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# Contents

MAY 2008 / ISSUE #5 / VOLUME 47



## Business

OPERATIONS ► MANAGEMENT ► MARKETING

### 12 On the Record

Most of us fear things we perceive we have little or no control over.

BY RON HALL

### 16 Relationship builder

Kent Basnight is having a lot more fun now that he's given his managers the reins.

BY RON HALL

### 26 Best Practices

Work orders should itemize hours budgeted and detail materials, tools and equipment required.

BY BRUCE WILSON

COVER PHOTO BY: GLEN MCCLURE

### 28 Business Benchmarking

In my experience, low average wage rates correlate closely with lower realize rates.

BY KEVIN KEHOE

### 30 In the Know

Student Career Days, Favorable fescues, Legally Speaking, STIHL stewardship, Consumer survey, Problem Solver, Weed Man grants, People on the move

### 59 Add-on Biz: Misting systems

Mr. Mister can help clients keep their cool and the bugs away while they enjoy the outdoors.

BY JODI TORPEY



### 60 Surviving bans

Canadian LCOs adopt alternative solutions to keep clients' properties green and weed free.

BY FELICIA DANIELS

### 68 Lawn Care Pro

Rick Yates, co-owner, NaturaLawn of America of Wilmington, DE

BY JIM GUYETTE

### 70 Jacobs' Journal

Hoping to be the biggest loser: The most important prize is we will become healthier and live longer lives.

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS

### 120 Whit's World

Bucket lists are not about death. They're about changing the way we live and look at life.

BY MARTY WHITFORD



# Contents

## Design/Build

PROJECTS ▶ PROCESS ▶ CONSTRUCTION

### 72 Award Winning Landscape

Jason Osterberger Designs gives a private residence the feel of a public park — inviting the community to come and join the fun.

BY MIKE SEUFFERT

### 80 Project Portfolio

Turf Tamer creates an outdoor living space for its property owners to entertain and unwind.

### 82 Floral Front

Minimal color, max impact

BY BRIDGIT WHITE



80

## Technology

RESEARCH ▶ EQUIPMENT ▶ CHEMICALS

### 86 Warm-weather disease control

The South's prolonged heat and humidity fuel fungi growth, but also help turfgrass outgrow the damage.

BY HANK WILKINSON, PH.D.

### 92 Standing ovation

The stand-on mower continues to reach a wider audience.

BY KEN KRIZNER

### 100 Drip, drip, drip

Tips and techniques for designing or installing a drip system.

BY JEFFREY KNIGHT

### 103 Get a Grip

Certification is one way the best and brightest technicians can show pride in their profession and proudly display their skills.

BY ALLEN SPENCE

### 104 InfoTech

Create special landing pages on your site for other Web sites you are test marketing.

BY TYLER WHITAKER

### 106 LM Reports: Skid steers & compact equipment



### SPECIAL INTEREST SUPPLEMENT: SNOW & ICE GUIDE

A look at why snow and ice management pros should consider liquid deicers, how to wrap up the snow season and the latest wintertime products

43

## Resources

PRODUCTS ▶ CLASSIFIEDS ▶ FYI

### 112 Products

### 116 Classifieds

### 118 Ad & Editorial Index

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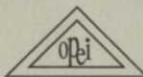
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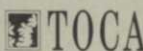
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## Perception is their reality

BY RON HALL / Editor-at-Large

**C**ruising an interstate one recent morning I glanced in my rearview mirror just in time to see the malevolently grinning grill of an SUV preparing to gobble up my smaller rented Prius. The lady driver, hardly aware of the road (or me), was busily applying lipstick. She was closing fast, and her attention was locked onto her SUV's rearview mirror.

I performed a maneuver worthy of Dale Junior in trusty old No. 8, whipsawing into another lane of traffic to escape being crushed into a bloody mass of steel and Hybrid Synergy Drive technology.

Strange, I thought to myself, how we perceive the risks of our day-to-day existence.

Are this woman and the other people I've seen blithely chatting with cell phones held to their ears as they dart in and out of traffic the same people who fear lawn care chemicals or any of the other host of perceived and largely unsubstantiated risks to their health or safety?

I have no way of knowing. But most of us tend to fear things we perceive we have little or no control over. Conversely, we don't take seriously enough real threats to our safety and our health.

How else can we explain more than 40,000 motor vehicle fatalities in the United States each year, most of them caused by carelessness and inattention? The hundreds of thousands of deaths directly attributable to cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, heart-clogging diets and other dangerous lifestyle choices?

We consciously make these choices, right? The chemical products applied to a neighbor's

landscape? That's another matter; that's out of our control, right?

This reminds me of an incident years ago involving a middle-aged woman who campaigned against the use of lawn care chemicals in her area. She maintained that every time an applicator treated a property in her upscale Florida neighborhood she became ill. She was active in her community and eventually attracted a lot of media attention.

Sure, some people are "chemically sensitive," and the right thing to do is acknowledge their conditions and adjust our services accordingly. But this woman's claims proved to be linked to perception rather than to reality.

A major lawn care company "treated" one of its client's properties near her home with water only, with the consent of the homeowner of course. No chemicals of any kind. Even so, she complained the "chemicals" applied that particular day on that particular property made her ill. Maybe it did. Perception is that powerful.

The ongoing avalanche of news reports about bans placed on lawn chemicals in Canada leads me to believe that much of public's perception of the lawn care industry there, although distorted in my opinion, will be tough to change.

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Most of us fear things we perceive  
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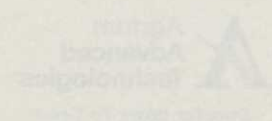


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Kent Basnight is having a

**A WINNING TEAM**

From left to right, Christian Basnight, Kent Brinkley, Kent Basnight and Chris Conner



"I used to drive people very hard and drive them off," admits Basnight, whose self-effacing smile and laid-back demeanor (reinforced by the silk, Hawaiian-style company shirts that he and his managers often wear) belie a fiercely entrepreneurial spirit.

**Changed man**

Perhaps the most-telling clue to his intensely competitive personality — more evident in the flash of his eyes than his controlled pattern of speech — is that he recently awarded the first 10-year anniversary Rolex watch to a company manager — this a mere 24 years after he founded the company. He says he will be handing out more Rolex watches in the next year or two when several other key managers mark their 10th anniversaries.

"In the beginning, I just liked hard, hard work and I did a lot of it," says Basnight. "I still work hard, but I don't force it now. And I work on different things."

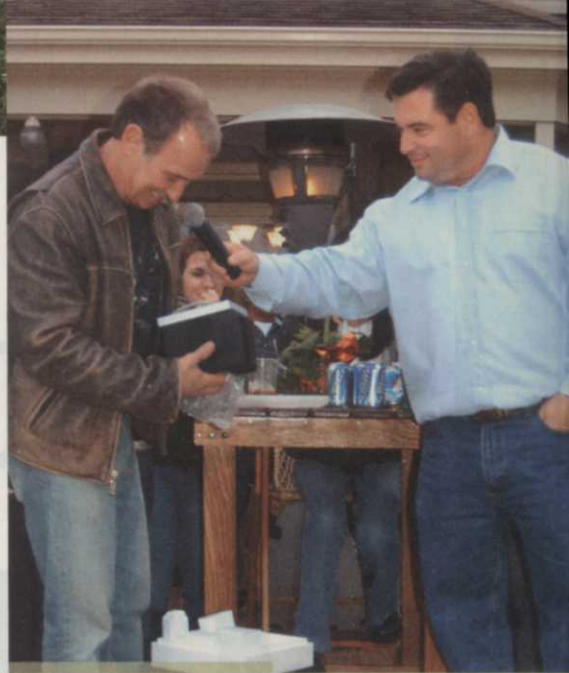
Has Basnight, not even 40 years old yet, grown soft?

Well, not exactly. "I still hold my managers and my employees accountable," he says briskly.

Case in point: When an employee recently grabbed the wrong chemical and toasted the turfgrass at a bank property and a home lawn, the company immediately repaired the damage at a cost of \$12,000. Everyone involved in the mixup ended stripping the dead

grass and prepping for the new sod. Basnight, in his evolving management style, might refer to this as "empowering" them.

This small example aside, Basnight's words ring true given the freedom his managers have interacting



**Kent Basnight, right, regularly hosts parties at his home for managers and hourly and seasonal workers.**

with clients and making decisions on their own. Gone are the days when he drove himself with hard work — as hard as he drove employees

and managers. He now directs his energies almost equally to developing and supporting his managers and employees. That is when he's not building strong and trusting business and social relationships within the communities his company serves.

**Relationship architect**

In the position Basnight has created for himself, he's as likely to be playing Wednesday afternoon beach volleyball with a community leader as he is to be discussing a construction project with a property developer. Networking and socializing within metropolitan Hampton Roads seem to fit Basnight's personality, a lifelong resident of the region, as barbecue to pig.

Basnight's knowledge of the market, visibility and the seemingly ubiquitous presence of his company's brand in the region are huge competitive advantages, he says. This is especially true in regard to the national and large regional landscape companies that battle Basnight Land & Lawn for projects and properties.

"To be successful in this business you have to build relationships," he says in somewhat of an understatement given his incredible schedule of meetings and appointments during the work week.

"You have to be involved in your community. You have to get to know and enjoy interacting

*continued on page 20*



**At a glance**

**Headquarters:** Chesapeake, VA

**Founded:** 1985

**President/Owner:** Kent Basnight

**Key managers:** Chris Conner, COO; Jon Lucas, CMO; Yazmar Martinez, HR Manager; Lori Cox, Office Manager; Ryan Baker, Sales Manager; Christian Basnight, Sr. Salesperson/Designer; Greg Thompson, Maintenance Production Manager; Jeff Steadman, Maintenance Q&A Manager; Marcus Mignat, Maintenance Sales; Kent Brinkley, Sr. Landscape Architect; Jason Baines, Landscape Architect; Rich Henock, Landscape Production Manager; Bob Gurkin, Landscape Production Manager

**Employees:** 120 fulltime; 130 seasonal

**Markets:** SE Virginia and NW North Carolina

**Services performed:** Landscape Division; Landscape Architecture Division; Grounds Maintenance Division

**2007 Revenues:** \$12.5 million





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*continued from page 18*  
with a lot of people," he says.

That involvement includes an active participation in regional professional associations, including sponsorships and donations of materials and services for a variety of charitable events. His company is always in the forefront in assisting with community projects, often enlisting the creative talents of Jon Lucas, the company's jack-of-all-trades director of marketing.

**Parade of customers**

Even so, Basnight closely monitors the quality of work his company does, and is obsessive about exceeding customers' expectations. The firm's landscape production foremen take digital images of every step of major projects. Landscape crew leaders and area managers take almost as many images of the properties they maintain. The images document the progress of projects, and help maintain quality control. But they're also used to provide a record of fun employee events and to build employee morale. Each seasonal worker gets a "Yearbook" to take home with him at season's end. The company has been remarkably successful in retaining these employees.

The incredible scope of Basnight Land & Lawn's services mirrors its motto of "Mother Nature's Outdoor Contractor." They include virtually everything involved with improving outdoor properties.

This particularly soft morning early last fall, Basnight is driving us through Homerama 2007 in



Armed for **service** on site

You would never mistake one of the small offices in the front of the 32-ft. Basnight landscape maintenance trailers for a corporate VP's office. But it can be just as productive.

Walled off from the equipment section of the trailer, each office is equipped with a small table, a microwave oven and an air conditioner. Power is supplied by a small gasoline generator located on the tongue of the trailer.

Field supervisors use the offices to complete their daily paperwork. In addition to a tiny office, each maintenance trailer contains two 52-in. and one 36-in. Wright Stander mowers, four backpack blowers, three stick trimmers and an assortment of common equipment maintenance and repair parts.

Basnight's managers and sales personnel rely upon more high-tech communication and job documentation tools. They travel with cell phones and laptops, complete with wireless cards that allow them to access the company's terminal server 24/7. This greatly speeds access to jobsite data, allows them create proposals/estimates while in the field and to promptly respond to emails from clients. And since their trucks are equipped with printers, they can provide clients with estimates at the time of visits. —RH



the upscale development known as Edinburgh.

Homerama is the Tidewater Builders Association's annual Parade of Homes,, which Basnight Land & Lawn supports.

As we slowly cruise through the exhibit of homes, enjoying warm breezes through the SUV's open windows, Basnight comments on the decorative pavers, wallstone and the colorful ornamentals (supplied by Eagle Bay Hardcapes and John Deere Landscapes, respectively) that his employees installed to beautify the huge headquarters tent.

This 2007 parade of 17 custom homes in Edinburgh is just 15 minutes from his office. The portion containing the Homearama is the second phase of the residential development. Eventually, it will contain more than 250 homes

tucked around five small lakes. Miles of walking and biking trails wind through the property and await the new homes and owners.

*continued on page 22*



Landscape Architect Jason Baines, left, worked with Brian Rowe in beautifying The Retreat, an upscale, age-in-place development.

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Doug Fuller refers to Basnight as his "partner" on the ambitious Edinburgh residential development.

*continued from page 20*

Basnight's company installed and also maintains the common grounds at Edinburgh. The entrance, which his company put in two years ago, is neatly trimmed, the grass freshly mowed and rows of Knock Out roses are ablaze in red. Basnight points out residential landscapes that younger brother Chris Basnight, a top salesman, and several other experienced managers installed. They put in one of the landscapes in a single 24-hour period, a favor for a builder in a time crunch.

"We had 14 guys on the job for 14 hours. They were even working under lights," says Basnight smiling as he recalled the project and the effort put in by managers Rich Henock and Joel Windham. "We should have filmed it. It was a great job."

### On the grow

"I remember when Kent (Basnight) started out in a pickup truck," says Doug Fuller, Precon Development, and one of the partners in the Edinburgh project. "To have done what he has done so far is fabulous."

To Fuller anyway, it doesn't seem that long ago that Basnight was a one-man operation. Basnight himself still laughs at the memory of the Hobie Cat sailboat trailer he retrofitted with a wood deck so he could haul a Sears lawn tractor and a Weed Eater trimmer to jobs. A high school student, he pulled the makeshift outfit, behind a 1966 Pontiac Star Chief—that is when he was finally old enough to drive legally. (He still has and takes loving care of the Star Chief.) Fuller describes the relationship he has developed

with Basnight as more of a partnership.

"His successes have been great for us, as well. All I do is tell him what we need and he converts it into a plan and then a reality," says Fuller.

Meanwhile, several miles away, Jason Baines, one of Basnight's talented landscape architects, oversees the final touches on the landscaping at a 45-acre, "age-in-place," planned community known as The Retreat. It features a mix of housing unit, all within walking distance of an elegant clubhouse, pool and patio. Basnight's 5-year-old in-house Landscape Architecture Division designed the project, which won a prestigious award.

"Our residents are very much attuned to landscaping," says Brian Rowe, of Weldenfield of Virginia, one of the principles in the 192-unit project. Rowe says he has been working with Basnight Land & Lawn since the late 1980s, and especially appreciates its ability to take a project from initial conception and planning to construction to ongoing maintenance.

"This is a lifestyle community," Rowe says. "These are not just condo units; this is a way of life and the well-maintained landscape grounds are important for the owners."

While Basnight Land & Lawn has two similar residential developments in the works, the company is shifting its emphasis toward commercial development, which seems to offer more opportunity in 2008, Basnight says.

So what does Basnight, still an intensely competitive young man, see in the future for his company?

Short-term he sees a greater emphasis on maintenance in light of slowing construction, which arrived in the Hampton Roads region later than most other markets in the United States. While Basnight says his company still has a healthy backlog of construction, it's less than it was this same time last year.

In the long-term, the continued growth of his company will depend more on the desires and efforts of his managers than upon his own.

"We will take this company as far as the managers and people who work here want to take it," Basnight says. "My job is to empower them, to stretch them and to support them. But the future of this company is up to them." **LM**

**WEB EXTRA**  
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ORNAMENTAL

Work orders should itemize hours budgeted and detail materials, tools and equipment required.



## Enhance your margins

BY BRUCE WILSON

**E**nhancement work offers great opportunities to make additional monies on landscape maintenance contracts. Most companies generate at least 25% enhancement revenues in relation to their contracts. Unfortunately, most firms do not spend enough time managing enhancement work properly and end up with disappointing margins.

There are several keys to managing enhancement projects successfully. First, your account managers must have good relationships with their clients. They should serve as trusted advisors to customers, having proven their value in these roles by consistently being proactive and successfully executing maintenance contracts.

They should be creative in making sure they recommend enhancements that add value to customers' properties, deal with safety/security issues and solve problems on the sites.

Account managers also must be aware of the fine line between making valuable recommendations and overcharging customers to generate extra billings.

Price usually is not a big issue in enhancement work if the clients have money in their budgets; so most companies are able to obtain adequate pricing.

However, many companies struggle with making desired margins because of the difficulty in coordinating smaller-sized enhancements. Small construction/enhancement jobs easily run over their allotted times if everything is not well coordinated.

Sometimes, enhancement jobs are single-day tasks, so even small missteps can require unbudgeted second days of work.

Usually, a variety of things go into enhancement work, so systems must be put in place to ensure crews have the correct materials, tools and equipment and the work is done systematically. Many problems stem from not having the right supplies and equipment on time, requiring second and third trips to job sites.

Employees selling enhancement projects should be required to fill out detailed work orders. These enhancement work orders should itemize hours budgeted for the jobs and detail the materials, tools and equipment required.

A preprinted list of available materials, tools and equipment should be on the work order forms so the people who sold the jobs can complete the checklists long before the enhancement work commences. This way, your crews will be less likely to forget something mission critical.

The work orders also should include site photographs, especially of areas to be improved, so enhancement crew foremen can get the "big picture" at least a few days before the work begins.

A well managed and organized enhancement department can add great value to your maintenance operation. Want to bolster your enhancement business, customers relationships and productivity? Simple: Plan your work and work your plan.

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



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# Business Benchmarking

BUSINESS THE PRODUCERS

In my experience, low average wage rates correlate closely with lower realize rates. A good factory isn't the cheapest factory.



## Leverage your labor

BY KEVIN KEHOE

# H

ow efficient is your labor? Gross margin alone won't tell you. There is only one financial ratio that captures this information neatly: the labor leverage ratio. Just as important, the labor leverage ratio directly affects your multiple, which drives your business valuation. The higher the ratio is, the higher your multiple.

Efficient manufacturing operations generate earnings for their buyers well into the future. Think

of your crew as the equivalent of a manufacturing factory. The primary difference — and the scary reality — is your “factory” drives into the distance every morning and the manufacturing guy's doesn't. You hope your producers (a) return safely in the afternoon, and (b) work efficiently all day.

Buyers like efficient factories because they maximize revenues in relation to fixed costs. How efficient is your portable production plant?

The labor leverage ratio provides a measure of the leverage you have turning production payroll dollars into revenue dollars. This ratio can be calculated for each revenue stream in your business.

However for our purposes here, and for most prospective buyers, the blended labor leverage ratio will suffice.

The labor leverage ratio calculation is “realize rate” divided by “average wage rate.” The realize rate is revenue dollars earned (less job material and subcontractor expenses) divided by total labor payroll hours. The average wage rate is labor payroll dollars, including payroll taxes, divided by total labor payroll hours. Total labor payroll includes all payroll dollars for foremen and laborers. See the accompanying “Labor Leverage Sample” table to see how we do the math.

The two areas of your business that most affect the labor leverage ratio are your pricing/estimating and your field management systems. Get these in order and watch the ratio — and your business valuation — increase.

The best way to raise your labor leverage ratio is to increase your realize rate, not lower your average wage rate.

In my experience, low average wage rates correlate closely with lower realize rates. A good factory isn't the cheapest factory. It's the best factory with the optimal arrangement of people and machinery that can maximize throughput and output.

Because labor is your primary input, every manager should pay close attention to their business unit's labor leverage ratio to maximize profits and opportunities and have a great story to tell prospective buyers.

— The author is the owner-manager of Kehoe & Co.

Contact him at [kkehoe@earthlink.net](mailto:kkehoe@earthlink.net).

### LABOR LEVERAGE SAMPLE

Total revenue	1,000,000
Materials	100,000
Labor	325,000
Subcontractors	50,000
Payroll taxes	30,000
Direct cost	505,000
Gross profit	495,000
Hours	27,000
Realize rate	\$31.48
Average wage rate	\$13.15
Labor leverage ratio	2.39

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# In the Know

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NEWS YOU CAN USE



## PLANET's 32nd Student Career Days was biggest ever

**A**CWORTH, GA — This year's PLANET Student Career Days in Acworth, GA, on March 27–30, boasted the highest number of teams in the event's history. Sixty-five college teams, including 950 students, participated in 25 individual and team competitions including tree climbing, paver installation, plant identification, sales presentation, exterior/interior design, irrigation troubleshooting and equipment operation, to name a few.

The competition, conducted by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), included awards to individual winners and teams.

In an exciting turn, the host school, North Metro Technical College, unseated Brigham Young University-Idaho to take first place in the overall competitive events. However, BYU still made a strong showing, with the school's Provo campus placing second and the Idaho campus third.

Matthew Early of North Metro Technical College (Acworth, GA) earned the top individual spot, but seemed

more excited about his team's win: "We just wanted to place in the top 10. We thought that if the whole team came together we might be able to pull it off."

Students received scholarships and award money; PLANET gave away more than \$70,000 in scholarships through its PLANET Academic Excellence Foundation. In addition, the on-site Career Fair offered students the opportunity to interview with Green Industry companies for full-time positions and internships.

"This year's attendees are probably the best prepared and most professional students that I've ever seen," said Jennifer Buck of Next Level Network and chair of this year's event.

The event was equally successful for more than 100 companies that participated. "Overall it was a fantastic experience," said Ross Fletcher, president and owner of Hemlocks Landscaping, Jasper, GA. "Seeing the level of talent coming into the field made me really proud to be a part of the industry. We had 150 kids who were interested in interviewing with us. You can't do better than that."



