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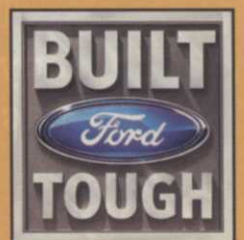


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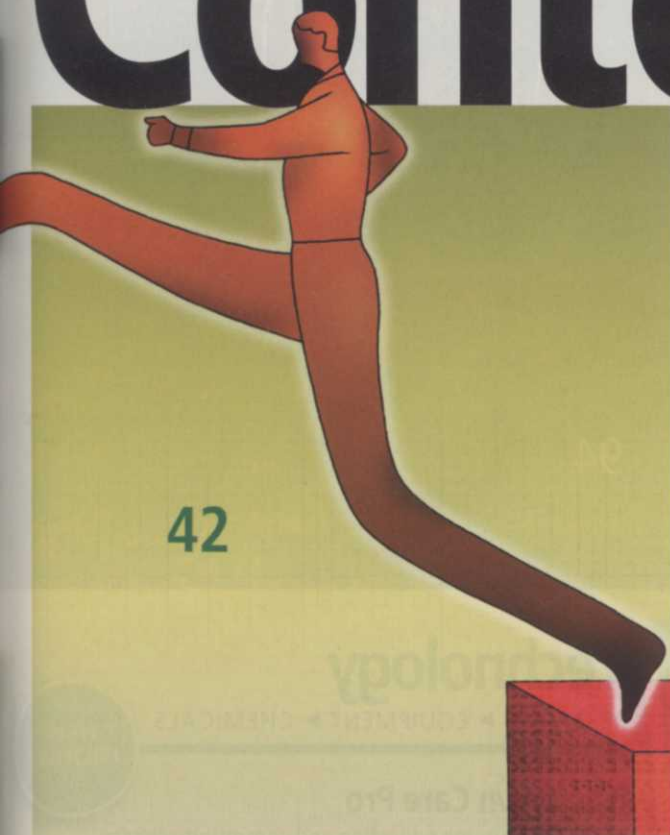
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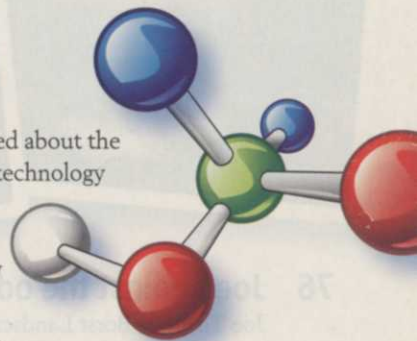
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It may have been a bit touchy-feely for some, but a pair of sessions at the recent PLANET Executive Forum in Scottsdale, AZ, gave Green Industry business owners techniques to bring more balance to their hectic schedules as well as implant goals deep within their subconscious.

» Special issue

1 27
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Landscape Management magazine is collecting information for its exclusive **2008 LM ranking of largest companies**. Type the link below into your browser, and fill out the online form by April 1: www.landscapemanagement.net/enterlmrankngs.

» Overheard

"Are YOU your company or is your company you?"

— David Zerfoss, president Husqvarna Forest & Garden Co. discussing the need for balance in a business owner's life.

» ONLINERESOURCES

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» Readers respond

A lot was made about who was winning the late-night talk show war during the extended writers' strike. **Who was your favorite late-night talk show host?**

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7%

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3%

Jimmy Kimmel

Jon Stewart

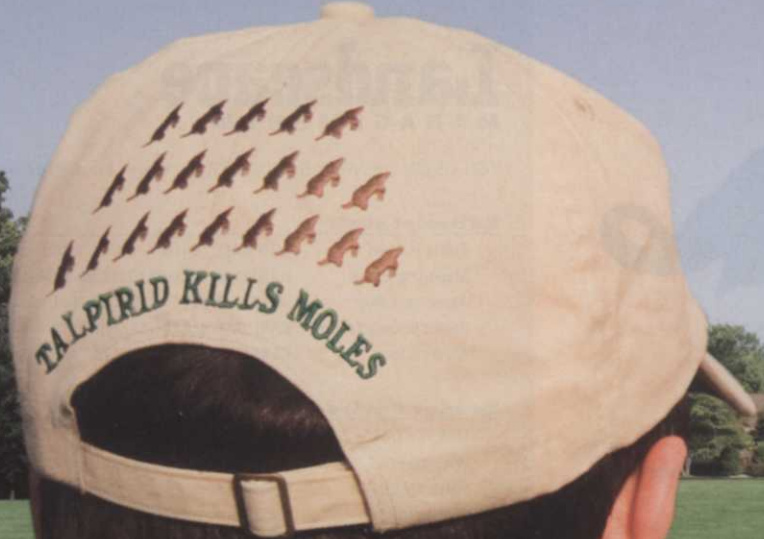
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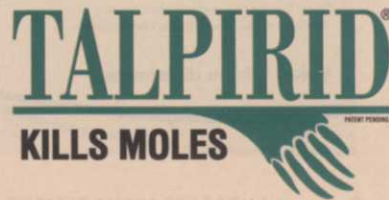
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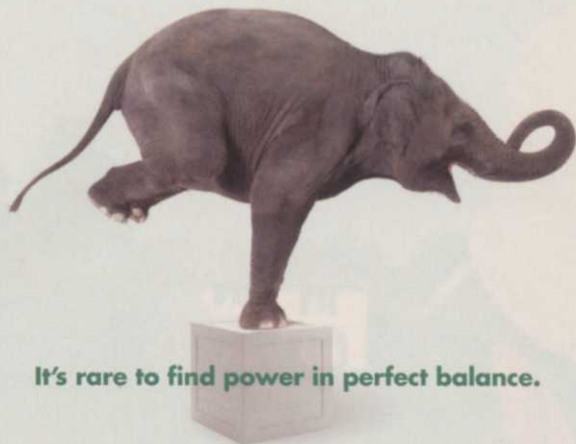
- Bill Johnson, All Green Corp.

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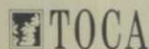
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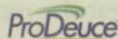
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Practical sustainability

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

Sustainable: (def.) *land management practices that provide goods and services from an ecosystem without degradation of the site quality, and without a decline in the yield of goods and services over time.*

Sustainable is a concept we will increasingly be asked to embrace by our customers. Rightfully so.

Four different educational sessions and probably that many less formal idea-sharing sessions at the recent American Nursery and Landscape Association Management Clinic in Louisville, KY, dealt with the issue in one respect or another,

Nursery and landscape professionals filled the room of every session devoted to this and related topics. Many offered suggestions, citing sustainable practices they've successfully incorporated into their companies.

Several described how they turn green waste into compost, which they then sell, doing something good for the environment and profiting from it. Others related their experiences providing clients with water gardens that capture storm water runoff. A few related partnering with developers to save trees and topsoil on home construction sites.

Most of us left the Management Clinic with a better understanding of the concept of sustainability and the need to incorporate new and greener-yet services into our businesses. Few of the professionals attending at the Clinic appeared to regard the ideas arising from the presentations as threatening. Most of the audience seemed energized by them.

After all, who can argue with the need to enrich and improve the makeup and structure of our

urban soils? To conserve fresh water? To recycle materials? To reduce our dependency on petroleum and to use energy more efficiently? Who can fault specifying and installing plant material (whether native or non-invasive adapted) that requires less maintenance and fewer inputs?

The owners and managers I spoke with during the Management Clinic said they're incorporating more sustainable practices into their operations — but only as long as they work from a dollars and cents standpoint, too.

That's the key, of course.

The sustainable practices that we add to or build into our operations must also provide us with a measurable return on investment. In other words, they must enhance each of our company's "sustainability," for want of a better word. This return must go beyond just giving us a nice marketing hook or a great story to share at the weekly Kiwanis Club meeting.

Every owner that I met at the ANLA event told me that they're committed to preserving, conserving and improving the outside environments that their customers entrust them with.

That they were soaking up what they could in these particular sessions is proof that they're sincere in our goal to be true "green" professionals.

It's also an admission that we all have much yet to learn about sustainability.

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By combining good cultural practices with a sound agronomic program companies can continue to deliver a high quality product at a competitive price and be a top tier company in their market.



Culture and agronomics

BY BRUCE WILSON

Successful companies in this low-cost, intensely competitive era look for every advantage. One of the most neglected is a good agronomic program. A good agronomic program uses technology to enhance quality at the lowest cost. Its two main components are a fertility program and the horticultural chemical program. They're both integrated into complementary cultural practices to accomplish the work in a manner that enhances quality and efficiently supports labor management.

Sensible fertility

Technically competent companies use slow-release fertilizers, organic fertilizers, mycorrhizae and biostimulants with traditional fertilizers. These programs maintain plant health without stimulating excess growth, which adds to maintenance costs by increasing labor necessary to prune and deal with excess clippings in turf maintenance.

Getting weed smart

Few companies really excel at optimizing the use of pre-emergence weed control chemicals in their maintenance programs. Few really understand the array of tools at their disposal in managing weeds in the landscape. They become reliant on hand labor and spot spraying with post-emergence chemicals such as Round Up. Some think the primary difference in chemicals is their cost.

The better companies realize that some herbicides are better than others at controlling target weeds. The better knowledge of the chemicals available and their differences in species controlled and at proper application rates, the better the program.

Plant growth regulators

Plant growth regulators (PGRs) are the most under-utilized resource available to manage landscape plants. The labor savings potential is huge. Many companies give up on these products when they don't have immediate success. There's a definite learning curve with these chemicals and there are few experts. Companies that learn the techniques and products reap handsome rewards.

Benefit value

Companies with good agronomic programs offer higher quality services to clients while reaping significant labor savings themselves. Crews spend less time doing tasks, such as hand weeding, catching clippings and pruning excess growth. This extra work adds little value to the finished product.

The more technically knowledgeable a company becomes, the better stewards of the environment they're able to be. Combining good cultural practices with sound agronomic program allows a company to deliver a higher quality product at a more competitive price.

— *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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Business Benchmarking

BUSINESS

3 KEY RATIOS

Leverage ratios allow business owners to make accurate apples-to-apples comparisons and demonstrate how small changes between input and output can produce big changes in profits.



Measuring true performance

BY KEVIN KEHOE

Learn how to calculate key leverage ratios. It's vital to your success. Simply put, a leverage ratio compares an output to an input. The more output per a given input, the higher your leverage. Leverage ratios allow you to make apples-to-apples comparisons of any company. They demonstrate how small changes in the relationship between input and output can produce big changes

in profits.

Three leverage ratios neatly capture the unique return on investment for your chief inputs: labor, fixed cost overhead and equipment. You hire labor, give them equipment and spend overhead dollars on yard and office support. In return you expect these inputs to generate your chief output — revenue. The rate of return (output divided by input) for each ratio is measured in terms

of dollar-for-dollar leverage. The goal is to increase these ratios — higher being better.

Start with labor leverage. The calculation is realize rate divided by average wage rate. The output (the numerator) is revenue per labor hour, also known as the realize rate. The input (the denominator) is a labor cost per hour, also known as the average wage rate. Keep in mind that (1) the realize rate is revenue dollars (less materials and subs expense) divided by payroll hours, and (2) the average wage rate is payroll dollars and payroll taxes divided by payroll hours.

The next ratio is equipment leverage, revenue dollars divided by net equipment value. The output (numerator) is annual revenue. The input (denominator) is your Balance Sheet equipment value — net accumulated depreciation. Proper calculation requires 12 months of revenue compared to the current Balance Sheet value.

The third ratio is fixed cost leverage, revenue dollars divided by fixed cost dollars. The output (numerator) is annual revenue. The input (denominator) is fixed cost. Fixed cost includes all expenses that aren't direct job costs.

The chart on this page shows some key financial information from the sample company referred to in my last article. It demonstrates the actual calculations of the leverage ratios for this company.

Calculate your ratios and use them to benchmark against best-in-class performers, create a high-performance budget, and determine a business plan.

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

FINANCIAL AND PAYROLL DATA

Revenues	2,000,000
Materials	400,000
Labor	600,000
Direct job cost	1,000,000
Gross profit	1,000,000
Indirect job cost	310,000
General & administrative cost	510,000
Total fixed cost	820,000
Net profit before taxes	180,000
Production payroll hours	48,000
Equipment (net depreciation)	250,000
Average wage rate	12.50
Realize rate	33.33
Labor leverage	2.67
Equipment leverage	8.00
Fixed cost leverage	2.44

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In the Know

BUSINESS NEWS YOU CAN USE

Benefits of GPS touted at ANLA Management Clinic

BY RON HALL

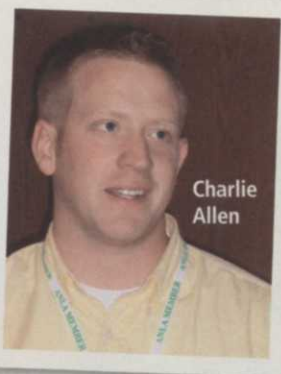
LOUISVILLE, KY — Green Biz Nursery & Landscaping, Fayetteville, NC, is one of a growing number of Green Industry companies relying upon GPS in its service delivery fleets. It's a trend that will certainly grow, judging by the interest and questions directed at presenter Charlie Allen, Green Biz landscape manager, during his presentation at the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) Management Clinic here in early February.

GPS is short for Global Positioning System, a constellation of at least 24 medium-earth-orbit satellites that emit precise microwave signals. The signals permit a receiver to determine its precise location, speed, direction and time.

According to Allen, the ability to track service vehicles can and should:

- ▶ reduce fuel costs,
- ▶ decrease overtime costs,
- ▶ encourage safer driving,
- ▶ reduce preventative maintenance costs,
- ▶ increase productivity,
- ▶ eliminate moonlighting with company vehicles, and
- ▶ reduce timesheet fraud.

There are two types of GPS systems — active and passive. Active systems, relying upon cellular and satellite technology, monitor the location,



Charlie Allen

speed and direction of vehicles in real time. In a passive system a vehicle's usage is monitored and recorded and downloaded, usually daily to a PC at a central location. Both have advantages and disadvantages,

but the majority of landscape companies, including Green Biz, choose passive systems because of cost.

Active system users can pay anywhere from \$40 to \$120 monthly per vehicle in cellular or satellite fees. By contrast, there are no monthly fees with a passive system, and once the initial investment has been made in the base station and software (generally about \$1,000) and the per-vehicle units (\$625 each in the case of the Green Biz vehicles), your system is basically paid off.

Allen said his company has been extremely pleased with the benefits and costs savings realized since it began equipping its service vehicles with GPS units. It now has 17 GPS-equipped vehicles.

Responding to a question from the audience asking if employees felt they were being distrusted or being spied upon, Allen said, for the most part, that doesn't seem to be a problem.

"We tell them that it's all about saving gas. And we all know how expensive that is," said Allen.

A stylized illustration of a satellite in space, tilted at an angle. The text is overlaid on the satellite's body.

Orbiting satellites
give business
owners data
on vehicle
useage.

ValleyCrest adds Second Nature Landscape

CALABASAS, CA — ValleyCrest Cos. has acquired Second Nature, a landscape maintenance company based in Hilton Head, SC. Second Nature Landscape, formed by Steve Clark and Ed McCullough in 2003, performs landscape maintenance for homeowner and property owner associations, resorts, hotels and other commercial properties on Hilton Head Island.

2008 GIE+EXPO Web site launched

LOUISVILLE, KY — Dealers, retailers and landscape professionals can go online for updates on events and features planned for the 2008 GIE+EXPO (the Green Industry & Equipment Expo). Online registration for the October 23-25 trade show in Louisville is now available at www.gie-expo.com.

Walker Family Reunion set for Aug. 1-2

FORT COLLINS, CO — On Aug. 1-2, customers, suppliers, dealers, distributors and friends of Walker Mowers from all over the world will converge on Fort Collins, CO, to celebrate the production of Walker Mower No. 100,000. Walker is inviting anyone who has ever owned, operated, sold, serviced or worked with Walker to attend. Five Walker mowers will be given away, along with many other prizes.

