



LEE KRAL

earning \$110,000 a year, the *Wall Street Journal* reports. When families have to tighten their budgets, some opt to cut discretionary expenses like lawn care, says Lee Kral, lawn service manager for Mountain High Tree, Lawn & Landscape Co., Lakewood, Colo. His division constitutes about 20 percent of the company's \$7 million in annual revenue. He plans for lawn care to be up about 5 percent in 2013 over 2012, but says that may be a struggle.

"Originally I thought 2013 was going to be good," he says. "It's not looking as good as I thought it would look. A lot of people are on the fence this year. In Colorado, there's still a pretty high foreclosure rate, we've got a lot of older people and everyone recently saw the payroll tax hike take a bite out of their checks."

Plus, Kral points to Washington, D.C., specifically the series of federal spending cuts that went into effect March 1 (better known as the sequester) as a major source of uncertainty that could hurt the economy.

These federal cuts are also a concern for Rick LaNore, technical director and co-owner of MRW Lawns in La Plata, Md. Last year was a good year for his firm, but when you ask him about 2013 he says, "That depends."

"We're looking at something different this year with the sequester," he says. "We have a lot of customers in the military and government, and we're getting some phone calls from folks getting furloughed, so we're not sure how it's going to affect us."

Another concern for LCOs is complying with new restrictions and regulations, and that will be the case for LaNore later this year. Beginning in the fall, the state of

WHAT MAJOR PESTS ARE YOU COMBATTING THIS YEAR?



// The biggest thing is Emerald Ash Borer, but it's been here for a while now. They've found Asian Longhorned Beetle in some parts of southern Ohio, but we haven't dealt with it here. It's quarantined, but you do still have to pay attention."

—ANDREW ZIEHLER, *Ziehler Lawn and Tree Care / Centerville, Ohio*

// Stink bugs, although they're not supposed to be as bad this year. And the department of agriculture is going crazy about Emerald Ash Borer, but we haven't seen a big problem here yet."

—RICK LANORE, *MRW Lawns / La Plata, Md.*



// Chinch bugs are always a big concern of ours, and we also deal with mole crickets and fire ants. Plus there are the insects there's no cure for, like ground pearl and nematodes, to some degree."

—KELLY BANFIELD, *Banfield's Lawn Care & Landscaping / Pace, Fla.*

// Last year we saw chinch bugs for the first time on the North Shore of Chicago. It's hard to forecast if it'll be a problem but we're going to be proactive and try to get the insect at hatch before they actually do damage."

—BILL LEUENBERGER, *Chalet / North Chicago, Ill.*



// There's nothing out of the ordinary, it's grubs, chinch bugs and other nuisances such as weeds. And unfortunately, there's not a lot of new products for managing them. I'd like to see some new technology coming out of the chemical industry."

—JIM CAMPANELLA, *Lawn Dawg / Nashua, N.H.*

Maryland's new fertilizer law goes into effect, including a blackout period from March 1 through Dec. 1 when companies can't apply fertilizer. Historically, LaNore's company has started applications in mid-February.

Campanella has concerns about impending restrictions in several of the states in which he operates.

"The Northeast has some of the toughest regulatory controls on lawn care there are," he says.