For a complete list of winners, visit [www.StudentCareerDays.org](http://www.StudentCareerDays.org).

[CLIPPINGS]

## Deere begins skid steer battle

MOLINE, IL — John Deere Construction & Forestry has launched [www.skidsteersmackdown.com](http://www.skidsteersmackdown.com), a Web site that showcases head-to-head contests between Deere and competitor machines. "Skidsteersmackdown.com" is a highly interactive site featuring the competitions captured on video, a discussion forum, buying information and more. The site's interactive components allow users to compare Deere machines to other units. The videos can then be rated, commented on, and shared with friends and colleagues.

## ValleyCrest buys Concepts in Greenery

CALABASAS, CA — ValleyCrest Cos. acquired Concepts in Greenery, a landscape services company based in Stuart, FL. Founded in 1993 by Dan Steinberg, who manages the company with partner and co-owner John Rose, Concepts in Greenery has achieved steady growth and market presence, providing landscape maintenance and installation services to a large and loyal customer base along the Southeastern coast of Florida.

## Case opens customer hotline

RACINE, WI — Case Construction Equipment launched its Customer Assistance call center, designed to handle customer inquiries on all Case product lines. The toll-free number, 866/54CASE6, is staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST.



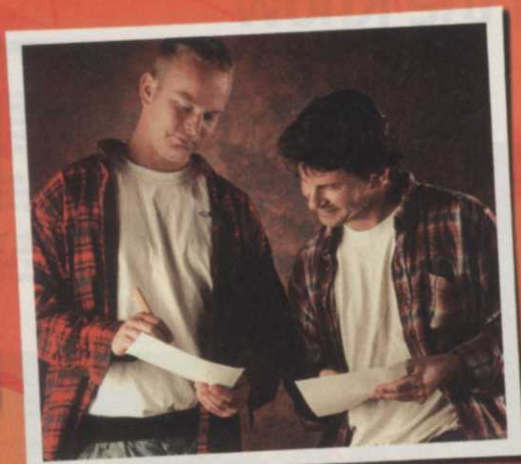
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DAY	START	LUNCH	END	JOB SITE	WORK DONE	HOURS
MON	7:00	1/2	3:30	Brentw.		8
TUE			3:30			8
WED			4:00	↓		8 1/2
THU			4:00	Crestv.		8 1/2
FRI	↓	↓	4:00	↓		8 1/2

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



**Reality?**

**Employee Time Card**  
Displays the total time worked by each employee

**Mountain View LANDSCAPE**

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

Jobsite Name	Cost Code	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Total
Brentwood Job	Irrigation	7:38	7:35	7:53	-	-	23:06
Crestview Job	Planting	-	-	-	7:58	7:49	15:47
		7:38	7:35	7:53	7:58	7:49	38:53

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

Bill Kemp  
Bill Kemp



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PHOTO BY: LARRY KASSELL



Dr. Karl Guillard from the University of Connecticut, at one of the four fescue test sites.

## Fescues getting favorable environmental attention

BY RON HALL / Editor-at-Large

**STORRS, CT** — An ambitious program investigating the potential for turf-type tall fescues and fine-leaf fescues to play a greater role in conserving water and preserving its quality is getting high marks in Connecticut.

What researchers are learning about these two species in regard to producing acceptable-quality lawns and parks with less irrigation and fewer nutrient inputs (compared to other popular cool-season grasses) is attracting favorable attention from state and regional environmental agencies. The name of the program is Fescue to the Rescue.

Dr. Karl Guillard, professor of Agronomy at the University of Connecticut, is one of the researchers involved in the project.

"The goal of the program is to show how fescues can produce acceptable lawns and other turfgrass areas with less inputs, such as irrigation and nutrients," says Guillard. "The goal is to conserve water and to reduce nutrient runoff and leaching, which helps protect the state's valuable water resources."

Tall fescue, a bunch-type, cool-season grass, burst upon the turfgrass scene about 30 years ago when breeders began developing lower-growing varieties that possessed finer leaf blades and darker green colors than previous varieties. These new varieties are referred to as turf-type tall fescues. In the past 25 to 30 years, turf-type tall fescues (and varieties of a related species, fine-leaf fescues) have become popular lawn grasses from the mid-south northward.

The Fescue to the Rescue program demonstrates, in comparison to other popular cool-season turfgrasses, fescues:

- ▶ Are more drought tolerant and require less frequent watering;
- ▶ Are more tolerant to shade;
- ▶ Require less fertilizer;
- ▶ Are tolerant to low soil pH;
- ▶ Maintain greenness during the summer;
- ▶ Retain quality at higher mower levels;
- ▶ Have high salt tolerance.

The program is supported by the Oregon Tall Fescue Commission and the Oregon Fine Fescue Commission, as well as the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

## IA launches Nursery and Floriculture interest group

**FALLS CHURCH, VA** — The Irrigation Association launched a new common interest group (CIG) to provide a platform for nursery and floriculture stakeholders to discuss shared issues. The nursery and floriculture industries represent a total of 500,000 acres of plant production and about \$9.5 billion in annual sales. The new CIG provides a forum to define and promote irrigation best practices and provide training.

[CLIPPINGS]

## Brickman buys Stiles Landscape

**FORT LAUDERDALE, FL** — The Brickman Group has agreed to buy Stiles Landscape Co., a division of Fort Lauderdale-based Stiles Corp. Stiles launched its landscape division 25 years ago. It has locations in Tampa, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Fort Myers and Orlando. The transaction will allow Stiles to focus on its core real estate development services and Brickman to substantially expand its presence in Florida.

## Davey grows with 5 new offices

**KENT, OH** — The Davey Tree Expert Co. continues to grow with acquisitions in Albany, NY; Orillia, Ontario, Canada; and Portland, ME, and by expanding its residential/commercial services operations with new offices in Chicago and Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. "These cities offer excellent growth opportunities for our company," said Karl J. Warnke, president and CEO.



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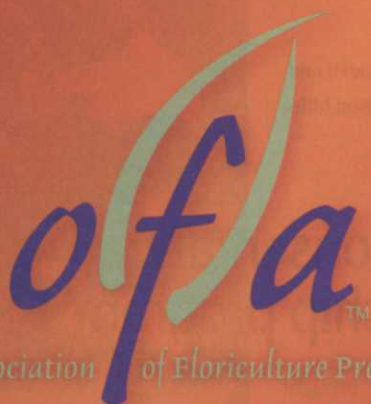
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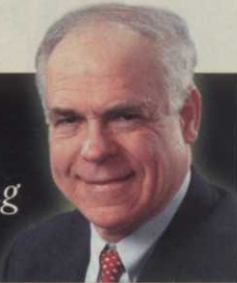
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# In the Know

## LEGALLY Speaking



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

**Q** A customer claims pesticides I use give her headaches. How can I assure her this isn't possible and protect myself from lawsuits?

**A** Standard practice should include leaving behind literature (labels and technical bulletins, etc.), which describe the characteristics of your pesticide. Contact the manufacturer for its most recent literature or handouts. Also, contact the manufacturer's technical representative to find out whether the product can cause headaches and under what circumstances.

Confirm you applied the product correctly according to the label, and let her know. Every application should have a ticket or document recording the product, rate of application, area treated, etc. If the product has been applied in the correct manner, you have preserved the right to tender any claims (i.e., lawsuits) to the manufacturer.

If other customers have similar complaints and you are sure you have applied the product correctly, you probably need to stop using that pesticide until the manufacturer has satisfied you that these complaints can't be caused by the product.

With your attorney's assistance, develop a standard service agreement to be signed between you and each of your customers. A properly drawn agreement sets out the parties' rights, the details of the product to be applied, etc.

Kenneth D. Morris is a Philadelphia-based attorney with more than 30 years corporate and law firm experience. Contact him via [www.kennorrislaw.com](http://www.kennorrislaw.com).

**Note:** The above should not be interpreted as offering legal advice in any jurisdiction where such practice is not authorized.

Chuck Leavell and his grandson Miles



## STIHL leads conservation and stewardship program

LITTLE ROCK, AR — STIHL Inc. brought together two of the outdoor industry's most renowned experts — P. Allen Smith and Chuck Leavell — for the filming of a television series at Smith's Garden Home Retreat near Little Rock, AR.

Leavell, who is a noted conservationist and runs a Georgia tree farm, shot to fame as the keyboardist for such legendary bands as the Allman Brothers and the Rolling Stones. Smith is the author of the best-selling Garden Home book series and is considered one of the foremost gardening experts in the country.

More than 70 local schoolchildren spent the day gardening with Smith and were treated to an outdoor piano concert by Leavell, as well as a reading of his award-winning children's book *The Tree Farmer*, in which a grandfather teaches his grandson how to

responsibly care for the land.

"We're delighted to welcome Chuck Leavell to the Garden Home Retreat," said Smith. "He is a kindred spirit and exemplifies all the values we put into the Retreat: He's at the forefront of conservation and responsible stewardship. We both work to bring care and respect for the land to future generations."

"There's no better way for children to learn about the earth than to be outside, working with it," said Leavell. "We hopefully gave them a sense of what they can personally do to make it a better place."

STIHL, a sponsor of Smith's endeavors and the official handheld outdoor power equipment for both his television shows, has worked with Leavell on conservation issues for more than 10 years.

## Poll shows consumers need lawn care help

YONKERS, NY — Sixty-four percent of consumers think a neighbor has the best lawn on the block, according to a poll conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. But lawn envy should be no surprise since 45% of respondents spend less than three hours per week doing lawn and yard work.

 The full report on lawn care equipment and service providers is part of the May 2008 issue of *Consumer Reports*, available at [www.consumerreports.org](http://www.consumerreports.org).

"Our poll found that 39% of consumers said that a perfect lawn raises property values or boosts curb appeal," said Peter Sawchuk, project leader at Consumer Reports. Among the other poll findings:

- ▶ 79% rarely or never use hearing protection
- ▶ 38% never water their lawns
- ▶ 28% believe they have the best looking lawns on their blocks
- ▶ 26% would prefer less lawn and more flowers, rocks or native landscaping
- ▶ 24% have been injured while mowing
- ▶ 12% said they drink beer while mowing

24%

of homeowners have injured themselves while mowing



## Four less reasons to think about global warming.



Each variety in the Heat Tolerant Bluegrass Series has been specifically bred to tolerate heat and humidity well beyond traditional bluegrass regions. These bluegrasses all provide a beautiful appearance and show excellent brown patch and shade tolerance, yet each has characteristics all their own. They

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**BEFORE**  
HERBICIDE  
APPLICATION

**Issue:** This is what the Norway Spruce looked like on a Friday afternoon. Everything looked normal. When we arrived on Monday morning this is what we saw (after photo) at the base of many of the same trees. Note the twisting growth of the needles and branches.

**The cause**

Damage around the base of the plant, the quick damage and twisting growth of the needles for me was an indicator that some kind of growth-regulator type herbicide had been applied. Checking with the property manager, we found out that a broad-leaf herbicide had been applied to the turf on Saturday morning when it was fairly windy. Obviously, some of the spray had drifted onto the lower branches of the trees.



**AFTER**  
HERBICIDE  
APPLICATION

**Aftermath:**

At this point there is very little that can be done except have a fierce conversation with the applicator. The best action is really no action. Allow time for the sprayed areas not too severely damaged to regrow, and then prune out the dead branches. You might also consider expanding the mulched beds to keep the turf farther away from the base of these trees to reduce the same problem from happening again.

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

## Weed Man launches student grant program

**SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO** — College students who dream of owning their own businesses some day now can do it faster thanks to a grant program offered by Weed Man. The lawn care company is offering \$10,000 grants toward franchise ownership to students enrolled in horticultural or other Green Industry college degree programs.

Weed Man's Student Entrepreneur Grant program was unveiled at this year's Student Career Days in Atlanta, March 27-30. The three-day event is sponsored annually by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET.)

"A good percentage of students in the Green Industry would ultimately like to become owners or partners in landscaping, lawn maintenance or lawn care com-

panies," said Mike Richard, Weed Man's marketing coordinator. "That's because it's the surest way to financial success in our industry. Weed Man wants to help students achieve their goals sooner."

The grants represent one-half the cost of a single franchise territory. Richard explained that students have options for obtaining the remaining financing including partnerships or third-party financing.

"In the Green Industry it's common for parents and children to become partners in their businesses," Richard said.

If students prefer to learn the Weed Man business model before taking the plunge into ownership, the company has options for those individuals as well. Summer internships and two — to four-year apprenticeships also are available.



Weed Man also offers students a four-year apprenticeship-ownership incentive program. Students learn the Weed Man systems while accumulating up to \$20,000 toward a Weed Man franchise.

"The earning potential in lawn care is huge. The students taking advantage of Weed Man's funding programs have a good chance of being way ahead of their peers in the long run," Richard said.



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# **YANMAR**

# In the Know

## People & companies



**Sipcam Agro USA, Inc.** and **ADVAN, LLC** appointed **Andy D. Lee** as chief executive officer.



**Trent Caldwell** joined **Aquascape, Inc.** as a senior territory sales manager in the Southern region.

**Hunter Industries** promoted **Steve Abernethy**

to executive vice president of sales and **Gregory Hunter** to executive vice president of marketing.



**ValleyCrest Companies** appointed **Jonathan Wyman** (above, left) as vice president of business development and **John Page** as director of business development.

**Robert J. Schlegel**, chairman and CEO of **Pavestone Company, L.P.** based in Dallas, has been awarded membership into the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans.

**Gehl Company** appointed **Ed Delaporte** to the position of vice president of information technology.

**Tom Batt** has joined the executive leadership team at **Hines Horticulture** as the vice president of sales and marketing.



**Austin Edmondson** (above, left) and **John Johnson** have joined **The Fockele Garden Company** as sales directors.



**Chuck Whealton** has joined the team at **Ruppert Nurseries** in a role created to build on his industry knowledge and strengths.

**The Scotts Company** added **Lisa Koonts** as its marketing services specialist.

## Scotts appoints Richard Shank as chief environmental officer

**MARYSVILLE, OH** — The Scotts Miracle-Gro Co. appointed Richard Shank as chief environmental officer. Shank will oversee the implementation of environmental stewardship and corresponding governmental affairs initiatives.

Shank succeeds Rich Martinez, who was named to the newly created position of vice president, North America Sustainability. Martinez's new role will focus on ensuring consensus of sustainability and environmental goals across all of the company's business operations and functions.

"Environmental stewardship and sustainability are critical components to our business," said Jim Hagedorn, chairman and CEO.

Shank previously served as executive director of the Ohio Chapter of the Nature Conservancy and director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

On the heels of the hirings, Scotts launched an integrated campaign to educate homeowners about water conservation and the environmental benefits of healthy turf. Through its new \$30 million campaign, the company will educate homeowners about the environmental benefits of lawns and introduce Scotts Turf Builder Water Smart fertilizer.

## Jason Cupp named PLANET president

**HERNDON, VA** — The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) named Jason Cupp president. Cupp served as the president-elect since November 2006, and replaces Jim Martin, CLP, of James Martin Associates in Vernon Hills, IL.

Cupp will head the PLANET board under a new governance structure that reduces the number of board members from 23 to 15.

"The goal of the new PLANET board will be much more strategic than operational," Cupp said. "We will focus more on issues impacting the industry including economic and labor challenges."

Cupp is the CEO of Highland Outdoor, Olathe, KS.

"I am proud to be elected president of the nation's leading Green Industry association," Cupp said. "The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) has built tremendous momentum moving the green industry into the future, and I look forward to the opportunity to continue that progress in the coming year."



Jason Cupp

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**One Tough Animal**

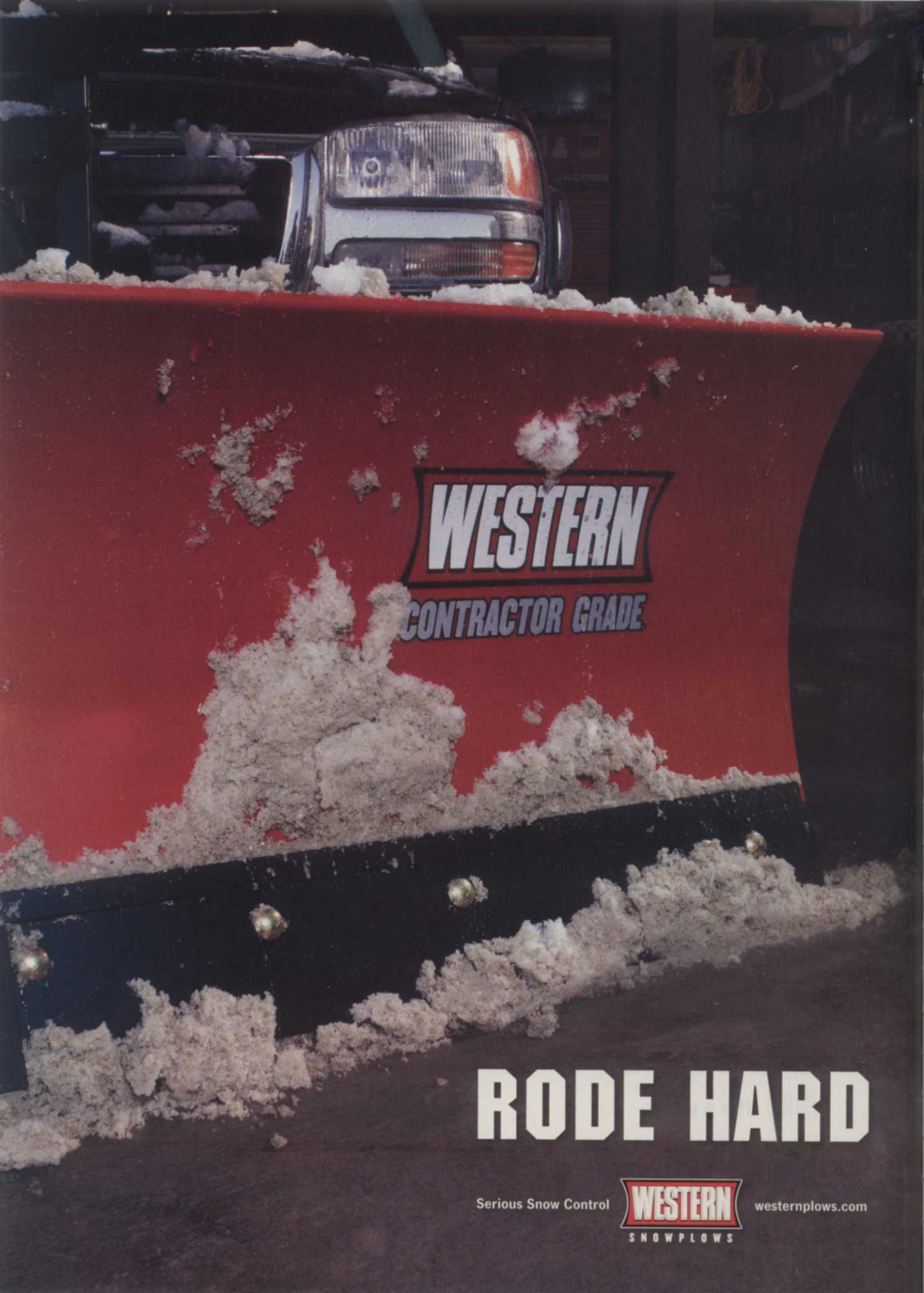
# SNOW & ICE GUIDE

## INSIDE

**45** Liquid deicers

.....  
**50** It's a wrap

.....  
**54** New products



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# Why you need liquid deicers

Snow and ice management pros finally are figuring out that liquids are great for their clients' properties and for improving their own bottom lines

BY RON HALL / Editor-at-Large

**N**ow is the time to explore adding liquids to your snow and ice management programs. Your clients will be delighted with what liquid deicers can do for their properties. But you'll even be happier with how they can boost your reputation and your company's bottom line.

The use of liquid deicers is one of the fastest growing trends among snow management contractors. But, keep in mind they're never meant to melt snow. They're designed to keep snow and ice from bonding to pavement. Think of Pam keeping eggs from sticking to frying pans.

Liquid deicers do away with hard-packed snow and ice, and make plowing and shoveling faster and cleaner. They create safer conditions faster, reduce the likelihood of slip-and-fall claims and cut the amount of salt you use.

There are several liquid deicers on the market. They do basically the same thing, but they're different enough that you should do your homework before making a big investment in product. (Tip: Talk

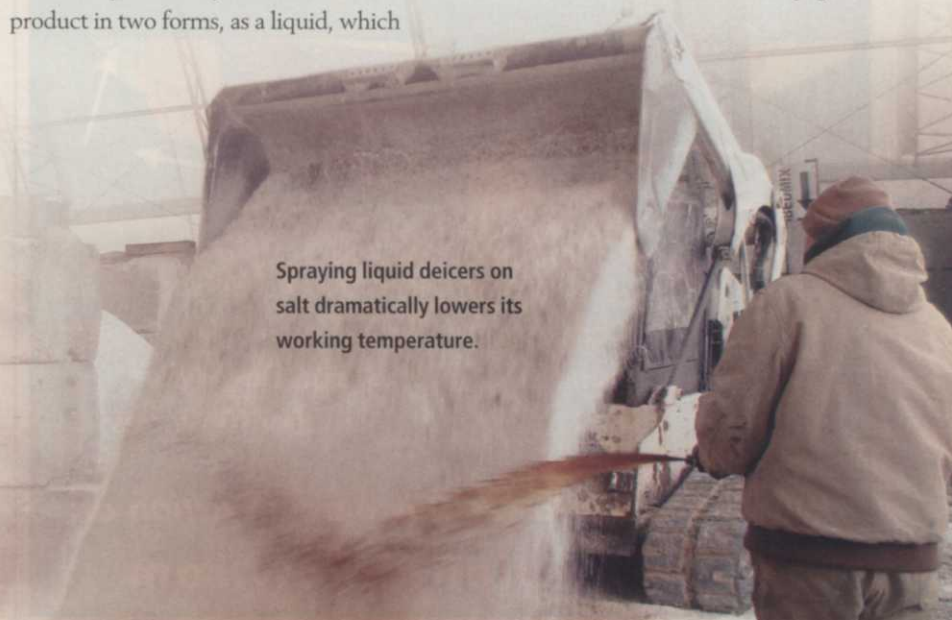
to the mechanic at your local municipal or highway department that's been using liquids. He'll give you the inside scoop.)

