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CONTENS \$\\ \text{SEPTEMBER 2014} \\ \text{VOL 53, ISSUE 9}



FEATURES

14 Full circle

Paul Fields leads Lambert's into its centennial with a vision to reinvent the Dallas firm by thinking ahead amid returning to its roots.

BY SARAH PFLEDDERER

ONTHE COVER
Photo by Lisa Means

COLUMNS

- 6 Editor's Note

 BY MARISA PALMIERI
- 8 Best Practices
 BY BRUCE WILSON
- 10 The Benchmark
 BY JEFF HARKNESS
- 44 Profiting from Design
 BY JODY SHILAN



DEPARTMENTS

- 7 News & Views Renewal & Remembrance
- **12 Weed Watch**Goldenrod; black mustard
- 21 Market Watch

MAINTENANCE A Texas firm focuses on excellence, giving back

IRRIGATION How one company sells water management

LAWN CARE Researchers caution LCOs about herbicide resistance DESIGN/BUILD Different ways to

handle plant warranties



46 Add-on Biz

A landscaping/fencing company adds mailbox installations.
BY CASEY PAYTON

48 LM Reports

Design software; truck/trailer equipment; engine products

52 1-Minute Mentor

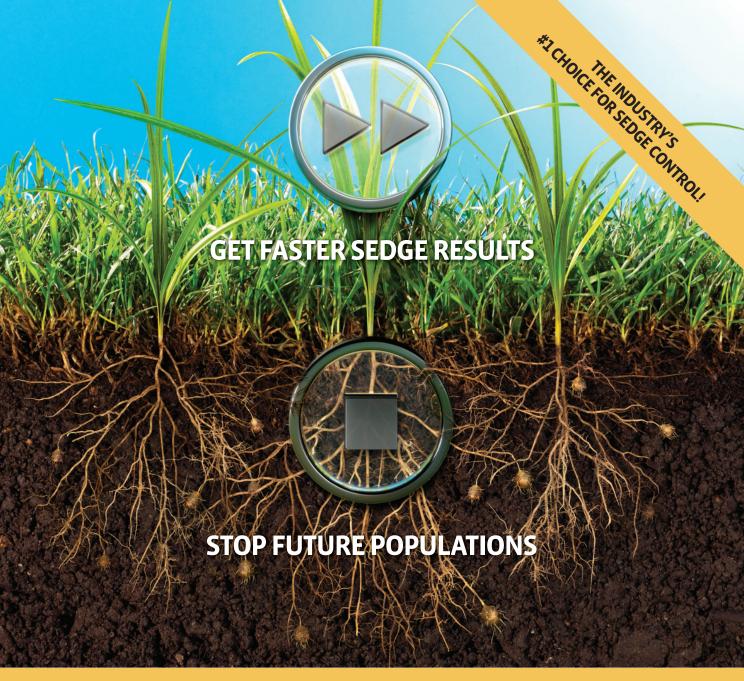
Zachary Johnson, associate professor, Colorado State BY SARAH PFLEDDERER

IN EVERY ISSUE

51 Classifieds, Resources



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Facebook Feature QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What types of community service does your company do?



- » Aaron Pope: We volunteer our free time to Green Care for the Troops, a nonprofit organization that connects military families in need with free lawn care service(s). We also do free lawn care for families we see that are in need.
 - >> Jeff McLean: My company Eco-Care Landscape Management donates monthly to our Boys & Girls Club, Coalition for Kids (and we) belong to the Home Builders Association, which has donated countless hours to our fairgrounds and other nonprofit

groups. We donate to our local schools and are a part of SOLVE.

>> Steve Hammer: Discounts to the veterans.

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@PLANET2005: MT @LandscapeMgmt: Heads up! You can win a 1978 Corvette—part of @PLANET2005's #PLANETGIC 25th anniversary. buff.ly/1p1USbN

WEB EXTRAS

Learn more from Lambert's (from page 14):

- » See samples of its marketing case studies.
- » View Lambert's award-winning advertisements
- » Flip through a photo slideshow of the company's history and projects.
- » Get the gist of the firm's organic program.

Plus:

- » Look at samples of Chris James' detailed plant warranty (from page 38).
- » Pore over a chart of common turf herbicide modes of action (from page 33).

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EDITOR'SNOTE

MARISA PALMIERI EDITOR

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Customers' voice

ave you asked your customers what they want lately?

"We don't need to do that," you might say.

"We've been at this for a long time, so we already know. Our customers want..."

Whatever your impressions are about what your clients want, are you sure they're not just that—merely impressions? When was the last time you validated or challenged those assumptions through market research?

I learned firsthand how powerful an in-depth customer study can be these past few months as we conducted the most comprehensive research project in the history of *Landscape Management*. We've done many studies over the years, including quick opinion polls and extensive Industry Pulse surveys, but we'd never before conducted a full-fledged "voice of the customer" research project.

In our case, the customers are *you*: readers of the magazine and our associated online content. What you told us during our multiphase research project is invaluable, and you'll see the results of what we learned next month when we debut an all-new *LM*.

I don't want to give away too much before the unveiling of our redesigned magazine and brand in October, but I do want to encourage you to think about doing some research of your own.

"We don't have a budget for that," you might say. You don't necessarily need one. What you do need is a point person on your team, patience and willingness to learn something new—and readiness to act on the results.

There are all kinds of resources available to get started on customer research, ranging from a basic list of questions to highly technical ways of ranking the results. Whatever path you choose, based on our experience, I highly recommend you include both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Two-pronged approach

We conducted qualitative research (reader interviews and a focus group) in addition to a quantitative online survey. The qualitative methods helped us understand what we do well and what we could improve. They also brought to light a few good ideas we hadn't yet considered that we were eager to learn more about. That said, we didn't just implement what this small sample size revealed to us. We used the information to drive our quantitative online survey (which went to a much larger group) to get consensus. Some findings from the qualitative portions held up in the online survey; others faded away.

The point is that focus groups, customer advisory boards and client interviews are all good ways to gather information, but be wary of the vocal minority. Be sure to test findings from qualitative methods with a bigger pool. Likewise, an online survey works well, but the questions you pull from a template or come up with off the top of your head aren't nearly as deep or useful as the topics you'll consider if you first ask a group of customers about their likes, dislikes and unmet needs.

Both methods, working together, will help you get to the heart of the customers' voice.

Landscape Management

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NEWSHIS

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

PLANET volunteers return to **Arlington National Cemetery**

he Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) hosted its 18th annual Renewal & Remembrance event July 28 at Arlington National Cemetery.

The beautification effort drew hundreds of landscape industry volunteers from around the U.S. for a day to apply lime and gypsum, aerate, plant and do tree and irrigation work to roughly 180 acres of the cemetery's grounds.

U.S. Army Captain Andy Jenks, a chaplain, may have best conveyed the volunteers' sentiments about the importance of the event in his invocation during the opening ceremony. He said, "We serve those here today because they served."

Denoted as "the largest landscape industry day of service in the country," according to PLANET, this year and for the past several years, organizers have capped the attendance due to capacity restrictions. Now, the max is 400 and it's a sell-out every year.

In total PLANET volunteers applied 78 tons of lime to 180 acres; applied 22.5 tons of gypsum to 86 acres; aerated 50 acres; installed lightning protection to



Mike Spatz of

Moyer Indoor

Outdoor fills

five trees and cables to seven trees, among other services.

a spreader "As the cemetery with lime. marks its 150th anniversary this year, it is national treasure for future generations," PLANET President Jim McCutcheon said. "It is the least we can do, as the landscape and lawn care industry, to help care for these sacred grounds."

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BESTPRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

The author, of the Wilson-Oyler Group, is a 30-year industry veteran. Reach him at bwilson@wilson-oyler.com.

Managing seasonal labor transitions

abor is, as we all know, the single largest cost on a maintenance company's financial statement. With that in mind, it's imperative to implement good management strategies for reducing labor.

There are two labor transition cycles for a warmseason company and three for a cool-season company.

To keep it simple, a warm-season company's two seasons of transition are spring and fall. In most Sun Belt markets, contractors provide landscape maintenance services to their customers' properties for a full 12 months of the year. Labor is at its lowest in winter due to reduced service frequency.

Fall, in particular, presents an opportunity to reduce labor gradually as weather cools, days get shorter and plant/turf growth slows. When it comes to replacing seasonal workers, I recommend not replacing people who leave beginning in September. Most operations managers are slow to do layoffs. Frankly, no one really likes making them, so it's natural to procrastinate and justify keeping employees on longer than they're needed. If you find yourself short-handed, overtime can be used cost effectively.

The benefit of not replacing people who leave during the fall is it reduces the number of people who must be laid off. When the labor market tightens up,

LABOR CURVE

% Labor	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
100												
90												
80												
70												
60												
50							•	•				
40					• •	• •			• •	•		
30			•	• •			•	•		•	•	
20	•	•	•								•	•
10	•	•										•
0												

Blue: Cool-season firms Green: Warm-season firms

laying people off becomes problematic. It's hard to find reliable, experienced crew members in the spring hiring season. Some companies have started to reduce hours, instituting four-day workweeks, seven-hour days or a hiatus at the holidays as alternatives to layoffs. This is becoming more common, and employees are beginning to expect it.

For cool-season or snow belt contractors, the landscape maintenance service cycle comes to a halt once temperatures drop and snow and ice set in. Since weather is unpredictable, snow contractors must manage the process carefully and aggressively. The downside could be a lack of trained crews for snow removal if too many people have been laid off.

The spring transition for warm-season companies is easier to manage than for snow belt companies, but it's just as important. "When do you gear up?" is the big question. I always have felt that the longer you can hold out on expanding your crews, the less labor you will use during the long, hot summer. Ensuring nonroutine tasks such as planting, mulching and pruning don't overlap is crucial to keeping labor costs in check.

For snow belt companies facing harsh weather patterns, strategically managing labor can be a challenge—especially when winter lingers into April and it becomes nearly impossible to prevent nonroutine tasks from overlapping. When this happens, take care not to gear up too fast and then not be able to deliver service due to weather.

Managing seasonal transitions is a balancing act and takes an experienced eye and sensible planning. That prep includes devising a contingency plan for emergencies or unexpected storms. Most companies fail to do the necessary planning then regret it when their profits are devoured by overtime.

For snow belt companies, the workload drops during mid-summer. July and August therefore provide an opportunity to manage the labor transition and not compromise costs. With September's rampup period, widespread layoffs during July/August are a bad idea. Instead, stretch your dollars by reducing hours or creating four-day weeks.



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THEBENCHMARK

JEFF HARKNESS

The author is owner-manager of 3PG Consulting. Reach him at jeff@3PGconsulting.com.

Teaching character and process

'm watching a transformation happen in a client's business. It's exciting to see. We started this phenomenon with a simple decision to invest in training our staff and weeding out the people on the team with poor character. It sounds simple, but all too often it's overlooked due to time constraints, bad hiring practices, tight purse strings or a sheer bull-headed owner mindset.

The biggest difference between the Green Industry and corporate America is management talent; more specifically, the dollars and commitment corporations make to develop leaders and create a culture where people want to come to work.

When done right, the results can be immediate, stabilizing your labor force and changing the culture of your company. While you're working and waiting for immigration reform and a better guest worker visa program, focus on coaching up the staff you have. Get the right people on the bus and invest in them. Start with this paradigm shift in your thinking:

A. There's too much emphasis on teaching goals and results and not enough focus on process. A goal is defined as "the result to which effort is aimed." Thus, owners and managers are conditioned to focus on results. Keep score. We, as consultants, are guilty of focusing too much on results.

Yes, each company has requirements for labor management, profit and cash flow, but managers and owners can become completely overwhelmed by meeting metrics. This leads to daily stress, anxiety

Managers will fail. You, as an owner, will have to deal with it. They need to learn from their failures.

and pressure that are neither healthy nor sustainable. The key is to focus on effort or, more importantly, the process to which one achieves results.

Are your processes efficient? Can technology help? What are people focused on, and where are they spending time? Processes that must be improved are:

- Tracking, routing and qualifying leads and sales opportunities;
- > Estimating, purchase orders and work orders;
- Scheduling and routing;
- > Safety;
- > Equipment and fleet programs;
- > Quality control and communication about issues;
- > Job costing and labor management; and
- > Individual communication, work habits and focus.

