him about two hours, he said.

When the first day of the festival passed and he didn't receive any comments about the ants, he wondered if his treatment had been effective. When he finally approached the vendors and officials, he learned that the fire ants had been eliminated. "Not even one ant on the heels of their shoes," said Sullivan. "Everyone at the festival was thrilled."

Sullivan is thinking about expanding his regular services beyond indoor pest control to include larger areas. "This experience has really made me think about the possibilities of offering my services to athletic fields, parks, yards and churches. If you are going to serve that market, you absolutely need a product that can perform," he said. **LM**

— The author is marketing manager for Turf & Ornamentals at DuPont Professional Products. Contact her at 302/999-5433 or nancy.schwartz@usa.dupont.com.



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With spring maintenance in high gear, double check and follow up on those neglected good intentions – and make a daily check sheet.



Cutting season is here

BY ALLEN SPENCE

April is here, the grass is growing, (at least here in Mississippi) and your crews will soon be swamped maintaining clients' landscapes. It's time to double check and follow up on those neglected good intentions.

String trimmers

You have replaced the cutting line in all the trimmers, including the spare, right? Those easy-feed heads are nice, aren't they? Remember to put a shot of grease in the gearbox on the lower end. On some units you can do this and on some you can't; check your owner's manual if you aren't sure. Also, make sure the retaining bolt for the cutting head is in good shape, and have someone adjust and tighten the operator's control section on the handle. Also, have him check the throttle cable for fraying and kinks.

While you're at it, why not replace the spark plug and the air filter. I know the old spark plug was running, but why take the chance? You don't need

to dispose of it; put it in the truck to use as a spare when someone floods the engine. Yes, that little piece of foam over the carburetor is the filter. Make a daily check sheet for your trimmers, too.

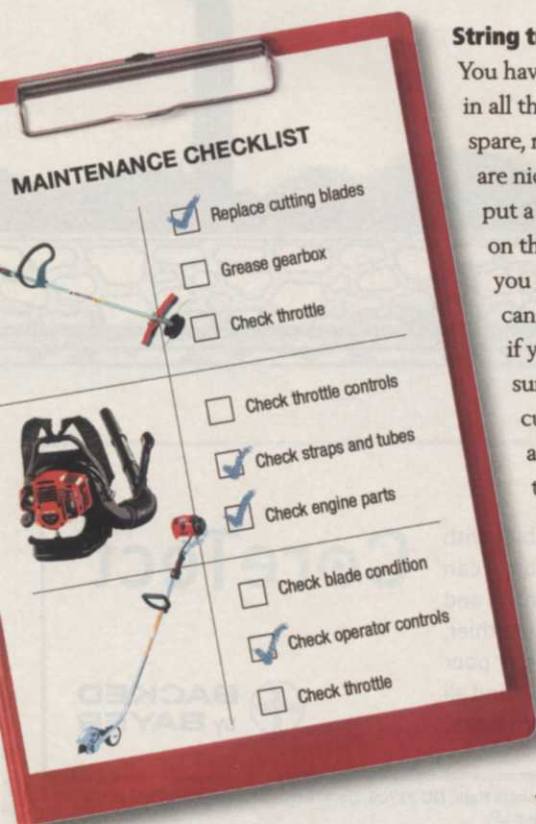
Backpack blowers

Most of what you did for the trimmers is also a good thing for backpack blowers. Check to make sure the throttle controls and engine components are in good shape. In addition, you need to verify the condition of the straps and tubes. Make sure the straps aren't frayed. You can imagine what an employee will say when a strap breaks and he has to tote that heavy thing all day. A more creative worker might fashion a harness out of a belt, but then he would have to work all day holding up his pants. And that's not a pretty sight – certainly not the image of professionalism you want your company to present. Last thing, you are using a daily check sheet on your blowers too, right?

Edgers

Stick edgers are a lot like trimmers, so what you check on the trimmer you should also check on the edger. Instead of changing the trimmer line you need to check the condition of the blade and roller. I have mentioned a daily check sheet a couple of times already. Are you getting the message? If you have any questions, e-mail me at the address below, and I will be glad to explain in more detail.

— The author is turf equipment management instructor at Hinds Community College in Raymond, MS. Contact him at haspence@hindsc.edu.



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When it comes to the latest and greatest technology, take a calculated risk only when your business can achieve a strategic advantage.



Buy the right technology

BY TYLER WHITAKER

Do I need a Bluetooth printer? Or should I get a laptop with WiMax or WLAN with 125HSM / Speed-Booster support? Questions like these give me a headache. Buying technology should be easy. What we need are some guidelines.

Shopping for computers used to be simple. A quick trip to the local technology store to pick out the latest and greatest from a wide selection was all it took. The major factors were functionality, brand name (quality) and cost. Today, finding the right technology solution has become complicated.

Internet shopping with a twist

The Internet is now the de facto standard for comparison shopping. Shopping by price is as easy as point and click. You can find everything from technical specs to reviews by actual users. It's a path to information overload and analysis paralysis in one easy step.

Instead of reviewing all wireless printers for the right match, stop and ask yourself, "What am I trying to accomplish?" Taking the time to define the problem: "I want to print wirelessly from my laptop" gives you a faster way to solve the problem. And here's the twist: try searching for the blogs of those who have had the same challenges. That way you get to leverage the time they spent researching the solution. This is a great way to narrow in on a few solutions.

Don't over buy or buy too soon

Next, limit the scope of your purchases. Technology changes so fast that sometimes you need a crystal ball, an IQ of 150 and a bottle of oxygen just to keep up. A good purchasing guideline is to limit the features and functionality to what you will actually use within the next six to 12 months. Buying the "top of the line" comes at a higher price tag and is a waste if you don't need the extra features.

