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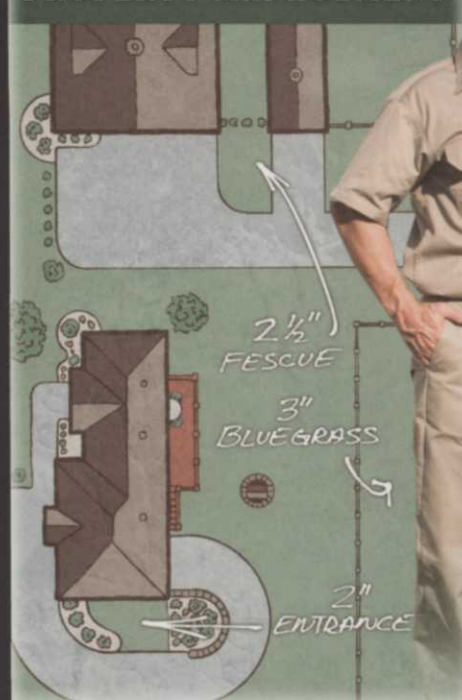
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Contents

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FEBRUARY 2008 / ISSUE #2 / VOLUME 47



Business

OPERATIONS ► MANAGEMENT ► MARKETING

- 10 6 trends for '08 and beyond**
If you want to be 21st century, you talk green.
BY RON HALL
- 12 Run scared and stay sharp**
Running scared helps you keep your business sharp, avoid surprises, anticipate problems and keep you on top of your game.
BY BRUCE WILSON
- 16 EBITDA and why it matters**
The owner's role is to grow the right kinds of revenue, build the management team and install business systems.
BY KEVIN KEHOE



- 18 In the Know**
Cipriano Landscape Design; Problem Solver; Southeastern water restrictions; Legally Speaking; Landscape planning; Intelligent irrigation; Project EverGreen brochure
- 28 Lawn care: Days of future past**
The professional lawn application industry's future remains intimately tied to a half century of innovation, growth . . . and controversy.
BY RON HALL

- 40 Add-on Biz: Putting greens**
An interlocking panel system makes installation easier, faster and a great way to increase the bottom line.
BY DANIEL G. JACOBS



- 44 Why a professional proposal matters**
An attractive and accurate proposal allows you to get your foot in the door. Then it's up to you to sell the job.
BY WAYNE VOLZ
- 48 Small business protection strategies**
Planning and professional guidance make the difference in the success and long-term survival of family businesses.
BY DANIEL G. JACOBS

COVER PHOTO COURTESY: JOHN DEERE LANDSCAPES

Contents

Design/Build

PROJECTS ▶ PROCESS ▶ CONSTRUCTION



52 Project Portfolio

GCS turned a 4.2-acre California estate into a landscape that can comfortably entertain 250 people in an elegant setting.

54 Harrah's Atlantic City

It was a pretty safe bet a \$1 million plantscaping would be the showcase of this casino's remodeling.
BY NANCY TAMOSAITIS

60 Light up their night

Nightscaping gives clients pleasure when the sun goes down, summer or winter.
BY JANET AIRD

Resources

PRODUCTS ▶ EVENTS ▶ FYI

89 Products

94 Ad & Editorial Index

96 Winners: Mountaineer Lawn Care Inc.

Giving back is a way to bring everyone together.
BY KEN KRIZNER



54

Technology

RESEARCH ▶ EQUIPMENT ▶ CHEMICALS

62 The dirty dozen of turfgrass weeds

Weeds are bad, but some are SuperBad.
BY SCOTT MCELROY



68 Get A Grip

Trimmer heads designed for really fast loading are also easy on the stress load.
BY ALLEN SPENCE

70 InfoTech

With the information age in full swing, one of the biggest productivity problems we have as professionals is too much information.
BY TYLER WHITAKER

72 LM Reports: Spreaders & sprayers



83 It's raining opportunity

An automated rainwater collection system is a new service that many of your customers will want
BY WILLIAM FELDMAN

86 Bird's eye view

Overhead imagery can provide landscape maintenance and lawn care companies with a more accurate tool for measuring and pricing jobs.
BY JACK KOZEN

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Remember your wingmen

The dangers a fighter pilot faces in combat may be a bit more daunting than a business owner. But former F-16 pilot Rob "Waldo" Waldman explained there are a lot of similarities between the two, including the importance of relying on your wingmen, the people around you who support your business everyday.

» Readers respond

With the dramatically rising prices of fertilizer, **are you raising your rates for lawn care applications?** If so, by how much per each application?



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» Overheard

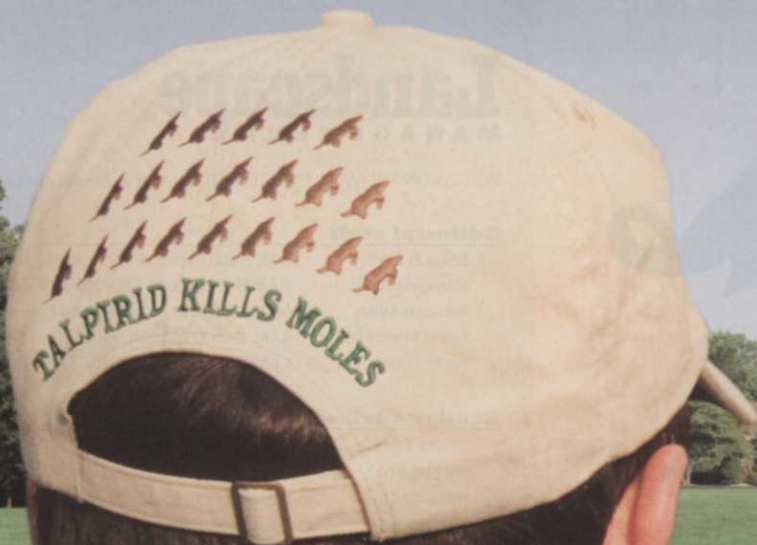
"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got."

— Charles Hall, Ellison Chair in International Floriculture at Texas A&M University discussing how some companies approach business.

» Special issue

Continue to follow *Landscape Management's* special winter/spring series focusing on **the future of lawn care**. In March find out where industry suppliers see the lawn care industry headed. In later issues we'll tackle sustainability, business conditions and other issues critical to lawn care.

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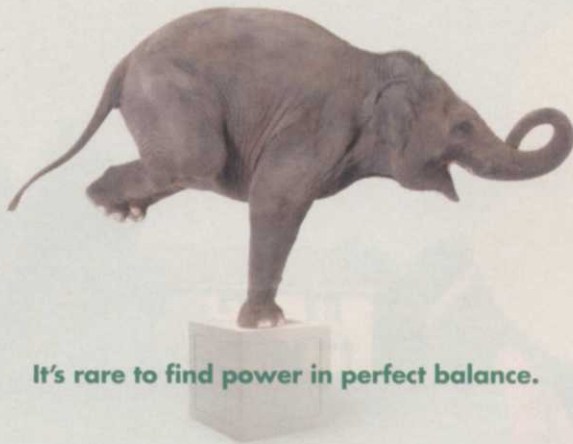
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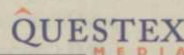
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6 trends for '08 and beyond

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

We're rubbing our crystal ball tenderly because we don't want to end up with a handful of broken glass. The picture is not as clear as we would like. Even so, we make out the broader outlines of trends that will define the landscape/lawn service industry this season and into the near future. Here are six of them.

1. "Green" is the thing. A generation ago the buzzwords were "natural" and "organic." These words, as nebulous and shop worn as they are, still pop up. But if we want to be 21st century we talk "green." We're all about "green," right? We haven't been very good about getting the word out though. Let's do a better job of getting the word out.

2. Wiser water use. Droughts crop up every year somewhere in the United States. They result in watering restrictions and bans aimed at landscapes and lawns. Authorities target our industry when they see poorly maintained and malfunctioning systems and wasted water? And, equally often, just because landscape irrigation is so visible. Let's embrace wise water use in '08, and work closer with the people that make the water rules.

3. Scrutiny of chemical products. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) has taken on too importance within our industry. It's a small part of providing clients with healthy and beautiful turf and ornamentals, and functional landscapes. We're in the "green" business (healthy soils, adapted plant material and appropriate care), not the pest management business. Let's talk Plant Health Care, not IPM.

4. Continuing consolidation. Brickman, ValleyCrest and Davey have been making strategic acquisitions in recent years. That trend will continue, but don't rule out a more dramatic roll up of businesses similar to the late 1990s. The time is ripe with many landscape/lawn service business owners, now in their late 40s, 50s and 60s, ready to listen to offers. That's just part of the picture. Consolidation will continue among suppliers and in the supply chain, as well. It will accelerate as our industry matures.

5. Fake grass is hot. The newest types of synthetic turf are dominating the sports field industry. More than 800 new artificial turf fields go annually. Many replace grass fields. Contractor/installers are now targeting parks, commercial properties and home lawns. They're telling customers that synthetic looks and feels like real grass, but it never needs watering, mowing, fertilizing or pest controls — no maintenance. Many property owners find that message attractive. Synthetic installations will continue to grow at a double-digit pace into the next decade.

6. Mechanization. The introduction of compact and mini construction equipment a generation ago gave the industry great tools to reduce labor. With the availability of low-cost labor in question, take a harder look at machinery to replace hand labor. Let's use technology.

We'll offer more trends next month. Email me at rhall@questex.com.

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Run scared and stay sharp



BY BRUCE WILSON

Joe Marsh, who some of you may remember, was one of my mentors as I got into the maintenance industry. Many consider Joe one of the founders of the industry as we know it today. One of his philosophies, in which I became a strong believer, was that of "Running Scared."

Just what did that mean to Joe, and what does it mean to me? It is a state of mind that prevents you from becoming complacent. It helps you to be hyper observant. It improves your motivation to be a better listener. It helps keep you on edge and helps you to maintain your edge.

More specifically, it helps you to keep your

business sharp, helps to avoid surprises, helps you to anticipate problems and keeps you on top of your game. It's the fear of getting caught by your competition. It's the fear of losing good employees to a competitor who might gain the edge on you.

It's the fear of losing your best customers. And very pertinent today, it's the fear of what might happen to the economic well being of your company.

By "running scared" you are looking for signs that the good times won't last. You are concerned that as good as you think you are, someone out there might be better. It is the driving force behind continuous

improvement. Never stop learning. Never stop improving, personally and as an organization.

As Joe mentored me, every morning he did a download from the day before with me looking for signs or warnings of problems. I soon learned the meaning and importance of being hyper-observant. When I would download the day's events, Joe would see some things that when he questioned me about them, were warning signs that there may be a problem or turned out to be an early indicator of a problem. At first I didn't see them but I learned quickly because I was driven to be successful. Running scared was a huge advantage.

— 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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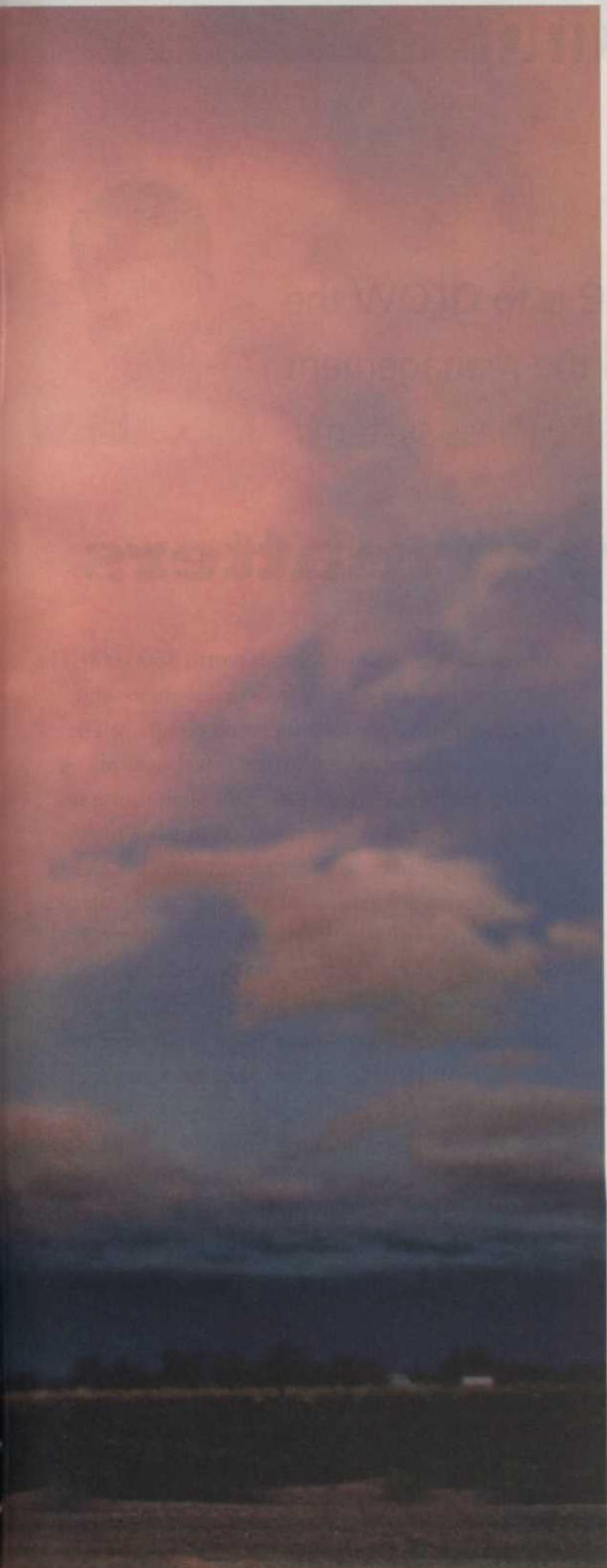
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The owner's role is to grow the right kinds of revenue, build the management team and install business systems.



EBITDA and why it matters

BY KEVIN KEHOE

Your job as an owner is to do things that maximize the valuation of your business. This means adding profit and reducing risk. Sound cryptic? Let me explain. The value of your business is determined by EBITDA plus multiple. EBITDA is short for earnings (net profits), plus interest, taxes, depreciation and owner add backs.

In simplest terms the higher your EBITDA dollars and multiple, the higher your valuation. The basic equation to compute business valuation is:
EBITDA × Multiple = Business Value.

Both EBITDA and the multiple are under your control. You want to increase both as you put together each year's business plan. For example, if your EBITDA is \$100,000 and the multiple you

negotiate is 5, your business is worth \$500,000. The multiple is usually 3 to 6 for a maintenance company, and 1 to 3 for an installation company. The multiple reflects the risk an investor/buyer places on the business's future EBITDA. High multiples reflect lower risk. The factors that justify a high multiple include size (bigger companies get higher multiples), solid management team, history of sales growth, recurring contracts, larger average job size and good business systems and procedures.

Another factor is consistent net profit margins above industry benchmarks. High profit positively affects both variables of the valuation equation. This is critical because the value of your business is ultimately based on what a buyer will pay for it. Your job is to create the best possible story to sell it. Consistent high EBITDA lowers risk increasing the perception of the value for each EBITDA dollar.

How important is this? Let's look at a simple example.

In the third column, see how higher net profit margin affects both the EBITDA and the multiple. The difference in valuation as a result is significant. Look closer; the multiple has the greatest impact on the valuation.

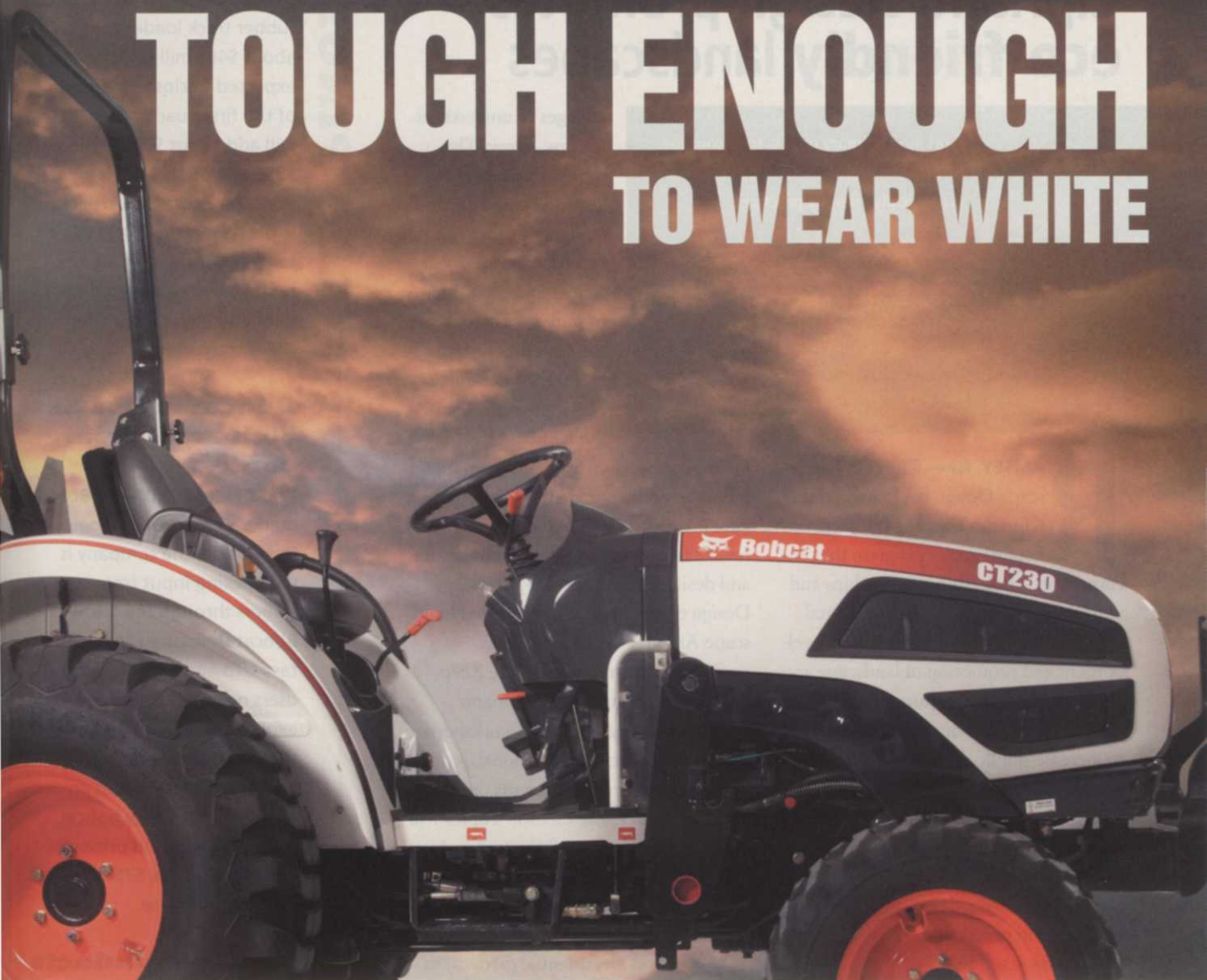
An owner/manager's role should be to (1) grow the right kind of revenues, (2) build a management team and (3) install business systems. Do these three things every year and you will drive consistent net profit margins above industry benchmarks and increase the multiple.

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

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BUSINESS

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Cipriano Design promotes eco-friendly landscapes

Cipriano's primary goal is to encourage New Jersey residents to adopt more ecologically-friendly practices.



RAMSEY, NJ — Cipriano Landscape Design has launched the Cipriano Keeping It Green Foundation, a program that encompasses scholarships, internships and workshops to promote environmental responsibility. Through the study, development and promotion of landscape architecture and horticulture, the Cipriano Keeping It Green Foundation is designed to increase public awareness of current eco-friendly practices and of the Green Industry in general.

"We all have a responsibility to be caretakers of the environment, yet every day we engage in practices that can have serious, long-term ecological consequences," said Chris Cipriano, president of Cipriano Landscape Design. "The only way to conserve and protect our resources is to consciously make better choices."

The Cipriano Foundation will provide a total of \$10,000 in scholarships with a \$2,500 scholarship awarded to four different students from accredited

colleges or universities in New Jersey. The scholarships will be awarded based on the students' academic record, community activities and their desire to pursue a career in the Green Industry.

Internships will also play a pivotal role in the Cipriano Keeping It

Green Foundation. Students from high school to college grade levels will participate in areas such as horticulture on Cipriano's farm, and landscape architecture and design in the Cipriano Landscape Design office, headed by Certified Landscape Architect William Moore.

As a final component to the Keeping It Green Foundation, Cipriano Landscape Design will host workshops designed to educate professionals, community members and students on a wide range of landscaping themes. Topics will encompass everything from mature tree conservation, renewable gardening and water conservation in residential gardens, to recycling old residential landscapes.



[CLIPPINGS]

Terex to acquire ASV for \$488M

GRAND RAPIDS, MN —

Construction equipment manufacturer Terex Corp. agreed to buy ASV Inc., a maker of rubber track loaders, for about \$488 million. The deal, expected to close by the end of the first quarter of 2008, will add about \$220 million to \$250 million to Terex's annual sales. Terex officials expect to triple ASV's revenue in three to five years by tapping the rental channel, international sales and new markets for ASV's technology.

Bobcat unleashes 50th anniversary contest

WEST FARGO, ND — As Bobcat marks 50 years of equipment innovation, the company is still seeking input from customers through the "How Bobcat Unleashed Me Contest." To enter, equipment users need to write an essay explaining how Bobcat helped them perform better, smarter and faster, then fill out an entry form at www.bobcat.com/50. The grand prize winner will receive a \$75,000 Bobcat gift certificate.

U.S. Lawn inducts Hall of Famers

ORLANDO, FL — This year's U.S. Lawns Hall of Fame Awards were presented to franchisees' Jeff Dajani of U.S. Lawns in Ashburn, VA and Patsy and Phil Gay of U.S. Lawns' Tuscaloosa and Birmingham locations. These two premier franchisees were selected from over 180 franchisees.



BEFORE

Problem A large lake is a central feature of this newly constructed residential community. Canadian geese have been drawn to the lake for food and protection. A few geese would be fine, but hundreds are attracted each day. The geese have destroyed the surrounding turf and their droppings have made walking the paths around the lake impossible. What would you recommend?

The cause

Unfortunately, this is an all too common problem in many communities. Most communities want to have turf right to the edge of the water. This traditional look is beautiful, but the design also allows the geese to easily run to the water for protection when threatened.

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

Solution

If the client demands the traditional look, you may want to hire a company that uses dogs to chase the geese away from the site. There are also taste and visual marking products that can be applied to the turf to make it less appealing to the geese. These methods may work temporarily and can become expensive in the long run.

A method that has met with long-term success is altering the environment surrounding the lake to make it less desirable for the geese. First, understand that the geese are near the pond for food and protection. Geese know predators won't go into the water because they fear drowning. The geese won't go into areas with tall grass or brush because they fear predators may be lurking in those areas.

Allow a 20 to 30 foot swath of vegetation to grow tall around the pond. The site instantly becomes less desirable for the geese. Now when a predator approaches the geese have less time to run and fly away. If you go in this direction, the look of the property will be dramatically different. You will need to clearly communicate this information to your client.



AFTER

Water restrictions dry up Southeastern business

CHARLOTTE, NC — From Texas to Florida, and up the East Coast to North Carolina, the Green Industry is being hit hard by local water restrictions. Though drought conditions have persisted in many areas, most notably Georgia, landscapers and nursery owners say the restrictions are unfairly targeting their businesses.

"I think there is a real need to conserve water, but I also think it's important to conserve inside the house. The majority of water use is inside the house," said Daniel Currin, representing the Green Industry Council, in an article from the local *News-Argus* newspaper.

According to reports from WCNC in Charlotte, due to the drought and ensuing restrictions, revenues in the area are down 40% and layoffs are up 30%.

And with customers' lawns turning brown, there's little incentive for them to pay for landscaping and lawn care services.