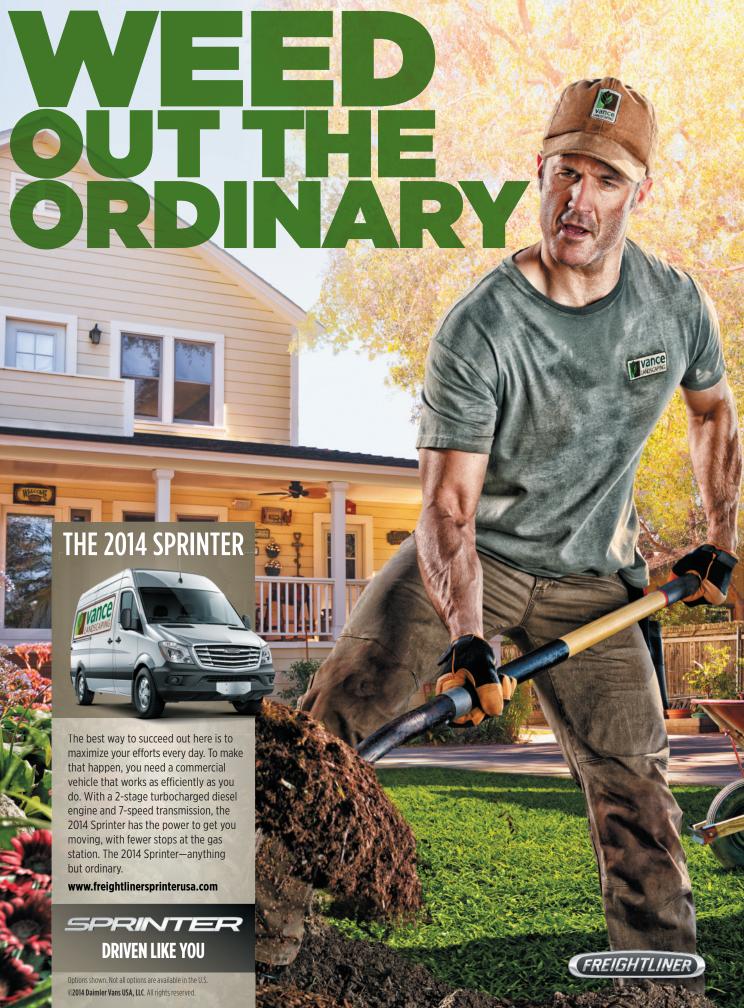
B. You need people with good character on your team to drive the processes described above. How do you rate your current staff? Is it time to upgrade and replace some managers? I like to grade people on two types of character: performance and moral. Rate each person on a 1-5 scale.

Performance: Hard working, competitive, positive, focused, accountable, resilient, confident, energetic and disciplined.

Moral: Unselfish, honest, respectful, appreciative, humble, loyal, trustworthy, encouraging, caring and socially aware.

The conclusion here is character drives your processes, and processes drive results. Everyone is so focused on results that they forget about character and processes. You can strive to be among the best and most profitable companies in your area, but there's a process to get there; you must focus on that.

Take note. Managers will fail. You, as an owner, will have to deal with it. They need to learn from their failures. After each win or loss make them ask themselves: What did we do well and why? What can we do better and how? It's a people business out there. Work on coaching yours well.



WEEDWATCH

STANDING SENTINEL TO PROTECT PLANT HEALTH



GOLDENROD

Solidago spp.

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- > This genus consists of more than 65 species. Most are herbaceous perennials found in open areas.
- > Goldenrod often grows in patches. In many cases, a colony of plants is a clone of a single plant.
- > Stems are erect and slender, and can grow up to 8 ft. tall. Long, narrow leaves alternate along the stem.
- Most are identified by golden inflorescences clustered on long stalks. Goldenrod usually blooms in late summer or early fall.

CONTROL TIPS

- > Goldenrod is a very effective colonizer. Wind-blown seeds can widely disperse and quickly establish in bare soil or places where competition from other plants is light.
- After the first flower buds form and before the first flower opens, apply a systemic foliar herbicide, which moves down through the plant and injures the root system.
- > Products containing clopyralid or triclopyr work well.



Brassica nigra

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- Also known as shortpod mustard, this winter annual grows profusely and produces allelopathic chemicals that prevent germination of native plants.
- > Stems grow erect, with a slight covering of stiff hairs on the lower portion and a smooth top half.
- Leaves do not clasp around the stem. Lower leaves are lobed; upper leaves are toothed.
- > Flowers resemble other Brassica or Cruciferae

species, having four bright yellow petals.

CONTROL TIPS

- > To prevent black mustard, apply a preemergent herbicide containing isoxaben in late summer or early fall, prior to germination.
- A postemergent product containing triclopyr may be applied to small and actively growing plants.
- > Ensure good drainage, as black mustard prefers moist soil. Proper mowing height and fertility also can help prevent establishment in turfgrass.

For more information regarding these and other turf weeds — and related control technologies and tips — please visit www.DowProvesIt.com or call 800/255-3726.



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Paul Fields leads Lambert's into its centennial with a vision to reinvent the Dallas firm by thinking ahead amid returning to its roots. BY **SARAH PFLEDDERER** LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET | SEPTEMBER 2014



founders would huddle around the conference room table, a repurposed wooden door from one of the company's first facilities. Stan Wetzel, the company's second owner, and

adopted for some of its clothing collections. The

and department store Neiman Marcus later

Undoubtedly, all eyes would turn to Fields, current co-owner, president and design lead, who has overseen Lambert's development into a more than \$15 million firm, with a split focus in design/build and maintenance, plus a tree care division.

In his calm and collected demeanor, the Tennessee native would assure the company's priorities are intact: The novel designs and concierge-style residential customer service the Lambert brothers breathed into it many years

ago remains. Additionally, the firm still is committed to an organic approach, the way Wetzel left it.

Paul Fields would join them.

"None of the owners bought this company from the perspective of profit, first and foremost," Fields says. "It's all been about the quality of product and the level of customer service we offer. That's one of the things that's really a differentiator in Lambert's and the reason we've been successful."



While that success is nowhere near dwindling, Fields hopes to skyrocket it with his intended mark on the company: The creation and execution of its first strategic plan.

From left: Gordon, Henry, Joe Jr. and Joe Sr. Lambert

The strategy is twofold, one part modern and one part revival.

The first part is to create a proactive sales division and modernize marketing efforts to tap into new clients.

The second is to introduce new and retired business segments to the Lambert's brand to complement the landscaping company.

Above all else, Fields' vision is to structure the company so it can be sustained and continue to grow for generations to come, all the while keeping its reputation unblemished—a reputation that began with a phone call from Dallas to Shreveport, La., sometime in the mid-1930s.

FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT

Joe Lambert Sr., who founded the company in Shreveport in 1919, instructed his sons, Joe and Henry Lambert, to tend to a prospective customer in Dallas. The prospects, who came from

> a word-of-mouth referral, wanted a flower planted on their property that had never been grown in Dallas before: azaleas.

"It was a success and so much so that over the course of the next years people started coming to see this big planting of azaleas. Busloads of people started coming by," Fields says. "It got so popular in the spring that the Dallas



COMPANY: Lambert's Landscape Co.

LOCATION: Dallas

2013 ANNUAL REVENUE: \$15.4 million

PROFIT CENTERS: 43% design/build; 42% maintenance; 12% tree care; 2% irrigation; 1% lawn care

OWNERSHIP HISTORY: Joe and Henry Lambert (1919-1980); Stan Wetzel (1980-2005); Paul Fields and Dan Morgan (2005-present) police department set up at intersections to direct the traffic."

From that project, the Lambert brothers set up shop in Dallas. At the time the brand had a few businesses under it, including the landscaping company—now formally referred to as Lambert Landscape Co.—and a garden shop that was a weekend destination for family picnics and a natural playground for children.

In 1980, Wetzel, a real estate man, Lambert's client and member of its board of directors, bought the firm. He ushered it into a totally organic organization, going "cold turkey" in 1989 (see Web Extra).

Fields, a student at Mississippi State University at the time, was in his third summer internship at Lambert's and recalls all synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers being disposed of in a single weekend. He was permanently hired on at the end of that summer.

Sixteen years later, in 2005, Fields and two other managers, Dan Morgan, who is still a co-owner, and Walter Dahlberg purchased Lambert's.

Like his predecessors, Fields had more of an appreciation for landscape design than running a business, but he was able to channel that artistic mentality into what's now his vision for Lambert's.

"When we bought the company I felt like there should be a lot more opportunity for people to grow within the organization," Fields says. "We weren't really set up to provide those opportunities."

And he admits he wasn't able to provide them.

"Looking back at the history of Lambert's, we never really had a strong business-minded background and

WEB EXTRAS

>> See samples of Lambert's marketing case studies.

>> Check out Lambert's updated advertisements, which were awarded a *D Magazine* Creative Award for best brand advertising in 2013-2014.

>> Flip through a photo slideshow on Lambert's company history and see more of its projects.

>> Learn about the company's organic program, including how its rainwater cistern brews out compost tea.

leadership position," Fields says. "We wanted to have someone who could come in to help run the operations."

Peek into the office door across from that "Lambert green" conference room and you'll see that void has been filled by COO Theresa Austin. She joined the firm in 2012 after serving as its independent consultant a few years prior.

With a background in global management and an Air Force veteran, she's the executor, so to speak, for Fields' vision and the one who's translated it into a strategic plan.

STRUCTURED SALES GROWTH

Austin is shifting the company internally into a more traditional business structure, instilling a corporate mindset. She refers to the process as "change management," moving the company into a future state based on its vision. She's had to tweak operations delicately, though, as to not bruise the reputation that has served Lambert's so well.

"(Fields) doesn't want that corporate culture that's hierarchal," she says. "He wants people to be as passionate and wanting to be there as much as he does. If we lose sight of that, we're not Lambert's anymore."

For most of its livelihood, Lambert's gained leads by word-of-mouth referrals—90 percent from this method, Fields says. It's a business built by waiting for the phone to ring.

"The company never really had a sales force since I've been here," Fields says. "We've always focused on the product, taking care of the client."

As a part of its strategic plan, Lambert's has become more proactive in sales. To do that, it first had to create a sales division. Specifically, it had to divide production and sales roles.

Austin facilitated the separation Jan. 31, leveraging her lean management philosophy to create continuous improvement teams (CITs) to examine the company's internal and external problems and how those could be quelled to better serve clients. The CITs then figured the standard operating procedures in each production unit.

From there, the descriptions for the sales positions were created, and interested employees applied.

The new sales force takes the same consultative approach with clients as the company always has. The proactive angle comes from the team encouraging clients to place their orders earlier for upcoming seasons to secure the revenue stream. They don't focus on upselling.

Also, Austin gives the sales employees cultural training on how to communicate with the rising diversity in Dallas as a result of the economic downturn. Because Dallas was not hit as badly during that time as other parts of the country, many corporations moved their headquarters there and brought with them a flood of residential prospects for Lambert's. To tap into those prospects, the company has had to get a hold on how newcomers value gardens differently or not as highly as Lambert's long-time clients.

"You need to know your client and where they find the value (in your service)," Austin says. "We have to be a little more aware and understanding, so that's where that consulting comes in."

Still, Lambert's continues to nurture existing clientele who are, for the most part, high-end homeowners in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex.

For some perspective, Lambert's maintains more than 250 homes in Highland Park, an estate-populated Dallas suburb, or the "Beverly Hills" of Texas, as Austin puts it.

MODERNIZED MARKETING

From a manager's viewpoint, Director of Construction Services Jodi Joseph compares Lambert's level of service to "juggling chainsaws."

"You have to have a balance of being able to accomplish what you need to accomplish to keep that person happy but not upset the applecart," Joseph says of serving the "elite."

Lambert's has made a name for itself by serving those clients and by the professional product it provides them. But being tagged as the firm that caters to the elite has, in recent times, become a burden, too.