Over buying goes hand in hand with buying too soon. Waiting for wider spread user adoption of a technology reduces both initial and unexpected conversion costs.

Quantify the technology risk

When it comes to the latest and greatest technology, take a calculated risk only when your business can achieve a strategic advantage by using a new piece of technology. Will it lower your costs, increase your efficiency and increase your net profit? Understand the costs and benefits so you can weigh the risk if the technology doesn't deliver.

It's not likely that the computer industry will ever consolidate to the point where technology purchasing will be as easy as choosing between "good enough," "better than most" and "top of the line." Until then save the hours of research for only your most strategic purchases. And, if all else fails, find a trusted advisor or expert for advice. A simple call or email can save a lot of time and hassle.

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



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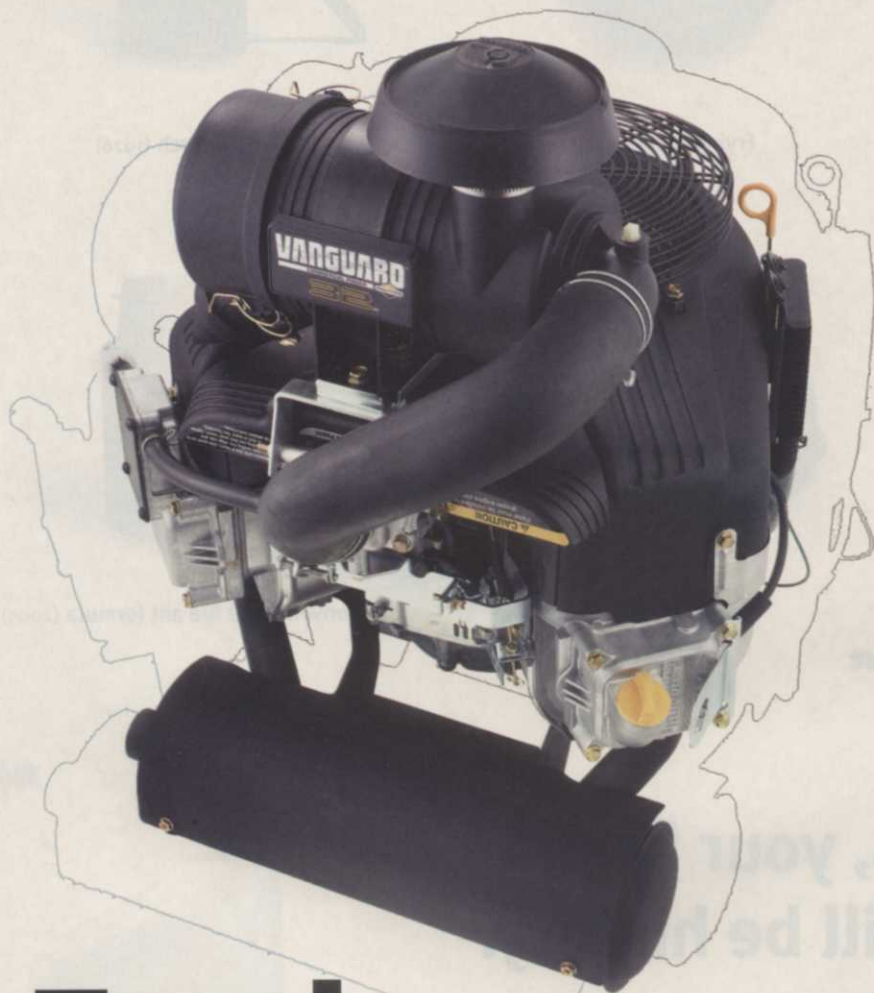
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LM Reports

TECHNOLOGY

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH



Engines

As equipment manufacturers must stay focused on developing more powerful, productive equipment, engine manufacturers must focus on achieving a balance between increasing horsepower and increasing fuel efficiency.

Ten years ago, a typical commercial zero-turn mower had a 25-hp engine. Since then, the incentive for increased productivity has led contractors to larger mowers with wider, heavier cutting decks, which combined with faster cut-

ting speeds, fuels demand for larger, more powerful engines. Now, more commercial zero-turn mowers are sold with 30- to 36-hp powerplants.

As fuel prices continue climbing, contractors pay closer attention to fuel efficiency. One practical technology Briggs & Stratton Commercial Power offers as an option on its Vanguard BIG BLOCK V-twin engines is called low speed operation. Increased fuel efficiency is just one of the system's benefits.

"When we looked at the strengths of our BIG BLOCK engines, we discov-

ered the torque produced allowed us to slow them down without compromising power," said Dan Roche, marketing manager of Briggs & Stratton Commercial Power.

Low speed operation leverages the generous torque curve produced by the Vanguard BIG BLOCK powerplant, and reduces engine speed from the standard 3,600 RPM to 3,200 RPM. This increases fuel efficiency, while also reducing noise and vibration.

Tim Buszkiewicz, the Briggs & Stratton engineer that led the development of low speed operation, said the system acts much like an overdrive gear in a passenger vehicle. Power remains in reserve for situations that require full-throttle application, while in the majority of situations, low speed increases fuel efficiency by up to 10%, decreases noise by up to 40%, and lowers engine vibration by 20%.

"The low speed system is easy for equipment manufacturers to engineer into their equipment," Buszkiewicz said. "It's a great example of thinking outside the box to create a practical solution that enhances customer value."

The benefits of low speed operation are compelling enough that Ferris has installed the system on its 30-hp Vanguard BIG BLOCK-powered IS2000Z and IS3100Z zero-turn mowers.

"We immediately recognized the value of the low speed system to fuel efficiency and reduced noise," said Bob Laurin, director of research and development for Ferris. "Unlike many fuel efficiency technologies, which add significant cost to the product, low speed operation adds virtually no cost, but continues to add to the bottom line throughout the life of the machine. Plus, the benefits of a quieter, smoother running machine enhances the customer experience."