"They [customers] look back and say 'Why are we paying all this money to have a company maintain a lawn and the yard deteriorates?'" landscaper Lawrence Toney told the news station.

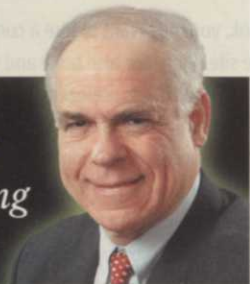
Suggested solutions included a proposal to the Charlotte city council that would allow once-a-week watering.

Other suggestions included better water conservation inside the home and studying the state's water infrastructure to find improvements to the quality and availability of water.

Meanwhile, in some areas of Georgia that have seen rain, Green Industry officials are calling for a loosening of Level IV water restrictions before it is too late.

Business owners have laid off about a third of the \$3.2 billion industry's 90,000 employees, Wally Pressey, incoming president of the Georgia Green Industry Association, told the *Athens Banner-Herald*. "Local business has dried up; no pun intended," he said.

LEGALLY Speaking



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

Q Some of my clients have been with me for over a decade. Prices have increased, but I haven't changed the contract. Does it matter?

A Yes. Presumably, when you began your business over a decade ago, you set your original price based on what you believed left you with a reasonable profit margin, after deducting expenses. While your customers no doubt appreciate the fact that prices have not increased, there is nothing wrong with increasing the price — provided your contract allows for price adjustments. If it does not, you may want to negotiate an amendment or have new contracts executed with each of your customers which allow for price escalation from year to year. If the current contract runs for a definite term and is not evergreen, you might also just allow it to expire and then send customers a revised agreement. Particularly if your costs may be impacted by fuel expenses, you ought to have the contractual freedom to charge for those expenses. You might also consider having your attorney add a section allowing for specific fuel surcharges aside from price adjustments if conditions warrant.

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.kennmorrislaw.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.

Plan landscaping before construction

The weather is keeping many of us inside. With your family and friends enjoying indoor activities, maybe you are yearning for some more interior space. Home improvement ideas are often hatched this time of year.

Existing landscape should be considered first even before your architect draws up plans. Why? A consulting arborist will point out which trees are tolerant to construction and which ones should be removed. Be inclusive of trees on neighboring properties if they too will be impacted. This is good information to have before talking to your architect.

What you will want to know first:

1. What trees will tolerate the impacts of construction and which ones will not?
2. How close to the trees can you build?
3. What pruning will need to be done to facilitate construction?
4. Are there tree protection ordinances on the books in your community?

In addition to the building itself:

1. Will new utility services be part of your project? Also, this might be a great opportunity to underground your electric, phone and cable lines.
2. Water, sewer and gas lines may also need to be considered. The trenching for these utilities may impact your trees even more than the construction itself.
3. Trees along the front of your home may be owned by your community. Find out about tree ownership before construction begins. If trees (not owned by you) are negatively impacted you may be found financially responsible.

Foresight in planning:

1. If time is on your side an excellent prescription is to cut roots ahead of

time (root pruning) that would be later severed in the construction process. This is an immense aid in the tree recovery process.

2. Remedial care recommendations should be implemented prior to construction. Simple things such as mulching over tree roots or adjusting watering recommendations can make a big difference in tree survivability.
3. Include the pruning and removal work in the construction schedule. Removing trees may be facilitated by scheduling this work before or during the demolition work cutting your project expenses.

Involving a consulting arborist early in the construction planning process will help brand your project for success. Tree care companies often offer consulting services or you may contract directly through a consulting arborist. More information can be found at www.asca-consultants.org.

— Article courtesy of Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care



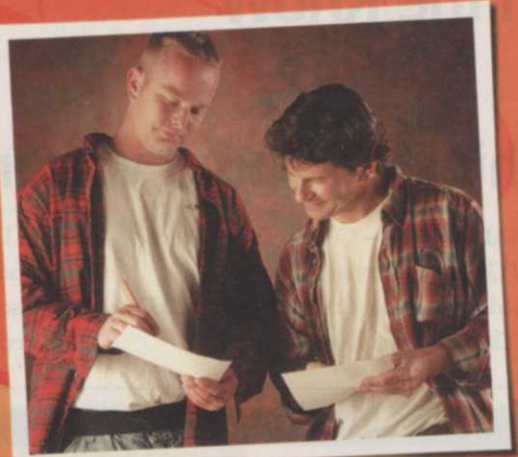
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EMPLOYEE TIMESHEET

NAME: Bill Kemp DATES: 11-15

DAY	START	LUNCH	END	JOB SITE	WORK DONE	HOURS
MON	7:00	1/2	3:30	Brentw.		8
TUE			3:30			8
WED			4:00	↓		8 1/2
THU			4:00	Crestv.		8 1/2
FRI	↓	↓	4:00	↓		8 1/2

Employee Signature: Bill Kemp TOTAL HOURS: 41 1/2



Reality?

Employee Time Card
Displays the total time worked by each employee

Mountain View Landscape

Bill Kemp
Time card for: Monday, Feb. 11, 2008 - Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008

Jobsite Name	Cost Code	2/11	2/12	2/13	2/14	2/15	2/16	2/17	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

Total Regular Hours: 38:53
 Total Overtime Hours: - 0 -
 Total Double Time Hours: - 0 -

Bill Kemp
Bill Kemp



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Thinking about water & irrigation intelligently

PASADENA, CA — Conservation experts and Green Industry professionals convened in Pasadena, CA, on Dec. 31, 2007 for The Intelligent Use of Water Sum-

mit VIII: Leading By Example, a forum focused on water conservation initiatives and landscape irrigation strategies.

Hosted by Rain Bird Corp., the sum-

mit included a four-person panel, who discussed the challenges faced by industry professionals and the public, as well as methods designed to foster outdoor water conservation.

The panelists were:

- ▶ **Mike Binns** – Regional Landscape Director, Camden Living (Houston)
- ▶ **Roger Cook** – Landscape contractor, *This Old House* (Burlington, MA)
- ▶ **Marty Eberhardt** – Executive Director of The Water Conservation Garden and recipient of the 2007 Intelligent Use of Water Award (El Cajon, CA)
- ▶ **David Zoldoske** – Director, Center for Irrigation Technology (Fresno, CA)

In addition to calling for irrigation and landscaping professionals to assist in the development and implementation of water conservation initiatives, the panel emphasized the need to question accepted trade practices. They also acknowledged the role that industry professionals can play by influencing individuals and organizations to adopt water-conserving practices.

"Our commitment extends beyond products to partnering with individuals and organizations around the world who share a similar interest in water efficiency," said Rain Bird Marketing Director Dave Johnson.

David Behrmann of Rain Bird hands a check to award-winner Marty Eberhardt.



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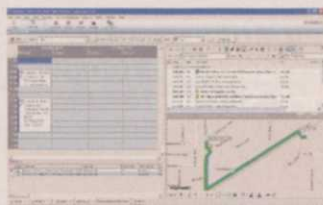
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Brochure targets commercial properties

NEW PRAGUE, MN — Project EverGreen has made it even easier for professional lawn and landscape firms to educate commercial customers about the value

of their services. A new brochure entitled "How Green Can Save — And Make — You Money," is available for purchase by landscape and lawn care



professionals to distribute to their commercial customers. The brochure goes beyond the environmental benefits of maintaining the green spaces surrounding a commercial property to explain how well managed and responsibly maintained green spaces actually contribute to the bottom line.

"It's a proven fact that well managed landscaping and lawn care efforts not only make a business look more appealing," said Den Gardner, executive director of Project EverGreen. "They actually result in lower operating and help drive an increase in property values each year."

The brochure makes a green space business case with facts such as:

- ▶ Landscaping can aid in reducing air conditioning costs by up to 50%.
- ▶ Planting just one tree can remove 26 lbs. of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually, equaling 11,000 miles of car emissions.
- ▶ Businesses are easier to locate when framed by trees and vegetation, rather than concrete.
- ▶ Office views of green spaces are proven to increase productivity and job satisfaction.

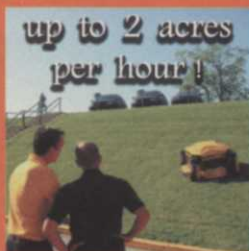
Gardner said that with more retail space being developed each year, it is vital to educate business owners about the importance of managed, responsible maintenance of green spaces.

"Who wouldn't be interested in reducing heating and cooling costs by up to 50%?" Gardner said.



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In the Know

People & companies



Two **University of Wisconsin-Madison** graduate students won honors at the Agronomy-Crop Science-Soil Science Society of America national conference. **Jake Schneider** (left) won 1st place for his presentation on Rain Gardens, Lawns and Urban Water Infiltration. **Eric Koeritz** (right) won 2nd place for his work on Determining Seeding Dates for Construction of Football Fields.

Syngenta Professional Products' Rob Neill has been appointed Global Head of Marketing for Syngenta Crop Protection based in Basel, Switzerland. **David Stanley**, currently Global Head, Lawn and Garden, will replace Neill as General Manager of Professional Products, NAFTA region.

PBI/Gordon Corp. promoted **Laylah VanBibber** to director of Marketing.

Mid-Am President **Randy Jasperson** stepped down after two years as president and 12 years on the board.

Quali-Pro has added **Larry Blackledge** as West Coast area manager.

Cyber-Rain announced the formation of its advisory board. The first two members are **Roger Braswell**, CEO of North Carolina-based **Compact Power Inc.** and **James Ridenour**, former director of the National Park Service.

Bill Arman and **Ed Laflamme** recently formed the Harvest Group, specializing in coaching and support for landscape company owners and managers.



The Davey Tree Expert Company has named **James F. Stief** vice president and

general manager in its residential/commercial service line. The company also named **Tim Cheever** senior motor carrier safety specialist and **John Manos** northern motor carrier safety specialist in its safety department.



Lebanon Seaboard Corp. added **Dave Heegard** as national sales manager, covering the golf, landscape and professional markets.

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> Days of FUTURE *past*

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

In 1964 Michael Kravitsky III purchased a Lawn-A-Mat franchise. It was a risky time to get into a business largely unknown to the American public. That summer a blistering drought scorched homeowners' lawns in eastern Pennsylvania.

"My dad would drive to Allentown to make sales calls from a phone booth near a golf course driving range," recalls son and namesake, Michael Kravitsky IV, who was five at the time. "He would set me up with a bucket of balls and proceed to make appointments to potential customers."

From such humble beginnings the industry slowly emerged, basically on the legs of young men with an entrepreneurial spirit, a desire and ability to provide reliable service and more than a dab of sales moxie.

continued on page 30

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a series of articles that will appear in *Landscape Management* in 2008 that will examine the lawn care industry, the issues that shape its future, and the prospects for its continued survival and growth. In this article, we recount the industry's past and share comments from lawn care business owners and managers about the industry's immediate future.

LAWN CARE
Looking
ahead

THE PROFESSIONAL LAWN APPLICATION
INDUSTRY'S FUTURE REMAINS INTIMATELY
TIED TO A HALF CENTURY OF INNOVATION,
GROWTH ... AND CONTROVERSY



continued from page 28

Michael and his brother Shawn now run the business that their father founded. It's known as Grasshopper Lawns and provides pretty much the same services it has from its founding.

Professional lawn care — the art but mostly science — of making the lawns at our homes, commercial properties, parks and other maintained turfgrass areas green and weed free is not yet a half century old. Not as a recognizable industry, anyway.

But first a number of factors had to come together before it could emerge, never mind grow to be a multi-billion part of the Green Industry. The factors merged during the "Leave it to Beaver" generation.

Home buying, sparked by GIs returning from WWII, accelerated the growth of suburbs with clusters of new homes situated on quarter- or half-acre grassed lots. While synthetic fertilizers had been developed several generations previously, the war years saw tremendous advances in chemistry and the development of many of the pesticides that have been credited with increasing crop yields beyond what would have been imagined a century earlier. This provided the chemical foundation upon which much of today's professional lawn care rests.

The convergence of the explosion of home ownership mid century, the availability and effectiveness of new chemical products, American's appreciation for their newly discovered leisure and a growing sense of well being created by more disposable income provided ripe conditions for the birth of the lawn application industry.

Ambitious entrepreneurs, first a handful and later a flood, saw the possibilities and acted. Some saw franchising as the key to spreading the business;

CONTINUED GROWTH EXPECTED

"The growth is not done yet," says Thomas Hofer, CEO of Spring-Green Lawn Care, Plainfield, IL.

"The growth will be similar to what it's been (around 5%) to the last 10 years. There are always ups and downs, but I expect it to be mostly up," says Hofer, whose company posted revenues exceeding \$26 million in 2006 and has franchise locations in 22 states.

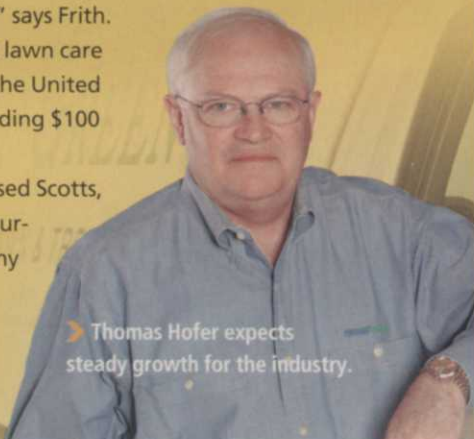
Hofer says he bases his optimism on his company's growth from year to year and also demographics "that say the aging population in the United States will be good for the lawn care business."

Scott D. Frith, CFE, vice president Lawn Doctor Inc., headquartered in Holmdale, NJ, agrees that the "graying" of America and other factors are in the industry's favor.

"The category will grow organically at an accelerated rate in the decades ahead as the population continues to age, wealth creation continues to favor and create a larger, more affluent upper class and societal and career demands require a younger aspiring population to outsource tasks for which they have no time," says Frith.

Lawn Doctor is the third largest lawn care provider that is headquartered in the United States with nationwide sales exceeding \$100 million in 2007.

According to Marysville, OH-based Scotts, the largest provider in the do-it-yourself market and the parent company of Scotts Lawn Service, approximately 15% of U.S. homeowners take advantage of professional lawn care. — RH



➤ Thomas Hofer expects steady growth for the industry.

others were content to go it alone as independents.

These fledgling operators used liquid and granular products, depending upon their particular climate and circumstances. They employed a range of service delivery systems — in some instances modifying arborist spray application equipment, in others converting fuel oil trucks, which of course, weren't generating revenue in the turfgrass growing season.

Most lawn care entrepreneurs were also innovators, people like Millard C. Dailey who, in the early 1950s, con-

sulted an engineer to build a truck with agitator tank, pump and 300 ft. of ¾-in. hose and began spraying liquid fertilizers onto home lawns. He called his service Liqui-Green.

Another was Daniel Dorfman, who founded Lawn-A-Mat on Long Island in 1961. He developed a machine that he towed behind a small tractor. It aerated and rolled a lawn as it dispensed several dry materials.

Meanwhile, Ron Collins founded a company in 1962 in Satellite Beach, FL, that delivered liquid pest controls to

continued on page 32

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PROVEN SOLUTIONS



For a look at the role of government in the industry, turn to page 36.

Today the industry is characterized by well-trained technicians and clean service delivery trucks.

continued from page 30

people's lawns. His company technicians drove clean trucks and wore white uniforms and red hats.

Professional lawn care attracted attention throughout the 1960s, but it erupted in the 1970s with the rise of powerhouse ChemLawn, which opened branches across the United States at a dizzying rate.

The service excited home owners because they could easily see the results, and they found it to be convenient and affordable.

But, almost from the beginning the industry attracted detractors, too.

Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring" in 1962 offered readers a frightening picture of pesticide use. Echoes from the book resonate to this day. Individuals and well-organized activist organizations continue to target the chemical products that keep clients' properties green and weed free. In some cases, they're targeting lawns themselves, portraying them as unnecessary and contributing to a host of environment problems, assertions that fly in the face of decades of research, responds the industry.

The industry's critics, to a greater or lesser degree, have driven or have affected many of today's industry's practices, such as lawn posting, compliance with state chemical sensitivity registers, shedding telemarketing and, in the case of several counties in New York State, practicing neighborhood notification.

Other changes, including the loss of certain chemical products resulted as much from the availability of newer, more acceptable products as they did from detractors' efforts.

"Products we used in years past are no longer available," said Kravitsky IV. "This is probably a good thing. Some people are so anti-pesticide even if they

continued on page 34

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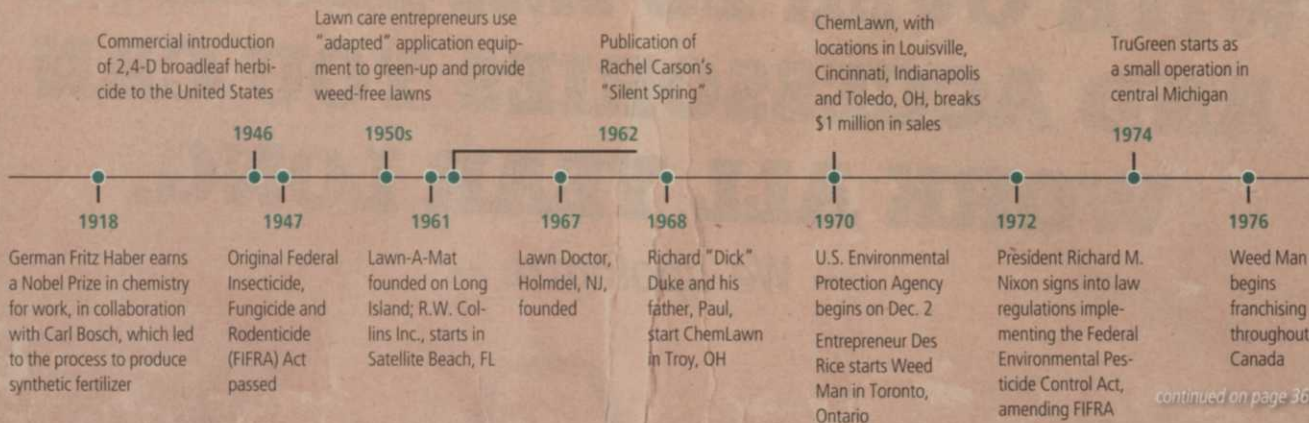
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THE HISTORY OF LAWN CARE IN NORTH AMERICA



continued on page 36

continued from page 32

don't know the facts and are not using good science to make a judgment."

In spite of the attention given to chemicals and, by association, the industry's image (easily the largest ongoing challenge facing lawn application

companies) the industry continues to grow at a modest pace.

One reason says, Brad Johnson, Lawn-America, Tulsa, OK, is that technology has changed ("Life was simple!"), but the business is the same, taking care of people — employees and clients.

Another reason, he says, drawing upon more than 25 years in the business, is obvious: The public continues to value and trust the service.

Gary LaScalea, owner of GroGreen, Plano, TX, says the industry must continue to work hard to maintain and build upon the service it provides. That's the key to the trust it has developed with consumers, he insists.

"The future of our industry, from manufacturers to our applicators/technicians, is based upon our efforts to enhance the safety and minimize the environmental impact of our products as we meet customers' expectations," says LaScalea, who started in the business in 1975 with ChemLawn.

"People don't want to buy from companies," he adds. "They want to buy from people they know and trust."

"Starting our 37th year in the lawn care industry gives me historical perspective of where the industry has come from, and I use this to help project where we

continued on page 38

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➤ Brad Johnson still optimistic after more than 25 years.



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POLITICAL CHANGES CONCERN INDUSTRY INSIDERS

The national political landscape doesn't look promising for the specialty chemical industry, said Allen James, president of the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), at the Golf Industry Show on Thursday, Jan. 31.

RISE is a 17-year-old national not-for-profit trade association representing producers and suppliers of specialty pesticides and fertilizers.

"There is no question that the country is leaning to the Democratic Party," said James. "RISE does have concerns." He pointed out that in the House of Representatives 19 Republican members are retiring compared to five Democrats. In the Senate, five or six Republicans will likely be retiring, while 23 Republicans are up for re-election to just 15 Democrats.

On top of that, some of the most powerful committees in the Senate are headed by individuals — Harry Reid, Barbara Boxer, Hillary Clinton, Frank Lautenberg and Joe Lieberman — that have been openly critical of the chemical lawn care industry or the specialty chemical industry. The situation isn't much better on House committees, he pointed out.

"We don't get a lot of support on either side of the aisle when it comes right down to it," said James.

Anticipating this presidential election year and the possibility of a different (i.e. more liberal) stance from national leaders starting in 2009, RISE is stepping up efforts to work at the federal level on behalf of the specialty chemical industry, and to stress its importance in putting the "green" into the Green Industry.

"We're being left behind in the green sustainable movement," James said to the 175 attendees at the event. "We've got to re-establish our place in the green movement."

RISE, he said, is making a concerted effort to improve communication and activities among its various committees, and urged audience members to join and participate as committee members.

"We're getting our strategic plan in place so that we're ready," he said. "We feel we're prepared but we recognize we're in for a long hard struggle."

— RH



Bullseye on crabgrass, sedges and broadleaf weeds.

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HERBICIDE

HISTORY, *continued from page 34*

Spring Green founded in Naperville, IL, and gains a strong foothold in Midwest

7th Circuit Court of Appeals rules two state statutes preempt the Village of Wauconda's right to pass rules governing lawn care

Lawn care hearings on Capitol Hill threaten industry's existence

ServiceMaster acquires ChemLawn from EcoLab for \$104 million, and merges it with TruGreen, forming lawn care giant TruGreen-ChemLawn

EPA announces comprehensive plans for protecting food safety, regulating pesticides and under the Food Quality Protection Act

The Supreme Court of Canada confirms that the small city of Hudson, Quebec, has the right to set bylaws to restrict lawn care chemicals responding to community concerns

Ontario considers a ban of "cosmetic pesticides." More than 130 Canadian communities restrict or ban the use of most common lawn care chemicals



continued from page 34

are going," says Sam Farison of Farison Lawn Care/Sports Turf, Louisville, KY. "Every year has been better than the previous year with respect to company growth for us," he adds.

Problems and challenges? You bet,

says Farison, checking off escalating fuel and fertilizer costs as the newest to surface. They can be dealt with, he says. The industry's fundamentals are strong.

"The appreciation of the benefits of a well-maintained lawn, the added home value and the lack of time or inclination

to do this work for themselves will continue the trend for more homeowners to use our professional services.

"The future of lawn care looks very good as long as we don't lose sight of the customer, specifically customer satisfaction," says Farison. **LM**

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Golf greens

The Tour Links panel system allows for custom designed greens and can be installed indoors or outdoors.

► An interlocking panel system makes installation easier, faster and a great way to increase the bottom line.

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS /
Managing Editor

The cliché of a business executive putting golf balls across his carpet into a coffee mug may soon be gone, at least if Dave Barlow has his way.

OK, a putting green in the corner office might be a little much, but for space any bigger than that, Barlow, the president of Creative Sports Concepts — which

manufactures the Tour Links interlocking panel system for indoor and outdoor greens — says is perfect for a realistic putting surface.

The system allows for the installation of small or large greens indoors or outside with fewer tools and people than traditional installation methods. Greens come pre-packaged or custom designed, and contractors can serve as dealers and sell to the end user and/or as the installer.

“Typically the industry

started with landscapers and pool builders,” Barlow says. “They had to go in and excavate a good portion of the yard out, come in and usually replace it with some type of decomposed granite or a compactable material. They dump tons of material into a yard, sculpt it, compact the heck out of it, and then turn it into something that looked like a putting green ready to receive artificial grass.”

Barlow’s solution is looking to change that, to make it

easier for contractors to get into the business.

“We have creative a methodology that replaces all that compaction, all that fill material with a precision molding locking panel system that can be built directly on top of the ground, once the customer or installer does some site preparation — making the contours the way they want. They are not excavating into the ground. We are building on the existing terrain.”