[CLIPPINGS]



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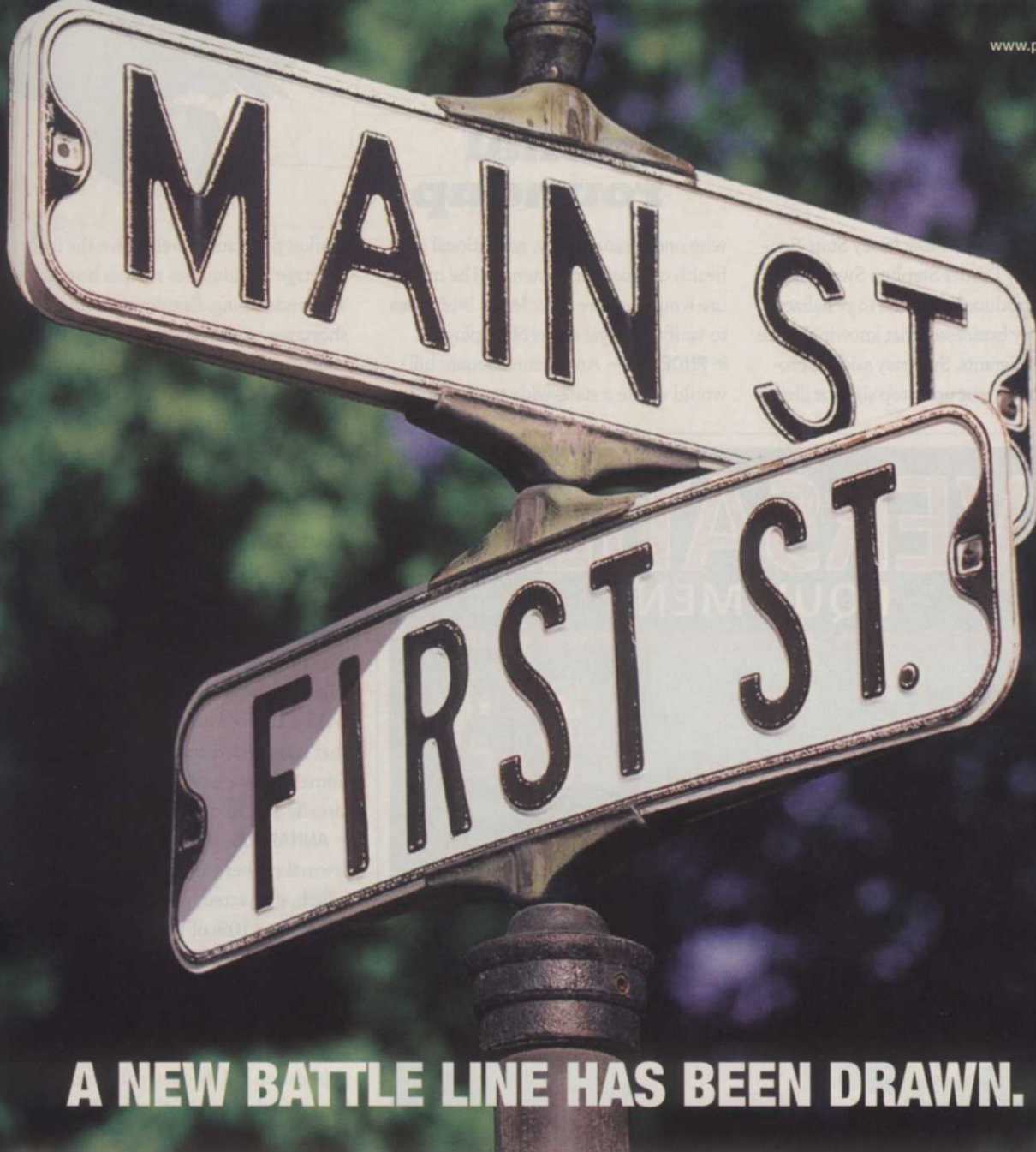
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Make it personal. Get involved. Draw the line.



In the Know

Regional roundup

► **TRENTON, NJ** — New Jersey State Senate Majority Leader Stephen Sweeney said he will introduce legislation to penalize New Jersey businesses that knowingly hire illegal immigrants. Sweeney said his proposal aims to “put up a stop sign for illegals

who undermine family, educational and health care support systems.” The measure would require New Jersey businesses to verify the legal status of employees.

► **PHOENIX** — An Arizona Senate bill would create a state-wide temporary

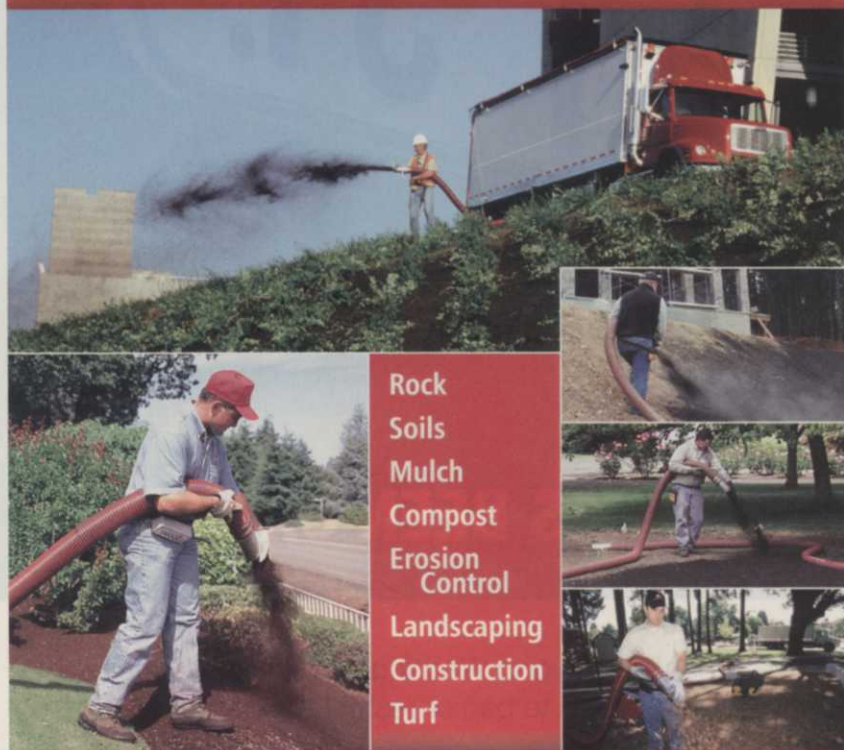
worker program to help solve the labor shortage in industries such as hospitality and landscaping. Employers with labor shortages would recruit through Mexican consulates in Arizona. Those approved would have a valid ID card for two years and couldn't go to other American states. The Arizona Legislature has to approve it. Congress must also weigh in, which makes passage unlikely.

► **ALLEGAN COUNTY, MI** — Allegan County is the latest Michigan county to restrict the use of phosphorus fertilizers to protect water quality and reduce the incidence of algae blooms in western Michigan lakes. Phosphorus fertilizers will be allowed only if soil tests show that it is needed and for new lawns. Some lawn care professionals there have already adjusted their programs.

► **ANNAPOLIS, MD** — Maryland state lawmakers here are considering a bill, which, if enacted, would tax commercial applicators 10% of the total cost of the fertilizer application. Known as a “fertilization application environmental impact fee,” the charge would appear as an itemized item on each customer's fertilizer application bill. Money collected would be put in the state's Water Pollution Control Fund to implement storm water management practices.

► **ATLANTA** — Easing concerns of many Green Industry businesses, Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue recently announced the state will ease outdoor watering limitations through exemptions to the Level Four drought restrictions implemented in September 2007. According to Perdue, taking this action strikes a balance between sound management of water resources and support of Georgia's industries that depend on water use. New professionally installed landscapes can be watered up to three days a week from midnight to 10 a.m. for a period of 10 weeks based on the odd/even schedule.

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In the Know

Exmark, Toro donate to Homestead National Monument

BEATRICE, NE — Exmark Manufacturing and the Toro Giving Program recently awarded a major grant to Homestead National Monument of America.

Located just west of Beatrice, NE, Homestead National Monument of America is a unit of the National Park System. The grant, in the amount of \$33,890, will be used to create all-new outdoor exhibits. The exhibits will be placed throughout the monument's 100-acre restored tallgrass prairie and at the Freeman School, a historical schoolhouse.

"Exmark is very proud of our southeast Nebraska roots, which we share with Homestead National Monument of America," said Mark Stinson, Exmark president. "We certainly recognize the good work Homestead National Monument does to educate the nation about the legacies of the Homestead Act and the history of this region. It is our honor to partner with the Toro Giving Foundation in supporting this important effort."

The new exhibits will explain the complexities of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, critically examine the Homestead Act's impact on prairies throughout the West, and highlight many of the monument's preservation and restoration efforts. The exhibits are expected to be in place by summer 2008.

"We are grateful to Exmark Manufacturing for its generosity and interest in helping the monument," said Mark Engler, superintendent of Homestead National Monument of America. "Our gratitude also goes to the Toro Giving Program for its generosity. We are proud to include them on this list of outstanding partners."

The Toro Giving Program is committed to beautifying and preserving outdoor environments, enhancing communities and improving peoples' lives. Beatrice-based Exmark Manufacturing is a leading manufacturer of commercial mowers for landscape professionals.

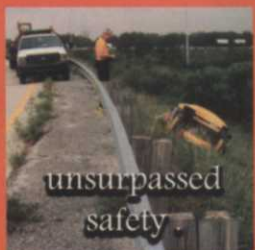
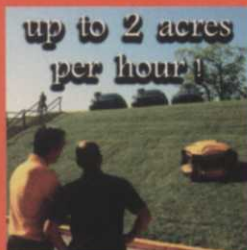
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In the Know

Nursery Liquidators.com launches new Web site for Green Industry

Nursery Liquidators.com has launched a new Web site to serve growers, garden centers, landscape contractors and

nurseries across the nation. The new Nursery Marketplace.com Web site is custom designed for members looking to

expand the way they source and buy product and vendors looking to offer and sell their inventory in a whole new way.

Nursery Marketplace.com is the site for growers to service independent garden Centers, nurseries and landscape contractors with premium nursery products, promotional programs, seasonal holiday crops and tropicals all season long. Revolutionary Name Your Price Nursery Stock and Tropicals will provide an exciting new format for retailers to gain increased margins with lower costs. Retailers now have a brand new way to purchase inventory with pricing they've never seen before.

Nursery Liquidators.com is an alternative to traditional auction houses for the sale of surplus and closeout inventory. Growers can now expand their sales opportunities beyond their property lines with our new online service.

Profile Products announces sale of DryJect Services LLC

BUFFALO GROVE, IL — Profile Products sold its DryJect Services division to former owners Peter Van Drumpt and Chris des Garennes, effective January 31, 2008.

While Profile Products no longer manages the DryJect Services business, it will continue to provide operational support and maintain working relationships with the DryJect franchisees. Profile Products will retain ownership of the DryJect Florida franchise territory.

The sale includes ownership of all franchise agreements, the manufacturing operations in Hatboro, PA, and the New Jersey eastern Pennsylvania franchise territory.



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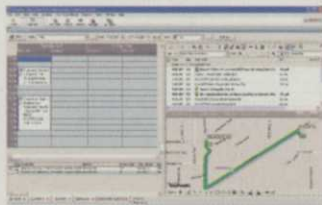
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Problem On a new job, you find this hidden in the tree. What would you recommend?

The cause

You just have to wonder how these situations occur. Is the tree eating the sign or is the sign eating the tree? In this case it is the wrong plant in the wrong place. This Saucer Magnolia tree has already outgrown its allotted space. To keep the tree in its space, it is being "pruned" (butchered) away from the walkway and "thinned" (butchered) to reduce the height and to see the sign.

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The real solution is quite simple, transplant the tree to the right location with the right amount of space for the tree to grow and prosper. This small expenditure to transplant the tree to a proper location will increase the beauty of the site for many years to come.



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

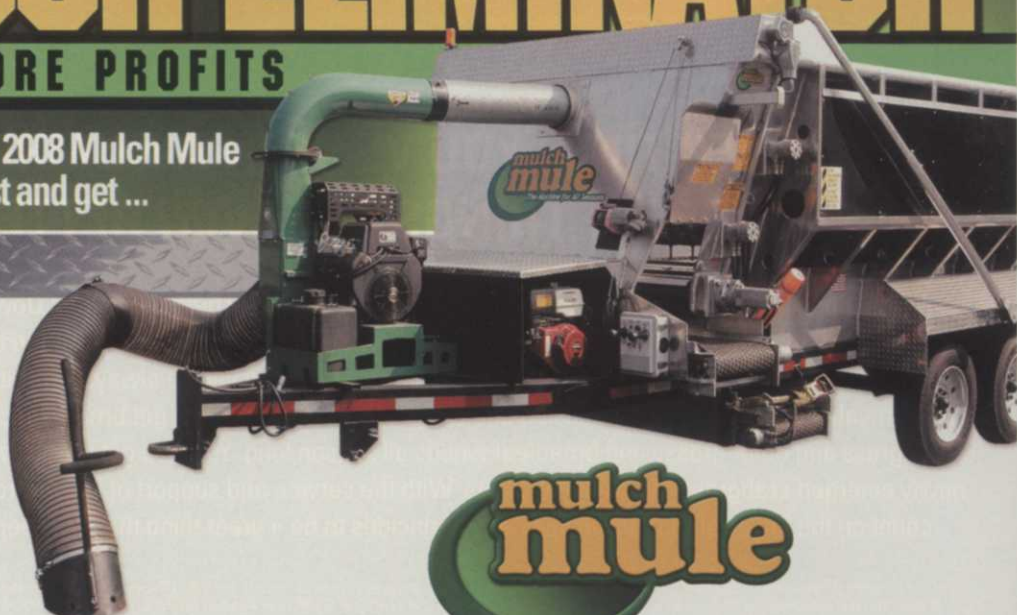
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In the Know

People & companies



Joe Burke was recently named business manager, imidacloprid products for **Bayer Environmental Science**.

Ewing Irrigation promoted **Jeff Zwick** to National Key Accounts manager of Ewing's new Key Accounts Sales Division. The company also appointed **Mike Blume** as national sales manager for its Turf Erosion Control Products division.

New Holland Construction and **Kobelco Construction Machinery America** named **Edgar J. Chavez** director of marketing for North America.



Wright Manufacturing appointed **Shawn Wolf** company president. **Bill Wright**, the company's founder and former president, continues as chairman of the board.

Barenbrug USA has hired **Jeff McGilvray** as a new field representative.

TyraTech added BASF veteran **William L. Baxter** as new director of sales and marketing.

Scott Jamieson, president and CEO of **The Care of Trees**, has been elected to the board of directors of the **National Safety Council**.



Tony Massey, president and chief operating officer of **Massey Services**, has been named to the Board of Trustees for the **Orlando Museum of Art**.

PROFILE Products hired **Becky Gauthier** as a technical service associate. The company also brought in **Doug Graham** as regional sales manager for the Western region.

Green Industry supplier **Bamboo Pipeline** hired **Robert Leuer** as regional market development manager for Northern California, and **Chris Buckhout** has been named Bamboo Pipeline's Northern California Operations Manager. For Southern California, **Timothy Lytle** joins the buying team at Bamboo Pipeline, and **Alex Fagnan** has been promoted to lead buyer.

Redexim Charterhouse hired **John Bruce** as a regional sales manager.



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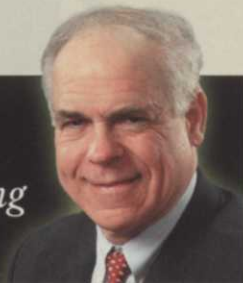


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In the Know

LEGALLY Speaking



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

Q One of my supervisors made inappropriate remarks to a female employee. Is firing the lout enough to protect me from getting sued by her?

A Probably not. You should establish a company-wide training and educational program on all forms of discrimination, not just sex. The aim of a company-wide program should be to change inappropriate behaviors and reduce the risk.