Veteran snow contractor Darren Rafferty, CSP, Darren Rafferty Inc., Clark, NJ, has been using a product sold as Magic Minus Zero — a sugary mixture of agricultural byproduct, magnesium chloride and condensed distiller solubles — for the past three years. He uses the product in two forms, as a liquid, which

his trucks spray onto clients' corporate properties prior to snow or ice events, and by spraying the liquid onto rock salt (8 gals. per ton of salt) to lower the working temperature of the rock salt from 18 F. to -35 F.

"Say it's going to snow tonight," explains Rafferty. "We will spray the product (liquid) on the properties of our accounts anytime prior to the snow event as long as the temperatures are right (See "Follow the rules" sidebar, pg. 50.) When we come in to do our snow removal, there won't be any hardpack, and we will hit it again with our treated salt. So when we plow or shovel it off, we won't need to use a lot of salt or deicer later because

*continued on page 48*



Spraying liquid deicers on salt dramatically lowers its working temperature.

Spraying a liquid deicer before a winter event makes plowing a snap.



continued from page 45  
the pavement will be clean underneath.”

Rafferty began investigating liquids after the property manager of a corporate client, still in sticker shock

over paying \$60,000 to clean the carpets and floors of his facilities, asked him to investigate alternatives to the rock salt and calcium chloride he was using.

“The problem was that the calcium

leaves a white chalky residue tenants and employees tracked it into the building,” Rafferty says. “We discovered Magic Salt, and it solved the problem.”

Since then, Rafferty has incorporated liquid deicers into all of his accounts. “We’ve reduced our usage of chlorides tremendously,” he says.

Each of the several liquid deicers available to snow management contractors has its benefits depending upon conditions, says John Parker, CSP, Taconic Maintenance, Poughkeepsie, NY.

Sugary liquid products made from agricultural by-products generally work better in heavy wet snows, which are common in the Northeast. Products made of calcium or magnesium chloride work very well in dry, light snows, like those that often occur in the Rockies and the West, Parker says.

Don’t jump into making a choice, Parker advises. Do a lot of research and talk to other users. These products are becoming popular, and the amount of information about them is growing fast.

Parker says the investment is modest compared to the results you’ll enjoy in terms of reduced salt use, faster and more-efficient service and fewer equipment repairs. (Some of these products are non-corrosive and, in some cases, actually inhibit corrosion.)

Here’s what you’ll need to get started and an approximate cost breakdown:

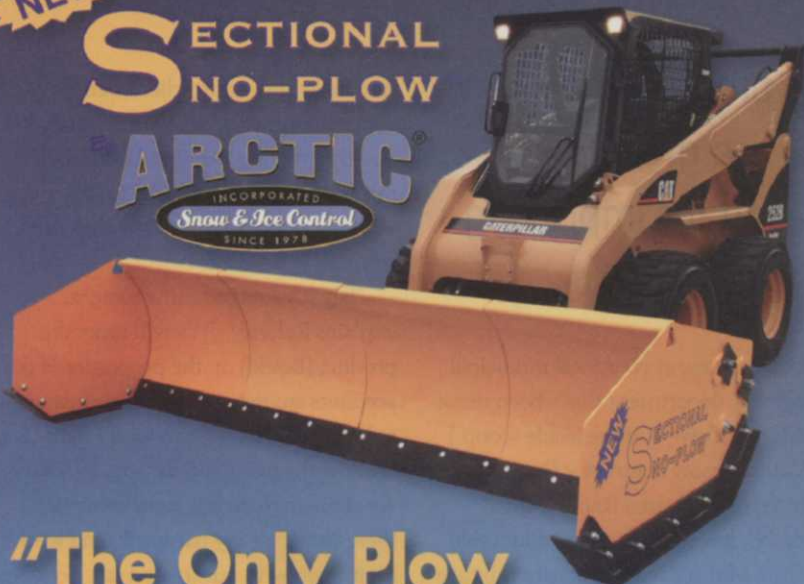
- A storage tank for the liquid that can hold enough liquid for several snow events, perhaps a 3,000-gal. tank. You don’t want to be driving 50 or 60 miles to get more liquid as a storm approaches. *Cost: \$1,300.*
- Plastic fittings and hoses on the tank to make filling the sprayer on your truck fast and efficient. *Cost: \$300.*
- Transfer or trash pump. The “in” and

continued on page 48


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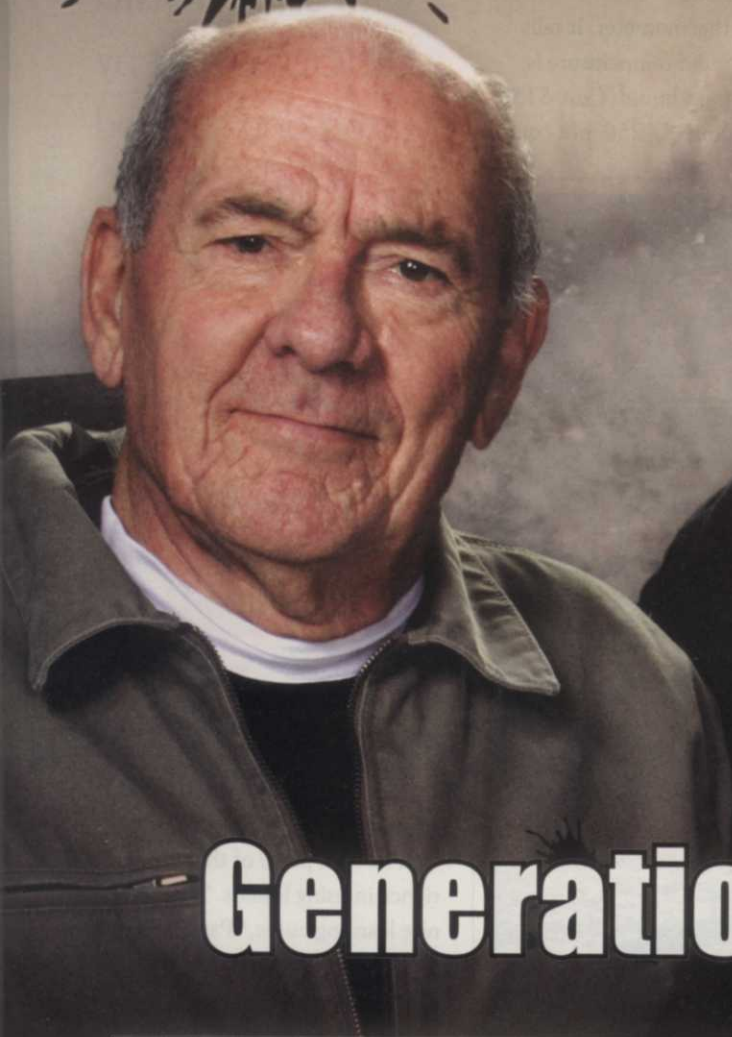


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# SNOW & ICE GUIDE

continued from page 46

"out" openings should be at least 1.5-in. in diameter so you can fill up fast and get going. Cost: \$1,000.

■ 500-gal. truck-mounted spray tank

system. Cost: \$4,500

■ infrared laser thermometer. It tells you what the ground temperature is, critical when using a liquid. Cost: \$150.

Total cost: about \$7,250, not count-

There's a definite learning curve with using liquid deicers. Start by using one sprayed onto salt.

— John Parker, CSP  
Taconic Maintenance



ing the cost of the product itself.

The final piece of the puzzle is experience in using liquids. "There's a definite learning curve," Parker adds. "Start by using one sprayed onto salt and then progress to using the deicers as a spray." As you gain experience you will learn to read conditions better and reduce the amount of liquid you're using for most snow or ice events.

Don't forget safety. Even a half-full 500-gal. tank of liquid in the bed of a truck changes its driving characteristics markedly. And, obviously, that tank spray system has to be secured to the truck, and not just by a couple of straps.

Finally, make sure the liquids you decide to use are permitted in your region or on your accounts. Educate your community and your clients about liquid deicers, and their many advantages. **LM**

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Our 8-foot blade expands to 9'3" in the BUCKET BLADE™ scoop mode while their 8'2" V-plow shrinks to 6'9". And only POWER PLOW fully-angles in this scoop position for even more snow carrying capacity when pushing around corners or other obstacles.

POWER PLOW is also much better at windrowing. Angled forward, the leading wing directs more snow into the moldboard—eliminating spill-off while effectively using the entire blade width.

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Simply Genius



## Putting an end to **SNOW** season

Take these eight steps to recognize a season well done and to look forward to the next one. BY PHIL HARWOOD

**S**uccessfully managing a snow operation is almost a year-round process. Even though spring is upon us, we cannot forget about the snow season until we wrap up the previous winter season. While there are many obvious wrap-up procedures, such as cleaning equipment, let's focus on the critical procedures often overlooked or neglected.

**1 Host a recap meeting.** The most important internal wrap-up procedure is to convene a snow recap meeting with key team members, including operations management, account managers, key administrative staff and select field team members. The purpose of this meeting is to identify all concerns and areas of success. These are the areas of opportunity for the next snow season.

Any action taken that solves problems or reinforces successful aspects of your snow and ice program will improve its overall successfulness. This meeting should be held while the season is still

fresh in everyone's mind so that important details are not forgotten.

This pow-wow needs to result in specific action items, accountabilities and deadlines. It also should be conducted in a manner that is conducive to generating honest, candid discussion, including complaints, ideas and suggestions.

**2 Recognize your workers.** Like any service business, the quality of people determines the level of a snow removal business' success. However, it is an all-too-common practice to give more attention to snow and ice management equipment, processes and contracts than to our employees.

It is absolutely essential to evaluate the individual performance of team members, provide detailed feedback and reward high achievers. A banquet at the end of each snow season is an ideal forum for recognition, rewards and thanking all team members for their hard work.

Furthermore, it is helpful to identify any gaps with recruiting,

hiring, assignments, training and managing our people.

**3 Review snow contracts.** Revisions often are required to more effectively minimize risks, clarify expectations, comply with legalities, etc. Both sales contracts and subcontract agreements should be critiqued in detail at this time.

The urgency of this procedure is because legal advisors might need to be consulted, and there might be several iterations of changes before they are finalized. Because this can be a fairly slow process, getting an early jump helps ensure these documents are ready to go for the next season.

**4 Revise estimating and pricing models.** While these models should not be dramatically altered simply because of one odd winter, slight adjustments might be necessary to maintain accurate estimating and pricing systems.

In many areas of the country, extreme weather conditions and shortages of materials drove up costs. New assumptions will need to be made about how these factors impact estimating and pricing models for the upcoming season.

**5 Identify equipment needs.** Some types of snow equipment, especially large and specialized machinery, have significant lead times required for planning, research, decision-making, financing, ordering and outfitting.

Also, if decommissioned equipment is going to be sold, there is no reason to delay turning it into cash and getting it off the books.

*continued on page 50*



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Plowing driveways in a full size pick-up with an 8-foot plow can be a challenge. That's why we engineered the Meyer® Drive Pro™ to be a lightweight, commercial grade plow designed to provide optimal maneuverability in tight residential settings. The 6'8" steel moldboard, professional grade hydraulics and angling rams, when combined with today's most popular ½ ton and light pickups and full size SUV's, is the perfect size for snow professionals that concentrate on plowing driveways or small condo complexes without sacrificing performance or ruggedness.

So the next time things get tight, look to the Meyer Drive Pro – The Small Plow with the Big Attitude.



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continued from page 50

**6 Do a marketing critique.** An analysis of what worked in your marketing program and what didn't is an essential step. This review should include both quantitative and qualitative metrics. If quantitative metrics are not available, this presents a huge opportunity in itself. All marketing initiatives can be measured to some degree with effective planning and execution. Without data, you might be wasting money.

Successful marketing initiatives must be evaluated before blindly repeating them. A promotional event, for example, might not be successful two years in a row without dramatically remaking it to keep it fresh and relevant. A successful mail campaign, however, might be a winner that deserves to be fully funded or even expanded in the future.

Marketing materials take time to plan, create, print, etc. The earlier we get a jump on this area, the better. August will be here before we know it.

**7 Talk with customers.** Whether an individual or a company, every customer requires our attention — even at the end of the season. Too many snow contractors disappear after the last snowfall, lie dormant all summer, and then resurface in the fall. Instead of hibernating all summer, remain engaged and visible to customers.

One often-overlooked procedure — and a great way to remain visible — is to conduct post-season site inspections. The May issue of *Snow Business* magazine ([www.snowbusiness.net](http://www.snowbusiness.net)), *Landscape Management's* sister publication, contains a comprehensive review of this important procedure.

It might be neither possible nor worthwhile to inspect every site and

## SIMA Symposium ready to roll

**BUFFALO, NY** — If you provide snow and ice management services or you're considering adding them to your landcare business make plans to be here June 18-21 for the 11th annual Snow & Ice Symposium. The Symposium is the Snow & Ice Management Association's (SIMA's) biggest event of the year featuring more than 20 educational sessions and 60,000 sq. ft. of snow and ice management products and equipment at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. Here is the schedule for the Symposium:

### TUESDAY, JUNE 17

Noon — 5 p.m., Registration

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

8 a.m. — noon, University of Buffalo  
Snow & Ice Management Facility Tour  
12:30 p.m. — 2:30 p.m., Conference  
Committee, Communication Committee, Education Committee meetings  
2:30 p.m. — 4:30 p.m., Editorial Advisory Board, Certification Committee, Membership Committee meetings  
4:45 p.m. — 6:15 p.m., CSP Exam Study Session  
6:30 p.m. — 7:30 p.m., General Membership Meeting  
7:30 p.m. — 10 p.m., Welcome Bash

### THURSDAY, JUNE 19

8 a.m. — 5 p.m., Registration  
8:00 a.m. — 9:30 a.m., Keynote Session, "Building the Dream Workplace," by Mark Mayberry, the Mayberry Group  
9:45 a.m. — 11:15 a.m., Concurrent educational sessions  
11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m., Snack & Chat Lunch; Exhibitor Luncheon  
12:30 p.m. — 6:30 p.m., CSP Exam

1 p.m. — 5 p.m., Trade Show

7 p.m. — 10 p.m., Awards Banquet

### FRIDAY, JUNE 20

7:30 a.m. — 3:00 p.m., Registration  
7:30 a.m. — 8:30 a.m., Snack & Chat Breakfast  
8:30 a.m. — 9:30 a.m., Keynote Session, "Businesses that Don't Do Business. People Do Business," by Christine Corelli, Christine Corelli and Associates, Inc.  
9:00 p.m. — 1:30 p.m., Trade Show  
1:45 p.m. — 3:15 p.m., Concurrent educational sessions  
3:30 p.m. — 5 p.m., Concurrent educational sessions  
5:15 p.m. — 6:30 p.m., Pre-Dinner Reception

### SATURDAY, JUNE 21

9 a.m. — 10:30 a.m., Concurrent educational sessions  
10:45 a.m. — 12:15 p.m., Concurrent educational sessions  
12:30 p.m. — 2 p.m., Snack and Chat Lunch  
2:15 p.m. — 3:30 p.m., Concurrent educational sessions



For the complete list of events and educational sessions please visit [www.sima.org/](http://www.sima.org/)

meet with each customer, but there are certainly some accounts that deserve this level of attention.

**8 Touch base with subcontractors and vendors.** These constituents have a significant impact on our operations. By ensuring all loose ends are tied up at the end of the season, your relationships with these key players remain strong and you can limit surprises in the fall.

A quick phone call or cup of coffee with an important subcontractor or

vendor goes a long way.

Putting the snow season to bed is not as simple as putting the snow and ice equipment and supplies away. There are important, if not critical, procedures that should be incorporated into our snow operations now to enhance our success for seasons to come. **LM**

— The author is owner of Pro-Motion Marketing LLC and has more than 20 years of management experience in the Green Industry. Contact him at [www.pro-motionmarketingllc.com](http://www.pro-motionmarketingllc.com).

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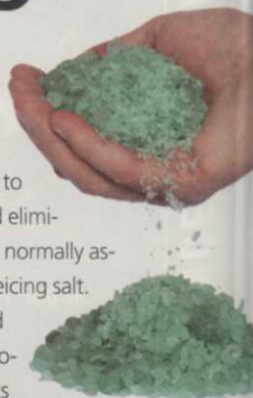
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Contact Daniels at 847/426-1150 or [www.danielsplows.com](http://www.danielsplows.com)

*continued on page 56*



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# SNOW & ICE GUIDE



continued from page 54

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# Add-On Biz

BUSINESS

EXTEND YOUR BUSINESS

## Misting systems

► Mr. Mister helps clients keep their cool.

BY JODI TORPEY

A scouting trip to Phoenix led to a lucrative add-on business for landscaper Scott Kopplinger of Broomfield, CO. While scanning the area for attractive landscape designs, he noticed the large number of misting systems homeowners used to cool their sunbaked backyard patios.

"As a native Coloradan, I wondered why I wasn't seeing similar systems in Colorado. We're a high desert, and we get 100-degree days here," he says.

Kopplinger, owner of Ironwood Landscape and Design, did some research and discovered a market for professionally installed outdoor misting systems along Colorado's Front Range. In 2002, he started installing these cooling systems under the business name Mr. Mister ([www.mrmisterfog.com](http://www.mrmisterfog.com)).

Misting systems use a process called flash evaporation to produce cooling. Flash evaporation occurs when water is pressurized to 1,000 psi and forced through special nozzles that break water

molecules into billions of droplets. When these droplets evaporate, the surrounding air temperature drops by as much as 30 degrees.

### Getting started

Kopplinger said it was easy to add misting systems to his landscape business because there was no initial investment or up front cost. After attending a half-day training session at Fogco Systems' (manufacturer of the system he uses) Phoenix headquarters, he was ready to start installing systems.

"It's a snap together system," he says. "There is some electrical work for the pump and some general plumbing work. It's similar to installing an irrigation system. Installers can buy the parts wholesale and sell them retail, usually at a 30% to 50% markup."

Kopplinger said large residential misting systems need only 10 to 20 nozzles and use less than one-half gallon of water per hour, per nozzle. That's not much water compared to the six gallons used each minute during the average shower. He was so pleased with the Fogco System ([www.fogco.com](http://www.fogco.com))

that he became the wholesale dealer for the Rocky Mountain region. Now he's getting more calls for the misting system than he is for the landscaping side of his business.

"There are endless ways to use a system," he says. In addition to cooling, misting systems repel flying insects and help reduce pollen, dust, smoke and other airborne pollutants. Systems installed in a greenhouse help ensure humidity levels. Misting systems also are an effective method for controlling unpleasant odors.

### Other markets

While cooling is the ideal use for misting systems, Kopplinger said "mistscaping" is increasing popular. Any backyard can be turned into a foggy tropical rain forest by strategically placing nozzles throughout the landscape.

"When fog is added near a water feature or swimming pool it creates a dramatic visual effect, especially when combined with a lighting

system," he says.

One challenge to promoting misting systems is educating customers on the low amount of water the system uses. Timers also can be used to conserve water.

"Water use really depends on the number of heads," he says. Even for a large misting system, there's no more than 15 gallons of water used per hour."

Kopplinger knows all about setting up large systems. Last summer he installed a misting system to cool the grandstands at the Cheyenne Frontier Days rodeo. The stadium was the first in the country to be misted, and it required 360 heads and three pumps. Now that's really cool. **LM**

— Jodi Torpey is a Denver-based freelance writer. Contact her at [info@landscapemanagement.net](mailto:info@landscapemanagement.net).



# SURVIVING BANS

**M**ore than 135 municipalities throughout Canada have passed bylaws phasing out the use of certain pesticides from residential yards, parks and areas of turfgrass within their jurisdictions. The march goes on as officials in Ontario and British Columbia consider province-wide bans similar to the provincial ban already in effect in Quebec. (Strangely, these bans do not apply to golf courses.)

Canadian lawn care operators (LCOs) typically are less concerned with defending blacklisted products and more concerned with continuing to serve their customers, says Chris Lemcke, technical coordinator of Weed Man USA.

"Our company, over the past 10 years, has probably put a million dollars into stopping bylaws. It's tough to go to meetings every night and defend something you're not the manufacturer of," Lemcke says.

But that's exactly what many companies have done for more than 27 years.

Canadian LCOs adopt alternative solutions to keep clients' properties green and weed free.

BY FELICIA DANIELS



## In the beginning

The Canadian lawn care industry's long battle against pesticide

prohibition began in 1991 when the Hudson, Quebec, community passed a bylaw banning the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. The bylaw exempted golf courses and agriculture, so the lawn care industry had to fight alone for the right to use outlawed products.

The Hudson bylaw, upheld by the Canadian Supreme Court, has encouraged more than 100 other municipalities to follow with restrictions of their own. So, companies like Green Lawn Canada decided to change their approaches to lawn care. Instead of struggling against the strong anti-pesticide tide, they're working with it.

"Some [bylaws] are more workable than others, but all have changed the way you run your business," says

Gavin Dawson,  
regional technician


*continued on page 62*


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*continued from page 60*  
manager for Green Lawn.

Some ordinances have changed the way Canadian lawn care professionals handle even minor work like ridding a garden of weeds.

"The most restrictive bans don't allow you to spray weed control. When you don't have any product to spray — and that's what most people call lawn care companies for — it makes things more challenging," says Dawson, who has seen the chemical bans gain strength during his more than 20-year tenure with Green Lawn.

If it's any consolation, at least Lemcke, Dawson and others are facing the same product limitations in a market in which no one has a "magic bullet answer."