FULL CIRCLE

"Too many people for too long thought Lambert's dealt with huge estates and that's the only thing we do," says Judson Griggs, director of sales and marketing. "Lambert's is too expensive for us,' or 'My grandparents used them; my parents used them; I want someone cutting edge,' they'd say."

To that end, and in hand with its ramped up sales process, Lambert's rolled out an award-winning marketing campaign last November to address those concerns. It created case studies, or project examples, for clients to view and gauge the company's service offerings from a style and price point (see Web Extras).

The notion, Griggs says, is to market the lesser-known side of Lambert's. That it does price projects at, say, \$2,000, and it can deliver younger generations the innovative styles they desire.

"We want to stay ahead and create new opportunities, forge new trails and not let the competition overtake us," Griggs says. "We don't want to become irrelevant."

And he has proof the marketing effort has done that, noting sales have increased nearly 24 percent this June over June 2013.

An on-track sales and marketing initiative just skims the surface of the strategic plan, though. The rest reinforces the parts of the firm that have endured time and pulls out of retirement parts that have been laid to rest.



REVIVING THE PAST

Though he wasn't around to experience it, Fields speaks well of the company's old garden shop, the one located off Interstate 635 that was wall to wall with families and children on the weekends.

"That's one of the things Lambert's was really known for was our garden shop," he says.

That shop is one of the business segments Lambert's intends to bring back through its strategic plan, as well as a continued on page 20



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FULL CIRCLE

From one leader to another

Jud Griggs on finding focus: "One of the main things I tell smaller companies is stay focused on what you're really good at. We know residential design, construction and maintenance. When you're a small company, it's so easy to say yes to everything that comes in. But sometimes saying yes to the wrong thing, you stub your toe and you get a bad reputation."





Theresa Austin on serving an "elite" clientele: "It's a different level of service. We truly have a consultative service. That is our selling approach. It's very meticulous. People need to be comfortable interacting with people who live on a \$20 million estate or in a \$200.000 home."

Jodi Joseph on best practices: "Best practices, processes and procedures, those are important all the way down, especially if you're smaller and want to grow. It's very important to establish those earlier on and stay true to them. That's when things get chaotic is when you get outside of those parameters."





Paul Fields on the Lambert's way: "The one underlying theme all the way across is we look at our product, the gardens we build and maintain, as an art form first and foremost. It's about doing what's best, design-wise, what's best for the client and then we try to figure out how to make a profit."

continued from page 18

tree farm that has sat idle for several years and a retail business for garden furniture. Hence, there will be four businesses under the Lambert's brand, including the landscaping company, to boost profitability.

With that game plan still in the making, Fields says further details will be unveiled nearer to Lambert's centennial in 2019 as part of an initiative tagged "Lambert's 2.0."

Even as the company's circling back to its roots, it's all part of an evolution, Austin says.

"Paul wants to grow this company," she says. "He wants to grow the company so it can continue to be relevant, become a more visual leader that accepts the responsibility that every generation currently in power has an obligation to the next."

And while his vision has played out only recently, Fields had a grasp on it ages ago. At least 25 years ago, that is, the day he was put on the payroll full-time at Lambert's.

"Where do you see yourself ultimately going in Lambert's?" Fields recalls Wetzel asking him in his interview. "I kind of laughed and said, 'Well, I want to be sitting in your chair."

MAINTENANCE

IRRIGATION

LAWN CARE

DESIGN/BUILD

PG 24

PG 29

PG 33

PG 38

MARKEMATC



The State of the Green Industry: **Big Changes, Bigger Opportunities.**

Now is the Time for Landscape Contractors to Position Themselves for Success.

It's a great time to be in the landscape contracting business! Recently, the biggest merger in the history of our industry, along with increased attention from private equity groups, has created a new industry giant that spans the North American continent. Some see this state of affairs as a threat to their businesses and the influx of investment capital as difficult to compete against. Others see a world of opportunity opening up to them, believing they will emerge stronger as an independent local company by picking up fallout business from a less agile "corporate giant." And some contractors will see the financial and business advantages of growing, either by merging with other contractors or becoming part of a franchise. The point is, the Green Industry IS changing, creating challenges for some - and huge opportunities for companies positioned to take advantage of those changes.

How to Make a Strong Company Stronger.

What does the future hold for YOUR company? Tomorrow's success belongs to those who recognize opportunity and take the initiative to seize it. Quite frankly, there's really never been a better time to be in the Green Industry because of the range of opportunities for success available.

There are contractors who will choose to sell their company outright, merge with another firm, or form a strategic partnership with the aid of investor money. This path may allow them to grow more quickly, add resources, or expand geographically in ways they might never have otherwise accomplished. Others, recognizing the need for formal practices and systems within their own business, may choose to become part of a larger community of businesses operating according to common procedures and benefitting from the knowledge base that comes with a nationally-recognized common identity.

But there is another pool of landscape contractors that can gain the most from a slightly different path — one that builds on their experience and knowledge while also letting them maintain their independence. These are successful, well-established contractors whose identity and reputation for great work and exceptional quality has earned them a place at the top in their markets. They also understand that consistent growth can be a struggle and are looking for ways to make their businesses

more systematic, ensure stability in a changing market, and become more business-focused so that they can continue to grow and thrive. For businesses like this, the option is LandOpt.



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The LandOpt Advantage.

While allowing businesses in the Green Industry to maintain ownership and their unique identity, LandOpt specializes in working with strong, established, independently-owned landscape contractors to help them plan the growth and success of their businesses for today and tomorrow. Along the way, LandOpt shows them how to increase their profitability, cash flow, and revenue — regardless of outside influences such as the weather or the up-and-down economy. Perhaps best of all, they become a part of the Powered by LandOpt Network, a non-competitive group of leading landscape contractors who freely share their experience and expertise with other network members for the benefit of all.

A Long-Term Relationship That Benefits Everyone.

As Tim Smith, LandOpt CEO sees it, "Today, continuing success means being committed to raising the bar on business performance and flexibility to new levels – permanently. LandOpt gives our contractors the power to do just that." Powered by LandOpt Contractors learn a new and better way of doing business, delivered in a staged and manageable way, that allows the business to run as usual while transformation progresses. LandOpt introduces contractors to the LandOpt System – tools and processes designed to institute permanent, beneficial changes to every aspect of their business.

This "whole-business" approach addresses everything from Sales and Operations to

Human Resources and Management. It includes a proactive sales approach as well as a specific financial planning process. It shares tools developed to track costs, profits, and margins. It provides detail and tools to properly recruit, hire, and train team members. And it specifically defines responsibility - so every member of a LandOpt Contractor's team knows exactly what their role is and has the confidence to do it to the best of their ability. There's no more duplication of effort or bottlenecks in the process. The business becomes proactive instead of reactive, helping satisfy existing customers and gain new ones. The owner will have the confidence to empower his or her team, eliminating micro-management. And the business model is exceptionally scalable, helping businesses grow and prosper on a continuing basis.

You Win By Focusing on The Three P's.

LandOpt makes it all happen by focusing on The Three P's: profitability, predictability, and professionalism. LandOpt ensures that Powered by LandOpt Contractors demonstrate the very highest levels of professionalism and customer service via ongoing coaching and support by the Success Coaching team. This builds customer satisfaction and the repeat business that comes with it. LandOpt Contractors learn how to develop a REAL plan for continuing business growth, with set goals and the proven methodology to achieve them. In fact, many LandOpt contractors proactively secure the majority of their next year's revenue by January 1st, minimizing the dreaded "revenue anxiety" many contractors face each year. And most LandOpt Contractor businesses return a net profit that's much higher than the industry average. So it seems we must be doing something right.

Make A Plan For Success.

Taking advantage of opportunities in today's Green Industry can mean the difference between growth and success in your business and...everything else. Check out the advantages you could realize as a Powered by LandOpt Contractor. LandOpt has the tools, training, and technology to give your business a real competitive advantage, today and tomorrow.

To learn more, visit LandOpt's website: www.landopt.com or contact them directly at 412.567.4345.

"I don't want to feel like my business is running me."



LandOpt provides the proven tools, training, and technology to increase the strength of your business.

It's just overwhelming! You have to meet with clients, agonize over budgets, make sure that new piece of equipment is working...and your cell phone seems glued to your hand. It sure would be nice if you could trust that everything would work without your personal involvement all the time. It DOES if you're a Powered by LandOpt Contractor.

LandOpt specializes in working with established, independently owned landscape contractors across the U.S., giving you a powerful, proven system that defines roles, systems, and processes while allowing you to maintain your business identity and ownership. Our unique business model, tools, and intensive training ensure that everyone on your team knows exactly what role they play – and can do so with confidence.

We eliminate micromanagement and duplication of effort, so your business runs more smoothly with the strength to grow and prosper.

Learn to work ON your business, not IN it. Contact us today and see how you can become a Powered by LandOpt Contractor. Then, put down that cell phone and relax for a change.









Howdy, partner

A Texas company's focus on partnerships inspires growth and goodwill in the communities it serves. By EMILY SCHAPPACHER

o Rick Onstott, president of The
Landscape Partners, a company is a
lot like a three-legged stool. "If one of
the three legs is broken, the stool will
fall down," he says.

It's that mentality that inspires The Landscape Partners' mission to deliver great quality, great service and great value to all of its customers. As stated prominently on the Fort Worth, Texas-based company's website, The Landscape Partners ultimately aims to leave the world a little bit better than it found it by maintaining beautiful landscapes and supporting those in the areas it serves.

The company's name has an underlying meaning that defines the way it strives to operate. By being more than just a service provider, The Landscape Partners can make a bigger impact in the lives of its customers and their communities.

"We wanted to have a partnership that went beyond the legal definition of 'partnership' with our customers, suppliers and with the people in the communities in which we do business," says CEO David Minor. "For us, that is the formula for success." The Landscape Partners opened its doors in fall 2003. Started by Onstott, Minor and two other founders who since have left the company, the group touted a combined 75 years of landscape industry experience. The \$8 million company has branches in Dallas and Oklahoma City, and offers landscape management services to a nearly 100-percent commercial clientele. While a few acquisitions have helped bolster its growth, overall the business has grown organically. Onstott believes staying true to the company's mission and valuing its partnerships have played big roles in its success over the years.

"Most significantly, what's contributed to our growth has been establishing a game plan from the very beginning, monitoring and adjusting that plan, and continuing to move forward," he says.

This drive helped The Landscape Partners garner the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award in 2013. The Landscape Partners won in the category of businesses with 50 to 150 employees and was selected from 94 nominees and 38 applicants. Each finalist was judged in several areas—including business continued on page 26

(From left) David Minor, president, and Rick Onstott, CEO, opened Fort Worth-based The Landscape Partners in 2003. The Landscape Landscape Partners in 2003. The Landscape Lan

The Ticker:

MAINTENANCE

U.S. Lawns inducted two franchise owners into its Hall of Fame: Steve and Teana Ferguson, husband and wife franchisees in Hampton Roads, Va.



ABM rebranded One-Source Landscape & Golf Services to ABM Landscape & Turf Services. ABM acquired OneSource in 2007. President Dale Elkins will continue to lead the business through the rebrand.



OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT
INSTITUTE

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute

named its 2014-2015 officers and board of directors, tagging Paul Mullet of **Excel Industries** as chairman; Lee Sowell of **Techtronic Industries Co.** as vice chair; and Tim Merrett of **Deere & Co.** as secretary/treasurer.



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MARKETWATCH

continued from page 24 growth and performance, customer service strategies and community involvement—by a panel of Fort Worth business owners and top entrepreneurial students from a local business school.

The Landscape Partners has incorporated the accolade into its marketing materials and promotes it in public relations scenarios.

While Onstott says his

company was fortunate to win and it was an honor to be chosen for the award by its peers, he also views the recognition as a testament to the company's hard work and solid values.

"Internally, we always thought we had a great company, but the award validated for us that people beyond our four walls see it as we do," he says. "What it says to me is we're credible."

The Landscape Partners' community involvement is just as notable as its small business prowess. In 2012, the company introduced its TLP Gives Back program, a key aspect of its overall company rebranding strategy. Through TLP Gives Back, the company donates \$100 to a nonprofit whenever a prospective client requests a commercial landscape maintenance proposal. After a potential client reaches out, a company representative visits the



The Landscape Partners earned the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award in 2013. property to discuss the client's needs, then schedules a follow-up visit to review the proposal.