Because the product doesn’t require the excavating and fill, it takes half to nearly three-quarters less time to complete. The only tools required are a trimmer, hand-held jigsaw, a plate compactor (or at least a hand tamper), rakes, a shovel and a wheelbarrow.

“We are making a major dent in this industry worldwide,” Barlow says. “There wasn’t an indoor industry before I started it. Guys were building plywood or Styrofoam putting greens indoors. The main number of greens sold in this country is outdoors.”

Barlow is trying to do

continued on page 42



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continued from page 40

for putting greens what Greg Wittstock, founder of Aquascape Inc., one of the most recognized names in the Green Industry, has done with water features.

"The beauty of the system is that it really takes away the error and the time involved in trying to create a totally smooth surface," says Chuck Fricke, owner, Turfmasters of Chicagoland, a distributor and installer of the system. "That was the key. It saves you on time to install and the fact that it's not really susceptible to the ground movement. I always tell our customers,

the best thing about it is if you ever move, you take the whole thing with you."

Fricke has spent eight years installing putting greens the traditional time consuming way and more recently the Tour Links system.

"The interlocking feature gives it a uniform transition from panel to panel," Fricke says. "That's the key to the design. The uniform interlocking eliminates the roller coaster that you get on a traditional sand filled system."

Fricke's company offers training to landscaper contractors. They then can install greens from a kit (the



The interlocking panels cut installation time by as much as 70 percent and do not require any large equipment.



company offers many pre-designed greens), or they can buy just the panels to create a custom fit.

But Barlow isn't interested in stopping at putting greens.

"We're going to expand way beyond putting greens to the world of athletic fields,"







he says. "We've filed for new patents for our product to become a hardscaping product in the form patio, walkways, sheds, decks, docks, basically the same technology migrating into a decorative application for more entertainment purposes."

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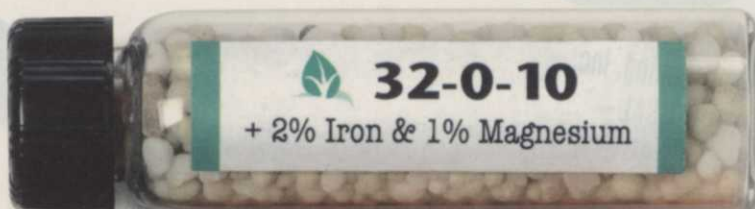
Nozzle Type	Herbicides, Fungicides, and Insecticides		Droplet Size	Nozzle Type	Herbicides, Fungicides, and Insecticides		Droplet Size
	Contact	Systemic			Contact	Systemic	
Turbo TeeJet® 	Good	Excellent		DG TwinJet® 	Excellent	Good	
Turbo TeeJet® Induction 	---	Excellent		Turbo TwinJet® 	Excellent	Excellent	
AIC TeeJet® 	Good	Excellent		XP BoomJet® 	---	Very Good	

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~ PROPOSAL ~



Why a professional proposal matters

An attractive and accurate proposal will allow you to get your foot in the door. Then it's up to you to sell the job

BY WAYNE VOLZ

Spring and fall are proposal time for most landscape and lawn care professionals. We try to gauge clients' satisfaction with our service and develop relationships with new prospects. No matter the impetus, a professional proposal distinguishes you from your competition.

Before addressing the structure of professional proposals, consider the twin concepts pride and professionalism. "Do you have pride in what you do, or do you apologize for it? Have you ever thought about it? Do you take enough credit or pride for the magnitude of responsibility and professionalism that you offer your customers?"

Professionalism goes beyond clean

trucks and uniforms. It entails everything we do daily to be different and better than the competition — training, education and business knowledge gained through experience. If you have pride in your profession and you are a trained professional, you have more confidence in what you do. As your confidence increases, your desire to be better than your competitors grows, giving you a better opportunity to close the sale.

Do you have a plan?

Professionally defining who you are helps you define who your prospects need to be. Attracting a more professional client — residential and commercial — helps you increase profit margins. A professional clientele expects a more professional service, a client more willing to pay for the benefits that coincide with hiring a professional contractor.

By definition, to bid is to try or at-

tempt. A proposal is to make an offer. Although the words are often interchanged, perceived value follows the word proposal.

Anything you can do to increase the perceived value of your service increases your opportunity to close the sale. Does your current proposal format say that you "need" the work or "want" the work? Although we all need work to stay in business, the last thing your potential client should perceive is that you need the work. If your proposal sends that message, clients will more than likely want to negotiate to a lower price. If your proposal says that you want the work, they may still negotiate price, however, the playing field is more level.

Clear and concise

Industry-specific jargon leaves clients confused. Use language and phrases that your prospect understands. If your prospects don't understand what you're saying they cannot make an educated decision to buy your services.

Use a question and answer sheet corresponding with your proposal to explain your service in detail. There may be occasions when you're talking to

continued on page 46

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continued from page 44

someone other than the person actually making the decision to hire a contractor. In that situation, if you do not have a written explanation of your services, the message could be lost or distorted from one person to the next.

Take the time to develop a proposal format that your prospects can easily understand. List each service individually, such as mowing and trimming, pruning, mulching, fertilization and weed control and annuals, to name a few.

Double check your professional proposal for obvious spelling and grammar errors. Also, double check your list of services and fees..

Perhaps, you've been to bid openings, where some of the proposals were less than professional, maybe even a hand-

written proposal torn out of a notebook. A professional proposal will not guarantee you a sell; however, it will guarantee you a professional image and greater perceived value.

Keep calling

Sales are the result of many factors including perceived value, a professional proposal and following up after the proposal. From the time the telephone rings, begin laying the foundation that your business is more professional, different and better than your competition. Don't just send out your proposal and wait for a response. Follow-up your proposals within two days with phone calls to prospects.

Many times, the prospect has had time to review multiple proposals and

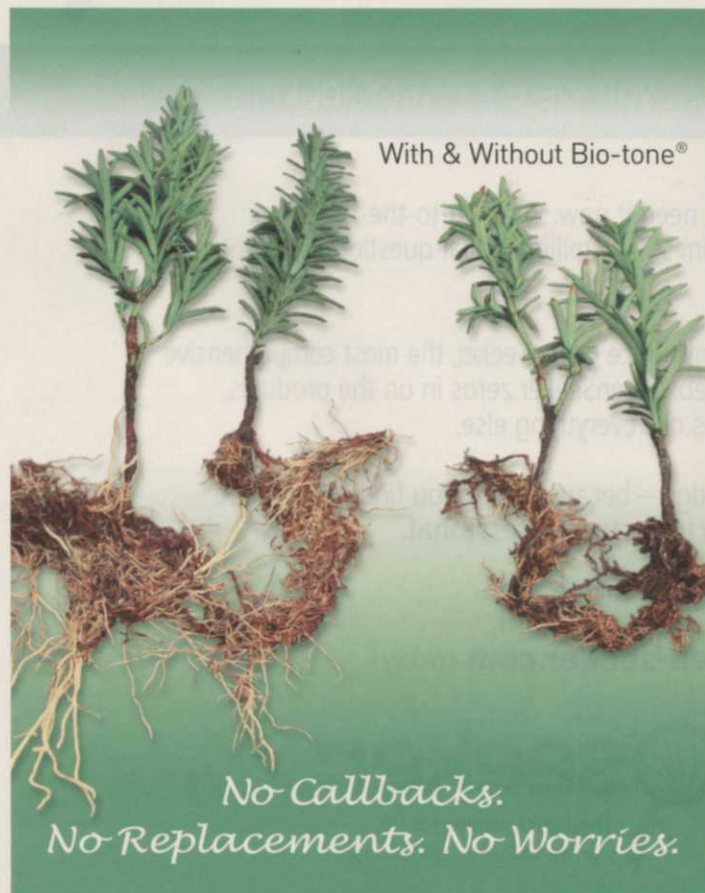
may have a few questions, but do not pick up the telephone to call you.

Persistence is a virtue, not a sin. Thorne Sales in Nashville, TN, stated that 50% of sales people call once and quit; 40% of sales people call twice and quit; 10% of sales people keep on calling; 80% of sales are made after the fifth call.

In other words, that 10% make 80% of the sales. In what group do you want your company to be included? An attractive and professional proposal gets you in the door. It tells the prospect that you're proud of what you do. Then it's up to you to sell the job. Keep calling. Most of your competitors won't. **LM**

— Wayne Volz owns and operates Wayne's Lawn Service Inc., in Louisville, KY. Contact him at WaynesLawn1@aol.com.

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— PROPOSAL —



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Small business protection strategies

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / Managing Editor

Anthony N. Mariani asked the Green Industry business owner if he'd taken a vacation recently. The man, the grey in his beard evidence that he was no rookie, responded that he had taken his wife on a two-week trip to Hawaii. Mariani, a partner with Stonebridge Advisors, Northbrook, IL, asked how long the man had spent planning for that trip. "One week." Then Mariani asked how long the man had spent planning his retirement in the past year. "Two hours." Unfortunately, this is more than most business owners give it, says Mariani.

Simply put, owners risk losing the organizations in which they invested so much time, energy and yes, money because they refuse to sit down and plan.

Mariani, who has spent 30 years advising Green Industry owners, spoke at the Mid-America Horticulture Trade Show in Chicago last month.

Mariani said the best way Green Industry business owners can protect and maximize the value of their businesses is to manage the risk in three key areas: 1) providing for employees and executives; 2) planning for unexpected circum-

stances and 3) preparing for transfer or succession and their own financial independence.

"These are things that are going to be our demise," he stressed.

Provide for employees and execs

Retirement and investment are two of the top benefit concerns of small business employees, Mariani said.

Many people think retirement plans are too expensive or too involved to offer employees. Mariani said retirement plans can be one of the cheapest benefit plans an owner can offer, costing as little as \$2,000. "You're giving them a benefit they cannot get on their own," he said.

Key employees, those making more than \$100,000 annually, may need alternatives to traditional retirement plans. Non-qualified executive compensation plans offer no contribution caps, can be designed to encourage retention (they get the money if they stay); are inexpensive and quick to set up and maintain; and they can even reduce an employer's payroll taxes.

Planning and professional guidance make the difference in the success and long-term survival of family businesses

The unknown

Another factor in employee retention is disability insurance. Most people can't go 30 days without a pay check. Imagine the hardship of going six months. According to the Office of Human Resources, University of California, Berkeley, there is

a 30% chance that an employee (or owner) between the ages of 35 and 65 will be disabled for 90 days or more.

What happens if disability or death strikes a partner? Not only does he (or a spouse) still want and need to be paid, you've lost those skills and you need someone else to take on those duties.

Preparing to leave

Many business owners ignore the inevitable. A time comes when they no longer desire to run their companies. They're ready to hand them to the next generation or sell them outright.

Only three in 10 small businesses successfully pass from one generation to the next and only one in 10 makes it to the third generation, Mariani said. Every business needs a succession plan that considers the tax implications of transfer, gifting vs. selling, the business valuation and family limited partnerships.

For their golden years, Mariani said that owners need to consider asset protection, college planning, family protection (income replacement), retirement savings, retirement income distribution and even elder care for aging parents. And, of course, owners needn't do this on their own. It pays to seek the advice of an expert. **LM**

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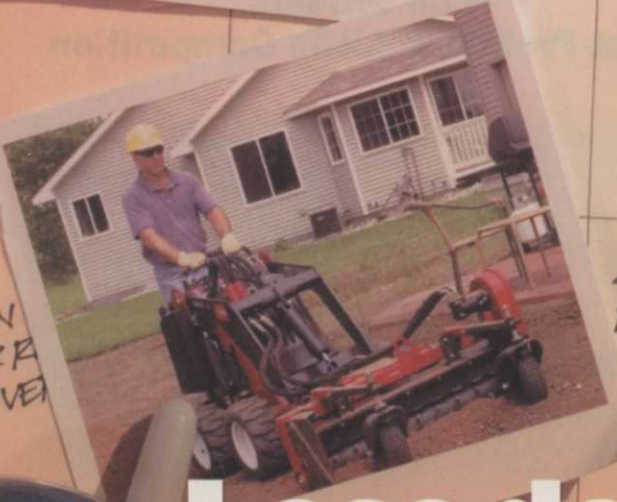


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18
ATTACHMENTS NEEDED:
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* TRENCHER
* VIBRATORY PLOW



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2
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California
dreaming 52

Inside Harrah's
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The right
night lights 60

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A California estate transforms
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Project Portfolio

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The design

Take a 4.2-acre California estate with a "blank canvas" landscape, and create an environment that can comfortably and elegantly entertain 250 people.

Project Requirements

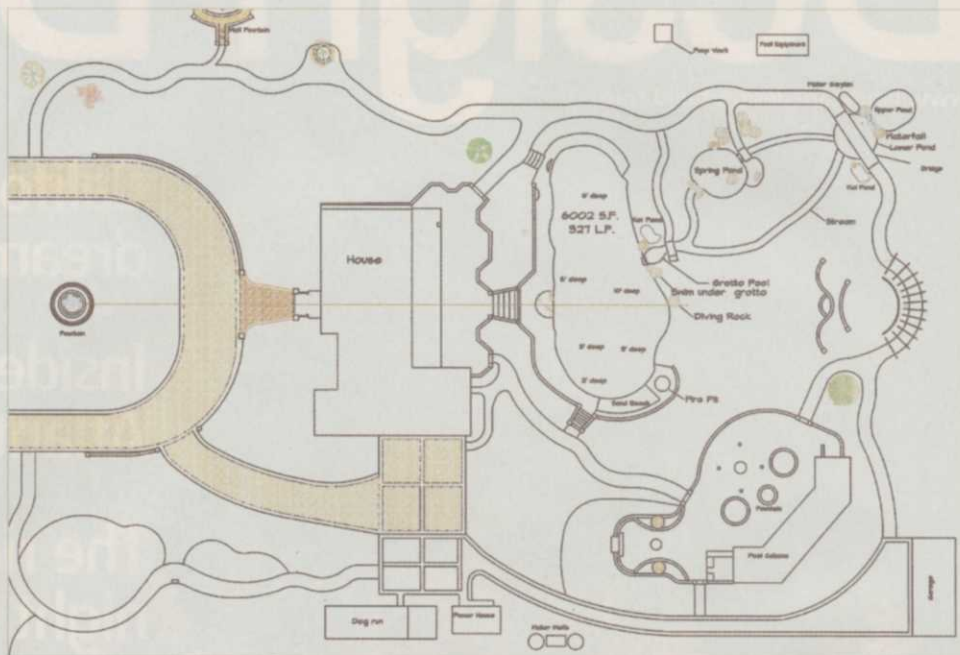
- Sculpt visual interest to make full use of the dramatic view angles.
- Create a beach, swim grotto and cabana for outdoor entertaining.
- Incorporate water features while not compromising the view.

Project Specifics

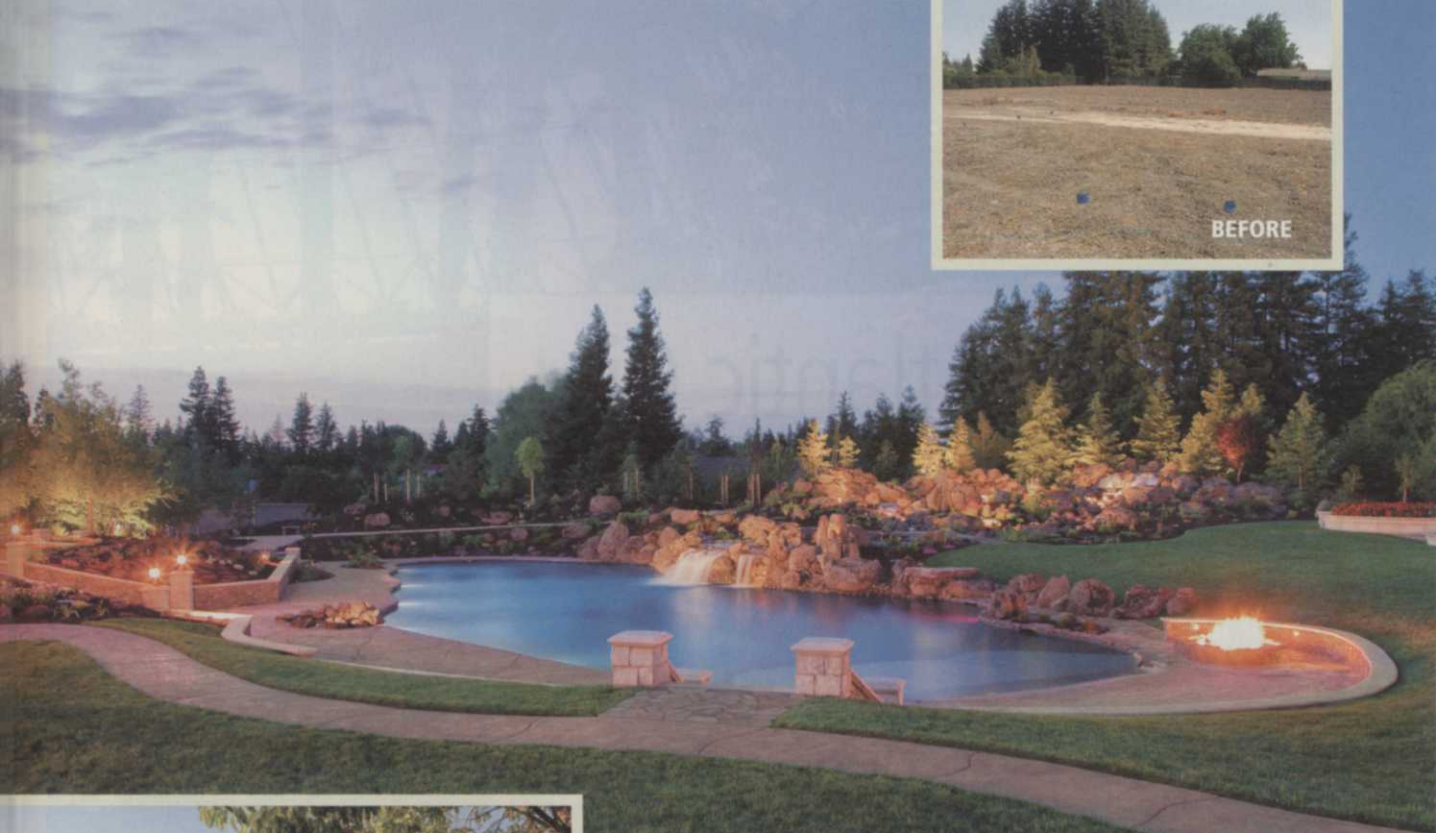
Water and lighting are dual focal points. In fact, more than 300 low-voltage lights were installed in the landscape to create dramatic evening lighting.

ABOVE RIGHT More than 250 trees were planted on the project from specimen olive and Japanese maples to 15-gallon varieties. A 1,500-ft.-long decomposed granite path circles the estate.

RIGHT The waterfall has 2,000 gpm of water flowing through four pools and two streams. It is constructed of 750 tons of natural rock. Half of the cast stone was made on-site.



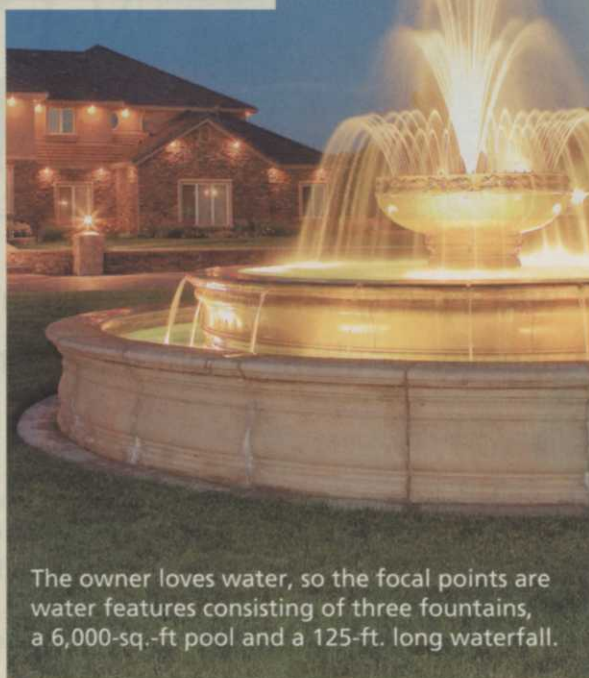
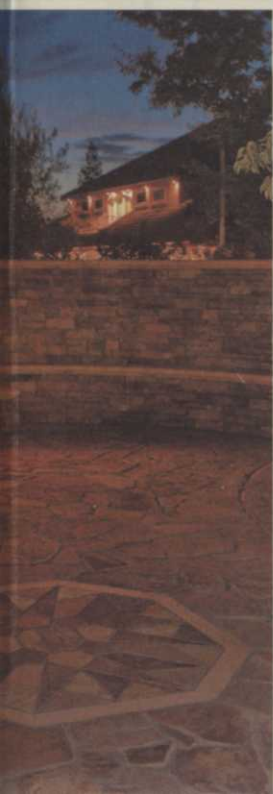
The pool cabana has an outdoor fireplace, arbor and extensive BBQ area.



LEFT There are two koi ponds, a water garden, 15 springs, three bridges and a fog machine along the waterfall. The pool has a swim-under grotto that will comfortably hold eight people, with music, lights, camera and intercom.

ABOVE A real sand beach and 6-ft. diameter fire pit are located at one end of the pond.

ABOVE, INSET At the project's start, there was nary a tree or bush on site. More than 16,000 tons (655 truckloads) were brought in to add texture and a starting place.



The owner loves water, so the focal points are water features consisting of three fountains, a 6,000-sq.-ft pool and a 125-ft. long waterfall.

Project Principals

- Designed by Bill Goddard, Goddard Construction Services, Woodbridge, Calif., www.gcsconstruction.net
- GCS specializes in large estate landscaping design and construction. Its repertoire includes waterfalls, lakes, ponds, pools, fountains, dramatic lighting and custom masonry.

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.

Harrah's Atlantic City



Initial Tropical Plants installed 257 plant species in five weeks to complete the project.

Harrah's Atlantic City engaged in a dramatic \$550 million property upgrade and expansion. Atlantic City's largest indoor pool is Harrah's Pool & Spa, which is a quarter acre entertainment complex within Harrah's property.

A quarter of Americans age 21 and older — 52.8 million — gambled at a casino in 2005, according to a study Har-

It was a pretty safe bet a \$1 million plantscaping makeover would highlight this casino's remodeling

BY NANCY TAMOSAITSIS

rah's conducted. On average, gamblers visited a casino about six times during the year. That totalled more than 322 million trips to casinos in 2005. And with New Jersey and Nevada no longer the only states with gambling, there's a

lot more competition for visitors' time and attention. Consumers want more than a place where they can win money, they also want a place where they can relax and luxuriate.

continued on page 56

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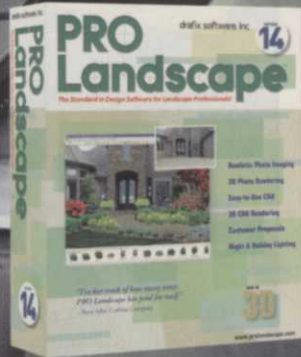
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continued from page 54


"We wanted to transform this indoor pool area into a tropical oasis with an arboretum atmosphere complete with an array of plants and trees," said Nick Moore, general contractor for Harrah's Pool & Spa who works for TN Ward, a construction management firm. "We issued a request for proposals and considered many firms. While Initial Tropical Plants was more expensive than its competitors, we felt its background justified it. We were impressed by the company's client portfolio including their work at Longwood

Gardens, the world's premier horticultural showplace in Kennett Square, PA. We selected Initial Tropical Plants, to perform planting and irrigation installation of both the interior and exterior sun deck gardens."