Q Anything else the "Code of Conduct" should contain?

A Yes. The Code should contain a statement or disclaimer, which will typically state that it is designed both for members of management with supervisory duties, as well as for employees with conditions of employment. It should state it is not intended to alter the employment at-will status in any way. It neither creates an employment contract, nor the terms, nor limits the reasons or procedures for termination or change in the employment relationship. The Code should also reserve in the company the right to add, change, delete, or terminate provisions at any time without notice. The Code is a good place to have corporate statements prohibiting harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment or retaliation, for example.

Q I have never asked my employees to sign Code of Conduct agreements. Am I vulnerable to a charge of wrongful termination?

A Yes. Though the Employment At-Will Doctrine means that employers may terminate employees whenever and for whatever reason usually without consequence, this presumption may be overcome if the employee can show that there is an implied contract that alters the typical at-will status. The employee will have the burden to make such a showing. An explicit, signed reaffirmation of the at-will status or an acknowledgement of a disclaimer to form a contract may overcome the claim of an implied contract, and protect you from charges of wrongful termination.

Q How would my employees prove discrimination?

A In any number of ways. Evidence of remarks or documents that indicate a bias would do it. For example, evidence showing an internal document remarking that "you cannot teach an old dog new tricks" would tend to prove discrimination in an age case. Other ways include having evidence that (i) the performance evaluations recorded satisfactory work, notwithstanding poor performance, (ii) there was disparate treatment (female fired for poor performance, while a male with similar performance was given warnings or promoted), (iii) there was unfairness during the work period ("he wouldn't tell me why I was fired"); or (iv) the timing of the decision is suspect (discharging an employee two weeks after complaining about the amount of dust at work).

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

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

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HERE'S WHAT TO DO WHEN
YOU HIT A GROWTH PLATEAU,
AND HOW YOU CAN MAKE THAT
LEAP TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF SUCCESS.



BY MIKE SEUFFERT /
Associate Editor

A couple years ago, business was humming along at Southwest Landscape Management in Columbia Station, OH. The company's owner and vice president, Steve Rak II, says the company was growing about 40% annually.

But things started to change as the company neared the \$1 million mark. It's not that business was bad. It had just leveled out. Last year, Rak says, the company grew only 3%.

The economy might have something to do with the slow down, though because Southwest Landscape Management specializes in commercial maintenance, it really wasn't hit as hard as other companies that rely more on big new construction and de-

sign/build projects.

"Last year was really rough," Rak says. "There's a ton of competition out there, and the commercial landscape maintenance market is getting saturated. We need to find a way to differentiate ourselves; we can't just compete on price."

JP Horizons' Bob Coulter says that Rak's predicament is common in the landscape industry. Hard work and determination can take you far, often to the \$1 million mark, but that's where problems within your systems — infrastructure and personnel

continued on page 46



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continued from page 42

— often catch up with you. Beyond that, there are other “plateaus” companies hit that are difficult to overcome. Coulter pegs these around \$2.5 million, \$4.5 million, and even \$8 million for the larger companies.

“When a company is larger than \$2.5 million dollars, it’s not a little company anymore, and you have to behave in a different way,” Coulter says. “You have to have some infrastructure in place. You have to have that administrative wing, someone handling the office stuff. You need a salesperson. You need to have production leadership. The owner can play one of these positions, but if the rest isn’t there, the whole thing is going to implode.”

Getting stuck on one of these plateaus is not unavoidable. There are steps you can take to jumpstart or re-energize your business and continue on the road to growth and profitability.

People in place

Coulter says that the biggest barrier to growth throughout the landscape industry is people.

“If you don’t have people within your organization who can step up and take on a pivotal role, you’re going to get stuck,” Coulter says. “If the owner doesn’t have a key manager he can

pass duties along to, the company will get stuck at \$1 million. Once you get to about \$1 million, you simply can’t do it all yourself anymore.

“With the right people, that support mechanism frees the owner to focus on one position — either the customer side or the production side of the equation — allowing the owner to do what’s best to grow the business.”

Rak realizes this. He recently brought an office manager aboard to handle the administrative duties that we’re eating into his time.

“You get to a certain point and you have to leave these other jobs behind,” says Rak. “As the business grew, I’d be out on the job and my phone was ringing and my pager going off. I was trying to do 1,000 things at the same time and wasn’t doing any of them particularly well.

“Having someone who can handle the administrative tasks like uniforms, insurance, payroll and all those other things frees me up to go out there and really focus on my sales.”

Training

Michael Martin, vice president of Operations for Outside Unlimited, based in Hampstead, MD, says that finding the right people to take key roles within your company goes hand in hand with your ability to train them.

“You have to invest time and effort in training them to take on and under-



Bob Maffei says it seemed like half a lifetime before his company reached the \$1 million mark; then it took off.

stand new responsibilities,” Martin says. “You cannot put them on an island and expect them to act exactly like you. Put processes in place or else you’ll be disappointed and frustrated with the results.”

“When we made the decision to open a branch office in the northern Virginia / Washington, D.C. area we didn’t just pick a branch manager, send him down there and wish him good luck. He was in my office for six months working and training with me before he moved.”

Corporate culture

Bob Maffei, owner of Maffei Landscape in Mashpee, MA, agrees that finding the right talent is the biggest sticking point.

“Especially when you’re small, you cannot invest in the wrong people,” says Maffei. “At \$1 million, the business is driven by the owner. But when your company gets larger, you start to have many people working together to manage the culture of the company. And if they’re not on the same page with you, it’s going to affect how employees and customers view your business.”

Maffei says his company invests heavily in recruiting new talent from both the college ranks and elsewhere in the

continued on page 48



We need to find a way to **differentiate ourselves** — we can’t just compete on price.

« Steve Rak, Owner and VP, Southwest Landscape Management



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continued from page 46

professional world. The company tests, trains and monitors employees to find the right people for the right job, and to groom them for their new roles.

"We've worked hard to remove any negative energy from the company. It's about getting the right people on the bus and the wrong people off."

Diversity

One way that won't help jumpstart a stalled business is grabbing any and all

work. You might increase your revenues by cutting prices and grabbing new clients, offering new services, or marketing in areas outside of your service zone, but if those jobs aren't profitable, they're only going to hinder you by monopolizing your time, employees, equipment and capital.

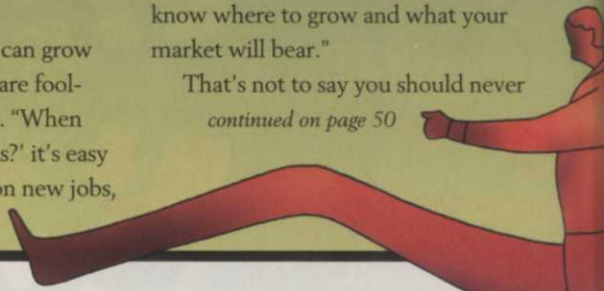
"Anyone who thinks they can grow themselves out of a problem are fooling themselves," says Coulter. "When customers ask 'Do you do this?' it's easy to say 'yes.' Before you take on new jobs,

make the business case for offering the service. Margins almost always deteriorate when you become too diversified."

"Keep your focus narrow and deliver a product that's above market conditions. If you concentrate on making good margins on the right customers, you'll know where to grow and what your market will bear."

That's not to say you should never

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EXECUTIVE VIEW

Landscape Management, at the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET) Executive Forum, in Scottsdale, AZ. recently, spoke to several company owners about the stumbling blocks they faced in growing their businesses. Here's what they had to say:

"The \$1 million mark was easy," says Rob Diaz, owner of Land Care Inc., North Las Vegas, NV. Diaz hit that revenue figure in 2002, six years after he started his company. He has since reached as high as \$3.5 million. "You're in no-man's land between \$3.5 and \$5 million." It's not simply taking on more business. The company's systems must be in place to handle that business.

"To create that kind of volume means adjusting your margins to that volume, but your company size is not quite there. If you don't have the wherewithal to handle that, that's where a lot of companies lose it."

An important factor in any company's growth is the group of people who will take you to that next level. "The group that you hire today may not be the group you have tomorrow," Diaz says.

Andy Tumolo, agrees. He hit the \$1.5 million mark in 2001, four years after he started Maple Leaf Associates Inc. in Mahopac, NY.

"When you don't have all the systems in place, you put a cap on your abil-

ity to grow. You hire a key person, and the business moves forward."

Tumolo tapped a consultant to help him move to the next level. That led to the hiring of a controller, which allowed the company to get its job costing in place.

"It was culmination of events," says Tumolo, the president of his 11-year-old operation. "You don't realize how much you need something until you have it. We were out to sea with no compass at all."

The owners of Integrated Landscape Management grew their operation to \$15 million before they ever noticed a hint of a plateau. It's not simply a matter of growth, however.

Co-owners John Garigen and Robert Clinkenbeard say they can sustain significant growth, in terms of revenue, year after year. The question however is whether or not they're making a profit on those revenues.

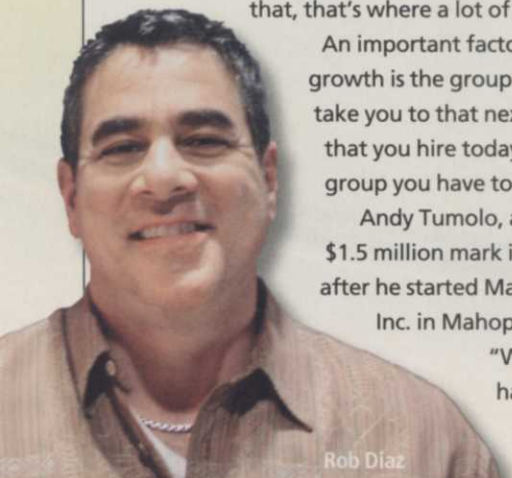
"We could sit still and fine-tune things," Garigen says. "What's the return on growing further? Are we going to be right where we're at now? Does it make sense to push for it?"

One way to make more money, Garigen says, is to become more efficient, but there comes a point where the squeezing doesn't deliver.

"We're at the point where we work to get that next level or we tighten up," Clinkenbeard says.

Also, the Tempe-AZ based pair recognizes that as they increase in size their infrastructure must change as well. Departments like human resources and information technology must become more formal.

— Dan Jacobs, Managing Editor



Rob Diaz



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HERBICIDE

continued from page 48

offer any new services. Martin says Outside Unlimited has been able to grow to the \$18 million range because it has diversified smartly.

"You can become more attractive to core clients if you can do more of the work yourself," Martin says. "You can only make so much money in one area. Ask yourself if it makes sense to offer things like hardscapes, lighting packages and irrigation. If you don't continue to grow as a company, it's easy to become complacent and stop moving forward."

Martin explains that Outside Unlimited began offering irrigation services because a single employee took it upon himself to become educated on the subject. Irrigation has since become its own department in the company, providing about 15% of the total revenue.

"By communicating with customers and peers, you'll open yourself up to new ideas," Martin says.

Branching out

Like Martin said, you can only make so much money in one area. Between geographic and competitive limitations,

once your company gets to a certain size, you may have to branch out to reach new customers.

Coulter says that after getting past the \$4.5 million mark, a company may begin to think about a second branch, either by natural growth or through acquisition. Even so, again, you have to have the right personnel and the right culture to replicate your success in the new location.

"We're at \$8 million and we're busting at the seams at this location," says Maffei. "I know I can't do \$20 million in one location. But we won't move forward until we have the right people in place to make that transition, so that I can effectively track and manage the company through multiple branches."

Roughly six years ago, with the company hovering around the \$7 million mark, Martin decided to open his Northern Virginia / Washington, D.C. branch.

"We had a really good handle on the Baltimore market, and didn't think we'd be able to grow much more in our 45-minute radius," Martin says. "Because of geography and traffic, we couldn't get to the Washington market without great expense and a hour-and-a-half drive time."

Martin said the idea was to open the branch with minimal capital layout and minimal risk.

The company leased a building for three years and bought a couple new trucks and skid steers. If the branch didn't meet expectations, the new crew and equipment could be

easily rolled into the existing operation.

"I just wanted a small piece of the D.C. pie — I didn't come in expecting \$7 million right away," he says. "We knew there was work; we knew the vendors, and once we didn't have a 3-hour drive time, we became competitive in the market. In six years, this branch has grown from zero to \$4 million."

Pressure build-up

If your business is not growing the way you think it should, don't be discouraged. It happens. Be rationale, focus on your strengths, continue to develop the right personnel and make the business case for all new initiatives.

While we may think we can do it all ourselves, even the best companies bring in a consultant to get a perspective on those areas that need to be improved or possibly even overhauled.

"The thing to remember when you may be stalled is that there's no need to reinvent the wheel," Maffei says. "There are people out there who have gone through the same situation. Look to them for help. Without the help of friends and consultants, I never would have made the jump from \$4 million to \$8 million."

Rak says he plans to work with consultants and others, like JP Horizons, to help him jumpstart his business, and help him find that element which will differentiate his company in the market.

And as Maffei says — once the infrastructure is in place, once the right people are on board, get ready for a ride.

"You can spend half your life getting to \$1 million, but the run from \$1 million to \$2.5 million feels like a month," Maffei says. "There's a pressure building up, and once all the pieces are in place and your systems are built to handle that level of sales, you can just breakout, and all of a sudden it gets easy." **LM**

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» **Michael Martin,**
VP, Operations,
Outside Unlimited





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You will be surprised about the amount of science and technology (not to mention cost) behind the development of new Green Industry chemistry

BY NICK
HAMON,
PH.D.

Most lawn care professionals probably don't think much about the science and technology behind the products they choose to keep turf free of weeds, insect pests and diseases.

New active ingredient development for turfgrass use is not so dissimilar from that of a new pharmaceutical; costs are high, it takes many years to get to market and the chances of success are not guaranteed, even in the final stages of development. In fact, one might argue that pesticide development can be more complex than drug development as it includes not only efficacy and human safety testing but also detailed and costly monitoring of the environmental fate of the product.

Facts and figures

Some facts and figures may help put the process in perspective: Many companies spend in excess of \$650 million annually on research and development. R&D involves both the discovery of new active

ingredients and the continued support of existing products. In a study from Phillips McDougall for American Crop Life and the European Crop Protection Association, the estimated cost of bringing a new agrochemical to market in 2000 was approximately \$200 million.

Today, the costs are considered to be closer to \$240 million. As well as in-house R&D, Bayer Environmental Science alone invests approximately \$3 million annually with about 42 major universities in North America. The work varies from basic research on the mode of action of new chemistry to efficacy profiling on pests, weeds and diseases. On average, it takes eight to 10 years to get a new active ingredient from the laboratory bench to the customer. If you invest \$250 million in new technology, you clearly do your best to protect your investment with patents. The life of a patent in North America varies from 17 to 20 years, which means a company has only about 10 years after launch to recoup its investment before generic companies can encroach.

Discovering actives

How are new active ingredients discovered? Every year, our company runs as many as one million new molecules through a complex biological screening process. Much of the work is done with a process called combinatorial chemistry, in which new molecular structures are synthesized using complex robotics. Robots are also used to measure and

weigh these chemicals, testing them for biological activity in biochemical screens.

These biochemical screens are often cell-based systems involving ion channels, receptor sites and signaling pathways. We are

constantly researching new modes of action to improve performance, reduce costs, improve the toxicological and ecological profiles and combat resistance to established classes of chemistry. In spite of more than half a century of industry research, the number of different modes of action available is surprisingly small. Using insecticides as an example, the most commonly used

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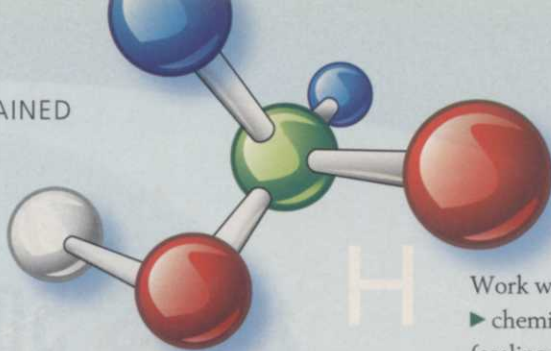
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continued from page 52

active ingredients still offer only three distinct modes of action:

1. acetylcholinesterase inhibitors (organophosphates and carbamates)
2. sodium channel modulators (synthetic pyrethroids)
3. nicotinic acetylcholine receptor agonists and antagonists (imidacloprid).

