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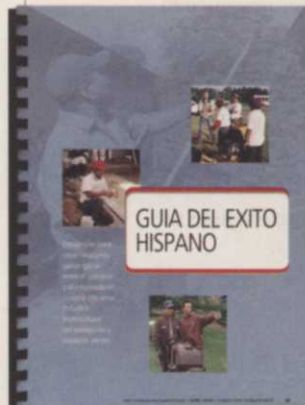
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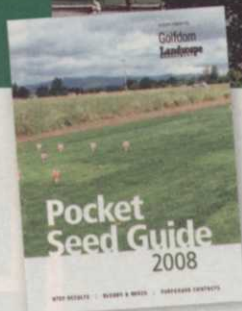
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A political pundit pontificates

Atop the Hay-Adams hotel overlooking the White House's front lawn, political pundit Charlie Cook gives his best guess as to how the upcoming elections will shake out. Cook was the closer for the BASF Media Summit held May 12-14 in Washington, D.C.



» Special issue

Looking for the latest information on the most recent turfgrass research programs?

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What are you doing to deal with rising gas prices?

11% We're raising rates, but not expressly as a fuel surcharge

8% We'll just try to route and schedule service better

7% Nothing. Our customers are feeling the pinch, too

74%

We're adding a fuel surcharge on our bills

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» Overheard

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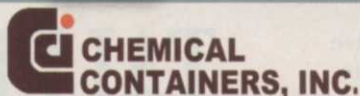
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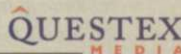
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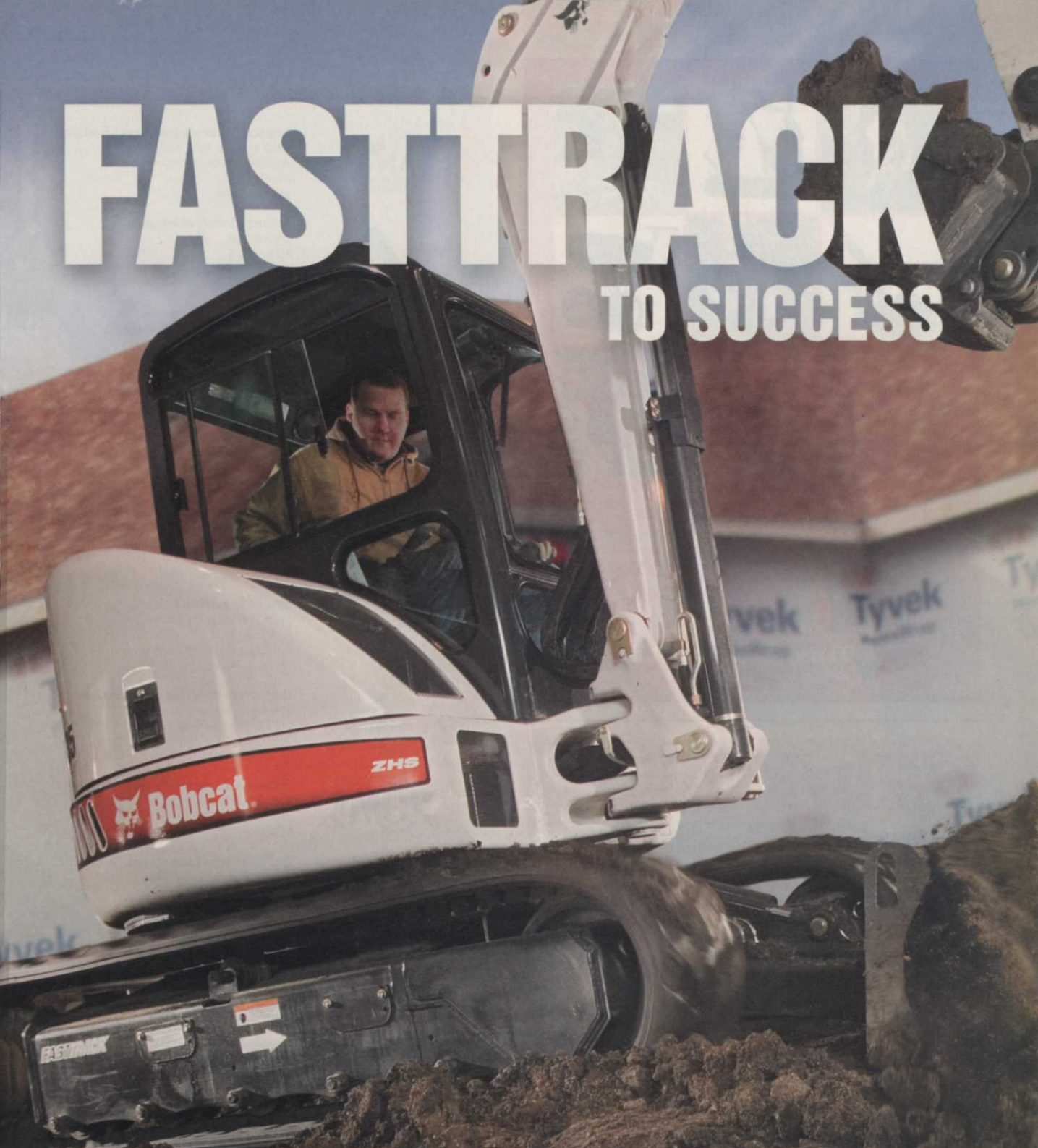
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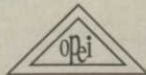
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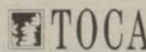
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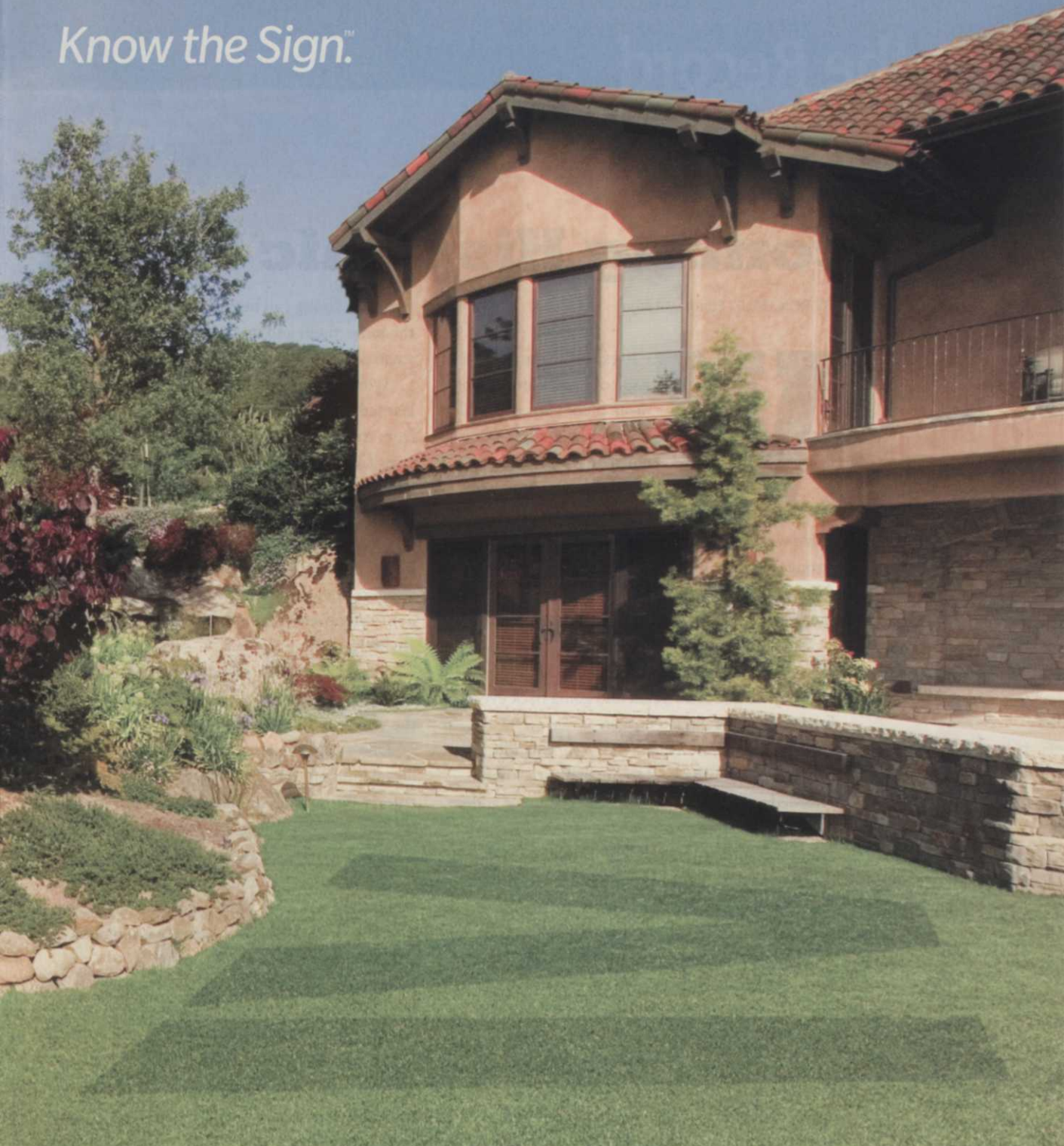


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The coming Hispanic factor

BY RON HALL / Editor-at-Large

We're especially proud of this issue of *Landscape Management*. It contains a special Spanish-language section entitled "Hispanic Success Guide," (starting on page 39) with information to share with your workers and managers to help build stronger "win-win" cultures within your companies. (The English version of the Guide is available on our Web site at www.landscapemanagement.net.)

The Guide is colored by my personal experiences, both as an editor covering the landscape industry for about 25 years, and going back even further than that, as a teenager.

Actually, it was my dad Cliff's commandment, on handing over the keys to my first car — that I needed a paying job to cover the insurance and gas money — that introduced me to the Hispanic culture, a culture much different than my own.

Like most of the teenagers I knew, I easily found work on the sandy fields of the truck farms surrounding our quiet whitebread village in northern Ohio. We planted, hoed and picked vegetables for local farmers. Or, when we got a nickel or dime more per hour, we tasseled corn for a nearby seed company. The days were long and the work was hot, but I liked it. It also gave me a grudging respect for the working people that we called "migrants." These darker-skinned, Spanish-speaking people showed up in their pickup trucks each summer almost on cue. Most of us initially saw them as "those people," and somehow mysteriously different from us.

As I worked beside them, I learned I was as

wrong as wrong can be. We were all pretty much the same, them and us — only they were a damn lot smarter when it came to the work we were doing.

Working shoulder to shoulder with them, I learned, following their example, to protect myself from the sun by wearing a hat and covering my arms and legs in loose, light-colored garments. I learned to keep a small file in my back pocket so I could sharpen my hoe to a razor's edge, making it a lot easier to flick weeds from around the vegetable plants. I learned to pick green beans, cucumbers, peppers, squash and melons at plant level and not to stoop, eight hours of which would destroy anybody's back.

Mostly I learned to appreciate how efficiently and diligently they went about their chores, both the young and the old.

Don't take what I'm writing as an apology for illegal immigration. Or that we shouldn't vigorously enforce our immigration laws. Or that there should be some sort of amnesty program for people here illegally. It is none of these.

The reality is that individuals who identify themselves as having a Latin American heritage now comprise the largest minority population in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau and other experts agree they will become an even larger presence in our society and in our industry — as laborers, as field foremen and supervisors, and increasingly as owners and competitors.

Contact Ron via email at rhall@questex.com



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In the Know

BUSINESS

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Green Industry loses H-2B battle: War goes on

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Hopes for extending the 66,000 guest worker cap through the H-2B program were raised and then quashed in late May.

Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Judd Gregg (R-NH) added an amendment to the Iraq Supplemental Appropriations Bill, which would have granted a three-year extension of the H-2B returning worker provision.

However, the H-2B provision was removed from the bill while it was being debated in the Senate.

The provision, with the unofficial title of Save Small Business, had been passed along with emergency spending bills on two previous occasions this decade and had allowed the number of returning workers to exceed 120,000. The

effort this year ran into fierce opposition from some members of Congress, in particular members of the Hispanic Caucus who have been pushing for a larger overhaul of U.S. immigration laws.

"My amendment was a very simple. There was no new law. We broke no new ground. We created no new rights or privileges. All we did was extend current law," Mikulski said. "This provision protects our borders, protects



Senators Barbara Mikulski's and Judd Gregg's H-2B amendment efforts fail.

America's jobs, and rewards people who go by the rules."

"Yet Congress' failure to extend this provision is forcing small businesses to deal with devastating cuts to their workforce. Companies in Maryland and around the country are unable to get the H-2B visas, and workers, that they need and depend on. Small and seasonal businesses are counting on us, and we are letting them down."

Any hope for the extension of the returning worker exemption before the November elections appears to be lost.

"I remain stunned and angry that a small number of elected officials who seem to care neither for the American workers we employ nor for the American communities we serve have been able to frustrate the ambition of the overwhelming majority of Congress who support the H-2B program," said Save Small Business's Hank Lavery. "Despite this setback, our supporters in the House and Senate have already begun looking for the next opportunity to get our Bill passed."

Rules proposed to streamline H-2B process

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Labor proposed rules to modernize the application process and enhance worker protections under the H-2B temporary labor certification program.

The changes, while helpful in streamlining the torturous procedure for applying for seasonal guest workers, provide small comfort for thousands of small businesses that have been shut out of receiving their workers this season.

The proposed rule would reform the application process so that employers would attest, under threat of fines and other penalties, that they have complied with all of the program's requirements. These proposals would alter the current certification process and eliminate duplication of effort by state workforce agencies (SWAs) and the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Instead of

applying first with their SWAs, employers would file their H-2B applications directly with ETA under the proposed process.

In addition, the department seeks to enhance protections for U.S. and foreign workers. For instance, employers would be prohibited from passing along application and other costs to foreign workers participating in the H-2B program.

Finally, the proposal contains a new Department of Labor enforcement program for H-2B in the event the Department of Homeland Security delegates its statutory authority for enforcing the H-2B program to the Department of Labor. Congress vested the Department of Homeland Security with H-2B enforcement authority in 2005.

The proposed rule appears in the Federal Register and can be found at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-11214.pdf>. The period for public comment closes July 7.

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WEEKLY TIMECARD

NAME: Bill Owen DATES: 9-13

	START	LUNCH	END	JOB CODES	JOB SITE/PROJECT	HOURS
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Tues.			3:30			8
Wed.			4:00			8 1/2
Thurs.			4:00		Crestview	8 1/2
Fri.	▽	▽	4:00		▽	8 1/2

SIGNATURE: Bill Owen TOTAL HOURS: 41 1/2

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Mountain View
LANDSCAPE

Bill Owen

Time card for: Monday, June 9, 2008 - Friday, June 13, 2008

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Brentwood Job	Irrigation	7:38	7:35	7:53	-	-	23:06
Crestview Job	Placing Sod	-	-	-	7:58	7:49	15:47
		7:38	7:35	7:53	7:58	7:49	38:53

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WORKING SMA

John and Mary Wheeler opened their business to outsiders and criticism — looking for ways to improve efficiency and profits

BY MIKE SEUFFERT /
ASSOCIATE EDITOR



RTER



“I feel like I’m standing in front of all you here in my underwear.”

It wasn’t even 9 a.m. yet on Monday, May 19, and John Wheeler’s world was being turned upside down. Wheeler Landscaping, the business he had built and run out in Chagrin Falls, OH, with his wife Mary over the past 33 years, was being invaded.

Owners and employees from four other landscaping operations around the country had taken over. All doors and file cabinets in the building were unlocked. The business’ books were left open on the table. Wheeler employees began spilling their guts about every mistake the company had ever made.

All was going according to plan.

Wheeler Landscaping was hosting the inaugural kaizen event of the J.P. Horizons’ Working Smarter Training Challenge. This event brought five companies together into a peer-network “smart group” for a three-day event. They were there to streamline and cut waste from Wheeler Landscaping.

Though those first few hours of the kaizen (a Japanese word for “continuous improvement”) event may have felt like chaos for John, it was all part of a detailed and premeditated process called lean.

What is lean?

Lean has been exemplified by Toyota and brought to the Green Industry

through the Ariens Co., which used the lean tenants of eliminating waste, reducing production time and improving quality to improve its bottom line, trim debt and lower its inventory levels by more than 50% since 2000.

Ariens is partnering with Cleveland-based consultants J.P. Horizons to spread lean to the service side of the industry through the 52-week Working Smarter Training Challenge program that teaches lean and continuous improvement.

More than 250 companies participate in the Challenge. About 70% of them from the Green Industry. The five companies arriving at Wheeler Landscaping for the kaizen event — Wheeler; Outside Unlimited of Hampstead, MD; Madison Planting & Design of Jackson, MS; Wood landscape Services of Columbus, OH; and Southland Engine of Lafayette, LA — had all completed a year’s worth of coursework, and were now metaphorically working on their master’s degrees in lean.

“Kaizen is not always about saving \$30,000 or \$50,000 in one fell swoop,” says Jim Paluch, president of J.P. Horizons. “It’s about working in little increments. We found here at Wheeler that if we can cut just six minutes out of the yard time for each employee each day, it would save up to \$17,000 per year. Or you chop off a few minutes here and there, get to jobs faster, then the



Top to bottom: The complete kaizen team; Jim Paluch Jr. gets a lean lesson from Ariens’ Paul Leao; Brice Quibodeaux of Southland Engine explains his team’s progress in improving efficiency.

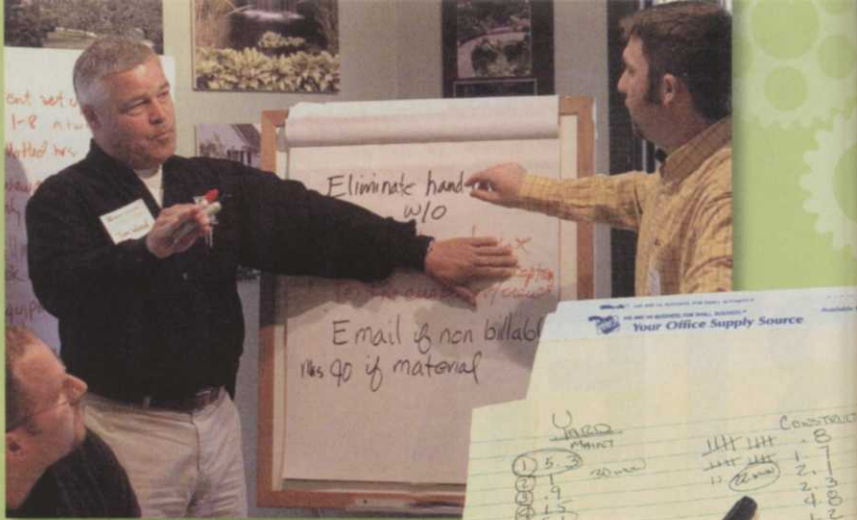
BUSINESS BOOSTING MARGINS

sales team can find time to schedule in another mowing job."

"Lean is about finding waste in the process and weeding that out — it's about working smarter, not harder," says Paul Leao, director of lean resources for Ariens, who served as a consultant for this kaizen event. "We like to say lean is hard on the process, not on the people. We don't want to eliminate employees or cut resources. We want to find a better way to do things so that employees can be more productive and the company can be more profitable."

Shell-shocked

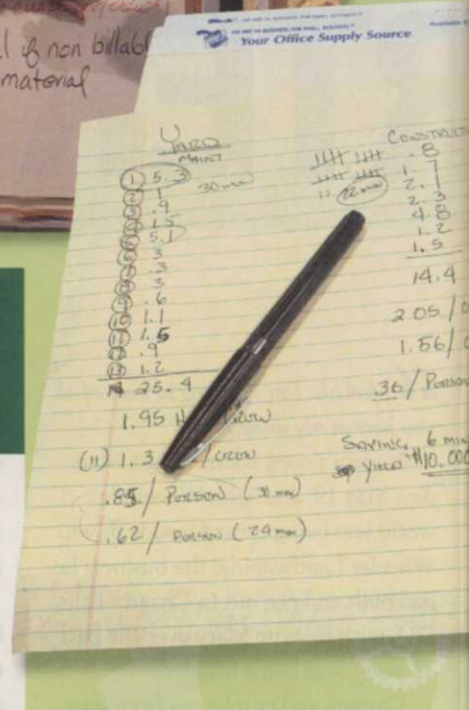
The kaizen event was the biggest undertaking yet in the ongoing program and no one knew how it would turn out. Wheeler just hoped it would work.



Above: Tom Wood of Wood Landscape Services charts out Wheeler's job packet process. **Right:** The yard team calculates how long it takes to get out of the gate.

"I've been running this company as a not-for-profit," he jokes about the company's roughly 2% profit margin. "I'd like to get up to around 8% to 9% like some other companies in the area."

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By improving your 5-S scores, it leads to a sixth S: **Safety**.

continued from page 20

You need to be profitable, need to be in good shape, in order to grow. Hopefully with lean and this process, we can get to where we want to be."

Wheeler says if he could get his

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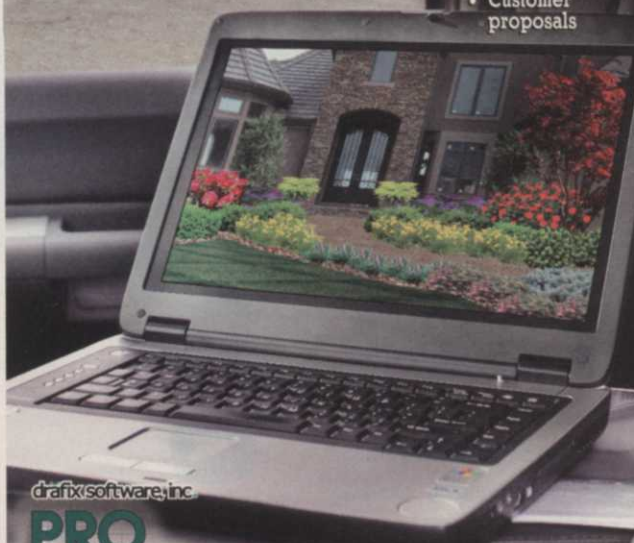
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\$5 million company (45% maintenance, 35% install, 20% snow removal) in better shape, he might be able to open an office on Cleveland's west side, where they've been turning down business because it takes 45 minutes to an hour to travel there — which is prohibitive because of gas prices. He also knows he will one day sell the business and wants to get it in shape to maximize its value.

As part of the Training Challenge,



WEB EXTRA

Watch video interviews with the participants at www.landscapemanagement.net/video.

Wheeler had already taken several steps to improve its bottom line: reducing and eliminating an on-site nursery and instituting an on-site material delivery system, as one example.

Still, Wheeler was a bit shell-shocked on that first morning when he heard that customer requests occasionally never made it to the crews, leaving clients unhappy or making return visits necessary. Or that several different office members were typing in the same information on several different forms, costing them time and overloading the staff.

"You guys are probably wondering how we've stayed in business for 33 years," Wheeler said. "The problem is that everybody here is too accommodating, and incomplete forms and requests are being passed along. We need some discipline around here."