— Matt Gersib, Public Relations Counsel, Swanson Russell Associates

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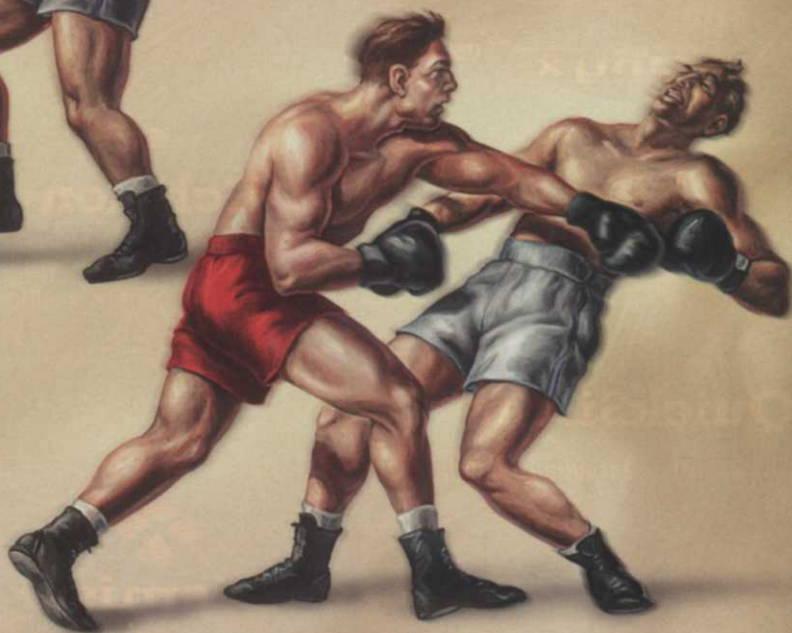
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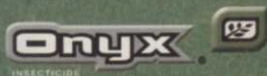
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LM Reports

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Kubota

Kubota's Super Mini Series engine models D902 and Z602 meet EPA Tier II requirements with increased power and low noise and vibration. These models share basic configurations with their predecessors and have increased bore and stroke. Water pump capacity is increased to enhance temperature regulation around the pistons and both models feature a new cooling water channel between the bores.

Contact Kubota Engine America at www.kubotaengine.com



Honda

The GX35 mini 4-stroke engine is Honda's most powerful engine for handheld applications. The 35.8-cc GX35's oil-immersed timing belt and overhead-cam architecture incorporate the valve train into the oil reservoir. This reduces the size and weight, making it comparable to a competitive two-stroke engine in those areas. The GX35 delivers powerful output across a wide range of operating speeds with ample low-speed torque. This reduces noise and operator fatigue, while increasing fuel economy and decreasing emissions.

Contact Honda at 770/497-6400 or www.honda-engines.com

Subaru

Subaru's EX40 overhead cam engine is the largest model in its line of high performance air-cooled, 4-cycle EX Series engines. Delivering a maximum output of 14 hp, the EX40 uses chain-driven overhead cam technology,



ogy, offers more power, easier starting and quieter operation than competitive engines. The EX40's intake and exhaust valves are positioned to offer lower resistance for the air/fuel mixture flow, thus optimizing engine performance. The EX40 meets both CARB and EPA Tier 3 emission standards.

Contact Subaru Robin America at 800/277-6246 or www.subarupower.com

Caterpillar

The Cat C2.2 is a 4-cylinder, turbocharged compact diesel engine with air-to-air after-cooling rated at 66 bhp at 2,800 rpm with a peak torque of 153.4 lb/ft at 1,800 rpm. The C2.2 engine meets existing Tier 3/Stage III emission standards for North America and is designed as a solid core engine platform to tackle future emissions requirements. Much of the C2.2's compact design comes from a new, side-mounted turbocharger and from a redesigned cooling system. Other options include a choice of high or low fan positions, a special low noise fan and electronic controlled governing.

Contact Caterpillar at 888/OWN-A-CAT or www.cat.com

Tanaka

Tanaka's PF-4000 Purefire Two-Stroke Utility Engine features an excellent power-to-weight ratio. Like all Tanaka engines, it is built with high quality engine components for long life and quick and easy starting. The engine is both EPA Phase 2 and CARB Tier 2 compliant. Features of the engines include: chrome cylinder plating, 40-cc displacement, 2.2 maximum hp, 1,000 fl. oz. fuel capacity and 8.2 lbs. engine weight. Compact,

lightweight and powerful, the

PF-4000 allows for multi-position operation

Contact Tanaka at 253/333-1200 or tanaka-powerequipment.com



continued on page 99

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LM Reports

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Kawasaki

Kawasaki's two new big-power V-twin engines are available for zero-turn mowers up to 72-in. deck width: the 34-hp FX921V and the 37-hp FX1000V. These engines are compact, 90° V-twins with a displacement of 999 cc's. They feature hemispherical combustion chambers and three valves per cylinder, with Kawasaki's advanced, overhead v-valve technology that provides low emissions, high power and smooth operation. The engines provide greater power with cleaner emissions and better fuel efficiency, meeting current and future emissions standards.

Contact Kawasaki at 800/433-5640 or www.kawpowr.com



Yanmar

Yanmar introduced the "MINIMAX" series diesel engine for lawn and garden equipment, small agricultural machines, utility vehicles and compact generators. The 3TNM68 model is a 784-cc, 3-cylinder, Tier IV compliant engine utilizing Yanmar's proprietary indirect injection technology to achieve low fuel consumption and low emissions levels. The engine block for this ultra compact and high performance power plant employs Yanmar's latest structural technology to achieve low vibration, noise and size.