Some of the chemistry under research involves well-understood modes of action, but much of the effort goes into the search for biologically active compounds among unknown chemistries. These biological screens run on nanograms or micrograms of active ingredient, and few (less than 1%) show biological activity on cellular systems or on whole organisms. Compounds that do elicit biological responses will progress to further levels of screening, eventually encountering many target and non-target organisms, such as weeds, fungi, nematodes, mites or insects. It is at this point that chemists will work closely on redesigning the structure of the new active molecule to optimize toxicology, biological performance, costs, physical properties and environmental fate.

Laboratory trials

Of the million compounds our company tests annually, fewer than 20,000 make it through the initial screens, and perhaps only 750 will show promising activity in further studies. All of these compounds will get full biological and chemical profiling in laboratory and glasshouse trials, but less than 10 per year will end up being field tested at one or more of the 25 research farms that the company manages around the world.

Because the target pests, methods of application and technology needs of the turf and pest control markets are different than agriculture, Bayer Environmental Science has its own Development and

Training Center in Clayton, N.C. At the Clayton site, scientists test new products on more than 40 cultivars of turf and as many as 30 different insects and diseases important to residential and commercial turf and landscapes. From the synthesis of a new molecule it often takes three to four years before field testing is done. After several years of field screening as well as intense research on manufacturing process, formulation, mammalian toxicology, environmental fate and mode of action, the company will make a decision on whether to promote this new compound into full scale development.

Full scale development means a further investment of many millions of dollars, with no guarantee that the new chemistry can jump all the cost, regulatory and efficacy hurdles that it will face in the next 4-6 years of the development process. Making a decision to invest in a new active ingredient is not all based exclusively on biological performance. Every detail is scrutinized: how large the market might be, what the competitive products are, whether the product is a good strategic fit, whether Bayer will recoup its \$240 million investment over the life of the product and what risks are associated with making a 'go' decision.

Shepherding the product

Once in full development, a whole new team of scientists will shepherd the product through a complex package of new tests. To get an EPA or EU registration, more than 150 regulatory studies will be done over a four year period that include product chemistry, ecological toxicity, mammalian toxicity, non-target plant and insect toxicity, environmental fate, metabolism and residue chemistry and risk assessment.

Work will commence on:

- ▶ chemical synthesis and production (scaling up from a few pounds to making hundreds of tons)
- ▶ manufacturing (do we need to invest \$50 million on a new manufacturing plant or can we adapt an existing plant)
- ▶ how best to formulate and deliver to the target organism
- ▶ optimizing bioavailability (drop size, retention, rainfastness, systemicity, crystal size of dry deposit on surface).

Thousands of field trials will be carried out on farms around the world. At the same time we will be working closely with university experts to get their input on performance and benefits compared to existing products. If all goes well, after 8-10 years from the initial synthesis and discovery, and an investment exceeding \$200 million, the involvement of thousands of scientists and university researchers, the new product will be granted a label of registration.

However, as exciting as it is to get a new product to market, the work of the scientist has only just begun. Thousands of trials will be closely monitored to better understand performance and mode of action. Formulations will be continuously optimized for new pest targets; in addition, compatibility studies, benefits of mixtures, application timing and techniques will be analyzed for many years. In fact, some of the most intensive research goes into the continuous improvements of existing products. At any one time we may be looking closely at up to six new active ingredients per year. Many will not make the transition into the environmental science markets, but a few will have the perfect profile for use by professionals in turf, ornamental or urban pest management. **LJM**

— *The author is Director, Development and Technical Service, Bayer Environmental Science*



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Opportunity 'calling'

Believe it: Something as simple as promptly responding to customers will set your company apart. BY DAVID SHIFFMAN

Ask a residential client or potential client the single biggest complaint they have about most landscaping services and the first answer is usually poor communication. What does that really mean? It means: "They didn't return my call."

It's easy to let calls slip, particularly if you're working in the field, or there are conditions (heavy snow, flooding, whatever) that have your phone ringing off the hook. To avoid problems, give yourself the right tools to respond. Here are some simple tips:



1 Communicate with yourself first.

Using simple tools consistently (always carrying a small pad and pen to capture information, for example) will enable you to follow-up on whatever issues arise. If you cannot remember what it was that you promised to do, the odds against you ever getting it done are nil. Keep all of your notes and lists in a single place and review them regularly.

2 Voicemail makes lousy storage. Keeping messages in your voicemail inbox is a bad idea. The limitations of most voice mail systems prevent you from easily scanning messages to find the necessary information to respond, and it's easy to forget about saved messages.

The first time you listen to a message, write down the relevant information and delete the message. Use a single location such as a specific pad of paper or section of your planner, or the electronic equivalent, to keep all of the messages together. Also, make sure you are in a position (i.e. not driving the truck) to take notes on the call. This gives you the flexibility to return calls as soon as you have a chance, whether that means while moving between work sites or during any other small time gaps

that you can take advantage of during the day. Always return the call the day that you receive it, faster if it's a real or perceived emergency.

3 Speed matters. It's tempting to hold off making a call if you have no information or, even worse, bad news. But that's exactly the opposite of what your client is thinking. A quick response, even if it is simply to acknowledge the problem and let them know you're aware and concerned, will diffuse far more tension than it creates. ("I just wanted to let you know that we had an equipment breakdown and have fallen behind. We're doing everything we can to get caught up, and expect to be able to service you no later than Tuesday morning.") Will you get a belligerent response? Sometimes. But it's better to let them yell at you and feel like they're being heard, instead of quietly stewing over it until they're angry enough to bad mouth your services to others.

4 Follow through. Especially if you are dealing with a customer that's angry or upset, make sure that you deliver whatever you've promised, and then touch base again with your client after you're finished. A good response to a perceived problem can turn a potential big

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continued from page 56
 negative into a positive by demonstrating that you're serious about customer satisfaction. If the customer is still angry, get his or her feedback, understand why they're upset and thank them for the feedback. They're going to want to tell somebody about their experience, and it's best if they tell you instead of complaining to their friends and neighbors. Who knows, the feedback might actually be useful!

5 Empower your crew. If crews work at sites you don't frequently visit, encourage experienced crew members to interact with customers when appropriate. Opening up a friendly line of communication will prevent many problems, and enable you to deal with

those that occur while they're still small problems.

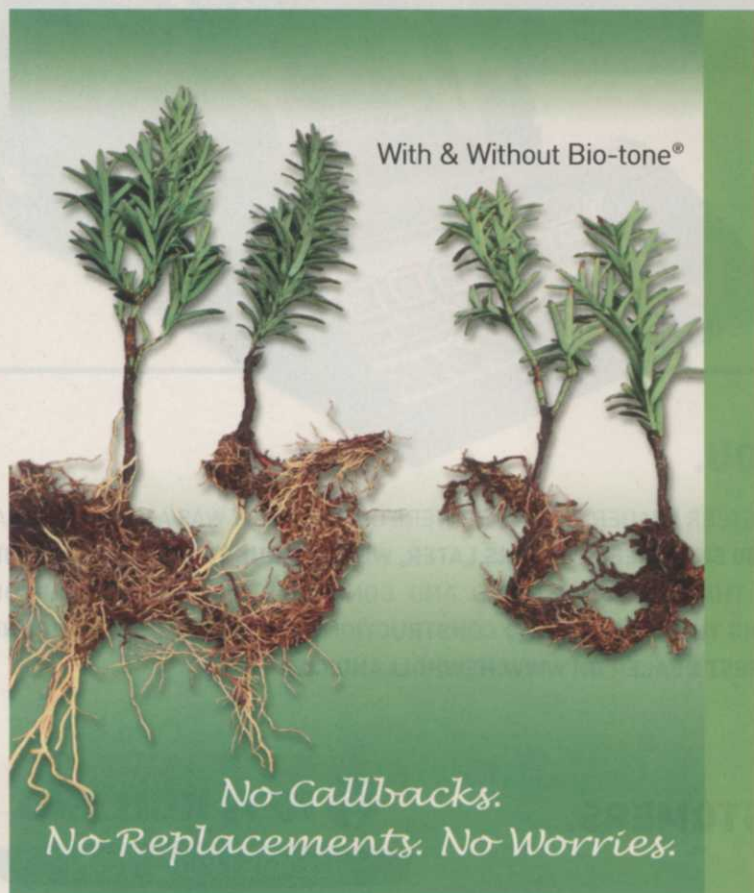
If your crew doesn't usually see the customer while they are on-site, have them leave a message as they leave, either by voicemail or with a simple follow-up form left in the mailbox. "Hello, this is the Happy Landscape team, and we just finished your weekly service. Please let us know if there is anything you need by calling our office."

6 Be proactive. Better and more regular communication with clients creates opportunities to make recommendations for additional products or services they might not have considered. It's far

The first time you listen to a message, write down the relevant information and delete the message.

easier to increase business with existing clients than to find new ones, and your customers will appreciate you sharing ideas, even if they don't act on them. **L.M.**

— *The author is the principal at Shiffman Consulting. Contact him at David@shiffmanconsulting.com*



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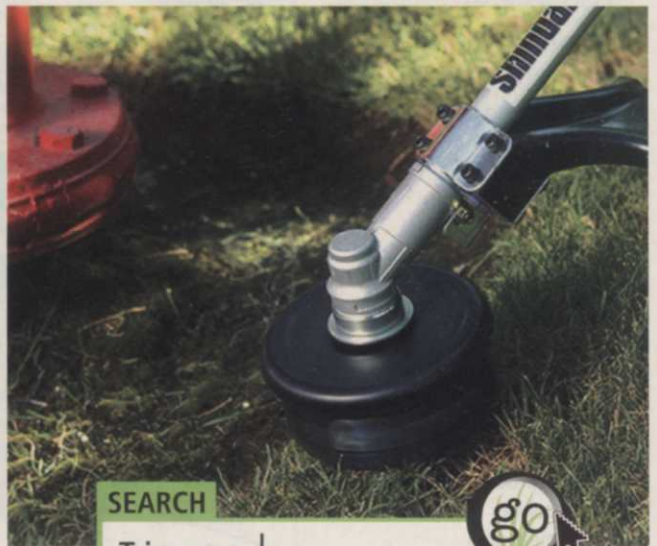
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Project Portfolio

DESIGN/BUILD

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The design

A small California backyard transforms into a dream kitchen.

Project Requirements

- Work within the 1,500 sq. ft. of space
- Create a privacy/noise screen, as the property backs up to a freeway
- Design a practical, but guest-friendly cooking, dining and entertainment area



Project Specifics

The design and implementation took place in front of the TV cameras. It's being featured on an upcoming episode of Home & Garden Television's "Get Out, Way Out." (check local listings).

ABOVE The Green Scene reworked the space to accommodate dining for up to nine. More seating is near the fire pit. A grill features custom, built-in surround for convenience.



ABOVE The Home and Garden television crew mapped out its coverage of the landscape on this newly installed spa counter.

LEFT The fire pit invites guests to relax on the nearby custom bench seats.



BEFORE




ABOVE The 6-ft. cinderblock wall reduces the noise and dust from passing highway traffic. The contemporary, cast-concrete fountain also provides a visual respite and the sound of the water is soothing.

LEFT Designer Scott Cohen of the Green Scene designed a lot of functionality into a small area, without creating a cramped feeling.


BELOW The clients put more of their budget into hardscape. Over time the plantings will grow larger and fill in the space. The larger ornamentals include crape myrtle, azalea and camellia. Pansies, snapdragons and primrose provide annual color.

Project Principals

- Designed by Scott Cohen, The Green Scene, Canoga Park, CA, www.greenscenelandscape.com.
- The Green Scene specializes in hardscapes, lighting, woodwork and waterscapes.
- For more information about Cohen and his TV work, see page 114.



Stetson University



The President's House, built in 1910, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A major landscape renovation at the Stetson University President's House in DeLand, FL, gives new meaning to the word groundbreaking. The team assembled for the Vera Lea Rinker Native Plant Garden was tasked with leveling an established landscape that was in need of renovation and replacing it with an equally beautiful setting planted with Florida native trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals.

Vera Rinker Native Plant Garden a model for ecologically friendly, biodiverse design BY GERI BAUER

The garden had to be beautiful, functional, educational, private and an appropriate setting for everything from multi-course formal dinners to casual receptions. It also had to complement the site's focal point — the University's 4,490-sq.-ft., neo-classical President's House, built in 1910 and listed on the

National Register of Historic Places. The result is a landscape not only groundbreaking but trailblazing.

"The university believes that the Garden is a signature addition to the use of native plants in the state of Florida," says Dr. James R. Beasley, Stetson

continued on page 64

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University senior vice president and chief operating officer.

In keeping with Stetson's educational mission, the garden also is designed to serve as a model for other institutions considering changing their landscape style to a more biodiverse, ecologically friendly environment, says Stetson University President H. Douglas Lee.

Scouring the state

Taking the lead in creating a multi-use, institutional landscape of indigenous flora presented challenges for the university, which acted as its own contractor. One of the most time-consuming chores was locating enough native plant materials to meet the project's specific needs.

"As we got into the project, we were delighted at the quality and beauty of native plants the nursery industry in Florida has available," Beasley says.

The Garden features thousands of plants on two acres, according to project manager Dave Rigsby, manager of Stetson's Department of Grounds. The plant

material purchased for the project was Florida-grown, with the larger trees dug from the ground at nurseries and smaller plants container-grown.

Rigsby and project landscape architect Glenn Herbert of Bellomo-Herbert & Co. in Orlando traveled Florida to find the appropriate trees, shrubs and ground covers in the size and quantity needed. The garden design called for numerous, 16-ft.-tall cherry laurel trees, needed to serve as a perimeter hedge. Lee and his wife, Margaret, continued living in the President's House throughout the landscape renovation, and the hedge was the first green element installed to replace privacy plants lost when the former landscape was razed.

Native plant initiative

The Vera Lea Rinker Native Plant Garden was designed in accordance with Stetson's Native Plant Initiative, a policy that mandates use of only native Florida trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals in university landscaping. Campus grounds

continued on page 66



Stetson President H. Douglas Lee and wife Margaret continued living in the house as the former landscape was removed and an "all-Florida" garden and landscape took shape.

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DESIGN/BUILD GOING NATIVE WITH STYLE

continued from page 64

are being gradually transformed as new landscapes are installed and existing ones renovated.

The privately funded Rinker Garden is the largest landscaping project ever undertaken on the university's 174-acre DeLand campus, Rigsby says. It may be the only garden of its kind in Florida. It's named after Vera Lea Rinker, the late mother of John Rinker, president of the philanthropic Marshall and Vera Lea Rinker Foundation whose donation funded the garden's creation.

Herbert says designing a landscape

of native flora was a new experience for him. "I don't know any project of its kind in the state on this scale," he says.

Certain native flora is frequently used in landscaping, such as oaks and sabal palms, Herbert notes. Other native flora including palmetto and coontie are frequently seen in landscaping because their attributes make them popular choices.

"This is the first job where virtually everything had to be native," says Herbert, who was born in nearby Daytona Beach. "It's been tricky because most people labor under the misconception that, with natives, you just stick them into the ground and everything's fine."

Native or not, newly established plants need regular watering to establish. Micro-irrigation is a component of the

continued on page 68



The iron fencing and brickwork blend in with and compliment the native flora and elegant 92-year-old house to present a distinctive (and elegant) vista of "old" Florida.



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continued from page 66
garden project. Weeding became a maintenance task even before the 3-month project was completed, Rigsby says.

From point A to B

Herbert says the team's goal was to use native plants in an ornamental application by using flora that created the desired look and feel.