The Landscape Partners leaves clients with a form listing 195 nonprofits they can give to, along with an envelope addressed to the United Way. Once the United Way receives the form, it sends the donation to the designated nonprofit and an invoice to The Landscape Partners. Even better for prospects, the company makes the donation

regardless of whether a customer accepts the proposal or not.

"When you start building a business and you're blowing and going and putting out fires, sometimes you don't focus on your branding," Minor says. "We thought, 'What can we do to send a message that this is what we're all about?""

Since the program's inception, The Landscape Partners has donated more than \$34,000 to nonprofit organizations. While the company views the initiative as being successful, it has come with challenges. Minor says a surprising number of customers don't follow through with selecting a nonprofit and sending the form to United Way. The Landscape Partners had to implement a callback process to remind customers to fulfill

continued on page 28

The Goods:

MAINTENANCE

BLOSSMAN SERVICES ENERKIT SMALL-ENGINE SYSTEMS

Manufactured by BSI's small engine division, this propane mower conversion kit is EPA certified for six Kawasaki engines.

FEATURING...

The kit includes – a tamper-proof regulator and duel venture mixer.



RANGING CERTS

Engine CERTS are for model years 2008-2014 with hp ranges of 15.5-25.5.

PERC PERKS

Get a \$500 incentive through the Propane Education & Research Council Mower Incentive Program.





Innovation you can apply.

MARKETWATCH

The Landscape Partners serves nearly all commercial clients.

continued from page 26 their part of the deal. If customers don't act by the end of the year, The Landscape Partners chooses the organization and makes the donation in their honor.

Minor says the firm also is considering assembling a committee of employees who will decide where to send the donations that are unaccounted for.



"This idea was conceived as a way to give back to the community, while at the same time hopefully creating more bid opportunities," Minor says. "We do it in part because we want to generate business, but the more business we generate, the more we can give back."

TLP Gives Back isn't the company's only philanthropic effort. The Landscape Partners is one of eleven platinum ambassadors of the Professional Landcare Network Academic Excellence Foundation, pledging \$50,000 to the fund that supports efforts to recruit professionals into the landscape industry and grants scholarships to students in landscape-related programs. The Landscape Partners also is generous with local efforts, such as recent fundraising events at a children's hospital.

While the company's future looks bright, Onstott and Minor realize challenges are on the horizon. The Affordable Care Act is one issue raising some questions about employee compensation that they simply don't have the answers to just yet. The ongoing battle with immigration reform and the H-2B guest-worker visa program is another situation that could impact the company's staffing model. But, as Minor's father used to say, nothing good comes easily, so The Landscape Partners will continue to move forward, striving to reach its goals.

"Problems are opportunities in disguise, and the strong—whether in the landscape industry or any industry—will survive," Minor says. "At the end of the day, everything we do is focused on our mission. That is what really drives us."

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Charlotte, N.C.



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The secret to selling water management

Liquid Technologies uses everything from drones to detailed irrigation audits to sell its water management services. By JONATHAN KATZ

hris Husband wanted a new toy.
And not just any toy—a drone. His friend had used a drone to film his Southern California fishing adventures, and this spring the video caught Husband's attention at just the right time.

Husband, co-owner and president of Glendale, Ariz.-based Liquid Technologies, wanted to produce a marketing video to impress a potential client for his irrigation business. The man was the president of a homeowners association (HOA). He also happened to own a visual marketing firm.

So Husband bought a drone and dazzled the HOA president with something he could

appreciate: a marketing video featuring dronecaptured aerial footage of the community.

Husband shot the video Memorial Day. By mid-July, about seven weeks later, Liquid Technologies secured a 12-month management agreement with the HOA and was installing controllers on the property.

Husband and his Liquid Technologies partner, Co-owner Tom Foley, now use the drone video to pitch the concept of wise water management to landscape contractors, commercial clients and high-end property owners. In Arizona, where water resources are scarce, water conservation is crucial. Nonetheless, getting clients to understand the importance of water management isn't easy and requires a strategic and innovative marketing approach.

Husband and Foley continue to build Liquid Technologies' client base, and the burgeoning company, founded in 2012, turned its first profit in 2013 on revenue of about \$300,000, Husband says.

continued on page 32



The Ticker:

IRRIGATION

John Deere
Landscapes (JDL)
completed its first
acquisition in Hawaii,
purchasing Diamond
Head Sprinkler Supply. The landscape distribution center, which
has three locations on
the islands, will operate
as a JDL location under
its existing name.

California tightened its water restrictions, with the State Water Resources Control Board instating new 270-day regulations July 15 that deemed it illegal for landscape irrigation to flood off of properties, among other restrictions. Moreover, the cities of Redding and Shasta Lake regulated their hours and parameters for outdoor water use. The statewide regulations and municipal rules are punishable by fine, if violated.

The Toro Co. partnered with the Wyland Foundation to host the National "Water Is Life" Classroom Mural and Art Contest for students. Winning classrooms receive artwork by Robert Wyland and a \$250 grant for supplies.

The Benefits of Upgrading to a **WORK UTV**

tility vehicles have been part of lawn care professionals' and property managers' fleets for many years and have proven to be a resource for hauling cargo and transporting people. Utility vehicles of today, however, can be so much more.

While there's an upfront cost to upgrading to a state-of-the-art work utility vehicle, the long-term benefits can far outweigh this initial investment. Professionals may be surprised at just how much using an outdated utility vehicle could be costing them.

Updated capabilities

Utility vehicles today are so much more innovative than their counterparts from 15, 10 or even five years ago. Technological advancements such as the integration of commercial attachments through a frontend power take-off (PTO) system have made it possible for utility vehicles to be true job site partners.

Joe Kavalec, chief operating officer of Kavalec Property Management LTD. (KPM), knows firsthand the value utility vehicles can provide. When it came time to replace the outdated and clunky utility vehicle at his 25-acre property account,

St. John Bosco Catholic Church in Parma Heights, Ohio, he spent nearly a year searching for the right fit.

Kavalec finally stopped at Cleveland's All Ohio Motorsports to see what Polaris® models could suit his needs. "I was familiar with the *RANGER* line, but after describing what I was looking for, the dealer showed me the new BRUTUS® line of commercial utility vehicles."

In addition to hauling up to 1,250 pounds in its rear pallet-sized cargo box and towing up to one ton, the Polaris





KPM CUT ITS SNOW REMOVAL TIME IN HALF BY USING BRUTUS



INCREASED 3X WITH BRUTUS



KPM'S WORKERS HAVE LOGGED 750 HOURS USING BRUTUS IN JUST THE FIRST 6 MONTHS BRUTUS HDPTO makes it possible to execute several additional applications through the use of hydraulically and PTO-powered front attachments.

Three PTO-powered attachments – an angle broom, a snow blower and a finishing mower – are driven directly from the vehicle's 24-horsepower diesel engine.

The BRUTUS HDPTO also operates four hydraulically-powered attachments – a snow blade, adjustable width pallet forks, a materials bucket and a grapple to work in conjunction with the materials bucket – that can also be used on the BRUTUS HD model.

"The fact there are several implements available was very attractive," Kavalec says. "I may have only purchased two, but there are others I can get in the future."

Benefits outweigh initial investment

While purchasing a work utility vehicle may be a significant investment, as Kavalec experienced, the benefits of purchasing a purpose-built vehicle that can execute several tasks will quickly outweigh the initial cost.

"My guy has cut his snow removal time in half from the old machine," he says. "With the BRUTUS, all of the controls are

inside the cab, whereas before he'd have to jump off and change the angle of the snow blade. The treadle pedal also saved a lot of time as with the old machine he'd have to stop, change gears, and then go."

Not only will the best work utility vehicles be more versatile and capable than older models, they should also be more comfortable. A fully-enclosed cab with heating, air conditioning and defrost means operators will be comfortable and in turn more productive year-round.

When a KPM worker would run the old, open-cab machine during a bad weather day, Kavalec could see it was physically draining. "The productivity drops off after being in the cold for hours, that's a big part of it. By using the BRUTUS, he's physically OK to continue on for the rest of the day."

In the first six months of use, KPM clocked more than 750 hours on the BRUTUS and has experienced benefits that it never could have imagined on its previous utility vehicle. Yes, there was an upfront investment, but the results speak for themselves.

"BRUTUS is a great value for the money. Bottom line, it's the best constructed machine out there," Kavalec says.



A CHAMPION HAS BEEN CROWNED.





Polaris® BRUTUS® is the most productive work utility vehicle ever created, delivering more of what hard-working professionals need to get the jobs done.

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MORE VERSATILE. MORE CAPABLE. MORE COMFORTABLE.



WATCH THE HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPETITION AT **BRUTUSCHALLENGE.COM**

IRRIGATION

MARKETWATCH

continued from page 29

WHY SELL WATER MANAGEMENT?

Husband first realized the need for efficient irrigation practices as a water management specialist for Horizon Distributors' West Coast region, where he worked with landscape contractors on developing water conservation programs.

"I saw a void there because it seemed (contractors') primary focus was mow, blow and go," says Husband, who worked at Horizon for 16 years. "There wasn't an emphasis on water management."

The opportunity to fill this market need prompted Husband and Foley to join forces. Foley's maintenance firm, which he helmed for 17 years, was among Husband's Horizon clients. When Foley sold his business in October 2011, he approached Husband about collaborating on a water management business.

The longtime associates saw a gap between property owners' water management needs and the services landscape contractors were willing or able to provide. "Landscape contractors didn't know how to sell a project; they didn't know how to sell a return-on-investment package," Husband says. "They didn't know how to analyze the historical water usage or how much money they could save the customer by doing specific capital improvements to a project."

C The historical way of marketing hasn't seemed to work for me. I'm trying to stand out and do something different."



-Chris Husband, president, Liquid Technologies

Initially, Foley and Husband planned to sell and install controllers. But it wasn't long before the firm evolved into an irrigation consulting and management business. About 50 percent of Liquid Technologies' business involves working with landscape contractors in one way or another. Some hire Husband and Foley as consultants; others subcontract the actual water conservation work to Liquid Technologies.

The rest of the company's business involves working directly with commercial property owners or, to a lesser degree, high-end residential clients who have higher-than-average irrigation needs.

The Goods: IRRIGATION

HUNTER INDUSTRIES PRO-C CONTROLLER

The updated Pro-C residential controller features cycle and soak, lighting programs and more.



ROOMTO GROW

Includes a four-station base controller with the flexibility to expand up to 16 stations.



Pairs with Hunter Solar Sync to create an EPA WaterSense smart device.



LIGHT IT UP

The Pro-C has three built-in landscape lighting programs.

HOW TO SELL IT

One of the most important aspects of their sales strategy is an irrigation audit. The audit begins with a water efficiency assessment. Liquid Technologies places receptacles, known as "catch cans," throughout an irrigation zone. The cans collect water while the irrigation system is running, revealing disparities in water distribution.

The company then displays the data in a worksheet that includes critical irrigation information, such as sprinkler type, zone and gallons per minute. A color-coded section displays the efficiency rate of each sprinkler type.

The Liquid Technologies team also walks the entire property to check for missing or faulty system parts and compiles the information collected into a comprehensive irrigation site report. A map of the system and irrigation controller charts are included as well, empowering landscape contractors to manage the system more effectively.

Another important piece of the marketing puzzle is a water budget that displays potential savings for clients. In determining the water budget, the company factors in moisture loss, irrigation system efficiency, square footage of the property and plant types.

CREATIVE MARKETING WINS

Husband focuses his marketing efforts on larger commercial clients such as HOAs. When it comes to water management services, commercial properties have a stronger return on investment than residential properties, he says. "If you're not spending at least \$1,000 a month on water, you can't afford me," Husband says. "There is no return on it. I'd rather work with a landscaper who is managing 100 of those homes."

When Husband sells his service to landscape contractors, he stresses the benefits of increased customer retention. In Arizona, where low-bid contractors are winning many of the maintenance jobs, water conservation services can help contractors differentiate themselves from competitors and further satisfy existing clients, Husband says.