Contact Yanmar America at 847/541-1900 or www.yanmar.com



Isuzu

Isuzu Commercial Truck of America's two 2007 emissions-standard-compliant diesel engines, the 4H and 6H, have been certification by the Environmental Protection Agency and California Air Resources Board to meet government-mandated emissions standards. To reduce nitrogen oxide levels, the 4H and 6H engines use an advanced Exhaust Gas Recirculation system and a variable geometry turbocharger. To reduce particulate matter emissions, a ceramic honeycomb channel Diesel Particulate Filter was created to capture sulfate particles and soot. Exhaust gases are directed through the channels and a porous material, which traps the particulates.

Contact Isuzu at www.isuzudieselengine.com



Cummins

Cummins' next-generation QSB6.7 engine with a fully integrated air intake to exhaust after treatment system meets U.S. EPA Tier 4 Interim and European Stage IIIB off-highway emissions regulations slated for January 2011. Cummins clean diesel technology enables the Tier 4 QSB6.7 engine system to achieve a 90% reduction in particulate matter and a 45% reduction in oxides of nitrogen. In addition it increases Tier 3 power output from 275 hp to a new top rating of 300 hp for Tier 4. By combining exhaust gas recirculation together with a high pressure common rail fuel system, the QSB6.7's fuel consumption to be reduced by up to 5% compared to Tier 3.

Contact Cummins at 800/DIESELS or www.everytime.cummins.com

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LM Reports

Briggs & Stratton

The Vanguard BIG BLOCK V-twin engines high-horsepower, air-cooled commercial power-plants line includes horizontal shaft models in the 25- to 35-hp range, and vertical shaft models in the 30- to 36-hp range. The Overhead Valve design provides superior balance and low vibration, while cast iron cylinder sleeves, an industrial-grade solenoid shift starter motor and a fully-pressurized oil lubrication system with spin-on filter ensure commercial-grade durability.

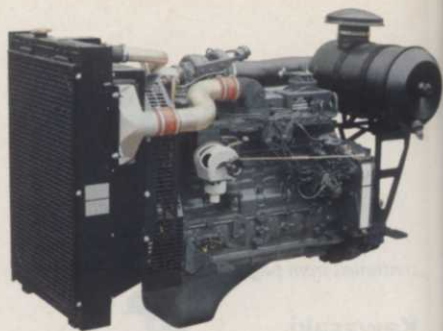
Contact Briggs & Stratton Commercial Power at 414/259-5333 or www.commercialpower.com



Kohler

Kohler's Command PRO 40-hp engine — available in horizontal and vertical-shaft configurations — provides more power and a new design that provides unmatched serviceability and extends maintenance intervals. It is certified for both the new EPA Tier 3 and CARB emissions requirements. The new engines target a range of commercial and industrial applications, including turf mowers, generators and pumps. This gasoline engine really shines with its healthy displacement, 999 cc with a dry weight of 132 lbs (horizontal shaft) and 127 lbs (vertical shaft).

Contact Kohler Engines at 800/544-2444 or www.KohlerEngines.com



Iveco Motors

Iveco's NEF series diesel engines have power outputs from 99-235 hp to meet the needs of any irrigation pump application. Their design allows a long oil change interval, resulting in lower maintenance costs, and meet current EPA emission regulations. Models come in 4- and 6-cylinder configurations.

Contact Iveco Motors of North America at 630/260-4226 or visit www.ivecomotors.com

John Deere

John Deere Power Systems offers Tier 3/ Stage III A certified PowerTech E family of off-highway diesel engines that provide improved performance over their Tier 2/Stage II counterparts. The lineup includes four displacement options: The 6.8L, 140 hp – 200 hp; the 4.5L, 85 hp – 140 hp; the 3.0L, 65 hp – 99 hp; and the 2.4L, 60 hp – 80 hp. Both the EPA and the EU have certified the PowerTech E 6.8L and 4.5L engines. The PowerTech E boasts the same or higher peak torque, more low-speed torque, better transient-response time and fuel economy.

Contact John Deere Power Systems at 800/JD-ENGINE or www.JohnDeere.com/jdpower

Case

The features of today's Case engines, including the 3.2-liter engine trace back to the Case and Cummins joint venture, called the Consolidated Diesel Co. This design has been updated by a new engine alliance, which includes Case, Cummins and Iveco. Many of the successful design features of CDC engines have also been passed to the 3.2-liter engine including: Parent Metal Block Design, an engine without liners with greater structural integrity in a compact design, the coolant is closer to the cylinder for more even heat extraction, minimizes cavitation erosion and coolant leaks, 40% fewer parts to fail and replace and provides simplified maintenance.

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OUTMANEUVER THE COMPETITION WITH

BY KEN KRIZNER

High-production mowing means cutting grass as quickly and as efficiently as possible. It's also a plus if the mower can be used for multiple tasks in other climates and conditions. Out-front mowers can do this. They're multi-dimensional units that have year-round uses.

Landscape contractors who have large properties to maintain, or a contract with municipalities and other governmental entities where there are several pieces of property to maintain, can benefit from using an out-front mower.

"The bigger the property, the more adaptable the out-front mower can be," says Gilbert Peña, commercial segment strategy manager for John Deere in Cary, NC. "If a contractor is geared toward more full-service capabilities, rather than just mowing, the better the likelihood that an investment in an out-front mower will give a better return because of its usability, flexibility and adaptability."

Out-front mower decks range in size but most landscape pros favor units with 60- or 72-in. decks. The out-front deck provides reach and sideways deck maneuvering, accessing more places without significantly reducing speed.