"We just want a product that's safe.

Whether it's organic or synthetic, if we're allowed to use it, we'll use it," Lemcke says.

Weed Man has used the restrictions as an opportunity to expand its "go green" services and to get creative with lawn care solutions.

Lemcke insists that Weed Man has been following Integrated Pest Management (IPM) protocols for years. Put simply, IPM is the management of pests only when their presence results in unacceptable damage to turfgrass or other landscape plants.

"When we were allowed to use traditional products, we only used them when necessary," Lemcke says. "We're a long way from spraying five times a year whether or not you had a pest or weed infection."

#### New solutions

The company also has begun using new products. Weed Man will be one of the first companies in Canada using the registered biological herbicide brand name Sarritor, according to Lemcke. The product is based on technology developed by Dr. Alan Watson from McGill University. The active component in Sarritor is sclerotinia minor, a naturally occurring fungus native to Canada, which can effectively control dandelions and other broadleaf weeds.

"We're trying to be as innovative as possible when dealing with the bylaws and pesticides. It's a learning curve, adjusting your business to fit the needs of your customers," Lemcke says.

Meanwhile, Green Lawn has taken

*continued on page 64*



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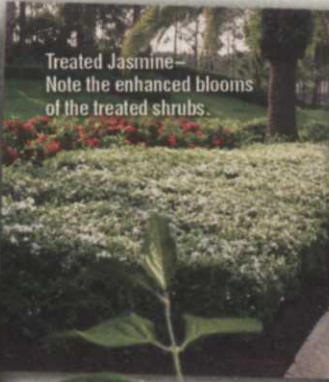
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continued from page 62

manual and preventative approaches to serving their customers in the absence of quick chemical fixes.

"There are not a lot of non-synthetic pesticides in regard to weed control, so the only real alternative often is hand-pulling weeds," Dawson says. "If there were more natural products that worked better to resolve insect and weed problems, most of us would spend that money to use the products. Right now, those are limited in availability."

So, Dawson and his team try to educate their customers to be more rigorous about horticultural practices. Since they can't use chemicals on residential lawns, Green Lawn promotes services like compost topdressing and seeding. The goal is to build a turf resist-

ant to most pest or weed problems.

"These are services we've always offered, but since we can't spray away these problems, we have to focus on the alternatives," Dawson says.

Though his company has acclimated, Dawson has seen many businesses in the industry not adjusting as well to the changes. He says some of the "less scrupulous companies" have resorted to using their own unregistered products.

"You have a market that demands something, and you have a regulatory system that doesn't permit it, so you have a company trying to fill a need," he says. "It's my hope that the professionalism in our industry doesn't suffer because of this."

Still, some lawn care professionals have thrived in the wake of the restrictions.

## Green Lawn promotes compost topdressing and seeding services.

"The bylaws don't really affect us because the work we do pretty much follows those anyway," says Sarah Mocon, a landscape designer for Green Bloom Lawn and Landscaping. "The whole thing is hypocritical, but we're all trying to be a little bit nicer to the environment."

### The cost of going green

Canadian lawn care professionals are finding various ways to work around the

continued on page 66

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The Chemical Company

continued from page 64

bans, but a big concern is delivering services that will cost significantly more because of the higher cost of natural weed and pest management products.

"There is a higher cost to going

organic. We try to pass some of the costs down to the customers, but we know you're going to lose some customers at some price points," says Lemcke, adding the majority will pay the extra cost.

Through surveying, Green Bloom has

found its customers also are willing to pay a little bit more for services they feel are better for the environment, Mocon says.

"People should look at the bylaws as an advantage to their companies. It's just more room for us to grow," she says.

Other industry insiders such as Dawson are not as quick to believe customers want to rid the world of synthetic products.

"The market did not stand up and say, 'We want a ban or bylaw.' Politicians did that," he says. "Customers want nice-looking lawns. They want them green and weed-free."

Lemcke fears that the polarizing language will give his clients the erroneous impression that "natural" products are safe. This is not always the case.

"When I tell someone we're providing insect control with a chemical, they often hesitate. But if I say we're using a 'natural' product, they give it an OK. It could be 10 times more toxic [than the chemical], but as soon as I say 'natural,' their questions stop," he says.

"The bylaws attempted to mitigate potential dangers, but it actually shifts the use to the homeowners, which is probably not in the direction you want to go if these chemicals are actually as dangerous as perceived," Dawson says.

The concerns are enough to motivate some professionals in the lawn care community to work with the government to improve regulation — even though they have adjusted their services to fit current bylaw restrictions.

"If anyone asks me what I think about the bylaws, I give my opinion," Dawson says. "Personal opinions aside, it's about picking your battles." **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer finishing her Masters Degree at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. Contact her at [fed415@gmail.com](mailto:fed415@gmail.com).



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# Lawn Care Pro

BUSINESS

LM'S OPERATOR OF THE MONTH



## Rick Yates »

Co-owner, NaturaLawn of America of Wilmington (DE)

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE

**F**or Rick Yates, co-owner with his wife Kathi of the NaturaLawn of America franchise in Wilmington, DE, being able to assist members of the military serving overseas brings immense personal satisfaction.

"This is the second season that we are participating in (Project EverGreen's) GreenCare for Troops," Yates reports.

"Last year, we provided free lawn care for 12 families in our area that had a family member serving in the Middle East. Right now, we have nine new families lined up for this season and hope to find three to four more in the near future.

"When I first read about GreenCare for Troops, my first reaction was 'what a wonderful opportunity for us to give back to these families that sacrifice so much for us in defense of our freedom.'"

Yates was 39 years old when he and Kathi founded the NaturaLawn Wilmington outlet in 1991. Prior to then, Rick was the regional manager of the field remediation group at Rollins Environmental Services.

**What is it about your work that you find so enjoyable?** I like what we do — helping homeowners solve lawn problems that they haven't been able to resolve on their own or with another company. In addition, I've got a great group of dedicated employees who are fun to be around.

**How did you get your start in the lawn care industry?** When I was in high school in Fort Myers, FL, I played American Legion baseball at Terry Park, then the spring training facility for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Our coach was the Lee County director for parks and recreation. He gave me my first summer job, which was being part of the grounds crew at Terry Park. After a 20-plus-year hiatus, I made it back into the fold.

**How do you motivate your staff to provide good customer service and attention to detail?** When I came into this business full-time 10 years ago, I realized that we could not grow and prosper if we tried to compete solely on price. Our focus ever since has been to put in place systems and controls that ensure we provide the highest levels of customer service to our clients. Our field staff incentives are built around customer retention — not production. Supervisory personnel regularly perform field quality control audits and follow ups. We use "secret shoppers" to evaluate employee performance. Employees are rewarded for providing exemplary customer service.

**What are the strategies that enable your business to stand apart from competitors?** Most importantly, a well-trained staff dedicated to providing quality lawn care services helps us stand out from

### GROWING IN STYLE

- **Founded:** 1991
- **Employees:** 12
- **Certifications:** Delaware and Maryland Certified Pesticide Applicator; Delaware Nutrient Management – Commercial Nutrient Handler
- **Industry involvement:** Within the NaturaLawn of America franchise system he's served on the President's Advisory Group, Marketing and Advertising Group and Franchise Advisory Group.
- **Business outlook:** "We started with zero customers in 1991 and will service more than 2,000 customers this season. On the revenue side, this year we'll gross more than \$1.25 million."
- **Personal highlights:** My wife Kathi — who is a co-founder of our company — and I have three adult children and two grandchildren. I enjoy playing golf or tennis when I get the opportunity. With my grandkids, I enjoy playing Halo online. I'm only an average player, but it does fire-up my competitive juices."
- **Website:** [www.nl-amer.com](http://www.nl-amer.com)

our competition. Also, the quality of NaturaLawn of America's natural, organic-based products helps us provide superior results for our customers. As a result, we're the only lawn care service in Delaware that has been a Wilmington News Journal "Readers' Choice" award winner and a recipient of the Delaware Valley Consumers' Checkbook "Top Rating for Quality." **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer in Newbury, OH. Contact him at [jimguyette2004@yahoo.com](mailto:jimguyette2004@yahoo.com).

If you know of a top-notch lawn care professional who gives of him or herself to the community and the industry and is worthy of recognition, e-mail us at [djacobs@questex.com](mailto:djacobs@questex.com), and tell us why.



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**BASF**

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## Hoping to be the bigger loser

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / Managing Editor

**P**layground taunts aside, I welcome the tag — loser.

As a child, no one ever called me thin, but I was a pretty decent athlete. With a decided lack of video games, I spent most of my free time in ball fields and back yards, which meant I usually worked off my caloric intake.

Over the years, less outdoor activity, an increase in, well, intake, and the slowing metabolism that comes with age have led to a broadening of my ... uh, my horizons. Maybe it's the tradeoff for the wisdom.

Some believe fitness is the past tense of fatness, but it doesn't have to be that way. You don't let your business practices lapse. We all get into comfortable routines, and it's human nature to look for shortcuts and find excuses to explain away the inactivity. But no more — it's time to buckle down, and I've gone to a sacred American institution to find inspiration — television. In this case, "The Biggest Loser."

The show pits rotund people against one another in a series of physical and mental challenges. They stay on a campus with trainers and learn how to live healthier lives. At the end of each week, one individual (or early on this past season, one couple) is voted out of the compound. For this to work, I need a partner. Enter Marty Whitford, the recently installed Editor-in-Chief of *Landscape Management*.

For those of you who have met us, you know that Marty and I are, well, I'll put it this way — Marty and I easily could have replaced any of the pairs on the recently ended couples edition of the show. While neither of us is as large as Roger and

Trent, the former University of Alabama football teammates, we're definitely more the "before" photos. So in the spirit of the show, we two, who spend a little too much time sitting behind our desks, began our own little biggest loser competition.

Yes, it's a blatant rip-off of a popular reality show. But unlike others that exploit participants, this show has a positive outcome — contestants lose weight, learn to live healthier lives and by extension so do tens of thousands of others.

We began our odyssey on April 1. And like the show, there is a prize for the one who loses the most weight — percentage-wise. The most important reason we're doing this is that Marty and I will become healthier and live longer lives. And there's a better chance we'll be there to watch our children grow. But we've added an extra incentive — a \$100 shopping spree to help one of us jump start a wardrobe to fit our sleek new exteriors. Our contest ends Dec. 31, 2008.

Look for semi-regular updates throughout the year. If you've moved from behind a mower to behind a desk, feel free to join us by e-mailing or calling me. We just might be able to find a prize for the biggest loser among our readers. Everyone who joins this contest is a winner just for trying.

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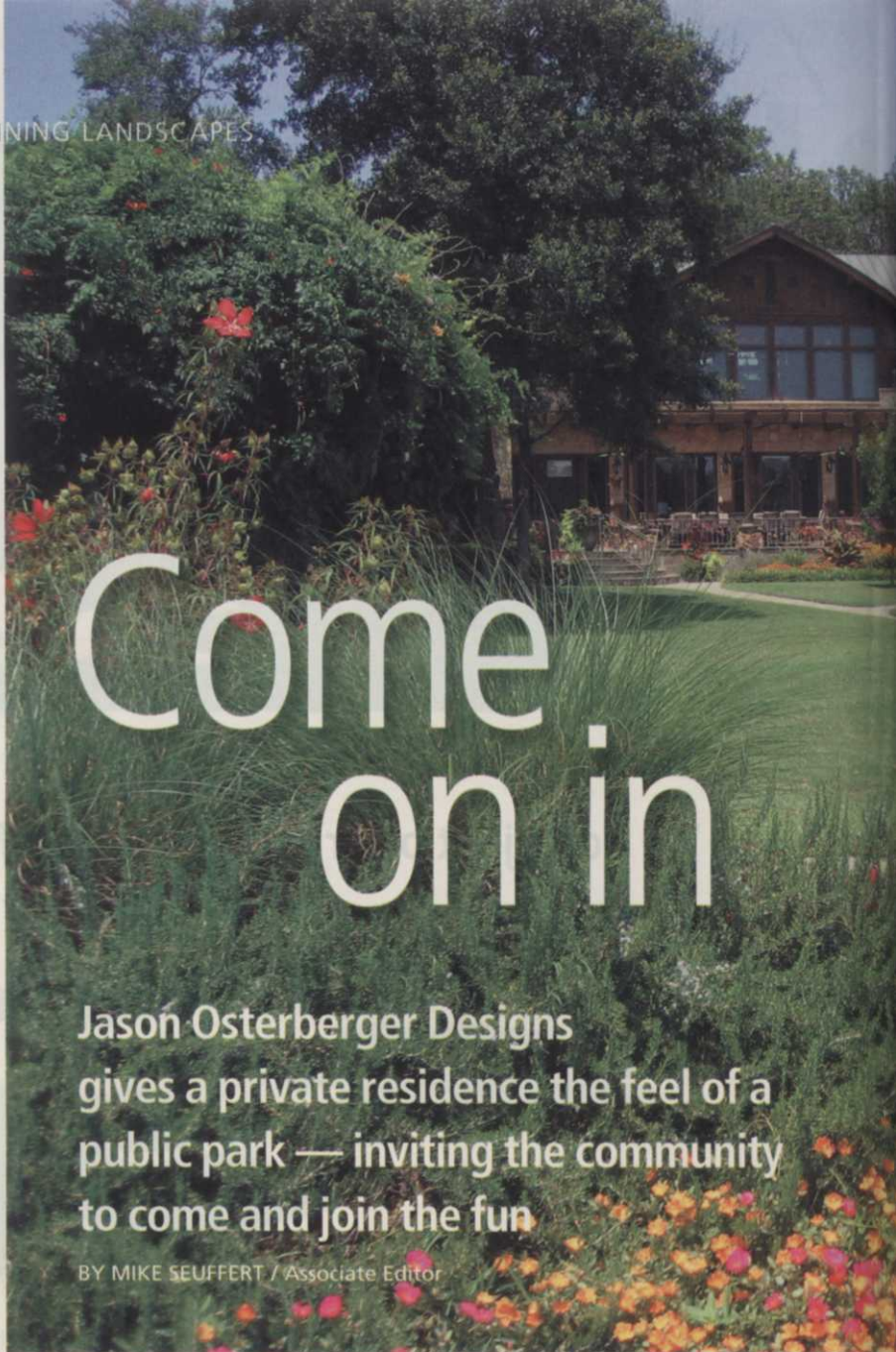
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by BAYER**

**S**cattered throughout a 6-acre lakefront property in Malakoff, TX, is a series of statues that represent an invitation to the community. On a grassy field looking out over the lake, "Kite Kids" begs visitors to run and play on the open field. "Breezy," a little girl basking in the wind surrounded by a colorful perennial bed, beckons boats to the shore. Two Native Americans climb the side of a mountain in "The Ascent," leading the way up a path you can climb too.

But the invitations to play, relax or explore go far beyond the statues. The family that owns the land on Cedar Creek Lake wanted the entire property to be an open and welcome place where everyone is invited to walk the grounds, enjoy the scenery and leave behind day-to-day worries.

Featuring the family's lake house, auto court, heavily wooded areas, huge flower beds and walking paths, the landscape design contractor — Jason Osterberger Designs — succeeded in creating a series of outdoor garden rooms that are more characteristic of a public park than a private residence.

"The family's clear vision for how they wanted this property to evolve drove the design process," says Jason Osterberger, company owner. "The owners are really big into giving back and community involvement. They love to walk and talk with the people who visit the property, and it was up to us to make that property a place worth coming to."



# Come on in

**Jason Osterberger Designs gives a private residence the feel of a public park — inviting the community to come and join the fun**

BY MIKE SEUFFERT / Associate Editor

For carving out this community getaway, and giving the family and friends a place to relax and enjoy nature, Jason Osterberger Designs took home 1st Place in the 2007 Texas Excellence in Landscaping Awards.

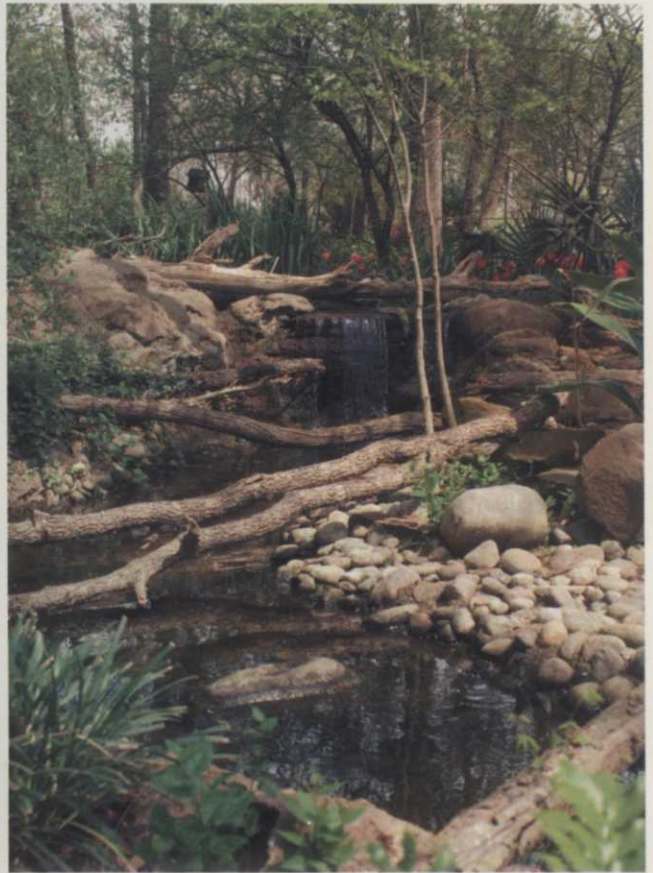
## Getting on scale

The estate sits at the end of a cul-de-sac of a gated community overlooking Cedar Creek Lake. With the lot so heavily wooded, Osterberger came in looking to really make an impact. With such a large property, and a large lake house as a centerpiece, that started simply by

making everything bigger.

"The house is just over-the-top wonderful but the continuity between the house and landscape wasn't there," Osterberger says. "They didn't have the same scale. The landscaping was too understated."

Osterberger blew out the landscape beds and filled them with color and texture. A huge stone and wooden entryway marks the entrance onto the property. Columns line the paths of Belgard Pavers that lead around the property. The entryway was realigned to provide a view of the lake, rather than



**Left:** Placed at the outermost point of the property, the "Breezy" statue is used by boaters as a navigational tool.

**Above:** Streams and waterfalls were created to contain the water runoff on the property.

**Below:** The stone and wood entryway leads into an auto court, large enough to handle parties and small gatherings.



leading straight toward the house. And another huge sculpture, a piece done by Glenna Goodacre of children at camp raising a flag, became the centerpiece of the auto court.

The first phase of the project took close to six months to complete, with an average of six to 12 employees working on the property at any given time. Though for some especially tricky work, like moving about 60 three-ton boulders into place, there might have been 25 to 30 people on the worksite at once.

The project has been going for more than four years now, and the homeowners

are constantly finding new pieces they want to add and new areas to extend enhancements. There are also seasonal color changes for all of the landscaped beds. For the owner's annual Spring Fling party, more than 11,000 tulips and 3,000 daffodils are planted. And for the family barbecue held over the Fourth of July, 8,000 caladiums are blooming.

"The details of the project are what I really enjoy," Osterberger says. "Getting to go outside of the typical box of planting and hardscapes and being able to find these great art pieces. Matching the colors of boulders to the rocks around the home. It's so much fun. Like a little kid, each day I got to go out and play in the gardens."

### Style and substance

Because the property is so expansive, versatility and variety was key to tying

Perennial color mixed with seasonal color and flowering plant material makes for an explosion of visual sensation year-round.



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the project together. From the lake house, two sides look out over the lake and onto the open spaces and landscaped areas. The other sides of the house look over the natural forested areas.

"There's a great play between the vast open areas versus the natural, wooded area," Osterberger explains. "And then we played on colors. In the landscaped areas we stick to more of the hot colors — the purples, burgundies, reds, yellows and oranges to really play off the white stones around the house and the dark greens of the woods. It's a nice marriage of the two landscapes together."

The variety is not only aesthetically pleasing, but functional to the family as

*continued on page 76*

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continued from page 74

well. The idea was to create different spaces that each family member can really enjoy. There are places to go boating, camping, open spaces to play baseball or soccer, koi ponds for aquatics lovers, rocks to climb and gardens to walk through or stop at and relax.

Plus, at night the entire property takes on a different feel.

"Every ounce of that property is lit with either accent lighting, up lighting or tree lighting," Osterberger says. "At night it just takes on an amazing different look. Every pot is lit and every sculpture is lit. It's really incredible."

#### Clogging the drainage

Though the final result was well worth the work, planning for six acres did not



come without its challenges.

Because of both the woods and the lake, different parts of the property could have wild fluctuations in light and temperature. Osterberger and his team had to understand the shadows cast on each areas of the property before they knew what they could plant in certain places. They also had to account for the winds coming off the lake and create

continued on page 78



The lake is framed with well-designed gardens and places to sit and watch as the sunset complements the colors of this property.

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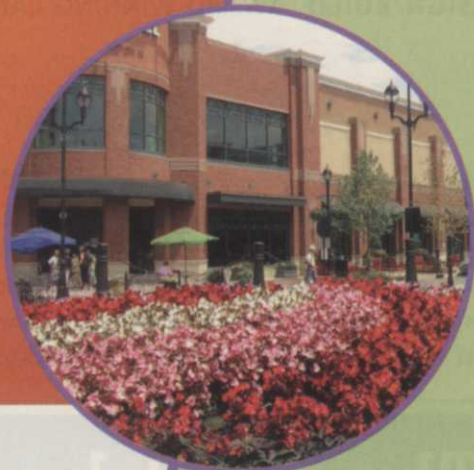
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continued from page 76

spaces where guests would be comfortable. Yet the biggest challenge of the project was water. Being at the end of the cul-de-sac on the lake, much of the water from the neighborhood drained

onto the property, causing it to flood during heavy rains.