Husband adds contractors and other industry professionals should consider more creative approaches to selling their services. The drone and camera Husband used in his pitch to the housing association cost him approximately \$900. It's been a wise and comparatively small investment. Already the video has reaped Liquid Technologies two new clients. Before the drone, Liquid Technologies spent about \$20,000 on traditional advertising with little return, Husband says.

His advice to others looking to improve their marketing strategy: "Don't be scared. Try something new."

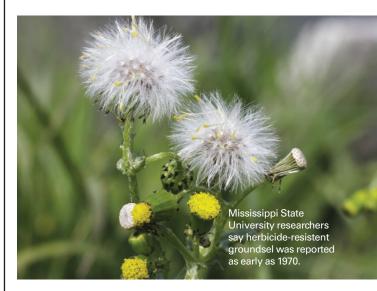
"The historical way of marketing hasn't seemed to work for me," he adds. "I'm trying to stand out and do something different."

Katz is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

Resistance fighters

With herbicide resistance a reality in agriculture and golf, lawn care could be next.

By BETH GERACI



ee Kral, lawn care manager at Mountain High
Tree, Lawn & Landscape Co. in Lakewood, Colo.,
got a reality check about seven years ago. That's
when, through a colleague's father, he learned about
glyphosate-resistant crops in agriculture production.

He's been keen on weed resistance ever since. And while he's seen no signs of weed resistance on the job, "I'm extremely concerned about it," he says.

That's because glyphosate is a common active ingredient in popular herbicides, such as Roundup. Weeds like annual bluegrass have shown resistance to it among row crops and golf course turf, limiting the number of weed-killing tools available to turf managers.

"We'll need to find alternatives that are as effective as glyphosate used to be while also reducing the risk to the environment," Kral says.

Brian Beane, vice president of Nature's Select Premium Turf Services in Winston-Salem, N.C., shares Kral's sentiments. After all, he's watched farmers in eastern North Carolina experience resistance to Roundup. "So it is a concern," he says.

MARKETWATCH

HOW PREVALENT IS RESISTANCE IN LAWN CARE?

The fact is, weed resistance is not yet an issue in the lawn care industry as it is in agriculture and golf. Virtually no one interviewed for this story had yet witnessed herbicide resistance among lawn weeds. Take Mike Stephens, general manager of Always Green of Cape Cod, based in Marstons Mills, Mass.

"I'm not really concerned about it," he says. "I really haven't seen it."

> concern justified? Absolutely, say turf

> > researchers. Landscape professionals "should definitely be concerned about weed resistance,"

says Jim Brosnan, Ph.D., associate professor of turf and ornamental weed science at Univer-



Jim Brosnan

sity of Tennessee. "Herbicide-resistant weeds are emerging at increasing rates in all facets of agriculture, and turf is by no means immune."

Based on what researchers have observed in other agricultural sectors, Brosnan says, "This is only bound to increase."

Weeds become resistant to herbicides due to lack of diversified weed management methods, turf scientists say. Managers find an effective herbicide, then use it year in and year out without rotating in different products.

In the end, weeds build resistance to the herbicide's mode of action. It's exactly what's happened in agricultural production systems, and it's happening in the golf industry now.

Scott McElroy, Ph.D., a professor in Auburn University's department of crop, soil and environmental sciences, asserts that while researchers simply have not seen the resistance in lawn care that they have in row crop agriculture and golf, researchers are less likely to hear from landscape and lawn care professionals than they are turf managers in the golf, sod and sports turf industries. That void could disguise a problem.

"People in the lawn care industry simply do not communicate with (researchers and professors) like me. I simply do not hear about the problems they are having," McElroy says. "They're much less likely to reach out and say, 'I'm having trouble

getting control and can you help me?""

So perhaps there's more herbicide resistance in lawn care, where "time is money," than people realize, he says. He also

cautions lawn care managers to consider "not all failures in weed control are their fault. It may be resistance that's actually developed."

Lawn care operators who believe they're exempt from resistance problems are mistaken, Brosnan says, especially "given the 'rounds' nature of the business." And as a weed scientist, he's disturbed he's not seeing products used in rounds change from year to year.

"These products only encompass a handful of different modes of action," Brosnan says. "If we lose one or two of these due to resistance, options will become quite limited, and weeds will become much harder to control to a commercially acceptable level."

ROTATE HERBICIDES NOW

Lawn care operators can avoid this problem by regularly rotating the herbicides they use. Beane's taken advantage of the variety of selective broadleaf herbicides on the market.

"Due to the fact that we have a rotation policy, we have not seen evidence of weed resistance," he says.

Neither Beane's nor Kral's customers care about potential resistance, if they're even aware of it at all. All they care about is a healthy lawn, they say. To keep healthy lawns a reality for their customers, neither operator is taking any chances. For broadleaf weed control, Kral has turned to non-2, 4-D products, and he rotates them mid-season.

"I am trying to stay in front of the problem, rather than having to deal with a resistant weed or insect," he says. "One thing I am convinced of is when we start to see some resistant weeds out there, we need to kill them with a different formulation of pesticides before they can become firmly established."

Stephens says that while he may "switch it up a bit" to better control a problematic weed, he hasn't officially rotated products.

"I always tend to be more optimistic, thinking that there's always going to be something continued on page 36

The Ticker: >> WEB EXTRA

Visit the Web Extras

section of Landscape

Management.net for a chart of common turf

herbicide modes of action.

LAWN CARE

The Scotts Miracle-Gro Co. released results for its fiscal third quarter, which showed its subsidiary Scotts LawnService saw a 3 percent increase in sales compared to a year ago. The companywide net sales, however, were down 2 percent for the quarter.



Arboriet launched a new air-powered trunk injection device, QUIKjet Air, and a smartphone app, ARBORmobile. Moreover, its IMA-jet is now approved for use in Canada.



Agri-Turf Distributing became a PrimeraTurf distributor. Located in California, Agri-Turf distributes turf and ornamental, nursery and pest control products, among other goods.

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LAWN CARE

MARKETWATCH

continued from page 34

new they'll come out with that will help," he says. "If it ever becomes totally resistant, it would be of concern, of course, but it seems there are continually new products coming out. I'm confident in the industry."

CULTURAL PRACTICES IMPORTANT. TOO

As vital as chemistry rotation is, Brosnan warns it's not enough without wise practices such as proper nutrient applications and irrigation.

While more attention finally is being paid to cultural practices in row crop agriculture, where resistance is prolific, "in turf the resistance is still isolated and many are following this same troublesome pattern," Brosnan says.

Kral is doing what he can to avoid it. Sure, rotating herbicides is crucial. "But keeping lawns healthy and strong so weeds can't get established in the first place is another good way to not have to use as much herbicides," he says.

THE BIG DANGER

So what happens if resistance does become a problem in lawn care? "Herbicides no longer working would be the biggest fear you'd have," McElroy says. "That's why it's so important for lawn care applicators to think about the long-term ramifications of their actions. If a herbicide application doesn't work,

It's so important for lawn care applicators to think about the long-term ramifications of their actions."





people don't take the time to figure it out. They just say, 'OK, let me go apply another one.' The answer of going and applying another herbicide is shortsighted." Instead, lawn care operators need to think long term, he says.

Just imagine if today's most popular herbicides were no longer viable weed control options for a lawn care operation, Brosnan says.

"These are the real consequences of what can happen if resistance gets out of hand," he says. "Operators will be stuck with limited herbicide options and forced to either physically remove weeds or communicate to customers that certain weeds will not be able to be removed ... That's going to be a tough sell in my opinion."

Geraci is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

The Goods: LAWN CARE

'INSECTICIDE OPTIONS FOR PROTECTING ASH TREES FROM EMERALD ASH BORER'

This second-edition report offers measures to combat the spread of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and means for preserving ash trees.

FOR YOUR INFO

It's less costly to treat ash trees with systemic insecticides than it is to remove them, according to the report.



FAOS ANSWERED

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STUDIES SHOW..

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Evening it out

Landscape professionals share the different approaches they take to plant warranties.

By JAMIE KEYES

fter a long day of installing plants, including junipers and barberry shrubs, the gloves come off and it's closing time. Another job done; another happy customer. Days and weeks fly by until the client calls, upset that several plants are dead. Question asked: Whose fault is it? Are these covered by a warranty? That's when the dilemma begins.

Landscape professionals have a score of approaches to plant warranties. Here are a few ways to handle them.

DEAL OR NO DEAL

Brian Tauscher, owner of Ridgewood, N.J.-based Artisan Gardens, offers one-year plant warranties and advocates for everyone else to, too.

"If you don't offer plant warranties it can be a deal breaker when a client is choosing between you and a competitor," Tauscher says. "If you are looking to sell yourself as a quality contractor then everything you do should be (under warranty)."

Tauscher tries to avoid the plant warranty conflict by educating his clients, of whom 40 percent are residential and 60 percent are commercial. Artisan Gardens is 70 percent design/build and 30 percent maintenance.

"We try to educate them throughout the job (to) have them realize and understand what maintenance is," he says.

Too much or not enough water is the most common mistake that causes a plant to die, Tauscher says.

He tells homeowners to "use common sense and adjust the watering to the weather and climatic conditions."

It's very important to plant correctly the first time to limit warranty issues, Tauscher says. He also does his best to stay in touch with customers after the job so plant issues can be resolved as quickly as they sprout.

"Keeping open channels of communication throughout the warranty period is important," he says. "It doesn't matter whether it's texting, email or phone calls. Communication is important."

Jody Shilan, a landscape designer and consultant with 20 years of contracting/design experience, says the best way to avoid plant warranty issues—and at the same time retain customers and sell new work—is to offer a maintenance agreement after an installation job.



During the walk-through after the job is completed, Shilan says to always be prepared to offer a homeowner a maintenance contract along with a one-year warranty.

For the homeowner, "It's sensible and logical after a big investment," Shilan says.

Artisan Gardens provides one-year plant warranties and educates clients on watering.

If a maintenance contract is out of the picture, Shilan says a landscape company should at least offer a one-year warranty on all deciduous, evergreen and perennial plants. The key is to price the installation appropriately so there's money available for possible replacements.

"In the industry we are stuck with that on some levels," Shilan says. "But it does give homeowners some assurances and security."

Giving a homeowner an easy-to-follow plant health care manual that covers watering, fertilizing and simple maintenance techniques goes a long way, he adds.

Along with that, sending out a monthly e-newsletter that provides maintenance information is the best way to stay connected with clients, Shilan says. If it's linked to a website, Facebook page and Houzz account, even better.

SPLITTING THE RESPONSIBILITY

Pat Ross, owner of St. Louis-based Landscape Concepts says putting responsibility on the homeowner solves many warranty issues. The company, which mainly does residential work, has an annual revenue of \$450,000.

Exclusively design/build, Landscape Concepts gives customers a way to get involved by offering a warranty that continued on page 40

BUILDYOURBUSINESS WEBINAR SERIES

Controlling landscape bed weeds in the fall

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WEBINAR DESCRIPTION:

In this hour-long webinar, experts will discuss strategies for controlling landscape bed weeds in the fall from two different perspectives: the technical and application viewpoints. Presenters will discuss the latest control methods available to lawn care operators and best practices for applications and operations.

MODERATOR:

Marisa Palmieri, Editor of Landscape Management

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continued from page 38 entails free replacements for the first 30 days after installation, but anytime after that, it's 50 percent of the plant cost, plus labor to replace the plant.

"This is a way to get a little more involvement from the homeowner," Ross says. "It makes the homeowner understand their part in the plantings."

During the development stages of a project, homeowners receive a presentation folder. This folder contains drawings, photos, designs and other documents about the project, including a sheet about watering practices and an explanation of the warranty.

If a plant were handled incorrectly or dropped, those signs are going to show up in the plant within the first 30 days, Ross says. The 50 percent cost after



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the 30 days is to make the homeowner accountable for the plant health care.

"The whole reason the warranties are laid out is because of the whole watering aspect," she says.

When Ross receives a replacement call, she goes to the property to inspect the plant. If the plants surrounding the dead plant are alive and well, she will replace it even after the 30 days. But if the plants are noticeably not being taken care of, that's when the warranty comes into play, she says.

"When we see maintenance happening, we make an exception," Ross says. "It's really hard to put warranties on a living thing."