That's where lean comes in. With the insight from Wheeler's smart group to guide him, the kaizen event aimed to re-

continued on page 24



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continued from page 22

duce waste and standardize processes.

"No matter what business you're in, every company is broken somewhere," says Tom Wood, president of Wood Landscape Services. "The Wheeler folks are bearing their souls to us. In some areas, I'm ahead of John. But in some areas he's ahead of me. The point of this exercise is to make some changes here, and then take some of those same lessons back home with us for our companies."

Areas of concern

Kaizen participants were divided into three separate groups, each given a different focus area and goals.

The resource group's job was to develop a process by which all materials are scheduled in the proper sequence

for each job, so that crews got all the information and materials they needed to do the job to each customer's satisfaction.

The efficiency tracking group huddled to create a process to measure the efficiency of each job.

"Because lean relies on small, gradual improvement, you need to be able to effectively measure the time and resources spent on a job," says Leao. "If you don't measure correctly, then how can you track the results? Once you have that, those results have to be posted and made visual so everyone can see where improvements can and have been made."

Gemba Gemba is the Japanese word for "actual place." In lean, that means going to the workplace where day-to-day activities are performed to see, with your own eyes, what's happening. This means, for example, actually going outside, watching and timing how long it takes crews to leave in the morning and come back in the evening; or talking directly to the sales staff, administrators and project managers to see how information needed in the job packet is passed along.

Finally, the "Out of the Gate" team, as the name suggests, looked to reduce the amount of time the crews spent in the yard, both in the morning and upon return in the evening.

The lean process

Each of the kaizen groups followed the five basic steps of the lean process:

1. Documenting Current Conditions: "We go out and observe, take notes and meas-

continued on page 27

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		.62 HRS/PERSON 36 min

Top: Wheeler's Tim Davis, J.P Horizons' Jim Paluch and Mike Martin of Outside Unlimited discuss improving traffic flow. Bottom: Calculating the savings from reducing yard time

continued from page 24
ure with stopwatches," explains Paluch, a member of the Out-of-the -Gate group. "We learn a lot from this observation that we couldn't get just by looking at employee timesheets. Sometimes what's in this sheet that someone filled out is not exactly what's happening in the field."

2. Identifying Waste: As Leao explains, this isn't just making a laundry list of stuff that needs to be fixed. It isn't about blaming a particular person or department.

"If somebody's not doing a good job or something's not going right, it's generally because the process is flawed," says Paluch. "People want to do a good job.

And they will if there's a good process. Most processes are in place because that's the way they've always been done, but companies change — and what worked yesterday isn't necessarily the best way to do it now."

3. Making Changes: For this kaizen event, Leao had a rule for the efficiency tracking group: when they found an area of waste they wanted to change, they had to come up with seven potential solutions before making any changes.

"Kaizen really empowers people to find solutions and take the initiative to implement them," Leao says. "If you've built a lean culture at your company, employees with new ideas shouldn't have to go to management every time to get permission to try them."

4. Standardize Process: Change is hard. Getting employees on board with change can be even harder. That's why it's vital to map out new processes for everyone to follow.

"Good ideas without follow-up can end up costing you more money than the waste," says Mike Martin, Vice President of Operations for Outside Unlimited. "If it takes one coaching session to come up with an idea, it should take three sessions to come up with an implementation plan. Then you must hold people accountable for following

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the plan, or else it will fall to the wayside."

For example, the Out-of-the-Gate group developed a new traffic pattern for the company yard, stopped drivers coming in the front gate and gave them a map and a checklist to follow.

"Having those papers made it real to them. They were excited to try it out and see if it improved the traffic flow in and out of the gate," says Paluch.

Watch for more from the Wheeler's kaizen event in a future issue of *Landscape Management*.

5. Celebrate: Kaizen can be hard. Some of Wheeler's employees said they were more tired after a day in the office using their minds

than they were after a day in the field. Take time to celebrate successes and recognize those who made them possible.

The right time

Anytime can be the right time for a kaizen event. These five companies gave up their time, their employees and their efforts in the middle of May, the busiest time of the year.

"I couldn't sleep the night before the event," John Wheeler says. "I thought I was crazy for doing this, especially at this time of year. But it's been fantastic, fun and rewarding.

"I've learned so much in such a short period of time. You think things are going one way, but by talking to people you find out something else entirely. I didn't know what I didn't know."

"It takes years to build your company's reputation, so it can be really hard to make yourself vulnerable like this — to open your 'yuck' up to everyone and ask them to help us fix it," adds Mary Wheeler. "But I just love the energy here, the enthusiasm. It's been absolutely awesome."

John and Mary both agreed that despite their initial concerns, they'd absolutely do the kaizen event over again. Though first, they might want to go out to one of the other companies and see them in their "underwear" too. **LM**

— *Brittany Hill, a student intern working with Landscape Management, contributed to this article.*

LEAN GLOSSARY

T.I.M. W.O.O.D.

T.I.M. W.O.O.D is an acronym that stands for the seven kinds of waste that lean eliminates: **T**ransportation, **I**nventory, **M**otion, **W**aiting, **O**verproduction, **O**verprocessing, **D**efects.



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Business Benchmarking

BUSINESS

EYE ON GROWTH



Overhead growth is bad only when it is faster than revenue growth.

Manage overhead expense

BY KEVIN KEHOE

The key to making big money in any industry is growing revenues faster than overhead. The way you do this is to manage organizational overhead dollars. Organizational overhead is defined as the payroll for all employees other than the foremen and crews. The reason we focus on these dollars is because they comprise 60% of all overhead costs in contracting companies.

It's important to measure the relationship between revenues and overhead using the overhead leverage ratio. This ratio has the greatest potential impact on net profit. The ratio is calculated as revenue dollars divided by overhead dollars. The higher your ratio, the better.

BENCHMARK TABLE

Overhead leverage ratio

Design/Build	3.24
Maintenance	2.89
Construction	4.05

OVERHEAD RATIO CALCULATION AND GROWTH EFFECT

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Revenue*	\$1,000,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,210,000	\$1,331,000
Gross profit	\$495,000	\$544,500	\$598,950	\$658,845
Total overhead**	\$390,000	\$421,200	\$454,896	\$491,288
Net profit	\$105,000	\$123,300	\$144,054	\$167,557
Overhead leverage ratio	2.56	2.61	2.66	2.71

* Assume revenue growth of 10%, overhead growth of 8%

** Total overhead = Indirect cost \$155,000 plus G&A cost \$235,000

Check www.kehoe.biz for overhead chart of account definitions

The larger chart below is an example showing the calculation of the ratio and the effect faster revenue to slower overhead growth has on the bottom line. I am assuming 10% revenue growth and 8% overhead growth. You can see that even with zero growth in gross margin, the bottom line increases substantially. In other words, overhead growth is bad only when it is faster than revenue growth.

The question is, what are the high profit benchmarks for this overhead leverage ratio? The Benchmark Table below outlines the high profit performers by industry segment.

Maintenance has the lowest ratio because this business is more service-intensive, requiring a larger staff for a given level of revenue. It also generates less revenue, selling materials and subcontractors.

To improve this ratio, establish a sound organization structure — where each position is responsible for a single aspect of the delivery process. Beyond \$1 million in annual revenues, the idea that everyone “wears a lot of hats” decreases the ratio.

Second, use the ratio in the budgeting process to quantify the upper level of overhead spending in relation to projected revenue dollars. This will force you to produce a “real” budget, rework your structure and focus on building systems instead of hiring more people. There are never enough people to get the work done — just ask your people. So you might as well manage to the right level of overhead.

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



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2	ValleyCrest Cos.	Calabasas, CA	935.00	10,500 / Not reported	Not reported	valleycrest.com
3	Brickman	Gaithersburg, MD	609.00	2,100 / 7,000	95 / 5	brickmangroup.com
4	The Davey Tree Expert Co.	Kent, OH	506.14	5,598 / 629	Not reported	davey.com
5	Scotts LawnService	Marysville, OH	200.00	1,500 / 250	Not reported	scottslawnservice.com
6	Bartlett Tree Experts	Stamford, CT	161.00	1,278 / 30	20 / 80	bartlett.com
7	Gothic Landscaping Inc.	Valencia, CA	129.00	1,438 / 0	44 / 56	gothiclandscape.com
8	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services, Inc.	Tampa, FL	117.05	1,122 / 214	100 / 0	one-source.com
9	Turf Management Systems Inc.	Mississauga, ON	98.00	750 / 2500	5 / 95	weedmancanada.com
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19	Jensen Corp.	San Jose, CA	45.50	325 / 0	80 / 20	jensencorp.com
20	The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin Inc.	Middleton, WI	45.22	200 / 425	83 / 17	thebrucecompany.com
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22	Tropics North Inc.	Homestead, FL	42.50	425 / Not reported	100 / 0	tropicsnorth.net
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26	The Groundskeeper	Tucson, AZ	38.00	750 / 0	100 / 0	groundskeeper.com
28	Ecoscape Solutions Group Inc.	Charlotte, NC	36.60	315 / 2	30 / 70	ecoscape.com
29	Denison Landscaping Inc.	Fort Washington, MD	36.20	190 / 180	92 / 8	denisonlandscaping.com
30	The Greenery Inc.	Hilton Head, SC	35.55	405 / 45	75 / 25	thegreeneryinc.com
31	Sierra Landscape Co.	Palm Desert, CA	34.70	300 / 0	70 / 30	sierralandscape.com
32	Naturalawn of America	Frederick, MD	33.00	400+ / 0	5 / 95	nl-amer.com
33	Dixie Landscape Co. Inc.	Miami, FL	32.70	250 / 0	80 / 20	dixielandscape.com
34	CoCal Landscape	Denver, CO	32.23	360 / 88	100 / 0	cocal.com
35	Middleton Lawn & Pest Control	Orlando, FL	30.50	618 / 12	Not reported	middletonpest.com
36	Piedmont Landscape	Chamblee, GA	30.00	260 / 325	100 / 0	piedmontlandscape.com
36	Scott Byron & Co. Inc.	Lake Bluff, IL	30.00	100 / 165	1 / 99	scottbyron.com
38	Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.	Plainfield, IL	29.60	Not reported	10 / 90	spring-green.com
39	Chalet	Wilmette, IL	29.00	100 / 250	10 / 90	chaletnursery.com
39	Metroplex Garden Design Landscapes LP	Dallas, TX	29.00	40 / 0	38 / 62	gardendesignlandscapes.com
41	Lipinski Landscape & Irrigation Inc.	Marlton, NJ	28.18	90 / 15	100 / 0	lipinskiland.com
42	Landscape Concepts Management	Grayslake, IL	25.00	110 / 450	100 / 0	landscapeconcepts.com
43	Dennis 7 Dees	Portland, OR	24.30	310 / Not reported	65 / 35	dennis7dees.com
44	Fairco Developer Landscape Services Inc.	Scottsdale, AZ	23.50	250 / 0	100 / 0	fairco.ca
45	Sebert Landscaping Co.	Bartlett, IL	23.10	55 / 275	90 / 10	sebert.com
46	McFall and Berry Landscape Management Inc.	McLean, VA	22.60	Not reported	100 / 0	mcfallandberry.com
47	Reyburn Landscape Companies	Henderson, NV	22.50	250 / 0	10 / 90	reyburnlandscape.com
48	Clarence Davids & Company	Matteson, IL	22.00	90 / 225	90 / 10	clarencedavids.com
49	Benchmark Landscape	Poway, CA	21.66	250 / 0	100 / 0	benchmarklandscape.com
50	Dobson's Woods & Water, Inc	Ocoee, FL	20.18	252 / 0	86 / 14	dobsonswww.com

	Company	Headquarters	2007 Revenue (in millions)	Employees Full time / Part time	% of Business Commercial / Residential	Web site
51	David J. Frank Landscaping	Germantown, WI	20.10	185 / 260	55 / 45	davidfrank.com
52	McHale Landscape Design	Upper Marlboro, MD	19.60	220 / 0	2 / 98	mchalelandscape.com
53	BIO Landscape and Maintenance Inc.	Houston, TX	19.06	0 / 243	100 / 0	biolandscape.com
54	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	San Antonio, TX	19.00	375 / 20	85 / 15	mnisa.com
54	Senske Lawn & Tree Care	Kennewick, WA	19.00	250 / 300	30 / 70	senske.com
56	Russell Landscape Group, Inc.	Dacula, GA	18.90	250 / 8	99 / 1	russelllandscapegroup.com
57	Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape	Denver, CO	18.25	198 / 45	35 / 65	myswingle.com
58	Christy Webber Landscapes	Chicago, IL	18.20	237 / 2	85 / 15	christywebber.com
59	Western Dupage Landscaping, Inc.	Naperville, IL	18.10	32 / 160	65 / 35	westerndupagelandscaping.com
60	Girard Environmental Services Inc.	Sanford, FL	17.88	150-200 / 0	95 / 5	girardonline.com
61	The Highridge Corp.	Issaquah, WA	17.34	160 / 1	60 / 40	highridge.com
62	DLC Resources, Inc.	Phoenix, AZ	16.85	280 / 0	100 / 0	dlcresources.com
63	ArtisTree	Venice, FL	16.50	320 / 60	90 / 10	artistree.com
64	Dora Landscaping Co.	Apopka, FL	16.50	85 / 0	Not reported	doralandscape.com
65	Luke Brothers Landscape Services	Holiday, FL	16.40	Not reported	100 / 0	lukebrothers.com
66	Land-Tech Enterprises Inc.	Warrington, PA	16.30	165 / 4	95 / 5	landtechenterprises.com
67	Outside Unlimited Inc.	Hampstead, MD	15.60	150 / 100	70 / 30	outside-unlimited.com
67	Proscap Inc.	Orlando, FL	15.60	300 / Not reported	97 / 3	proscap.biz
69	James River Grounds Management	Glen Allen, VA	15.55	125 / 165	99 / 1	jrgm.com
70	Berghoff Design Group	Scottsdale, AZ	15.50	Not reported	30 / 70	berghoffdesign.com
71	Pine Ridge Landscaping, Inc.	Chantilly, VA	15.10	60 / 130	100 / 0	pineridgelandscaping.com
72	Complete Property Maintenance Inc.	Coconut Creek, FL	13.30	260 / 40	10 / 90	Not available
73	Lambert Landscape Company	Dallas, TX	13.25	143 / Not reported	2 / 98	lamberts.net
74	Basnight Land and Lawn	Chesapeake, VA	13.00	105 / 100	55 / 45	basnightlandandlawn.com
75	Stay Green Inc.	Santa Clarita, CA	12.52	200 / 0	100 / 0	staygreen.com
76	Naturescape	Muskego, WI	12.40	140 / 10	10 / 90	naturescapelawncafe.com
77	Mickman Brothers Inc.	Ham Lake, MN	11.80	115 / 215	60 / 40	mickman.com
78	Arteka Companies	Minneapolis, MN	11.78	22 / 90	90 / 10	artekacompanies.com
79	Santa Rita Landscaping Inc.	Tucson, AZ	11.60	150 / 150	36 / 64	santaritalandscaping.com
80	Mill Brothers Landscape & Nursery Inc.	Fort Collins, CO	11.24	45 / 105	92 / 8	millbrothers.com
81	Sposato Landscape Co. Inc.	Milton, DE	10.50	98 / 52	60 / 40	sposatolandscap.com
82	New Way Landscape & Tree Services	San Diego, CA	10.10	200 / 0	35 / 65	newwaypro.com
83	Parker Interior Plantscape	Scotch Plains, NJ	10.00	185 / 15	99 / 1	parkerplants.com
83	Perficut Lawn & Landscape Inc.	Des Moines, IA	10.00	40 / 70	75 / 25	perficut.com
85	McGinty Bros Inc.	Long Grove, IL	9.60	40 / 40	90 / 10	mcgintybros.com
86	ILT Vignocchi	Wauconda, IL	9.50	25 / 135	50 / 50	iltvignocchi.com
87	Southview Design	Inner Grove, MN	9.30	25 / 60	Not reported	southviewdesign.com
88	John Mini Distinctive Landscapes	Congers, NY	8.90	50 / 55	100 / 0	johnmini.com
89	Pacheco Brothers Gardening Inc.	Hayward, CA	8.70	120 / 15	80 / 20	pachecobrothers.com
90	Tomlinson Bomberger Lawn Care & Landscape	Lancaster, PA	8.70	85 / 1	48 / 52	tbill.com
91	Carol King Landscape Maintenance Inc.	Orlando, FL	8.35	127 / 42	78 / 22	carolkingscapes.com
92	Angler Environmental	Manassas, VA	8.00	80 / 4	95 / 5	anglerenvironmental.com
92	Clearwater Landscape & Nursery	Ijamsville, MD	8.00	80 / 3	20 / 80	clearwaterlandscape.com
92	Dworsky Landscape Services	Gardena, CA	8.00	180 / 0	100 / 0	dworskyservices.com
92	Greener Landscaping Inc.	Lowell, MA	8.00	90 / 0	30 / 70	greeninc.com
96	Fine Earth Landscape Inc	Poolesville, MD	7.50	60 / 0	20 / 80	fineearth.com
97	Maffei Landscape Contractors, Inc.	Mashpee, MA	7.18	90 / 0	50 / 50	maffeilandscape.com
98	Rancho West Landscape	Temecula, CA	7.17	75 / 3	98 / 2	Not available
99	Greenscape Inc.	Holly Springs, NC	6.90	111 / 6	42 / 58	greenscapeinc.com
100	Jacobsen Landscape Design & Construction Inc.	Midland Park, NJ	6.50	38 / 50	25 / 75	jacobsenlandscape.com

A company that pays employees very well but abuses them doesn't have employees; they have prisoners.



It takes more than money

BY BRUCE WILSON

When you talk to many business owners, they cite good employees as their most valuable asset — and they're right. It is critical for businesses to retain their employees, but some experience constant turnover. This industry often lacks sufficient qualified employees to staff all companies.

Retaining your good, well-trained employees becomes a key driver for successful companies. However, many companies have destructive habits that drive employees away. They try to keep employees by paying them very well. That works sometimes, but for the most part employees want more than high pay. In fact, I once was told by a disgruntled employee of a company that paid its employees very well but abused them that they didn't have employees; they had prisoners.

Most employees need an environment that is stimulating, where they can do their jobs and be successful. Yet some companies do not have systems that make it easy for them to be successful. They have owners who constantly change things and/or are not equipped with the tools to assist employees in being successful. They are very demanding but do not provide the leadership that employees want and need.

Good employees want and thrive on recognition. The better companies realize this. They have programs that define expectations. They are demanding, but they reward successful behaviors.

Employees also want well-defined career paths. They want to know where the company is going, and how they will grow with it.

Most employees like an environment where they can make a difference. They like to be included in planning — particularly decision-making processes that affect their work. They respond well when they feel that their opinions count for something, and that the owners listen to them. Plus, their ideas have value.

The best companies have a working environments filled with mutual respect between their owners and employees. The owners are seen as good businesspeople who treat employees fairly and with respect. Good owners communicate regularly with employees, sharing the visions for their companies.

I talk to employees who say they receive better compensation offers all of the time, but will not leave because of the loyalty they feel to their companies, the owners and other key employees. In many cases, they feel like family. They believe the owners truly care about them as people.

In today's environment, employers must provide competitive pay and benefits, but it takes more than that if you want to retain employees and build a successful company.

— 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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nuestra creciente
industria
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espacios verdes



GUIA DEL EXITO HISPANO



ESCALANDO POSICIONES

Como los trabajadores de habla española con deseo e ímpetu están progresando y escalando posiciones a pesar de enfrentar retos de grandes proporciones

POR RON HALL / EDITOR GENERAL

La industria estadounidense del paisajismo como la conocemos hoy día, sería diferente sin el trabajador hispano; sería más pequeña y ofrecería menos productos y servicios. Nadie sabe con precisión la cifra de personas de origen latinoamericano que están empleadas en la industria del paisajismo; sin embargo, el número de trabajadores por hora, gerentes y el creciente número de propietarios debe ubicarse en decenas de

miles en virtud del tamaño de nuestra industria. La mayoría de los cálculos establecen que la cifra de compañías activas que ofrecen servicios de paisajismo y cuidado de espacios verdes en los EE.UU., es de aproximadamente 70.000.

Independientemente de la actual y polémica controversia sobre la reforma migratoria y políticas de inmigración, los hispanos se establecieron, desde hace mucho tiempo, como una fuerza potente en nuestra sociedad — y en nuestra industria. Más aún,

ellos se convertirán en un factor mucho mayor a medida que crezca la industria para satisfacer las demandas de servicios de un cálculo de aproximadamente 70 millones

de “*Baby Boomers*”, [nacidos entre 1946 y 1964] la generación más rica de la historia.

Debemos admitir que el término “hispano” lo usamos de manera general en este reportaje y sólo como una conveniencia en el reportaje. En la opinión de Mauricio Velásquez, de *Diversity Training Group* con sede en Reston, estado de Virginia, es injusto e impreciso describir o ver a los hispanos como un grupo homogéneo y monolítico de personas, y al respecto observa que, aparte de compartir un idioma y algunas características culturales comunes, los hispanos vienen de diferentes países y tienen costumbres diferentes. Dicho esto, México, por su tamaño y proximidad a la frontera con los EE.UU., es el país de origen de donde proviene la mayoría de los empleados de habla española en la industria estadounidense del paisajismo.

Independientemente del país de origen o de su condición migratoria (legal o ilegal), todos llegan con una sola meta en mente: ganar dinero.

LOGRAR ASCENSOS AL HACER CARRERA

La mayoría de los trabajadores hispanos, y en especial los trabajadores temporales y aquellos con documentación dudosa, define su éxito en la conservación de

NOTA DEL EDITOR: El presente reportaje es el primero de varios reportajes exclusivos en ambos idiomas sobre administración gerencial de paisajismo y hacen énfasis en factores que definen y conducen al éxito de trabajadores de habla española en la industria del paisajismo, gerentes y propietarios. El primer artículo ofrece una visión general de la importancia de estos trabajadores extranjeros en la industria y las rutas que siguen hacia al éxito. Próximamente, no se pierda los artículos sobre prominentes empresarios hispanos y gerentes de alto nivel. Por favor, sírvase compartir este primer reportaje con sus empleados de habla española — luego entre al portal en la red de Internet: www.landscapemanagement.net para leer y descargar el artículo en inglés.