"Creating dry creek beds allowed us to capture the water, use it as a feature with waterfalls and fish and then divert it back toward the lake," Osterberger says.

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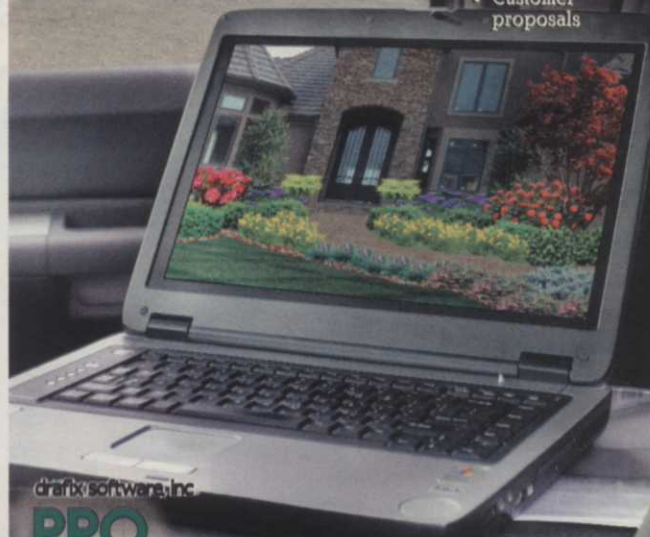
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Many visitors like to stand amongst the kids' statues and salute the American flag.

The lake water then also was used to irrigate the landscape, which was a first for Osterberger's team — having to calculate pressures and making sure pipes and pots were big enough to handle the waterflow.

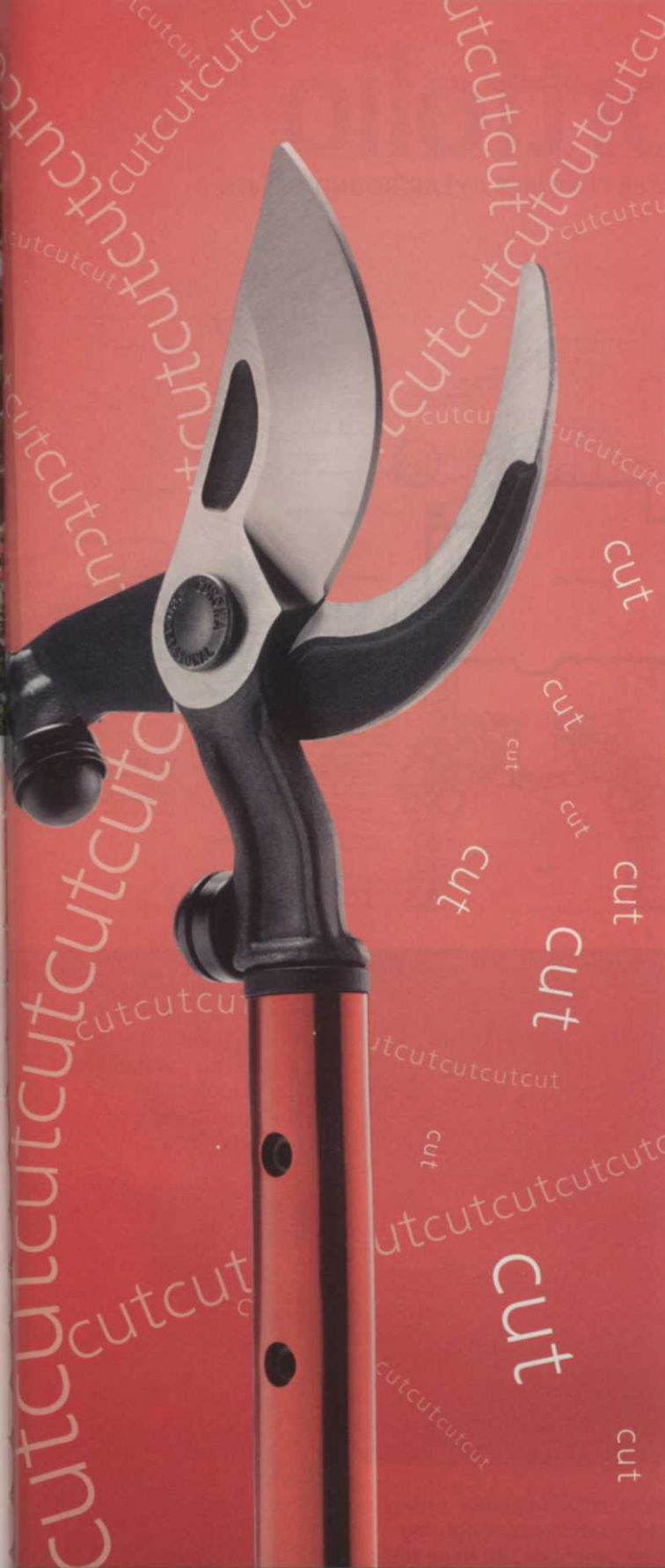
### Quality time

The one goal that Osterberger brings to every project is to create a space where you can "leave it all behind." Not every project has six acres to work with, but he feels that anyone can create an environment to relax, retreat from problems and enjoy what nature has to offer.

"There's beauty out there to behold," Osterberger says. "What we did in Malakoff, TX, is a great example of that. We added to the existing environment so the family, friends and the community could have a place to leave their worries behind and spend quality time together.

"The memories created by the time spent here will be handed down from generation to generation," he adds. "To have a part in creating those memories is tremendously rewarding to us." **LM**





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# Project Portfolio

DESIGN/BUILD

OUTDOOR LIVING / WATER FEATURES / YEAR-ROUND DESIGN

## The design

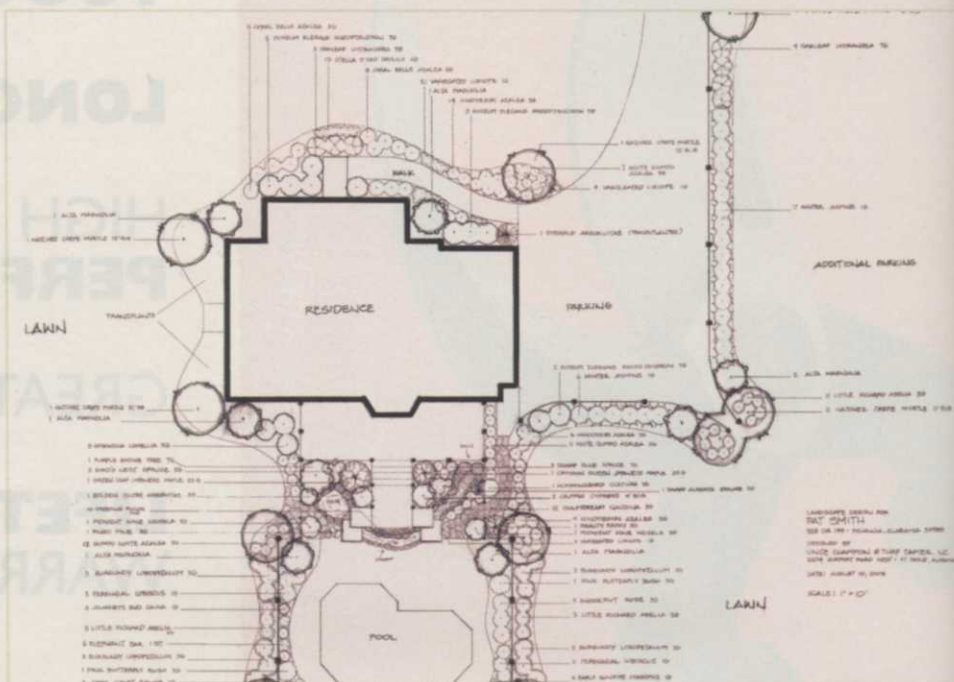
A place where the client could plug in (power outlets abound) and entertain, or "unplug" and unwind in a relaxing environment.

## Project Requirements

■ Budget range: \$100,000 to \$500,000

■ Meet the client's need for both entertainment and relaxation areas

■ Create functional areas for the kitchen and fire pit



An installed rock waterfall features this stream flowing under the landing areas onto the pool deck and back into the pond on the opposite end of the veranda.

## Project Specifics

■ Demolition of existing hardscape

■ Add veranda, waterfall/pond and outdoor kitchen

**ABOVE** The client's desires included power outlets abounding throughout the landscape, a lighting system, winter interest ornamentals and large trees and shrubs in scale with the residence. The most important challenge associated with this project was incorporating all of the client's requests into a cohesive design.



Turf Tamer was able to exceed the client's expectations by creating an outdoor living space with the addition of a large veranda with stamped concrete surface, rock columns and wrought iron railings.



BEFORE

**ABOVE** Removing this existing decking and above-ground pool — to offer a more-permanent structure for entertaining and relaxation — was a crucial component of this project.



**ABOVE** An outdoor kitchen was constructed to incorporate outdoor needs into the design while managing convenience and functionality. A fire pit was constructed on the opposite side of the pool deck, and positioned so the fire would reflect in the pool and offer interest at any vantage point.

### Project Principals

- Designed by Vince Champion, Turf Tamer, Fort Payne, AL, [www.turftamerinc.com](http://www.turftamerinc.com)
- Turf Tamer's many services include landscape and hardscape design-build, water features, outdoor living, landscape lighting, irrigation, and landscape and turf management. With its trademark "passion in every project" credo, the 13-year-old company has evolved from founder J. Lee Buffington's high school mowing business to a respected and award-winning professional firm.

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

# Floral Front

DESIGN/BUILD VISUAL IMPACT

## Minimal color, max impact

Changes in ownership didn't deter this designer from creating a unique living space

BY BRIDGET WHITE

**WITH THE PROPERTY** now on its third owner in less than five years (and rumors of a buy-back by a previous owner), Kathy Hubner's knowledge of the site, her ability to adapt the landscape to the current owner's style, and her strategic use of color have turned a single, small job into a constant source of revenue.

With a small budget and limited planting area on a lot dominated by a large home, each element of Hubner's design had to be carefully thought out for maximum impact. Standard obstacles such as screening unsightly views caused by a too-close neighbor were heightened by planting spaces as small as 5 ft. In this instance, giant timber bamboo grew completely vertical to provide the necessary screen

within a few years while taking up very little space. Plus, the bamboo quickly provided shade to allow plants such as wandering jew, canna lily and philodendron to thrive.

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

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

"That's a design trick I use often," Hubner says. "People get busier and busier. They still want the annual color but don't want the time it takes." **LM**

— *White is a freelance writer living in New Orleans. Contact her at [info@questex.com](mailto:info@questex.com).*



### PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

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

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

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

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



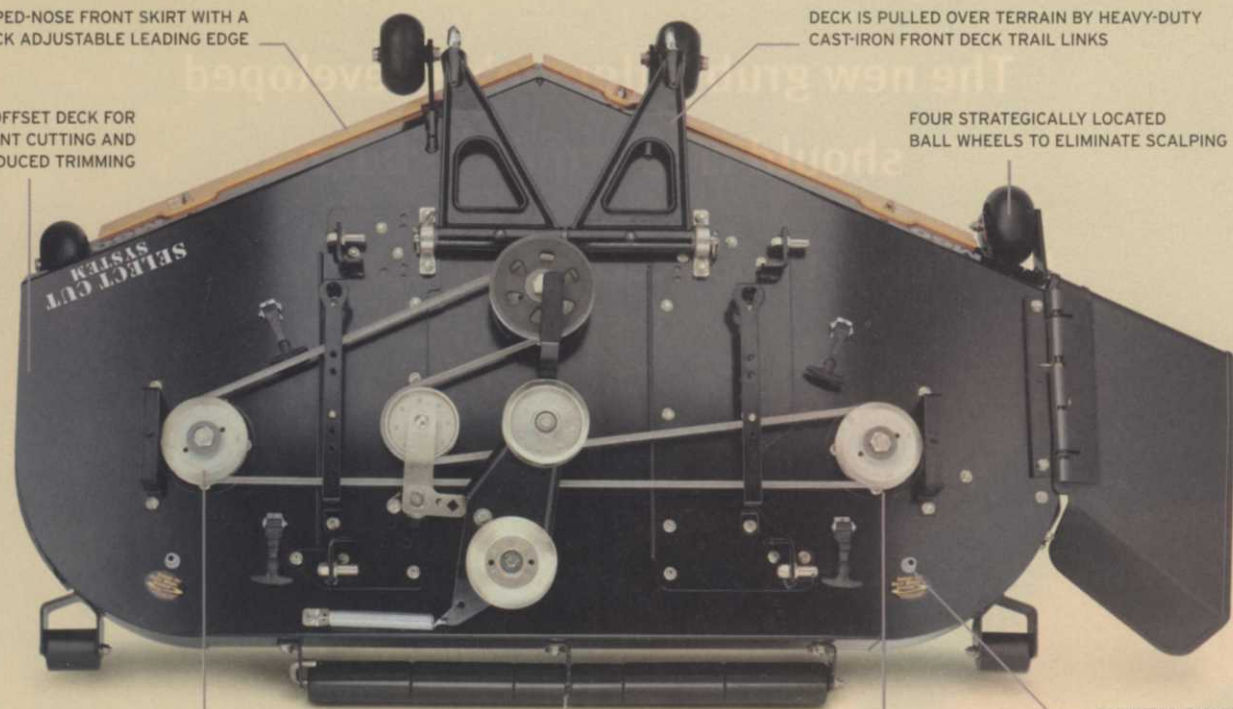
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# Controlling WARM-SEASON turf diseases

1

## Two-sided coin:

The South's prolonged heat and humidity fuel fungi growth, but they also help turfgrass outgrow the damage.

BY HENRY WILKINSON, PH.D.

It's May, and those of you managing warm-season grasses know that the 2008 season is already two or three months old. One of the "benefits" of being a southern turf manager is that you get three or four summer months when turf disease is a challenge. (Your compatriots up north feel bad for you; then again, they were freezing all winter.)

Speaking of your northern neighbors, we realize that many of you, in addition

to caring for Bermudagrass, centipede, zoysia and St. Augustinegrass, also deal with tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass and a bit of creeping bentgrass. These cool-season grasses are an even greater challenge for you to sustain in the summer than for your northern lawn care counterparts.

Let's take a look at why warm-season grasses grow in a much more varied environment than cool-season grasses. From east to west across the United States, the amount of rainfall can vary from feet per year to inches per year. Likewise, the humidity can range from nine months of high humidity in the Southeast and costal areas to nine months of very low humidity in the Southwest.

The biggest weather challenge that warm-season managers face is the heat, with its swings and duration. In general, warm-season grasses grow from late March to December. Compare that to the growing season in the North: mid-April to mid-October. In the South, the daily mean temperature can reach 90 F or higher for four months; compared to one to two months of comparatively hot temperatures in the North. Why is this important? Disease-causing fungi need heat and water (humidity) to attack your



2



turf. The longer that turf is subjected to heat and wetness, the more severe the disease and its symptoms.

In the South, disease is more severe, takes longer to manage and you use more control materials, which means more expense. Hopefully, you've explained this to clients. If you can sustain a beautiful lawn through the summer, you are both good and worth the money.

### What to know

To be a successful and confident lawn manager, especially when dealing with turf pathogens, you need to understand:

- ▶ turf growth, what and when;
- ▶ identification and nature of the diseases most likely to attack turfgrass under your care; and
- ▶ how to use weather conditions to predict when disease will start and end, and when the turf will recover.

Although the most common warm-season turfgrasses are Bermudagrass, centipedegrass, zoysiagrass and St. Augustinegrass, some of you also will encounter tall fescue, bluegrass, ryegrass and bentgrass. Hopefully, you do not manage lawns of all these grasses. But if you do, then you're faced with the challenge of understanding how each of them grows in your area.

Bermudagrass, centipedegrass, zoysiagrass and St. Augustinegrass rely on rhizomes and/or stolons to spread. This is an advantage over ryegrass and tall fescue. In general, no matter how

severe the disease that attacks these warm-season grasses, they can recover, although the time that takes will vary. These grasses also grow in two other ways: plantlets and leaf number. There are two rules for managing turf diseases: 1) Encourage the turfgrass to grow new tissue to replace diseased plants; and 2) Stop fungi from attacking the turf.

The best way to sustain a lawn is to keep the grass growing. Warm-season turf management has a definite advantage over cool-season turfgrasses here. If you understand this, you will be successful at dealing with diseases. Warm-season grass grows mainly from May through October. As long as grass is growing, the

impact from disease can be managed. Why? Because the only way to get rid of ugly, diseased leaf tissue is to mow it off. Leaf diseases are most active when the turfgrass is growing most vigorously.

Does this mean you should push turfgrass growth during mid-summer? No. But make sure it has enough fertilizer and irrigation to remain healthy and growing. If disease develops in your turf faster than you are mowing the damaged leaves off, consider other short-term ways to stop the fungi.

### What to do

First, let's look at the diseases you might have to deal with this year. While there

- 1 Brown patch generally appears on warm-season turf in early spring or late fall.
- 2 Take-all patch is a big problem for Bermudagrass.
- 3 Summer patch, caused by a soil-borne fungus, targets Kentucky bluegrass.
- 4 Zoysia patch (next page) is most common on wet soils and long dew periods in spring, fall and during cool winters in the South.

3





are more than 100 diseases that will attack each type of turf, generally fewer than five show up each year. Divide them into leaf diseases and root diseases.

If you have been in the lawn care business for several years, you know which diseases routinely occur in your area and when. Adjust your lawn maintenance schedule in anticipation of the diseases you're likely to encounter. Do not rely simply on chemical fungicides. Fungicides used alone during the long, hot and humid Southern summers might not be able to maintain protection at a satisfactory level.

Cultural practices that help keep leaf blights under control include:

- Fertilizing at proper levels, not over- or under-fertilizing the turfgrass. Keep the plants growing at a moderate,

sustained level.

- Keeping the turfgrass mowed. This will reduce the amount of time the turf leaves are wet.

- Irrigating deep and infrequently. This will keep plants growing and drier.

Root-rotting diseases are tougher to handle. One of the main reasons warm-season grasses suffer severe root-rotting disease is they are not growing optimally when the disease occurs.

The two root-rotting diseases of warm-season grasses are spring dead spot for Bermudagrass, and take-all root rot that infects Bermuda, zoysia and centipede grasses. A number of different fungi cause these diseases, which can attack the roots, crowns, stolons and/or rhizomes of these grasses.

One of the most challenging aspects

of these diseases is that they primarily develop when your turf is not growing very fast or just not growing at all, often in the winter. In a sense, these are "Diseases of Dormant Turf." In a case like spring dead spot, the fungus lives on the roots and is most active from December to April. After that, it's still able to survive in your turf roots, but it's not very active. There is little you can do to protect the turf during the months of December to April. However, in the late winter (March) keep an eye out for these

*continued on page 90*



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continued from page 88

diseases, treat them immediately, and then again next November.

From April through November, use technologies and techniques that encourage your lawns to re-grow turf in

areas affected by root-rotting diseases.

It's probably also a good idea to get the advice of a turfgrass pathologist.

These are tough diseases.

Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue contract difficult diseases when grown

Adjust your lawn maintenance schedule in anticipation of the diseases you're likely to encounter.

in the South. It is too hot and too humid for too long. The "too long" part of the equation is what does the most damage.

When bluegrass is grown in the South, it struggles especially from root-rotting fungi that remain active most of the winter.

In the case of tall fescue, the long periods of slow leaf growth during a Southern summer, combined with hot humid turf, allow diseases like brown patch and dollar spot to severely reduce the quality of a lawn.


What can you do to sustain cool-season grasses in the South? Here are a few tips:

- ▶ Encourage turf growth in the fall, winter and spring.
- ▶ Scout your turf for early signs of disease as summer approaches.
- ▶ Consider using fungicides early to quickly stop the fungi.
- ▶ During the summer, when the grasses aren't growing, put away the water and the fertilizer.
- ▶ Do not mow the turfgrass too short. Keep Kentucky bluegrass at least 2 in., and tall fescue at least 2.5 in.

The key to managing diseases for warm- or for cool-season grasses is to understand when your turf is not growing new tissue, being aware of what diseases typically develop and when, being consistent with mowing, applying fungicides at the appropriate times and developing a good working relationship with an experienced turfgrass pathologist. **LM**


— The author is a professor at the University of Illinois and has worked on both cool- and warm-season turfgrasses for more than 30 years. Contact him at [hwilkins@uiuc.edu](mailto:hwilkins@uiuc.edu).

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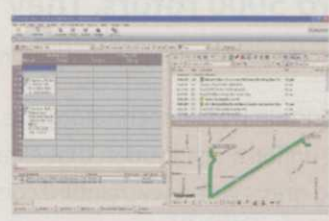
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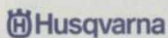
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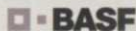


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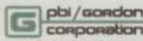


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# Standing OVATION

**The stand-on mower continues to reach a wider audience.**

BY BRIAN MOORE



It has been 10 years since the stand-on mower invaded the green industry. Before that, walk-behind mowers and mid-mount riders were the only options contractors had to equip their fleets. At a time when many contractors were expanding their crews from three to five operators, the ability to put more stand-on mowers on a trailer meant each crewmember could have a more efficient riding mower without the investment of additional, larger trailers.