CAVEAT FOR THE CUSTOMER

Plants are not like a couch you buy, take home and sit on for years without any care,

The Ticker:

DESIGN/BUILD



Greg Wittstock, CEO of Chicago-based **Aquascape**, is the star of Nat Geo Wild's latest reality series, "Pond Stars." Wittstock is joined by three of his colleagues on the show, which is scheduled to premiere Sept. 5.

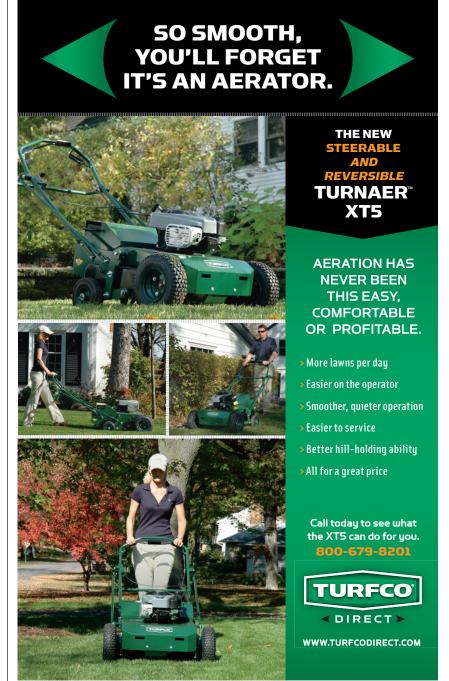
The **Sustainable Sites Initiative** certified four new pilot projects, including Seattlebased Kirke Park; 38 Dolores, a grocery store and housing site in San Francisco; West Point Foundry, a Civil War era preserve in Cold

Spring, N.Y.; and the office of Atlanta design firm Perkins+Will.

Sustainable SITES Initiative™ says Chris James, owner of Waldwick, N.J.-based Chris James Landscaping (CJL). They're in constant need of maintenance.

After 36 years in the Green Industry, James has learned many lessons about

plant warranties and has tailored his policy accordingly. Before he offers a one-year warranty James requires a homeowner to have an irrigation system to ensure the plants will receive appropriate watering.



DESIGN/BUILD

MARKETWATCH

If homeowners don't have irrigation systems, James gives them two options: 1). Homeowners can pay for a hand-watering Chris James Landscaping only offers one-year plant warranties to clients with irrigation systems.

service done by CJL, which includes periodic trips to the property to water the plants. This option does not include a warranty. 2). He gives homeowners a printed list of maintenance instructions and it's 100 percent their job to take care of it all, also with no warranty.

"Some clients are willing to take on the responsibility," James says.

James' projected revenue for this year is \$1.9 million. With 80 percent residential clients and only 20 percent commercial, homeowner relationships are important to him. He refers to his company as a long-term partner and not a "one-hit-wonder company."

"It's not a plant-it-and-forget-it (mentality)," he says. "We want to establish a relationship."



Right from the get-go he talks to the homeowner about what he can and can't do regarding warranties, and he won't start building until he feels they understand. CJL has a detailed contract that's signed by both James and the client to avoid any miscommunications that can lead to replacements and warranty issues.

"A good warranty will state what each party is responsible for," James says.

Although, James says if a homeowner

calls him at 13 months, a month after the warranty expires, he's not going to turn them away.

"All good business needs flexibility," James says. "We want to affirm that trust." LNI

of Chris James'

detailed warranty in

the Web Extras section

at Landscape Management.net.

Keyes was a summer editorial intern for Landscape Management.

The Goods:

DESIGN/BUILD

PRO LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR

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MIKE SEILHEIMER Naylor Landscape Management, Kalamazoo, Michigan

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JODY SHILAN | Shilan is editor of FromDesign2Build.com. Contact him at 201/783-2844 or jshilan@gmail.com.

Do you charge nuisance fees?

What's your take on charging clients an initial consultation fee before meeting with them at their home? I've never done it before but have heard other design/build contractors do.

There are various theories about how to properly screen clients so you're focusing on solid leads and not wasting your time with "tire kickers." One way is by charging "nuisance fees," those \$50 or \$75 fees you charge to meet with a client for the first time. As far as I'm concerned, nuisance fees are bad business and are penny wise and pound foolish.

The theory behind charging a fee to meet with a potential client is twofold. Some of you believe charging it makes you appear more professional, and others believe this is a good screening process to weed out people who are just going to waste your time. Unfortunately, this methodology turns off both tire kickers and rock solid leads.

Now calm down. I already can hear the objections out there. Let's see if I still have my mind-reading capabilities. Here goes. "Plumbers and electricians charge homeowners to come out to the house, and doctors and lawyers charge for an initial consultations. So why shouldn't we? Isn't our time valuable? Don't we deserve to be paid for our time?"

Let me answer the last two questions first. Yes, our time is valuable, and yes, we are professionals. That, however, is not the question or the problem. The problem is we are trying to do something these other industries don't do but have convinced ourselves they do. In reality, plumbers, electricians, doctors and lawyers *do not* charge these "nuisance fees," so why should we? Read on.

All of us need to learn how to properly screen clients, but charging someone \$50 or \$75 (I've heard numbers as low as \$25) is a silly way to do it. You're as likely to push away someone who's really serious about having work done as you are someone who is going to waste your time. I don't know about you, but I certainly don't want to lose 50 percent of my leads because I'm a professional and deserve to be paid for my time.

My philosophy is once a client has passed your initial screening on the phone and sounds like a viable lead, you need to set an appointment with the client. Your first appointment is your opportunity to meet with a potential clients and learn more about who they are and what they are looking to do. This is your chance to show them samples of your color-rendered drawings and photos of your built work. In other words, they need to see in person why they should work with you instead of your competitors. This initial meeting should be considered an investment of your time, not something you bill for. However, after this one-hour meeting, money needs to exchange hands before you provide any landscape service.

Now back to my original argument that we are trying to charge clients for something other professionals don't charge for. For instance, when you call a plumber to your home, it's typically because you need something repaired, usually right away. A leaky pipe or some other problem that requires a service call. They will charge you for this visit and hopefully will make the repair then and there. Conversely, had you called the plumber about getting a price for installing a new Jacuzzi, sink and toilet in your bathroom, they would gladly meet with you and get you a proposal, no charge.

The same goes for doctors and lawyers. If you need immediate medical attention or legal advice you will be billed for the services provided. If, however, you are shopping for a surgeon to operate on your back or an attorney to defend you in a lawsuit, both professionals gladly will meet with you for a free consultation in hopes of earning your business.

So the next time you want to charge a nuisance fee to a potential client because "you're a professional," think about the neurosurgeon who's willing to meet "new customers" for free in hopes of getting their business. It might just might make you rethink your strategy.

To submit a question for Profiting From Design, please contact Shilan at jshilan@gmail.com.



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10 · 22 · 14

EXTEND YOUR BUSINESS >>> BY CASEY PAYTON

You've got mail

Mailbox installations deliver a nice profit for a New Jersey landscape and fencing firm.

spectacle of DAMAGED mailboxes after a heavy snowfall got Chris Demato's wheels turning toward a way to help the homeowners and his business. The owner of Rock Bottom Landscaping & Fencing had the vision of adding residential mailboxes and posts to his service offerings. A decade later, it's become a small but mainstay service for his Somerset County, N.J.-based company.

"What's nice about the service is once customers invest in having a really nice mailbox, it's not uncommon for them to go a step further and enhance the front of their home with some additional plantings or maybe a land-scaped area around the mailbox," says Demato, whose firm is 70 percent design/build and 30 percent maintenances, serving residential and commercial clients. "It's

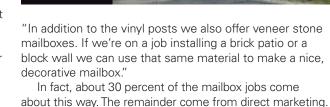
an add-on that's led to more work. Plus, it helps us be that one-stop-shop we want our customers to see us as."

Because the company already installed fences, Demato says getting into mailboxes and mailbox posts was a "natural transition." The installation process is essentially the same as installing a fence post. Therefore, the company already had the knowhow and required equipment: a post-hole digger, a level and a wheelbarrow.

"Installing a mailbox post requires digging a hole and installing concrete footing, much like you'd do with a fence," Demato says. "As far as new services go, it's always nice when you already have the knowledge and the equipment because there's no investment."

Demato offers high-quality, decorative mail posts from an outdoor furnishing supplier. They're an upgrade from the standard posts customers could buy at a home improvement store. He orders products directly from the manufacturer and says the nicer quality differentiates what he does as a professional service versus something homeowners could do themselves.

"There's more craftsmanship involved in the posts we offer, and it has more of an impact on curb appeal," Demato says.



If Demato notices a mailbox is out of shape while he's on a job site, he encourages the upsell. Sometimes it's just a small revenue boost to the original

a small revenue boost to the original job, but the profit margin for mailboxes generally is around 50 percent.

In terms of pricing, Demato says the flat rate he charges can vary widely, based primarily on installation time. A basic wood or vinyl post is a simple job and starts at around \$400. But putting together a brick or stone mailbox is a more detailed endeavor and can cost up to \$2,000. Mailbox installations typically require a two-man crew. The most critical element, making sure the post is level, requires two sets of hands.

To market the service, Demato uses his website and direct mail campaigns targeting higher-end residential neighborhoods. He markets the service in mailers each spring and has found that effort to be most successful after a bad winter.

"After a bad winter it's not uncommon mailboxes need to replaced because of getting banged up by the snow plow or because of dealing with the pressure of high-piled snow," Demato says. "The spring is the best time to target this kind of work."

Payton is a freelance writer with eight years of experience writing about the landscape industry.



High-end vinyl

posts are one type of mailbox

offering.

COMPANY: Rock Bottom Landscaping & Fencing

LOCATION: Somerset County, N.J.

SERVICE: Mailboxes and mailbox posts installations

WHY: To fill a need while becoming more of a one-stop-shop

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: "Understanding the differing codes for different townships in regard to mailbox height and how far it has to be from the street was our biggest challenge," Owner Chis Demato says. "These are just things you come to remember in time."

BEST TIP: "The faster you can learn a new service, the better," Demato says. "It makes sense to look for things that are natural transitions. For us, mailboxes were a natural transition from fencing installation."

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TRUCK & TRAILER EQUIPMENT

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Made in the US, the #9102 Heavy Ranger Mobile Universal Trailer Tester (MUTT) is a portable, lightweight solution for testing lights and electric brakes. Compatible with seven-way round pin connection types, the unit is designed to simulate all electrical circuits while providing short protection on industry standard pin configurations. The water-resistant "ammo can" case allows for on-the-go testing without the need for a tow vehicle.

Innovative Products of America // IPATools.com



CAT 2000 Peak Amp Professional Jump Starter

Featuring rugged plastic and rubber housing, the CAT 2000 Peak Amp Professional Jump Starter delivers 1,000 instant starting amps to quickly power most 12-volt batteries — without the need for another vehicle. It will start multiple vehicles on one charge and can recharge the internal battery up to four times faster with the built-in 2-amp, high-frequency charger, the company says. The nonspillable battery allows users to safely store the jump starter in any position.





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Featuring integrated side walls for a standard sheet of plywood to lie flat, these inserts turn 8-ft.-bed pickups into dump trucks. The poly material provides a long service life and will never rust. DumperDogg inserts are also available in 12-gauge steel and 304 stainless steel for both 6- and 8-ft. truck beds. The steel and stainless steel DumperDogg inserts have a 2-cu.-yd. capacity in the 8-ft. insert and a 1.5-cu.-yd. capacity in the 6-ft. insert.

Buyers Products Co. // BuyersProducts.com



Trailer tongue boxes

This line of durable trailer tongue boxes mount on the front of A-frame style trailers to convert unused space into a secure storage area. The nearly 3-ft.-long boxes are rotationally molded in a single piece from 100 percent waterproof polyethylene for high-impact strength, light weight and resistance to inclement weather conditions or chemical attack from leaky tools. They feature a steel hinge pin and hasp for lock installation.

Backyard Pool Products.com // BackyardPoolProducts.com

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Landscape software series

The simplicity of Landscape Lighting Software and Landscape Lighting Effects allows the lighting contractor to create a design for a client in less than 15 minutes, the company says. The programs' features include on-board learning tutorials, a website support page and technical support.