Harrah's undertook the remodeling to make sure it adheres to its philosophy to maintain "the right kind of casino gaming," which encompasses more than just slots and tables.

Or as one of the company's policy briefs put it: "venues for casinos gaming show great variation, demonstrating how local communities



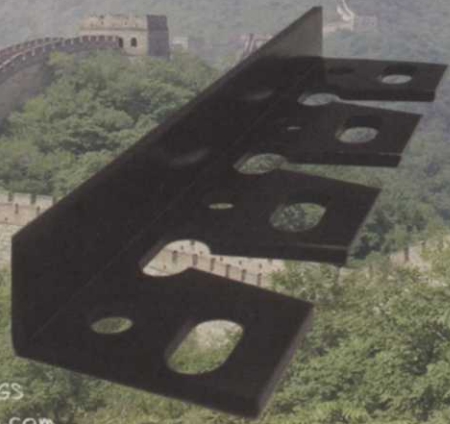


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With sunlight streaming through the glass dome, the trees and plants give the New Jersey casino a tropical feel year round.

have successfully tailored casino developments to satisfy their particular capital investment, physical planning, aesthetic and entertainment needs."

The challenge

"Harrah's Pool & Spa features a dramatic 90-ft.-high glass dome, so it was important that the plants we installed complemented this architecture," said Mark Hawry, senior project foreman for Initial Tropical Plants.

But finding the right plants to fill the space was only part of the challenge. There was a limited time to complete the project, and the company did not want to limit the number of plants.

"We had only five weeks to transform this space with 257 specimen plants ranging in height from 12 to 50 feet," said David Pelham, project foreman, Initial Tropical Plants.

To get the work done within the limited time frame, Hawry and Pelham ran two shifts of crews from five different trade unions simultaneously for seven days a week for five weeks to get the project completed by the Memorial Day weekend deadline.

"We had 21 semi-trailers of interior plants and trees off-loaded and installed within this short time window," Hawry

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A 90-ft. glass dome (below) and mature plants — some 50 feet tall — surround the new indoor landscape.



says. "All of the larger pieces had to be installed with a crane. Trees were hoisted over cabanas, Jacuzzis and various elevation changes to get them into position within the planter beds. Simultaneous with the plant installation, we installed more than 1,700 yards of specialty mix soils and an elaborate drip line irrigation system with separate zones,

control valves and timers for each area."

The results

This nearly \$1 million plantscaping installation began in April 2007 with the design and installation completed by May 24, 2007. The Pool at Harrah's — a \$28 million dollar dome enshrined pool and spa — is open for all of Harrah's



Atlantic City guests. The Pool features 12 cabanas, six Jacuzzi hot tubs, a bar, a giant pool in a 172,000 sq. ft. tree-lined, indoor paradise capped off by the 90-ft.-tall glass dome.

Initial Tropical Plants installed a tropical and floral design to complement the luxurious compound. Plant species installed include *Washingtonia robusta* 'Tornado Palms,' *Strelitzia nicolii* 'Bird of Paradise,' *Bambusa* and *Phyllostachys* species of Bamboo, *Howeia forsteriana* 'Kentia Palms,' *Ptychosperma elegans* 'Alexander Palms' and *Veitchia merrilli* 'Adonida Palms.'

"Thousands of orchids, bromeliads, anthuriums, marantas, alocasia, asplenium and philodendrons make up the understory of the plant palette," said Denise Eichmann, director of project management, project development for Initial Tropical Plants.

"Harrah's guests are captivated by the lush greenery," said Nick Moore. "The dramatic plantscaping has made a distinctive contribution to the space and visitors are always pleasantly surprised. Maintenance is key so we have contracted Initial Tropical Plants' Philadelphia branch to ensure the optimal health and appearance of the trees and plants." **LM**

— Nancy Tamosaitis is the President of Vorticom Inc., a public relations consultancy based in New York City. Contact her at nancyt@vorticom.com.

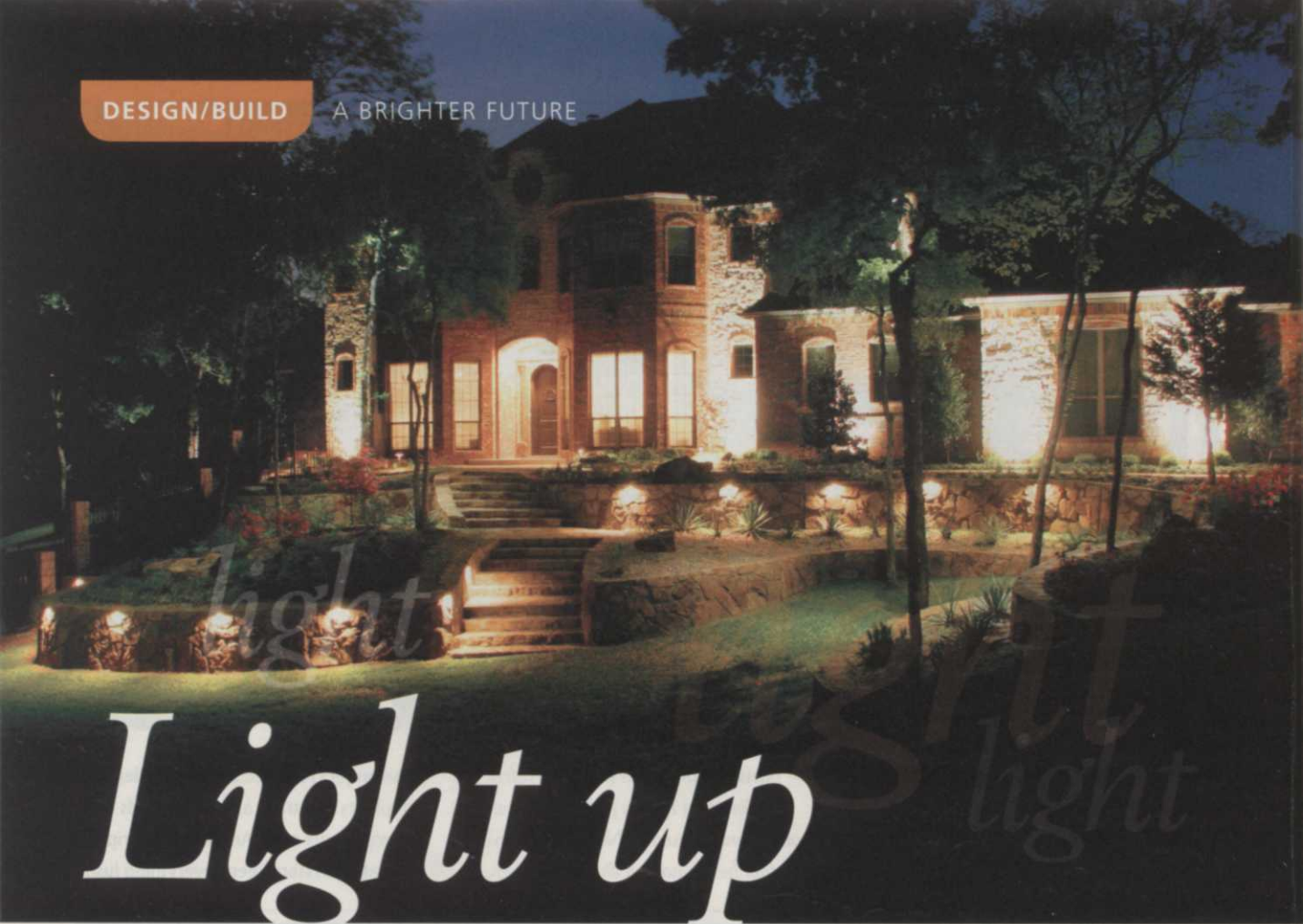
The project required 21 semi-trailers of plants and trees and 1,700 yards of specialty mix soils. An elaborate drip irrigation system keeps everything lush.

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Light up

THEIR NIGHT

Nightscaping gives clients pleasure when the sun goes down, summer or winter. BY JANET AIRD

Nights in the Dallas-Fort Worth area have become a lot brighter since Dooley's Landscaping and Irrigation Company began installing landscape lighting in 2000.

"It's the perfect add-on service," says Ray Dooley, who owns the company with his wife, Sandra. The cost is modest and the return is good — when the lighting is installed well.

"Anyone can put a light in front of a house," Dooley says, "but you have to have something special inside of you to enhance the house without taking away from the beauty of the property."

Most customers want landscape lighting for ambiance when the sun goes down, he says. Increasingly, though, people are using their back yards as living space, and lighting allows them to use it at night. Some want to light walkways and pathways for safety. Some want a well-lit landscape for security.

Dooley uses lighting from a variety of suppliers, to suit his customers' resources and tastes.

Suppliers and manufacturers provide the installation training. Installers need to know technical information such as the many different kinds and qualities of lighting, how to install the lighting so the light sources don't show and how voltage works so the property lights up evenly.

"If you don't have the proper knowledge of voltage, the customer won't be satisfied with the work," he says.

Just as important is what

Dooley calls 'artist's work,' the installer's ability to add to the beauty of the property. He listens to what his customers want and then decides on the lighting that will enhance their property. Then he does a demo at night, with lights and a transformer. There's little question what will happen next.

"They take our advice," he says.

Most residential lighting installations range between

\$2,500 and \$8,000. Few are more than \$10,000, Dooley says, although some companies charge much more. His maximum has come in at a little under \$12,000.

"You can only add so much," he says. "You have to have the perfect balance between too much and not enough."

The costs to add this service are minor, Dooley says. He uses the same employees, the same trucks and the same insurance, liability and workers comp that he already had. Because the lighting is low voltage, he doesn't need a state electrical license. Even

Finding the right balance between too much and not enough lighting is the key to enhancing a client's home and property.

so, he advises contractors to check with local and state laws and building codes. Also, call DIGTESS for the location of utility lines before starting any job, he says.

He bought some specialized hand tools, such as voltmeters. He advertises with the logo on his trucks, in the phone book and through the

company Web site www.dooleyslandscape.com.

The lighting comes with a two-year warranty, but there are very few callback issues, he says. He charges to repair damage that customers have done themselves and to change burnt-out light bulbs for them.

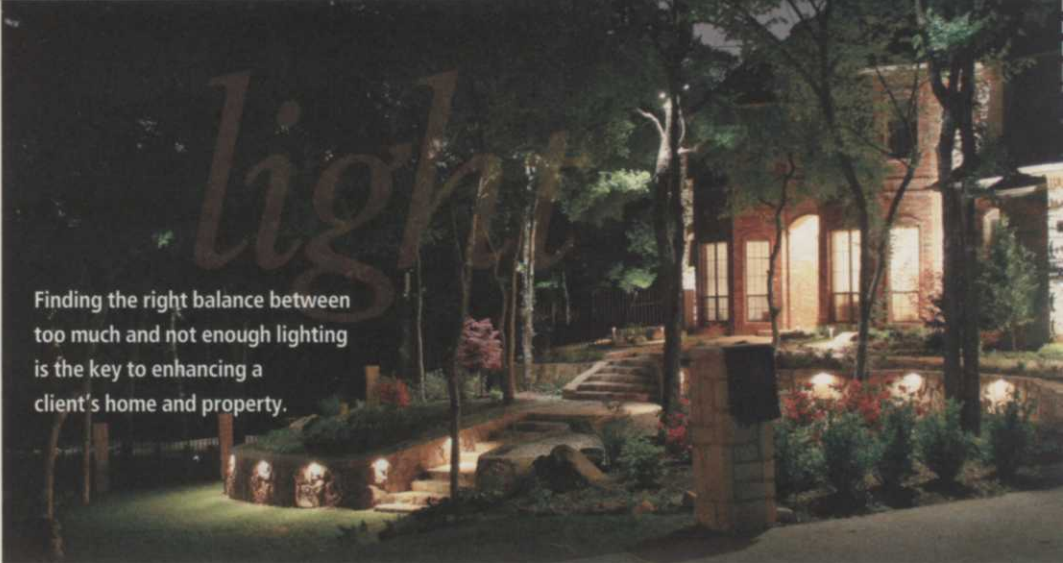
In fact, Dooley says, virtu-

ally all his callbacks are from satisfied customer and their neighbors.

"Once you do one house, you get a lot of callbacks from neighbors. They want the same thing." **LM**

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

Contact her at info@landscapemanagement.net



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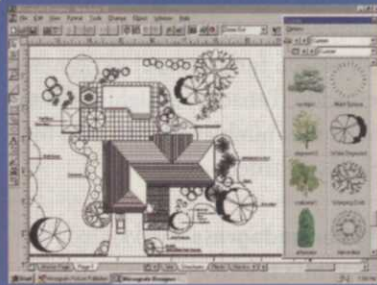


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The dirty dozen of turfgrass weeds

BY SCOTT MCELROY



Weeds are bad, but some are SuperBad

Weed control is one of the great tasks of turfgrass and landscape managers. Weeds are a constant challenge even in the most pristine situations. But there are certain weeds, that require an extra special degree of attention — weeds that you can't just spray one or two times and expect control. Rather, managers often have to consult their weed control tribal Shaman and make a sacrifice to the gods of undesirable plants before control can be achieved. Or at least that's the way it sometimes feels.

Put simply, weeds are bad, but some are SuperBad. And if I had to name the 12 worst, here is what they would be.

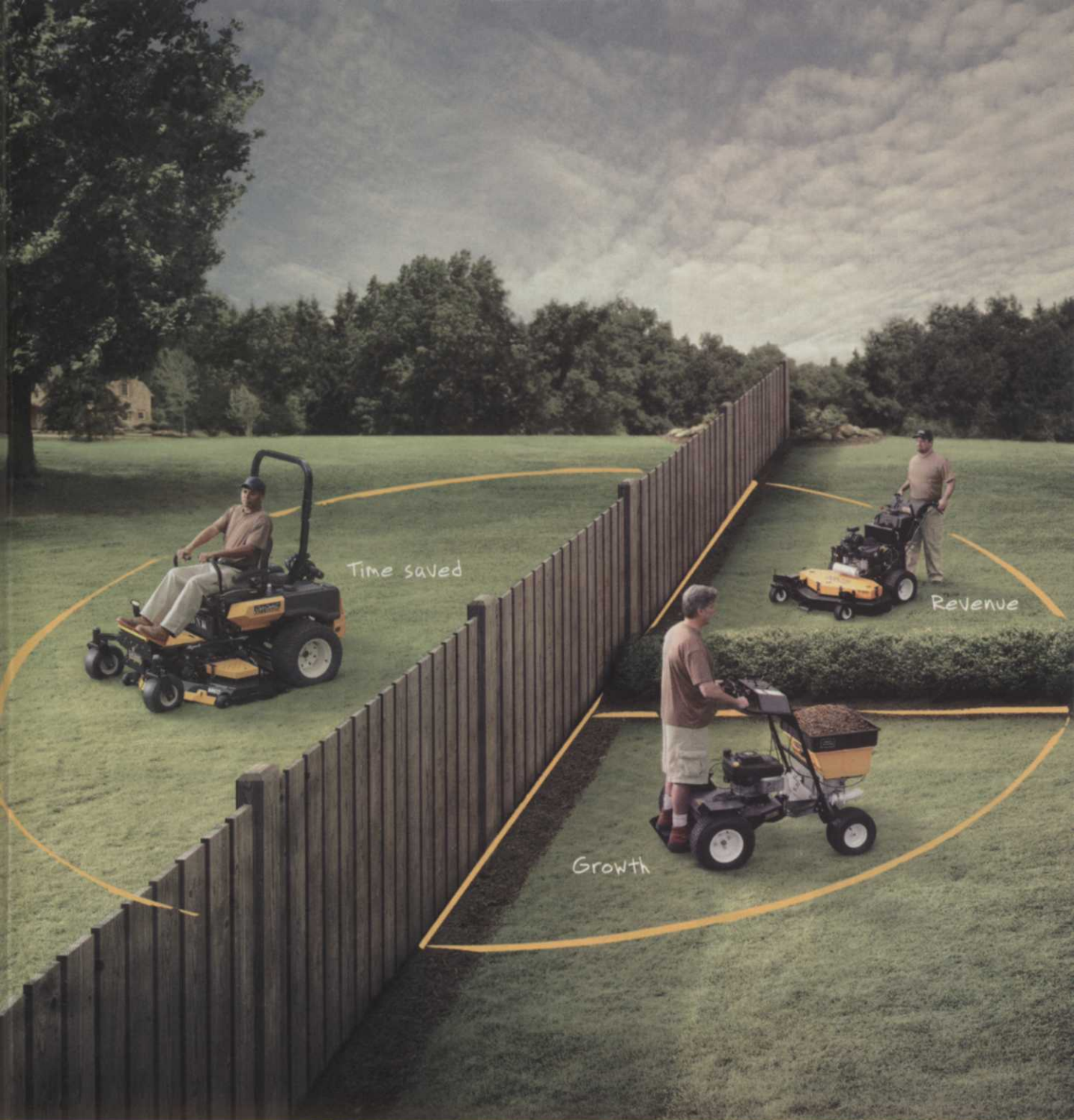
▲ Nimblewill (*Muhlenbergia sherberi*) — It looks like Bermudagrass, but it is not Bermudagrass. This shallow-rooted perennial is very drought tolerant and highly competitive against warm- and cool-season turfgrass species. A new herbicide, Tenacity, is highly effective controlling nimblewill. See label for specific instructions.

2 Bermudagrass (*Cynodon* spp.) — While it's an excellent turf, it's

also an excellent weed. Deep rhizomes, rapid growth and tolerance to varying environmental and soil conditions give Bermudagrass the upper-hand as an infesting weed. Even repeat applications of Round-Up (Glyphosate) are often not effective for long-term Bermudagrass control. Repeat applications of Fusilade II and Acclaim Extra over one to two years for control is the best strategy in many situations.

3 Dallisgrass (*Paspalum dilatatum*) — Due to the recent denial of re-registration by EPA of the organic arsenical herbicides, weeds once controlled by MSMA or DSMA now need alternative solutions. Dallisgrass was commonly treated with multiple applications of MSMA and varying degrees of control was achieved. Now with the loss of MSMA, industry and academia are scrambling to find a solution for dallis-

continued on page 64



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continued from page 62

grass, and again they're realizing varying degrees of success.

This weed is one of the worst because there are few herbicide solutions, it's a hearty perennial weed and it's able to survive in the most meager circumstances. So, until a solution is found, Roundup and renovate is probably the best solution.

4 Annual/korean lespedza

(*Lespedeza* spp.) — Annual and Korean lespedeza are extremely drought-tolerant broadleaf weeds that are difficult to control with conventional herbicides. Throughout the summer they begin to form woody-like stems that seem to increase their ability to tolerate herbicide treatments.



▲ Virginia buttonweed (*Diodia virginiana*) — How do you kill a weed that develops rhizomes up to a meter below the soil surface, produces underground flowers that self-pollinate, has a high seed production, grows at varying mowing heights and grows fast enough to out-compete many turfgrass species. The answer — with great difficulty.

Virginia buttonweed does have several herbicide options for control, the newest of which are Escalade II and Spotlight herbicides. But be prepared for repeat applications and prolific seeds to replenish killed perennial plants.

▼ Goosegrass (*Eleusine indica*) —

Goosegrass, also referred to as silver crabgrass, can exist as a summer annual or a perennial in tropical regions of the country. As an annual, goosegrass germinates later than crabgrass; Thus an infestation can occur if pre-emergence herbicide applications do not persist through the goosegrass germination period. With the loss of MSMA, few herbicides are available for post-emergence control. For warm-season grasses you have Revolver and for cool-season grasses, Fusilade II and Acclaim Extra.



▲ Oxalis- Yellow woodsorrel

(*Oxalis stricta*) — This weed looks no more intimidating than a kitten or a puppy. But it easily laughs off conventional herbicide treatments. Yellow woodsorrel has explosively dehiscent seed. So when the seed pods are ripe, they explode to spread the seed further.

8 Annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) —

Annual bluegrass, *Poa annua*, is one of the worst weeds for many reasons. High seed productions, germination in many areas of the country is almost year round, and resistance to numerous herbicides are only a few of the attributes that make it a SuperBad weed. *Poa* is a weed throughout the world and in areas where they cannot control it. That's when they must manage it as a turf (ever heard of Pebble Beach?). While there are many herbicides that control *Poa*, continual flushes of new seed and possible perennial ecotypes, often confound are best efforts. So stay after it.

continued on page 66

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continued from page 64

▲ Silvery-thread moss (*Bryum argenteum*) and other moss species

— Yes, I'm serious. Moss is definitely a weed. It is primarily a weed in golf course putting greens and in heavily shade home lawns. In home lawns, and other shady turf areas, moss can be problematic for two reasons. First, moss creates a thatch

barrier that's impossible for seed to germinate and establish. Second, the thatch layer created by moss can be both extremely hydrophobic and hydrophilic. In other words, when it becomes dry, it's difficult to rewet. And when it becomes wet, it's difficult to dry out. These conditions stress the turfgrass root system and eventually thin the turfgrass.

10 Purple nutsedge (*Cyperus rotundus*)

— Of all the sedge species, purple nutsedge is definitely the most difficult to control. Numerous herbicides can provide burn down of above-ground growth but it is difficult to eliminate the large underground tubers. Numerous herbicides that control yellow nutsedge will not control purple nutsedge.



▲ Wild violet (*Viola* spp.)

— Violets are weeds that everybody hates to try to control. These hearty perennials have small, colorful flowers, either purple or white. Spreading by rhizomes and developing thick, robust crowns, violets are often difficult to control due to these perennial structures. Typical three-way mixtures of 2,4-D, MCP, and dicamba are ineffective. Manor (metsulfuron) is effective when tank-mixed with triclopyr, but beware of potential turfgrass injury.

12 Path rush (*Juncus* spp.)

— Path rush is neither grass, broadleaf, nor a sedge. It's in the rush family (Juncaceae) and while it looks like a grass or a sedge, it does not respond to herbicides the way these groups respond. Surprisingly, a couple of 2,4-D applications applied three weeks apart controls path rush. Path rush grows in overly wet or compacted soils with low soil oxygen. **LM**

— The author is an Assistant Professor of Turfgrass Weed Science at Auburn University. Contact him at JSM0010@auburn.edu

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Stop pulling your hair out

BY ALLEN SPENCE

Boy, do I have good news for you. Are you and your employees constantly scratching your heads over trimmer head issues? Rest assured, on a trip to a trade show late last year I saw what may be the answer to your dilemma.

What is he taking about you want to know? Glad you asked. I am talking about trimmer heads designed for really fast loading. Not only are they easy to load with line, they are also easy on the stress load. How many times have you seen an operator waste trimmer line trying to re-spool a trimmer head? Maybe you've had to fight with a welded line or had to stop and manually extend the line from your trimmer?

There are several reasons why these things happen, which we don't have the time or space to get into here. And to be fair, the new style head will not fix all of them. No matter how simple it is someone will find a way to make it harder

than it needs to be. Nonetheless, I was amazed at how simple the manufacturers have made this process. No more needing a third hand either.

Some of these heads are twist and turn to remove, some you just line up the arrows and others you rewind and then install. One thing is certain. It will save time, money and aggravation. Several manufacturers have these as standard equipment on some models and are available to retro fit others. Contact your favorite dealer to find the best solution for your equipment.

One last thing, where were these when I still had hair?

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



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With the information age in full swing, one of the biggest productivity problems we have as professionals is too much information.



Tips to increase productivity

BY TYLER WHITAKER

Recently, I've learned five things you should not do in the emergency room. I've seen a dog rescued from the side of a cliff. And I now know how to dine alone without feeling like a 'loser.'

Am I an accident-prone, negligent dog owner with self-esteem issues? The truth is worse. I'm addicted to news and information.

No, my life is not falling apart. I've learned these useless things from the major media and news outlets available on the Web and TV. The headlines are so good and the video clips so compelling, that I'm drawn in to learn more. Can I help it if I'm naturally curious? The answer is a resounding YES!