"You can swing the deck right under a shrub or fence and kind of 'sashay' sideways until the area is completely trimmed out," says R.A. Stucky, marketing director for The Grasshopper Co. of Moundridge, KS. "You can even take a

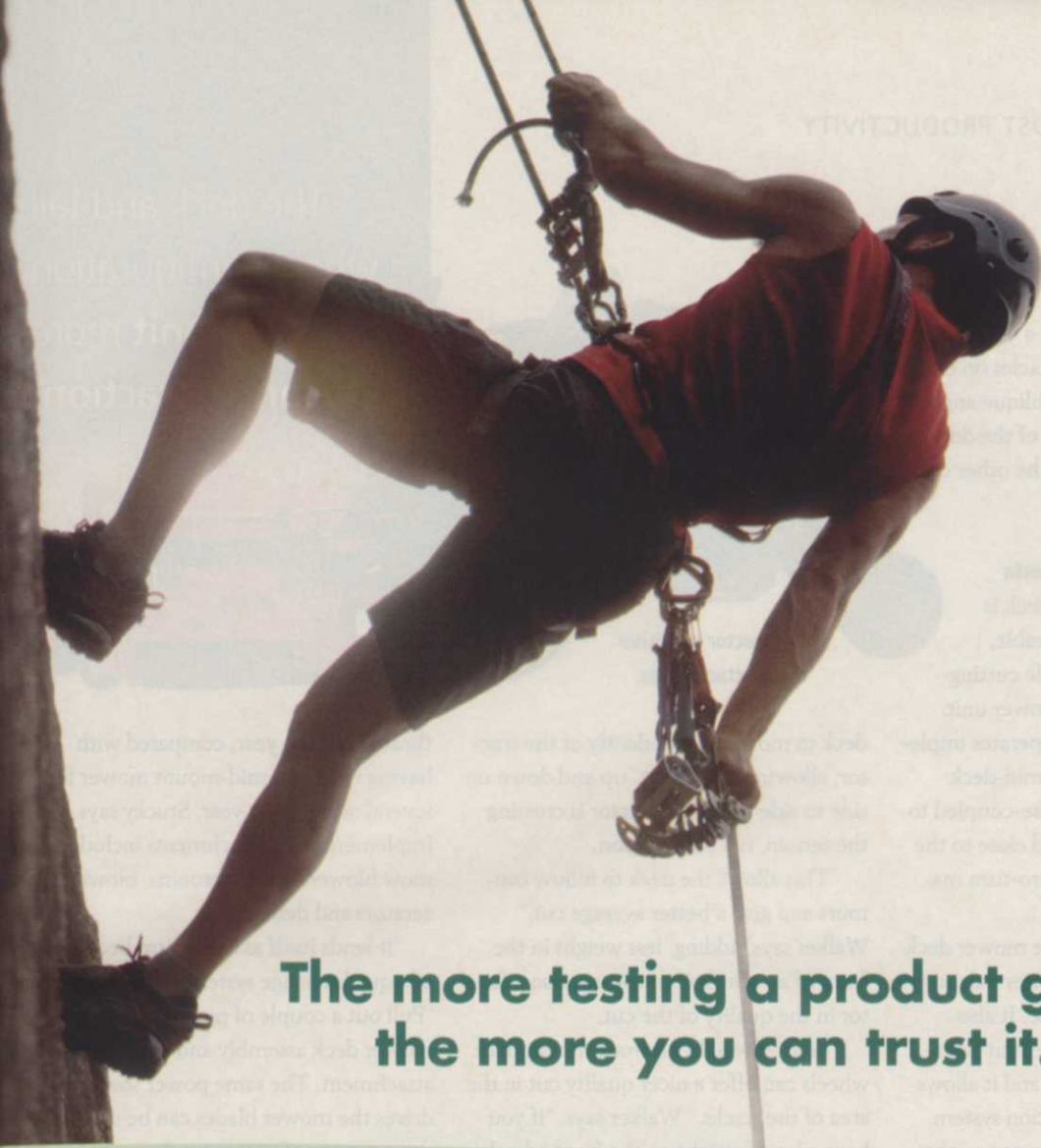
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out-front mowers

The front deck of these units allows for a wider reach, reducing the need to trim mowed sections.



Operators get a better view of what they're cutting with out-front decks.



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continued from page 102

52- or 61-in. deck through a 48- or 50-in. gate if there are no obstacles on either side. Just approach at an oblique angle, and when the front corner of the deck clears the gate, just swing the other corner in and drive through."

Closed-coupled implements

Because the front-mount deck is removable and interchangeable, contractors can use multiple cutting deck sizes with the same power unit.

The out-front mower operates implements much better than a mid-deck mower because they're close-coupled to the power unit and situated close to the drive wheels, preserving zero-turn maneuverability, Stucky says.

The configuration of the mower deck and tail wheels provides better balance and traction, even in reverse. It also lightens the footprint of the unit with better weight distribution, and it allows the use of a vacuum collection system without the addition of counterweights.

"A benefit is being able to see what you're mowing as you are coming up to it," Stucky says. "With the cutting action in front of you, there is unrestricted vision to monitor trimming and mowing."

This is especially beneficial when trimming or going around fence posts, flower beds and other obstacles, says Jerry Reineking, engineering leader, Commercial Ride-on Products, for Ariens Co. in Brillion, WI.

"When riding a mid-mount mower, you're always glancing down and losing track of where you're cutting," he says.

Quality of the cut

Bob Walker, president of Walker Manufacturing in Fort Collins, CO, claims the quality of the cut from an out-front mower is better than a mid-mount mower. He says the ability of the mower



The tractor can drive many attachments.

The deck and tail wheel configuration gives the unit more balance, traction.

deck to move independently of the tractor, allowing it to "float" up and down or side to side while the tractor is crossing the terrain, is a main reason.

"This allows the deck to follow contours and give a better average cut," Walker says, adding, less weight in the front of an out-front mower is also a factor in the quality of the cut.

"Lighter weight on front-mount deck wheels can offer a nicer quality cut in the area of the tracks," Walker says. "If you have a lot of weight on the front wheels, you tend to make [deeper] tracks. You are asking your mower deck, as it comes along behind the wheels, to pick up the grass and make a nice cut. On some of the softer-type grasses, that makes a difference in the finished cut."