Landscape Design Imaging Software // LandscapeLightingSoftware.com

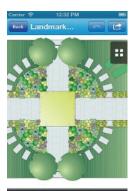
PRO Landscape Version 20

Coinciding with Drafix Software's 20th anniversary, the release of PRO Landscape Version 20 has several new



features and enhancements. This includes adding more than 1,000 new images to the photo imaging library, which now boasts more than 12,000 objects. It also features enhancements to the free PRO Landscape Companion app for iPad and Android tablets. Now users may not only design right on their tablets, but they may create an instant price quote, too.

Drafix Software // PROLandscape.com



Vectorworks Nomad 2.5

Users of the 2.5 version of Vectorworks Nomad now can connect their Dropbox accounts to Vectorworks Cloud Services and access Dropbox files from the mobile application. Vectorworks Cloud Services also can process VWX files that are stored within a Dropbox account and generate PDFs. In addition, Vectorworks Nomad 2.5 includes snapping functionality for floor plans, which allows for precise measurement of distances, angles, perimeters and areas.

Nemetschek Vectorworks // VectorWorks.net/cloudservices

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"Number-crunchers: This issue's for you!

In the 2015 Business Planner, we'll identify and explore a slate of 'magic numbers' that Green Industry owners and managers

should understand to better their businesses. Keep an eye out for our October issue for these can't-miss articles from LM's best contributors."

— Marisa Palmieri, editor

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Specifically formulated for gasoline, K100-MG eliminates water in the fuel, preventing phase separation in ethanolblended fuels. It also stabilizes fuel up to two years, cleans injectors, provides a superior lubricant and boosts octane. According to the company, K100's exclusive organic chemistry will "fix" fuel that has been stored a while and is no longer fresh, which is one of the leading causes of engines that won't start or that run roughly. Kinetic Fuel Treatment // K-100.com



Short block engine assemblies

The engines and power products division of Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA is making short block engine assemblies available for its FS and FX engine series units. The assemblies, available at authorized Kawasaki engine

dealers nationwide, allow professionals to extend the operational life of mowers. Gasket kits are included with the sale of every short block assembly, and assemblies are shipped with an attached oil filter.

Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA // KawPower.com



Vanguard 810cc engines

Vanguard 810cc engines for commercial zeroturn mowers are available in 24 or 26 gross horsepower models. The new models have 810cc of displacement for higher torque to take on the heavy workloads common in commercial settings. This meets a growing landscape industry demand for higher displacement engines and higher productivity mowers.

Briggs & Stratton Commercial Power // BriggsAndStratton.com

SABER **Professional** Synthetic 2-Stroke Oil

This reformulated product enables users to mix it at any ratio—up to 100:1 for a combination of convenience, savings and protection, the company says. SABER Professional is designed for hotoperating, two-stroke engines. It fights carbon/deposit formation and prevents ring sticking. Its synthetic



formulation burns clean, passing the industrystandard smoke test at the standard rich mix ratio. When mixed at the SABER Ratio, smoke is virtually undetectable. It also provides fuel stabilization during seasonal storage.

Amsoil // Amsoil.com

Echo PowerFuel

Premixed at a 50:1 ratio, Echo PowerFuel is formulated to aid engine break-in and extend the life of 2-cycle power equipment engines. It's a blend of ethanol-free, premium 93-octane gasoline and Echo Red Armor Oil, which contains detergents that remove carbon deposits and protect against future build-ups without losing lubrication or film strength. Red Armor Oil also stabilizes fresh fuel for up to two years.

Echo // ECHO-USA.com/powerfuel



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RESOURCES

AD INDEX

Blount International	37*
Dow AgroSciences	13
Ecolawn	47
FMC Professional Solutions	3
GEICO Commercial	
GIE+Expo	43, Insert*
John Deere	
Kinetic Fuel Treatment	47
Koch Agronomic Services	CV3
LandOpt	
Landscape Management Network	35
MistAway Systems	4
MSP Sprinter	11
NAFA Fleet Management Association	40
PBI/Gordon Corp	
PermaGreen Supreme	19
Polaris Industries	30-31
Project EverGreen	37*
PRO Landscape by Drafix Software	7
Propane Education & Research Council	28
Quali-Pro	27, CV4
Ram	CVR2-1
Solu-Cal USA	18
The Andersons	5
Turfco	41
USPS	9

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[Coming in October] Business Planner is back!

A perennial favorite, the Landscape Management Business Planner returns this fall. This year's edition is all about the numbers. Look for a pub packed with articles from our best contributors, sharing insights on key indicators, rules of thumb and other numbers you should note to run a better business.

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Zachary Johnson

Associate professor (in landscape business and landscape design & contracting) at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colo.

c mai

Who's your mentor? His name was Todd Williams, president of Terracare Associates. We lost him too soon. He was a great guy. We were both on the board of directors of the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado. Also, we created a professional practices class together for students at Colorado State University (CSU). The class is now

a required course for our students, with topics ranging from contracts and negotiations to marketing and risk management. It's a great opportunity for industry professionals to really see what we were

doing within our program and build those relationships. Todd was a key piece of that. He and I had this idea. We built it together, and he helped get funding from our state association to make that happen.

You're also the owner of Green Ink Designs. How does that coincide with

your teaching? I founded that in 1999. We have ongoing projects with residential and commercial design, both in landscape architecture and irrigation. At this time with my full-time responsibilities at CSU, it's a one-man band. Prior to that, it was doing larger volumes of work. The benefit of doing work privately and with the university is I get to provide a current taste to students of what's going on in the industry. It's not dusty academia. It's real stuff. I carry a lot of the projects I do professionally into the classroom so students have opportunities to look at current projects versus theoretical pieces.

You received the 2014 Outstanding Educator of the Year Award from the Professional Landcare
Network (PLANET) Academic Excellence Foundation. What's the value of a college education in this
industry? It can be looked at a lot of different ways. Many people have been successful
with going straight out of high school. I had a business in this industry in high school
and I guess I could have gone straight into that business without the degree. The important part to me was education of any type is beneficial. Having degrees connected
to this industry gives you increased credibility and deeper understanding. For students
entering the workplace it gives them increased opportunities as they move on professionally, recognition by the industry and clients, which will help your business thrive.

Do you have any pointers for landscape companies looking to recruit college students? A formal education is just a piece of the education students are going to need to be successful. What that means for companies is students want to continue to learn and move forward. I would advise companies looking to recruit students—for the growth of their company, for the long-term health of their company—set up a clear path. It's not just one of those, 'Well, if you work hard, we're going to treat you right.'

It's chronological milestones or accomplishments, having those in place so students recognize and see their future.

OFF THE

YOU RECEIVED THE PLANET AEF EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD AT STUDENT CAREER DAYS THIS YEAR. DID YOU EVER PARTICIPATE AS A STUDENT? I did participate. My first time, I think, was 1992 (held at Cal Poly Pomona). The event was much smaller then.

WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB AS AN EDUCATOR? Being around young people. They're full of energy and excitement. It keeps you young, engaged and excited for the next day.

DO YOU HAVE ANY
HOBBIES? I'm an
avid cyclist. I do
a lot of bicycle
tours. Colorado
is a great state
to do these.
There are a lot
of weeklong tours
where you ride 70 to
100 miles a day and do
that for five or six days. I've
done all kinds.

DO YOU RECALL THE FIRST LANDSCAPING EQUIPMENT YOU BOUGHT? A 21-inch Briggs & Stratton push lawn mower, PHOTOS: PLANET/PHILIPPE NOBILE PHOTOGRAPHY:



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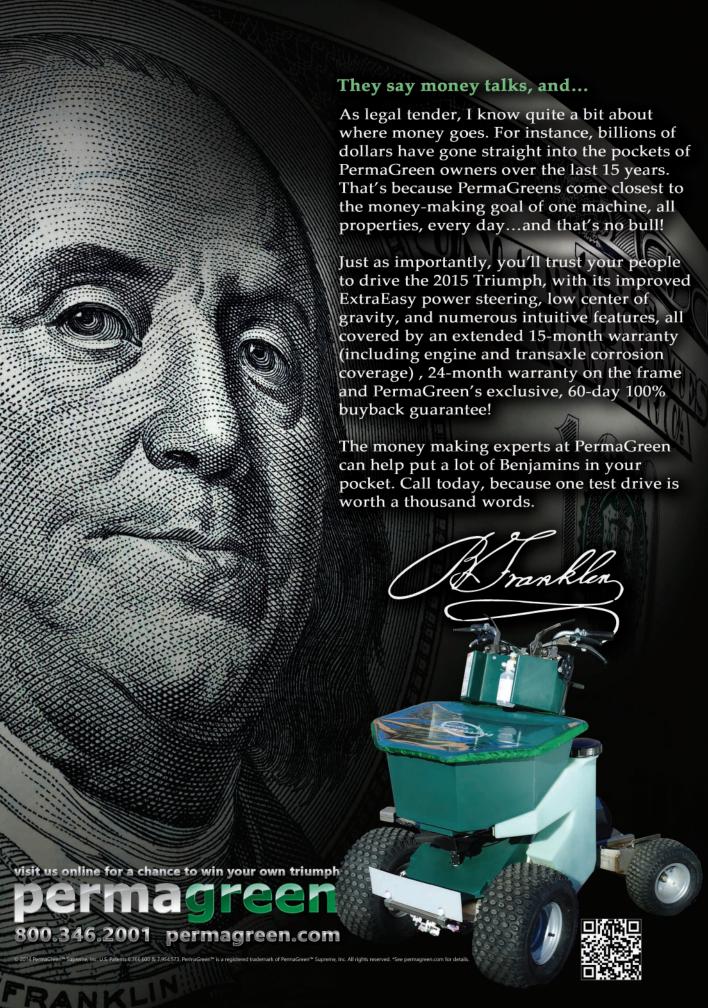


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Outdoor Must-See Exhibits Guide GIE+EXPO



The Outdoor Demonstration Area at GIE+EXPO and Hardscape North America offers trade show attendees the opportunity to try equipment before they buy it.

test drive is helpful when you're choosing a car, and an equipment demo is helpful when buying a zeroturn mower, chain saw or another piece of landscape machinery. Luckily, at GIE+EXPO, located at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky., there is a 19-acre Outdoor Demonstration Area that will let you do just that: test drive equipment and compare products first hand. The Demo Area is open Oct. 23 and 24, just steps away from the indoor displays.

In addition to the traditional outdoor exhibits, attendees may want to check out the Hardscape North America Outdoor Arena—a tented space in the Outdoor Demonstration Area. With a \$25 upgrade to the GIE+EXPO trade show admission, landscape contractors can learn the latest techniques in hardscape installation by attending six hours of live demonstrations. Upgrade when you register online. If you're already registered, use your registration dashboard to add the HNA Demonstrations or call Sellers Expositions at 800-558-8767.

Table of contents

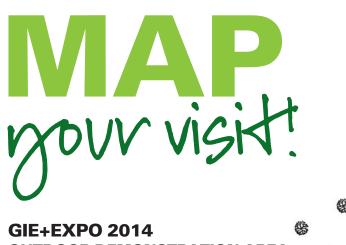
Must-See Exhibits Profiles	
Area Map & Exhibitor List	4-5
GILTENI O Outuooi Deillolistration	

Exmark	7
FINN Corp	8
The Grasshopper Co	9
John Deere	10
Kubota Products	11
PermaGreen	12-13
Turfco Manufacturing	14

Outdoor Demo Area hours

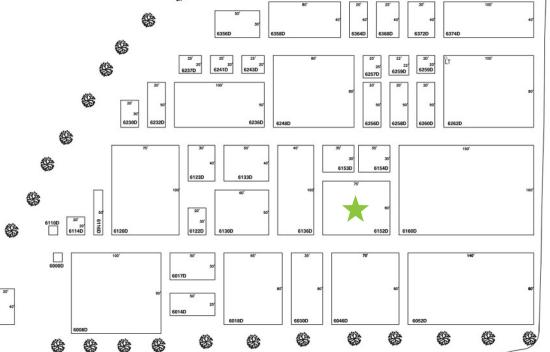
Thursday, Oct. 23 > 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 24 > 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

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Entrance

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John Deere Landscapes JRCO	7702D 6017D 6014D 7422D

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Montgomery Gentry, 9 p.m. Opening Act: Jeni Carr and TwangTown, 7:30 p.m.