Mauricio Velásquez

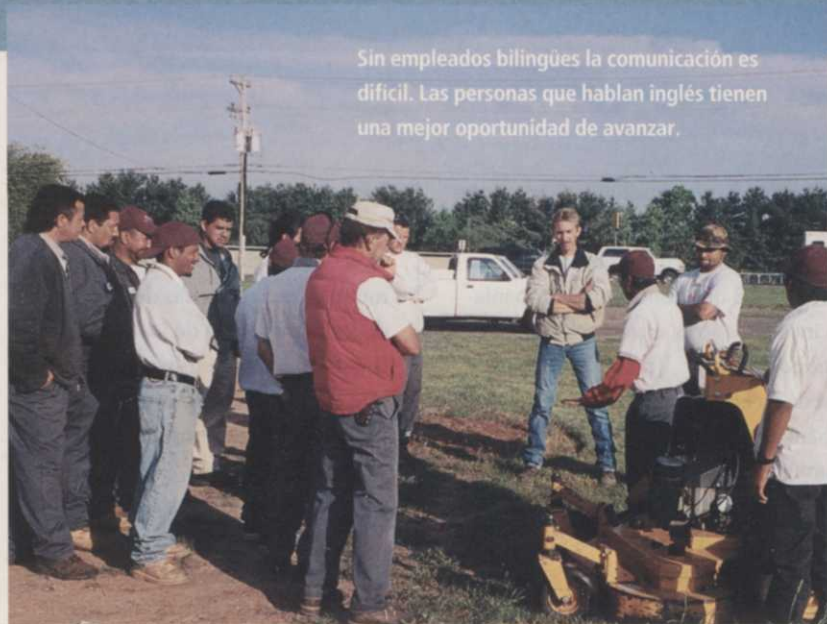
su empleo como obreros. El modo de hacer carrera para trabajadores hispanos — y en particular para los trabajadores recién llegados — es esencialmente el mismo en toda la industria. La mayoría comienza como obreros o jardineros. Aquellos con ambición se empapan de conocimientos de negocios y habilidades técnicas y progresan al lograr ascensos y niveles más altos de responsabilidad y quizás, hasta llegar a ocupar niveles bajos de gerencia. Los más ambiciosos y con orientación empresarial, especialmente aquellos con una condición migratoria legal o que han obtenido la nacionalidad estadounidense, aspiran convertirse en gerentes o quizás administrar sus propias compañías.

La tendencia no ha pasado desapercibida en la industria.

Las personas que se identifican como hispanos conforman ahora el grupo minoritario más grande en los EE.UU., y se espera que se triplique en tamaño a medida que nos acerquemos al 2050.

Hace varios años, el paisajista de Massachusetts, Nicholas J. DiBenedetto, CLP, *N.D Landscaping Inc.*, le dijo a un grupo de propietarios de empresas como él, como llegaron sus predecesores con otros inmigrantes provenientes de Italia para trabajar en los rascacielos de Nueva York y observó que muchos de estos obreros con el paso del tiempo, comenzaban sus compañías propias de albañilería o construcción, convirtiéndose así en algunos de los más exitosos en el noreste y New England. DiBenedetto pronosticó un éxito similar de los hispanos en el negocio del paisajismo.

En efecto, las predicciones basadas en los cambios demográficos de los



Sin empleados bilingües la comunicación es difícil. Las personas que hablan inglés tienen una mejor oportunidad de avanzar.

EE.UU., en lo relativo a los hispanos, son una muestra: las personas que se identifican como hispanos conforman ahora el grupo minoritario más grande en los EE.UU., y se espera que su tamaño se triplique a medida que nos acercamos al 2050, de acuer-

terrey en el norte del país. Después de una noche de descanso, seguida a la mañana siguiente de una temprana visita al consulado de los Estados Unidos de esa ciudad, continúa su viaje al abordar otro autobús que lo llevará por una zigzagueante ruta de 24 horas hacia el norte y que en el camino hacia St. Louis, irá dejando a otros trabajadores como él.

Con 50 años de edad, Sánchez no es el típico trabajador temporal portador de la visa H-2B; la mayoría son más jóvenes, pero él, en un español mezclado con inglés, dice que le gusta trabajar, mientras que Travis Andrews, supervisor de la compañía le sirve de intérprete. Además, dice Sánchez con aire de alegría, comparado con algunos de los trabajos que ha tenido en su México natal, trabajar para la compañía de paisajismo y jardinería de St. Louis no es tan difícil.

“La única cosa que en lo personal no me gusta es cuando hace frío,” dice con una espontánea sonrisa.

Kelly Haskett, co-propietario de la compañía *US Lawns West County*, dice que la lealtad de Sánchez, su ética de trabajo y su decisión de aprender inglés (aunque admite que continúa aprendiendo) le ha permitido, de manera progresiva, ir

do con un estudio de investigación llevado a cabo por el *Pew Hispanic Center* en el año 2005. Ese estudio de investigación predijo que el 29% de la población en los EE.UU., afirmará ser de origen hispano para el año 2050, comparado con el 14% en el año 2005. El estudio también señala que gran parte de este crecimiento tendrá su origen en la inmigración.

UN CASO DE LA VIDA REAL

El ir y venir de Ernestino Morino Sánchez a su trabajo es admirable - un viaje de 12 horas en autobús desde Miacatlan, su ciudad, ubicada en los altos del sur de México central hasta la activa ciudad industrial de Mon

asumiendo responsabilidades mayores en *US Lawns West County*. El fue uno de los primeros tres trabajadores con visa H-2B que contrató la compañía cinco años atrás, a través de *Mid-Atlantic Solutions Inc.*, (másLabor) con sede en el estado de Virginia. Ahora, Sánchez, sus dos sobrinos y varios amigos cercanos se encuentran entre los 23 trabajadores temporales que han llegado de México a trabajar aquí.

Desde el comienzo ha sido una situación en la que ambas partes ganan, y al respecto, Kelly añade: "son empleados excelentes."

Sánchez ha

Ernestino Morino Sánchez



hecho carrera escalando posiciones más altas y ahora supervisa la atención de espacios verdes y la ornamentación de muchas de las propiedades comerciales de los clientes de la compañía. Sin embargo, al igual que la mayoría de los más de 20.000 trabajadores temporales portadores de visas H-2B, en compañías de paisajismo a todo lo ancho de los EE.UU., él mide su éxito por la cantidad de dinero que puede ganar y enviar a su familia— una esposa y una hija en edad escolar que viven en Miacatlan. Sánchez también

tiene dos hijos ya crecidos.

Al preguntarle si él prefería vivir en los EE.UU. o México, Sánchez, sin dudarle mucho, responde que en México. El dice que llama a su casa tres veces por semana, y que ansiosamente espera ir a Miacatlan cada año a pasar las navidades. Y, como dice Sánchez, él es un trabajador. Durante el invierno maneja un taxi en su ciudad de aproximadamente 24.000 habitantes, hasta que llegue el tiempo de regresar a trabajar en St. Luis a comienzos de la primavera.

EL CAMINO HACIA EL EXITO

Sin duda, el éxito de cualquier empleado en la industria del paisajismo, depende en última instancia de su habilidad para satisfacer las expectativas del patrono, incluyendo el adaptarse a la cultura de la compañía, alcanzar las metas de producción y ofrecer un trabajo de calidad.

El salario para los trabajadores que se inician en la Industria del paisajismo en los EE.UU., varía generalmente entre \$8 y \$11 por hora, dependiendo de la región. El salario básico es establecido mediante una combinación de regulaciones estatales y federales y la competencia en el mercado laboral local.

Después de obrero, el siguiente escalafón en la escalera laboral es el de capataz de campo. La autosuficiencia en inglés no es necesariamente una barrera para convertirse en capataz, asumiendo que los demás compañeros de cuadrilla sean de habla española. A los fines de alcanzar esa posición -que por supuesto ofrece mayor salario por hora, el trabajador debe ser capaz de llevar a cabo una variedad de tareas, tales como ubicación e identificación de plantas,

5 consejos para asegurar el éxito

El veterano y experto laboral Robert Wingfield, de *Amigos, Inc.*, con sede en Dallas, ofrece las siguientes cinco sugerencias a los propietarios de empresa para formar empleados de habla española exitosos:

1 Explique con claridad lo que se espera de cada trabajador. Esto incluye lo que se espera de ellos en términos de su desempeño laboral, su comportamiento mientras representan a la compañía y en particular, lo que se les va a pagar y lo que se les va a descontar de su salario semanalmente.

2 Ofrezcales una vivienda cómoda en un área segura. La vivienda debe incluir como mínimo lo básico -una cama con sábanas y almohadas, un sofá, mesa y sillas con un lugar para cocinar. Los trabajadores quieren ahorrar tanto dinero como les sea posible para enviarlo a sus países de origen.

3 Los trabajadores deben tener acceso a un banco, un supermercado y una lavandería automática cada semana. Es mejor si cuentan con estos servicios sin tener que caminar largas distancias desde sus apartamentos; de otra manera necesitará contar con un líder de cuadrilla que los lleve semanalmente.

4 Los trabajadores necesitan tantas horas por semana como sea posible. Ellos vienen a este país expresamente a ganar dinero. Si usted sólo les da 40 horas sin sobre-tiempo, es probable que se vayan. Una solución es traer -y distribuir más horas entre -menos trabajadores.

5 Trátelos con respeto. Entienda que ellos vienen de una cultura diferente con costumbres diferentes. Usted no tiene que "adoptarlas," pero trátelos de manera justa.

— RH

continúa en la página 44

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viene de la página 42

lectura de planos, dibujos y especificaciones de construcción, así como la operación de equipos y maquinaria. Obviamente, el capataz también debe trabajar de manera eficiente con los demás miembros de la cuadrilla.

Si un trabajador se destaca como capataz y llega a ser autosuficiente en inglés, puede ser seleccionado para recibir entrenamiento adicional y convertirse en el "hombre líder," con mayor autonomía para tomar decisiones relativas a las propiedades que atiende su cuadrilla y asumir un mayor número de responsabilidades.

La oferta de un mejor salario y responsabilidades mayores, representan un gran paso y dar ese salto requiere del trabajador temporal decisión y un esfuerzo mayor, siendo muy pocos los que lo hacen. De un hombre líder se espera que consistentemente haga trabajos de calidad para que no sea necesario "re-hacerlos;" que los trabajos estén dentro del presupuesto, que se comunique de manera efectiva con su supervisor, que continúe aumentando sus habilidades y las de su cuadrilla, que cuide el equipo de la compañía, que trabaje cumpliendo las normas de seguridad, sin accidentes, y que presente la información escrita a tiempo y exacta. Con raras excepciones, los empleados a tiempo completo toman estos cargos.

¿ENTRENAMIENTO PARA IRSE?

El mayor reto que enfrentan la mayoría de los trabajadores de habla española recién llegados es el más obvio: el idioma. Algunas compañías de paisajismo ofrecen a sus trabajadores la oportunidad de aprender inglés en escuelas o programas locales. Sin embargo, en líneas generales el inglés que aprenden los trabajadores,



Steve Rak contrató a un intérprete para que le ayude a comunicarse con sus empleados hispanos.

lo aprenden por cuenta propia.

"Si no hubiera la barrera del idioma, muchos de sus trabajadores renunciarían, empezarían sus propios negocios y se convertirían en su competencia más grande," dice Mauricio Velásquez de *Diversity Training Inc.* "Muchos de ellos trabajan duro, son industriales y emprendedores."

Hoy por hoy, a medida que los dueños de empresas aumentan su conocimiento del negocio y destrezas de sus mejores trabajadores hispanos, aumentan el valor de sus empresas y el nivel de servicio que prestan a sus clientes. Lo que muchos de estos mismos empresarios están empezando a reconocer ahora, es que ellos también pueden estar entrenando a su competencia - y a algunos de los líderes de la próxima generación de esta industria.

COMENZAR DE LA MANERA CORRECTA

¿Que es lo que se necesita para que tanto una empresa de paisajismo como sus trabajadores de habla española logren el éxito? Las cosas que comienzan bien tienen un chance mucho mayor de alcanzar el éxito.

Steve Rak II, de *Southwest Landscape Management*, en Columbia Station, OH, empleó a sus primeros

trabajadores temporales portadores de visa H-2B hace cinco años y actualmente tiene nueve. Desde el principio, Steve decidió no dejar a la suerte ni el entrenamiento ni la sesión de inducción a la cultura de su compañía.

Al respecto Rak dice: "La primera cosa que hice cuando comenzamos el programa fue contratar un intérprete externo. "Cada cierto número de semanas,

nuestro intérprete viene y tenemos una reunión breve en la mañana para hablar sobre cualquier tipo de interrogantes o comentarios que ellos puedan tener."

La Compañía de Rak también desarrolló y usa una presentación específica en PowerPoint y en español, que presenta a los nuevos trabajadores. El intérprete, usando la presentación como elemento visual, cubre casi todos los aspectos de la compañía, desde uniformes hasta formularios legales. Esa sesión toma la mayor parte del día.

Para las sesiones ordinarias de entrenamiento de la compañía, los gerentes de Rak se apoyan principalmente en los materiales de entrenamiento ofrecidos por PLANET, la Red de Profesionales del Paisajismo.

En diferentes ocasiones, Rak, sus gerentes y sus empleados se han reunido en un restaurante local para pasar una noche fuera, o ir a un partido de béisbol de los Indios de Cleveland o jugar golf en miniatura.

En este sentido, Rak dice: "Nosotros somos ahora una compañía multicultural y al divertirnos trascendemos cualquier barrera cultural que podamos tener." **LM**

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DESTRESAZ ESPECIALIZADAS SIGNIFICAN MAS PAGA

Ofrecer a los trabajadores herramientas y expectativas les permite avanzar en sus carreras POR DANIEL WEISS

Los trabajadores hispanos miden el éxito en su empleo en términos de sus salarios. Dinero. Dinero en efectivo. Se aceptan títulos de propiedad, pero ellos (al igual que la mayoría de nosotros) están más interesados en lo que puedan ganar — y en muchos casos, en el dinero que puedan enviar a sus familias.

En cuanto a los empleados, ellos se dan cuenta de que hay dos maneras principales mediante las cuales pueden aumentar sus salarios: trabajar más horas por semana o adquirir destrezas adicionales. Y es así como ellos se hacen más valiosos para su compañía y sus clientes.

Mi compañía tiene varios traba-

jadores que escogieron este último recurso. Ellos hacen un trabajo excepcional con ladrillos y otros trabajos de paisajismo rocoso. En comparación con los promedios nacionales de salarios, yo les pago muy bien; mucho más de lo que ganan los obreros en general. Aparte de eso, yo los trato (y de hecho a todos nuestros empleados multiculturales) con el mismo respeto que trataría a cualquier persona que trabaje duro, que sea honesto y se sienta orgulloso de ofrecer un servicio de calidad.

Algunos de nuestros empleados hispanos hablan inglés. Ellos viven en los EE.UU., y se han establecido en comunidades cercanas con hogares, fa-

milias y amigos. También empleamos trabajadores temporales, cuya mayoría no habla inglés. Trato de conocerlos aunque sea a medias, haciendo el esfuerzo de hablar con ellos en español. Admito que me cuesta mucho pero lo sigo intentando. En ocasiones, incluso, uso mi computadora para buscar la traducción al español de una frase en particular y aún cuando no consiguiera la traducción exactamente correcta y que los empleados pudieran sorprenderse al escuchar que lo intenté en el lugar de trabajo, el haberlo hecho, estoy seguro, fortalece mi relación con mis empleados de habla española.

El proveer a los empleados de habla española, incluyendo los recién contratados, de las herramientas para que sean exitosos, comienza por establecer las expectativas por adelantado. Todos deben saber y obedecer las reglas y de allí en adelante depende de los empleados aumentar su valor y su salario de acuerdo a la manera en que desempeñen sus tareas — y en virtud del valor agregado que ellos crean para la compañía y sus clientes con las destrezas que dominan.

Estoy convencido de que una de las claves para establecer una relación exitosa con trabajadores extranjeros, es establecer las expectativas por adelantado y de manera clara, manteniendo las líneas de comunicación abiertas. **LM**

— El autor es propietario/operador de Elysian Design & Landscape Group, con sede en el Condado de Oakland, MI.



Los trabajadores que adquieren destrezas como trabajar con ladrillos o con el paisajismo rocoso pueden aumentar sus salarios.

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LA COPA VILA ESTIMULA LA COMPETENCIA Y MANTIENE LA MORAL EN ALTO

Muchos de los trabajadores mexicanos y centro-americanos de Vila & Sons traen su cultura y su ética laboral al trabajo POR RON HALL

M IAMI, FLORIDA — En los EE.UU., el deporte es conocido como "soccer." En el resto del mundo, incluyendo a los mexicanos amantes del deporte, así como a los centro-americanos, todos ellos trabajadores en paisajismo y jardinería de Vila & Son, el deporte es conocido como "fútbol."

Vila & Son, es una de las principales compañías de paisajismo en el estado de Florida, promueve el entusiasmo, estimula la competencia y mantiene la moral en alto de su personal en varias de sus agencias y parcelas con uno de los campeonatos anuales más inusuales del "fútbol" del mundo: La Copa Vila.

El sábado de cada mes desde enero hasta mayo, la compañía transporta en autobuses a los equipos, compuestos casi exclusivamente de todos los trabajadores de habla española, desde sus agencias en Orlando (La Máquina Celeste), Miami (Blue Tigres), West Palm Beach (Coyotes) y Ft. Myers (Atlético Barcelona). Es allí donde se reúnen con Los Reales, el equipo for-



Los Coyotes ganaron su primer campeonato este año.

mado por trabajadores corporativos y trabajadores de los viveros. Ellos compiten en un cancha especialmente preparada en la casa de Juan Carlos Vila, CEO de Vila & Son, ubicada en la región agrícola y de mucha vegetación, justo al suroeste de la cuidad. Los cinco equipos compuestos por trabajadores del paisajismo y los viveros ponen a prueba sus habilidades futbolísticas en un campeonato *round-robin* de cinco meses de duración en dicho lugar.

El juego, aunque amistoso, es de un gran entusiasmo, comenta Vila. Los jugadores no son los típicos hijos

de vecinos escogidos al azar. Cada equipo cuenta con su cuota de excelentes atletas, agrega, y el nivel de juego es a menudo excepcional. Esto (y el señuelo de la buena comida y la expectativa de reunirse con amigos) atrae a aproximadamente 150 miembros de familias, ex-empleados y empleados potenciales a presenciar cada competencia.

La compañía ofrece a los jugadores el transporte y uniformes y la familia Vila y el personal corporativo preparan y sirven comida y gaseosas a los jugadores, espectadores e invitados.

Una vez que se aplaca el polvo, el equipo campeón del torneo (este año son Los Coyotes – la primera corona para el equipo) se lleva el trofeo a su localidad hasta que se corone a un nuevo equipo en mayo del año próximo.

"Mi familia y yo estamos honrados de compartir nuestro hogar con nuestros empleados. Los consideramos como parte de la familia, y la familia siempre es bienvenida," comenta Vila. **LM**

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BUSINESS

LM'S OPERATOR OF THE MONTH

Bill Hildebolt »

President, Nature's Select Premium Turf Services Inc.

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE

For much of his working life, Dr. Bill Hildebolt achieved supreme accomplishments within the corporate world. At the Campbell Soup Co., he helped develop Prego spaghetti sauce. He later pursued innovations within the cigarette market for R.J. Reynolds.

As consolidation and economic turmoil descended on the corporate realm in the 1990s, Hildebolt headed back to the family's Ohio farm to research and create the innovative lawn care program that ultimately became Nature's Select.

How does the Nature's Select program differ from others in the industry?

We're a biologically based program. We believe that if you feed the soil first, then the soil feeds the plant. It's based on the trademarked Renewable Lawn Care program, which is based on building a healthy soil environment. It's a hybrid program that takes the best organic principles and combines them with the best modern agronomic principles; that gives the best performance results possible.

What inspired you to join the green industry?

After leaving R.J. Reynolds, I had the family farm operation. It was a fairly straightforward transition to start this study (of Green Industry techniques). I wanted to add value to the knowledge base of the products we had developed. I backed into lawn care.

How difficult was the transition?

With a startup, you do everything. I was developing the formula and building the equipment.

You also don't have a lot of control over the aspects you're facing, such as weather conditions. Your employees make or break your success. It's a lot of hard work starting something from scratch. You have to be involved in every aspect of the business and you're doing things for the first time.

How did you establish the Nature's Select business enterprise?

I had two partners, one from Reynolds and one from landscaping. I bought the original partners out. The Triad (region of North Carolina) was where Reynolds was located, and we liked it here.

As president-elect of PLANET, what do you view as the biggest challenges facing the industry?

The challenge is on the labor factors (related to immigration law). It is a huge deal. People are clamoring to get workers. With the Homeland Security issues, people (with governmental authority) have really clamped down on this. Regulatory issues are going to continue to affect us.

We have a grand opportunity to promote the aspects of what we in the Green Industry provide. We make a great contribution to the environment, and we



AT A GLANCE

- **Founded:** 1994
- **Employees:** 20 full-time, 7 to 9 part-time workers during fall aeration and seeding season.
- **Education/certifications:** Undergraduate degrees and doctorate from The Ohio State University in food technology through Department of Horticulture; was graduate teaching assistant. PLANET Certified Turfgrass Professional/Cool Season Grasses — Pennsylvania State University. Certified Turfgrass Professional — University of Georgia.
- **Industry involvement:** President-elect of PLANET; assumes the office in May 2009. Was previously a board member for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA).
- **Business outlook:** 10% to 15% annual growth rate. "We believe in really steady, high quality growth — we don't mass market."
- **Personal highlights:** Son Joe works in the business; responsible for blending proprietary formulas and mixes. "We blend all of our natural products on the premises." Bill plays golf and is an avid woodworker. He also enjoys managing the 600-acre Ohio farm that's been in his family for 200 years.
- **Web site:** www.naturesselect.com

need to capitalize on it. Everyone should be working together to capitalize on the positive impact we have. **LM**

— *The author is a Cleveland-based freelance writer. Contact him at jimguyette2004@yahoo.com.*

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The emergency call

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / Managing Editor

What would you do? My wife's voice was quiet and anxious on the other end of the phone. I had called to let her know I was at our daughter's fast-pitch softball game, and it was running a bit late.

"I just had the strangest experience," Marci said, clearly shaken up.

She had just returned to her car after stopping at the grocery store to pick up a birthday cake for a co-worker when she heard the crash. A woman, apparently passed out behind her steering wheel, had rammed into another vehicle. At first, like the others nearby, my wife watched, thinking that others had gone for help. She realized that no one had moved; they were just staring.

Although she's not a physician, Marci works in a medical field and has some first aid training. She went to the woman's aid and made sure someone called 911. The driver was suffering a seizure and appeared unconscious. Marci and another woman came to help. The pair decided not to move the woman. She was breathing and belted in and was safer in the car until the paramedics came.

It was then Marci noticed the many injection sites around the woman's abdomen. She was a diabetic. Marci called to the store's employees — who still were just standing around, to get some sugar.

Their response: "Who's going to pay for it?"

I'll ignore the appalling lack of humanity for a moment because that's not my point here.

Marci was about to take some of the icing from the birthday cake she'd just bought to help the woman, but by then Marci heard the sirens of the ambulance. The paramedics put the woman on a gurney and rushed her to the hospital. I wish I could tell you how the woman fared; we just don't know. Marci was left to give a statement to the police and then calm herself as she drove to pick up our son at the library.

I'm proud of my wife for getting involved. She thought quickly and clearly and made the right decisions in a crisis. I don't know how I would have responded. I'd like to think I would have reacted the way my wife did, but until we're confronted with such situations, we just don't know. Are you the good Samaritan or the rubber-necking bystander? Do you or your people have basic first aid training? Given the nature of this business (and the steady spate of news reports on injuries to contractors), the answer to that last question should be "yes."

Tragedy is an unfortunate part of life. With a little training and preparation, we may one day be able to ease the pain of someone suffering — perhaps a client or a coworker. And I pray I'm never so callous that I wonder who's going to spot me the 59 cents it may take to save someone's life.