There is also the safety factor when mowing on uneven slopes. The out-front mower ride is better on rough or uneven ground because there are five or six wheels addressing the terrain, improving handling and weight distribution.

"The machine has a large footprint. It's wider, longer and has a longer wheel base," Peña says. "It's a safer machine because you have more ground coverage."

One machine, multiple functions

Because out-front mowers are multi-dimensional units, contractors can get more production from the same machine

throughout the year, compared with having to store a mid-mount mower for several months per year, Stucky says. Implements and attachments include snow blowers, rotary brooms, blowers, aerators and dethatchers.

"It lends itself as a platform because of a quick-change system," Walker says. "Pull out a couple of pins, slide off the mower deck assembly and slide on the attachment. The same power shaft that drives the mower blades can be used to drive a range of power implements."

Decks are also interchangeable during mowing. Out-front mowers have grass collection capabilities, but can quickly convert to mulching.

There is also a financial upside to an out-front mower, Stucky says. He estimates that contractors can save at least 50% of the trimming, perhaps more, depending on a landscape's layout.

"In situations with a lot of trimming, the out-front mower does more work in the same amount of time," he says. "It eliminates the need to retrace mowed areas with a string trimmer. Trimming while you mow eliminates extra two-cycle engines, and it allows the reassignment of workers into more productive activities, saving on overall labor costs." **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer based in Cleveland. Contact him at info@landscapemanagement.com.



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Contact Bayer Environmental Science at 800/843-1702 or www.bayerprocentral.com



Power Pod

C&S Turf Care Equipment's new Turf Tracker Power Pod gives lawn care professionals the versatility to perform multiple services for their customers. The Power Pod has a 100-lb.-capacity spreader and coming soon is an aerator and a leaf blower. C&S will be continuously adding new options, allowing operators to perform services more efficiently while they ride along.

Contact C&S Turf Care Equipment at 800/872-7050 or www.csturfequip.com

Management software

New and improved management software from Adkad Technologies Inc. makes it easy for landscaping and lawn care companies

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
BACKHOE

Rockland Smart Thumb

The Smart Thumb by Rockland Manufacturing offers unique features that other backhoe thumbs can't. Because it is designed for backhoes with extendable inner sticks, the Smart Thumb requires no retrofitting for a hydraulic cylinder or plumbing, control valve or cables, which are all required for standard backhoe thumbs. Instead, the Smart Thumb is powered by the inner stick on the backhoe boom, which allows it to move like a hydraulic thumb, providing quick, positive grip from the bucket curl and stick extension. A quick-mount feature makes the attachment ideal for contractors, municipalities and rental companies to install whenever the application calls for it. Once a mounting pad is initially installed, the quick-mount allows the Smart Thumb to be removed or installed in less than two minutes.

Contact Rockland Manufacturing Co. at 814/623-1115 or www.rocklandmfg.com

to do their books. Groundskeeper Pro is cutting-edge software, featuring scheduling, routing, billing, customer account maintenance, job estimating, customizable customer lists, tracking business expenses and much more. Groundskeeper Pro allows business owners to look more professional and saves time so Green Industry companies can focus on growing their businesses. The software allows managers to enter up to 10,000 customers, invoice for regular repeating services and estimates, invoice for special services and time and materials, print or e-mail invoices and gain easy access to customer account history.

Contact Adkad Technologies Inc. at 800/586-4683 or www.Adkad.com

Portable timeclock

Exakttime introduced PocketClock/GPS, software that transforms a Windows Mobile PDA into a portable timeclock that uses GPS technology to record the exact location of workers as they clock in and out. Designed for mobile work crews in industries including construction, landscaping, building

maintenance, agriculture and health care, PocketClock/GPS lets crews clock in and out at dozens of jobsites each week. The PocketClock/GPS provides assurance that the crew is at the correct location when it clocks in and when it clocks out.

Contact Exakttime at 888/788-8463 or www.exakttime.com

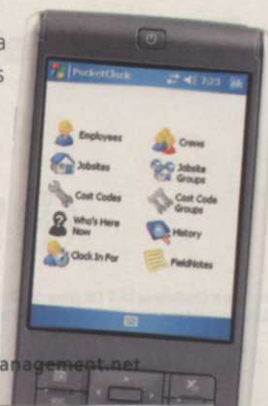
GPS Service Fleet Manager

Qualcomm Inc.'s OmniVision Metro service offering, Service Fleet Manager, meets the needs of local service-based businesses that are centered in metropolitan areas and have mobile resources. It has industry-specific capabilities and features such as detailed maps and reports that provide a snapshot of an entire fleet for improved logistical planning. Service Fleet Manager provides customers with visibility into their mobile assets

through management dashboards driven by data from in-vehicle global positioning system hardware. This is designed to provide improved workforce and asset management, routing and scheduling.

Contact Qualcomm at 858/587-1121 or www.qualcomm.com

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Products

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Ditch Witch drillers

Ditch Witch upgraded two of the company's horizontal directional drilling (HDD) machines: the JT4020 Mach 1 and JT4020 All Terrain. The rubber-tracked JT4020 Mach 1 features a 15-ft. drill pipe, and touch-sensitive, variable-speed, electric-over-hydraulic controls that minimize operator effort, with thrust/pullback and rotation controlled by a



single lever. The JT4020 All Terrain features as a 2-pipe rock-drilling system and an integrated electronic system with cruise control. The 190-hp JT4020 All Terrain can efficiently install utilities underground at long range — up to 1,000 ft.