The new garden was carved from the existing President's House grounds and an unpaved parking lot adjacent to it. Early project work — surveying and prep work — drew little attention. Then land-clearing equipment appeared and azaleas, ligustrums and invasive

Dave Rigsby scoured Florida to find the native trees, perennials and annuals that he and his grounds crew now maintain at the 2-acre President's House site.

camphor trees started disappearing.

Traffic on busy U.S. 17-92 crawled as townspeople driving by slowed and gawked as a secluded corner site became an open expanse of Florida sand dotted with existing oaks. "We kept warning people it was going to be a dramatic change," says Herbert.

The site was cleared and then leveled. Subcontractors laid out path and walkway lines, installed irrigation lines, and

planted 16-ft. and taller trees including the aforementioned cherry laurels and magnolia, river birch, cypress and maple. Other subcontractors built brick pillars, installed grating and laid brick. Stetson's grounds maintenance team made sure the newly planted flora received enough water to survive the hot, sunny weather that prevailed during the project, which started in late May 2007 and was completed in late August 2007.

"Plants grown natively are acclimated to the environment," Herbert says. "But when you take one out of a container and stick it into the ground it can't survive on its own. You still have to water and fertilize it until it gets acclimated."

Native plants do have fewer fertilizer requirements, and suffer fewer insect pests and fewer fungal diseases, he adds.

After plant installation, workers completed irrigation installation, mulched, laid sod and added lighting.

The finished product

The garden's distinctive features include a 40-foot-wide by 120-ft.-long grand lawn lined with river birch trees, and a 40-foot by 30-ft. circular garden room south of a free-standing pavilion. The birch trees are an example of how certain native plants associated with wetter sites can adapt to drier locations such as this one.

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Walkways frame perimeter plantings, and fencing and low-voltage lighting add style. The site features thousands of plants representing about 30 native species. Only the lawn is not native greenery. Rigsby said St. Augustine is used directly in front of the house, and zoysia is in other lawn areas. Rigsby says zoysia's mowing requirements won't be as in-

Only the lawn is not native to Florida. St. Augustinegrass was installed in front of the house and zoysia elsewhere. The remainder of the site features thousands of plants representing about 30 native species.

tensive as the St. Augustine's, a fact that should help his grounds crew reduce its mowing footprint.

Natives a growing trend

"There's a lot of validity to using native materials," Herbert says. "It's a bold move on the university's part to take this approach. I think you'll see more institutions starting to take the same approach."

There are some industry challenges inherent in the native-garden plan, he said: Native plants are usually more expensive, in great demand, and typically slow growing. A grower could turn over conventional stock three times in the time it takes to grow certain native plants, he adds.

People shouldn't go into a native plant landscape thinking they won't have to do anything after the garden is established, he adds.

"We are going to have to stay on top of weeding," says Rigsby. "This is a huge

site to undertake weeding, but at the same time, we'll see our footprint of chemicals, like fertilizers, being reduced significantly."

Water needs are expected to drop after plants are established, and reclaimed water will be used for irrigation.

Rigsby adds that because the university is returning its campus environment into native-plant spaces, it's therefore re-introducing healthier habitat for wildlife.

"From a maintenance standpoint, those are some of the things we're looking at," he says. "We're really excited about this project. It's a pretty incredible garden." **LM**

— The author is a Communications Specialist at Stetson University. Contact her at gbauer@stetson.edu. For more on the project visit www.stetson.edu/plants.



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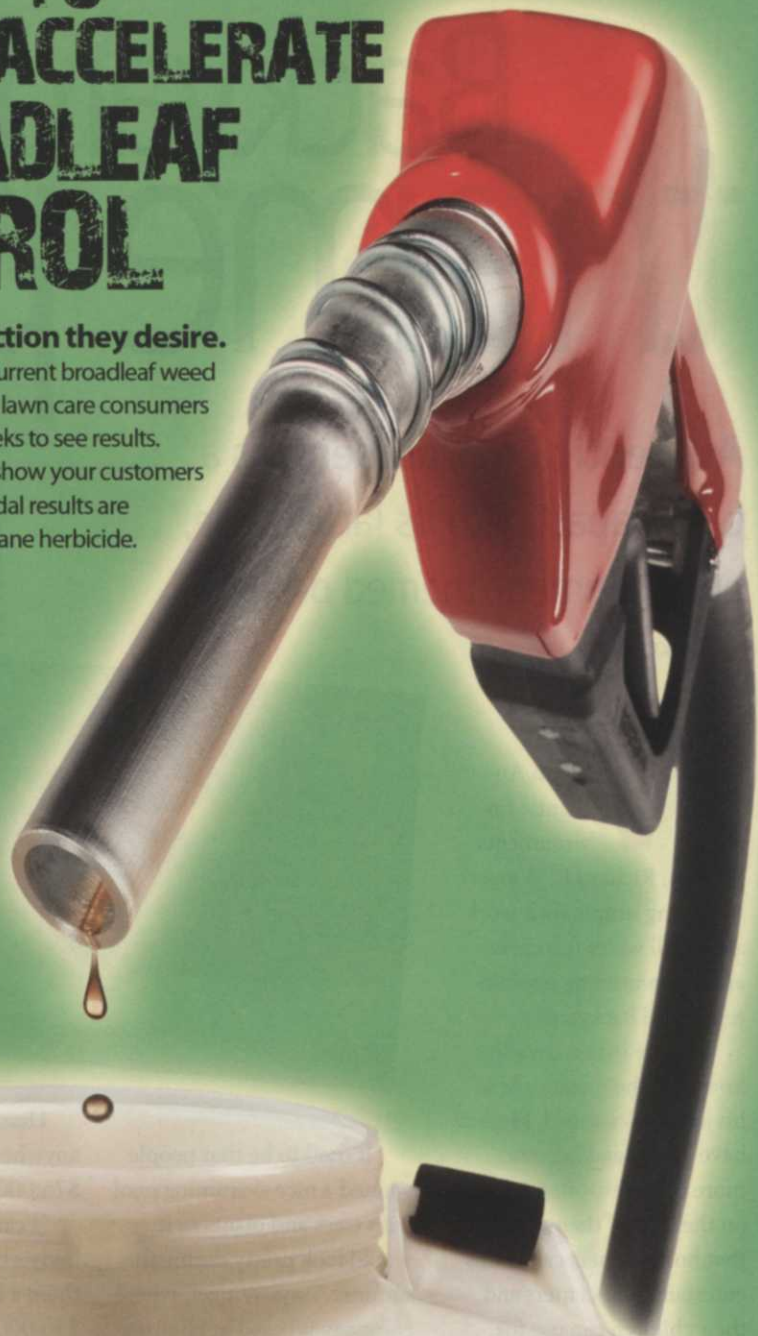


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Backyard theme parks

Authentic Environments is a breed apart with its large-scale, entertainment-themed designs

BY KEN KRIZNER

When he began Authentic Environments in 1994, Richard L. Winget was doing simple rock work and small water features around swimming pools in residential backyards.

In more than a decade, however, the magnitude of his jobs has changed. Projects have grown and become more complex, often taking on the look of theme parks that homeowners can use as entertainment centers and their children can use for stay-at-home fun.

Authentic Environments replicates and creates imitation worlds of nature, including structures that have been built, carved and painted to simulate the look of antiquity, even in decay.



"It used to be that people wanted a nice swimming pool with trees and plants so it would look pretty during the summer," says Winget, whose company is based in Huntington Beach, CA, south of Los Angeles. "Now, people want to bring theme parks into their backyards. They want full-blown entertainment complexes. It has become an extension of the home into their backyards."

Homeowners can spend anywhere from \$30,000 to \$75,000 for a project.

"I can walk into somebody's backyard and give them a ballpark estimate of \$50,000, and they won't even bat an eye," Winget says. "All they want to know is when we can start the project. They want it up by summer."

Designed for the family
Authentic Environments, which markets itself entirely

on the Internet (there is no physical showroom), mainly builds its designs in Orange County. The company has gone from two employees in 1994 (including Winget) to nine employees. It also employs freelance artisan sculptors for its design work.

Prior to starting Authentic Environments, Winget was a freelance artist, working on projects at water parks, zoos, hotels, casinos, aquariums and theme parks throughout the world.

He learned his trade from creative individuals who

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had the idea for large-scale outdoor design projects before the technology made it affordable to build those designs in the mainline residential market, he says.

Now, prompted by a desire to keep their children nearby, more homeowners are building these types of projects in their backyards.

"They create a venue in their backyard where their children will stay home and invite their friends over," he points out. "It's a way for parents to keep track of their kids."

It's also not uncommon for these homeowners to host parties with 40 to 50 guests. These entertainment-themed designs make it possible for them to accommodate such a large gathering.

"People are more family-oriented," Winget says. "They want to spend time together and they want to do it at home, not at a restaurant or banquet hall."

Design challenges

Winget says that potential designs can come either internally or externally.

"Sometimes, we get into the design aspect," he says. "Sometimes, a homeowner will come to us with an idea for a rock formation or water feature around a swimming pool, or a swimming pool contractor will have an idea."

Authentic Environments works with many swimming

pool contractors in Southern California. Those contractors will often recommend the company to their customers.

A typical project can take from four weeks to three months depending on its scope and magnitude.

Winget says he looks for designs that challenge the imagination, adding that he has never turned down a project.

"If it's difficult, then it's a challenge," he says. "We'll find a way. It may be expensive, but we will get it done. I look for projects that are a little above normal."

The most interesting project he has built is a reproduction of a Roman aqueduct for a homeowner in Dove Canyon. The design was complete with an Alexander the Great statue with water spilling into a pool over simulated rubble. The project cost nearly \$50,000.

Winget says all carvings and designs were based on historical research.

"We simulated the decay and collapse of the wall of stones," he says. "We designed arches that were typical of a Roman aqueduct."

One of the reasons why Authentic Environments can do such detailed work is the advancements made in cement technology during the past two decades.

"We use our cement for our construction, and we expect the cement to do a lot of things, like easily stay on walls and ceilings," Winget says.



Winget says cement can now be used as a waterproofing material by adding certain materials to it, something that was not possible 20 years ago.

Depending on what type of additive is used, cement can dry in as little as two minutes or as long as four days, giving the artist flexibility in the design process.

"The additives, plasticizers, accelerators and retarders allow theme construction artists to manipulate the cement more easily, allowing more time and creativity," Winget says.

Additionally, a cellulose additive entrains air into the cement matrix and also makes the cement sticky, which aids in building it out thicker than traditional cement.

"My job would be considerably tougher without this type of cement," says Winget.

A trend to smaller

Winget admits that Authentic Environments' business has slowed during the past year because of the economy. The company compensates by designing smaller jobs it wouldn't normally do, as well as installing waterslides.

When the economy revs

back up, Winget expects homeowners to be back ordering large-scale designs.

He predicts his market is primed to grow because large-scale projects will become part of the design of new homes.

"People will expect rock work or some entertainment-themed venue in their backyards, and they're going to have choices," Winget points out. "There is going to be a package for children and a package for adults. That is going to become standard in the industry."

In this way, Winget believes the large-scale designs will change the way people think about buying a home.

"The [home] models are going to showcase our kind of work," he notes. "I think this [type of design] will take priority over some other amenities in the home." **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

Contact him at info@questex.com.

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JOE against the odds



Joe Tuttle, landscape designer, reviews plans with Mark Borst, president of Borst Landscape and Design.

How Joe Tuttle of Borst Landscape and Design battled through tough zoning laws and defeated a severe slope to give clients a fantastic entertainment area BY DINA STEIN

"The zoning law does not allow for retaining walls more than four feet high on the property. We could have asked for a variance, but that would have held the project up for at least a year," Tuttle says. "Instead, we had to find a way to terrace the property in such a way that we could create several different levels that did not exceed the 4-ft. limit and would flow into each other for easy access."

There was also an existing 4-ft.-high retaining wall on the property line that was not only falling down, but also needed to be raised to a height of eight feet to support the new pool and keep it from sliding into the neighboring property. This called for some creative thinking because Tuttle had to deal with the 4-foot wall height regulations as well as a requirement that any new wall on the property line be set back one foot from the property line for every foot of height. This would cut into the usable backyard area. Tuttle modified his plan and replaced the failing wall with a 2-tiered interlocking wall that conformed to the set back requirements. Once this was addressed the work began.

Joe Tuttle knew he had a challenge on his hands. Tuttle, landscape designer for Borst Landscape and Design Inc. of Allendale, NJ, had been asked to transform a small, severely sloping backyard into a series of welcoming spaces that would include a swimming pool, outdoor kitchen and entertainment areas.

"The first thing I noticed when viewing the property was a retaining wall that cut across the backyard," Tuttle says. Located about 18 feet from the rear property line, the wall cut off some 2,000 sq. ft. of usable space from a back yard that measured about 7,500 sq. ft. Behind this wall, Tuttle found an eight-foot drop to the level of the neighboring property. The transition in grade from the ground floor of the house to the rear property line worked out to be 15 feet.

Meeting zoning concerns

Working with the client, Tuttle designed a plan to eliminate the old retaining wall, extend usable property almost to the property line and create several discreet entertainment areas.

Surprises along the way

After removing the old retaining wall that had divided the property, Borst started the regrading process, first lowering

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AFTER

The coping on the patio hides an automatic safety cover for the pool. Water runoff from impermeable surfaces is collected on site.

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the level just behind the house by three feet. "In doing that we discovered the footing of the house had not been constructed to code," Tuttle says. "That was a big surprise. In order to support the back of the house and the existing deck, we needed to construct new footings."

Using dry-laid bluestone walls, the Borst team built a 3-ft.-high retaining wall and several steps descending from the ground floor of the house to the new patio level. This level includes a fully equipped kitchen with tile countertops, counter stools, a variety of cooking elements, plus an adjacent dining area.

To add another element of outdoor entertainment, a bar area was created under the first floor of the house in a space formerly used to store outdoor furniture. Tuttle and the homeowners collaborated on creating a room in this space with French doors for direct access to the main patio area. From the inside, a flat screen TV was mounted on a swiveling bracket behind the bar so that it can be positioned for viewing from the outside while in the outdoor kitchen space.

Swimming pool solutions

At the next level, four feet below the patio, Tuttle created a pool area, accessed by six curving steps built into another landscaped retaining wall.

But the pool design itself presented new challenges. Zoning regulations required that hardscape elements occupy only a certain percentage of the landscaping. This meant that the originally planned size of the swimming pool and adjacent patio had to be downsized.

In addition, the clients had special requests. "They had always wanted a free-form pool but were concerned about safety when it was unattended," Tuttle says. The problem was resolved with the design known in the industry as a "deck on

deck" pool. This is a unique solution with a patio that accommodates the automatic safety cover within its coping. The free-form shape is set in a rectangle elevated six inches above the pool level. The cover track is then hidden under the coping reveal along the rectangle, securing and enclosing the entire pool surface.

Catching storm water

Another issue that had to be dealt with was a state regulation that requires any water runoff from impermeable surfaces be collected on site. To meet this requirement, Borst installed seepage tanks with a total capacity of 7,000 gallons to capture the run-off from the patios, roof and driveway. The tanks collect the water from drains located throughout the project and slowly release the water into the ground. This prevents rainwater runoff from affecting neighboring properties.

To create the various back yard levels, Borst removed approximately 1,000 yards of soil and several trees. Even that process, however, had a complicating twist. "Only one side of the property was accessible," Tuttle says. "All the soil that was removed had to be handled twice since dump trucks could access only a small portion of the back yard."

Tree removal and concrete placement were also restricted by the tight site conditions. A crane had to be brought in that could extend 30 or 40 feet into the backyard to enable tall trees to be topped and then removed. Concrete for footings and pool construction had to be pumped into place since concrete trucks could not get close enough for a conventional pour. "These and other site restrictions made for many challenging moments," Tuttle says.

Finishing touches

The entire project took more than a year, from initial planning, through permit approvals, site preparation and final installations.