With the information age in full swing, one of the biggest productivity problems we have as professionals is too much information. With the Web, email, TV, magazines, books and junk mail, it's no wonder that the end of the business day is getting later and later. Here are a couple ideas to help you regain control of your life.

► **Information diet.** Too much of our time is wasted on information that has no direct benefit. Knowing what my favorite celebrity train wreck did today will not help me close the next deal nor help me make payroll. This includes joke emails, videos and aimlessly surfing major news sites. Ask yourself, "Am I reading or watching something that will solve my biggest headache?" If your answer is "no" then stop, unsubscribe, turn it off, throw it away. Instead follow

the advice from industry professionals and experts using a blog reader, like www.google.com/reader.

► **Junk mail.** One of the biggest time wasters on my list is junk mail. Sure I've learned to quickly throw away the obvious "current resident" mail. The credit card and insurance offers that drive me crazy and jam up my shredder. That's why I decided to Opt Out via www.optoutprescreen.com. This is a Web site created by the major credit reporting companies to give consumers the ability to take your name off many of the major credit card and insurance companies' mailing lists. You can opt out for five years or permanently. Be prepared that it may take up to 60 days for you to notice a decrease in mail.

► **Business email.** Business email often degrades into a game of pass the buck, cover your behind or team meeting by email. The rules for productive business email are simple. Keep your emails short and to the point. Keep the recipients to a minimum. For emails over two paragraphs or three replies, you should probably call them on the phone or hold a meeting. Consider using MSN Messenger (get.live.com/messenger) instead of email for short questions and comments. It's quick, easy and it's free.

Productivity increases are a result of focusing on what's important and not just what's interesting. Guard what you pay attention to. Taking the next step based on the right advice is always better than analysis paralysis from too much information. Cut back, narrow your focus and take action.

— *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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TECHNOLOGY

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH



BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor

Cub Cadet's TANK Spreader/Sprayer



zero-turn mower, such as ergonomic seating and easy-to-operate controls. The TANK Spreader/Sprayer will even apply granular product and liquid in the same pass, saving time and effort.

The ride-ons also allow for bigger payloads, which keep you from going back to the truck to reload. C&S Turf Equipment's Turf Tracker Stealth provides a 200-lbs. capacity hopper and additional 200-lbs. capacity rear carry rack. The spray system has a 35-gal. tank with built-in sump that allows you to cover up to 140,000 sq. ft.

Even though ride-ons are easy to maneuver around obstacles, you'll want to watch out for properties with severe slopes, as you wouldn't want to tip over or spill your product. Some machines are

Spreaders

& sprayers

Is the iconic image of the lawn care operator pushing the old bucket-style spreader ready for a change? With the number of ride-on spreaders and sprayers on the market today, lawn care professionals can now get more fertilizing done by taking a ride, and even sitting down.

These new ride-on machines have changed the way many professionals do their spreading and spraying work. At speeds of up to 5 mph, the ride-ons can cover more ground — over 100,000 sq. ft. in an hour — without wearing out the

rider by the end of the day. A dependable ride-on can essentially replace the production of an employee at a lower price — even considering the cost of gas.

The newer ride-ons are being built with operator comfort in mind. Cub Cadet, for instance, has a new TANK Spreader/Sprayer, which is designed with many of the comforts of its TANK

built to handle hills better than others. They will also operate differently depending on whether the hopper is full or not.

You will also want to make sure to keep the machine clean, as you don't want the chemicals to corrode the electronics and paint, or a residue build-up to clog up the hopper.

continued on page 74

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continued from page 72

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pers, up to 7-in. adjustable gates and a live roller floor system. The GT-100uv model mounts on popular utility vehicles, including Toro Workman, Cushman Truckster and John Deere Gator.

Contact Pequea at 866/684-0393 or www.pequea.com



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Combine the carrying capability of the utility vehicle with the precision of the JRCO Electric Broadcast Spreader. The spreader attaches with just one bolt to the available receiver hitch. The JRCO Utility Vehicle Mount can fit the front or rear of most utility vehicles. The heavy-duty broadcaster is ideal for spreading all types of granular and pelletized fertilizer, seed and ice-melting pellets. The gate is opened with a push-pull cable and spread width is adjusted with an electronic speed control.

Contact JRCO Inc. at 800/966-8442 or www.jrcoinc.com



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ECHO's SHR-210 Gas-Powered Backpack Sprayer covers more ground with commercial-duty power and lasting performance in an easy-to-carry sprayer unit. A powerful commercial-grade, two-stroke 21.2-cc engine provides maximum reliability and performance. The 17.6-fl. oz. fuel tank allows for extended run times between fuel refills, while the diaphragm carburetor maintains the proper mixture of air and fuel for maximum engine performance. The 5-gal. capacity tank is equipped with a recirculating pump ensuring chemicals inside the tank remain mixed without building excess pressure. The sprayer covers ground quickly, discharging chemicals at a powerful rate of 1.9 gpm in a controlled, precise spray stream, with a pressure rating of up to 145 psi.

Contact ECHO Inc. at 800/432-ECHO or www.echo-usa.com

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The new PermaGreen 2008 Ride-On Magnum features: Honda 6.5 hp horizontal shaft engine and wet clutch; new super-duty transmission; bigger 150-lbs. hopper and 12-gal. spray tank; improved spray system with 2-gpm pump; improved spreader mechanism; no complicated electrical or hydraulic systems; laser-cut and precision stamped 100% stainless frame; and custom-molded protective panels for safety and style.

Contact PermaGreen at 800/346-2001 or www.permagreen.com

continued on page 77



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LM Reports

continued from page 74



Scotts Professional Solutions

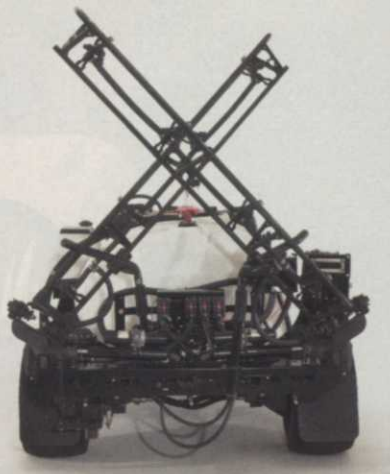
Scotts Landscaper PRO professional-grade spreaders distribute material evenly, accurately and quickly. Available in powder-coated or stainless steel models, each rugged spreader holds a bag and a half of fertilizer or other top-dress material. A full range of settings allows the user to set the broadcast rate to what the job requires. The spreader's 13-ft. swath and EdgeGuard enable coverage of more ground, rapidly and with great precision. Featuring durable, welded-steel construction and larger 13-in. pneumatic wheels for an easier push, the Landscaper PRO spreader offers enhanced performance and reliability.

Contact Scotts at 800/492-8255 or www.scottspohort.com

EarthWay

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

Contact EarthWay Products at 574/848-7491 or www.earthway.com



Toro

Toro's newly designed Spray Boom for all Multi-Pro and Heavy Duty Workman 200 Gallon Spray systems is tough and durable, providing precise coverage. The triangulated truss structure wing booms are strong, yet lightweight. Boom-enclosed turrets protect spray nozzles from damage and mounted to prevent turning. Transport cradles with breakaway capability holds boom wings secure during transport. The operator can change the booms from spray mode to transport mode without leaving the driver's seat. Tree-friendly boom ends reduce damage to trees or other objects.

Contact Toro at 612/888-8801 or www.toro.com

Shindaiwa

The Shindaiwa SP415 Backpack Sprayer boasts many features designed for improved efficiency, ease of use, operator comfort and durability. With its 4-gal. tank capacity and 90 psi maximum pressure, the SP415 will treat everything from small plants to large fields. The Shindaiwa SP415 features a contoured polyethylene tank that fits comfortably against the operator's back and padded shoulder straps for maximum comfort; a reversible pump handle for left or right-hand operation; a high-efficiency piston pump with built-in agitator; chemically-resistant Viton seals; and a UV-resistant translucent tank that also shows the level of the contents.

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continued on page 79

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continued from page 77

Spyker

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

Contact Spyker at 888/8-SPYKER or www.spyker.com

Herd

The Herd 2440 spreader is designed for 3-pt. hitch Cat. 2 tractors. It has standard hydraulic remote control. The 14-gauge steel hopper has 2,440 lbs. capacity. The unit comes equipped with a heavy-duty independent stand and carrying frame. Heavy cast iron gearbox is standard for 540 rpm. It features a rotating agitator and heavy-duty aluminum fan with replaceable steel blades. Spreads three to 1,000 lbs. per acre.

Contact Herd at 574/753-6311 or www.herdseeder.com

Cub Cadet

To get a job done faster, Cub Cadet Commercial offers the new stand-on XP Spreader with a 125-lbs. hopper that comes equipped with a 6-hp Kawasaki engine and hydrostatic drive. This rear-wheel-drive spreader offers increased traction, maneuverability and performance, while squeeze control on the operator consol make application fast and easy. Users can add a specially molded, drop-in 9-gallon sprayer and boom kit that is designed to work with both the XP Spreader and 80# Spreader. The kit's polyurethane tank features a mounted pump, battery, filler, regulator and valves.

Contact Cub Cadet Commercial at 877/835-7841 or www.cubcadetcommercial.com



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Turfco's METE-R-MATIC provides an ideal self-propelled top dresser for smaller turf areas and tighter greens. It's light footprint is very helpful for new or refurbished greens reducing the traffic of utility vehicles. Operator controls allow fingertip access to forward, reverse, brakes and throttle. Its patented chevron belt allows very accurate and uniform top dressing. Features include: Chevron surface conveyor for lighter, more consistent applications; reverse for operator convenience in maneuvering the machine; brakes for increased operator safety during operation on slopes; plastic guards with insulation for quieter operation; 5.5-hp Honda engine; new controls mounted to the handlebar, more convenient and easier to understand.

Contact Turfco at 800/679-8201 or www.turfcoirect.com



C&S Turf Care

The Turf Tracker Stealth from C&S Turf Care Equipment covers up to 240,000 sq. ft. of liquid application and carries up to 400 lbs. of granular product, while providing extra stability on tough terrain. Features include zero-turn twin hydrostatic drive, 4 mph treating speed or 10 mph transport speed, rear-mounted carry rack, and rear-mounted 12 ft. break-away booms with 7-pattern spray selection.

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

Landpride

The Land Pride FSP500, FSP700 and FSP1000 are rotary/spin type broadcast

spreaders designed for Category 1, 3-point hitch mounting.

They are capable of spreading seed, sand, salt, top dressings, and prilled/granular fertilizer, lime and iron at delivery rates ranging from 43-890 lbs. per acre. An internally mounted agitator helps keep material in the hopper from bridging. This ensures a continuous hopper flow and uniform delivery rate from the adjustable pattern rotary spreader. The spread rate capability and range of hopper capacities make the Land Pride Fertilizer Spreaders well suited for applications on farms, golf courses, park systems, athletic fields and large campuses.

Contact Landpride at 785/823-3276 or www.landpride.com

Agri-Fab

Agri-Fab commercial-grade spreaders are loaded with performance features and built to last. Available in push and tow-behind models, Agri-Fab spreaders feature a 14-gal. hopper and 12-ft. broadcast width, enabling quick coverage of 25,000 sq. ft. without refilling. All Agri-Fab spreaders feature stainless steel hardware to help eliminate corrosion, as well as wheel bearings for smooth rolling and greater durability.

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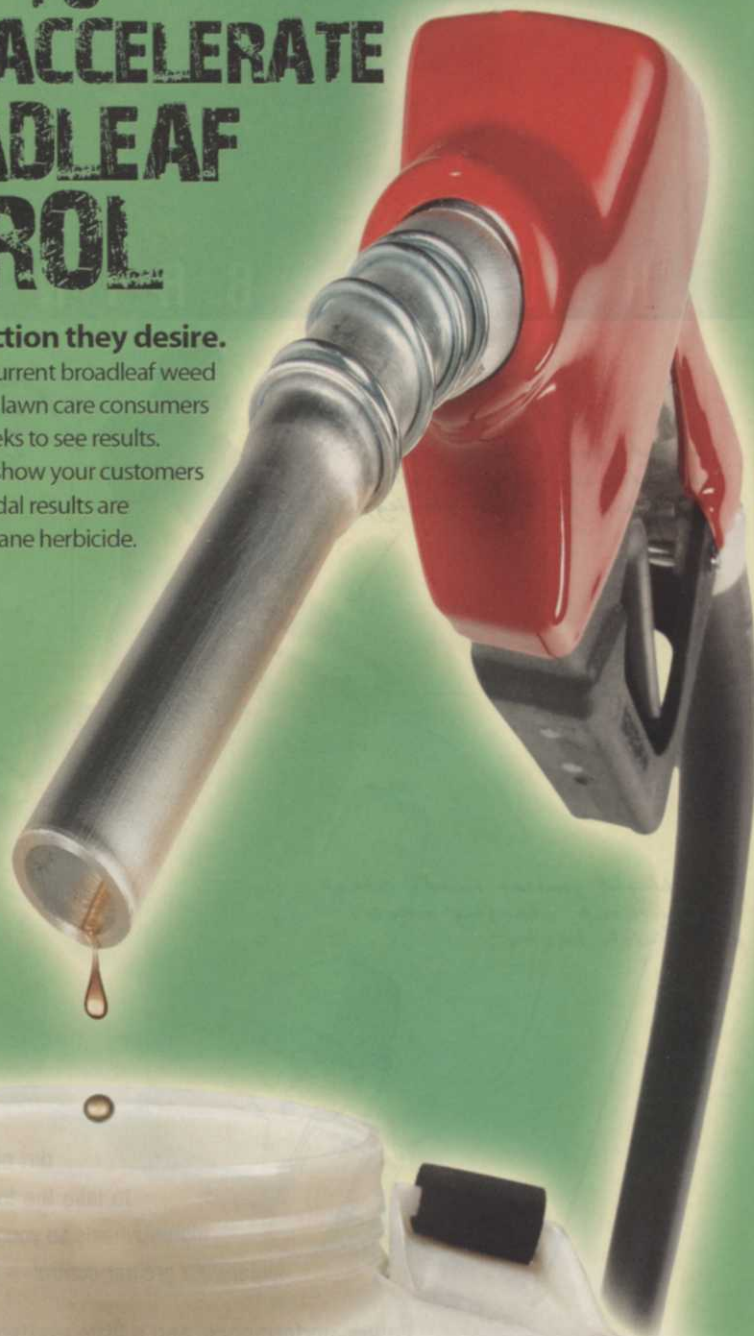


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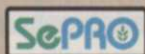
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It's 'raining' opportunity

An automated rainwater collection system is a new service that many of your customers will want BY WILLIAM FELDMAN



Rainwater recover systems use pump-assisted irrigation to deliver water around the grounds.

Every drop of water that falls from the eave of a house is like watching money disappear as it seeps into the ground.

Automated rainwater collection systems are becoming even more attractive to green-minded, environmentally aware homeowners;

owners of resort facilities such as golf courses and hotels; commercial clients and office park owners. These systems capture and redirect rainwater for irrigation of the property and plantings. They can relieve demand on utility-supplied potable water, supplementing and, in some climates, replacing it.

A system designed to

optimize rainwater recovery will typically use standard eave guttering and drain spouts to transport rain water from rooftops to a storage reservoir, on-grade drain spouts, a central underground catch basin, and a water tank or underground cistern to hold the water until called for.

It may also include gutter screens and a filtering system to remove debris. Typically, a company specializing in storm water recovery systems handles the design and technical aspects of these systems as a subcontract.

How it works

Automated and manual valves divert the flow of water to various locations through a pump station. An electrical control panel automates and regulates pump

and valve operations.

In addition to traditional roof gutters, the design of the recovery-piping network can include roof, patio and deck plantings and collection drains strategically placed around the home or facility property. The size and configuration of the system components are designed to meet the specific needs of each installation.

A green solution

Resource Recovery Inc., a rainwater harvesting and on-site stormwater management specialty company in Tavares, FL, (www.h2orr.com), recently developed a customized system for a flat-roofed "green" home in Orlando that was named the New American Home 2007 award at this year's NAHB International Builders' Show.

The rainwater harvesting installation captures runoff from large planters situated around the perimeter of the "green" roof and on a 3rd floor patio, hidden roof gutters on the house and detached garage, six drains strategi-

cally placed on grade around the 7,500-sq.-ft. property, a catch-all catch basin under the driveway and a 7,000-gal. concrete cistern located two feet under the garage slab.

The recovery system supplies about 59% of the annual irrigation requirements for an average rainfall season in Orlando, where 48 in. of rain falls, on average, every year.

The planters on the green roof, which was developed independently by the director and students at the Stormwater Management Academy at the University of Central Florida, hold coontie plants (low maintenance palm-like

perennials with stiff feathery fronds) and muhly grass (ornamental perennial grass). The well-planted roof offers other benefits as well – it insulates the home from the high heat and extends the life of the roofing material.

The system provides pump-assisted irrigation for the planters and all the plantings around the grounds, with elimination of heavy reliance on potable city water, notes Jim Schultz, founder and vice president of Resource Recovery.

The water in the catch basin flows either into the cistern or, on the infrequent



1. The design of the recovery-piping network is custom to each home and can include roof, patio and deck plantings and collection drains strategically placed around the home or facility property. **2.** An underground cistern holds the water until it is needed for irrigation. **3.** A customized rainwater recover system for this flat-roofed “green” home in Orlando helped it earn the New American Home 2007 award at last year’s National Association of Home Builder’s International Builders’ Show.

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occasions when that is full, into the city’s storm water reclamation system.

While in dry climates, traditional water supplies will likely be needed on occasion, in rainy climates, the system sometimes captures enough rainwater to eliminate any reliance on utility-supplied water.

Generally, a 2,000-sq.-ft. roof yields approximately 1,124 gal. of water per inch of rain, saving about 50,000 gal.

of water per year drawn from the utility supply, a statistic that can be very appealing to environmentally aware clients. And, points out Schultz, the collected water can also be used for washing vehicles, flushing toilets, firefighting and other applications. **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer from Chappaqua, NY who specializes in software and technology issues. Contact him at billfeldman@verizon.net.



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The Right Way To Treat A Tree

**Mauget**

Bird's eye view

Overhead imagery can provide landscape maintenance and lawn care companies with a more accurate tool for measuring and pricing jobs. BY JACK ZOKEN

Fast, free and easy access to overhead imagery is available via Internet services like Google Earth and Microsoft Virtual Earth. It's changing the way many small businesses operate.

Roofers and solar panel installers can estimate the size of a job or generate a lead by remotely measuring a roof. Similarly, businesses involved with pool servicing, fencing, deck upgrades, pressure cleaning, windows and siding installation can realize productivity improvements. Not surprisingly, the landscape professional can also benefit from this new technology.

Generating a quote

If the goal is to generate a simple quote (e.g. based on turf size) for, say, a residential or commercial property, you can see and measure

it in overhead ortho-imagery. Start by geo-locating the property, tying the address to a position on the street, either by consulting the prospect or working with a company that provides rooftop geocoding capabilities such as Group One, Whitegold Solutions or Address Points. (Services such as Google-Earth

or Microsoft Virtual Earth only approximate the position of the property based on an address.)

Next, the property is measured in a geographic information system (GIS), either by the landscape professional or a third-party service, and the turf is represented as a series of polygons.

The parcel boundary is outlined in black and the turf boundary is outlined in green (see Figures A & B below). Maintaining the turf information in this manner provides more than just square footage. The schematic can be used to generate a quote (based on total turf size and layout), but it's also great sales collateral and valuable information to share with customers.

Sample commercial schematic

This technology makes it possible to offer a more sophisticated quote, say for commercial applications, using both high-resolution oblique imagery and ortho-imagery. Also consider relevant components such as turf, walkway edging

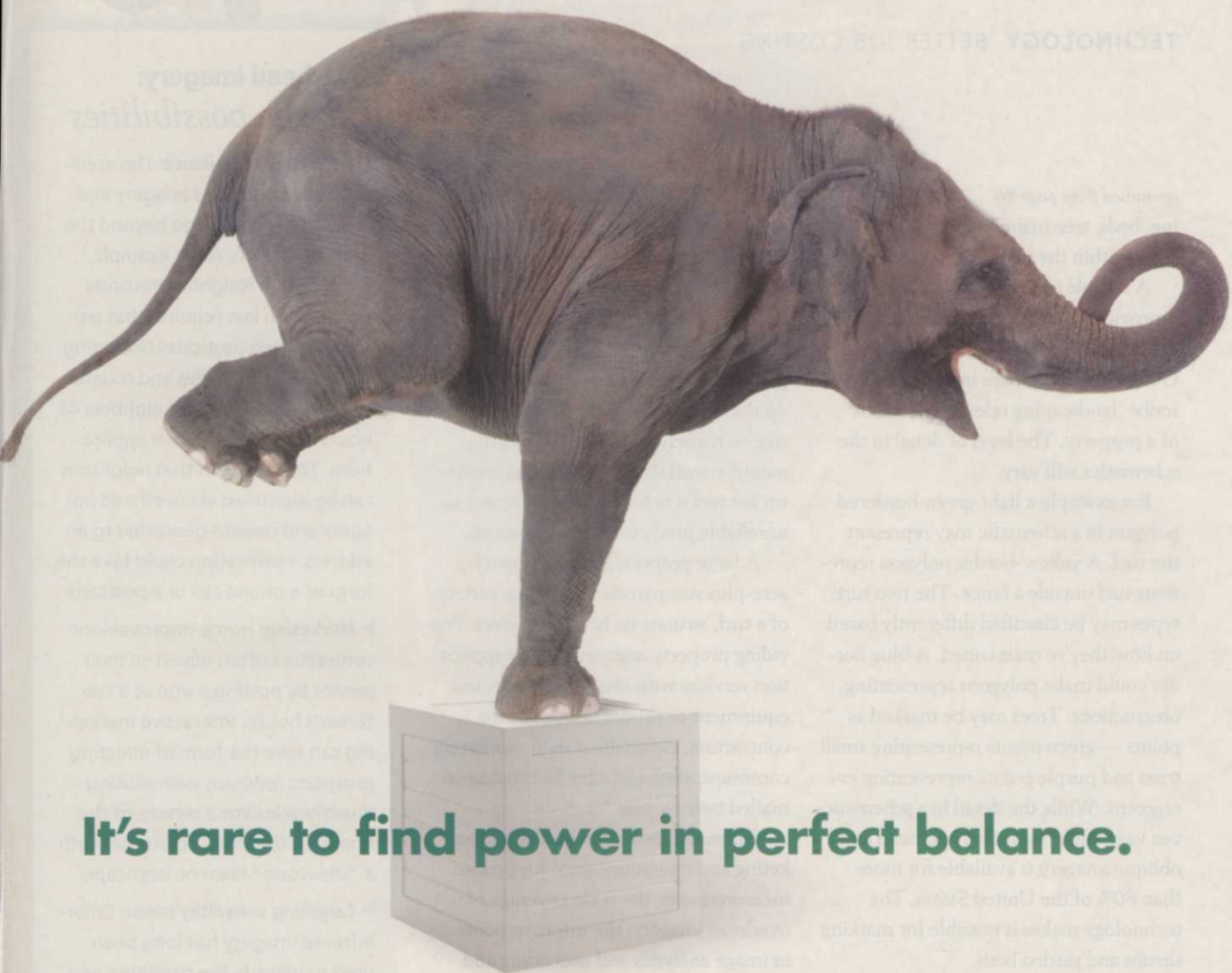
continued on page 88



FIGURE A



FIGURE B



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continued from page 86

ing, beds, tree maintenance and obstructions within the turf or landscape.

A sample of a commercial schematic is provided in Figure B. Schematics are captured in CAD or GIS systems (like Google Earth) and are intended to describe 'landscaping relevant' portions of a property. The level of detail in the schematics will vary.