Stand-on mowers now are available from several manufacturers, including among others, Deere & Co., EverRide, Gravely, Great Dane, Wright Manufacturing Inc. A commonly voiced benefit of stand-on mowers is a productivity boost from increased nimbleness and maneuverability. This benefit is a result of the location of the true center of the turning radius on a stand-on

*continued on page 95*

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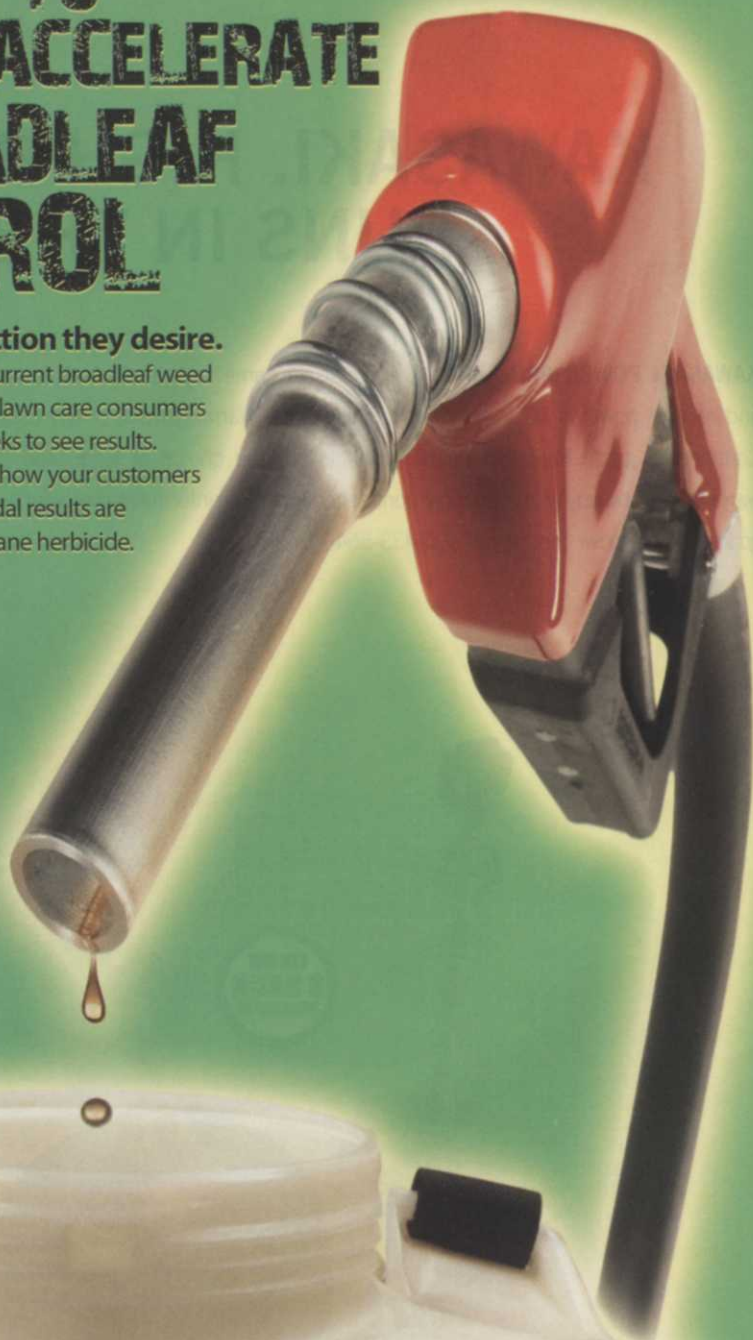


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*continued from page 92*

mower. Because the location of the turning radius is near the center of the cutter deck, a stand-on mower virtually cuts grass in its own tire path, eliminating the need for back-and-forth, wasted passes.

Some contractors replace their hydro walk-behinds with stand-on mowers, while others use a mix of sit-down riders, stand-on mowers and walk-behinds. One observation I made when testing stand-on mowers was how well they performed on hillsides.

**Find a need, fill a need**

"The inception of the stand-on mower, as with most significant new products, comes from a simple strategy: Listen to the users and develop a creative, efficient product that addresses their needs," says industry pioneer Dane Scag.

In the 1990s, while many industry expert and end users continued to laud Scag for introducing the dual-hydro, zero-turning walk-behind, he took note of the numerous comments about walking so much during the day and being exhausted in the evening. An acquaintance showed him a prototype of a hydro walk-behind with a rigid platform.

"With my engineering background, I could immediately tell the balances were not right," he recalls. "However, the concept was exactly what the industry needed to address fatigue and increase efficiency."

Once he solved the balance issue, Scag launched Great Dane Power Equipment Inc. in 1996 with the stand-on mower as its core product. "At the time, many people wondered why I wanted to get into the business again," Scag says. "It wasn't about money; it was more out of a sense of responsibility to provide a great tool to the industry."

By January 1997, Great Dane was shipping hundreds of new stand-on

products.

"We thought we might ship 400 or so the first year, but the product immediately caught on and we shipped many times that amount," Scag says. "The benefits of decreased operator fatigue, improved productivity and maneuverability were a huge hit with end users."

Another early leader in the stand-on mower market was Wright Manufacturing. Chairman Bill Wright says Wright's stand-on mower innovation was the result of observing and listening to employees of his lawn maintenance company.

"We used 35 intermediate walk-behind mowers to mow around 500 lawns," he recalls. "We did some research, and our hard-working employees were walking 20 to 30 miles per day. So, after much brainstorming, [Jim] Velke and I

Our hard-working employees were walking 20 to 30 miles per day.

— Bill Wright

designed and developed the first Wright Stander. The machine was, and still is today, the shortest and most compact stand-on mower in the industry."

Wright Manufacturing holds several stand-on mower patents relating from overall design to the specifics, such as the patented quad-lever control system. Its Wright Stander has a fixed deck available and a quick height-change deck in all deck sizes.

"Overall, stand-on mowers are more maneuverable, more compact, provide better balance and traction on hillsides, and are more simple than other riders on

*continued on page 97*

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## TECHNOLOGY TAKING A STAND

*continued from page 95*

the market," Wright explains, pointing to the machine's fewer parts and less steel. "We are bullish on the future of the stand-on product lines, and continue to see a strong growth trend as more operators take demos and more companies convert to stand-on products."

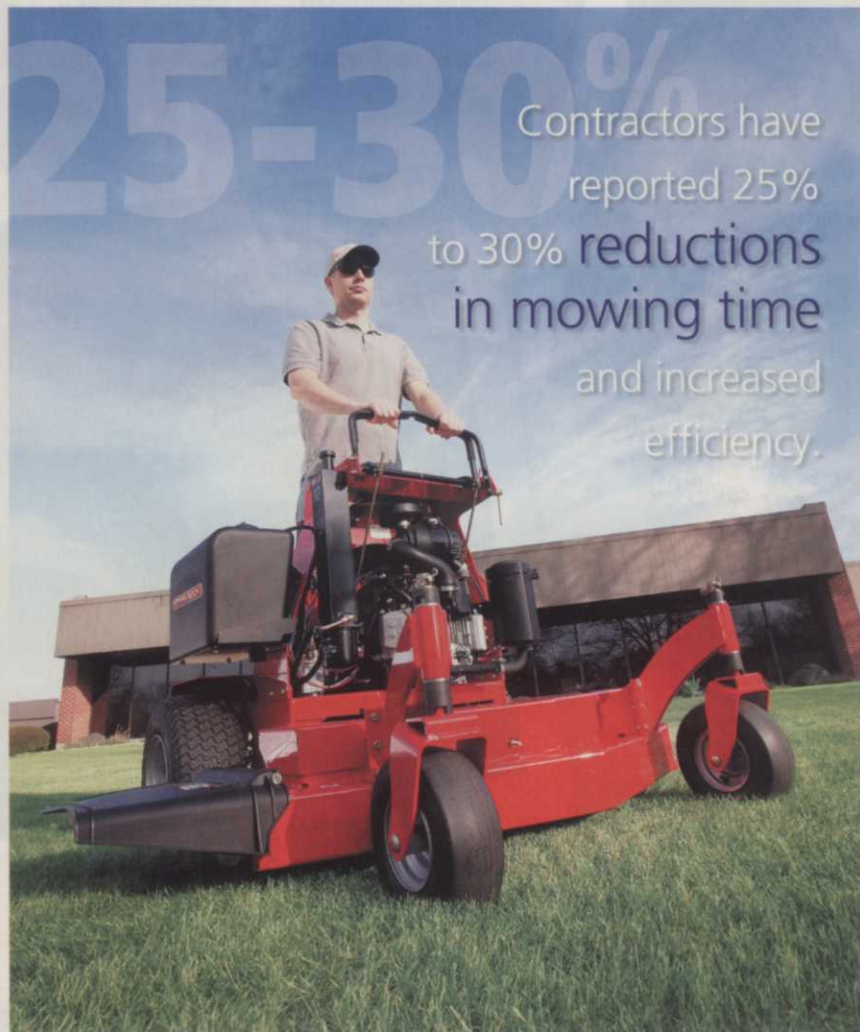
### Product category on the rise

Just last year, Ariens Co. bought into the stand-on market. The company first built the Gravely brand under a private label, then it bought the manufacturer and rights to several additional brands.

"When we introduced a Gravely

stand-on line, we saw a niche for contractors in metro areas and for those doing smaller properties or highly landscaped jobs," notes President Dan Ariens. "In many of these kinds of applications, a larger, ride-on unit is overkill, which is why stand-on units appeal to larger landscapers who are interested in efficiency, or matching the right equipment to the right jobs. The compact size appeals to many landscapers for the same reason — more efficient to trailer. With the acquisition of the Great Dane and EverRide brands, we now have more ability to impact the distribution side of

*continued on page 99*



Contractors have reported 25% to 30% reductions in mowing time and increased efficiency.

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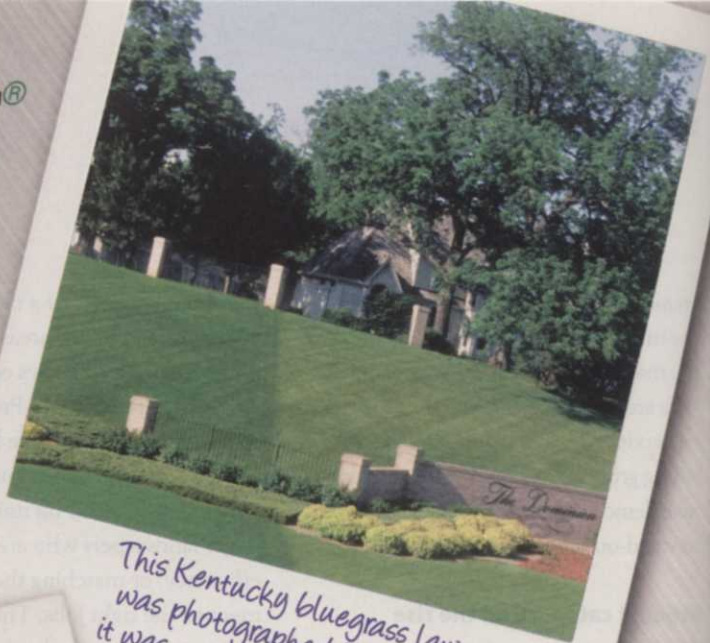
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continued from page 97  
the equation.”

Deere & Co. joined the stand-on market in 2001 with its Quik-Trak mower, available with 48-, 54- and 60-in. cutting decks. Gilbert Pena, John Deere business-to-business segment strategy manager, says the mower offers such as the floating 7-Iron II Deck, easy height-of-cut adjustment, and ease of training new operators.

“Recognizing a growing market segment and understanding the need to provide the landscape contractors with the best tools for their trade, we committed our resources and aggressively pursued the stand-on business,” Pena says. “Today, we are very pleased with our Quik-Trak product. Several large landscape contractors have converted a substantial portion of their fleet to Quik-Traks. Attributed to the handling and compact footprint of our mower, several contractors have reported 25% to 30% reductions in mowing time and increased efficiency.”

“The compact size appeals to many landscapers for the same reason — more efficient to trailer.”

— Dan Ariens

Recently, the Toro Co. unveiled a prototype version of its stand-on mower, which is slated for production release later this year. According to Edric Funk, marketing manager for Toro’s Landscape Contractor Equipment, “We are actively completing the development of the Toro



### Nice ride

Yes, stand-on mowers are actually riding mowers, according to the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, the mower manufacturers’ trade group. The OPEI shipment figures published each year have included stand-on mowers in the category of “Mid Mount Transmission Steer Riders.”

stand-on mower for the '09 season.”

Estimates of the number of stand-on mowers sold annually are difficult to come by, but it is a safe bet that the popular machines have bit into both the walk mower and sit-down rider sales numbers. (My educated estimate is that more than 11,000 stand-on mowers are sold annually.)

Price becomes a considering factor in these trying times, however: Stand-on mowers typically cost a little more than hydro walk-behinds and a little less than sit-down, mid-mount riders. What was once a small cult phenomenon, however, has evolved into a legitimate lawn-mower category in contractors’ fleets. **LM**

— The author is an independent writer with many years’ experience in the Green Industry, and has been an executive with several major commercial mower manufacturers. Contact him at [bmoore1557@insightbb.com](mailto:bmoore1557@insightbb.com).

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INSECTICIDES

# Drip, drip, drip

Tips and techniques for designing or installing a drip system. BY JEFFREY KNIGHT

**W**hen it comes to low-volume, drip or micro-irrigation, there is much deliberation surrounding the proper terminology. For many distributors, manufacturers, contractors and landscape architects, the debate continues.

Contractors frequently identify “drip” as the term most often used in their day-to-day activities. No matter the terminology, the general consensus in the Green Industry is that drip irrigation offers many benefits — when properly installed in the appropriate applications.

## Materials selection

Unlike traditional sprays and rotors, with flow rates measured using gallons per minute (gpm), drip irrigation is measured in gallons per hour (gph) and distributes water slowly over a longer period of time.

There are many drip irrigation product manufacturers to choose from, but there are essentially three basic forms of drip irrigation used in a variety of landscape and agronomic applications:

**1. Microsprays**, also known as micro-sprinklers, are similar to traditional sprays but have a much lower precipitation rate. These devices have an adjusta-

ble throw, but can be susceptible to wind and evaporation. Microsprays are often used in orchards, greenhouses, open fields, nurseries and landscape beds.

**2. Point-source** drip irrigation features single emitters that are attached to polyethylene tubing. The emitters can be placed at random intervals near individual plants to apply water directly to the plants’ roots. Point-source drip irrigation is frequently used for sparse plantings, nurseries, vineyards and residential and commercial landscapes.

**3. Line-source** drip irrigation is similar to point-source drip irrigation, but the pressure-compensating emitters are built-in and pre-spaced. Easy to install, line-source drip irrigation wets an entire area indiscriminately and relies on the soil to distribute water to plants’ roots. It is optimal for use with dense plantings.

No matter what drip irrigation materials you select for your project, be sure to incorporate proper filtration, pressure regulation, an air vacuum relief (or emitters with built-in check valves) and flush valves at the ends of the lines to rid your system of dirt and debris.

## Typical applications

Drip irrigation is often considered for areas where water is scarce. On average, a typical irrigation system comprising sprays or rotors is only 50% to 70% efficient, whereas drip is 90% to 95% efficient. This means that the water applied is used more effectively. Drip irrigation can play an important role in reducing water waste and is most effective when combined with other water-saving technologies.

Many residential irrigation contractors choose to install spray or rotary heads in turf areas, and use drip line in adjacent landscape beds. Drip irrigation is an ideal solution for these sparse plantings because water can be applied

precisely to the roots of a specific plant, providing a more efficient irrigation while reducing the growth of unwanted weeds in landscape beds. There are many U.S. cities that have ordinances preventing the installation of spray or rotary heads in turf areas six feet wide or less; in these cases, installers would use drip irrigation.

Drip irrigation is also optimal for shrubs, hanging baskets, row crops and orchards. It can be used successfully with most plant material, prompting some manufacturers to recommend the product for larger turf applications.

Despite the benefits of using drip line on landscape beds, many contractors still choose to install spray heads. Even if a contractor installs these heads on risers, the spray pattern will become dis-

torted over time as plant foliage continues to grow and mature. Additionally, risers can become a tripping hazard when stationed in landscape beds near sidewalks or parking lots. They're also prone to vandalism.

#### Getting started with drip installation

There are several things to consider before beginning a drip irrigation system installation. Math, water quality, pressure, plant spacing, seasonal planting and the maximum length of run all play an important role in the success of a design or installation project.

► **Math.** Many landscape contractors do not know how to calculate proper run

times, and therefore tend to overwater. Become familiar with the standard formulas used to calculate run times in order to design, install and maintain a successful drip irrigation system.

► **Water quality.** Drip irrigation systems require filtration to keep debris from clogging the drip line. If the water quality is especially poor and debris is rampant, the end user will have to constantly clean the filter. This can lead to frustration or cause the user to abandon proper maintenance practices. Obviously, this would render the system ineffective, and potentially lead to the death of the planted material.

► **Pressure.** Most drip irrigation systems require 30 psi to operate successfully, with at least 10 psi at the most distant end for flushing. Generally, there's very



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little pressure loss in a drip irrigation system because of the low flow rate. Install a pressure regulator to avoid excessive pressure — 45 psi for most drip systems. **► Plant spacing.** For areas where planting is dense, a drip line with pre-installed

drip emitters applied in a grid pattern will suffice. If plantings are sparse, use regular drip line tubing and install drip emitters at the base of each plant. Install more than one drip emitter per plant; this practice provides plants water even

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if damage occurs to an emitter. Additionally, place drip emitters where the roots will be when the plant is mature. Placing drip emitters at only the base of the plant will eventually kill it because the roots will stay closely bound to the small area where they regularly receive water. In time, the plant will deplete this small area of nutrients and die.

**► Seasonal planting.** Seasonal planting requires landscape contractors to revisit landscape beds two to three times a year for replanting. Remember to be careful to avoid cutting the existing drip lines.

**► Maximum length of run.** Every drip line has its limit. If the run is too long, drip emitters will put out more water at the start of the run and less water at the end. When this happens, the effect will be akin to arranging your shrubs in line from tallest to shortest.

Always make a thorough inspection of the site, and consider the future growth of newly planted materials. Catering to these important considerations will assist you in adopting proper drip installation practices, and avoid frustrating situations.

Drip irrigation can also play an important role in contributing to your overall system efficiency. When combined with other water-saving technologies, drip irrigation can help your clients save water and money. **LM**

— The author serves as educator and national trainer for Ewing Irrigation.



Certification is one way the best and brightest technicians can show pride in their profession and proudly display their skills.



## Certiably best in class

BY ALLEN SPENCE

**R**esumes can be tricky. Some people look great on paper, but lack the skills required of the positions they seek. Some resume information can be downright lies, or hopefully, harmless career pumping that doesn't reflect candidates' true qualifications. Let's just say resume embellishment is a well-established, if unpleasant, approach for the lazy or inexperienced.

Hiring the wrong person means wasted time, energy and money – not to mention the disruption it could have on your shop. What's an owner to do?

Looking for independent verification of technicians' skills goes a long way in suggesting how valuable employees and potential employees are to your company. One thing you might want to look for is certification as an outdoor power equipment (OPE) technician.

Certified technicians don't only work in automobile repair shops. OPE technicians are joining the ranks of their automotive brethren. When it comes to outdoor power equipment, the certification you want to look for comes from the Engine and Equipment Training Council (EETC). This certification is separate from the various manufacturer certifications many dealers require to be authorized to perform warranty repairs, sell or service equipment.

The EETC was started in 1996 by a group of concerned manufactures, dealers, distributors and technicians. Since then, more than 7,000 techni-

cians have taken the voluntary certification tests. Adding the certification to business cards is one way the best and brightest show pride in their profession. EETC tests are written by a team of EETC members from all disciplines of the OPE industry.

Many manufactures allow the EETC certification in place of the factory certifications required by many dealers. And unlike the factory tests, the EETC certification does not test technicians on only one manufacturer; it covers all manufacturers. Find out more about the certification at [www.eetc.org](http://www.eetc.org).

The organization offers these six reasons for EETC Technician certification:

- ▶ Many manufacturers require certified technicians as part of their "preferred dealer" programs, so your skills are and will continue to be in demand.
- ▶ Certification also can improve your prospects for increased income and job security.
- ▶ Shortages of certified technicians are expected to continue, ensuring job security.
- ▶ Prove your knowledge and skill.
- ▶ Certification might increase your income.
- ▶ Demonstrate pride in your profession.

According to EETC, this certification will "prove that you have mastered the skills to provide a high level of service. EETC Technician certification is recognized as the standard for outdoor power equipment servicing." Isn't someone with EETC Technician certification on their resume someone you'd like to have in your shop?

— *The author is turf equipment management instructor at Hinds Community College in Raymond, MS.*

Contact him at [haspence@hindsc.edu](mailto:haspence@hindsc.edu).

Create special landing pages on your site for other Web sites you are test marketing.



## Free online marketing

BY TYLER WHITAKER

The other day I found myself in an interesting discussion about small business advertising and the Internet. I was asked for my opinion on a marketing program offering Web advertising for \$125 per month on some Web site. I asked about the Web site's traffic and the number of leads it would generate. There was no data in the Web site's sales material, but the sales rep still was convinced search engines loved the site. With no data to look at, I couldn't make an informed decision.

In the rush to market products and services on the Internet, we often forget the end goal is not to spend our marketing budget, but to increase sales. Finding simple ways to test new marketing channels helps focus those dollars in areas that produce results. Here is a list of places to help you focus your marketing messages and monies on the right local audiences.

### Google Local | [www.google.com/local/add](http://www.google.com/local/add)

Google Maps is a great resource for finding local businesses. You can add your business through the Google Local Business Center. As Google becomes the de facto yellow pages, having your business show up in local searches and on maps could be a big advantage. Try spicing up your listing with pictures and videos. You can even set up special coupons to track customer leads Google sends your way.

Yahoo (<http://listings.local.yahoo.com>) and MSN (<https://llc.local.live.com>) have similar programs.

### Craigslist | [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)

Craigslist is a great resource for free classified listings. Started as a San Francisco events Web site, it has grown to an international service for local classifieds and forums for more than 450 cities worldwide. With more than 25 million U.S. customers per month, this is a wonderful place to post ads. Remember to post at least once a week to keep your ad close to the top of the listings. And don't forget to post comments in the forums. It never hurts to be seen as an expert in your field.