Contact Dan at
216/706-3754
or e-mail at
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Are you the good Samaritan or the rubber-necking bystander? Are you or your people even trained on basic first aid?





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Greener baseball

Thousands of visitors to Washington, D.C. view and appreciate this company's work every day. McDonnell Landscape, headquartered in nearby Brookeville, MD, over the past 25 years has beautified some of the highest profile grounds in Washington, D.C. — including the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial and the Old Executive Office Building.

"When you look at our work in Washington, D.C., in total it's pretty amazing," says McDonnell Executive Vice President Jon Fritz. "It's great to be a native of the region and to get to do these projects where you grew up."

Fritz recently oversaw the completion of yet another fascinating project — the landscaping of the new Nationals

The brown roof you see above is now a green roof thanks to 7,000 sedum plants over the concession area.

McDonnell Landscape helps put the 'green' into the new LEED-certified Nationals Park in Washington, D.C.

BY RON HALL / Editor-at-Large

Park, home of the Major League Baseball Washington Nationals.

One of the unique features of the landscaping contract (a design/build project) was the installation of a 6,300-sq.-ft. green roof within the confines of the Park. The incorporation of the green roof over the concession stands area is significant for several reasons, not the least being it helped the sports facility be the first of its kind in the United States to gain LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (www.usgbc.org). This is a remarkable achievement for a stadium, Fritz says.

"Everyone got behind it, or it would never have happened," says Susan Klumpp, project manager for HOK

Sport, the company that designed the ballpark. "It was a new experience for a lot of people on this job. There's no blueprint that says, 'This is how you do a LEED-certified ballpark.' We had to figure it out."

LEED is short for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. To gain LEED certification, builders and developers earn points as they meet or exceed a comprehensive series of rigorous environmental and conservation standards. The goal of LEED is to encourage the development of green buildings that efficiently use energy, water and materials and reduce the impact on human health and the environment through the

continued on page 58



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continued from page 56
life of the structures.

Remarkably, Nationals Park was built on time, just 22 months after groundbreaking, and on budget at an eye-popping \$611 million. It was ready to go

for the Nationals Opener on March 30. Three weeks later, April 17, it hosted a 10 a.m. Mass by Pope Benedict XVI. Ballpark officials expanded seating at the ballpark by 4,000 to allow 45,000 of the faithful to witness and participate in



the Mass. The Pope gave the Mass from center field during his three-day visit to the Capital.

Even with many water- and energy-saving features the park is a beauty.

Nationals Park is located in a once-blighted neighborhood along the Anacostia River one mile south of the U.S. Capitol, and all indications are the entire region of southwest Washington, D.C., is in the midst of a remarkable rebirth.

"The Stadium is gorgeous," Fritz says. "I'm not saying that just because we were involved with it; it's really gorgeous."

He and the several thousand other construction and skilled tradesmen who worked on the ballpark were treated to a special day at the Park when the Nationals played their neighboring team, the Baltimore Orioles, in an exhibition game on March 29.

"It was incredible to get to walk around the Stadium and see it as a finished product," Fritz says. "When you're in work mode, you're always concentrating on your part of the project."

The landscape company started working on the site in September 2007, and, for much of the project had about 22 people employed there.

In addition to installing the green roof, the company landscaped the ballpark's main entrance (known as The Timeline Plaza) with a half acre of fescue sod and 28 Yoshino cherry trees. This is the same variety of cherries that encircles the Tidal Basin and spills north onto the Washington Monument grounds.

McDonnell Landscape also designed and installed the "Batter's Eye" in a sloped planter behind the center field wall. The company planted the 5,800-sq.-ft. Batter's Eye with mondo grass,

continued on page 60



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continued from page 58

which is not a grass but rather an evergreen sod-forming perennial that grows 8 inches high and never needs mowing.

"It's going to grow into a green carpet so batters will have a good background for seeing pitched balls," Fritz explains.

The green roof presented some special challenges because weight on the metal roof could not exceed 25 lbs. per sq. ft.

Says Fritz: "The weight issue was a huge challenge." No more than eight employees could work on the roof at any one time, and they all had to be tied off for safety, of course.

Once McDonnell Landscape employees laid drain board over the roof, Skyland U.S.A., based in Avondale, PA, supplied the green roof extensive media.

Aggregate Industries, a local quarry, supplied the roof gravel used on the border circling the roof and dividing its panels.

Because of the ballpark's construction, getting the growing media and gravel to the roof required creative engineering.

"We had to pump the soil and gravel onto a conveyor belt system up from the road," Fritz says. "It's called a Telebelt with a reach of 105 ft., and it was supplied by Brundage, Bone and Blanchet. We had to get the soil and gravel up and over a roof. We could only pump a small amount of materials at time."

Installing Permaloc 4-in. GeoEdge around the edge of the roof and for the gravel divider strips to keep the media in



McDonnell Landscape lifted the green media to the roof with a Telebelt.

place, and planting the 7,000 sedum plants, which were contract grown at Emory Knoll Farms, Street, MD, into the media completed the company's work at Nationals Park.

"We had 2,000 subcontractors basically working on top of each other trying to get the stadium done on time," Fritz says. "But we were up to the challenge. We finished our scheduled work a week early, on March 25." **LM**

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“Why is my lawn brown?”

THERE IS NO industry more closely tied to color than the lawn and landscape industry. After all, it is called the “green” industry. Yet sometimes, color appears to go unnoticed and even taken for granted.

Think of the importance of color in designing an installation job. The colors of the flowering trees and shrubs combined with the mix of annuals and the backdrop of the building all serve as influential factors in an average design job and a great one.

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Just as color impacts many of our day to day decisions, color is also a significant aspect in distinguishing two very unique nitrogen sources. Dark blue is said to be the color of truth and moderation. Research also confirms surrounding yourself with purple promotes good judgment and peace of mind. It also is the distinguishing characteristics of two LebanonTurf's exclusive fertilizer technology, MESA and Expo.

MESA offers a cost-effective alternative to coated urea products. MESA combines fast green-up with long-lasting results. University tests have shown that MESA sustains a very high quality turf while producing less flush growth than other sources of slow release nitrogen. While the deep blue symbolizes truth and moderation, basic agronomy teaches us there's truth in moderating nitrogen levels. To better understand

the benefits of MESA, it helps to take a closer look at the two components.

The MESA granule is made by combining sulfate of ammonia crystals into our exclusive Meth Ex methylene urea complex. The result is a homogeneous granule that combines the benefits of Meth Ex and ammonium sulfate in a single particle. Like all methylene ureas, Meth Ex offers long feeding by relying on soil microbes to release nitrogen slowly, only when moisture and temperature are ideal. Meth Ex is a very efficient

nitrogen source because almost all of the applied nitrogen is available to the plant in the season of application.

Ammonium sulfate is an excellent economical source of ammoniacal nitrogen and soluble sulfur. It also responds very quickly. Ammonium sulfate supplies soluble sulfur. Sulfur is the fourth-most used nutrient behind nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in turf plants. As important as sulfur is, it is often overlooked. Sulfur deficiency is often referred to as a “hidden hunger” because symptoms are not easily distinguishable. Ammonical nitrogen provides almost immediate response, and in combination with sulfur, produces a very deep green color.

Perhaps the most blatant advantage when comparing MESA with coated products is noting its clipping yields. An Iowa State University study compared MESA and SCU side by side. While SCU

produced 24.2 yd³, MESA yielded only 13.4 yd³. Consider also the surge growth typical of SCU and the unneeded stress on the turf increasing the likelihood of insect and disease pressure.

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Two 1-pound of N/MSF applications provide more consistency than spoon feeding with coated products. Expo also delivers an attribute often claimed by organics, less disease and healthy vigorous turf that recovers readily from damage and stress. Leaching studies have demonstrated that potash in Expo requires significantly more water to be completely leached than SOP.

Expo is available as 20-0-25 homogeneous granules. You can also find it in selected grades within LebanonTurf's NX-Pro and Par Ex product lines.

The next time you have to make a decision that impacts the color of your turf, remember the blue color of MESA or the purple color of Expo and rest assured you've made the right choice.

For more information about LebanonTurf products, visit LebanonTurf.com

Mike Sisti is Marketing Manager for LebanonTurf. He can be reached at msisti@lebsea.com.



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Project Portfolio

DESIGN/BUILD

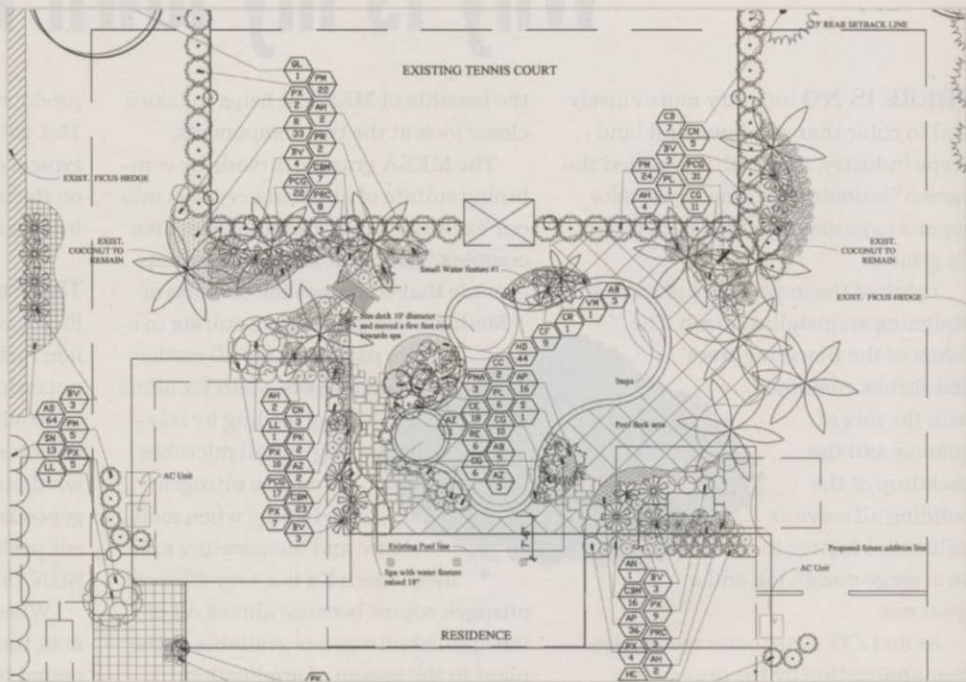
PRIVACY / UNIFYING DESIGN / DRAINAGE

The design

A Florida homeowner desires a landscape that can integrate with the house, pool and tennis court elements.

Project Requirements

- Budget range: \$200,000 to \$300,000
- Refresh and update the landscape
- Integrate the space



Project Specifics

- Redesign and rebuild existing pool
- Pay attention to drainage within the enclosed courtyard

ABOVE A bridge connects the pool and tennis court.

RIGHT The side garden was essentially a blank canvas with which to work.



BEFORE



ABOVE The new pool incorporates a waterfall to echo the tranquil feel of the plantings, while the attached spa serves as both an aesthetic water feature and central focus during entertaining.

LEFT The client wanted the pool updated and less set apart from the tennis court and rest of the yard.

BELOW Large heliconias were used to screen views into the neighbor's yard.



Project Principals

- Designed by David Font, Font Designs, Coral Springs, FL, www.fontdesigns.net
- Font Designs' many services include landscape and hardscape design, urban planning, irrigation planning, golf course and recreational facility design and streetscapes. With extensive experience in the design of resorts and hotels, the company is known for delivering resort-style living environments.

Form & function

BY KEN KRIZNER

Retaining walls combine practicality with design to make properties more useful.

Function remains the most-important element because retaining walls are built to stabilize the terrain or prevent erosion. But these walls can be aesthetically pleasing, as well, because of the many different looks available.

Functionality remains the main mission of retaining walls, but the structures also shape and sharpen landscapes.

In residential settings, retaining walls can be used for a number of purposes, including leveling a yard or creating

a raised patio. In commercial settings, they can be used to level large tracts of land to prepare them for construction projects.

and textures and are made to resemble practically any element, from wood to stacked slate, O'Connell points out.

Retaining walls play a role in the visual effect of landscapes. They can be informal shapes or include irregular placement of materials — smaller in size but more pronounced in visual character than more-functional retaining walls, says Michael O'Connell, president of O'Connell Landscape, a design/build landscape contractor in San Rafael, CA. The structures also can complement other landscape elements, such as plants, paving and mulches.

There are numerous types of retaining walls, including poured concrete, conventional stacked blocks and stackable decorative blocks that need no mortar. Manufactured blocks and glass/concrete facade elements are available in a variety of colors

Site preparation

Many factors should be considered before construction of a retaining wall begins.

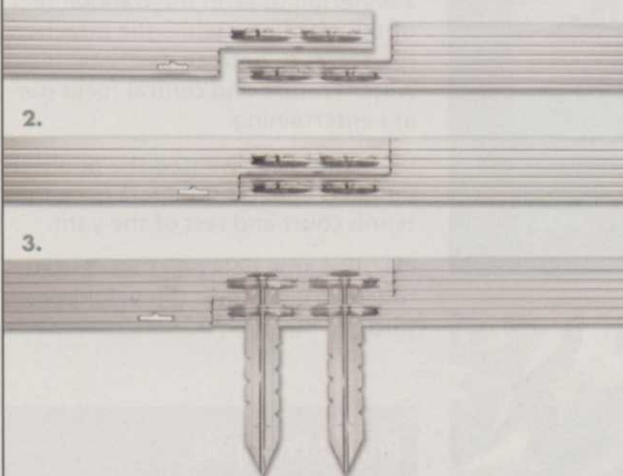
"It always starts with how the space is going to be used," says Andy Vande Hey, president of The Vande Hey Co., a professional landscape firm in Appleton, WI.

Other factors to consider are: the overall height of the wall; slopes at the top and/or bottom of the wall, which will change the way the wall is constructed; and whether the wall will be under a driveway, pool, shed or other variable that will put great pressure on it.

"These factors will determine how to build the wall functionally to survive long-term," says Tim Huinker, construction specialist

continued on page 66

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continued from page 64

for Anchor Wall Systems, a developer of retaining wall systems in Minnetonka, MN.

When preparing the site, the area should be clear of vegetation, especially above the wall. Site preparation also can depend on the engineering cross-section of the wall, Vande Hey adds.

"If it's more of a structural wall, there will be more preparation involved," he says.

Construction involves digging a footing trench about 12 in. deep and laying in a gravel leveling pad until about 6 in. deep. The wall will lie on top of the pad.

Site access

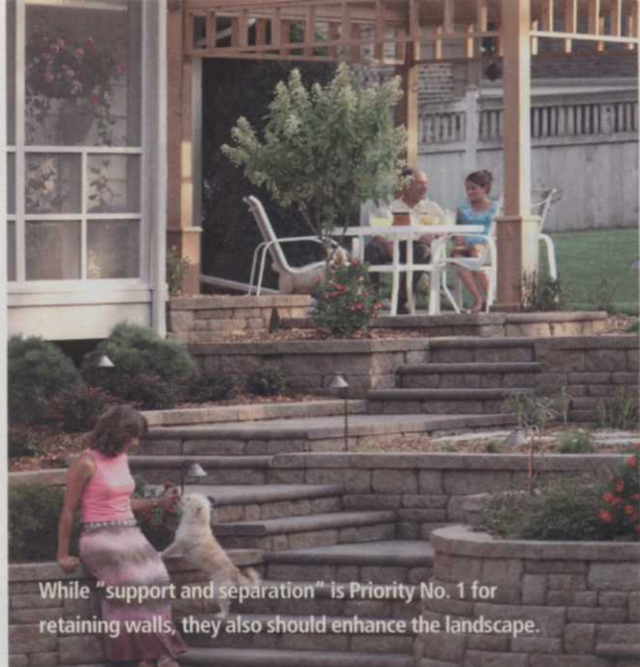
Access is probably the biggest challenge to building a retaining wall. These walls require different backfill materials and a lot of block. There is likely to be a great deal of excavation work beforehand.

To be as efficient as possible, there is a lot of equipment used to build retaining walls.

"It's nice to have equipment accessibility, but that is not practical at every site," O'Connell says.

Weather can be another challenge, Huinker says, as can be the availability of labor to build the wall.

It's also important to



While "support and separation" is Priority No. 1 for retaining walls, they also should enhance the landscape.

remember the engineering behind a retaining wall. It can take almost no time at all to discover whether a wall is improperly built.

"And the cost to replace a retaining wall is enormous," Huinker adds.

The height of the retaining wall is critical. As the height of a wall increases, the forces that want to make it tip or slide are increased exponentially. If the height of a retaining wall is doubled, the forces pushing against the wall could be three or four times as great.

The slope of the soil also is key. The wall not only has to contend with the soil behind it, but also the soil upslope. The weight pressing against a wall likely will be measured in the thousands of pounds.

Soil drainage capability is also important. Soil that retains water will put additional loads against the wall during rainy seasons. For this reason, retaining walls should be designed with excellent drainage systems within the soil behind them.

Contractors should install

drainage tile, washed gravel backfill and geo-tech fabrics to prevent siltation of gravel backfill, and weep holes within the walls to allow water to escape from behind them.

Trends in materials

Years ago, there were just a few different types of blocks that could be used. Today, Vande Hey says, there are at least 15 common retaining wall block types — and each has a compelling reason for its use.

The materials, such as native stone, timbers and colored concrete bricks and blocks, are chosen to provide a visual effect in the landscapes. But the new trend in the appearance of retaining walls is an aged/distressed look, often accomplished by the use of multiple size blocks within the walls.

"You want the walls to look like natural stone, like they have been there forever," Huinker points out. **LM** — The author is a freelance writer based in Cleveland. Contact him at info@landscapemanagement.net.

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SLOW GROWTH

1



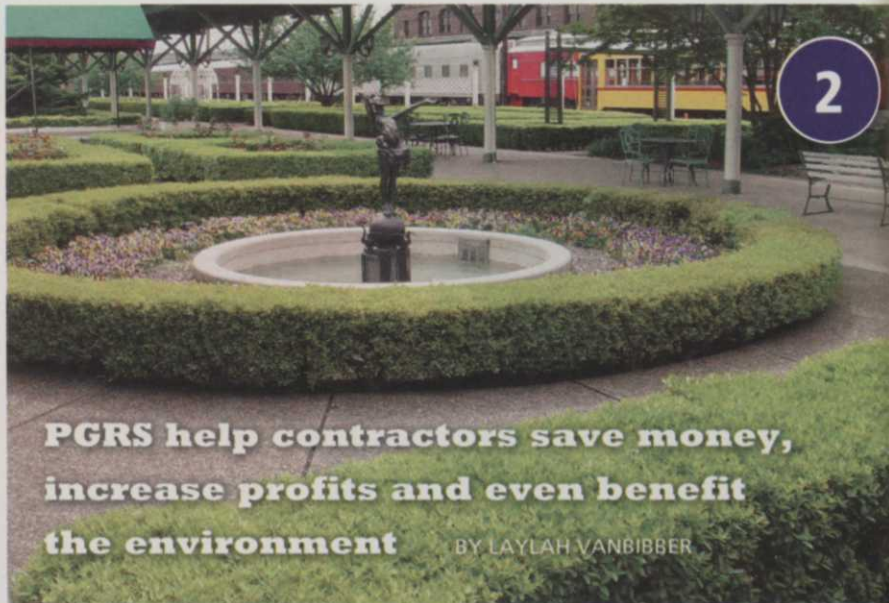
With escalating fuel, labor and insurance costs, profits are getting squeezed tighter and tighter. If you are not already using a plant growth regulator (PGR) to reduce mowing and trimming, it might be time to consider the cost-saving potential of these products. PGRs can help you stay on track with mowing and trimming schedules, provide add-on services to clients for increased profit and still net substantial savings in your property management programs.

Although PGRs have been around since the 1960s, the first introduction for use on fine turf was in 1987. Since then, PGRs have proven their value in turf and ornamental management. A well-thought-out PGR program has repeatedly demonstrated reductions in the costs associated with labor-intensive tasks such as mowing, trimming, clean-up and hauling by 50% or more.

The first step in developing a plant growth regulation program is to determine your objectives.

Using PGRs

Many managers feel they get the most from their PGR programs during the peak spring growing season when the demands for mowing and trimming are



2

PGRs help contractors save money, increase profits and even benefit the environment BY LAYLAH VANBIBBER



3

1 String trimming is labor intensive, time consuming and a drain on profits. PGRs are ideal for reductions in string trimming. **2** PGRs can reduce the cost of keeping ornamental hedges neat and trim. **3** PGR use allows you to maintain properties with steep embankments more easily.

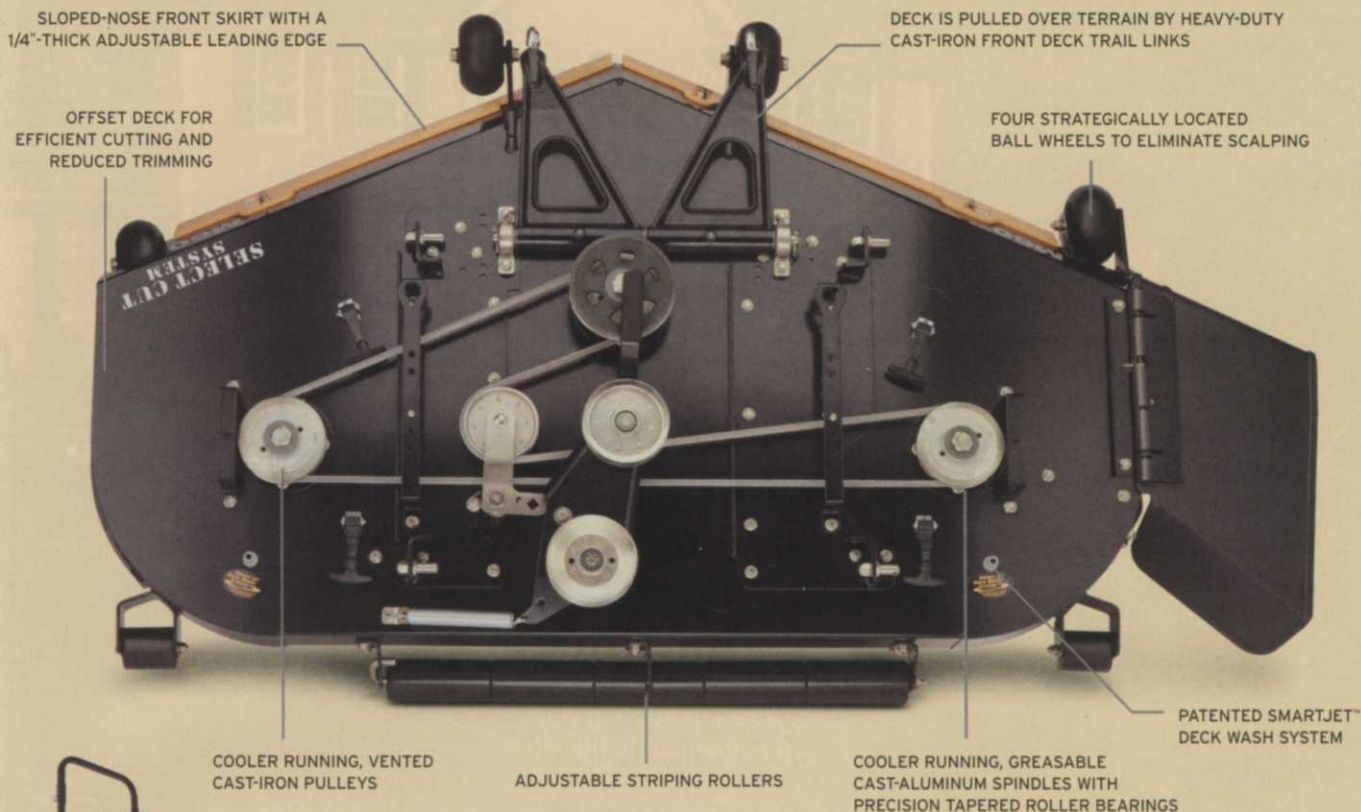
"We get many calls concerning PGR use," says John Spaulding, PGR Product Manager for PBI/Gordon Corp. "I like to use a PGR on my own lawn during the peak season."