For example a light-green-bordered polygon in a schematic may represent the turf. A yellow-border polygon represents turf outside a fence. The two turf types may be classified differently based on how they're maintained. A blue border could make polygons representing obstructions. Trees may be marked as points — green points representing small trees and purple points representing evergreens. While the detail in a schematic can vary, high resolution overhead and oblique imagery is available for more than 80% of the United States. The technology makes it possible for marking shrubs and garden beds.

Commercial schematics will likely have more varied uses than residential schematics. A commercial quote might require hours on site and the expectation is, in many cases, an 'overhead-imagery-based schematic' will expedite a quote. Moreover, a schematic becomes a record of the landscape, and in its electronic form, can easily be communicated between landscaper and customer. Standard GIS and CAD schematics can be converted to Google-Earth format. This provides a virtually universal way to exchange landscape information about a property.

Measuring turf

Landscape professionals and equipment companies try to target prospects' properties based on a number of characteristics, often starting with the size of the

turf area. Turf size dictates equipment needs (type of mower/tractor), irrigation requirements and the amount of product, such as fertilizer, required.

Lawn equipment distributors and the home-improvement big box retailers target mowing equipment prospects based on the best available predictor for lawn size — namely parcel size. Unfortunately, parcel size is a mediocre predictor for turf size for small parcels and an unreliable predictor for large parcels.

A large property, broken down by acre-plus size parcels often has a variety of a turf, structures, brush and trees. Providing property maintenance or application services with improperly selected equipment or products is costly for contractors, especially if their marketing communication includes \$5 brochures mailed twice a year.

Given the landscape industry's marketing and operations need for precise measurements, the wide coverage of overhead imagery, the improvements in image analytics and geocoding and the emergence of companies focused on building information bases from overhead imagery, it's possible that eventually a nationwide, by-address, turf-size database will be compiled.

Other applications

A landscape schematic combined with an overhead image, has the potential to provide value to a landscaper before and after the first site visit. Landscapers versed in the technology can generate their own schematic with tools such as Google-Earth and location knowledge (i.e. knowing exactly where the property is located). Alternatively, the schematic generation can be outsourced to a third party specializing in these services.

The landscaper provides addresses and a checklist of features to be identified, delivers this information elec-

Overhead imagery: *Oh the possibilities*

► **Regulator compliance:** The applications of overhead imagery and rooftop geocoding go beyond the individual lawn. As an example, the NY State Neighbor Pesticide Notification law requires that persons applying pesticides (including herbicides, fungicides and rodenticides) notify abutting neighbors 48 hours in advance of such applications. To the extent that neighbors can be identified via overhead imagery and reverse-geocoded to an address, notification could take the form of a phone call or a postcard.

► **Marketing:** Home-improvement contractors often advertise their service by posting a sign at a customer's house. Interactive marketing can take the form of directing prospects (perhaps with routing directions and/or a picture of the home) to the closest customer with a "showcase" lawn or landscape.

► **Targeting unhealthy lawns:** Color-infrared imagery has long been used to identify the condition and types of vegetation in large-scale agricultural applications. This same technology could conceivably be applied to regularly monitor the condition of lawns. At current prices, commercial satellite, 4-band imagery (captured at approximately \$500 per 10 sq. miles) could be cost effective if customers come to use and rely on such a service.

— JK

tronically and a day later, a schematic is returned via email (or some other electronic format), often half a world away (India or China) and very cost effectively. **LM**

— *The author is president of Whitegold Solutions Inc., San Rafael, CA. Contact him at jzoken@whitegoldsolutions.com.*

Products

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Fence-ready retaining walls

Strata Systems recently added Sleeve-It, a code-compliant system for building fence-ready retaining walls, to its product line. Sleeve-It is a foundation system that utilizes traditional cantilever technology for anchoring perimeter fences and guards to mortarless block retaining walls. Compared to a retrofitted fence, Sleeve-It adds up to 3 ft. of buildable real estate along the entire length of a segmental retaining wall. A proven system for simplifying fence post integration, reducing designer liability, as well as the costs associated with compliance, Sleeve-It meets all code requirements for fences and guards as prescribed by Section 1607.7.1 of the IBC code.

Contact Strata Systems at 800/680-7750 or www.geogrid.com

Log splitter

The Timberwolf TW-P1 log splitter powers through logs with a 5.5 hp, Honda OHV engine, 20 tons of splitting force and a 13-second cycle time. Standard features include bolt on log cradles and a 2-in. hitch



Diesel mini-skid

Compact Power Inc.'s new track-driven 532DX diesel mini-skid is ideal for the landscaping, rental and construction markets. Like the Boxer 526DX, the 532DX offers an integrated track system that retracts from a fully extended 43.5 in. to a width of 35 in. and is controlled by a joystick on the control panel. The variable track design makes it simple for the operator to maneuver the 532DX through tight areas, such as gates and sidewalks, then extend back to full width for increased stability while in operation. This new mini-skid offers operating capacity of 1,050 lbs. and is powered by a 32.8 hp Kubota D1105-T diesel engine.

Contact Compact Power Inc. at 800/476-9673 or www.cpiequipment.com



that allows the splitter to be towed to job sites. The company also offers a 4-way wedge for the TW-P1 that cuts splitting time in half, plus its "Back Saver Package" that includes Timberwolf's patented log lift and table grate.

Contact Timberwolf at 800/340-4386 or www.timberwolfcorp.com

Go organic

Wonder Grow organic fertilizer-soil amendment can boost aerobic action and photosynthetic sugars for greener and healthier plants. The organic fertilizer-soil amendment combines seaweed and yucca, two leading organic farming compounds used separately for decades but never before combined. With potassium, B-vitamins, trace minerals, rooting hormones and microbial activity, Wonder Grow is a multipurpose plant food that can be



used as a starter fertilizer, penetrant, root builder, anti-stress compound and for mineral nutrition.

Contact Wonder Grow at 888/460-8536 or www.wondergrow.com

Goose repellent

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Products

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Contact JLG at 877/JLG-SELL or
www.jlg.com

New & improved skid steers

Case unveiled its new 400 Series 3 line of skid steer loaders, featuring more powerful engines, a redesigned cab and improved serviceability for all models. Tier III certified engine power is now available on the Case 410, 420, 430, 435, 440, 445, 450 and 465 skids steers. With engine improvements come increases in horsepower across the board, from 57 to 83 hp. The new cabs available for all Case Series 3 models feature a 7% increase in headroom and 6% increase in lap-bar width, along with improved forward, side, rear and overhead



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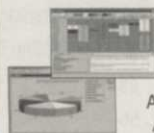
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EDITORIAL INDEX

Company	Page #		
Address Points	86	Lawn-A-Mat 28	
Auburn University	66	Microsoft 86	
Brickman	10, 19	Mountaineer Lawn Care Inc. 96	
Camden Living	22	Project EverGreen 24	
Center for Irrigation Technology	22	Rain Bird Corp. 22	
Cipriano Landscape Design	18	Resource Recovery Inc. 83	
Davey	10	Responsible Industry for Sound Environment (RISE) 36	
Dooley's Landscaping and Irrigation Co.	60	Scotts 30	
Farison Lawn Care/Sports Turf	34	Spring-Green Lawn Care 30	
Georgia Green Industry Association	19	Stonebridge Advisors 48	
Goddard Construction Services (GCS)	53	Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care 20	
Google	70, 86	The Water Conservation Garden	22
Grasshopper Lawns	30	TN Ward 56	
Green Industry Council	19	TruGreen-Chemlawn 32	
GroGreen	34	ValleyCrest 10	
Group One	86	Wayne's Lawn Service Inc. 46	
Hinds Comunity College	68	Whitegold Solutions 86	
Initial Tropical Plants	56	Wislon-Oyler Group 12	
Kehoe & Co.	16		
Lawn America	34		
Lawn Doctor Inc.	30		

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Mountaineer Lawn Care Inc.

Giving back is a way to bring everyone together

BY KEN KRIZNER

For Dan Cheslock, participating in the annual Renewal & Remembrance project at Arlington National and Historic Congressional cemeteries is a way to give something back to the country.

"I grew up during the Vietnam years, but I had a college deferment," says Cheslock, owner of Mountaineer Lawn Care Inc. in Morgantown, WV. "I feel that this is important. It's a way to give thanks."

Mountaineer Lawn Care is a 29-year-old company that covers north central West Virginia. The company's expertise is fertilization and weed control, and this year it will begin doing maintenance.

Since 1996, Cheslock has taken a crew to join in Renewal & Remembrance, the annual community service project sponsored by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). It takes place the

day before PLANET's annual Legislative Day on the Hill in Washington, D.C.

Cheslock's company began volunteering through its involvement with the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

"It was really something that appealed to us," he says.

Mountaineer Lawn Care employees spend half a day laying new sod at Arlington.

"We help keep the grounds looking good for the future," Cheslock says. "We're building a better-looking cemetery."

Cheslock and his crew will go Washington the weekend before Renewal & Remembrance to take in the monuments and other sights in and around the nation's capital.

"We use it as a company retreat," he says. "It is a way to get to know each other away from work."

There is another reason why Cheslock likes to take



A good deed indeed.

Several members of the team donated their time and energy to PLANET's Renewal & Remembrance at Arlington.

his crew to Arlington.

"While you're out there, you get a chance to see who is the hardest working member of the staff," he says. "We grow as a team and enjoy each other's company. It's a team-building experience."

Renewal & Remembrance is a true win-win situation for everybody involved, Cheslock says.

The size of Arlington National and Historic Congressional Cemeteries, coupled with their national significance, demands a high level of maintenance and care. There is an abundance of donated landscape work during Renewal & Remembrance that might not otherwise be done.

Employees are humbled by the emotion that embraces this country's most cherished resting place, Cheslock says.

After all, Arlington National Cemetery is called "America's Most Hallowed Ground" and with good

reason. More than 300,000 people are buried there, including veterans from all of the nation's wars, from the American Revolution through Iraq and Afghanistan.

In a distinct and personal way, volunteers, are showing their gratitude to the veterans and their families who have sacrificed for their country, Cheslock says.

The Mountaineer crew, he continues, is privileged to participate in Renewal & Remembrance because it was a day of hard work and reflection.

"What we get out of it is much more than what we put in," Cheslock says. "We feel privileged to go in and do the work we do." **LM**

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

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columns

4 Green is in, are you?

Savvy landscape companies can profit from environmental trends.

BY KEVIN STOLTMAN

6 H-2B: Woe are we!

The cap has already been met, but keep the pressure on.

BY CRAIG REGELBRUGGE

7 A punch of color can make a positive first impression

There are plenty of plant choices to help you make an impact.

BY JOHN R. HOLMES

8 Networking now: from the back 9 to the web, it's all about links

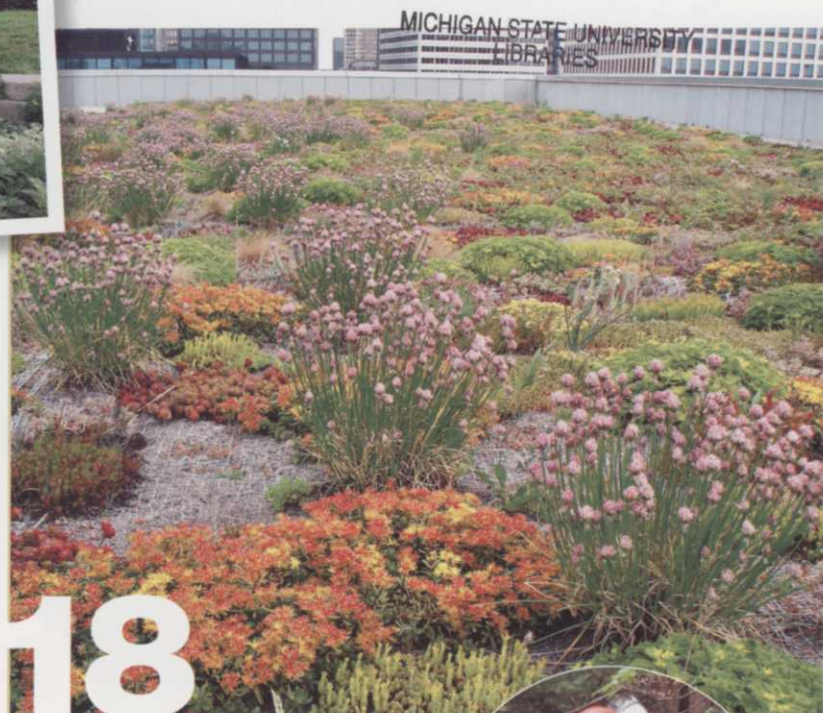
Combine face-to-face networking with online social networks for the best results.

BY MJ GILHOOLEY

10 How can I control broadleaf weeds? Stop grubs?

Dr. Rao answers readers' horticultural questions.

BY BAL RAO, PH.D.



features

12 The Kindest Cuts

Prune trees properly.

BY JANET AIRD

16 According to Plan

Minimum color, maximum impact.

BY BRIDGET WHITE

18 Landscapers See Opportunity in the Sky

Green roofs present opportunity, challenge to landscape companies.

BY BRIAN ALBRIGHT



contents

livescapes



26

26 Feeding Contained

Mixed container fertilization requires special considerations.

BY FRED HULME, PH.D



28 Perennial Powerhouse

Curbside perennial gardens trap pollution.

BY ROBERT SCHEYER

departments

22 Regional Reports

Native park plantings, IA's new president, drought in Florida and a new website for Midwest horticulturalists.

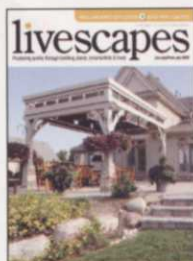
BY JAMIE J. GOOCH

25 What's New

New products

30 New Products

Innovation at work



◀ On the cover:
Splashes of color liven up a hardscape. Photo courtesy: Grunder Landscaping Co.

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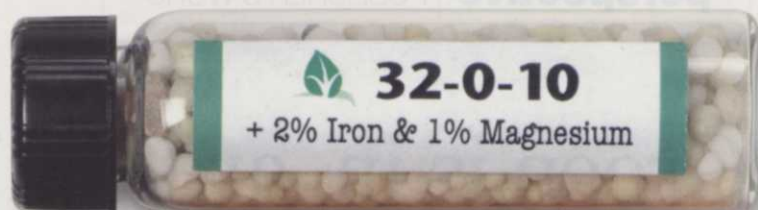
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Green is in, are you?

As we head into the new year, it's human nature to look back on what we've accomplished and look ahead to what 2008 will bring. For the landscape industry, despite the housing market bust, 2008 will bring a lot of opportunities. One such opportunity is the continuing trend of environmental awareness by U.S. consumers.



V Savvy landscape companies will take advantage of consumers' increasing environmental awareness.

It's hard to go a week without seeing a global warming or climate change headline. Last year's reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the science behind global warming led the charge. Al Gore and Ed Begley, Jr. began popping up on television screens across the country, putting familiar faces on scientific data. The December 2007 climate change talks in Bali kept the media's attention focused on the environment — and that media attention is unlikely to wane this year or next. While other data may put some of the global warming conclusions into question, the reality is that many consumers think humans have a negative impact on the environment.

A December 2007 Forrester Research report shows 41% of U.S. adults surveyed are concerned about the environment. What's more, the research firm says 12% of U.S. consumers are already willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products.

And if they're willing to pay more for "green" products, would they be willing to choose an environmentally friendly landscape company over one that didn't market itself as environmentally conscience? Landscaping is the most obvious direct link to the environment for homeowners. If they're concerned about the environment, wouldn't they want their environmental efforts to start at home? It all starts with education. From manufacturers to service providers, we need to teach our customers that sound practices are the greenest solutions.

Add in the fact that landscape companies can make a real difference when it comes to the environment, and you've got all the makings for a meaningful trend toward environmentalism in the landscape industry. From high-tech water-saving irrigation devices to rain gardens to green roofs, landscapers are in a position to make America "greener." Savvy companies will take advantage of the trend, not only to gain a competitive advantage, but to continue to be good stewards of the environment.

Regards,

Kevin Stoltman
Group Publisher
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H-2B: Woe are we!

> COMMENTARY FROM ANLA

As you may have heard, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) bureau announced on Jan. 3, that it had received enough petitions to reach the congressionally mandated H-2B seasonal and temporary worker program cap for the second half of fiscal year 2008, which begins April 1. With the second half 2008 cap of 33,000 visas met, all petitions for new H-2B workers received after Jan. 2 will be rejected.

The simple fact that the cap has been exceeded so quickly, as our executive vice president Bob Dolibois stated, “is an irrefutable affirmation of ANLA’s efforts to increase number of H-2B guest worker visas available to support the American economy and landscape and nursery businesses.”

Practically, it means that tens of thousands of experienced seasonal landscape workers may not be able to return to their jobs. It means that businesses may be forced to downsize or close, affecting their American workers, their tax contributions to local communities, and the ripple economic effect that comes from their purchase of local supplies and services.

Shying from Controversy

If Congress intended to design an approach to shrinking the American economy, it is well on the way. Frankly — no one wants to talk about this. If Congress wanted to encourage illegal immigration, the best way to do so is to force law-abiding workers who have been coming through just about the only legal channel to either lose their economic lifeline or cross illegally and take their chances.

Why hasn’t Congress acted yet? There is broad bipartisan support for the Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Acts (H.R.1843 and S.988). Yet, as program users are learning, guest worker programs are controversial stuff. In the case of the H-2B cap relief measure, organized labor has lined up as a major stumbling block. Labor holds the view that guest worker programs empower the employer too much, and can suppress wages and undermine working conditions for Americans. We counter that few Americans are looking for seasonal jobs, that seasonal

foreign workers support full-time American jobs, and that the program has wage and labor protections. But this is not necessarily a debate where folks want to know the truth. So the unions want to hold the measure hostage until they get wage and labor protections concessions.

Other opposition comes from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, which is reluctant to allow any narrow immigration-related measures to move through Congress alone. They are advocating for at least a somewhat broader approach to immigration legislation. Labor and the Hispanic Caucus together have had the power to hold Leadership back from moving on the H-2B return worker measure.

Some in the H-2B user/provider community are bewildered that H-2B — a small business issue — is getting caught up in the immigration debate. That’s a rational view, but folks, our political system doesn’t always operate in the realm of the rational. To illustrate, NumbersUSA, one of the leading immigration restrictionist groups, has trained its guns on the H-2B program as an assault on the American worker. To think that the debate can be reframed and isolated from immigration in time to do any good is to shovel sand against a swift tide.

Keep the Pressure on

That isn’t to say we give up. There is enormous and growing pressure to pass the H-2B returning worker exemption. We need to keep that pressure up, with weekly calls and faxes and emails to Congress asking, “have you gotten the job done yet? Here are the consequences if you don’t.”

With such pressure, it can happen, perhaps sometime in February or March. Obviously, the later it happens, the more chaotic the spring season. Sooner is better. How might it happen? Legislative strategy and packaging are ultimately going to be a Democratic leadership call. If an opening is created, and if the fix is clean enough (meaning, concessions to unions are limited and won’t cripple the program) we need to run for it, run in a hard and unified fashion. We may only get one chance.

Regelbrugge is vice president for government relations, American Nursery & Landscape Association, www.anla.org.



A punch of color can make a positive first impression

> COMMENTARY FROM OFA

Color design saturates every corner of our lives — from the clothes we wear to the electronics we purchase to the items that decorate our homes. While most people don't stop to think about how much color impacts their lives, those of us in the green industry know that color sells, especially when it comes to real estate. Whether you're preparing a home to go on the market or installing seasonal color for a corporate client, color can benefit not only your bottom line but your client's as well.

Consider the following:

- > Landscaping can add between 7% and 15% to a home's value.
- > Homes with "excellent" landscaping can expect a sale price about 7% higher than equivalent houses with "good" landscaping and nearly 12% higher than homes with "average" landscaping.
- > Landscaping can bring a recovery value of 100% to 200% at selling time.
- > In one study, 99% of real estate appraisers said landscaping enhances the sales appeal of real estate.

The reason landscaping has such an effect on property value is that it's often the first thing a person notices about a building or house. A well-planned, beautiful landscape implies that the home's interior is just as tidy, stylish, and interesting as the yard outside. And while green might be one of the hottest colors in modern design, when it comes to landscaping, color is a crucial part of making the most powerful first impression.

The Benefits of Color

According to a study conducted by the Color Marketing Group, a non-profit association that predicts and tracks color trends, as much as 85% of a consumer's purchasing decision is based on color and packaging. If you think of landscaping as packaging for a building, then how can you use color to enhance that packaging and ultimately the building's value?

The Color Marketing Group has well-documented cases detailing the benefits of color. In one case study,

General Motors replaced a standard gray automotive paint color with a new hue-shifting color that allowed a \$995 premium and increased color penetration by 1.7%. In another example, Procter & Gamble designed a new container for Febreze Air Effects to mimic the light, subtle, and airy fragrances of the product line, engaging the customer and increasing customer purchase by an undisclosed percentage.

Expand Your Color Palate

Regardless of what emotion you are trying to evoke or the type of impression you are trying to create, there are plenty of annual and perennial plants to accomplish the job. The important thing is to keep your palate varied and choose the right color both for your client and the specific job.

While many people believe that color rules were made to be broken, there are some generally accepted color stories that can help you get started if you need direction. For bold statements, hues such as reds, oranges, and yellows quickly grab attention. Pastel colors fit better with a cottage look and nostalgic landscapes. Contemporary or modern homes can sustain a wide

Homes with "excellent" landscaping can expect a sale price about **7% higher** than those with "good" landscaping and **nearly 12% higher** than homes with average landscaping.

range of colors from bold, primary color schemes to trendy colors such as brown and bright pink.

But really, the color scheme you use matters much less than the fact that you've added color to your project. Once you do, you'll quickly learn the power of color to make great first impressions that increase property value, create happy clients, and make your bottom line a bit "greener."

Holmes, CAE, is executive director of OFA. For more information, visit www.ofa.org.



Networking now: from the back 9 to the web, it's all about links

In order to determine exactly what networking means, let's go to the good old Webster's Dictionary and get on the same page: "Networking — The exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions."

The meaning is still as broad as it was when my dictionary was published in 1997. What's changed are the staggering options for various platforms of information exchange that weren't imaginable 10 years ago. Bottom line: Networking is a vital tool for gathering information, talking to the right people and achieving your goals. It's an essential for any successful business — but boy, has the landscape changed.

Before you head out to the blogosphere or the local golf courses, know your objectives. Are you trying to drive more traffic to your website, engage numbers on your blog, get a specific contract signed, increase margins or gross revenue by a particular percent? Know your end game.

Listen and Learn

Before fear and desperation creeps in, start listening. Find out what customers want instead of trying to get them to take what you need to sell. If you don't add value to your customers' operations, you won't be successful in the 21st century marketplace.

Don't let yourself get discouraged. If you can't immediately measure your results, keep investigating new ways and places to make contacts and exchange ideas. There are more networking opportunities today than ever before.

Going Old School

Studies have shown that only about 5 to 10% of all new jobs are posted in the classified ads or on the Internet. The other positions are filled by word of mouth.

How clients or business contacts react on the golf course can clue you in as to how they deal with business situations. You can learn how they handle playing with partners, how they talk to employees by how they talk to a caddy, whether they compliment your good shots or whether they're so competitive that they don't notice anything else, how angry they get or how happy they

get. It can even indicate how they would deal with management — whether they try to make excuses for how they're playing.

The Online Universe

Blogs and fresh website content are critical to effective networking. It is essential that you constantly update your site content because search engine algorithms will rank your company, in part, on the sheer volume of fresh content you are posting. Content is king! If you can't write it all, hire someone. The volume of fresh material is very important if you care about where you sit on that search engine results page.