### Local TV & radio Web sites

Check your local newspaper and television Web sites. Many times they offer free online classifieds. This is a great way to test the effectiveness of each station without paying for on-air ads. Another option is to leave comments on their forums and news stories. A series of well thought out comments can help people get to know you and your business. Remember to list your name, company name and Web site below each comment. Be authentic and add real value.

Create special landing pages on your site for other Web sites you are test marketing. (For example: [www.mycompany.com/google.html](http://www.mycompany.com/google.html)) For phone calls, use special referral code language such as "Ask about our Craigslist discount."

By investing a little time, you can use the Internet to refine your marketing messages and find your target markets. Remember, it pays to experiment and track.

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

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A skid steer's versatility makes it an ideal piece of equipment for landscapers.

## Skid steers & compact equipment

**S**kid-steer loaders have long been viewed as one of the most logical and economical pieces of equipment for landscapers. If you talk to owners of landscaping companies, many will tell you they started their businesses with a used skid-steer loader. And it's not unusual to see larger landscaping companies with a fleet of skid-steer loaders and attachments.

Many landscapers choose skid-steer loaders because of the many benefits they provide. Skid-steer loaders perform a wide range of jobs, handle numerous attachments, and are easily transported

quickly between jobsites. The machine's agility also stands out as one of its top features. Because it can turn within its own length, landscapers can maneuver the skid-steer loader in tight areas such as between homes or through gate openings. On larger loaders, landscapers can choose the 2-speed option to quickly move material around jobsites.

Ground disturbance can be a particular concern for landscapers, especially when working on established landscape surfaces such as turf. An all-wheel-steer loader offers the benefits of both a skid-steer loader and lower ground disturbance. The machine can be switched from an all-wheel-

steer mode, which offers minimized ground disturbance, to skid-steer mode, which offers more maneuverability.

Skid-steer loaders are ideal for landscapers who need to lift between 700 and 3,300 lbs. and work on varied surfaces from dirt to asphalt and concrete. High-rated operating capacity allows landscapers to easily transport pallets of sod, stone or pavers.

Another advantage of skid-steer loaders is that they're equipped with powerful auxiliary hydraulic systems, meaning they can run even more landscaping attachments such as the rotary cutter, chipper, soil conditioner, sod layer, spreader, stump grinder, tree spade, landscape rake and mower. Of the numerous attachments with which landscapers can outfit the loaders, many find the combination bucket especially useful because its versatility enables them to perform five different tasks. With the combination bucket, operators can doze, grapple, level, dig and dump. The bucket features serrated grapple edges to hold objects firmly in place and has a reinforced bucket bottom and clamshell that can work in a variety of ground conditions, such as dirt, sand or rocky soil.

Diversity is a key to any successful business, especially in landscaping. Many landscapers make snow removal and clearing part of their businesses. Unlike a pickup truck with a snow blade, a skid-steer loader is not only able to push snow, but also blow, lift, pile or load it for transport. The agility of skid-steer loaders makes them popular for removing snow in the tightest quarters, such as crowded parking lots and sidewalks.

The ability to lift and move material efficiently, maneuver where space is limited and perform many tasks using a wide range of attachments make the skid-steer loader the perfect machine for landscaping.

— Bryan Zent, marketing manager,  
Bobcat Company

## John Deere

Two new additions to the John Deere Skid steer family — the 313 and 315 — feature the same unified design as the rest of the line and continue the 300 Series advantages of superior stability, visibility and serviceability. These two models are compact and maneuverable, yet powerful with rated



operating capacities of 1,300 lbs. and 1,500 lbs., respectively. Features like 10-by-16.5 in. tires for traction and flotation, heavy-duty, never-adjust tire chains and best-in-class visibility provide safety while operating in tight spaces. These new models have standard machine widths of 59 in.

Contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or [www.johndeere.com](http://www.johndeere.com)



## Vermeer

The Vermeer S400TX mini skid steer features a 23-hp gas engine, which produces 15%



## Mustang

Mustang Manufacturing Co.'s

2803ZT zero-tail-swing compact excavator offers stability, a comfortable operator's station and easy access to maintenance points. With a longer undercarriage, the slim machine provides a sturdy track width and optional counterweight, creating an even more-stable machine. With two driving speeds, pilot-operated pedals and an X-shaped chassis frame of high-strength steel, the 2803ZT is strong enough for tough applications yet gentle enough to reduce operator fatigue. Specifications include: 24.3-hp diesel engine, 8.3-ft. maximum digging depth, 9.3-ft. dump height, 5.2-ft. width and 5,886-lbs. transport weight.

Contact Mustang Manufacturing at 507/451-7112 or [www.mustangmfg.com](http://www.mustangmfg.com)

more horsepower than competitive models. Two joysticks, which control transport and boom/bucket motion, can be operated while holding onto an integrated hand-grip bar. Ground drive is controlled by a single joystick, and provides a smooth range of motion while operating the unit. The S400TX produces only 3.8 psi ground pressure and a hydraulic flow rate of 11.5 gpm. The S400TX delivers a tipping capacity of 1,430 lbs. with a rated operating capacity of 500 lbs. and maximum 69-in. lifting height.

Contact Vermeer Manufacturing Co. at 888/VERMEER or [www.vermeer.com](http://www.vermeer.com)

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## Caterpillar

The new Caterpillar B2 Series of skid steer loaders and multi-terrain loaders features an improved operator station, an advanced hydraulic system and a wide range of standard features and options designed to meet a variety of production and comfort requirements in the compact machines. High-performance power trains provide high engine horsepower and torque, allowing part-throttle operation for lower sound levels and fuel consumption. The eight machines in the series have rated operating capacities ranging from

1,400 lbs. to 2,500 lbs. Caterpillar Tough-Guard hoses are used for all lift, tilt and auxiliary circuits. They are approximately 20 times more resistant to abrasion than standard hoses and provide improved reliability.

Contact Caterpillar at 888/OWN-A-CAT or [www.cat.com](http://www.cat.com)

## Compact Power, Inc.

Compact Power, Inc.'s track-driven 532DX diesel mini-skid is ideal for the landscaping, rental and construction markets. Like the Boxer 526DX, the 532DX offers an integrated track system that retracts from a fully extended 43.5 in. to a



width of 35 in. and is controlled by a joystick on the control panel. The variable track design makes it simple for operators to maneuver the 532DX through tight areas, such as gates and sidewalks, then extend back to full width for increased stability. This new mini-skid offers operating capacity of 1,050 lbs. and is powered by a 32.8-hp Kubota D1105-T diesel engine.

Contact Compact Power, Inc. at 800/476-9673 or [www.cpiequipment.com](http://www.cpiequipment.com)

## Case Construction

Case's 400 Series 3 line of skid steer loaders features more powerful engines, a redesigned cab and improved serviceability for all models. Tier III certified engine power is now available on the Case 410, 420, 430, 435, 440, 445,

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450 and 465 skids steers. With engine improvements come increases in horsepower across the board, from 57 hp to 83 hp. The new cabs available for all Case Series 3 models feature a 7% increase in head room and 6% gain in lap-bar width, along with improved forward, side, rear and overhead visibility. The new Case 400 Series 3 skid steers also feature improved oil and fuel filter access, which helps avoid spills and speed up oil changes. Pilot controls are now available on all eight Case skid steer models.

**Contact Case Construction Equipment at 262/636-6011 or [www.casece.com](http://www.casece.com)**

## ASV

The PT-30 is ASV's most compact rubber track loader. At only 48-in. wide, the PT-30 is sized to work in confined spaces. The 33.7-hp PT-30 uses 24 wheels in its undercarriage to spread the machine's weight over the entire length and width of its



tracks. As a result, the machine's 3,350-lbs. operating weight is distributed down to only 2.8 psi. With such low ground pressure, the PT-30 can work productively in soft or wet ground conditions where skid steer loaders and other larger track loaders cannot work. Refinements to the PT-30 include greater upward visibility from the operator station, a new dash with more gauges, an optional improved door with a better handle and tighter sealing, plus a completely new paint and decal package.

**Contact ASV Inc. at 218/327-3434 or [www.asvi.com](http://www.asvi.com)**



## JLG Industries

JLG Industries' Model G5-18A super compact telehandler boasts a 5,500-lbs. maximum lifting capacity and 1,850-lbs. capacity at the fully extended reach of almost 11 ft. The machine comes standard with three operator-selectable steering modes including 4-wheel circle, 4-wheel crab and 2-wheel steering. The 126-in. turning radius allows maneuverability in confined or congested work areas. The G5-18A is offered with several available attachments including a general purpose bucket, a light material bucket, a grapple bucket, various carriages and a crane hook — making it ideal for jobs that previously required several different types of equipment. The G5-18A can even be configured to accommodate skid steer attachments.

**Contact JLG at 877/JLG-SELL or [www.jlg.com](http://www.jlg.com)**



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 David Justice, Managing Editor

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**INDUSTRY NEWS**

Starry Whitford named Editor-in-Chief for Landscape Management  
 Whitford brings with him 16 years of experience in the business-to-business media environment. He joined Qualex four years ago as Managing Editor of GPS World and advanced to Managing Editor of Post Content in September 2005. (More...)

H-2B hearing on Capitol Hill set for April 16  
 The U.S. House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law will hold a hearing on the H-2B program next Wednesday, April 16, 2008, at 2 p.m. in room 2141 of the Rayburn House Office Building. (More...)

National survey shows consumers need help with lawn care  
 Consumer Reports magazine article reveals that 24% of U.S. consumers say they have been injured while mowing their lawns, 12% say they drink beer while mowing. (More...)

Green industry professionals hit hard by high gas prices  
 Some companies are taking the rising overhead on the chin; others are passing it alone to customers. (More...)

Features getting favorable environmental attention  
 By Rita Hill  
 The University of Connecticut "Escape to the Rescue" program is gaining favorable attention from homeowners and environmental agencies. (More...)

Canadian Cancer Society urges pesticide ban  
 According to the Canadian Cancer Society, a poll of 3,202 B.C. residents showed strong support for a pesticide ban, labeling products with carcinogens, and further restrictions on smoking. (More...)

ValleyCrest acquires Concepts in Greenery  
 Founded in 1993 by Dan Sternberg who manages the company with partner and co-owner John Rose, Concepts in Greenery has achieved steady growth and market presence, providing landscape maintenance and installation services to a large and loyal customer base along the Southeastern coast of Florida. (More...)

Earthlink urges zero-turn mower owners to drive safely  
 As the spring mowing season begins, Earthlink urges owners to review their operator's manuals for safety guidelines. (More...)

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## LM Reports

### Bobcat

The Bobcat 418 compact excavator has an operating weight of 2,593 lbs. and a dig depth of 6 ft. Excavators in this class are often used in tight working areas, next to buildings or other property and areas where it is difficult to transport equipment. Keeping these concerns in mind, Bobcat has developed the 418 excavator with zero tail swing (ZTS) with tracks extended. Eliminating tail overhang on the machine allows operators to optimize spoil placement and minimize machine contact with property or other nearby objects. The undercarriage of the excavator retracts to less than 28 in. The Tip-Over Protective Structure (TOPS) folds down so the excavator can travel through a standard-size doorway and work in interior jobsites.

Contact Bobcat Co. at 866/823-7898 or [www.bobcat.com](http://www.bobcat.com)



### Kobelco Construction

Kobelco Construction Machinery America's 17SR ACERA zero-tail-swing compact excavator 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 Machinery at 888/562-5201 or [www.kobelcoamerica.com](http://www.kobelcoamerica.com)

### Ramrod

The 905, 915, 950 and 1150 Ramrod Taskmasters handle the most demanding jobs. The 905 Taskmaster can be as narrow as 32 in. to work in constrained areas and the 915 can wide track to 44 in. There are more than 40 versatile, "quick on, quick off" attachments. From the low-step stand-on platforms, operators get clear, 360-degree unobstructed views of their work areas. New for 2008, Ramrod has added the WB1500 TX compact utility loader to its lineup.

Contact Ramrod at 800/667-1581 or [www.ramrodequip.com](http://www.ramrodequip.com)





## New Holland

Seven New Holland Super Boom skid steer loaders offer superior visibility, more lift capacity, and enhanced stability, durability and dump height and reach. They're nimble enough to work easily in tight spaces and handle fine finishing work, yet strong enough to tackle your demanding loading, lifting and digging jobs. The models — L150, L160, L170, L175, L180, L185, L190 — offer a spacious, enclosed cab and ergonomically placed controls for maximum operator comfort. The Super Boom design lifts the bucket load up and away for optimal dump height and reach. The machines' stability improves safety and efficiency and prevents bucket spillage.

Contact New Holland at 630/260-4000 or [www.newholland.com](http://www.newholland.com)

## Toro

The Toro grapple rake attachment, for use with Toro Dingo compact utility loaders, is ideal for picking up and removing trees, bushes, roots and rocks — as well as demolition and construction debris. The Toro grapple rake attachment is 34.5-in. wide, weighs 270 lbs. and includes two hydraulic cylinders. Its compact design allows skid steer operators to fit through gates and narrow access openings to pick up materials. Its clamping force from tip to tip is 3,000 lbs., and its tines are strong enough to dig up roots and rocks.

Contact Toro at 800/Dig-Toro or [www.toro.com/dingo](http://www.toro.com/dingo)

## Gehl

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](http://www.gehl.com)



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# Products

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## Walking seeder

The TriWave Walking seeder from Turfco takes the innovations developed for its Tri-Wave 60-in. tractor-mounted overseeder and applies them to a smaller, self-propelled machine, increasing the success of seeding operations. The WaveBlade design allows operators to turn while seeding, with minimal disruption to existing turf. The WaveBlades are mounted on two, 18-in. wide patented independent floating seed heads capable of precisely following the ground contour, even in uneven terrain, for unmatched consistency in seed placement depth. With



## Back up safely

Rostra Precision Controls Inc. introduces a RearSight back-up camera system specifically designed for use in fleet vehicles. The RearSight kit (#250-8040) features a 5-in. LCD monitor that mounts directly in the vehicle's headliner to display with a large, wide angle view for drivers. The monitor has a reverse override function as well as dual video inputs for navigation, interior camera and/or DVD. A heavy-duty, waterproof color image camera provides a 150-degree wide-angle view behind the vehicle that is transferred to the in-cab monitor. The camera features auto infrared for night vision and a heavy-duty bracket with a 5-ft. harness, which allows users to easily adjust the camera's angle.

Contact Rostra at 800/782-3379 or [www.rostra.com](http://www.rostra.com)

a simplified control system, one lever simultaneously starts and stops the blades, raises and lowers the seed heads and opens and closes the seed box gate, while a second lever controls the forward and reverse drive.

The TriWave walk-behind seeder is powered by a Vanguard 27-hp BIG BLOCK V-twin engine from Briggs & Stratton.

Contact Turfco Manufacturing at 800/679-8201 or [www.turfco.com](http://www.turfco.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.



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## Green engine oil

Fully biodegradable and environmentally friendly, G-OILTM 2-Cycle Green Engine Oil from Green Earth Technologies is a petroleum-free, bio-based oil, manufactured from base oils derived from American-grown animal fats. The result is engine oil that does not burn when mixed with gasoline, eliminating smoke and reducing up to 48% of the carbon monoxide, 32% of the hydrocarbons, and 80% of the nitrous oxide produced by petroleum-based 2-cycle engine oils. Test results for G-OIL show that its performance rivals that of synthetic oils like Mobil One and that a significantly higher flash point and incredibly low ash content allows for a much cleaner burn.

Contact Green Earth Technologies at 877/438-4761 or [www.getg.com](http://www.getg.com)



## Powerful trimmer

The HHT35S hand held trimmer is the most powerful trimmer in Honda Power Equipment's lineup. The HHT35S uses Honda's 360-degree inclinable GX35 mini four-stroke engine. This model bridges the weight gap with the two-stroke competition while delivering all the advantages of a four-stroke engine. The new engine's oil-immersed timing belt and overhead-cam architecture makes it possible to incorporate the valve train into the oil reservoir. In addition, Honda trimmers do not require the mixing of gas and oil, which provides for greatly reduced emissions, increased efficiency and a reduction in opportunity for operator error.

Contact Honda at 800/426-7701 or [www.hondapowerequipment.com](http://www.hondapowerequipment.com)

## Super Edg

Oly-Ola Edgings' Super-Edg, constructed of 100% recycled vinyl material, provides a strong and durable landscape border that is virtually invisible. Super Edg has the look of metal but is safer-to-use and easier-to-install and transport. Super-Edg features a 6-in. deep low profile design that enhances the

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landscape design by providing a distinct border that doesn't take away from the finished product.

It can be used in applications such as: defining landscape beds, forming and containing creatively shaped logos and landscape designs, edging flowerbeds, maintaining fence bases, and keeping dirt and debris off walkways.

Contact Oly-Ola Edgings at 800/334-4647 or [www.olyola.com](http://www.olyola.com)

## Select Cut deck

Cub Cadet Commercial's new Select Cut System (SCS) is an adaptable mowing deck that gives commercial cutters the ability to deliver a clean, high-quality cut regardless of terrain, grass type or weather condition. The SCS deck incorporates a sloped front skirt with an adjustable leading edge to meet the needs of commercial cutters across the country. Unlike standard industry decks, the SCS front skirt is sloped, creating increased space between the deck and the cutting blade. This space allows grass to rebound after the deck passes over the lawn and before hitting the cutting blade, resulting in a cleaner cut. Additionally, the leading edge of the front skirt is adjustable, so it can be raised to further reduce grass deformation.

For more information contact Cub Cadet Commercial at 877/835-7841 or [www.cubcadetcommercial.com](http://www.cubcadetcommercial.com)

## Instant dump truck

Bri-Mar's DI-100 and DI-100-6 Dump Inserts — available for both 8-ft. and 6-ft. beds — aid in the removal and transport of mulch, stone, dirt and debris. The dump insert fits easily and securely in the back of any pick-up truck, quickly converting it into a cost-effective dump truck. The dump insert uses a heavy-duty hydraulic scissors lift, powered by a

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# Products



## Efcopower stick edger

Efcopower's all-new 8245 SE commercial grade stick edger is equipped with a professional series 300-hour, 25.4-cc engine. A nickel coated cylinder, piston with 2 rings, and forged crankshaft offers extended engine life. It has an aluminum gear box with grease fittings and a metal protector to ensure durability over time. A professional grade clutch gives optimal power transmission to the cutting blade. A rubber ergonomically designed loop handle makes this edger comfortable to operate and its easy-to-use height adjustment with a reference scale ensures precise control. The 8245 SE also has an extra wide rubber debris flap for operator safety.

Contact Efcopower at 800/800-4420 or [www.efcopower.com](http://www.efcopower.com)

## Bedrock solid

DuraClass introduced the Bedrock dump body to its line of truck bodies. The Bedrock's contemporary design features high strength materials for dent resistance and durability. The elliptical radius provides a smooth dumping action. Hardox 450 Steel is used throughout the floor, sides and rear to offer durability while maintaining a low weight to maximize payload. The I-Beam Understructure gives maximum floor support. A heated understructure is available for cold-weather applications. The optional aluminum fenders keep weight lower to further increase payload. The DuraClass Bedrock is available in lengths from 13- to 21-ft.

Contact Heil by TBEI at 662/438-7800 or [www.duraclass.com](http://www.duraclass.com)



## Advan PGRs

Advan LLC enters the plant growth regulator market with Groom PGR for managing turf growth and Tide Paclo 25C ornamental plant growth regulator. Groom, which has the same active ingredient as Primo, manages the growth of warm- and cool-season turfgrasses. Slower growth results in reduced frequency of mowing and less grass clippings. Tide Paclo is a systemic plant growth regulator that slows the vertical

growth of turf within three to 10 days by inhibiting gibberellin biosynthesis.

Contact Advan at 800/250-5024 or [www.AdvanLLC.com](http://www.AdvanLLC.com)



## Eco-friendly grass seed

Pennington Seed's Smart Seed requires far less watering, maximizes fertilizer performance and grows denser and deeper root systems for a thick, healthy, drought-resistant lawn. Smart Seed features MYCO Advantage, a blend of beneficial, all-natural root organisms that enables a smart lawn to flourish with less water and work.

Contact Pennington Seed at 800/285-SEED or [www.smartseed.com](http://www.smartseed.com)

## Granular Safari

Safari Insecticide from Valent Professional Products has a new granular formulation — Safari 2G. This formulation offers the same rapid, systemic control as a drench with Safari 20 SG, but is applied dry to the soil. Safari dissolves quickly and is more systemic for faster insect control. It is taken up in the plant quicker and in larger quantities, which helps it to work faster and longer to control a broad spectrum of insects.

Contact Valent Professional Products at 800/89-VALENT or [www.valentpro.com](http://www.valentpro.com)

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## Sickle mower

The Year-A-Round Corp. Monarch II Jari walk-behind sickle mower allows commercial, industrial and residential

users to cut difficult, heavy growth areas without plugging. The self-propelled Jari features a floating sickle bar that glides over rough terrain, making tough jobs easier to handle. The sickle bars, available in eight sizes from 16 to 60 in., cut large jobs quickly and efficiently. Control of the unit speed helps to prevent the knife assembly from throwing stones, wire and other small objects. The mower is available



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**Modeco Systems/ p55**

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Company	Page #	
Ariens Co. ....	97	Kehoe & Co. .... 28
Basnight Land & Lawn ....	16	Mr. Mister .... 59
Brickman ....	32, 38	Naturalawn of America .... 68
Case Construction ....	30	PLANET .... 30, 40
Darren Rafferty Inc. ....	45	Project Evergreen .... 68
Davey Tree ....	32	Scag .... 95
Engine and Equipment Training Council ....	103	Scotts Miracle-Gro .... 40
EverRide. ....	92	SIMA .... 52
Ewing Irrigation ....	102	STIHL .... 36
Gravelly ....	92	Taconic Maintenance .... 46
Great Dane ....	92	Toro .... 99
Green Bloom Lawn & Landscaping	64	Turf Tamer .... 80
Green Lawn ....	62	ValleyCrest. .... 30
Highland Outdoor ....	40	Weed Man .... 38, 60
Ironwood Landscape and Design	59	Wilson-Oyler Group .... 26
Irrigation Association ....	32	Wright Manufacturing .... 92
Jason Osterberger Designs ....	72	
John Deere. ....	30, 92	

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## What's on your "Bucket List"?