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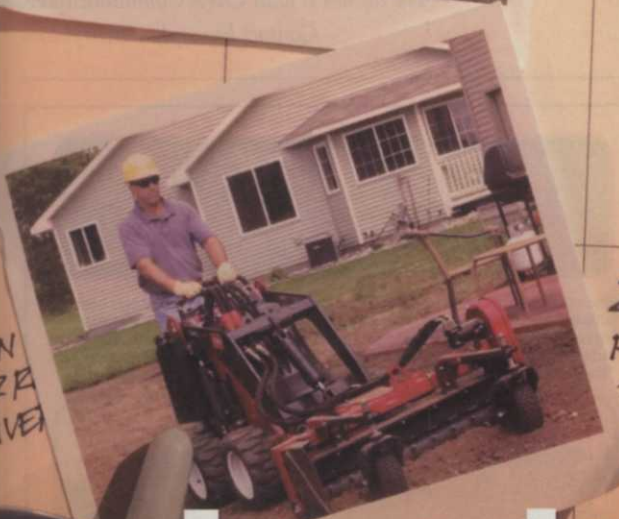


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continued from page 78

"Despite the challenges the results were outstanding," Tuttle says. "The site, although restrictive, was composed of mainly bank run soil with few large boulders or ledge rock. The winter was a mild one, enabling us to work through January and February. The clients, whom we had worked for before, were the best. Each morning they had coffee and

doughnuts ready for the crew as well as lunchtime cold cuts and soft drinks."

Every job that involves major landscaping changes requires some grading and excavation. But coping with a 15-foot difference in elevation is an unusual challenge. In this case, it was met with creativity, persistence and panache. **LM**

— The author is with Caryl Communications.
Contact her at dina@caryl.com.

Tuttle's team lowered the level behind the house by three feet. Then it dry-laid blue-stone for a wall and steps down to the patio.

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Tom Shotzbarger »

General manager, Tomlinson Bomberger Lawn Care & Landscape Inc.

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE

When Tom Shotzbarger interviews job applicants, "I like to hire 'capital D' Doers – they get the job done and deliver the results."

He poses a vexing problem to each candidate: "When given a hypothetical challenge, they have to be able to think on their feet and respond with one or more potential solutions to solve the problem," says Shotzbarger, general manager at Tomlinson Bomberger Lawn Care & Landscape Inc., Lancaster, PA.

"People who quickly convert problems and challenges into solutions exhibit a capacity to think and speak logically and proactively. This demonstrates an ability to assess challenges, move quickly to identify potential solutions and verbally express their proactive ability to achieve positive results," Shotzbarger says.

When on the job at Tomlinson Bomberger you're known as a co-worker, not an employee, and each is encouraged to reach for higher levels of professional and personal achievement. A firm believer in the benefits of ongoing education, Shotzbarger has been pursuing excellence – and generously sharing what he learns with others – throughout a distinguished career as a business manager, arboricultural consultant, horticultural

trainer, and conference speaker.

"I've been dedicated to the green industry since 1973," says Shotzbarger, 53, who started mowing lawns during the summer between high school and college. He went on to supervise several crews, graduating to sales and then sales manager, eagerly acquiring other skills along the way, such as implementing lawn care and tree care divisions at two different companies prior to assuming the GM spot at Tomlinson Bomberger in 2001. (He currently oversees 85 to 90 co-workers at the 27-year-old firm.)

"I've always been strong on education. When I started to sell in the green industry I read about 20 books on selling. When I started being a manager I read books and took courses on management," Shotzbarger recounts, noting how a "broad-based knowledge" has proven to be beneficial on several fronts.

"I have pretty good crossover skills on both lawn care and tree care," he explains. "I have all my pesticide licensing, and I want to promote certification for anyone in the green industry. You become more valuable to your employer," and in return you gain increased personal and professional satisfaction, he believes.

Invitations to conduct industry lectures keep coming in, and Shotzbarger has willingly taken the lead in chairing the Renewal & Remembrance Committee

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- Certified Arborist, ISA, (International Society of Arboriculture)
- Licensed Tree Expert, State of NJ
- CLP, CTP, CLT PLANET
- Certified Ornamental Landscape Professional, PLANET
- PA Certified Horticulturist, PLNA, (PA Landscape and Nursery Assoc.)
- Licensed Pesticide Applicator – Commonwealth of PA
- President of LCAP, (Lawn Care Association of PA)
- Board Member – Pesticide Advisory Board for the Commonwealth of PA
- Founding Advisory Board Member – Lawn Care Institute

for the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). More than 400 volunteers take part in enhancing the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery and Historic Congressional Cemetery.

"I've been involved with this for a number of years dating back to PLCAA, before PLCAA and ALCA joined forces."

While much of the onsite work is done on a Monday, Shotzbarger and a cadre of "champions" who help with preparation and supervision arrive on the previous Thursday, toiling without a hint of complaint throughout the weekend.

Shotzbarger views the exhausting endeavor as "an opportunity to give back to a revered and holy site and to give back to our veterans who fight for our freedom." **LM**

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

Editors note: This is the first in a series of profiles highlighting lawn care professionals. In addition to being top-notch professionals they also give of themselves to their communities and the industry. If you know someone worthy of recognition, e-mail us at djacobs@questex.com, and tell us why.

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Just like your garage or your attic, give your computer systems a good spring cleaning



Spring cleaning time

BY TYLER WHITAKER

March is the month of St. Patrick's Day, Easter and the Ides of March (which I'm still trying to figure out.) It's also the month for spring cleaning. OK, let's be real for a minute. If I can help

it, the only thing I'll be cleaning this spring is my computer's hard drive. With that admission, below are some tips to give your computer a speed up by cleaning and organizing your hard drive.

► **Use folders** — Organize for efficiency. Have you ever lost that important spreadsheet because you forgot where you saved it? Nothing stops that problem quicker than a good folder structure. Separate your personal files from your business files. Once you have your family vacation pictures separate from your world domination .xls files, separate your files by project or customer. Breaking down files by customer or company department keeps things clean and easy to find.

► **Remove old programs** — Computers collect all kinds of old and obsolete programs. If kept unchecked your PC will become the digital equivalent of your grandma's knick knack ridden living room. Follow this rule of thumb: Uninstall early and often. Windows provides a useful utility in the control panel for removing programs. The "Add" or "Remove Programs" tool lists give you the ability to remove them. Review this list at least once each month.

► **Clean up** — Take out the digital trash. Hopefully organizing your files will alert you to the fact that some of them can be deleted altogether. You know the files. Chances are you haven't touched these files in at least six months and may never need them. If that's the case, delete away. If you really think you might need these files, try burning them to a data CD or DVD for storage with your regular computer backups.

A great tool to use is the "Disk Cleanup Utility," found under "Start, All Programs," "Accessories," and then "System Tools." This tool will identify temporary or unnecessary files on your system and then remove them for you. Cleaning up the dead weight on your hard drive will help make the next step easier.

► **Defragment** — Fragmented hard drives will slow your computer. This occurs naturally as you add, edit and delete files on computer. Imagine your hard drive as a large game of Tetris with files broken into blocks. As files are added and deleted, these blocks are placed in every conceivable location. The Windows "Disk Defragmenter" tool, found in the "System Tools" folder, can speed up your hard drive by moving file blocks back together. Removing the "Swiss cheese" effect on your hard drive on a regular basis will also reduce the wear and tear on your hard drive.

This spring as you contemplate cleaning the garage, basement or office, stop to consider spending quality time with your computer hard drive. Keeping it clean and organized will pay dividends.

— *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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Herbicides

Drought affects most of the West and Southeast, and almost half the country is abnormally dry. Aside from obvious irrigation challenges, lawn care professionals likely will see additional pest occurrences in the absence of normal rainfall.

But there will be a few new active ingredients coming online to help thwart weed pressures.

"With the launch of some of the new herbicides coming along, we've been doing a lot of analysis with end users, and herbicides that provide a broad spectrum of control for a variety of weeds pre-emergence or post-emergence, especially when it comes to annual grasses, sedges and broadleaf weeds," says Dave Ravel, golf market manager for Syngenta Professional Products.

Turfgrass managers desire low-use formulations as well, and manufactur-

ers are responding.

"We put as much development into products from a toxicological and environmental standpoint as efficacy," says Charles A. Silcox, global turf and ornamental product development manager for DuPont Professional Products. "We screen for both very early in the process."

It's a corporate requirement at DuPont that new chemicals tread lightly on the environment, so its research pipeline consists primarily of low-use chemicals. DuPont expects to submit one such active ingredient for review and approval with the Environmental Protection Agency some time this year.

"It's an extremely interesting compound in terms of the spectrum of pests it controls, including all the major weeds and many of the difficult-to-control weeds and some grasses at extremely low application rates," Silcox says.

Bayer Environmental Science has some low-use chemicals on the horizon

as well. Its new products strive to use about 50 grams of product per acre, according to Ben Cicora, Bayer's business manager for herbicides.

Although Bayer's products aren't ready to be named, it has a post-emergent material that will have efficacy on broadleaf weeds and perhaps some grasses. This herbicide, now under EPA review, could become available in '09.

The new chemical — like many of Bayer's pipeline herbicides — are acetolactate synthase (ALS) inhibiting chemistries, says Don Myers, Bayer's product development manager for herbicides and plant growth regulators.

Another product in the pipe, expected to launch late in 2009 or early 2010 is "a very strong pre-emergent herbicide for use on warm-season turf for the most part, which is also similar to the one we will release next year," Myers says. "That one will mostly be for control of Poa, goosegrass, crabgrass

segment™ HERBICIDE

and numerous broadleaf leaves."

Dow AgroSciences unveiled penoxsulam in July; the molecule provides post-emergent control of broadleaf weeds at rates of .02 lbs. to .06 lbs. of active ingredient per acre. Dow, which will market the herbicide as LockUp, expects to introduce penoxsulam to the market in mid 2008. It's labeled for most turf-grasses, and it's the first ALS inhibitor formulated in a granule as well as a liquid.

"This active brings powerful, consistent control with residual activity and will be a good option to the old industry standbys found in favorite three-ways," Dow senior marketing specialist Mark Urbanowski said.

Toni Bucci, Ph.D., business manager for BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals, says *Poa annua* and crabgrass continue to be problems because pre-emergent products can break down. Plus, *Poa* and crabgrass are efficient and immense seed reservoirs.

To attack the crabgrass, BASF is launching a new formulation of its quinclorac product. And its new herbicide for 2008 will eliminate primarily Bermudagrass.

"We have a product called Segment that we are planning to launch the first part of this year for bermudagrass control, and in addition to that, we have a few things that are early in the pipeline that we will probably introduce in the next few years or so for harder-to-control weeds," Bucci says.

Feedback will continue to drive research and development for the next generation of synthetic weed treatments.

"We hear that lawn care professionals are battling some key weeds," Bucci says. "So we are just going to keep our eye on the ball as our research development people are looking for new formulations and active ingredients that will rise to the task."

— David Frabotta, Senior Editor,
Golfdom magazine

Monsanto

Monsanto's Certainty Turf Herbicide controls tough weeds in residential and commercial turf. Certainty Turf Herbicide is easy and flexible to use and has excellent control of both purple and yellow nutsedge. Combined with a non-ionic surfactant, Certainty Turf Herbicide attacks nutsedge through broadcast applications or spot treatments. In cool-season turf, Certainty Turf Herbicide will control broadleaf weeds, sedges and *Poa trivialis*. In warm-season turf it will control broadleaf weeds, sedges and *kyllinga*.

Contact Monsanto at 314/694-1000 or www.monsanto.com

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herbicide from BASF Turf & Ornamentals offers selective control of weed problems in centipedegrass, annual bluegrass, and established fine and tall fescue turf-grasses. Segment is the only post-emergent grass herbicide that can be applied directly to trees or shrubs at any stage of growth, even at seedling and bud break stages. The active ingredient in Segment is sethoxydim, a member of the cyclohexanedione chemical family. Segment rapidly enters grass plants through the foliage and translocates throughout the weed. This inhibits the biosynthesis of lipids in grass species, including Bermudagrass, crabgrass, goosegrass, and more than 25 others.

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Bayer Environmental Science ▶

A flowable product containing oxadiazon, Ronstar Flo from Bayer Environmental Science is a new, easy-to-use formulation of Ronstar herbicide. The product is registered for use on dormant golf course, park and athletic field turf, as well as on ornamentals and ground covers in residential and commercial properties. Ronstar Flo can be applied to both newly planted and established plants. Its use will be particularly beneficial in new, shallow-rooted landscape plantings. Ronstar Flo provides pre-emergent control of lambsquarters, oxalis, pigweed, spurge, goosegrass, crabgrass, annual bluegrass, cheeseweed, common groundsel, common purslane and other tough weeds.

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



Quali-Pro

Quali-Pro's Dithiopyr 40 WSB broad spectrum herbicide provides proven early post-emergence control of crabgrass and pre-emergence control of more than 40 other broadleaf and grass weeds including season-long control of crabgrass, goosegrass, foxtail, spurge, and *Poa annua* in established lawns, golf courses and elsewhere. Dithiopyr 40 WSB is easy on turf and with nearly 200 ornamental plants labeled for use. Compatible with liquid fertilizers and other products, Dithiopyr 40 WSB can be tank-mixed for additional application flexibility. Its low odor,

water soluble formulation makes mixing simple and its low use rates offer convenience and economy.

Contact Quali-Pro at 800/979-8994 or www.quali-pro.com

Phoenix Environmental Care

GullWing aquatic herbicide from Phoenix Environmental Care offers broad spectrum control of shoreline grass, nuisance floating aquatic plants, broadleaf weeds and brush species, and emerged vegetation in and around aquatic sites. The active ingredient in GullWing is imazapyr, a proven performer



that is effective at very low rates, and provides long-term, labor-saving control. GullWing may be tank-mixed with Avocet or Kraken aquatic herbicides to control a broad spectrum of floating aquatic plants, shoreline grasses, broadleaf weeds and nuisance aquatic brush. GullWing may be used in still and flowing water, including estuaries and marine sites.

Contact Phoenix Environmental Care at 229/245-8845 or www.phoenixenvcare.com

United Phosphorus Inc.

United Phosphorus Inc., (UPI) Surflan WDG specialty herbicide is a water-dispersible granular oryzalin herbicide for long-lasting control of more than 50 annual grasses and small-seeded broadleaf weeds. The specially formulated granular herbicide is convenient to use and is safe on more than 400 ornamentals. Surflan WDG is easily dispersed when mixed and stays in solution well. Available in 12-lb. bags, Surflan WDG is uniform spherical granules that offer higher flowability for easy pouring and measuring. And because the bags are plastic, there are no containers to rinse and recycle, and spills of this dry formulation are easy to clean up.

Contact UPI at 800/247-1557 or www.upi-usa.com

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LM Reports

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Syngenta

Syngenta's Barricade is formulated to give lawn care professionals the long residual and performance they need to keep more than 30 grassy and broadleaf weeds at bay. A single application lasts an entire season and offers the widest possible window for keeping turf



weed-free — even allowing for applications in the fall for protection against crabgrass the following spring. Available in granular, flowable and on-fertilizer formulations, Barricade herbicide's low solubility and volatility means it will stay put in the weed germination zone for optimal weed control.

Contact Syngenta at 800/Barricade or www.BarricadeGuarantee.com

DuPont

DuPont Professional Products has a robust discovery pipeline for the turf and ornamental market. DuPont first discovered the sulfonylurea (SU) class of chemistry in 1975 and commercialized the first SU in 1982. Its TranXit herbicide provides superior control of *Poa annua* at low application rates. Thanks to the active ingredient rimsulfuron, a sulfonylurea herbicide, it aids in spring transition and fall overseeding. DuPont will soon introduce a new single ingredient, non-phenoxy herbicide. Research shows that at low application rates this new chemistry will eliminate many of the toughest and most important turf weeds.