Spaulding tells contractors they can get by with mowing every 10 to 14 days instead of needing the twice weekly

continued on page 71

high and the weather is erratic. During this season, properly timed PGR applications can slow growth to make mowing easier and faster or to hold turf growth to reduce the number of mowings.

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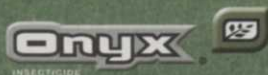


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continued from page 68

mowing generally required during peak growing season.

With rising fuel costs and concerns about emissions, this can add up to dramatic savings – for your business and the environment.

Mowing PGR-treated turf also takes less time, resulting in labor cost savings, and there is less strain on the mower. Clipping volumes are reduced, which can be even more important to contractors who may have to double mow or bag and haul the clippings.

Additional benefits

Other contractors use PGRs primarily to reduce the labor-intensive task of trimming and edging, especially if their contracts are based on number of mowings.

String trimming is labor intensive, time consuming and, therefore, a drain on profits. PGRs are ideal for reductions in string trimming and many property managers use them exclusively to keep string-trimmed areas neat.

Spaulding offers the following application tip: “Don’t scalp the turf and then apply a PGR.” The grass has to have suf-

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PGR dos and don’ts

Do make sure the turf to be treated is in optimum condition at the time of treatment, generally in spring or fall.

Don’t apply to grass that is showing signs of insect infestation or disease.

Don’t apply to grass in areas subject to concentrated traffic from people, animals or vehicles.

Don’t make a PGR treatment on grass that has been scalped; sufficient leaf tissue for absorption is required for success.

Don’t waste your PGR treatment on dormant plants. Wait until green-up is complete.

Do delay initial spring PGR applications in mixed-species turf to

make sure the slowest recovering species have greened up sufficiently to be sprayed.

Do make a pre-emergent crabgrass application and a broadleaf weed control application prior to, or with, your PGR treatment.

Do mow grass to be treated at a summer mowing setting so there remains sufficient green and foliage.

Do try to apply PGRs at least eight hours before irrigation or before rain is expected.

Do read all label directions prior to making your PGR application.

Do make sure that the PGR is applied evenly;

skips will result in an uneven appearance and overlaps may cause discoloration.

Don’t make your PGR application when there are high winds, which could cause the spray pattern to be uneven.

Don’t allow a plugged spray tip to create embarrassing gaps in your boom sprayer’s PGR coverage.

Don’t mow turf for at least three days after application; mowing will remove any PGR that has not yet been fully absorbed.

Do monitor and adjust irrigation: PGR treated plants require less water during the suppression period. Too much water may damage treated plants.

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4

4 Using a PGR around sprinkler heads can allow your mowing crew to skip the time-consuming trimming of these areas for several mowings. 5 Shows the difference between seedheads suppressed with PGRs and how the treated area can look neater longer.

continued from page 71

ficient leaf tissue to absorb the product.

Using a PGR around sprinkler heads, trees, landscape beds and sidewalks allows your mowing crew to skip the time-consuming trimming of these areas for several mowings.

Some contractors only apply PGRs in less-visible areas that need to be kept trim and neat, but not necessarily have immaculate lines of freshly mowed turf.

These areas are often large and the advantage of not mowing for several weeks can really add up the savings. This allows crews to give more attention to the highly visible areas of the property. Additionally, since these areas are less visible, the higher rates for longer growth control, which may cause discoloration, can be used with less concern for aesthetics.

Being able to skip some of the mowing required for maintenance of steep embankments or areas with high vehicle traffic that may make mowing hazardous to employees, but which still need to be kept neat and trim is an additional benefit.

Getting started

First-time PGR users are encouraged to experiment. Determine your objective; then select a product to work with that fits that objective.

Review product claims, and discuss the potential benefits with a representative from the manufacturer. Company representatives are generally able to provide some suggestions concerning proper application of their products and might even be available to assist with the first application. They also can assist in the development of an initial PGR program designed to meet the needs of your specific situation.



Make sure your sprayer is calibrated. Uniform application at the correct rate is essential for PGR success. Over application can result in uneven suppression and discoloration of the turf. Make sure your application timing is appropriate for your objective.

Make your first application in an area designated for experimentation or on your own turf. Before making an application on a customer's property, make sure they know what you are trying to accomplish. And leave an untreated plot so you can gauge the growth regulation effect. The side-by-side comparison will be your best measure of your success.

With a little homework and practice you can put PGRs to work on your team. See for yourself how PGRs can reduce your fuel and labor cost, repair and maintenance costs and reduce the emissions and waste load on our environment. **LM**

— VanBibber, marketing manger at PBI/Gordon Corporation, has worked with the professional greens industry for 20 years. You can reach her at info@landscapemanagement.net.

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Green Technology goes mainstream — driving the development of better, less-costly solutions.



Green tech for summer

BY TYLER WHITAKER

I don't consider myself a tree hugger, whale saver or master recycler. But recently I have found myself interested in Green Technology that helps the environment and saves me money. This month I'm sharing some of my favorites so you can join the fight against climate change while benefiting at the same time.

1. Compact fluorescent vs. LED light bulbs | www.1000bulbs.com — We should all know the benefits of using Compact Florescent Light (CFL) bulbs instead of regular incandescent bulbs. Lower power consumption (13-15 watts vs. 75 watts) and longer life means smaller power bills and a significant decrease in lighting costs. Cost savings for these bulbs typically repay the purchase price within six months. LED light bulbs take these benefits even further by reducing the wattage to 1-3 watts and increasing the life of the bulb to 30,000 hours for the same amount of light. Also, LED lights contain no mercury and therefore are safer for disposal.

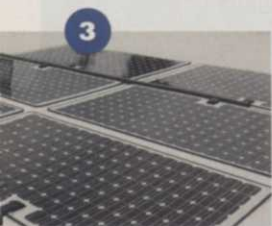
2. Lutron Maestro dimmers | www.lutron.com — Sometimes you need the ability to dim the lights or you can't find an LED or CFL to fit your lighting needs. In these cases, using a dimmer is the right option. Lutron Maestro dimmers provide IR, wireless and three-way dimmer controls for every office and home application. I like the ability to lower the wattage to save on the power cost and extend the life of my lights. Using a dimmer you should be able to lower your power costs up to 40%.

3. LUMETA Power-Ply 380 solar panels | dricompanies.com — Getting off of the power grid is the envy of every green techie and DRI Energy's Lumeta solar panels have made it easier. What initially caught my eye was a video showing six thin panels being installed in just more than 30 minutes. Their unique rack-less install eliminates traditional mounting structures that penetrate your roof and add costly labor and time to the install. Another benefit is that any excess power can be put back into the public power grid to lower your regular costs or even put money in your pocket.

4. Air X Wind Generator from Southwest Windpower | www.windenergy.com — Many solar power owners augment their installations with wind power for those cloudy days. If rain and wind are normal in your location, the Air X Wind Generator from Southwest Windpower just might be what you need. Weighing 13 lbs. and featuring a 46-inch rotor diameter, this unit has an Air X microprocessor for increased battery charging capability, greater reliability, and lower flutter noise. Using a brushless alternator with only two moving parts will allow this maintenance-free wind turbine to be a quality source of power for years to come.

Regardless of your views on global warming, Al Gore and rising oil prices, green technology is becoming mainstream — driving the development and availability of better, less-costly solutions that are good for both the environment and the bottom line.

— *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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LM Reports

TECHNOLOGY

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH

Landscape lighting

A Q&A with Sarah Goodale,
sales manager, U.S. Architectural Lighting

What are some of the significant trends in landscape lighting you are seeing? Installers are going to see two major trends in landscape lighting: LED lamps because they save energy and new modular fixtures with interchangeable components. Modular fixtures are a brand new concept that helps specifiers and installers save design time while ensuring a well-planned aspect to the landscape. The range of finishes allow these fixtures to coordinate with varied architectural styles and exterior or interior color palettes.

What are new technical advances in lighting and fixture adjustability? One of the really new capabilities is "infinite articulation," using a tri-axis system. This provides a full-range of adjustability when directing a light source. The tri-axis light directional stem is field adjustable on two axes with a 180-degree aiming capability, plus a full 360-degree rotatable axis. The fixture housing also can be rotated 360 degrees. There is a graphic degree indicator on the stem body that simplifies precision aiming before and after installation.

What should contractors look for in landscape lighting fixtures? For practical reasons, installers should always consider product availability and timely delivery, durability, simplified installation and

easy maintenance. Savvy contractors also should be receptive to new products that can make their jobs easier, more productive and which set them apart from the competition.

For example, innovative lighting technologies, like those incorporated into modular fixtures, can simplify both planning and execution. Interchangeable body styles and accessories, along with versatile mounting options radically simplify a lighting project. Plus the uniform appearance of modular fixtures creates a sense of refined design and aesthetic sensibility.

U.S. Architectural Lighting ▲

The Trilux lighting series from U.S. Architectural Lighting features an innovative modular design with three body styles and interchangeable mounting options. Landscape options include: ground spike, tree mount assembly or junction box. Depending on the body style and mounting accessory selected, Trilux can be used as an accent light, a pathway spot, wall wash, tree flood or landscape flood light. Trilux is available in 2.5-, 3.5- and 5-in. diameters and a range of lengths to accommodate lamps from miniature MR16 to large 175-watt PAR 38 metal halide.

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continued on page 78



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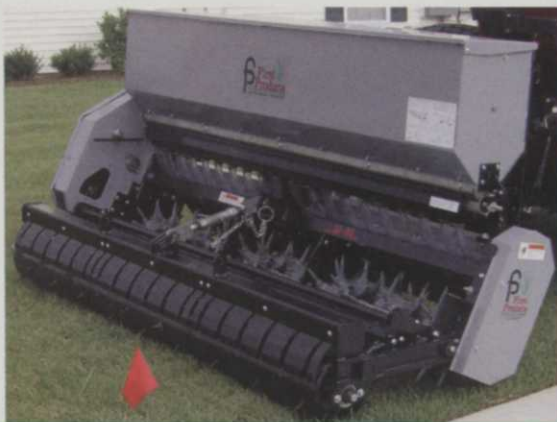
For additional product details, consult with your Rain Bird salesperson, or visit www.rainbird.com/shiftgears.

RAIN BIRD

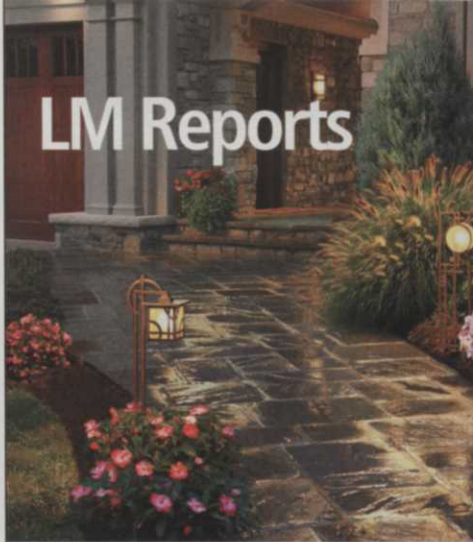
AERA-vator

Using the **Aera-vator** from First Products creates the ideal seed bed for overseeding. Vibrating tines loosen the soil without disrupting the existing turf.

Using the seed box with **Aera-vator** makes it a one pass operation for the landscape professional.



LM Reports



continued from page 76

Kichler

Kichler welcomes two new families to its Garden Collection, the Aries Manor and the Larkin Estate. The Aries Manor collection is accented with genuine marble, ornate detailing and an Olde Bronze finish. The astral designs make their way into the family's lit centerpiece — a garden armillary. The Larkin Estate presents an art-glass inspired look with distinctive geometric lines. Path lights, deck lights and a lit path and spread centerpiece are finished in durable brass and feature umber-etched glass.

Contact Kichler at 866/558-5706 or www.landscapelighting.com

Orbit/Evergreen

A new 12-volt fiberglass directional light, Model FG1020, has been released by Orbit/Evergreen. The fiberglass body is corrosive-resistant and is available in black or dark green. The FG1020 can be precision-adjusted for optimal illumination and includes a reinforced ground stake for additional support. Without the hood, Model FG1020 measures 4 3/8-in. by 3-in. and with the hood it measures 6 1/8-in. by 3-in. A 20-watt lamp is included and the fixture can handle up to 35-watt bulbs.

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Patents Pending



Pave Tech

Pave Tech's Ambiance by Paver Bright is the newest light in its line of architectural hardscape lighting. Ambiance have a frosted tempered glass lens that defuses 1 watt LED lights encased in stainless steel housings.

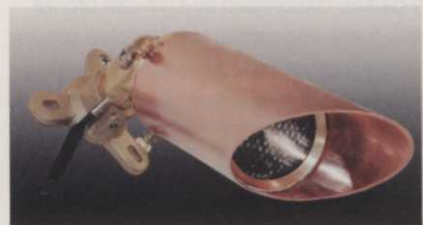
Also available are Gems by Paver Brights. Gems come in varying colors. Paver Brights are available in five standard paver sizes: 4-in. by 4-in., 4-in. by 8-in., 5.5-in. by 5.5-in., 5-7/8-in. by 5-7/8-in. and 6.25-in. by 6.25-in. Contact Pave Tech at 800/728-3832 or www.paverbrights.com

flush with grade, so nothing sticks out to trip over, hit with a lawnmower or have kids knock over while playing. Available in different shapes and sizes, they add that finishing touch around homes.

Contact Kerr Lighting (by Snap Edge Corp.) at 800/932-3343 or www.kerrlighting.com

Nightscaping

Nightscaping introduces a new Down-lighting fixture. The WM-0207CU JEM-Liter has many features including: two O-rings in brass base to assure water tightness; socket includes a lamp retaining clip to insure a constant tight fit; mount-



ing bracket is contractor designed for easy installation, aiming and servicing. The risk of fire or liability is decreased with an inline fuse and the eyebrow is adjustable in eight different positions, 360 degrees around fixture, while knuckle remains in vertical position.

Contact Nightscaping at 800/544-4840 or www.Nightscaping.com

Vista

The 2350 bullet-style fixture from Vista is designed to be the most rugged available, with the fixture housing and fully-adjustable knuckle precision-machined from heavy solid brass bar stock. The 2350 uses a standard MR-16 and is UL listed to 50 watts maximum, allowing you to specify it with powerful lamps. Dual O-ring seals prevent water intrusion and protect components.

Contact Vista Professional Outdoor Lighting at 800/766-8478 or www.vistapro.com





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LM Reports



Hanover Lantern

Hanover Lantern designs and manufactures high quality, heavy duty cast aluminum decorative lighting fixtures, posts, accessories, signs and mailbox assemblies for residential, commercial and landscape applications. Hanover Lantern products are offered in a

variety of design styles to complement virtually any architectural theme from Colonial Williamsburg through contemporary and oriental motifs. Mounting variations and lantern sizes, 25 hand applied finishes and

15 panel options are also available. Contemporary lines combined with classic mission styling highlight the new Hanover Lantern Indian Wells Series (pictured). Opalescent glass completes the look, now available in two sizes and all Hanover Lantern finishes. **Contact Hanover Lantern at 717-632-6464 or www.hanoverlantern.com**

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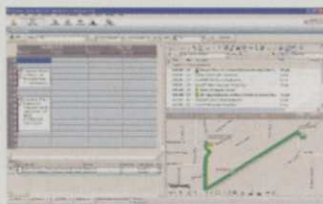


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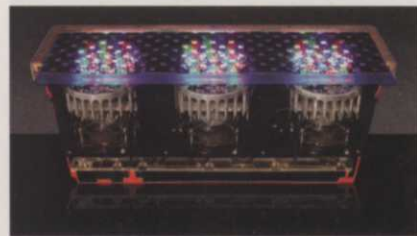
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tures of each fixture. Each parabolic reflector can rotate up to 360 degrees and tilt up to 15 degrees. A dual-lamp T5HO asymmetric reflector and triple Titan 25W LED options are also available.

Contact ALLSCAPE at 800/854-8277 or www.alllighting.com

Hadco

Hadco's AL41 low-voltage landscape Pathlyte is built to last with die-cast aluminum housing, stainless steel hinge and spring latch. It provides simple, tool-less entry, which means maintenance without a screwdriver. The roof has dual stainless steel hinge with stainless steel spring-lock for tool-less entry and relamping. The finial is clear seeded glass that sparkles when illuminated. The thermoset polyester powdercoat finish is electrostatically applied after a five-stage conversion cleaning process and bonded by heat fusion thermosetting and laboratory tested for weatherability and fade resistance.

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2 new Hitachi excavators

The ZX75US-3 and ZX85USB-3 Hitachi excavators are compact ultra-shorts that are useful for all kinds of jobs including landscaping, light residential, urban renewal, and underground utilities. These machines deliver power, smoothness and precision. They reduce the potential for damage to surrounding areas or to the machines themselves. The new shape of the backfill blade provides crowding performance, and machine stability. The swing boom on the ZX85USB-3 enables parallel digging to walls, guard rails, and foundations, useful for excavation and utility work. Both models' cabs also feature a suspension cloth seat, controls, multilingual LCD monitor, slide-open front glass, and a tinted, transparent roof hatch.

Contact Hitachi at 800/675-8459 or www.hitachiconstruction.com

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Nikko Tanaka Engineering's new grass trimmer / brush cutter, the TBC-280PF, weighs in at just 12.8 lbs. and delivers 1.4 hp. Pow-

ered by Tanaka's new 27-cc PureFire engine, its features include a 23-fl.-oz. see-through fuel tank, padded "D" handle, 5-in. semi-automatic cutting head, and a solid steel

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Contact Husqvarna at 800/HUSKY-62 or www.usa.husqvarna.com



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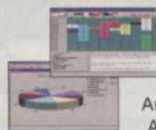
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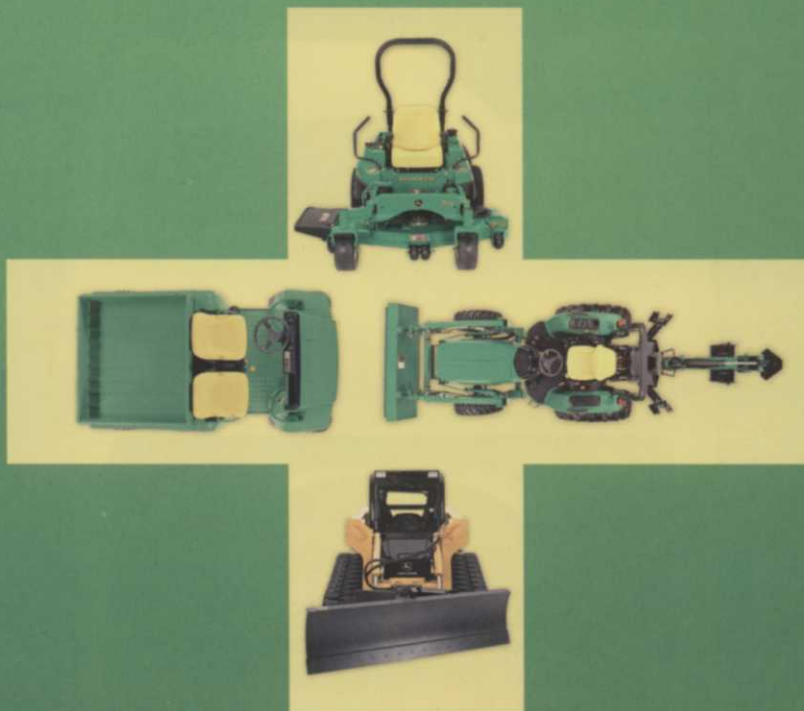


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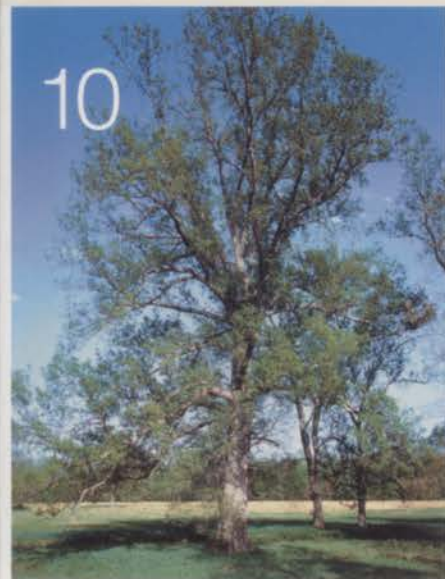
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Correction: In the March/April issue of *Livescapes*, Conard-Pyle's name was misspelled in the Rose Roundup on page 16.

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A walkway surrounded by vibrant color. Photo courtesy: Goldsmith Seeds

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Home prices and confidence drop

Home prices have fallen at record rates, gas prices are rising and consumers are feeling less confident about the economy.

"Consumers' inflation expectations continue to rise and this measure now matches the all-time high reached in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina," says Lynn Franco, director of The Conference Board Consumer Research Center. "The percentage of respondents intending to take a vacation over the next six months has fallen to a 30-year low, another sign of consumers turning more cost conscious. Looking ahead, consumers' outlook for the economy, the job market and their income prospects remains quite pessimistic and little changed from last month."

According to Standard & Poor's Case/Shiller Home Price Index prices have dropped 12.7% for the 12 months ending in February. Seventeen of the 20 large markets it tracks had record low annual declines.

While common sense would indicate that a weak housing market, a poorly perceived job market and less disposable income would have a negative affect on the Green Industry, at least one segment seems to be feeling no pain as of yet.

Throwing a wide net

Despite the continued drop in the real estate market, the majority of landscape architects remained busy in the first quarter of 2008, according to the latest Business Quarterly survey by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA).

"Landscape architecture firms have turned to high-end residential work, commercial development and public sector projects to mitigate most of the slowdown from the housing market," says Nancy Somerville, executive vice president and CEO of ASLA.

The survey also asked about interest in sustainability, with nearly 72 percent of respondents reporting clients as "very interested" in sustainable issues such as water conservation, energy efficiency and native plantings.

In uncertain economic times, it pays for landscape businesses to diversify their revenue streams. By expanding your client base and offerings, you can weather the economic storm.



V
Diversify your business to weather these uncertain economic times.