Montgomery Gentry is comprised of two Kentucky boys - Eddie Montgomery is from Lancaster and

Troy Gentry is from Lexington. They will perform from their list of 14 Top 10 singles, including five No. 1 hits — "Something To Be Proud Of," "If You Ever Stop Loving Me," "Lucky Man," "Back When I Knew It All" and "Roll With Me."



You can also expect to hear something different from Montgomery Gentry as they have released a new album, "Rebels on the Run."

Opening for Montgomery Gentry will be country music singer/songwriter Jeni Carr and her band TwangTown. Their sound is a blend of new and classic country, mixed with Southern Rock dance tunes.

THURSDAY, 10.23

The Crashers, 8 p.m.

From the official pre-game band for NBC at Super Bowl XLVI to the backing band for national artists like Luke Bryan and Kid Rock, The Crashers have performed all over the country since 2008.



FRIDAY, 10.24 Olivia Henken, 9 p.m.

As a member of Team Christina on Season 5 of NBC's hit TV show The Voice, Olivia Henken captivated the imagination of the country with her stage presence, singing ability and charm. Since the show, she has headlined at major festivals and graced the stage with Kip



Moore, Charlie Daniels, Dustin Lynch, Chuck Wicks and Jason Jones. She will be performing songs from her recently released original album, "The Ride."

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Exmark Manufacturing

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Exmark EFI-Propane Mowers— Maximum Efficiency and Productivity

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riding mowers available today.

The EFI-propane Turf Tracer and Lazer Z models utilize the innovative new Kohler PCV680 air-cooled V-twin powerplant, which uses a closed-loop EFI system to deliver choke-free starting and consistent performance regardless of conditions, with an up-to 40-percent reduction in fuel costs compared to a carbureted gasoline engine.

For 2015, Exmark will offer three EFIpropane models—the Lazer Z S-Series zero-turn rider, and the Turf Tracer S- and X-Series walk-behind models.

RED Technology — Exclusive to Exmark

The 2015 Lazer Z X-Series mower is available with Exmark's exclusive RED Technology. RED Technology uses an electronic governor (EGov) combined with defined performance modes to give landscape professionals the opportunity to reduce fuel consumption by up to 41 percent, with increased responsiveness and performance regardless of cutting conditions.

The EGov is key to the engine's increased responsiveness. It significantly reduces governor droop compared to a mechanical governor, delivering more consistent blade tip speed and a superior cut quality. The EGov works



in synergy with RED's defined performance modes to optimize performance and efficiency for virtually any mowing conditions. Landscape professionals can increase mower efficiency when conditions allow, and maximize power for more challenging conditions.

On RED-equipped Lazer Z X-Series machines, a three-position rocker switch replaces the traditional throttle. Engine rpm is determined by the rocker setting combined with the position/engagement of the PTO switch. An exclusive Clutch Saver feature engages the blades at 2,750 rpm, and disengages at 2,500 rpm, regardless of rocker switch position. This eliminates full-throttle blade engagements and disengagements, while still allowing for PTO engagement on-the-fly. Clutch life is increased significantly on RED-equipped models, while required maintenance is reduced.

See Exmark at GIE+EXPO 2014

Visit the Exmark booth at GIE+EXPO 2014 to learn more about how the company's complete line of commercial mowers and professional turf care equipment can help you increase productivity, minimize downtime and maximize profitability.

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FINN Corp.

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et more productivity while cutting labor and material costs with FINN landscape and erosion control equipment. FINN has developed extensive equipment lines from our industry-leading HydroSeeders, Bark Blowers, and Straw Blowers to our complementary material lines of hydroseeding consumables, TRU-Mulch hydromulch and FINN filter sock. Not only has FINN extended its expertise into the development and commercialization of these diverse product lines, but it has also opened its arms to a number of additional industries, including construction, golf, mine reclamation, landfills and equipment rentals.

FINN delivers the utmost in performance and productivity. With working capacity tanks up to 3,300 gallons, FINN's complete line of HydroSeeders is designed to meet the needs of extensive erosion control job sites and demanding seeding applications. We've modified HydroSeeders to be mounted on tracks, equipped them with special axles and tires, designed special frames and even tailored a collapsible rail system to meet unusual height requirements.

FINN Bark Blowers can also be customized on tracks rather than tires for offroad applications, such as filling sediment control filter sock on site in hard-to-reach



or remote areas. Now offering our own FINN Filter Sock, we really are your one-stop shop for all things erosion control.

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Find the financial tools to make it all add up with John Deere Financial. Flexible leasing programs, seasonal payment plans and pick-your-own payment date.

We've all got a job to do. And ours is to make sure you have the equipment and solutions you need to do your job right, the first time and every time.

Visit us at indoor booth 1110 and outdoor booth 7834D.



JOHN DEERE

2000 John Deere Run Cary, N.C. 27513

Phone: 800-537-8233

Website: JohnDeere.com/MowPro

Kubota Products

OUTDOOR BOOTH 7401D INDOOR BOOTH 5094

ubota Tractor Corp. stands out in the turf industry with a complete line of compact, utility and mid-size tractors, rugged utility vehicles, consumer and commercial zero-turn mowers, pendulum spreaders and

compact and utility-class construction equipment—precisely engineered to help you get more done.

Producing quality equipment involves more than engineering tools for the job. It fuses technology, efficiency, safety and comfort—making the equipment a natural extension of the operator. That has been Kubota's philosophy for



almost half a century. Today, Kubota markets a full line of turf and landscape equipment through a nationwide network of more than 1.100 authorized dealers.

Every Kubota employee and each Kubota dealer

deliver on The Kubota Promise to provide exceptional quality, innovation and value every day. This promise helps Kubota continue delivering marketplace innovation year after year.

No matter what your next project holds, Kubota has the power and versatility to help you achieve your goals. Be sure to stop by both the indoor Kubota



booth (5094) and outdoor Kubota booth (7401D) during the show to discover the latest in turf innovation.

Product Lines:

- Sub-Compact & Compact Tractors*
- Utility & Mid-Size Tractors
- > TLB Loader/Landscaper Tractors
 - Zero-Turn and Front-Mount Mowers*
 - > RTV Utility Vehicles*
 - > Pendulum Spreaders
 - > SVL Compact Track Loaders
 - > Compact & **Utility Excavators**
 - Wheel Loaders



- > Gainesville, Ga.
- > Jefferson, Ga.





GIE+EXPO 2014 Demonstration Area SOUTH WING

KUBOTA TRACTOR CORP.

3401 Del Amo Blvd. Torrance, CA 90503

Phone: 888-4-Kubota Website: Kubota.com

Facebook.com/KubotaTractor

PermaGreen

OUTDOOR BOOTH 7436D INDOOR BOOTH 1030

Synergy Volt Spray Attachment

Change your ordinary spreader to a professional-grade, all-in-one, time-saving, money-making, broadcast-spraying, hand-trimming spreading/spraying machine that sprays up to 8,500 square feet per fill.

A tank full of weed spray leaves room for one bag of fertilizer in the hopper. Therefore, the overall weight of the fully loaded spreader/sprayer is about the same as a fully loaded spreader.

A Synergy Volt spreader sprayer has good:

- > Weight distribution
- > Balance
- Handling
- > Pushability

Synergy Volt installs without drilling and comes with:

- > Tank
- > Hopper cover
- > Rechargeable pump
- > Complete plumbing system
- > Front-mount broadcast nozzle
- Hand-held trimming gun





PERMAGREEN

5609 Murvihill Road Valparaiso, IN 46383

Phone: 800-346-2001

Email: info@permagreen.com Website: PermaGreen.com

PermaGreen

OUTDOOR BOOTH 7436D INDOOR BOOTH 1030

Triumph

Ride a PermaGreen Triumph every day and make more money! A PermaGreen is simply the best and only machine you need. Available at hundreds of dealers across North America.

Patented features:

- > Easy steering assist system
- > Accurate synchronized spray system
- > Reliable articulated steering
- > Walk or ride with drop-down handles

Best-in-class features:

- > Stability with low-profile design
- > Smooth-riding long wheel base
- > Controllability with all-wheel handoperated brakes
- > Familiar 3-hole hopper
- > Gentle oscillating agitator
- > Convenient remote hand-operated shifting

Best-in-class service:

- > Over 100 years of lawn care know-how
- > Huge parts inventory
- > Legendary tech support

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Turfco Manufacturing

OUTDOOR BOOTH 6152D INDOOR BOOTH 7050

Turfco T3000i and XT5

For more than 50 years Minneapolis, Minn., -based Turfco Manufacturing has been working to provide landscape professionals with the most innovative lawn maintenance equipment and latest technology. Years of research and development, coupled with customer feedback and rigorous testing, give Turfco equipment a reputation of quality and trust. Since the company was founded, Turfco has been listening to customers' wants and needs and using input to drive innovation and improve products.

"We pride ourselves in listening to feedback and making improvements that will help landscape contractors do their job better, faster and easier," says Scott Kinkead, Turfco's vice president. "We aim to maximize a contractor's time so they can maximize their profits."

Two of Turfco's most recent products—the T3000i spreader sprayer and TurnAer XT5—exemplify Turfco's dedication to innovation.

The T3000i spreader sprayer coupled with the optional 3-in-1 Auxiliary Tank provides maximum productivity thanks to the integration of four years of customer feedback. The versatile T3000i spreader sprayer is small enough to fit through a 36-inch gate, yet productive enough

for large commercial properties, resulting in easier route management and increased efficiency. It also allows contractors to use the same machine on residential and commercial properties.

The machine's innovative handsfree speed control system allows operators to keep one hand free at all times to run the spreader sprayer. When coupled with the 3-in-1 Auxiliary Tank, the T3000i can spray up to 124,000 square feet.

Larry Ginger of American Lawn Care in Des Moines, Iowa, says, "The T3000i is so versatile that you're able to treat everything from small residential properties to large commercial ones. In fact, one of our operators was able to treat 18 acres in seven hours."

The TurnAer XT5 is another patented Turfco product. It uses Turfco's revolutionary TurnAer technology, allowing the operator to turn and reverse while the tines are still in the ground, thus eliminating the need to stop, lift and turn at each pass. A variable speed hydrostatic drive system gives 50 percent more productivity than traditional aerators, and a new

gear ratio system increases aeration speed by 14 percent. For improved performance and control on hills, operators can adjust the

weight in the back of the aerator with the XT5's weight system.

Innovative lawn maintenance equipment isn't the only factor setting Turfco apart. Turfco has also pioneered a new customer service model in the landscape industry. Through Turfco Direct, customers can buy directly from the company online or by phone, instead of working through a dealer. Starting with an overview of all purchasing options and ending with direct delivery, Turfco ensures landscape professionals receive personalized service.

Visit turfcodirect com or call 800-679-8201 to learn about Turfco's line of lawn equipment and try a product for a 14-day trial period.



GIE+EXPO 2014 SOUTH WING

TURFCO MANUFACTURING

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> INDOOR: #7040 and

> OUTDOOR: # 6152D

THE NEW T3000 series enables you to put more residential and commercial properties on the same route. You'll dramatically improve route efficiency and eliminate the expense of two machines. It's easy to transport, easy to operate and easy on the operator. Advanced features include:

- NEW intuitive, hands-free speed control giving you unprecedented control and productivity
- **NEW** 3-in-1 15-gallon Auxiliary Tank can save you up to 10-15 minutes *per lawn*
- NOW with 45 percent more hopper capacity, enabling you to cover more ground per fill

It's time to expect more from your spreader/sprayer. Lots more.











CUTTING EDGE. COMMERCIAL GRADE.



New Kubota Z700 Series: We Mean Business

Kubota's new Z700 Series commercial zero-turn mower raises the bar for quality, durability, precision and all-around productivity. No other commercial mower in its class comes close. Available with 48, 54 or 60-inch decks and a wide variety of attachments and accessories. Ready to cut with the best? Give your business the Kubota Z700 edge. *Demo one today at your local Kubota dealer.*