Refreshing content on your blog or website, posting on someone else's blog or simply supplying industry articles that will be linked somewhere is a powerful and effective tool for networking. Your search engine ranking is directly tied to the amount of authored links you have on the web. Post new entries at least three times a month to show that you're committed.

The following are a few keys to securing more "link love" with your on-line content:

- > Classify your specialty. Include a tagline on your blog or web site's banner so its subject can be quickly recognized.

- > Demonstrate that you're current on hot topics. For example, relate a recent news item about your area of expertise to a project you completed and link to evidence of your work.

- > Avoid too much personal information.

- > Contribute to other blogs. Insert a link to your blog to increase your traffic.


Networking is a 24/7 job. In today's culture, you are missing opportunity if you stay only on the golf links, or only engage in an online viral campaign. The optimal networking campaign means attending your child's Cub Scout pack meeting as much as engaging in search engine optimization. Actual and virtual face time is equally vital.

Gilhoolley is president of Gilhoolley Consulting, Inc., Cincinnati.

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How can I control broadleaf weeds? Stop grubs?

Q This year we had severe problem with lots of grassy and broadleaf weeds. Particularly in new customers' properties, weed problems are number one. Our major problem is nutsedge, crabgrass and a number of difficult to control weeds like oxalis and speedwell. Can you recommend products which will take care of all of these? — PA

This year many places in the Northeast experienced severe crabgrass problems. To manage nutsedge, crabgrass and most of the difficult weeds, such as oxalis and speedwell, consider using an herbicide called O-4. It contains quinclorac, sulfentrazone, 2,4-D and dicamba. Reports indicate that this herbicide can be applied in spring and fall to actively growing broadleaf weeds as compared to summer months. Fall applications provide good control of winter annuals and perennials such as henbit, chickweed, clover and ground ivy.

Reports indicate treatments done as late as in September can provide good control of nutsedge, crabgrass and a number of difficult broadleaf weeds. Repeat treatment as needed.

Always read and follow label directions.

Q A number of our customers' properties have severe grub problems. Another problem is lawns damaged by skunk or raccoons in search of grubs. We have used Merit in summer with good results. Our question is what to expect from Merit treatment in the fall? Would it be beneficial in controlling grubs then? If not, we will use Dylox as a rescue treatment. How quickly can we expect the grubs to die and hopefully minimize the animal damage? — OH

There are many different species of white grubs that can cause severe damage to turfgrass. In your area, Japanese beetle, European chafers and Masked chafers are probably the most common white grubs. Grubs feed on turfgrass roots at the soil and thatch interface and are difficult to manage. Although there are many

insecticides — such as Merit, Mach-2, Dylox and Arena to name a few — that are labelled for grub control, we will limit the discussion to Merit and Dylox, the ones you have mentioned.

Affected areas may appear to be under drought stress due to heavy grub infestations. Affected turfgrass can be pulled back like a carpet. Often grub infestations may not result in noticeable injury in lawns. Problems become more noticeable when animals such as raccoons, skunks, moles or opossums dig or pull the turfgrass in search of food.

To develop a good management strategy, it is important to identify the target grub species and understand their biology. Refer to your extension publications to learn about grubs. The majority of the grubs in your area have a one-year lifecycle.

If you apply Merit insecticide in the fall, it may not provide adequate control because you would be dealing with late second- or third-instar grubs. These grubs go down deeper in the soil for overwintering as the temperature gets colder. The insecticide has to be ingested for grub control. For better control with Merit insecticide, the treatments should be applied between mid-June and mid-August. This preventive application is targeted against young larvae as they hatch from eggs laid in late summer.

Since you are experiencing animal damage to your clients' turf and extensive grub infestation, your best option is to provide a rescue treatment using insecticides such as Dylox or Arena. Reports indicate that Dylox insecticide can work as a rescue treatment. The product needs to be ingested by the target grubs. The performance may vary depending upon the grub species and/or the formulations of Dylox being used. Generally, if the product moves to the target grubs and if they ingest 70 to 80% of it, control can be achieved within two weeks. Post watering or rainfall after treatment is beneficial for grub control.

Read and follow label directions for best results.

Rao is manager of Research and Technical Development for The Davey Tree Expert Company, Kent, OH, and supervises research conducted by The Davey Institute.

>> ASK DR. RAO If you've got a question about tree, ornamental, or turf care that you'd like answered by Dr. Rao in an upcoming issue of *Livescapes*, send them to brao@davey.com.

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PRUNE TREES PROPERLY

BY JANET AIRD

Trees are different than other plants in a landscape, says Tchukki Andersen, a certified staff arborist at Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), which provides training and certification for tree care workers.

"Trees are part of the landscape, but we need to treat them differently than the rest of the landscape," she says. "When things go wrong with trees, they can go really wrong."

Reasons to Prune

Removing a hazard is the first reason to prune a tree. The health of the tree and aesthetics are the others. No matter what the reason, though, make sure you have a permit if the city you're working in requires one and follow the regulations carefully.

Storms can cause trees to be-

come hazardous, but so can changing their environment, for example, building a patio or a swimming pool nearby. It's important to inspect trees regularly, and especially after storms. Remove all branches that could fall and cause injury or property damage. Trim branches that block sight lines on streets and driveways. Branches that grow into utility lines also pose a hazard, but they should be removed by an arborist who's trained to work near electrical hazards.

Even the healthiest trees can be damaged by a storm, disease or insects, but trees that are well pruned are more likely to withstand them. Pruning for health begins when saplings are still in the nursery. This is the best time to establish a tree's structure, Andersen says.

Structural Pruning

Many trees have co-dominant stems, branches of approximately the same size that are connected at a V-shape and grow out of the same union in a tree. They're held together by bark, not wood, so the joint is very weak.

"Trees need to be trained early into a U-shape or subordinate V-branches," she says. "The U-shape allows more space in the middle, and the branches are attached by wood." You can also remove some branches from one co-dominant stem to reduce its growth and allow the other stem to become dominant.

Young, vigorous trees are better able to handle limb removal than older, slower-growing ones. Still, it's best to remove less than 30% of the crown, she says. "The more foliage

continued on page 14

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continued from page 12

you remove, the worse off the tree will be."

Most larger and older trees need some crown thinning, usually to maintain their structure or to rejuvenate them. Reduce foliage by no more than about 15% to 20% each growing season. The next year, remove no more than another 15% to 20%. Rejuvenating a tree can take five to seven years, she says.

Remove branches that are dead, diseased, insect-infested and broken, and ones that cross or rub another branch. Then selectively remove smaller branches — up to 2 inches in diameter — to increase light penetration and air movement through the crown. Prune from the outside in, she says, so you don't end up removing the interior foliage and leaving foliage

only on the outer branches.

Pruning larger limbs is often a case for "the trained eye of an arborist," she says. In fact, Andersen adds, "Whenever you need to get on a ladder, it's best to call an arborist."

Pruning for aesthetics enhances trees' natural shapes and branch structures, especially trees that do little self-pruning.

"It all comes back to the tree species," she says. "Sometimes we just need to leave trees alone and let them be what they want to be. If you're pruning mature trees once or twice a year, or if power lines run through the tree, the tree is probably in the wrong place."

When to Prune

When it comes to pruning specific kinds of trees, all trees are different and all sites are different. "A lot depends on the health, size and species of the tree, the time of year and prior pruning," Andersen says. The only hard and fast rules are: Don't top trees and don't cut the roots."

Some trees, like conifers, are really good at pruning themselves, she says. They shade their lower branches, which then die and snap off. If the dead branches become a hazard, prune them off any time.

The best time to prune hardwoods is when they're dormant. You can see their structure, and the wounds close better in the next growing season. This helps protect them from diseases such as fireblight.

It's also usually all right to prune them in early summer, after the spring rains have stopped and when the flow of sap has slowed. But avoid pruning trees at this time if they're susceptible to diseases, for example, elms, and oaks in areas where oak wilt exists.

Trees with showy flowers are also

best pruned when they're dormant. Trees that flower in early spring can be pruned right after they flower. To increase the size and decrease the number of flowers or fruit the next year, prune after the buds have set.

Trees seal their wounds with sap, gum and resins to protect themselves from pathogens. It's usually better to allow trees to heal naturally than to use pruning paint.

Pathogens spread easily on pruning tools. When you're pruning a tree you think might be infected, sanitize your tools after cutting each branch by immersing them in either 70% denatured alcohol or a solution of one part liquid bleach and nine parts water for one to two minutes. Clean them with soap and water after each use.

If you're interested in upgrading your tree care skills, TCIA has many courses, from pruning, insect problems, diseases, fertilizing and safety to certification and accreditation.

"We recommend that landscapers become certified arborists," she says. "It raises their level of professionalism and the level of confidence property owners have in them." 🌿

Aird is a freelance writer based in California.

HOW TO PRUNE

Prune at a node, the point where one branch attaches to another. Make your first cut just outside the branch bark ridge, which forms in the branch crotch and around part of the stem. Angle down away from the stem to avoid injuring the branch collar, the 'shoulder' or bulge at the underside of the base of the branch. Cut as closely as possible to the stem in the branch axil, the angle where the branch joins the stem, but outside the branch bark ridge. This allows the wound to seal most quickly.

Pruning too closely to the stem (flush cuts) may cause the stem tissues to decay. Pruning too far from the stem leaves stubs, which may cause the branch tissue to die,

suckers to sprout and insect and disease damage, all of which may cause hazards in the future.

Source: USDA Forest Service website





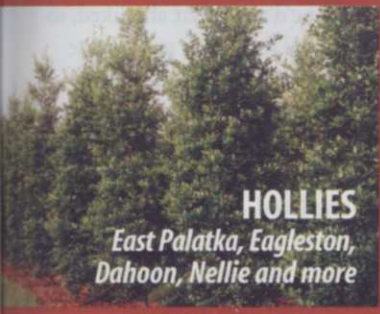
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>> Minimal Color, Maximum Impact



an architect, she had a very strong sense of what she wanted for the property.

"She just didn't have a strong background in landscape design, and she didn't know plants well," explains Hubner. "She had a big stack of ideas; things that she'd seen that she liked, so it was very easy for me to get a sense of her taste and style. She was very contemporary and used a lot of strong, saturated colors in her house. From the initial meeting when I asked her to show me what she liked, I knew that if I used those colors in the landscape she would be happy with the plant choices."

But having an artistic client wasn't all easy. While an architect client can better visualize concepts and might be open to more cutting-edge designs, they also tend to have their own vision for the finished product — and it likely doesn't account for the realities of living materials. As we all know, landscape design, unlike any other art form, has to be realistic as well as creative. However, through careful plant selection, Hubner was able to translate the owner's vision into a workable plant palate.

Strategic Placement

With a small budget and limited planting area on a lot dominated by a large home, each element of Hubner's design had to be carefully thought out for maximum impact. Standard obstacles such as screen-

1 Punches of annuals in saturated colors were used throughout the landscape as low-cost focal points.

2 The property owner contracted for a concrete-block retaining wall flanking the front walkway.

BY BRIDGET WHITE

After working with one of her projects through three owners and as many landscape visions, Kathy Hubner probably knows the site better than any of the owners. Initially hired by the first owner/architect during construction, Hubner created a landscape master plan that addressed specific owner requirements and included multiple implementation stages to keep the budget low. But before the final stage could be implemented, a new owner came in with a new vision.

While the property is now on its third owner in less than 5 years (with rumors of a buy-back by a previous owner), Hubner's knowledge of the property, her ability to adapt the landscape to the current owner's style, and her strategic use of color have turned a single, small job into a constant source of revenue.

An Educated Client

With most projects, the hardest part of the design is figuring out what the client really wants. That was not a problem with this project. Since the original owner was

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- > Add almost instant shade.
- > Screen unsightly views of the neighbor's house.
- > Use low-maintenance and drought-tolerant plants.
- > Create play spaces and incorporate space for a future pool.
- > Highlight intense, saturated color, including heirloom plants from the owner's mother.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

- > Small lot with large 3-story house
- > Neighboring houses were very close and shared a driveway
- > Poor site drainage, grading and irrigation
- > Very limited budget

ing unsightly views caused by a too-close neighbor were heightened by planting spaces as small as 5 ft. In this instance, giant timber bamboo grew completely vertical to provide the necessary screen within a few years while taking up very little space. Plus,

the bamboo quickly provided shade to allow plants such as wandering jew, canna lily and philodendron to thrive.

“So that was one solution,” says Hubner, “add in a little more planting space, and the result is incredible. It’s this lush jungle look that just erased a whole bunch of eyesores. Within the backyard, we used fast-growing ornamental trees, taller palm trees and large, box live oaks to get the instant shade she wanted.”

The goal in the front yard was to trick the eye into thinking there was more annual color than there was. Hot pink petunias were planted in front of white artemisia and red yucca. Together, the small planting of annuals and showy perennials make a big color statement.

“That’s a design trick I use often,” Hubner says. “People get busier and busier. They still want the annual color but don’t want the time it takes. So you build a backdrop of perennial color and interest and accentuate that with annual color. It works every time ... even for the most discerning of clients.”

White is a freelance writer living in New Orleans.

3 After construction, pink petunias and layered perennials were added for maximum impact.

4 By re-using existing plants and containers, project cost was controlled while the landscape offered continuity between old and new.



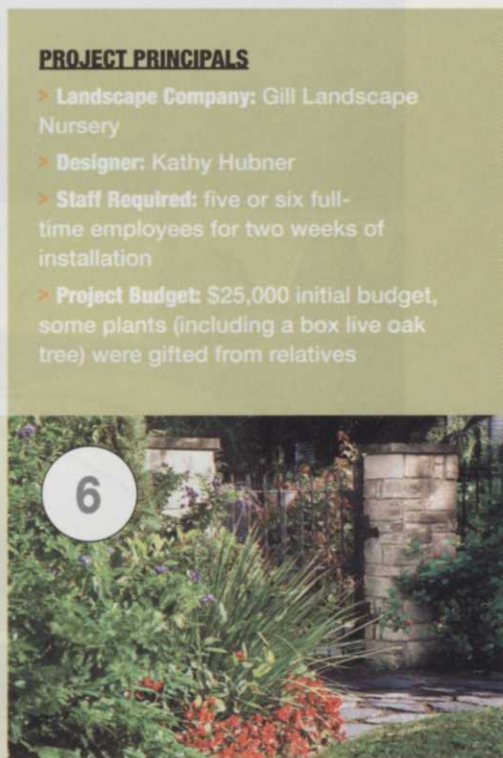
PLANT LIST
In addition to a variety of new and existing trees, multiple varieties of drought-tolerant foliage plants and a large stand of giant timber bamboo, the following annuals and perennials added splashes of color to make the landscape really pop.

Kalanchoe	Lantana
Geranium	Bougainvillea
Viola	Hibiscus and Hibiscus Sinensis
“Pink Carpet” Petunias	Duranta
Russelia	Plumbago
Canna Lily	



5 The final design relied heavily on fast-growing foliage plants to create a tropical feel in the backyard play area.

6 Strategically mixing annual color with perennials created a low-maintenance landscape yet still offered visual interest.



Landscapers See Opportunity in the Sky

BY BRIAN ALBRIGHT

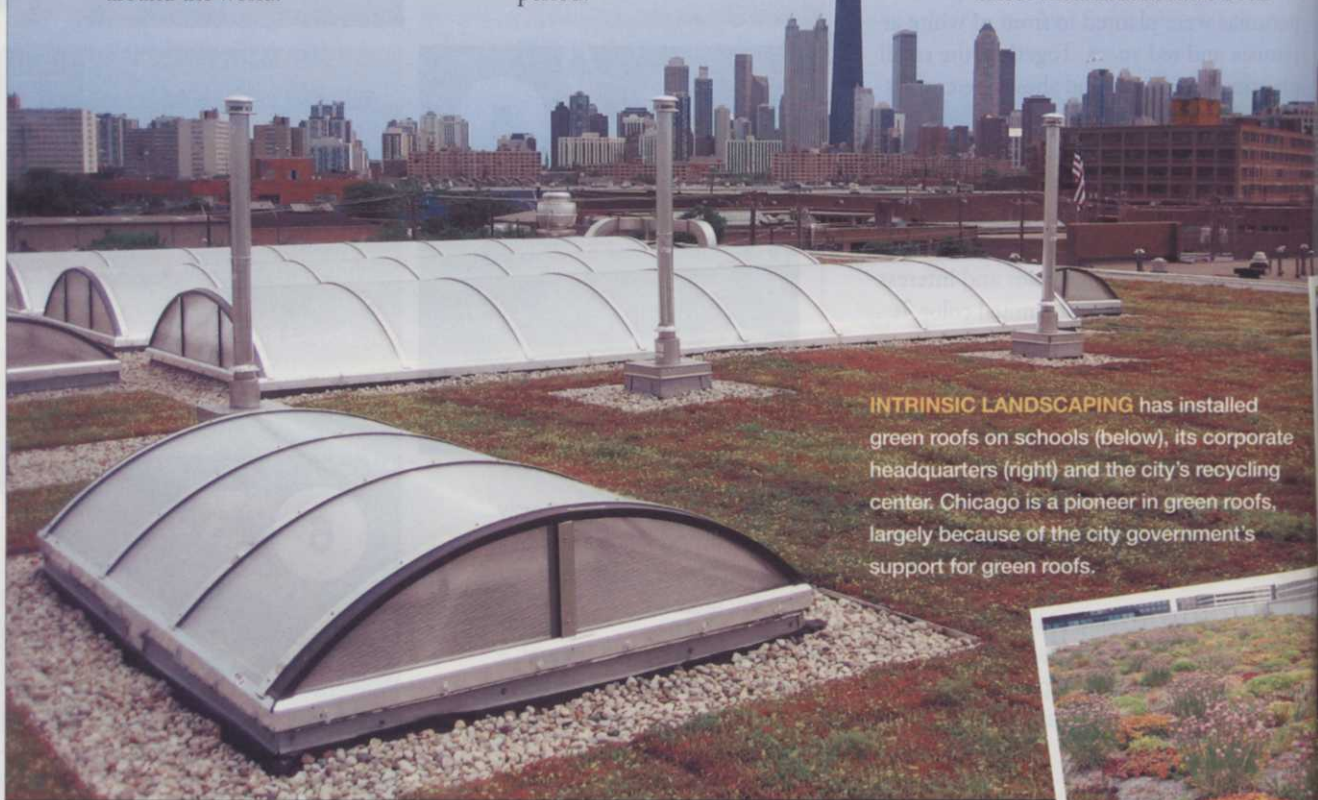
Landscapers spend a lot of time looking down—understandable, since their livelihoods are linked to the soil. But Kurt Horvath, owner of Intrinsic Landscaping in Glenview, IL, has his head in the clouds these days. Horvath is one of a growing number of landscapers specializing in the design and construction of green roofs, those eco-friendly islands of greenery that dot formerly drab roofscapes around the world.

GREEN ROOFS PRESENT OPPORTUNITY, CHALLENGE TO LANDSCAPE COMPANIES

According to Green Roofs for Healthy Cities (GRHC), the North American industry association, green roof installations in 2006 were up more than 25%, representing more than 3 million sq. ft. For intensive green roofs, which incorporate larger plants, the growth rate was 110% during the same period.

Horvath's company, which includes a nursery and two landscaping divisions, was contracted to install its first green roof in 2000. More than 100 installations later, he has built a new business focused on rooftop projects, as well as a subsidiary that manufactures and distributes green roof components.

"Those installations have been



INTRINSIC LANDSCAPING has installed green roofs on schools (below), its corporate headquarters (right) and the city's recycling center. Chicago is a pioneer in green roofs, largely because of the city government's support for green roofs.

a mix of anything and everything," Horvath says. "If you can put it on a roof, we're there."

There is expected to be significant opportunity in the green roof market as more and more businesses and homeowners look for ways to reduce their impact on the environment, but do your homework before leaping into a project. Unlike traditional installations, or even simple rooftop gardens, green roofs require a wide variety of expertise, ranging from horticulture to structural engineering.

"There's more to green roofs that meets the eye," says Steven Peck, founder and president of Green Roofs for Healthy Cities. "There are a lot of ways to mess up a green roof. It's a living system. It's very important to follow the lessons we've already learned to make sure it doesn't leak, that the plants survive, and that you get the maximum benefit for your climate."

Green Roof Benefits

Green roofs can range from smaller plantings on residential homes to the massive, 10.4-acre "living roof" at Ford Motor Company's historic River Rouge Plant in Dearborn, MI. Building owners in-



A VIEW of ASLA's green roof from a nearby building (above). **SILENE CAROLINIANA** give the "south wave" of ALSA's green roof a burst of color at the beginning of spring.

stall the roofs for a variety of reasons, ranging from concerns about the environment to simply providing usable green space for their employees or tenants.

There are also hard-dollar benefits. It's estimated that green roofs can last up to twice as long as conventional roofs by protecting the roof membrane. Depending on the size of the building and the climate, these roofs can also help keep buildings cooler in the summer, and even insulate against noise.

One of the most significant benefits, though, is the reduction in stormwater runoff. Depending on the plants and depth of the growing medium, these roofs can retain 70 to 90% of precipitation in the summer. Green roofs can potentially reduce flooding and sewer overflow, as well as act as a natural filtration system.

In 2006, the American Society of Landscape Architects installed a green roof on its downtown Washington, D.C., headquarters, and closely monitored its effects on temperature and stormwater runoff. According to a report issued in September 2007, the roof retained nearly 75% of all precipitation, and lowered the roof air temperature by as much as 32° in the summer, compared to a neighboring tarred roof. Engineering analysis showed that

the roof's extra insulation lowered energy usage in the winter by 10%.

Construction Tips

There are two basic types of green roofs: extensive (which include shallower soil depths and smaller plants), and intensive (with larger plants and deeper soil). While designs vary, green roofs typically include a waterproofing membrane and some sort of lightweight growing material. As an example, the green roof installed at 1425 K Street in Washington, D.C., includes a waterproof membrane/root barrier, a 2-inch layer of polystyrene insulation, a layer of geo-textile filter fabric, and an inch-thick drainage mat, topped off with 3 inches (33,000 lbs.) of engineered soil held in place with a loosely-woven jute mat.

The roofs also have to be properly contained on all sides, either using the existing features of the roof or specially designed barriers, a structural element sometimes overlooked by inexperienced architects. "I don't know how people can overlook containment, but sometimes they do," says Sarah Murphy, green roof program coordinator with D.C. Greenworks, the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that spearheaded the K Street project and installed the city's



PHOTOS COURTESY: INTRINSIC LANDSCAPING



installation

first green roof in 2001. "Sometimes we're asked to come in and bid on a green roof after most of the construction and water proofing is done. Often, there are design elements we would have handled differently had we been involved sooner. Since we're designing after the fact, it's not ideal and often more expensive."

A green roof is not a simple undertaking, which is why the GRHC has put such an emphasis on cross-industry training and collaboration. Landscape companies have to work hand-in-hand with roofing specialists, architects and engineers to avoid structural damage, leaks and poor plant performance.

When Intrinsic Landscaping (founded in the late 1960s by Horvath's father) was contacted about its first green roof, Horvath spent a lot of time researching the concept. "I talked to all of the other trades, and



tried to understand where we would start and where we would finish," Horvath says. "It took a lot of time to really understand how the cranes work, what the limits are, and what kind of water proofing membrane we needed to use."

Rooftop Plantings

The type of plants will vary by climate, the slope of the roof, and the expected maintenance program. Many green roofs are designed so that they don't require any irrigation, so hardy plants are common.

Research conducted in Portland, OR, by the Bureau of Environmental Services found that Sedums, sempervivum and ice plants were successful on green roofs because of their tolerance of heat and cold, and minimal irrigation requirements. At the ASLA green roof (which included some experimental plantings), hardier Sedums (*Sedum album*, *Sedum reflexum*, *Sedum spurium* and *Sedum sexangulare*) did better than others (*Sedum lanceolatum* and *Sedum stenopetalatum*) on the extensive portion of the roof. Flame Sumac, Smooth Sumac, Trumpet Vine and Pasture Rose thrived on the intensive portion of the roof. Other perennials that thrived included Nodding Onion, Thread Leaved Tick Seed, and Butterfly Milkweed.