BY MARTY WHITFORD / Editor-in-Chief

Last month, I shared a little news from Whit's World — that a few days after this past Thanksgiving, doctors told a lifelong friend of mine, Adam Gaspar, that he has a super-aggressive, inoperable brain tumor. Short of a miracle, they gave him six to 12 months to live, and that's with extensive chemotherapy and radiation.

Adam, 42, his wife, Ann, and their six children ages 21 to 10, are squeezing everything they can out of every minute of every day. They're truly living in the moment, and watching and being a part of that has been one of life's greatest blessings.

In mid-February, Adam, Ann and I saw "Bucket List." In the movie, two terminally ill men (parts played by Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman) break

out of a hospital's cancer ward and take a road trip to work through their Bucket Lists — wish lists of things to do before they die.

Seeing the flick was a life-changing experience I feel compelled to share with the world.

### Don't waste a minute

*You don't get to choose how you're going to die. Or when. You can only decide how you're going to live.*  
Now. — Joan Baez

After we saw the film, each of us created our own Bucket List, and we already have begun putting dents in our last To Do lists.

Our soul-searching journeys began with Item No. 1 on Adam's Bucket List.

"The most important thing in the world to me is Ann and the kids," Adam shared with tearful eyes and a big smile, as I jotted down his Bucket List.

Bucket List Item No. 1: On March 7, the Gaspars braved a blizzard and drove downtown to celebrate their 20th anniversary at St. Mary's Chapel at St. Ignatius High School, from which Adam and I graduated 24 years ago. Adam and Ann recited their self-written vows and rededicated their lives to each other in front of their six children.

I will never forget that day — nor will Adam, Ann or their children.

For the record, my lengthy Bucket List included advancing from my role as Senior Editor of sister publication *Pest Management Professional* to take the editorial helm at *Landscape Management*. I crossed that one off my list last month.

Other professional goals on my Bucket List include helping *Landscape Management* become the clear market leader in advertising — in addition to strengthening our existing No. 1 positions in circulation, readership and editorial.

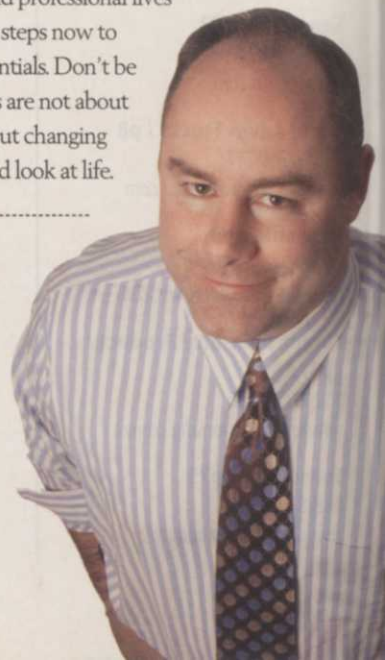
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My buddy from the first grade, Adam Gaspar, recently renewed his vows with Ann, his bride of 20 years, as part of his Bucket List.

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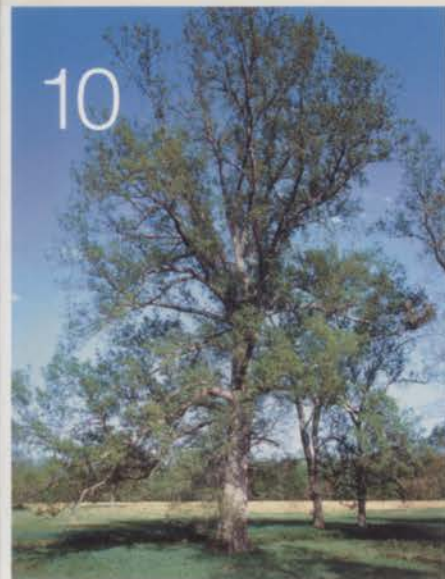
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10



15

## features



### 15 Discovering Gold in California

Savvy landscape contractors look to the gold mine of plants at the California Spring Trials.

BY FRANK ZAUNSCHEB

### 18 Designs for Greener Gardens: Winning the Challenge

Winning HGTV's *Landscapers Challenge* meant meeting a tight deadline.

BY BRIDGET WHITE

### 22 Rose Roundup, Part 2

Find the right rose for your clients, region and color theme.

BY JAMIE J. GOOCH

### 24 Growing Interest in Ornamental Grasses

Low-maintenance ornamental grasses continue to gain popularity.

KENDALL WEYERS



## columns

### 4 Home prices and confidence drop

Tough economic times are on the horizon.

BY JAMIE J. GOOCH

### 6 Making molehills out of H-2B mountains

Reports of H-2B program abuses have been exaggerated.

BY COREY CONNORS

### 8 Water-wise landscaping can improve conservation efforts

Proper irrigation techniques can improve landscapers' water-use image.

BY STEVE CARVER, PH.D.

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

Expert answers to reader inquiries.

BY BAL RAO, PH.D.



## 26 Pest-Proof Your Landscape

Pest-tolerant ornamentals are out there, just waiting to please your clients.

BY JANET AIRD

## 28 Finding the Culprit

Pest identification is the first step to an effective management program.

BY BRIAN ALBRIGHT

## 31 Smart Water Solutions

As water-use issues grow nationwide, the ability to efficiently irrigate landscapes will become critical.

BY KEN KRIZNER



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

## departments

### 12 Southwest Regional Report

Water award nominations sought, CLCA executive honored and volunteers beautify a women's shelter.

### 14 Southeast Regional Report

FNGA receives \$253,000, ValleyCrest gets bigger in Florida.

### 33 What's New

New cultivars

### 35 New Products

Innovation at work



« On the cover:  
A walkway surrounded by vibrant color. Photo courtesy: Goldsmith Seeds

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# Home prices and confidence drop

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

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

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

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

## Throwing a wide net

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

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

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

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



**V**  
Diversify your business to weather these uncertain economic times.

Regards,

**Jamie Gooch**

Managing Editor  
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# Making molehills out of H-2B mountains

> COMMENTARY FROM ANLA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> For more information on H2B, see [www.anla.org/legislative/](http://www.anla.org/legislative/).

Connors is ANLA Director of Legislative Relations. For more information, visit [www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org).

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# Water-wise landscaping can improve conservation efforts

> COMMENTARY FROM OFA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> For more information on irrigation, see page 31.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Read and follow label specifications for best results.

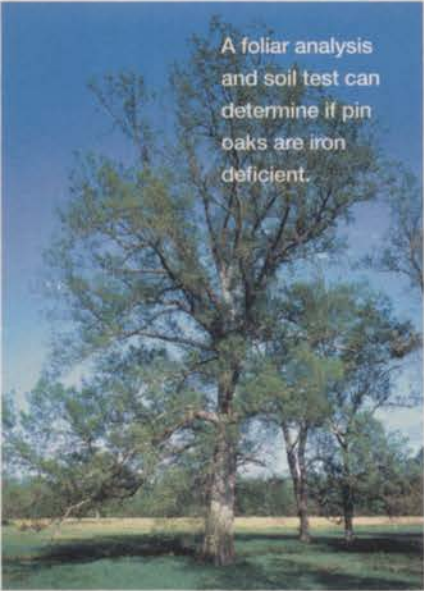
### **Q** How do you control scale on azalea? We are having difficulty in management. — TX

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

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

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

Read and follow label specifications for best results.



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

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

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





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## southwest

### > OUTREACH

#### Industry Improves Landscape at Shelter

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



### > IRRIGATION

#### Rain Bird Seeks "Difference Makers"

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

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

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

### > PEOPLE

#### CSLB Honors Rohlfes

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

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

Larry Rohlfes



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## regionalreport

# southeast



### > ASSOCIATIONS

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

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

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

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

### > BUSINESS

#### ValleyCrest acquires Concepts in Greenery

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

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

# Discovering GOLD<sup>in</sup> California

BY FRANK ZAUNSCHERB

**T**oday's home owner wants a "do-it-for me" outdoor-living space and they expect the area to reflect their individuality and taste. They want it to be alive with the same flair and fashion sense as their home's interior.

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

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

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

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

This year, massive three-dimen-

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



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

### It's All About Her

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

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



and an energetically spreading plant suited to landscape installations.

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

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

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

### Find Gold, and Every Other Color

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

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

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

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

### GREEN IS GOLD

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

### Nuggets of Wisdom

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

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

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

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

### Gold Star Performers

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

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

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

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

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

Geranium varieties were fre-

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

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

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

### After the Gold Rush

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

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

For more information visit

[www.ofa.org](http://www.ofa.org)

Zaunscherb is creative director and business strategist, Zaunscherb Marketing Inc., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. For more information visit [zmi.ca](http://zmi.ca).

## » Designs for Greener Gardens: Winning the Challenge



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

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

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

### PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

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

### CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

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

BY BRIDGET WHITE

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

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

### Pitching the Project

The job was to design a tropical garden

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

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



### Tricking the Mind

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

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

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

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

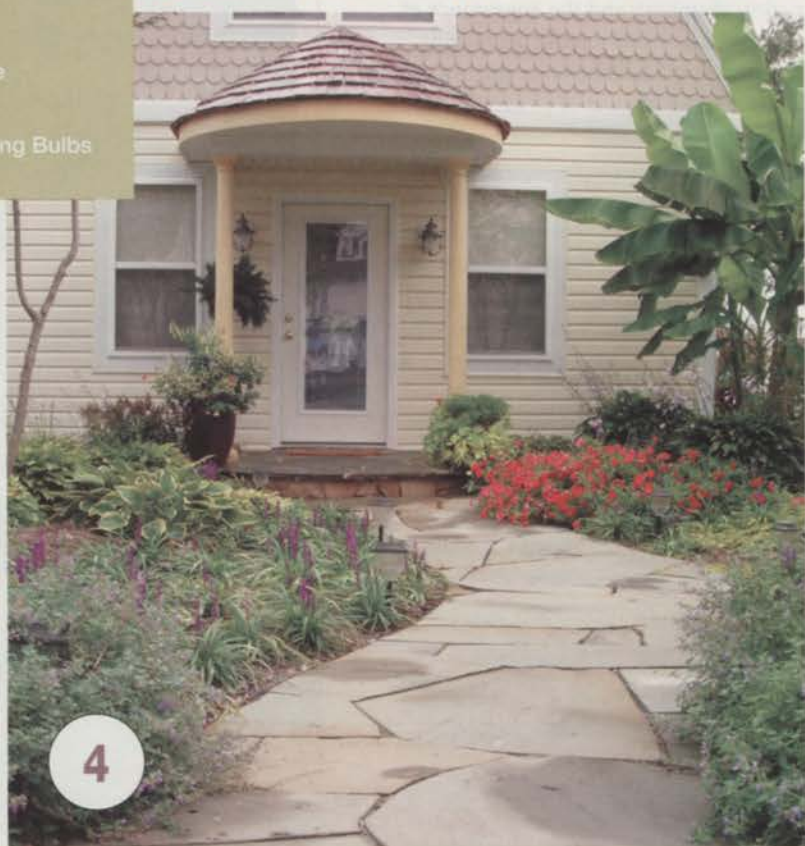
**3** Native hibiscus filled multiple needs in the landscape: bright color, a tropical feel and use of native plants.

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



#### SELECTED PLANT LIST

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



## according to plan

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

### Navigating Permits

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

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

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

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

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

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



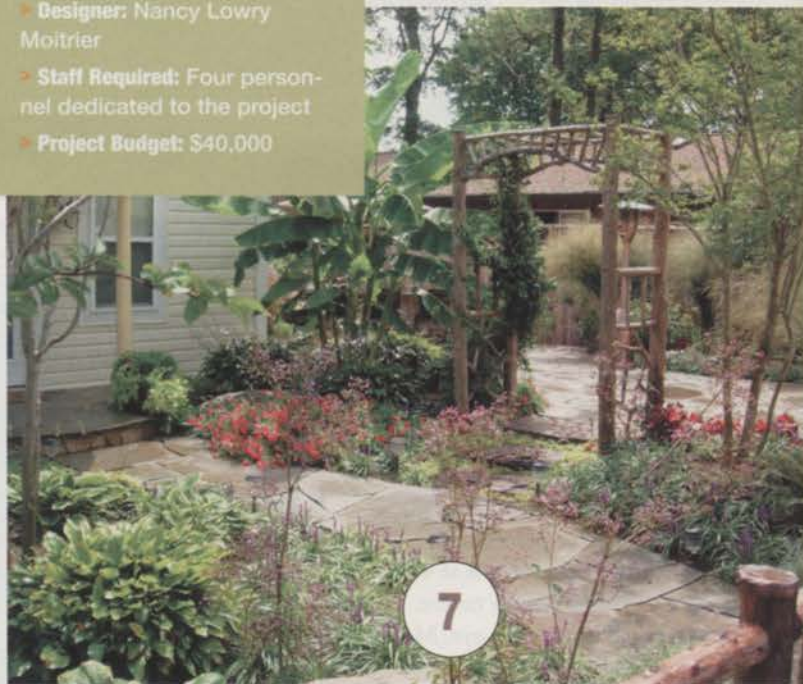
5



6

### PROJECT PRINCIPALS

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



7



8

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

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



an Association of Floriculture Professionals



# SHORT COURSE 2008

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# Rose Roundup

PART 2

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

BY JAMIE J. GOOCH

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

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

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

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

**Carefree Wonder** is an everbloom-

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

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

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

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

**Memorial Day** >

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

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

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



Gemini



Eureka





Sunny Knock Out



Tahitian Sunset >

**Mountain State AARS Winners Include:**

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

plant supports continuous blossoms.

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

**Tahitian Sunset** is a brightly-hued

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

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



Day Breaker



Sentimental



Carefree Wonder

# Growing Interest in Ornamental

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

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

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

## Easy To Grow

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

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

## The Fine Print

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

*Miscanthus*  
Autumn Red

*Miscanthus* (background) and  
*Pennisetum* (foireground)



BY KENDALL WEYERS

# Grasses



Andropogon Silver Sunrise

tainers or buried containers with the bottom removed.

## Varieties

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kendall Weyers is a landscape designer and freelance writer and can be reached at [kweyers@earthlink.net](mailto:kweyers@earthlink.net).

# Pest-Proof Your Landscape

BY JANET AIRD

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

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

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

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

### Planning Makes Perfect

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

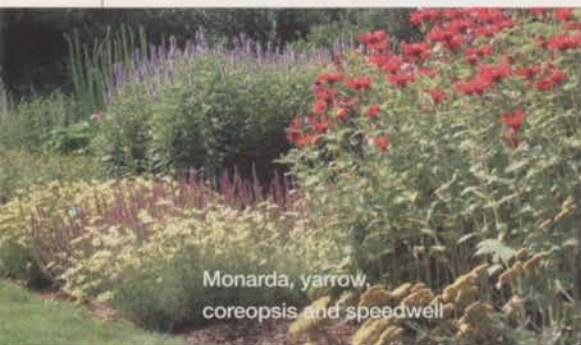
and widths that fit the space.

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

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

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

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



Monarda, yarrow,  
coreopsis and speedwell



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

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

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

### Less Maintenance

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Roll with the Changes

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



Fern and geranium



Geraniums and coreopsis

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

> **Northeast (Rhode Island):** [http://131.128.91.217/maynard\\_susplants/html\\_spl2000/index.htm](http://131.128.91.217/maynard_susplants/html_spl2000/index.htm)

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

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

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

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

### Educate Clients

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

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

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

Aird is a freelance writer based in California.

# Finding the culprit

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

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

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

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

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

#### Fake IDs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



Chilli thrip

## COMMON PESTS

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

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

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



Common whitefly

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

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

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

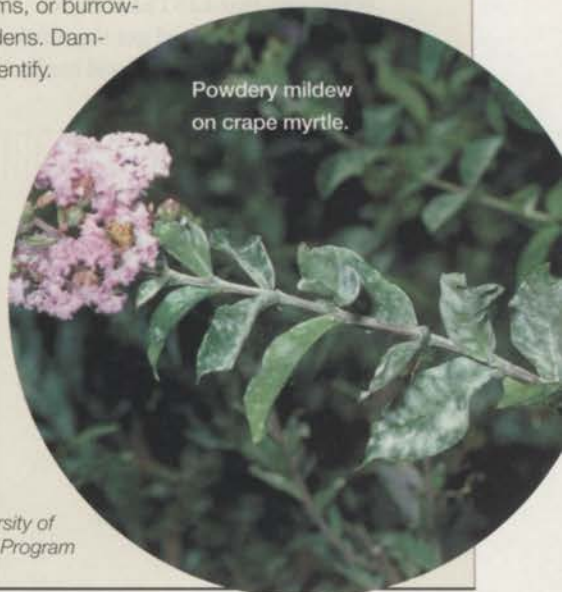
**Artist's Conk:** This fungus attacks a variety of ornamental trees, forming semicircular, brown and white conks. It causes white rot of sapwood and hardwood in roots and trunks.



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



Adult pocket gopher



Powdery mildew on crape myrtle.

*Descriptions courtesy of the University of California Statewide IPM Program*

## maintenance

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

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

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

### Communication is Key

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

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

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

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

CHILLI THRIP  
damage on roses.



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

MEALY BUG  
damage to a  
Hoya



### NATURAL ENEMIES: THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ONLINE RESOURCES

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

> University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program

[www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)

> National Plant Diagnostic Network

[www.npdn.org](http://www.npdn.org)

> University of Florida, Entomology and IPM

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

# SMART Water Solutions

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

BY KEN KRIZNER

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

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

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

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

Because of the severity of the

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

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

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

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

#### **Uniform Coverage**

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

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

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

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

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

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

sacrificed is quality of coverage in the system.”

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

### High-Tech Irrigation Controls

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

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

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

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

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

The controller receives radio, pager or Internet signals with

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

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

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

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

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

### The Economics of Conservatism

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

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

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

“If we don't voluntarily take

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


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

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

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

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

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

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



### Butterfly magnet

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

For more information, visit [www.bloomsofbressingham.com](http://www.bloomsofbressingham.com).



### Strong beauty

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



### Grows 6 to 8 ft.

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



### Blooms all summer

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



### Consistently strong blooms

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



### Pretty in Pink

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



### Rose of Sharon

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

### Ornamental strawberry

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







### Floral shade accent

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

### Metal look without the sharp edges

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

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

For more information, visit [www.olyola.com](http://www.olyola.com).



### Faster silt fence installs

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

### New Insecticide

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

For more information, visit [www.proproducts.dupont.com](http://www.proproducts.dupont.com).



### One-stop info access

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

For more information, visit [ballhort.com](http://ballhort.com).

## newproducts



### Non-corrosive edge fasteners

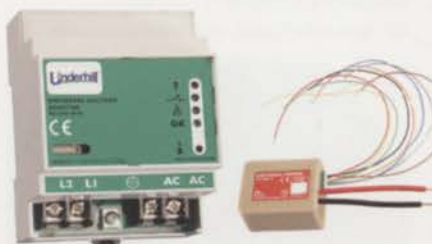
**W.P. Hickman Co.** is providing stainless steel fasteners as a standard component with all of its perimeter edge metal systems at no additional charge to customers. Stainless steel fasteners are effective in resisting the corrosive nature of Alkaline Copper Quaternary (ACQ), a wood preservative increasingly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

For more information, visit [www.wph.com](http://www.wph.com).

### Convert to two-wire

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

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



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

For more information, visit [www.underhill.us](http://www.underhill.us).

### Walk-behind trenchers

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



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

For more information, visit [www.toro.com/trx](http://www.toro.com/trx).

### Redefine Beds

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

For more information, visit [www.eztrench.com](http://www.eztrench.com).

# moreinfo

## AD INDEX

COMPANY	PAGE
Anthony Tesselaar	14
Ernst Benary	CV4
Florigem	5
Garden Market Expo	11
Goldsmith Seeds	CV2
Pine Island Growers	7
Proven Winners	CV3
OFA	21
Soaring Eagle	3
Tygar Mfg.	9

These indices are provided as an additional service. The publisher does not assume any liability for errors or omissions.

## EDITORIAL INDEX

COMPANY	PAGE
All America Rose Selections	22
American Nursery & Landscape Association	6
American Society of Landscape Architects	4, 12
American Taki	16
Anthony Tesselaar Plants	34
Armstrong Nursery	12
Ball Horticultural Co.	15, 34, 35
Benary	17
Big Trees Nursery	12
Blooms of Bressingham	33
BMLA Landscape Architects	12
Brickman Group	12
California Landscape Contractor's Association	12
Concepts in Greenery	14
Davey Tree Expert Co.	10
Decorative Stone Solutions	12
Designs for Greener Gardens	18
Ditch Witch	35
DuPont Professional Products	35
Ecke Ranch	15
E-Z Trench	36
FNGA	14

Garden Splendor	33
Gillespie Moody Patterson, Inc.	12
Goldsmith Seeds	15
Irrigation Association	31
Jackson & Perkins	15, 23
John Deere Landscapes	12
Monrovia Growers	12
North Florida Irrigation Equipment, Inc.	31
Novalis	33
OFA	8, 17
Oly-Ola Edgings	35
Orbit/Evergreen	35
Pardee Tree Nursery	12
Proven Winners	16
Rain Bird Corp.	12
Simplot Partners	12
Spring Meadow Nursery	34
Stepables	34
Syngenta Seeds	15
The Conard-Pyle Co.	23
The Toro Co.	36
Underhill	36
URI Botanical Gardens	26
ValleyCrest Companies	14
W.P. Hickman Co.	36
Weeks Roses	23

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