Contact Ditch Witch at 800/654-6481 or www.ditchwitch.com

No sneezing

Airborne is the herbal health formula that boosts your immune system to help your body combat germs. The new Airborne Seasonal has a blend of vitamins and nutrients that promotes normal histamine levels to prevent sneezing and allergic reactions when working outdoors. Airborne Seasonal comes in a citrus blend flavor. Drop the tablet in water, drink it and breathe easy.

Contact Airborne at 800/590-9794 or www.airbornehealth.com

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
TRENCHER



Toro TRX walk-behind trenchers

The Toro Co. introduces the TRX-15 and TRX-19 tracked trenchers. Tracks and operator-friendly controls make these gas-powered machines more productive and easier to learn and operate than typical wheeled trenchers. The low-profile tracked design of the Toro TRX models provides a low center of gravity and a large footprint for increased stability on side hills and smooth operation on uneven terrain. TRX models have a light footprint, with ground pressure as low as 4.1 psi. Each model trenches up to 36 in. deep.

Contact Toro at 800/Dig-Toro or www.toro.com/trx

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Products

continued from page 108

Postmaster & Slab Blaster

Danuser Postmaster can drive up to a 14-ft.-tall wood or steel post depending upon model. The machine can drive a 3-in. to 8-in. diameter wood or steel post. The hammer weight is 275 lbs.; additional weight can be added for a total of 700 lbs. It can drive up to 60 posts an hour, and needs at least 12 gpm and 2,000 PSI for hydraulic requirements. Its grapple option picks up the post from the ground without additional hydraulics or controls. The Slab Blaster can break up to 9-in. thick concrete with reinforcement. The hammer weight is 400 lbs.; additional weight can be added for a total of 700 lbs.

Contact Danuser at 573/642-2246 or www.danuser.com

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
TRENCHER



Quick trench

The Groundsaw from E-Z Trench is ideal for installing irrigation, gas lines, pipe and more with minimal turf damage. It can dig a trench 13 in. deep and 2.5 in. wide at a rate of 20 feet per minute. The Groundsaw is small enough to fit into standard gates and weighs only 250 lbs. The model EZ9100 has a 6.5-hp Honda with a "wet clutch" transmission, which virtually eliminates the frequent maintenance associated with belt-driven equipment. Heavy-duty carbide cutting bits will slice right through hard soils and roots.

Contact E-Z Trench at 843/756-6444 or www.eztrench.com

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
BACKHOE



New Holland loader backhoes

New Holland Construction's new B95B and B95BTC loader backhoes feature a sloped, flip-up hood for easier engine access and increased visibility and a curved boom design for additional clearance when

transporting. The curved boom provides lower transport height and increased breakout force. The machine's loader also offers superior breakout force. This, combined with the machine's new backhoe features and increased horsepower, ensures maximum productivity. The flip-up hood is designed with ease-of-use in mind, allowing the widest opening angle and low-effort opening and closing for easy daily maintenance without having to lift the loader arm. Additionally, the exhaust and muffler system reduce exhaust vibrations and extend the life of the muffler.

Contact New Holland Construction at 866/726-3396 or construction.newholland.com

Permeable paver

Oldcastle Architectural Inc. unveiled the latest addition to its BELGARD Environmental series' line of permeable concrete products: Subterra Stone, an environmentally responsible, durable, natural looking permeable paver for residential driveway, walkway and patio and light commercial applications. An

environmentally and economically friendly alternative to traditional paver products that merely allow water to run-off, Subterra Stone uses a 9.5% void ratio, serving as a drain in the center of the unit, allowing rainwater to drain through the paver into native sub soils. This reduces the impact on the environment and storm-water management systems while recharging local aquifers.

Contact Oldcastle Architectural Inc. at 877/BELGARD, or www.oldcastle.com



New suspension system

Bobcat Company has developed a new compact track loader suspension system using all-steel components to increase operator comfort without sacrificing durability. The new roller suspension system is available as an option on the Bobcat T320 compact track loader and will be added to other Bobcat compact track loader models later this year. The Bobcat roller suspension system provides greater operator comfort by minimizing vibration at the ground. The rollers are suspended by high-strength steel leaf springs to reduce vibration. The system increases operator comfort by requiring less steering lever effort to turn the loader. The track idlers on the Bobcat roller suspension system have been raised, making the compact track loader easier to turn.