Green roofs can also host fairly large trees, depending on the building's design and the construction firm's ability to actually move the trees to a rooftop. "If the climate can support a particular species of tree, there's no technical reason why you can't have all of those trees on rooftops," Peck says. "But you have



THE REEVES CENTER'S green roof in Washington, D.C., takes shape over time.

to know what it will weigh when mature, how much water it needs, wind uplift, knowledge of the root system, and what kind of containers you can use."

Maintenance varies depending on the type of roof and its uses. For roofs that aren't visible from the street, and not otherwise accessible, maintenance could simply entail occasional irrigation and pest management. "If no one can see it, does it matter if it's weedy?" Horvath says. "That's a matter of opinion."

When necessary, low-grade or organic fertilizers are recommended since there is less soil present to absorb the chemicals. "We've seen some scenarios where contractors treat the roof just like grade landscapes, and misuse chemicals," Horvath says. "You have to do the research and be environmentally responsible."

GRHC offers a training and accreditation program to help members of the landscaping industry better understand how to install and maintain a green roof. The organization has delivered its Green Roof Design 101 course to more than 3,000 industry professionals, and also offers courses on design and implementation, waterproofing and drainage.

"We're pulling this knowledge together," says Peck. "Our industry is so new that you really can't find the information anywhere else." 🌱

RESOURCES

> **Green Roofs for Healthy Cities:** Includes a member directory, information on training and accreditation programs, and updates on the group's annual conference. The sixth annual International Greening Rooftops for Sustainable Communities Conference will be held April 30 to May 2, 2008 at the Baltimore Convention Center & Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel. www.greenroofs.org

> **ASLA Green Roof Project**
www.asla.org/land/050205/greenroofcentral.html

> **Emory Knoll Farms:** This site also includes links to green roof equipment suppliers, organizations and other resources.
www.greenroofplants.com

> **Greenroofs.com**
Publishes an online directory of manufacturers and suppliers, as well the Greenroof Projects Database.

> **World Green Roof Infrastructure Network (WGRIN)**
www.worldgreenroof.org

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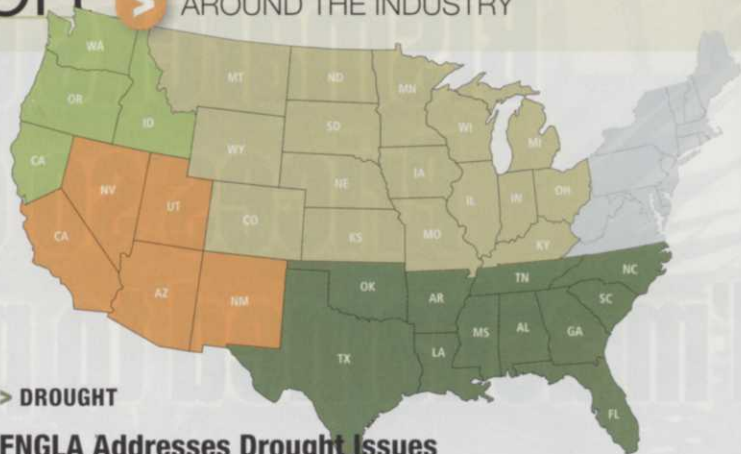
NATIVE LANDSCAPING

Botanical Developments Completes North Rim Park

BEND, OR — Drake Design Group (DDG) and Botanical Developments, both affiliates of Brooks Resources Corp., recently completed the North Rim Park project. DDG designed the park to match with the community's architectural guidelines, which includes the incorporation of native landscaping.

The park features native plantings and rock outcroppings, along with erosion control elements to help stabilize the area.

"We specialize in working with the native plants and creating projects that really fit with the high desert environment," says Project Manager Ron Kidder. "North Rim is committed to preserving the natural landscape of the area, and we feel that North Rim Park really epitomizes this goal in many ways."



> DROUGHT

FNGLA Addresses Drought Issues

In light of reason drought conditions in the state, the staff of the Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA) has been meeting with the executive directors and top officials of the South Florida and Southwest Florida Water Management Districts to push for 60-day exemption periods for all new landscapes, as well as funding for consumer marketing to promote proper planting during dry periods.

According to FNGLA Executive Vice President Ben Bolusky, the association has urged Florida Governor Charlie Crist to work with his colleagues, state and federal agencies to conserve water in Lake Okeechobee as well as Georgia's Lake Lanier (metro Atlanta is North Florida growers' major market). For more information, visit www.fn gla.org.



southeast

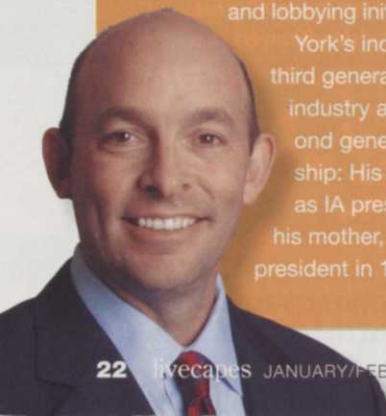
southwest

> PEOPLE

York Inducted as IA President

PHOENIX — Ewing Irrigation President Douglas W. York was inaugurated as the 2008 Irrigation Association (IA) president during the International Irrigation Show in San Diego. As president, York says he will concentrate on education, active membership involvement, and lobbying initiatives.

York's induction marks a third generation of irrigation industry advocacy, and second generation of IA leadership: His father, Ray, served as IA president in 1986; and his mother, Sue, served as IA president in 1998.



> INTERNET

U of I Debuts Hortanswers Site

URBANA, IL — A new website allows horticulturists to gain information about plant pests, diseases, and performance in the USDA hardiness zones 4, 5 and 6.

"Hortanswers," online at www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/hortanswers, is designed to provide basic information about disease and pest problems, plus determine the right plant for the right place, says Greg Stack, U of I Extension horticulture educator and one of the site's designers. Originally conceived by former U of I Extension specialist Bruce Pallsrud, the site was developed by Jane Scherer, U of I Extension urban program/Web coordination specialist, along with Stack and fellow Extension horticulture educators James Schuster, Maurice Ogutu and Sharon Yiesla.

"Because of its complexity, it took several years to develop," says Stack. "The result is an extremely valuable site."



midwest



Double the Color

Calibrachoa cultivar MiniFamous Double Blue from **Selecta First Class** is part of a double flowering series that includes three colors on trailing 4-inch-tall plants. The annual performs well in sunny baskets and containers. **Circle #200 for more information.**

Double the Fun with Fiesta Double Impatiens

Fiesta double impatiens from **Ball Horticultural Company** display big, beautiful, fully double blooms from installation until the first frost. These well-branched plants fill in fast for quick landscape color. Fiesta varieties are "self-cleaning" and easy-care: there's no need to remove old blooms or pinch the plants back to keep them lush and full.

Circle #199 for more information.



High Contrast

Like the original green-leaved Nonstop Begonias, **Benary's** Nonstop Mocca offers large, 10-cm. double flowers in brilliant colors that stand out against the deep bronze leaf. Six colors are in this Begonia tuberhybrida series: Orange, Deep Orange, Scarlet, White, Yellow and its newest, Pink Shades (pictured).

Circle #197 for more information.



An Award Winner

Goldsmith Seeds' Asti White Osteospermum recently won a 2008 AAS Award. As the first Osteo from seed available in separate colors, this plant is heat- and cold-tolerant. It blooms all season long and is versatile for spring, summer and fall.

Circle #196 for more information.



Pink as a Daisy

Molimba Pink from **Proven Winners** features mounds of single pink blooms. The 14- to 24-inch plants should be spaced about a foot apart. They can bloom from planting to the first hard frost and don't require deadheading. The Marguerite Daisies should receive full sun. They can be planted in landscapes or containers.

Circle #198 for more information.



Watch Out for Avalanche

Using inter-species breeding, Avalanche Petunia from **Bodger Seeds** has a more spreading habit, better recovery from rain, and lasts longer in the garden.

They are recommended for containers, baskets and beds. The Avalanche series provides earlier blooming baskets and pots, are uniform in habit across all 10 colors and produce a mounding plant before they begin to trail. In beds they will spread to 3 feet.

Circle #195 for more information.

Feeding Contained

MIXED CONTAINER FERTILIZATION REQUIRES SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

BY FRED HULME, PH.D.

As everyday life becomes more hectic and complicated, many consumers are retreating from the time and worry associated with traditional gardening in soil beds. This has led to an explosion in container culture, especially promoting the use of mixed containers that offer instant gratification, variety, flexibility and aesthetic appeal. These items can offer an ever-changing season-long display that can be moved around the landscape area and have dramatic visual impact from day one. Unfortunately, many consumers overlook the extra care involved with proper watering and fertilization of these containers.

There are several basic types of fertilizers available for landscape use including water soluble fertilizer (WSF) and controlled release fertilizer (CRF). WSF may be in granular or powdered form. These fertilizers dissolve in water and instantly supply a veritable buffet of nutrients. However, the effect of each application is not long-lived, and WSF is best used when constantly supplied with each watering or at least

as frequently as possible. CRF's are generally coated to ensure a consistent and predictable supply of nutrients throughout the growing season, and because of this, they offer a high degree of plant safety. With CRF

the entire fertilizer dose for a crop is applied only once at the beginning of crop production. This one application continuously feeds plants over an extended period of time.

Soilless System Needs

Plants growing in soil beds have the moderating influence of mineral soil to help them thrive throughout the growing season. Mineral soil will hold and supply many nutrients, remain fairly stable throughout the season and can hold significant moisture, allowing ornamental plants to survive periods of drought. As consumer preference switches from garden beds to mixed containers, the growing media generally used is "soilless," comprised of peat moss, composted bark or perlite, for example. While these manufactured growing mixes are excellent for quickly, efficiently and consistently raising ornamental crops in greenhouses and nurseries, they do not hold nutrients or water for long periods very well, and can almost be considered hydroponics systems.

In greenhouse production, plants may receive a constant diet of a WSF that is fitted to the irrigation water and provides all the essential nutrients. However, when plants leave the protected environment of the nursery, water and nutrients often take a back seat to other considerations. Many garden centers can provide little care, especially if plants remain there for long periods and consumers may never feed these plants at all after purchasing them. In many cases, frequent feeding with WSF at the necessary concentrations is not a viable practice. Many mixed container plant species are heavy feeders and vigorous growers. Inadequate fertilization will quickly lead to nutrient deficiencies and a decline in appearance.

This presents an opportunity for landscapers. Consumers are buying bigger and showier mixed containers every year. Usually, these containers are quite expensive to purchase, and their quality will quickly decline if they are not fed properly.



CONTAINER CULTURE is growing in popularity due to its convenience, but containers require special fertilization considerations.

Controlled Release Benefits

The use of CRFs can be an effective and economical solution to this problem. CRFs are very easy to apply. Fertilizer prills (or particles) can be blended into the growing media at planting or can be top-dressed on the growing media surface once the container is placed in the landscape. The product begins to activate very quickly, and within a week, the CRF will begin to dose nutrients to the root-zone.

After applying a CRF, the consumer only has to keep the container sufficiently watered. For the small cost of the fertilizer dose and the labor to initially apply it, landscapers can ensure mixed containers have adequate nutrition to reach their full potential throughout the growing season. CRFs also help maintain better foliage color and bloom production due to constant, uniform feeding.

Key considerations for CRF product selection and use include:

- > Nutrient content, including micronutrients.
- > Homogenous nature of the product — is it blended or are all particles the same?
- > Stated longevity of the product — does it match your growing season?
- > Appropriateness of the rate for intended crops and application.
- > Other fertilizer sources — is a WSF also being used?
- > Growing media make-up — tighter mixes should have lower rates.
- > Plant types.

Combination Programs

So what is the best fertilizer method for maintaining mixed containers? Some researchers have reported that using combination fertilizer programs (a low-to-medium rate of CRF, along with supplemental applications of lower concentrate WSF as needed) can round out a potentially inefficient fertilizer program. Even if the current program contains only WSF, combination fertilizer programs with both WSF and CRF can be beneficial and certainly increase customization potential.

- > For landscapes that contain many crops types, one simple WSF program can be used on all plants; then CRF can meet the additional needs of heavy feeders or plants with special fertilizer requirements.
- > WSF can be used to spoon-feed specific nutrients (like iron) or acidify containers when needed.
- > CRFs provide a base feed when one can't use water solubles — during cool, cloudy weather (no need to



irrigate), or when there is no time to irrigate or mix up fertilizer solutions.

- > CRF will help maintain root-zone nutrient levels during periods of frequent and heavy rains.

- > Since CRFs are coated, the use of them in the garden can help minimize nutrient run-off into the environment compared to liquid feeds only.

The Scotts Company recommends landscapers choose a WSF program for mixed containers based on a complete water test. The CRF component should provide a steady and extended release of N-P-K, Mg and minor elements. Match CRF longevity with growing temperatures and desired delivery time. In most cases, a CRF with eight to nine months of longevity will perform well in the landscape. Refer to the label for specifics.

Recommended rates:

- > Use the **low CRF** rate for salt sensitive, tender species such as fuchsia, begonia, fern and impatiens; bedding plants; high water retentive media; minimal leaching.
- > Use the **medium CRF** rate for more vigorous species and heavy feeders such as trailing petunia, with low water-retentive media (containing coarse bark) or in situations with frequent leaching.

- > **WSF concentrations** need to be lowered when used in combination with CRF. Reduce your constant feed to 50 to 75 ppm for bedding plants and 100 to 150 ppm N for flowering pot crops and baskets.

By following these suggestions and tips, you can provide your clients with mixed containers that provide consistent beauty to their landscapes throughout the growing season. Remember, when using any fertilizer, it's best to study the product and consult with the manufacturer for optimum results. 🌱

Hume is director of Technical Services for The Scotts Company, Marysville, OH.



PERENNIAL PLANTINGS will help filter out any runoff before it reaches the storm drain.



WHEN EXCAVATING a rain garden, be sure to leave a lip of soil on the downhill side of the newly dug swale.

A Perennial Po

BY ROBERT SCHEYER

Can curbside perennial gardens improve water quality? Environmental and community groups, and even City Hall, are adopting a landscaping technique called “rain gardens” to find out.

Rain gardens are curbside perennial plantings that trap what the Environmental Protection Agency calls “non-point source” water pollution. Non-point water pollution is runoff from impermeable surfaces that collect dirt, fertilizers, chemicals, oil and bacteria. It is simply what accumulates in the normal course of property ownership among responsible people. These same property owners are organizing themselves to reduce this source of pollution by having eco-friendly rain gardens installed. It’s a win-win proposition for communities and landscapers.

An Idea is Planted

Rain Gardens were first conceived in 1990 by Larry Coffman who was heading up Maryland’s environmen-

CURBSIDE PERENNIAL GARDENS TRAP POLLUTION

tal programs. He was investigating cost effective, low maintenance methods for improving water quality in local watersheds. With the help of his staff, they came up with the idea of “bioretention,” or capturing storm runoff in plant systems.

“I began to realize that we could use the functions of the upland ecosystem to treat storm water runoff,” Coffman says. “One other fact that influenced my thinking was the studies we were getting back on BMP (best management practices) efficacy. They showed there were major problems with cost, maintenance and operations. So, I got the idea of designing the green space in a parking lot to treat the runoff.”

In 1997, in cooperation with the University of Maryland, Coffman

and his staff began testing for the most effective design.

“Since then, we have improved the design and learned about the whole new world of the complex and wonderful plant/soil/microbe ecosystem,” Coffman says, “and how to use nature to protect nature and make things prettier too.”

The term “bioretention gardens” was a little clumsy, so Coffman coined the term “rain gardens.”

Proper Placement

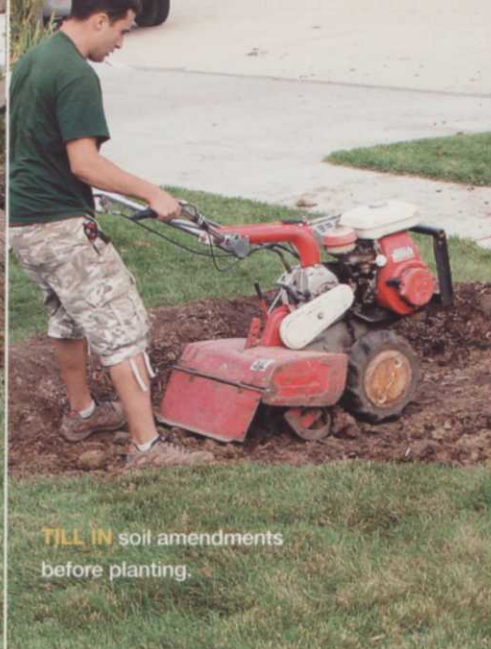
Coffman’s final design emphasizes location, location, and location.

A rain garden must catch and hold water runoff before it gets into a storm drain. So, wherever storm water runoff collects or flows is a prospective site. Likely sites include the bottom of a hill or ravine; or on a slope through which water flows.

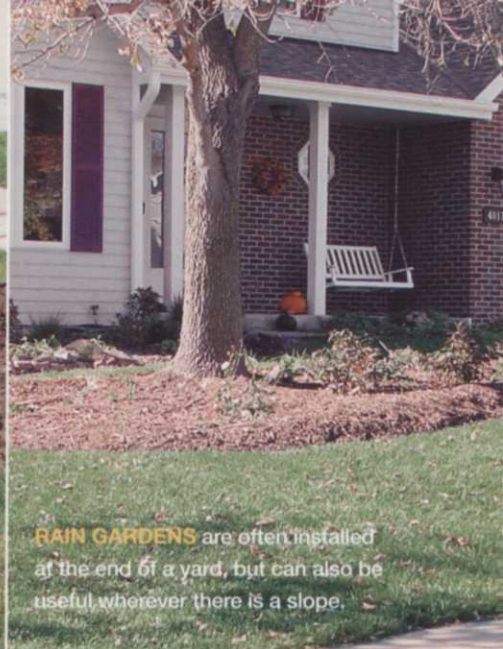
Other important considerations are size and shape. A Rain Garden should be about 20% the size of the roof, patio, or pavement area draining into it. In most cases, this will be between 100 and 300 sq. ft. The shape should be both ascetically pleas-



CLOSE-UP of the lip of soil that is key to trapping runoff



TILL IN soil amendments before planting.



RAIN GARDENS are often installed at the end of a yard, but can also be useful wherever there is a slope.

verhouse

ing and appropriate to catch water runoff. Although, since site selection is the key, even a small garden, when properly placed, has an impact.

Installation Tips

Once the proper location, size, and shape are determined, a concave depression or “swale” is dug. This differs from a typical perennial garden. A concave depression is necessary to collect the runoff.

Some of the soil excavated from the site is used to form a soil “lip.” This is built up on the downside sloping edge of the depression, next to the place to be planted. The resulting dig should leave a 6- to 12-inch bowl-shaped depression in the ground. This often means that some dirt will need to be excavated and hauled away. Soil amendments, such as sand, compost, and peat moss, are tilled into the bottom. Plants are dug in and the area is mulched.

Costs vary according to the property’s soil type, the size of the landscaped area and the types of plants chosen. Clay soils at the bottom of a slope can add to the

cost significantly because they need drain tiles to increase the rain garden’s effectiveness.

Depending on the region, landscapers typically charge \$10 to \$12 per sq. ft. to install a rain garden.

Rain garden maintenance is easier than a typical perennial bed since no fertilization is required, and the area collects needed water for plant establishment. The property owner may need to water it occasionally and weed it.

Catching on

Environmental advocacy groups have formed to promote rain gardens. They come together through websites, newsletters and town hall meetings to raise awareness of rain gardens’ benefits to a community’s water quality and attractiveness.

The city of Lincoln, NE, has begun funding rain gardens. Lincoln’s Public Works and Utilities Department has earmarked \$70,000 in EPA grant money to install rain gardens on homeowner’s properties. Essentially, they are paying homeowners to landscape their property.

“The Nebraska Environmental Protection Agency gives us grant money every year to improve a watershed’s water quality,” says Amanda Meyer who oversees the project for Lincoln’s Watershed Management Division. “Communities have been installing these rain gardens to prevent non-point source water pollution with varying degrees of success, so we decided it was worth investing in.”

Meyer stresses that the importance of the program is to “reduce water runoff into the local Holmes Lake Watershed,” which carries the majority of these non-point source water pollutants.

EPA’s grant money will cover the cost of about 20 gardens, which is a far cry from the number needed to make a measurable impact. So, what is Meyer’s barometer for the program’s success?

“We don’t expect a significant reduction in non-point pollution right away,” Meyer says. “Basically, we hope to promote community awareness that this type of pollution can be controlled using rain gardens.”

Raising awareness is good place to start. Rain gardens can increase business for landscape companies and protect their local watersheds. 🌿

Scheyer is manager of GardenScapes, a landscaping company in Lincoln, NE.

Repel Nuisance Wildlife

Armorex Goose Repellent's dual modes of action are based on smell and taste, so persistent geese and other pest animals undeterred by the odor get a taste of mildly irritating hot pepper extract. This aversive conditioning assures that they do not re-enter the area, often for up to one month. The liquid concentrate product is 100% biodegradable and has a pleasant scent to people.

Circle #194 for more information.



Path and Flood in One Outdoor Lighting Perspectives (OLP)

introduces BB7 Flood, a half-hood that directs 180° of light to a path on one side and 180° of flood lighting on the other. The fixture is designed for special applications in which flood and path lighting are needed in adjacent locations, such as walls or outdoor features. The light features copper and brass construction, no-corrosion stainless steel sockets and a 20-watt halogen bulb.

Circle #193 for more information.

Extend Insect Protection, Fertility

Bayer Environmental Science's CoreTect tablets are now available for use during tree and shrub installation or on established plants. They are a new treatment technology that combines the power of Merit insecticide with a fertilizer in convenient, easy-to-use 2.5-gram tablets.

Circle #192 for more information.



Natural Fertilizer

As an alternative to traditional chemical fertilizers, **Organica** Plant Growth Activator Plus uses 54 strains of naturally occurring, beneficial soil bacteria, fungi and actinomycetes — as well as humic acid, kelp, B complex vitamins, biotin, folic acid and natural sugars to help plants reach their full genetic potential. It's available in two forms: One is mixed directly with the growing medium and the other, which contains glucose, is mixed with water and applied as a sprench.

Circle #191 for more information.

moreinfo

AD INDEX

CIRCLE #	COMPANY	PAGE
110	Ball Horticulture.....	CV4
104	Ernst Benary	9
101	Goldsmith Seeds	CV2
105	JWD Trees	11
106	Marshall Tree	15
108	Pine Island Growers.....	21
102	Scotts Co	3
103	Soaring Eagle.....	5
109	Spring Meadow	CV3
107	Tampa Bay Wholesale Growers.....	13

EDITORIAL INDEX

COMPANY	PAGE
American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA)	6
American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA).....	19
Armorex.....	30
Ball Horticultural Co.....	25
Bayer Environmental Science	30
Benary.....	25
Bodger Seeds.....	25
Davey Tree Expert Co.....	10
D.C. Greenworks	19
Drake Design Group	22
Ewing Irrigation	22
Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA)	22

GardenScapes.....	29
Gilhooley Consulting, Inc.	8
Gill Landscape Nursery	17
Goldsmith Seeds	25
Green Roofs for Healthy Cities	18
Intrinsic Landscaping	18
Irrigation Association.....	22
OFA, an Association of Floriculture Professionals.....	7
Organica	30
Outdoor Lighting Perspectives	30
Proven Winners	25
Selecta First Class	25
The Scotts Company.....	26
Tree Care Industry Association.....	12

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