Regards,

Jamie Gooch

Managing Editor
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Making molehills out of H-2B mountains

> COMMENTARY FROM ANLA

Workers from India, recruited by third-party labor contractors overseas with the alleged promise of robust wages and a green card, came willingly to this country for the promise of jobs and a better life. When they arrived, they learned that they would be participants in a temporary guest worker program called H-2B, and that they would be returning to India upon the completion of their work. If true, this act was deplorable. Some might say this act was cruel and inhumane. Others may call it indentured servitude. Such abuse cannot and should not be tolerated. On this point, there should be universal agreement.

As motivational speaker Jim Rohn has been quoted as saying, "For every promise, there is a price to pay." If the tale of the Indian workers for Signal Corp were common, as employers of H-2B temporary guest workers, we probably wouldn't be able to sleep at night. But the truth is that this type of story is so strikingly uncommon that it leaves employers who

Worker advocates who have expressed significant opposition to an extension of the returning guest worker exemption for the H-2B program have unfairly painted a picture of widespread abuse.

have followed the letter of the law by utilizing the last resort for legal seasonal labor to ask why, after doing things the right way, they are being left to foot such a hefty tab: surviving without a key part of their workforce.

Worker advocates who have expressed significant opposition to an extension of the returning guest worker exemption for the H-2B program have unfairly painted a picture of widespread abuses. And while the rest of our nation's broken immigration system is replete with faults and confusing guidelines, opponents of

the H-2B program have politicized the only temporary guest worker program that works in any meaningful way, and represents only a fraction of a percent of the workforce in the United States.

While the business community is aware of the statutory limitation of 66,000 H-2B workers per fiscal year, few realize that through the returning guest worker exemption there were more than 254,000 Department of Labor certified H-2B job opportunities in FY2007. While some workers will extend their visas to fill H-2B job opportunities in consecutive seasons, it's extremely

difficult to believe that the remaining tens of thousands of H-2B workers would be so desperate to return to this country through a program that, as the labor unions put it, is laden with widespread abuse. Is it an insatiable desire to be further abused?

But please heed this warning. Proposals outlined by Big Labor would be permanent new burdens of the H-2B program in exchange for temporary cap relief. Unions believe that they have successfully backed the seasonal, non-agricultural employer community into a corner where we will accept any proposal. The reforms sought by labor unions are, largely, already tenants of the H-2A program. FACT: there is no cap on the H-2A program, yet only 1.9% of the agricultural job opportunities in the U.S. are H-2A certified, and between 60% and 75% of U.S. agricultural workers are believed to be improperly documented. There is a reason that even in an era of increased enforcement; the H-2A program is still wildly unpopular. It's unworkable, expensive and clumsy.

The ironic decision that we will face in the coming weeks: At what point does it make more sense for us to walk away from a returning guest worker exemption saddled with permanent, unworkable labor protections, simply to maintain the workable program with an unworkable cap that we already have?

> For more information on H2B, see www.anla.org/legislative/.

Connors is ANLA Director of Legislative Relations. For more information, visit www.anla.org.

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Water-wise landscaping can improve conservation efforts

> COMMENTARY FROM OFA

Irrigation is essential for most of the urban and suburban landscapes in the warmer summer months, with some experts estimating that as much as 60 percent of all water usage in some communities goes to maintaining landscapes. However, the amount of water used for irrigation often exceeds the amount needed. It is estimated that millions of gallons of excess irrigation water are wasted annually.

This has given landscaping a bad reputation as a heavy water user, but with effective management practices, established landscapes not only require little water, they can also contribute to decreased water usage by creating shade and lowering ambient air temperature. The key to a water-conscious landscape is applying the following six basic principles to every design.

1 A Good Design. The first step in any successful landscape is a good plan. Observe the site and take notes on the current or desired use of different areas, considering maintenance and water requirements. Indicate high-use areas, desirable views, environmental concerns

(such as wind direction, slopes and dense shade) and traffic flow through the yard. For example, a high-quality lawn for entertaining will require high-water use. A deck or patio is a more maintenance-free choice for get-togethers, but don't overdo the use of wood

or concrete on your land. Leave plenty of vegetative surface for rain to reach the soil and soak in; otherwise, runoff and erosion become problems.

2 Soil Preparation. Good soil is the basis for healthy plants and optimum water use. The key to good soil is the addition of organic matter, such as compost. Incorporate 2 to 3 inches of compost, shredded leaves or other fine organic material into the soil annually. In locations with established trees and shrubs, it is difficult to incorporate organic matter, but applying and maintaining a 2- to 3-inch layer of an organic mulch will gradually improve the soil quality.

3 Effective Plant Selection. Water-efficient landscapes need not be barren or planted with cacti and loaded with rocks. They can be colorful, cool landscapes full of

beautiful plants. The most important consideration is plants with a natural ability to grow well in your area. You don't want to fight against nature. Limit plants with high-water demands to small areas that can be watered efficiently, and group all plants with others of similar watering requirements. This allows you to provide just enough water to keep them healthy. Limit the amount of turfgrass you use in the landscape to areas in which grass provides a functional benefit that exceeds the benefit of other ground covers or surfaces. Also, select turfgrass suitable to your climate and site.

4 Efficient Watering Practices. It is imperative to apply water in adequate but not excessive amounts. Water should not be applied faster than the soil can absorb it; generally, apply 1 inch per week at one watering. The best irrigation method is with trickle or drip irrigation, but properly calibrated sprinkler systems can also be effective. Water-use areas should be separated so high-use plants are located in one irrigation zone while low-use areas are located in separate zones. This way the irrigation system can be most efficient. Once established, water-efficient plants can be weaned to tolerate more drought-like conditions.

5 Mulch Use. Think of mulch as sun block for plant roots. Organic mulches help retain moisture so there is less need to water. They also recycle plant materials that might otherwise end up in the landfill. In addition, mulches help to control annual weeds that compete with desired plants for water. Organic mulches also improve soil structure as they decompose and moderate the soil temperature. Just 2 to 4 inches of mulch can substantially retain soil moisture, slow evaporation and protect roots from overheating.

6 Proper Management Practices. Proper mowing and fertilizing can help conserve moisture. Mowing at the proper height (do not remove more than one third of the grass at any one mowing) allows the grass to develop deeper roots that are more efficient in using soil moisture. Fertilizing at the proper time encourages healthier plants that need less watering.

> For more information on irrigation, see page 31.

Carver is Manager of Technical Education with OFA, an Association of Floriculture Professionals.

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How can I ensure pin oaks get iron? Rid azaleas of scale?

Q How do you correct iron chlorosis in pin oaks? — IA

A chlorotic condition in pin oaks may be caused by several factors, such as poor drainage, dysfunctional roots, lack of iron and certain pest and disease problems.

If the chlorotic condition is resulting from an iron deficiency, and it is detected early, it can be treated.

The symptom of iron chlorosis in pin oaks is yellowing of foliage between the veins, which remain green. If left untreated, necrotic spots will form on the leaves leading to defoliation and tree dieback.

Consider having a foliar analysis and soil test conducted to determine the exact element deficiency.

If the test results indicate iron deficiency, then consider applying supplemental iron treatments. Quite often, soils may contain sufficient iron but the plants are unable to obtain adequate micronutrients because of high soil pH. Soil pH dictates nutrient uptake. Under

high soil pH, other elements can interfere with iron absorption, rather than the soil lacking iron. Under these circumstances, supplemental iron treatments may be beneficial.

Chelated iron, which reduces the effect of high pH, can be soil applied. However, if the tree is already showing advanced evidence of iron deficiency such as die-back, consider trunk injecting with ferric ammonium citrate to correct the deficiency as quickly as possible. Along with trunk injection, also consider soil treatment of chelated iron such as Ferriplus to main-

tain the iron levels so that further trunk injections will not be necessary. Iron injections should be administered when there is good soil moisture. Early spring is fine, although reports indicate that fall treatments may minimize injury. While injecting, avoid the "valleys" or the sunken areas and inject in the "ridges" of the root flare, close to the ground.

Soil treatment of chelated iron can be provided along with a normal tree fertilization program.

Iron sulfate products can also be used with a gravity flow feeding method using a high volume of water. With this method, there is potential for leaving the treatment unit hanging from the treatment trees for an extended period. Therefore, it may not be practical to use in certain situations where too much traffic exists.

Read and follow label specifications for best results.

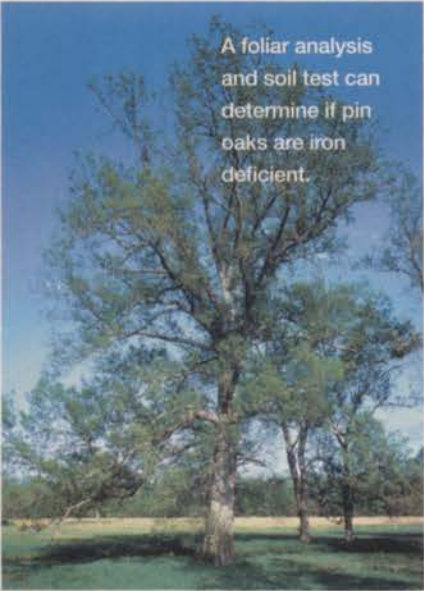
Q How do you control scale on azalea? We are having difficulty in management. — TX

Scale insects can become a serious destructive pest if not managed as needed. They can build up in numbers over time and through their sucking and feeding activity they can weaken the target plant. It is important to understand their biology — particularly as eggs hatch into the stage known as crawlers.

Insecticide treatments such as Talstar, Merit, or Safari should be targeted against young, second instar crawlers. Second instar crawlers stop moving around and introduce their sucking mouth parts into the plant tissue. They eventually produce a new cover over their body. Ideally, the best time to treat is after the second instar settles down and before it develops the protective cover. This is a vulnerable stage.

Reports indicate that Safari would be a good choice for scale insects management in general. Make sure the ground is moist but not wet for better uptake and results.

Read and follow label specifications for best results.



A foliar analysis and soil test can determine if pin oaks are iron deficient.

>> 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.

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



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> OUTREACH

Industry Improves Landscape at Shelter

The San Diego chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and a number of green industry professionals have completed a beautification project at the Center for Community Solutions' North County emergency shelter for survivors of domestic violence and their children.

The project encompassed the beautification of the shelter's grounds, includ-

ing new trees, shrubs, potted plants, patios and outdoor furniture. Following a recent renovation of the aging shelter, which was profiled on KGTV/10 News' "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," donations were sought to replace a large tree that was struck by lightning.

According to Chris Gustard, past president of the San Diego chapter of the ASLA, senior project manager for Gillespie Moody Patterson Inc. and project lead/landscape architect for the CCS project, a

(L to R): Chris Gustard, Gillespie Moody Patterson; Adam Gunn, Big Trees Nursery; Wendy Urushima-Simmons, Center for Community Solutions; Dave Salisbury, Mintz Levin and Ross McCright, Brickman Group.



groundswell of enthusiasm from local companies and organizations enabled the team to replace the tree with a 30-ft. tall, 75-year-old Coast Live Oak from Big Trees Nursery and to renovate the grounds.

The local ASLA chapter, which provided a \$2,500 grant, was aided by community leaders, including Mintz Levin, an international law firm; Big Trees Nursery, Brickman Group, Pardee Tree Nursery, Armstrong Nursery, Coast Recreation, Gillespie Moody Patterson Inc., Horizon Crane Company, John Deere Landscapes, Monrovia Growers, Quick Crete Products Corp., Decorative Stone Solutions, BMLA Landscape Architects and Simplot Partners.



> IRRIGATION

Rain Bird Seeks "Difference Makers"

Rain Bird Corporation is seeking nominations for the 2008 Intelligent Use of Water Award, which recognizes persons or organizations whose innovation, leadership, ingenuity and overall commitment to improved landscape water efficiency has raised the standard for outdoor water conservation.

Nominations for the 2008 Intelligent Use of Water Award may be submitted by completing a nomination form at www.rainbird.com/iuow/award.htm. The deadline for nominations is June 30, 2008.

Following the close of the nomination period, an independent panel of experts will select the finalists and winner based on their demonstrated leadership, innovation and implementation of water-efficient measures. The recipient of the 2008 Intelligent Use of Water Award will receive \$10,000. They will also be featured in a short film highlighting their contributions to outdoor water conservation, which will be shown at the final screening event of the Intelligent Use of Water Film Competition (www.iuowfilm.com) in Los Angeles on October 11, 2008.

> PEOPLE

CSLB Honors Rohlfes

The Contractors State License Board gave a Certificate of Appreciation to Larry Rohlfes, assistant executive director for the California Landscape Contractor's Association.

The presentation was made for his "work to partner with the Contractors State License Board to combat unlicensed and fraudulent construction activity that has helped level the playing field for legitimate contractors while, at the same time, protected California from illegal operators."

Larry Rohlfes



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> ASSOCIATIONS

FNGLA Receives More than \$253,000 in Grant Funds

Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association (FNGLA) executive vice president Ben Bolusky announced the establishment of a partnership program with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS). The program was made possible by a USDA specialty crop block grant and will be conducted over a two-year period.

A grant in the amount of \$253,750.10 will be used for the partnership to conduct the following programs:

- > FNGLA will showcase an interactive educational exhibit at Walt Disney World's 2008 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival.
- > FNGLA's existing online Plant Locator will be transformed into a real-time, online plant locator service.
- > A series of public service announcements will be aired statewide. An expansion of the award-winning GrowSmart! water conservation campaign, these messages will promote watering wisely, use of Florida-friendly plants in landscapes, buying locally and will direct consumers to plant and landscape resources.
- > There will be featured homes in five target areas of the state to exhibit innovative water-conserving landscapes and irrigation design standards.
- > FNGLA will also work with FDACS and the Florida Department of Education to transform the existing horticultural curriculum in Florida high schools to provide a pathway to the Certified Horticulture Professional (FCHP) program.

> BUSINESS

ValleyCrest acquires Concepts in Greenery

ValleyCrest Companies has acquired Concepts in Greenery, a landscape services company based in Stuart, FL.

Founded in 1903 by Dan Steinberg, who manages the company with partner and co-owner John Rose, Concepts in Greenery has achieved steady growth and market presence, providing landscape maintenance and installation services to a large and loyal customer base along the southeastern coast of Florida.

Discovering GOLDⁱⁿ California

BY FRANK ZAUNSCHERB

Today's home owner wants a "do-it-for me" outdoor-living space and they expect the area to reflect their individuality and taste. They want it to be alive with the same flair and fashion sense as their home's interior.

The California Spring Trials, which took place in late March and early April this year, are organized by floriculture industry seed breeders throughout the state. The trials are structured so each breeder features both their own plant genetics and those from competitors. Plants are grown under identical conditions in their greenhouses or outdoors.

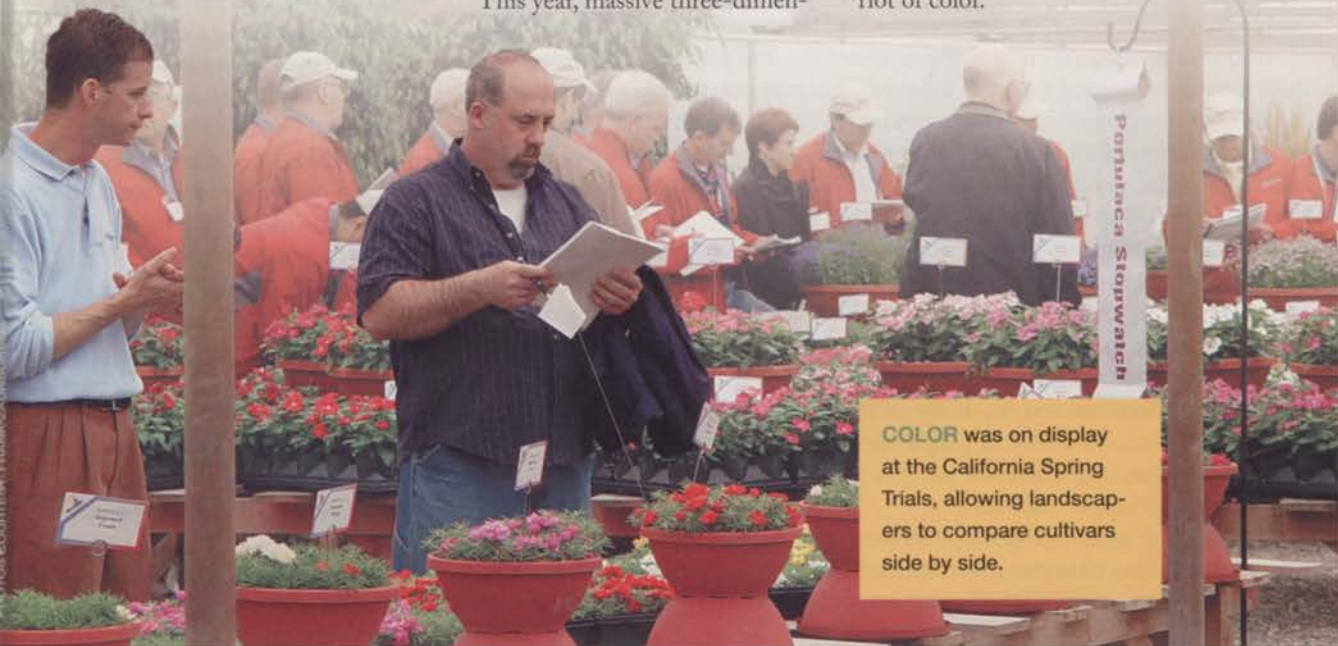
SAVVY LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS LOOK TO THE GOLD MINE OF PLANTS AT THE CALIFORNIA SPRING TRIALS.

Growers attend to examine the comparative results. Retailers, landscape contractors and commercial and municipal grounds managers are encouraged visit so they can be inspired by the many choices available, and get connected with local growers to produce the plants.

The first overall impression a landscape contractor might have when attending the California Spring Trials for the first time is "Wow!"

This year, massive three-dimen-

sional floral displays greeted visitors outside the entrance to the Suntory/Jackson & Perkins facility. Gorgeous grounds surround the Goldsmith/Syngenta Trial location in Gilroy, as well as the Ball Horticultural Co. site in Santa Paula. A local landscape contractor built an inspiring display inside the Ecker Ranch greenhouse in Encinitas specifically for the event. And all the greenhouses and displays were full of blooms and a riot of color.



COLOR was on display at the California Spring Trials, allowing landscapers to compare cultivars side by side.

It's All About Her

Consumer research conducted by Proven Winners — and supported by many participating Spring Trial companies — proves that women, by an overwhelming margin, are today's decision makers when it comes to purchasing flowering plants for gardens. Goldsmith inspired with a beautiful garden platform seating area/gazebo draped with gauzy fabrics, festooned with pillows and surrounded by a coordinated colorscape of annuals. The display caused a nearly unanimous "I want one, too!" reaction from female attendees.

Aromatherapy is a consumer buzzword in personal wellness circles. Promote fragrant gardens as one of the healthy benefits of a landscape. Temari Blue, a trailing verbenas new to Jackson & Perkins' Suntory Collection is fragrant, constantly blooming from spring to fall



and an energetically spreading plant suited to landscape installations.

Stay connected with the latest home décor and lifestyle trends, as well as what's being advertised in consumer garden media when selling, planning and installing outdoor living spaces. Proven Winners and P. Allen Smith, a leading national garden personality have teamed up to promote his "Hot 25 Plants and Shrubs for 2009" plant list to millions of potential customers. Do you

know what's on that list? You can be certain women researching new plants for their gardens will.

Inspiring the female "Do-It-for-me" customer with a full range of flowering annuals and perennials suited to commercial applications is an excellent advantage over competitors.

Find Gold, and Every Other Color

Do you know the top three colors women want in their gardens? Proven Winners research indicates that it's purple, red and pink. Every color imaginable — from silvers and whites, through yellows, oranges, reds, purples, blues and greens — was in abundance at each of the trial locations. Landscapers will have no problem in creating a color palette suited to individual customer tastes.

Cool- and warm-season varieties offered unlimited opportunity for the landscaper to create seasonal beds and containers with almost year-round (depending on the region) color accents.

Along these lines, Syngenta introduced its Calliope geranium with an amazing deep-red color, and excellent heat performance in both full sun and partial shade.

For "75-mile-an-hour drive-by impact in the landscape," American Takii's Fantasy linaria cool season plants have bold colors for early spring and fall mass planting, hanging baskets and mixed containers.

GREEN IS GOLD

Environmental issues are top of mind for consumers and the green industry alike. Drought conditions in many regions of the country have caused sometimes-severe water restrictions and challenges to plant maintenance. Seed breeders have concentrated efforts on improving their plant varieties with higher drought and heat tolerances.

Integrated pest management — the consideration of all available pest management techniques to discourage the development of pest populations, while minimizing the use of pesticides — was highlighted at several trial locations. Disease- and insect-tolerant plants are good not only for the environment but can help the grower and the grounds manager by reducing costs; an important aspect when considering how sustainable practices and business practices are linked.

American Takii prepared an interesting IPM display including "Why are flowering annuals important for a 'green' garden?" The answer: flowering plants attract a wide variety of beneficial insects and birds that need pollen and nectar to survive. Additionally, "green" mulching — using ground covers with dense, low spreading characteristics like their Opera Supreme petunia — is an effective, natural weed suppression method.

Several locations featured new biodegradable plant container options for plants. Ball Horticultural Co. promoted its EasyScape plantable pots for seasonal color and perennials. Actually degradable sleeves, they save labor and time, cut planting waste and speeding up job site clean-up.

The interest in 'green' solutions will likely continue, and the California Spring Trials is an excellent event for landscape contractors wanting to expand their knowledge about and leverage demand for green flowering plant solutions in the landscape.



CREATIVE DISPLAYS along the trial route gave landscapers ideas how to use new plants in the landscape.

Clockwise from top left: displays from Ecke Ranch, Jackson & Perkins and Goldsmith Seeds.

Nuggets of Wisdom

At every stop landscape industry attendees can uncover important nuggets of information about incorporating flowering plants into their work. Here's just a small selection from this year:

> While pointing out their landscape selections, Jack Williams, International Product Manager at

Ecke Ranch, explained the criteria used to select landscape plants: structure and shape to provide dimension, longevity to minimize change-outs and instant color for dramatic effect.

> Faith Savage from Goldsmith Seeds offered an insight for landscapers to think about. "Who still uses an old 286 computer?" she asked. "Be open to the new genetics. Like computers, the seed genetics available today are drastically changed from just 10 short years ago. Tried-and-true varieties may not be the best choices anymore. Talk to your grower about what's available now."

Gold Star Performers

Goldsmith's Ramblin' trailing petunia was bred to grow from center to provide the spread, but keep the color centered. Its recent Cora vinca introduction was bred to be more drought-tolerant.

Containers, window boxes and hanging baskets are essential in integrating landscapes and outdoor living spaces. Suntory's Desana ipomoea with compact habit and short internodes, was bred to tame the potato vine's habit of overwhelming other plants in combination baskets and containers.

For added shape in the landscape, Takii's new Soprano petunia series is a bush type with strong growing habit. Their selection of drought-resistant varieties is especially important for areas with water restrictions.

Syngenta's Natalia Hamill suggested two drought-tolerant perennials as excellent choices for the southeastern region: Gaura Geysler and Gaillardia Sunburst.

Benary introduced a new begonia designed for full-shade to full-sun landscape applications, as an alternative to using traditional impatiens.