Contact DuPont at 888/638-7668 or www.proproducts.dupont.com

FMC Professional Solutions

FMC Professional Solutions' Echelon herbicide provides pre-emergence and early post-emergence control of a variety of annual grasses, broadleaf weeds and annual sedges in golf courses, sports turf, residential

and institutional lawns, sod farms and similar areas. Echelon provides effective pre-emergence control of *Poa annua*. In addition, this new herbicide also provides post-emergence control of goosegrass and key broadleaf weeds such as dandelions, curly dock and buckhorn plantain. Echelon works quickly, with some targeted weeds showing visible results within days.

Contact FMC Professional Solutions at 800/321-1FMC

or www.fmcprosolutions.com

Nufarm Turf & Specialty

Nufarm Turf & Specialty offers a number of plant protection products. Product lines include Dynamo, Nufarm's dithiopyr-containing pre- and early post-emergent herbicide, which provides season-long control of many broadleaf and grassy weeds including crabgrass. Dynamo's broad application window allows for applications to emerged weeds up to the 5-leaf stage, and is non-staining to concrete and other surfaces. Also available is Quincept, a post-emergent herbicide designed for the control of both grassy and broadleaf weeds. Quincept is effective for early-season broadleaf control or late-season crabgrass cleanup. Quincept not only performs on the toughest grasses but over 200 broadleaf weeds as well.

Contact Nufarm Turf & Specialty at 800/345-3330 or www.turf.us.nufarm.com

Dow AgroSciences

Dow AgroSciences offers Dimension 2EW specialty herbicide, a sprayable version of its Dimension herbicide. Dimension 2EW, which contains the active ingredient dithiopyr, is an innovative formulation that offers early post-emergence control of crabgrass, pre-emergence control of other grassy and broadleaf weeds, and



can now be sprayed over the top of landscape ornamentals. This new formulation provides application flexibility for almost anywhere users need it: established lawns, landscape ornamentals, golf courses, commercial and residential properties, sod farms, noncropland and industrial sites. It can also be used over the top of field-grown nursery ornamentals.

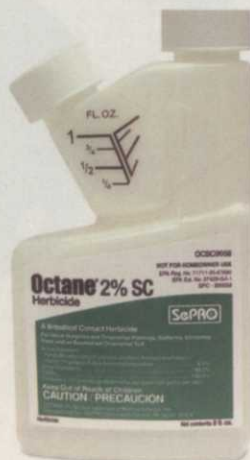
Contact Dow AgroSciences at 800/255-3726 or www.DimensionHerbicide.com

SePRO

SePRO Corp.'s Octane 2%SC contains the active ingredient, Pyraflufen ethyl, which when added as a tank-mix with post-emergent broadleaf weed herbicides, increases the speed of kill, and broadens the weed spectrum. Visual herbicidal results are evident within 24-48 hours of application. Because Octane is rainfast in only one hour,

the risk of losing activity due to inclement weather is minimized. Octane is active on broadleaf weeds, but gentle on desirable turf-grasses. Octane can be applied in rates less than 4 oz. Per acre stand-alone or 1.5 oz. per acre in tank mixes.

Contact SePRO at 800/419-7779 or www.sepro.com



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Kawasaki

Power Products



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LM Reports

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Advan LLC

Advan LLC's Eject 75WDG quinclorac herbicide offers extended post-emergence control of grassy and broadleaf weeds, including young and mature crabgrass, foxtail, barnyardgrass, clover, dandelion and speedwell. Eject may be applied just prior to or immediately after seeding, overseeding or sprigging in most situations. Other Advan herbicide product lines include: Atrazine (pre-plant, pre-emergent and post-emergent control of annual broadleaf and grassy weeds), Cavalcade (a pre-emergent herbicide for broadleaf weeds, grasses, such as crabgrass, goosegrass, *Poa annua*, spurge, purslane and knotweed) and Sim-Trol (pre-emergent herbicide for annual grasses and broadleaf weeds.)

Contact Advan LLC at 800/250-5024 or www.advanllc.com

Arysta LifeScience

Arysta LifeScience, hot off its exclusive global licensing and co-development agreement to manufacture and market a number of insecticide products for certain horticultural markets with TyraTech, is looking to expand its presence with herbicides. The company plans to submit a flucarbazone product to the EPA in April and hopes to introduce it to the market some time this year. Flucarbazone is a post-emergent grass and broadleaf control for warm and cool-season grasses.

Contact Arysta LifeScience at 866/761-9397 or www.arystalifescience.us/turf

PBI/Gordon

PBI/Gordon Corp.'s Q4 Turf Herbicide is formulated with four active ingredients: Quinclorac + Sulfentrazone + 2,4-D + Dicamba. Q4 offers a single product control option for yellow nutsedge suppression and grassy and broadleaf weed control in established turfgrass areas, and reduces phytotoxicity on cool-season grass species. It also offers the enhanced speed of a protox inhibitor benefiting the golf, lawn care and landscape markets. Grassy weeds, such as crabgrass



and foxtail will turn ghostly pale prior to the reddening which precedes weed death. Clients will see fast results, usually within 24 to 48 hours, reducing call backs.

Contact PBI/Gordon Corp. at 800/821-7925 or www.pbigordon.com

Valent

Valent Professional Products' BroadStar and SureGuard herbicides contain the active ingredient flumioxazin. Flumioxazin is a PPO inhibitor which provides broad-spectrum control and residual activity on problem weeds in containerized and field-grown ornamentals. BroadStar is a granular herbicide that provides excellent control of summer and winter annual broadleaf weeds and grasses that growers most commonly confront, including spurge, bittercress, oxalis, chickweed, groundsel and crabgrass. SureGuard is a sprayable herbicide for use on field-grown ornamentals and conifers, including Christmas trees. It effectively controls numerous summer and winter annual weeds, including chickweed, groundsel, lambsquarters, liverwort, dandelion, pigweed and ragweed.

Contact Valent Professional Products at 800/89-VALENT or www.valent.com

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When installing a new irrigation system or upgrading an existing system, it's important to consider the many system components available that can increase efficiency while maintaining healthy plant life.

Irrigation manufacturers are making increasingly efficient products that pay off monetarily — considering the long-term cost of water — and in the continued beauty and health of plant life.

Nowhere is the efficiency of an irrigation system more visually apparent than the results of proper watering on turfgrass. Generally speaking, efficient irrigation results in turf with a uniformly green color and consistent texture. With too little water, the grass gets patchy and

Spray head nozzles and rotors can compensate for poorly designed or installed irrigation systems. BY HEATHER KRAUS

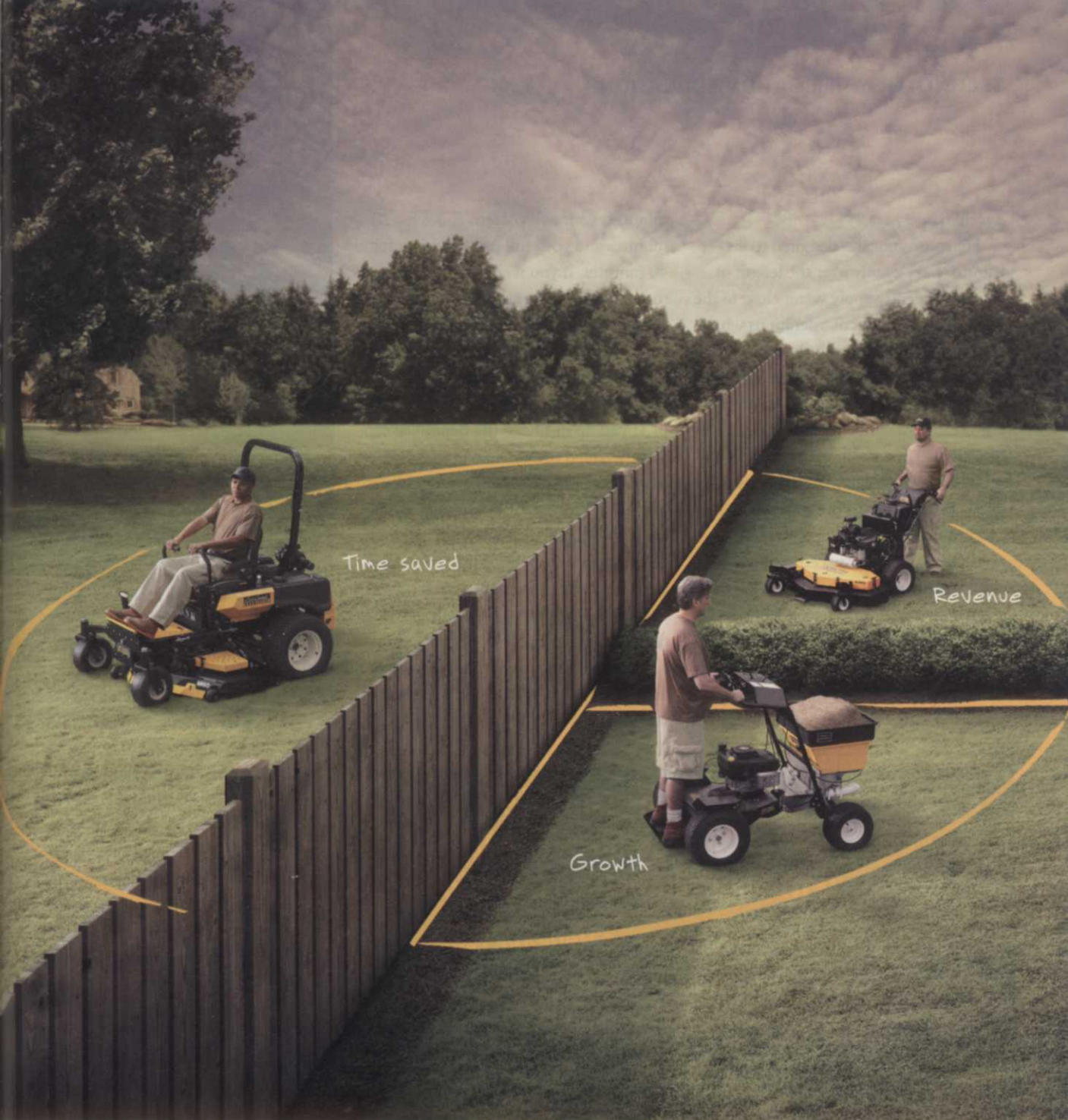
brown; water too much and you end up with soggy areas that increase the potential for harmful fungi. When an irrigation system is not designed or installed with emitting devices that cover the area with a uniform application of water, it is even possible to have both results at the same time. The products you choose will have a tremendous impact on your system's water usage and overall performance.

Spray head nozzles and rotors

Spray head nozzles and rotors designed for efficiency can often compensate for poor system design or installation. For example, a system may be designed at 30-ft. head-to-head rotor spacing. However, the as-built installation may have some rotors spaced at 28 feet and others at 32 feet. Nozzles designed to be efficient and uniform can compensate for this lack of installation precision.

In spray heads, fixed-arc-matched-precipitation-rate (MPR) nozzles are more efficient than variable-arc nozzles. Some manufacturers even offer a next-generation series of highly efficient spray head nozzles that can reduce water consumption by up to 30% when compared to conventional spray head nozzles.

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For rotors, nozzles designed to distribute water evenly over the length of throw and gently apply water close to the head are important considerations when choosing an efficient rotor line. Another equally important factor is nozzle selection that approximates matched precipitation rates. Matched precipitation can be achieved in several ways. The first and most effective way to match precipitation is to zone/valve your quarter, half and full-head patterns separately.

If your heads are spaced evenly, choose the nozzle that performs for the given distance of throw. Run half patterns twice as long as your quarter patterns and full patterns four times as long as the quarter patterns. In this instance, you would run your quarter zones for 10

minutes, your half pattern zones for 20 minutes and your full pattern zones for 40 minutes. If you were to run all your rotors for the same amount of time, you would apply four times the water on your quarter-pattern turf area than your full-pattern turf – wasting water and creating overly irrigated zones.

If you do not have the benefit of separately zoned rotors, nozzle selection is your next best solution. Manufacturers provide performance charts that are readily available through their catalogs, distributors or online. While you won't be able to achieve true matched precipitation when using different nozzle sizes, you can approximate it by choosing a nozzle for a quarter pattern that has half the flow of the half pattern it is zoned with.



Today's spray head nozzles can reduce water consumption by up to 30% compared to older style spray nozzles.

Some manufacturers sell matched precipitation rate nozzles for rotors that are easy to use across several radius and arc patterns. MPR nozzles offer particularly high levels of water efficiency by allowing sprinklers with various arcs and radii to be mixed on the same zone. Various types of MPR nozzles are available for even water distribution and design flexibility at various rotor radii.

Pressure regulating features

All irrigation systems have different water pressures. Depending on the regional water system, the system's design or the method of installation, a system may have too much pressure or varying amounts of pressure from one emitting device to the next. Nozzles work best when each spray head or rotor receives the same amount of incoming pressure. This is how to create the most precise water distribution.

When a spray or rotor has too much operating water pressure, the result is water droplets that atomize, becoming

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mist. Mist is blown away more easily by wind than a spray or rotor water droplet created at optimum pressure. The mist is blown away or evaporates, wasting water. The optimum pressure for a spray head is 30 psi. For a residential rotor, it is generally around 45 psi.

If your pressure is above these levels, consider regulating your water pressure with a pressure-regulating dial at the valve or at each spray head or rotor. Pressure regulation at the valve is better than no pressure regulation at all. However to achieve excellent results, each head should be pressure regulated. Pressure regulating stems (PRS) are available in both spray heads and rotors. A PRS is integral to the body of the spray head or rotor. The difference in performance is dramatic. Pressure regulating swing joints for larger commercial rotors are also available.

Check valves

Check valves are in the base of a spray head or rotor and prevent water from

draining out of the lowest rotor on the line. For installations where elevation differences occur between sprays or rotors, check valves are essential to prevent the flow of water downhill out of the rotor when the rotor is inactive. Water will drain out of the lowest rotor head if there is no check valve.

Water drainage out of the lateral irrigation lines can cause puddles, water flowing down sidewalks or roadways, a swampy area or even erosion around the lowest rotor. This wastes water and causes a host of other problems.

Furthermore, when lines empty due to drainage, water hammer damage can result. This weakens the system components and can cause severe damage. If your irrigation system encompasses different elevations, using a quality rotor

with a check valve will save you both time and money by using less water and preventing damage.

Quality is essential

Nothing is more discouraging than having to replace a system component due to a manufacturing malfunction or defect. Poorly performing products can damage or destroy plant life, wasting resources and costing money.

Choose a manufacturer that stands behind its product quality and has a proven track record of excellent products that can withstand both the test of time and the elements. **LM**

— The author is a product manager
Commercial Rotors for Rain Bird
Corporation. Contact her at
info@landscapemanagement.net.

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Seeking answers

BY ALLEN SPENCE

How well does 4-cycle handheld equipment fit my needs? Is it more expensive to own and operate? I was hoping to get a better understanding of this and other things regarding handheld equipment as I talked to manufacturing company reps at the '07 Green Industry & Equipment Expo.

For instance, what's behind a company's claim that its equipment is run by a cleaner-burning and more efficient 2-cycle engine than its competitors? Was there any validity to the claim? So I asked various manufacturer reps that very question. I was impressed by some answers and not so impressed by others.

First let's talk about 2-cycle technology. One major manufacturer said that because its 2-cycle engines ingested more air than was used in the combustion process, it was more efficient and released fewer pollutants in the exhaust.

This was achieved by redesigning the air intake system. It did not require a complete redesign of the equipment and was achieved with a minimal amount of the cost being passed on to the consumer.

Another company told me that it was going to use "points" gained from the sales generated by its other types of lawn and landscaping equipment equipped with cleaner burning engines to offset the penalties generated from the dirtier burning 2-cycle engines.

As far as 4-cycle equipment, one company told me that its extensive research and development developed handheld equipment that significantly reduces exhaust emissions.

Yes, the 4-cycle models are more costly than their 2-cycle counterparts, but the cost difference is made up for in fuel efficiency and other measurable benefits, claimed the rep at that booth.

Actually, all manufacturers of handheld power equipment segment are working to reduce emissions, and improve the durability and efficiency of their offerings.