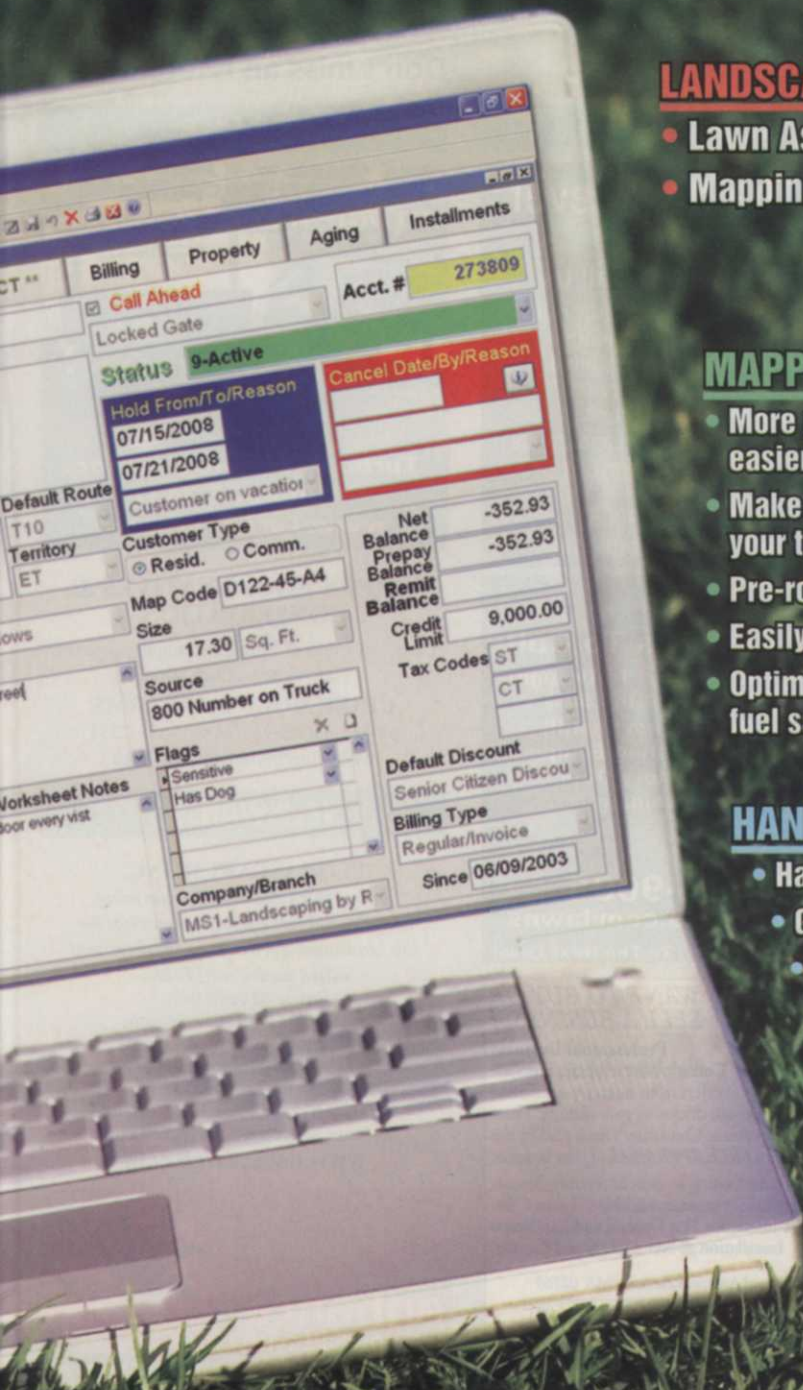
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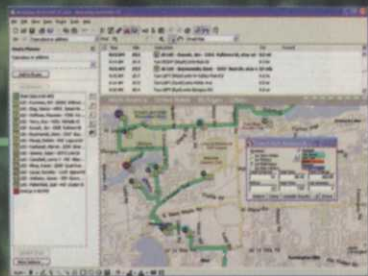


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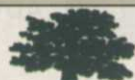
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Make every day count

BY MARTY WHITFORD / Editor-in-Chief

Just a few days after Thanksgiving, he was given a death sentence. Doctors told Adam Gaspar, my friend since the first grade and a 41-year-old father of six ages 21 to 10, he has a glioblastoma multiforme — a grade IV malignant brain tumor. In early December, a surgeon removed 80% of a “daughter” tumor in Adam’s cerebellum, but it was too risky to remove the rest or to touch the primary tumor invading his brain stem.



Adam Gaspar and I have been friends since the first grade, but we're closer now than ever before.

Adam’s waging a war for his life — and his family. He’s starving the tumors of sugars and combating the cancer with vitamin therapy. He also has undergone a rigorous radiation and chemotherapy regimen.

Forever friends

I’ll never forget the day I became friends with Adam. It was show-and-tell day, and my mom had asked me to tell a whopper. As I stood before my fellow first-graders holding one of my dad’s boots, I told them the legendary lumberjack Paul Bunyan had stopped by our house and forgotten his footwear.

I shared a few tales of Bunyan, the classic big man, who American folklore purports being of such gargantuan size and titanic strength that he and his big blue ox Babe plowed the Grand Canyon. I sold my mom’s story the best I could, but before I could take my seat, Adam called my bluff.

“That can’t be Paul Bunyan’s boot. My dad’s shoes are bigger than that,” Adam argued.

I was not pleased with this naysayer, but what

was I to do? I was the smallest kid in the class, and Adam was the tallest. Realizing I couldn’t beat him, I joined him. That was 35 years ago.

Standing taller than ever

As fate would have it, Adam has become my — and many others’ — real Paul Bunyan. Adam stands 6-ft. 8-in. and has helped create a few worldly wonders of his own — the most towering being the unshakable love he shares with his wife, Ann, and their little giants Nick, Monika and Gabi (my goddaughters), Juli, Emily and Adam Jr.

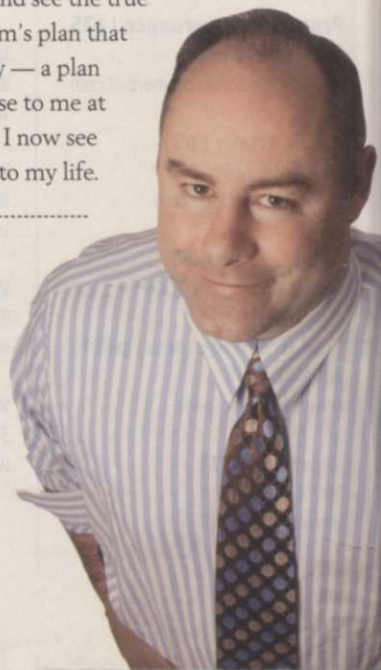
Adam’s lying flat in bed a lot these days, but he has never stood taller to me, his family or the thousands of others he has touched and helped. We’re all fervently pulling and praying for him.

I’ve learned so much about life, love and laughter the past few months — thanks to Adam. Two of my many take-home lessons are that we need to cherish every day at work and at home, and really pull together during times of adversity.

All of us are here for a limited time. If God calls Adam home sooner than we hope, we need to remember His plan is both beautiful and mysterious. More will be revealed. It took decades for me to step back and see the true beauty of my mom’s plan that show-and-tell day — a plan that made no sense to me at the time, but one I now see brought Adam into my life.

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