Geranium varieties were fre-

quently featured at sites along the 2008 route because they are among the most drought-resistant landscape performers. Other notable and oft-recommended landscape varieties: breeder's proprietary versions of cool-season pansies; osteospermums, which grow and flower throughout the season; dramatic cyclamens; impatiens and petunias.

With the popularity of water features in the landscape, American Takii's Canna Tropical series (an extra dwarf variety) provides instant color and unique appeal when placed in shallow water gardens.

Ball Horticultural Co. offers landscapers a complete range of top-performing annuals, perennials, grasses and shrubs for superior flowering, reliable growth, disease tolerance and low maintenance.

After the Gold Rush

Don't worry about missing the 2008 California Spring Trials, because there is still time to attend the OFA Short Course July 12-15 in Columbus, Ohio, to meet with the same seed breeders that participated this year, plus 600 floriculture exhibitors on the trade show floor.

OFA — an Association of Floriculture Professionals, will be hosting the 2008 American Nursery & Landscape Association's (ANLA) Annual Meeting at the Short Course, as well. Don't miss this outstanding opportunity to meet with peers, attend educational sessions (including a special landscape contractor track) and network with all segments of the floriculture industry.

For more information visit www.ofa.org

Zaunscherb is creative director and business strategist, Zaunscherb Marketing Inc., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. For more information visit zmi.ca.

» Designs for Greener Gardens: Winning the Challenge



oasis that included everything from lots of flowers to an outdoor kitchen to a spot for the family fish. Not an easy task when the previous owner had covered most of the property with 12 inches of pea gravel and built a water feature so deep it was considered a pool and had to be fenced.

"It was a real challenge," explains Nancy Lowry Moitrier. "I really tried to listen to all of the owner's requests, and give them the garden they wanted. I think that helped us get the project. I learned a long time ago to remove my own agenda. Now, I try to write down everything the client says. I review my notes a lot while I'm creating the design, and I give the client what they asked for, even when I think something else would work better."

According to Moitrier, her notes from the initial consultation become an integral part of presenting the finished design to the client and often help in landing projects. "When I go back to present to a client," says Moitrier, "I review those notes so I can repeat to them what they told me: 'Cathy, you said you wanted lots of bright colors, red flowers, all these other things, and here's how I incorporated it into my design.' I think that helps the client connect with you and feel like you designed something specially for them."

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- » Lots of bright colors
- » An entertainment area, including an outdoor kitchen
- » A lawn area
- » A hot tub
- » Enhanced view of the Chesapeake Bay

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

- » Very small space
- » Majority of space covered by impervious surface, including 12 inches of pea gravel on almost 50% of the surface
- » Heavily zoned site that required extensive permitting
- » Compressed schedule dictated by TV filming

BY BRIDGET WHITE

If you've seen the HGTV show *Landscape Challenge*, then you know the sequence: Three landscape companies are selected to create potential designs for a customer; all three consult with the client about their requirements, produce a design and pitch to the client. One company is selected, and the design is implemented.

What you don't see on the TV program is everything the landscape company goes through in a very limited time frame and under tight budget constraints to make the project a success. But when Nancy and Pierre Moitrier from Annapolis, MD-based Designs for Greener Gardens were invited on the show in spring 2006 and selected by the client, they learned firsthand why the show is aptly named.

Pitching the Project

The job was to design a tropical garden

1 The rigors of filming the landscape transformation added a layer of difficulty that designer Nancy Lowry Moitrier hadn't encountered before.

2 The use of "doorways" such as this trellis and different paving materials helped define separate garden rooms.

Tricking the Mind

In creating the design for *Landscapers Challenge*, one of the most important things Moitrier wanted to accomplish was making the space seem much bigger than it actually is. The total property is only 7,500 sq. ft. with less than 3,500 sq. ft. of outdoor space for parking, flowerbeds, lawn, an entertainment area and a hot tub.

To make the space seem bigger, Moitrier divided it into garden rooms, created elevation changes and varied the surface materials to help define spaces and present new experiences.

"It's all about giving the mind different experiences," explains Moitrier. "You wander down the walkway, step up to the porch, walk through an arbor that acts like a doorway; and all the while the surface material is changing from bluestone gravel to stepping stones to grass to bluestone pavers. Having these different spaces, these different surfaces makes you feel like the experience — and therefore the space — is so much bigger than it actually is."

Additionally, Moitrier placed flowerbeds and individual garden rooms at 45° angles to fight the space's linear nature. Without something to slow the eye, Moitrier argues, your focus would go straight to

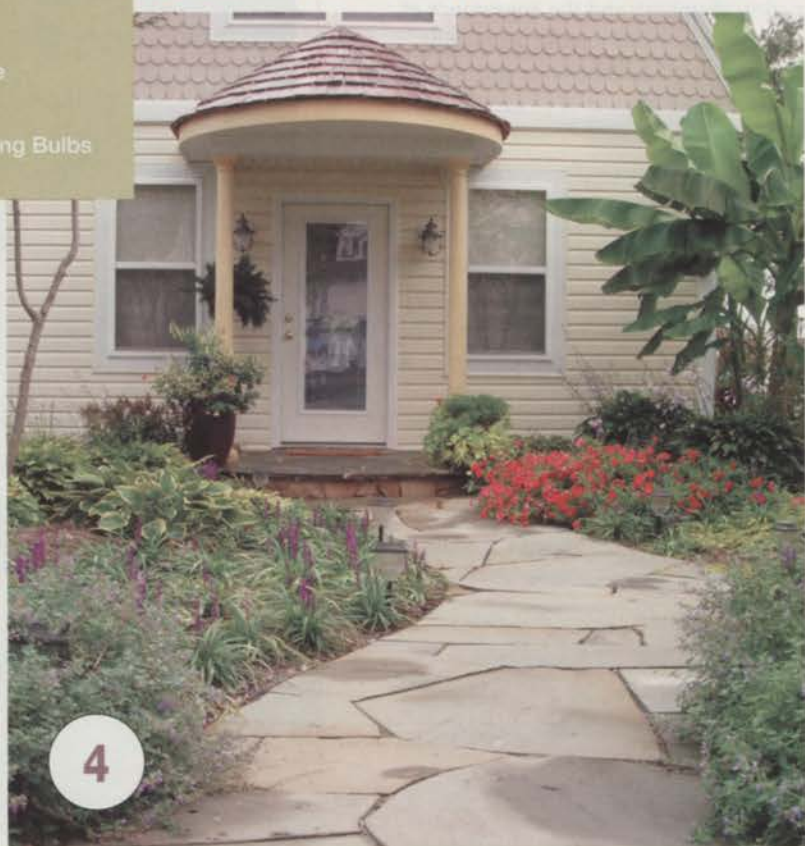
3 Native hibiscus filled multiple needs in the landscape: bright color, a tropical feel and use of native plants.

4 One of the homeowner's requests was the use of bright colors in the landscape. A plan filled with perennial and seasonal color was instrumental in securing the job.



SELECTED PLANT LIST

Baptisia
Coreopsis
Crepe Myrtle
Native Hibiscus
Hosta
Lilies
Musa
Perennial Sage
Roses
Spring Flowering Bulbs



according to plan

the bay in the distance. By using angles and multiple focal points, your vision is slowed to take in more of the yard, and this longer experience is perceived as a larger space.

Navigating Permits

While many landscaping construction projects involve permitting, this project brought an additional layer of difficulty. Because the property is located within what is called the "critical area" of the Chesapeake Bay (a 100-ft. buffer zone designed to protect the Bay from runoff and pollution), there were strict regulations for surface material and plant choices as well as a ban on constructing permanent structures.

Not only did the outdoor kitchen, (which was called an outdoor barbecue area to facilitate permitting) hot tub and front porch have to be permitted, it all had to be expedited because of the filming schedule. To move things along, plans for an outdoor sink were abandoned, eliminating plumbing and the appearance of permanence. Additionally, permitting dictated that Moitrier place the hot tub on a cement slab instead of sinking it as she would have preferred.

Despite the multiple trips to wrestle with the permitting office and the inability to erect any truly fixed shade structures (portable umbrellas, existing structures and smaller "temporary" structures such as an arbor provide lots of shade), the client's new landscape features everything ... well ... everything but the kitchen sink!

Bridget White is a freelance writer based in New Orleans, La.

5 Another request from the homeowners was a large space for entertainment on a fairly small lot.

6 By removing a privacy fence, Moitrier opened up the view to the Chesapeake Bay less than 100 ft. away.



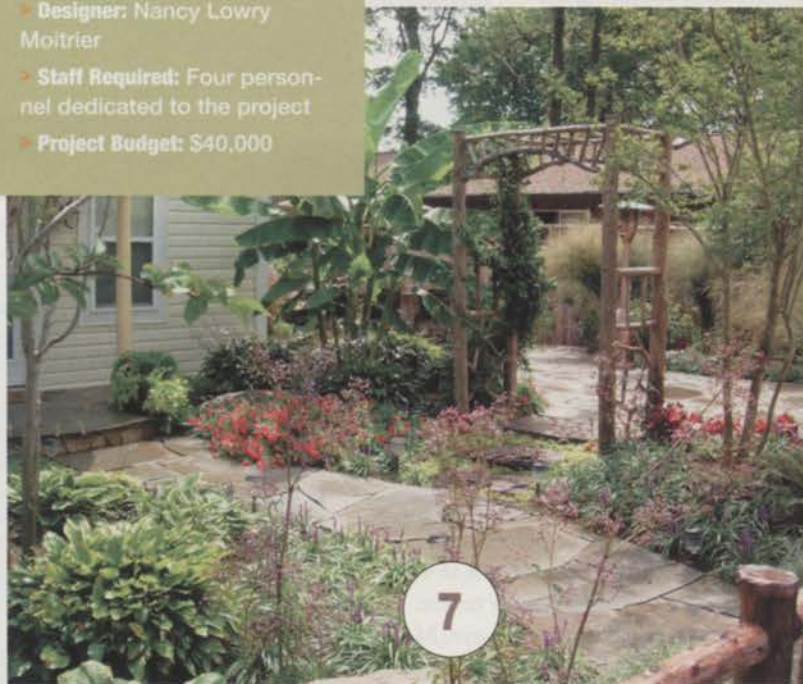
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6

PROJECT PRINCIPALS

- ▶ **Landscape Company:** Designs for Greener Gardens
- ▶ **Designer:** Nancy Lowry Moitrier
- ▶ **Staff Required:** Four personnel dedicated to the project
- ▶ **Project Budget:** \$40,000



7



8

7 The use of distinct garden rooms with varying flooring substrates and elevations gives the appearance of a larger space.

8 Moitrier used large containers of mixed foliage and color to add texture, color and visual interest throughout the landscape.



an Association of Floriculture Professionals



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Rose Roundup

PART 2

FIND THE RIGHT ROSE FOR YOUR CLIENTS, REGION AND COLOR THEME.

BY JAMIE J. GOOCH

In our last issue, we brought you 15 roses that were well-suited to various landscape uses. Roses have come a long way from the fickle, maintenance-intensive varieties of the past. In fact, some of the more recent cultivars require little-to-no maintenance.

Breeders and groups such as the All America Rose Selections (AARS) are a great place to look for landscape roses suited to your climate. Below are just a few of the roses available for landscapers.

Baby Love is a yellow shrub rose with excellent resistance to blackspot, it blooms all season long. The plant's deep green foliage grows upright about 4½ ft. high. It's available in the U.S. from heirloom Old Garden Roses.

Carefree Delight is a landscape shrub rose that blooms profusely with upright, arching canes and a free branching habit. Graceful canes enveloped with dense, dark green foliage show off clusters, which open to expose pink petals and a white center. It is highly resistant to mildew, blackspot and rust.

Carefree Wonder is an everbloom-

ing landscape shrub rose that is low maintenance and hardy in both summer and winter. Its double-flat buds open to expose bright pink petals with a creamy pink reverse.

Day Breaker is a floribunda with a sharp tea fragrance. Its 4 to 4½-inch flower clusters are yellow, blending to pink and apricot. Its long-lasting flowers bloom continuously.

Eureka is nearly as wide as its 3½-ft. height. The floribunda provides a hedge-type look with apricot yellow flowers in bunches of three or five.

Gemini is a hybrid tea with coral pink and white blooms that intensify in color as it ages. Its flowers can grow as large as 7 inches on 4- to 6-ft. plants.

Memorial Day >



Gemini

Magic Carpet is a low-growing ground cover rose with pink and lavender blooms. It will perform well when planted singly or in groups. It grows about 18 inches high and spreads up to 5 ft.

Memorial Day is an unusual orchid-pink hybrid tea with enormous full flowers that are very fragrant. Its long, low-thorned stems have clean green leaves.

Sentimental is a floribunda with varying splashes of burgundy red and white on its petals. The vigorous



Eureka



Sunny Knock Out



Tahitian Sunset >

Mountain State AARS Winners Include:

- > Carefree Delight (The Conard-Pyle Company)
- > Carefree Wonder (The Conard-Pyle Company)
- > Crimson Bouquet (Jackson & Perkins Wholesale, Inc.)
- > Eureka (Jackson & Perkins)
- > Hot Cocoa (Weeks Roses)
- > Julia Child (Weeks Roses)
- > Memorial Day (Weeks Roses)
- > Sentimental (Weeks Roses)
 - > Tahitian Sunset (Jackson & Perkins)
 - > Whisper (Jackson & Perkins)

plant supports continuous blossoms.

Sunny Knock Out is a new color in the The Conard-Pyle Co./Star Roses' shrub rose family. It is the latest release from breeder Bill Radler. According to Radler, Sunny Knock Out has the disease resistance of the original Knock Out, with similarly dark, attractive foliage and a slightly more upright habit. It naturally resists rust, mildew, blackspot, Japanese beetles and rose midge, and should perform well in any garden.

Tahitian Sunset is a brightly-hued

hybrid tea with blossoms starting from high-centered orange-yellow buds that open fully to an apricot-pink with yellow highlights. With an upright, vigorous growth habit and disease-resistant foliage, Tahitian Sunset is one of the most low maintenance hybrid teas.

Whisper is a white hybrid tea with classically formed flowers and dark green, semi-glossy leaves. It is resistant to disease and well-suited to a cutting garden. 🌿



Day Breaker



Sentimental



Carefree Wonder

Growing Interest in Ornamental

Ornamental grasses are a whole different game than carefully maintained and manicured turfgrass lawns. They are grass plants that need little care and are allowed to grow to the full glory of their natural mature size.

Ornamental grasses have a long list of attributes that make them popular in the landscape. Topping the list is their range of dramatic beauty in color, form and texture. Depending on variety, summer color ranges from dusty blue to brilliant red and deep green. A number of varieties are also available with attractive variegated foliage. The array of colors expands further in the fall, including purple, bronze, orange and shades of red.

Most ornamental grasses have attractive flowers that, like their foliage colors, vary widely. Forms and size vary from tiny tufts to flowing mounds to majestic columns. This versatility makes it easy to find a grass that meets the needs of any landscape.

Miscanthus
Autumn Red

Easy To Grow

Although beauty is important, ease of care is probably the top reason grasses are so popular. Low-maintenance is a priority for almost everyone, and ornamental grasses certainly meet that requirement. They are durable, adaptable, virtually pest-free, need little fertilization and many are drought tolerant. Pruning is limited to an annual spring buzzcut a few inches above the ground.

The wide range of varieties make ornamental grasses easy to use in almost any situation. Their rapid growth make taller varieties ideal for quick screens or single specimens. Wide mounding varieties can be grouped together to create a dramatic flowing mass. Smaller grasses work well as ground covers or borders. Any variety offers an appealing contrast that accents structures, boulders and other plants. Warm-season ornamental grasses are ideal with spring-blooming bulbs, hiding the fading summer foliage of tulips, crocus and daffodils.

The Fine Print

While there are many benefits to using ornamental grasses, keep in mind that some can be invasive. The majority of ornamentals are clump grasses, with the size of the clump only gradually expanding. But a few spread to start new plants by rhizomes, stolons or seed, and can become a problem if site conditions are right. A grass that is invasive in one part of the country might not be a problem at all in another due to limitations such as moisture, temperature or season length. The best advice is to be aware of potential spreaders, and how they act in your area. If you decide to use spreaders, they can be kept in bounds by using enclosed beds, above-ground con-



Miscanthus (background) and
Pennisetum (foireground)

BY KENDALL WEYERS

Grasses



Andropogon Silver Sunrise

tainers or buried containers with the bottom removed.

Varieties

There are a wonderful array of options when choosing ornamental grasses. Described below are some favorites ... but don't limit yourself to this list. It's always fun to try something new. Remember to check with your local plant expert to learn more about the benefits and limitations of specific grasses in your area.

Maiden or Silver Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*): A tidy and graceful mound of fine green blades, ranging in size from 3 to 7 ft., depending on variety. Feathery, fan-shaped flowers put on an attractive display from late summer through winter. Many varieties are available, including Gracillimus (Maiden Grass, to 6 ft. tall), Morning Light (silver variegated Maiden Grass, to 6 ft. tall), Autumn Red (nice red to purple fall color in compact size, 3 to 4 ft.), and Zebrinus (Zebra Grass with yellow bands on foliage to 6 ft.). Zones 5-8.

Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*): Robust native to the tallgrass prairies, this grass is tolerant of heavy clay soils. It reaches a height up to 6 ft., but is only 1 to 2 ft. wide, making it a good choice for screens or backgrounds. Gray-green foliage becomes light red in the fall. Purple "turkey foot" blooms begin in August. Zones 4-9.

Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*): A native with great drought tolerance that produces an upright form 2 to 4 ft. tall and 2 to 3 ft. wide. Blades have a fine texture and colors range from green to blue-green. Fall brings bronze to red colored foliage and blooms that are attractive all winter. It prefers infertile soil. Blaze is a variety with russet-red fall color and The Blues has a deep blue summer foliage that turns burgundy red in the fall. Zones 4-9.

Feather Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis x acutiflora*): This grass has a tight, upright habit, topped with abundant narrow, feathery gold plumes. It is attractive all winter. Karl Foerster is the classic standard to 5 ft., which was named Perennial Plant of the Year in 2001. Avalanche reaches 4 ft. and has blades with a wide white stripe down the center. Overdam reaches only 2 to 3 ft. tall and wide, and has bright yellow to white margins on its leaves. Zones 4-7.

Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*): Another drought-tolerant native that produces attractive upright, dense mounds of narrow blades 2 to 3 ft. tall and 2 ft. wide. Emerald summer color becomes gold to orange in fall. Seed heads are open and attractive to birds. Zones 3-8.

Hardy Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*): A beautiful green mounding grass with numerous creamy white to pink bottlebrush blooms that is effective summer to

fall. Fall foliage color ranges from gold to rusty red. Hameln is 2 to 3 feet tall and wide, and is the most common variety. Little Bunny is a tiny 12-inch mound with fluffy white flowers. Zones 5-8.

Blue Fescue (*Festuca glauca*): A great dwarf mound of blue foliage is the hallmark of this grass. It works well as an accent or border, or in rock gardens. It prefers dry soil and full sun, but can take partial shade. Elijah Blue keeps a beautiful blue through the summer. Zones 4-8.

Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*): Switchgrass is a durable, drought-tolerant native that grows up to 5 ft. tall. A large airy panicle floats over the foliage. Heavy Metal sports bluish-green leaves and is reliably upright. Shenandoah is a smaller plant, 3 to 4 ft. tall, with tremendous wine-red foliage. Zone 5-8.

Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia selloana*): This large, dramatic grass reaches 10 ft. tall and 6 ft. wide. Abundant state-ly, white plumes put on a show in late summer to fall. It makes an excellent screen or specimen, especially with a background of red color to highlight the plumes. It can be invasive under certain conditions. Zone 6-10. Hardy Pampas Grass or Ravenna Grass (*Saccharum ravennae*) is similar and is more cold hardy, to Zone 5. 🌿

Kendall Weyers is a landscape designer and freelance writer and can be reached at kweyers@earthlink.net.

Pest-Proof Your Landscape

BY JANET AIRD

What chance do ornamentals have against insects and disease? A pretty good one, says Brian Maynard, professor of Horticulture at the University of Rhode Island. In 1991, the university and the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association installed the URI Botanical Gardens. Since then, they've lost only one or two plants to

PEST-TOLERANT ORNAMENTALS ARE OUT THERE, JUST WAITING TO PLEASE YOUR CLIENTS.

pests, he says, and both pre-dated the garden. They've never used pesticides.

They've managed this in large part by planting ornamentals that are well-adapted to the area. The plants are healthy and very pest-tolerant.

Planning Makes Perfect

The first step to pest tolerance is choosing plants that grow naturally in the same kind of climate, soil, moisture and light, and with heights

and widths that fit the space.

Some plants have natural protection against insects, such as hairs that prevent them from reaching the leaves, or thick leaves they may not be able to penetrate.

"Plants also have active defense mechanisms. They respond to being attacked," Maynard says. Some drop leaves, removing the pests' food source. Others grow tougher leaves. Many release repellent chemicals.

When a plant is under attack from pests — either insects or diseases — it releases stress hormones. These chemicals signal to the plant that it needs to change to fight the threat. The chemicals also communicate with other plants nearby, letting them know a threat is near.

"That takes energy," Maynard says. Healthy plants can defend themselves and bounce back from attacks.



Monarda, yarrow,
coreopsis and speedwell

Plants that are stressed by conditions are more prone to insects and diseases. In fact, there are pests, for example, bark beetles, that actually seek out ailing plants.

The second step in having a pest-tolerant landscape is to find out which pests are already in your local area and choose ornamentals that aren't susceptible to them.

Third, aerate the soil before planting. A landscape design may be beautiful, but if the soil is compacted, ornamentals will always be stressed because of the poor drainage and lack of air. And once they're in the ground, he says, it's very difficult and time-consuming to improve the soil.

Less Maintenance

Pest-tolerant ornamentals need less maintenance than others. In addition to keeping planting areas clear of de-



bris so insects have fewer hiding places, one of the most important parts of maintenance is monitoring plants for signs of trouble.

Often, it's maintenance that causes the stress in the first place.

Using too much fertilizer stresses plants because too much salt goes in the soil. Also, too much fertilizer causes uncontrolled, soft growth, which makes the plants more susceptible to insect attacks. Some plants, like hemlocks, shouldn't be fertilized

at all. Woolly adegid populations increase on hemlocks that have been fertilized, Maynard says.

Overwatering also causes problems. Plants can only take up so much water, and fungi are active in wet soil. Although underwatering is stressful, too, you can gently stress plants by underwatering them slightly, which controls their growth and toughens them up.

Over-pruning causes stress, too. While some pruning can help develop good plant structure, many plants self-prune. Ornamentals shouldn't be pruned often or severely, which is why it's important to choose ones whose mature size fits the space.

"Plants want to reach a certain height," Maynard says. "Fighting their natural tendencies stresses them. There is really no case in which it's good in the long run to have to keep pruning."

Roll with the Changes

"Landscapes change over time," Maynard says. Competition increases between plants as they get larger. All the sun-loving ornamentals that were planted near saplings will be in the shade 10 years later. And sooner or later, all plants reach the end of their life span.