But the questions that I most wanted answered are still somewhat unclear in my mind, including — How much of an impact will 4-cycle machines have on the market, and how much more environmentally friendly and efficient can manufacturers make handhelds?

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

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Bobcat compact utility tractors

Bobcat Co. introduces a line of compact utility tractors that includes the CT120, CT225 and CT230. The size (46.5 in.), agility and strength of the CT120 assist commercial landscapers and groundskeepers with a variety of tasks. A 20-hp diesel engine provides power to the CT120 and two travel speeds.

The CT225 has a 27-hp diesel engine, hydrostatic transmission and three speed ranges to help navigate difficult terrain. The CT230 has a 30-hp engine with three travel speed options. Bobcat offers implements to use with its utility tractors, including an



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Honda's iGX 440 overhead cam (OHC) general purpose engine sets a new standard for ease of use, value fuel efficiency and quiet operation. The iGX features an integrated electronic control unit (ECU) that delivers complete drive-by-wire remote control capability and controls key aspects of engine operation. The integrated electronic control unit communicates with the application to achieve optimal performance. It is suited for a range of commercial and residential power equipment applications.

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

angle blade, box blade, finish mower, post-hole digger and tine rake, as well as a front-end loader and attachments.

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Products

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Edge Artist

E-Z Trench's new Edge Artist (model EA55), equipped with a GX160 5.5-hp Honda engine and a centrifugal clutch drive, is a compact bed edger for redefining beds. Weighing only 100 lbs. and having a compact frame design, the Edge Artist is ideal for edging beds on any terrain and in tight spots. It has solid tires, preventing flats and lost



time. A carbide-tipped rotor utilizing E-Z Trench's serrated cutting design enables smooth cutting in the hardest soils.

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

Makes geese Migrate

Bird-B-Gone Inc. introduces Migrate Turf Spray, a repellent that makes grass areas unpalatable to geese and ducks. Apply by spraying it directly on grass anywhere geese or ducks cause a problem. When the geese graze, they realize the food is inedible and move on. The repellent lasts three months, and will not wash off with rain or water. Migrate Turf Spray contains a biodegradable, food-grade repellent: Methyl anthranilate, which is safe for the geese, pets and people. The product is sold by the gallon and covers 16,000 sq. ft.

Contact Bird-B-Gone at 800/392-6915 or www.birdbgone.com



Ditch Witch 250R/T locating system

The Ditch Witch's 250R/T locating system is an efficient and cost-effective method for locating and avoiding buried telephone, CATV, power, gas and water lines. Consisting of a 250T transmitter and 250R receiver, this lightweight system features intuitive controls, an easy-to-read display, and depth estimation to 15 ft. The dynamic range of the 250R/T allows it to locate even when signals are weak. Tones are derived from the actual signals radiating from pipes or cables, making it easy to distinguish the signal from background noise. The display is backlit and reinforced with a scratch-resistant coating for optimal visibility.

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

New versatility meets same optimum performance.

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

The LSS6 seeder uses Brillion's time-proven blade agitator metering system to provide accurate and reliable seed placement for a wide variety of seed sizes.

The LSS6 itself is 84 inches wide with a seeding width of 72 inches and a hopper capacity of 4 1/2 bushels.

To find out how the versatile new LSS6 Skid Steer Landscape Seeder can work for you, contact your local Brillion dealer or call Brillion Iron Works for more information.



Brillion Iron Works, Inc.
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Underhill HoseTap

HoseTap, a new hose connection device that facilitates hand watering, is now available from Underhill International. HoseTap can be used anywhere where a Toro or Rain Bird electric valve-in-head sprinkler is installed and quick couplers or hose bibs are not available. Crews can tap into an irrigation line by removing the Toro or Rain Bird sprinkler internal assembly and setting the HoseTap directly into the snap ring. HoseTap connects to a hose with a brass swivel. The body is constructed from color-coded (red or green) anodized aircraft aluminum for easy manufacturer identification and will not break nor wear like plastic.

Contact Underhill at 866/863-3744 or www.underhill.us

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Products

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New ProCore aerators

The Toro Co. introduces two new additions to the aeration line of equipment for large-scale applications, the ProCore 864 and the ProCore 1298. The 864 has eight coring heads and is 64 in. wide, and the 1298 has 12 coring heads and is 98-in. wide. Both are tractor-mount, PTO-driven units designed



for large area applications. The precision balanced coring head drive eliminates hopping, rocking and unnecessary vibration.

Contact Toro at 800/803-8676 or www.thetorocompany.com

Kobelco compact excavator

Kobelco Construction Machinery America introduces the new 17SR ACERA zero-tail-swing compact excavator. The machine delivers more digging performance and an adjustable track gauge that gives easy maneuverability in tight spaces without sacrificing stability when working. The 17SR also features a new "Smart Hydraulic System" fueled by three pumps that ensure maximum power for simultaneous lifting, swinging and travel operations as well as controllability for fine grading. The Kobelco 17SR features a 15.2-hp, 3-cylinder, Tier III-certified diesel engine. The machine has a bucket breakout force of 2,900 lbf and an



arm-crowding force of 2,158 lbf.

Contact Kobelco Construction at 888/562-5201 or www.kobelcoamerica.com

Long lasting nutrient release

KMB Technologies' polymer coated urea technology promises to extend the nutrient release of fertilizers for up to 90 days. SurfCote-N is a slow-release urea for general turf production and will be available through Knox Fertilizer distribution in the Shaw's Turf Food line for spring 2008. The Sustained Uniform Release Fertilizer technology, is a patented polymer coating that represents a

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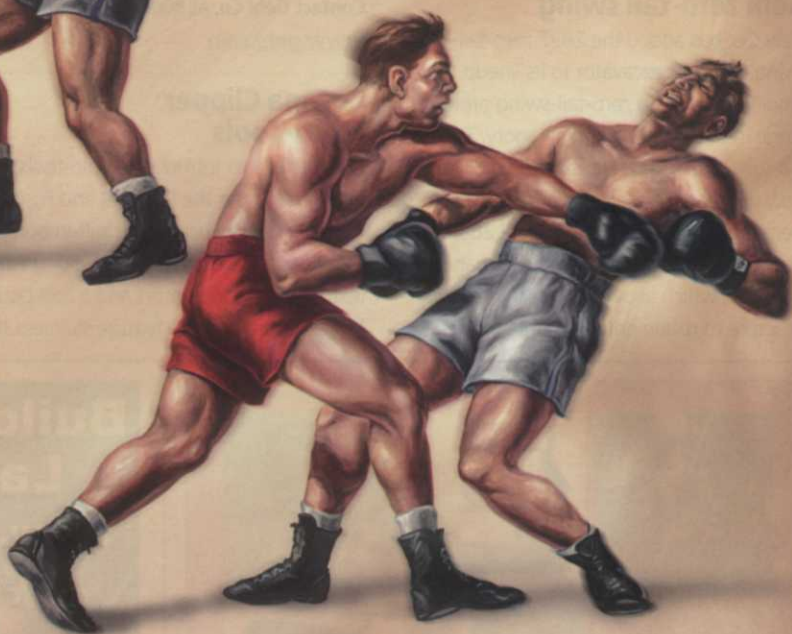
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Harmony In Growth

Products

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new era of "smart" fertilizers that will help lawn care professionals and landscaping companies improve their environmental impact as well as their bottom line. SurfCote-N also reduces the opportunity for plant burn and over application and waste of nutrients.

Contact Knox Fertilizer Co. at 574/772-6275 or www.knoxfert.com

Gehl zero-tail swing

Gehl Co. has added the 283Z zero-tail-swing compact excavator to its lineup, extending its existing zero-tail-swing product range in the lower weight category. The 2.8-ton 283Z can be transported easily on a passenger car trailer with a permissible weight of 3.5 tons. The new Gehl 283Z excavator features zero-tail-swing maneuverability, which allows the machine's superstructure to rotate entirely within its tracks.



The 283Z compact excavator can operate close to walls and obstructions without risk of contact.

Contact Gehl Co. at 800/628-0491 or www.gehl.com

Corona Clipper Multi-Tools

Corona Clipper introduces multi-tools, marketed under the Fusion 9 and Fusion 11 names. Each includes a built-in bumper for ease of use when pruning, along with a textured grip for comfort and a tool pouch for safe storage. Both feature stainless steel

bypass pruning heads and multiple implements within their handles. The Fusion 9's stainless steel implements include a bottle opener, sprinkler adjusting tool, weeder, ruler, flat-head screwdriver, point blade knife, half-serrated blade knife and a pruning knife. The Fusion 11 multi-tool's implements mimic those of the Fusion 9, with the exception of the pruning knife and the addition of a bag cutter, wire cutter and saw blade.

Contact Corona Clipper at 800/847-7863 or www.coronaclipper.com



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Case compact wheel loaders

Case Construction Equipment has re-powered the engine on its E Series compact wheel loaders with a 3.2-liter Tier III-certified Case engine. Suited for a variety of landscaping and residential construction applications, the Case 21E, 121E, 221E and 321E feature Versa-Boom linkage for excellent reach, visibility and precise parallel lift, increased bucket roll back for greater material retention, a comfortable cab and easy access to service points. The Case E Series compact wheel loaders deliver between 54- and 82-net hp. Operating weights range from 10,168 to 12,676 lbs., while bucket capacities range from 1.05 to 1.44 cu. yds.

Contact Case Construction Equipment at 262/636-6011 or www.casece.com

Cat upgrades

The new Caterpillar 938H wheel loader and IT38H with integrated toolcarrier linkage feature the Cat C6.6 engine with ACERT

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Contact Caterpillar at catrequests@cat.com or www.cat.com

FECON chipper knife tools

FECON Inc.'s new of line chipper knife tools cut 25-50% faster and use less horsepower than its standard double-carbide-tipped tools. The chipper knife holder bolts onto Fecon's Bull Hog Rotor Drum. Tools can easily be replaced with an impact wrench. Chipper knives are excellent for Excavators and above-ground mulching applications. With the addition of chipper knife tools, the Fecon rotor system can accommodate three different tooling systems — standard, stone and chipper to offer versatility.

Contact FECON at 800/528-3113 or www.fecon.com

John Deere hydraulic hammer

John Deere introduces the first hydraulic hammer exclusively designed for backhoe loaders — the new Worksite Pro HH100. The HH100 delivers 1,200 lbf of impact



energy and features a compact design that makes it easy for operators to see what they're breaking. The hammer's slim shape also allows entry into narrow places. With its long-stroke piston and low-pressure, nitrogen-charged design, the HH100 provides consistent power to get the job done with minimum recoil.

Contact John Deere Construction at 800/503-3373 or www.johndeere.com

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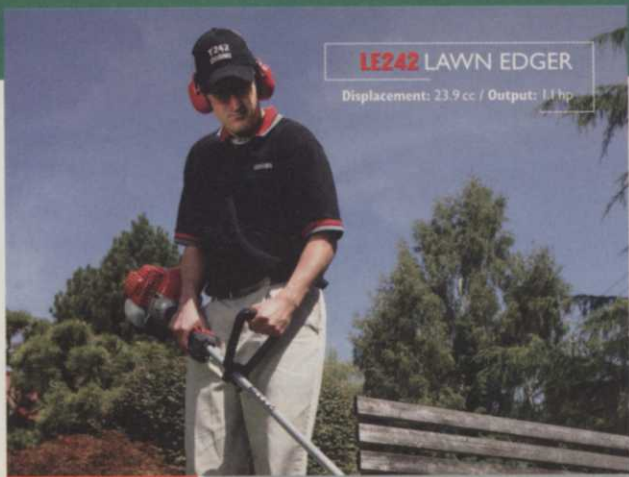
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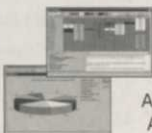
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Winners

RESOURCES

SMALL/MID-SIZED COMPANIES TO WATCH

The Green Scene

Scott Cohen has gained national acclaim, thanks to HGTV

BY HEATHER GOOCH

Eight years ago, The Green Scene President Scott Cohen was approached to participate in "Landscapers' Challenge," a Home & Garden Television (HGTV) series where three landscaping companies present their ideas to a home-owning couple, who weigh their options and go with one of the three designs. Cohen, who is a general and pool contractor as well as a landscape contractor and designer, found the experience was a great one. It didn't hurt that the homeowners chose his design.

Cohen's natural presence on camera didn't go unnoticed. He was soon chosen to work on a variety of other HGTV programs, including "Designing for the Sexes."

That one was a lot of fun, because it was a familiar issue — as a designer, you're often put in the position as a sort of marriage counselor," he says. "Ground Rules," an HGTV series where two neighbors compete to have the better yard on a limited budget, also featured Cohen and his crew.

Most recently, The Green Scene has been involved in

"Get Out, Way Out," which follows projects from conception to completion.

HGTV featured the Canoga Park, CA-based firm in two specials: "Big Splash," which counted down the "Top 10 swimming pools," featuring three of The Green Scene projects, while "Sizzling Outdoor Kitchens" placed Cohen as one of the Top 4 outdoor kitchen designers in the country.

Every time HGTV airs a program highlighting his company, Cohen notes, Web traffic, phone calls and emails soon follow. "We might get 150 emails immediately after a show airs," he estimates.

Drawings for sale

To tap into that national audience, Cohen created a separate company, Intellectual Property Sales. Its centerpiece is Fetch-A-Sketch.com: For a \$10 fee, visitors can download a rendering of a The Green Scene design that they saw on a HGTV program — or any one of the dozens of other designs on the site.

Likewise, designers with sketches lying around can upload their works to Fetch-A-Sketch.com, and when



The TV guide. Scott Cohen turned a stint on an HGTV program into a recurring landscaping role.

someone downloads a file, they get half of the fee.

"We've found that waterfalls and outdoor kitchens are among the most popular downloads," Cohen says.

Cohen uses Web technology to consult nationally. Clients send their yard's existing layout and photos. He discusses ideas with them on the phone as they watch their computer screen.

Marketing mania

Cohen notes that every moment on camera is a fantastic marketing tool, both for him and for the green industry.

If a landscaping professional is interested in pursu-

ing an on-air opportunity, he needs to look no further than HGTV.com. "Just go to the Web site and email the show," Cohen says. "They're often looking for new talent."

But even for the camera-shy, he stresses the importance of branding.

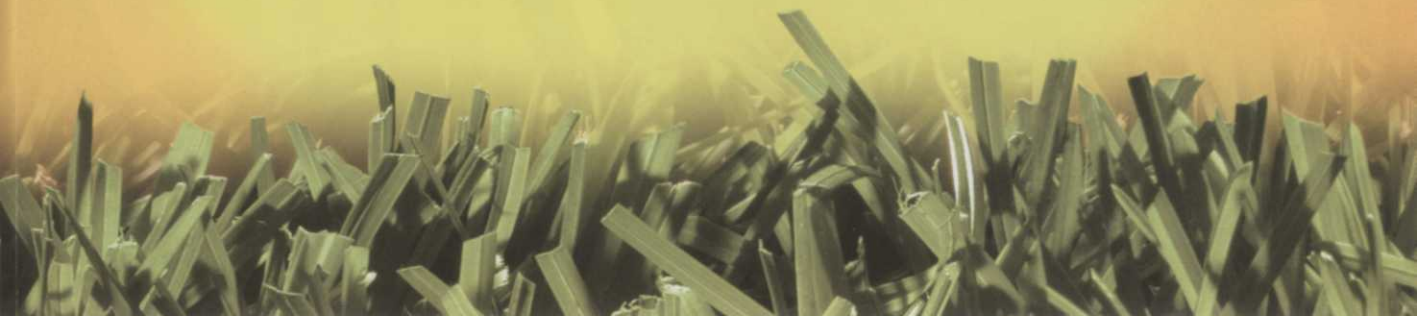
"You have to have a marketing program in place, even when you're busy and you don't think you need it," he says. "Because eventually, you'll slow down and that's when it might be too late.

"We've been busy year-round because our name is out there." **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer in the Cleveland area.

Contact her at heather@goochandgooch.com.

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