Fern and geranium



Geraniums and coreopsis

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For ideas for pest-tolerant ornamentals and other plants in different areas of the country:

> **Northeast (Rhode Island):** http://131.128.91.217/maynard_susplants/html_spl2000/index.htm

> **Southeast (Florida):** <http://floridayards.org/fyplants/plantqueryfm.php>

> **North (Illinois):** www.bestplants.org/plantindex.pl

> **Southwest (Arizona):** <http://dbg.org/index.php/gardening/growingguides>
(Click on 'Recommended Plants for Desert Landscaping'.)

"A lot of people don't understand how important a plant's age is," he says. "When they get old, they lose their ability to respond to attack."

Educate Clients

Clients need to develop reasonable expectations about their landscape, he says. Most people still want a perfect landscape. In reality, though, it's rarely possible to keep ornamentals completely pest-free.

Even the healthiest plants can be overwhelmed by pests that attack quickly, like gypsy moths and dogwood blight. And worse — the chemicals plants use to protect themselves from pests can actually attract other pests.

It isn't necessary to eradicate every pest on every plant, Maynard says. Many ornamentals have insects and diseases occasionally, but don't have a problem. 🌿

Aird is a freelance writer based in California.

Finding the culprit

PEST IDENTIFICATION IS THE FIRST STEP TO AN EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM. BY BRIAN ALBRIGHT

Landscapers in the southern U.S. are used to fighting a variety of pests — invasive insects, weeds and pathogens arrive monthly in Florida and other states by way of cargo ships and international air travelers.

For the past few years, gardeners and landscapers in Florida have been seeing a brownish-bronze discoloration on the leaves and buds of roses, herbs, lisianthus and other plants, along with growth abnormalities. In some cases, roses completely

failed to bloom. Many homeowners mistakenly treated their plants for what appeared to be a disease.

But they were wrong. Florida (and now Texas and other states) had been invaded by the chilli thrip, which arrived in the U.S. two years ago.

Fake IDs

“Because we’ve never had this problem before, a lot of people assume it’s a pathogen,” says Lance Osborne, professor of entomology at the University of Florida. “There have been losses of thousands of dollars just for homeowners.”

Experienced landscapers can usually identify damage caused by common diseases and animals, and even insect damage can be narrowed down a list of usual suspects such as aphids, whiteflies and scales. But as new species of insects and plant pathogens are discovered in the U.S., identifying what ails a customer’s

plants has become increasingly complex for landscape and pest management professionals.

The presence of common fungi or other diseases might be a secondary problem related to an insect pest. Some insect damage can be mistaken for root rot, and vice versa.

“Fungi and diseases are usually harder to identify,” says Dan Smith, county extension director in McDowell County, NC. “You have some physical evidence, but you don’t have an insect there. Smaller pests like thrips and spider mites can sometimes look like diseases, and if you don’t have a microscope or a hand lens it’s hard to tell.”

“Just because an insect is present doesn’t mean it caused the problem,” says Mary Louise Flint, extension entomologist for the University of California Statewide IPM Program. “In some cases you see secondary invaders that come after a plant has been stressed by overwatering or underwatering, or some other issue.”

Damage from animal pests is often easier to identify, both because



the damage is so readily apparent and homeowners often spot pests like deer, rabbits and raccoons before, after or even during the act.

Aphid, whitefly and thrip damage can look very similar (deformed or wilting leaves; honeydew), but in the case of severe infestations the insects can usually be identified. If normal control methods aren't working, a new species or a variation on a familiar one could be present.

Flint says there are some basic steps to take if the cause of plant damage can't be identified:

1. Properly **identify** the plant.
2. Define the **symptoms** and determine which species are affected.
3. Collect **information** on the soil, plant and site conditions.
4. Look for **patterns** that could indicate abiotic vs. biotic disorders.
5. Look for **evidence** of pest organisms (feces, scarring, honeydew, etc.), but remember that just because an organism is present does not mean it is causing the problem.

If the source of the problem still can't be identified, landscapers can turn to the county extension agency or state department of agriculture. The extension agent can often determine whether a pest or disease is present, and if not, send samples to a local university lab for testing.

New insects usually require a taxonomist to identify them, but according to Osborne, there are fewer people entering the field, which could eventually lead to a shortage of trained professionals who can make those identifications. "In the U.S. as a whole, we haven't funded training of new taxonomists," Osborne says. "I've got mites here that I don't know what they are, and



Chilli thrip

COMMON PESTS

Thrips: Thrips are slender winged insects. Feeding causes scars on leaves and fruit, and can stunt growth. Some species of thrips (like black hunter thrips) are actually beneficial predators.

Scales: These insects are typically wingless and immobile, and don't quite look like insects at all. Heavy infestations can cause leaf wilting and yellowing. They can also cause blemishes and discolored halos in fruit. Like aphids and whiteflies, they excrete honeydew, which can draw ants and lead to the growth of black sooty mold. The waxy coating they cover themselves with generally protects adult scales from insecticides.

Aphids: Large populations of these tiny insects (there are 4,000 known species) can cause yellowing, curling and distortion of leaves and shoots. Aphids also produce honeydew.



Common whitefly

Whiteflies: Large populations of whiteflies can cause leaves to appear dry, to fall off or turn yellow. They also excrete honeydew, leaving the sticky substance on leaves and attracting black sooty mold. Whiteflies can also transmit plant diseases.

Vertebrate Pests: Deer are the most common animal pests that can damage ornamental and garden plants, but raccoons, skunks, rabbits, squirrels, and gophers can also harm landscapes by eating vegetation, roots, bulbs, blossoms, or burrowing under lawns and gardens. Damage is typically easy to identify.

Powdery Mildew: Characterized by white or gray powdery fungus on leaves, flowers, fruits, buds and shoots.

Artist's Conk: This fungus attacks a variety of ornamental trees, forming semicircular, brown and white conks. It causes white rot of sapwood and hardwood in roots and trunks.



Whitish wax and sticky honeydew from Asian woolly hackberry aphid on Chinese hackberry leaves.



Adult pocket gopher



Powdery mildew on crape myrtle.

Descriptions courtesy of the University of California Statewide IPM Program

maintenance

it's hard to find anybody to identify them. If you can't identify the insect, then you can't figure out how to manage the problem."

A number of online resources are available through local universities, the UC Statewide IPM Program, and U.S. Department of Agriculture that can also help with identification of common plant diseases and pests.

The National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN), which consists of five regional centers across the country and a network of diagnostic laboratories to detect, is also helping agencies across the country coordinate identification efforts.

Communication is Key

When outbreaks of pests or diseases occur, communication has often been a challenge in the past. Gardeners and landscapers need to feed information to county extension agents and agriculture departments, which in turn have to alert the public at large.

The Internet has helped. Osborne says that LISTSERVs, for instance, have helped get the word out to growers and the local media.

"Growers are absolutely critical to stopping invasives," Osborne says. "It has to be a two way street, because they're the ones who see the problems first."

Landscape companies have been harder to reach, and Osborne notes that Florida had an issue with the spread of mealy bugs at one point because the pests were traveling along with bush clippings that were taken to landfills.

CHILLI THRIP
damage on roses.



In North Carolina, extension agencies rely on the local media and online communication, and Smith hosts a local radio program where he alerts listeners to new pest outbreaks. Keeping track of landscapers can be more challenging because "people get in and out of the business so frequently," Smith says. "It's a good idea for landscaping companies to call the local extension office and get on their mailing list." 🌿

MEALY BUG
damage to a
Hoya



NATURAL ENEMIES: THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

One of the most effective ways to control pest outbreaks is to encourage the development of predator insect, or natural enemy, populations.

"For most of our insect and mite problems, natural enemies are really our first line of defense, particularly in landscapes," says Mary Louise Flint, extension entomologist for the University of California Statewide IPM Program.

"Some of the most successful management techniques are using biological controls," says Lance Osborne, professor of entomology at the University of Florida. "We have a pretty good landscape industry here in Florida, and with some education they have switched over to different chemistries that aren't as disruptive."

Improper pest management techniques can kill predator species, and have the unintended consequence of causing a secondary pest outbreak.

To encourage populations of natural enemies, Flint says landscape professionals should avoid using broad-spectrum pesticides, which often kill more predators than pest species, and instead use narrow-range chemicals with little or no persistence.

Landscapes should also be designed to encourage natural enemies to flourish. Methods include growing diverse plant species and sequentially flowering plants to provide a constant source of food, and to tolerate low populations of plant-feeding insects and mites.

Homeowners and landscape professionals should also take the time to differentiate pests from predators. In some cases, natural enemies might be almost indistinguishable from pest species. Some of the more common natural enemies include lacewings, lady beetles, parasitic flies and wasps, and predatory mites. For invasive species, local forestry services and U.S. Department of Agriculture have often imported predatory beetles and other insects to take care of the problem, and even pathogens and fungi can protect against insect pests.

Flint also emphasizes the importance of plant selection. If you can avoid choosing a plant that is known to have pest management issues, do so.

"I really work on trying to convince people to plant plants that don't have problems," Flint says. "There are so many plants you can grow here that are attractive. Why choose one that you know will have a problem every year?"

ONLINE RESOURCES

For more information on pest diagnosis and management, visit these sites:

> University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program

www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

> National Plant Diagnostic Network

www.npdn.org

> University of Florida, Entomology and IPM

<http://mrrec.ifas.ufl.edu/iso/>

SMART Water Solutions

AS WATER-USE ISSUES GROW NATIONWIDE, THE ABILITY TO EFFICIENTLY IRRIGATE LANDSCAPES WILL BECOME CRITICAL

BY KEN KRIZNER

Conventional wisdom once held that water conservation was an issue that only affected small portions of the country. The changing demographic picture of the United States is altering that wisdom.

The population of the country continues to grow, but the water supply remains essentially unchanged. That means per capita consumption of water is increasing annually. In certain locations across the country, water is not easily accessible and has to be brought in from other areas, such as in the Atlanta metro area.

"As a culture, we use more water every year," says Rose Mary Seymour, Ph.D., an extension specialist at the University of Georgia. "As our population becomes more urban, our water needs are more focused on certain locations."

It is anticipated that at least 36 of the 50 states will suffer water shortages during the next decade, forcing them to implement mandatory water conservation practices.

Because of the severity of the

situation, it has become incumbent upon landscape contractors in all parts of the country to pay attention to water-use issues when they design and install irrigation systems.

That means employing smart technologies that uniformly and efficiently irrigate landscapes.

But before these technology solutions can be used to their fullest extent, landscape contractors must adopt best management practices for their irrigation strategies.

"Technology won't help if you don't have the basics — no matter how good the technology is," points out David Zoldoske, director of the Center for Irrigation Technology, an independent testing laboratory and applied research facility based at California State University, Fresno. "That's an obvious statement, but everybody has seen irrigation equipment running during a rainstorm."

Uniform Coverage

Best management practices in irrigation provide for the efficient distribution of water based on proven science and engineering principles, such as matched precipitation, meaning that

all of the sprinklers in a particular zone are placing about the same amount of water on a given area.

"Not enough people at the landscape contractor level are paying attention to matched precipitation and doing what they can to create uniform coverage in the system," says Andy Smith, external affairs director for the Irrigation Association, a Falls Church, VA-based organization that promotes efficient irrigation. "There is no substitute for uniform irrigation design."

If a system operates at 50% distribution uniformity, landscape contractors would have to double the run time to make sure there are no brown spots, creating inefficient and wasteful irrigation.

Matthew Eaton, vice president of sales for Jacksonville, FL-based North Florida Irrigation Equipment Inc. and Fluid Solutions, says the price-driven market has forced landscape contractors away from applying best management practices to their irrigation systems.

"[Contractors] have had to come in below the budget that their client has," he says. "What ends up being

sacrificed is quality of coverage in the system.”

Eaton says there can be no water conservation without best management practices, no matter how much smart technology is implemented into the system.

High-Tech Irrigation Controls

On the other hand, if landscape contractors follow best management practices, then smart technologies can provide an efficient distribution system, saving clients money and using a minimum amount of water.

There are several technology platforms commercially available to landscape contractors. They are self-adjusted systems that control irrigation based on weather conditions, soil moisture and the demands of the landscape. The cost of these solutions has come down dramatically during the past several years.

“We need to automate the control process so there is a constant adjustment based on what the need or demand is,” Smith says. “That can be done through a variety of control technologies.”

At a minimum, landscape contractors can incorporate technology that can suspend irrigation cycles in time of sufficient rainfall through rain sensors. On a higher level, an ET (evapotranspiration) controller is a smart technology solution that uses soil moisture and climactic information to determine whether it is time to irrigate.

ET is a combination of the water that evaporates from the soil surface and the water that transpires from plants. Transpiration is water moving from the plant as water vapor. Weather parameters are the major controlling factors for the amount of ET a plant transpires.

The controller receives radio, pager or Internet signals with

It is anticipated that at least **36 of the 50 states** will suffer **water shortages** during the next **decade**.

ET information to replace only the moisture the landscape has lost to heat, humidity and wind.

“We use calculations of weather created by climatologists and meteorologists for determining ET, given weather patterns,” Seymour says. “We have controllers that take in weather information and incorporate plant material and the kind of soil and decide how much irrigation is needed.”

Another smart technology, soil moisture sensors hooked to a sprinkler system, would override the automatic irrigation system if the landscape doesn't need water.

Soil moisture sensors have become smaller and more accurate in recent years, says Michael Dukes, an associate professor in the agricultural and biological engineering department at the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

The Economics of Conservatism

One issue hampering widespread conservation practices is the fact that water is an inexpensive commodity, thus there is no economic motivation for landscape contractors, or their clients, to conserve.

“The first thing we need to do is have conservation water rates,” Seymour says. “We have to make overuse of water so expensive that it becomes a disincentive. As long as water is inexpensive, there will be no interest in being efficient.”

Zoldoske believes the attitude that water is inexpensive is beginning to change, and if landscape contractors don't take the lead, state and local governments will do it for them.

“If we don't voluntarily take

control of the situation, it will be legislated, and the legislation we hear is no more watering your lawn,” he points out. “That can't be good for our industry.”


He suggests that the only legislation needed is how much water clients are entitled to for irrigation. After that, the client and contractor can decide how to use that allotment, and the client would be penalized for exceeding the allotment.

That would prompt an increase in smart technologies to control irrigation, Zoldoske maintains.

It is critical that contractors design and install their landscapes with a water budget in mind because there will be many changes with regard to landscape irrigation coming during the next several years, Seymour says.

“The cost of water is going to increase but the supply will stay about the same,” she says. “Because of that, homeowners will start paying attention to the issue, and contractors will be asked by their clients to pay attention. They can get ahead of the curve by educating themselves on the [available] technology. Contractors have to look ahead to what their customers want.”

Using smart technologies could also benefit landscape contractors by lowering maintenance costs, perhaps by as much as half through reduced mowing and once-a-year mulching — savings that could be directly passed on to the client.

Smart technologies, implemented correctly, have the ability to not only conserve water, but to create better-looking landscapes because of improved watering techniques. 



Butterfly magnet

Blooms of Bressingham's new Buddleja Butterfly Heaven is a shrub that features large, fragrant flowers that bring butterflies to the landscape. Long, tapering panicles of tiny, sweetly scented lavender florets with orange eyes flower from July through September. The foliage features silver-gray new growth, turning to green. The plant grows to 6 ft. tall and 4 ft. wide, with hardiness in Zones 6 to 9 and AHS Heat Zones 10 to 4.

For more information, visit www.bloomsofbressingham.com.



Strong beauty

This recent introduction from New Zealand comes to North America exclusively through the **Novalis** network of growers. Acer palmatum Shirazz Gwen's Rose Delight is a blend of pinks, greens and creamy-white, with new growth emerging as a crimson-pink with autumn tones of scarlet. A vigorous, upright grower at first, branches become gracefully arching as it matures. The Japanese Maple hybrid has been tested for cold hardiness in the U.S. through Zone 5. Grow in full sun to part shade farther south. For more information, visit www.plantsthatwork.com.



Grows 6 to 8 ft.

Plant the **Garden Splendor** clematis Daniel Deronda to climb on a fence, arbor or trellis. This award-winning variety has semi-double, violet-blue flowers in late spring and again in summer, with large but single blooms. It has hardiness to Zone 4, with cultural requirements of sun to partial shade. For more information, visit www.gardensplendor.com.



Blooms all summer

Mauve Majesty is a new "lily wannabe" that was recently patented by **Cornell University**. While it can last for two weeks in a vase, left in the garden it can bloom all summer long in the cooler, northern climes until fall's first freeze. As the new hybrid of the Inca lily (Alstroemeria), this non-fragrant perennial with strong, upright flower stems is set apart by its lavender-lilac flower color — adorned with dark speckling and a creamy yellow throat. It's the first in its color class to be hardy to Zone 6, and it often is hardy in many parts of the cooler Zone 5.



Consistently strong blooms

The Matrix series of pansies from **Ball Horticultural Company** offers landscapers what they want: consistency, predictability and results. Matrix varieties build strong plants that branch out to cover the soil before blooming, so the large flowers are easily supported above the foliage to show off the brightest color. More than a dozen individual colors and five mixes are available. Matrix delivers similar habit, timing and performance across the series, including the novelty colors. For more information, visit www.ballhort.com.



Pretty in Pink

Flower Carpet Pink Supreme, the second of **Anthony Tesselaar Plants'** Next Generation of Flower Carpet Roses, is the result of more than four decades of breeding by Noack Rosen. The rose features big clusters of blooms; compact, beautifully shaped bushes; bright glossy leaves; long bloom seasons providing big color from late spring through frost; and tremendous natural vigor against common rose blights such as black spot and mildew. For more information, visit www.tesselaar.com.



Rose of Sharon

Spring Meadow Nursery presents Sugar Tip Hibiscus, *Hibiscus syriacus* America Irene Scott. With a USDA hardiness Zone of 5, this variegated hibiscus blooms clear, double pink flowers in late summer. It can reach a mature height of 8 to 12 ft. high. The plant prefers full sun for best performance, and is tolerant of most soils. Its versatile uses include containers, as a privacy screen or specimen planting. For more information, visit www.springmeadownursery.com.

Ornamental strawberry

Stepables' *Fragaria* Lipstick has dark green oval leaves that are a backdrop for deep, rich pink flowers. Lipstick puts on quite a show from late spring to early fall until the flowers eventually give way to small tasty, red strawberries. The plant spreads by above-ground runners. The creeping perennial is well-suited for borders or around herb gardens. For more information, visit www.stepables.com.





Floral shade accent

A solid brass "trumpet vine" path light is now available from **Orbit/Evergreen**. Designed to highlight garden settings, Model B106 is a 12-volt fixture that includes a fluted glass shade in amber/green tones or frosted white glass. Model 106 has a bayonet 18-watt lamp (26-watt max) and is offered in three finishes: antique brass, antique bronze and aged green. The shade measures 5.5x3 in., and the fixture is 28-inches high. A heavy-duty, 8.5-in. GS-85 professional ground stake with 0.5-in thread is included. For more information, visit, www.orbitelectric.com.

Metal look without the sharp edges

Oly-Ola Edgings introduces Super-Edg, a strong, durable landscape border that

is constructed of 100 percent recycled vinyl material and is available in 100-ft. coils. It has the look of metal, but is safer to use and easier to install and transport. Its 6-inch-deep, low-profile design is secured with specially developed 14-inch steel anchoring stakes that slide through pre-cut slots to easily penetrate the ground for permanent installation. It can be heated with a mini torch to create different angles and shapes.

For more information, visit www.olyola.com.



Faster silt fence installs

Ditch Witch introduces a silt fence installer designed to be faster and more productive. It uses a vibratory plow — not a static plow — to install the fence. According to the manufacturer, using this method results in faster installation and a fence with longer-lasting integrity. The installer can be powered by several different Ditch Witch machines: the SK650 mini skid steer, a tracked unit; the XT850 MegaTool, also on tracks; or the four-wheel-drive Zahn R230 and R300 power utility units with hydraulic, articulated steering. For more information, visit ditchwitch.com.

New Insecticide

DuPont Professional Products has a new insecticide with a new class of chemistry and mode of action. DuPont has submitted registration applications to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its Acelepryn insecticide, and the company expects approval later this year. As the first insecticide in the new anthranilic diamide class of chemistry, Acelepryn is for control of white grubs and other key insect pests. It features a new active ingredient, DuPont Calteryx insecticide, and offers consistent performance, low application rates and an excellent toxicological and environmental profile, according to the company. It has been classified as a reduced-risk insecticide by the EPA. For more information, visit www.proproducts.dupont.com.



One-stop info access

Ball Horticultural Co.'s newly re-launched website combines information from six formerly independent Ball sites, organized by audience (designers, retailers, nursery, etc.) to create a portal to easily find the most up-to-date information that is most relevant to the user. Highlights include a searchable database of greenhouse and nursery growers and retailers; a "Knowledge Base" section that includes nearly 100 commonly asked questions and answers for all audience segments; and an all-new "Sustainable Solutions" section with details about sustainable products and programs available from Ball. For more information, visit ballhort.com.

newproducts



Non-corrosive edge fasteners

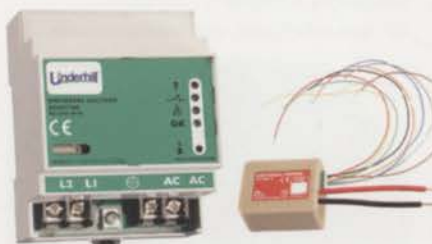
W.P. Hickman Co. is providing stainless steel fasteners as a standard component with all of its perimeter edge metal systems at no additional charge to customers. Stainless steel fasteners are effective in resisting the corrosive nature of Alkaline Copper Quaternary (ACQ), a wood preservative increasingly being used as the result of the EPA ban on the traditional Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA) preservative.

For more information, visit www.wph.com.

Convert to two-wire

Any commercial controller can be converted to two-wire operation with the installation of **Underhill's** 2Wire

Universal Decoder Module, which can either be mounted internally inside an existing controller or externally in a separate enclosure placed anywhere along the two-wire path, up to 3,000 ft. from the controller. The two wire system reduces installation time and labor, and offers easier expandability. This system is designed for mid- to large-sized irrigation sites and controls up to 63 stations.



In addition to new installations, 2Wire can be retrofitted to existing systems wherever additional zones are required.

For more information, visit www.underhill.us.

Walk-behind trenchers

The Toro Co. has added two new walk-behind, zero-turn trenchers to its compact equipment line: the TRX-15



(hp) and TRX-19 (hp) tracked trenchers. Tracks, plus operator-friendly controls, make these gas-powered machines more productive and easier to learn and operate than typical wheeled trenchers. They offer a low center of gravity and a large-but-light footprint for increased stability and smooth operation. Both models trench up to 36 inches, and feature a 4-cycle, V-twin engine.

For more information, visit www.toro.com/trx.

Redefine Beds

The **E-Z Trench** Edge Artist (model EA55) is a compact bed edger for redefining beds. It is equipped with a GX160 5.5hp Honda engine and a centrifugal clutch drive. Weighing 100 pounds with a compact frame, the Edge Artist is suited for any terrain and tight spots. It has solid tires, preventing flats and lost time. A carbide-tipped rotor with a serrated cutting design enables smooth cutting in hard soils.

For more information, visit www.eztrench.com.

moreinfo

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LUSH LANDSCAPES



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