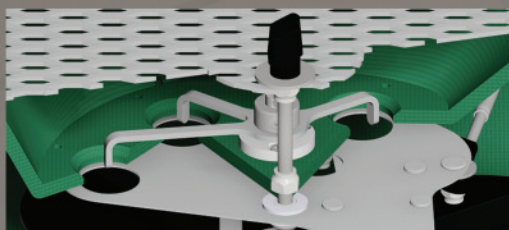


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# CONTENTS

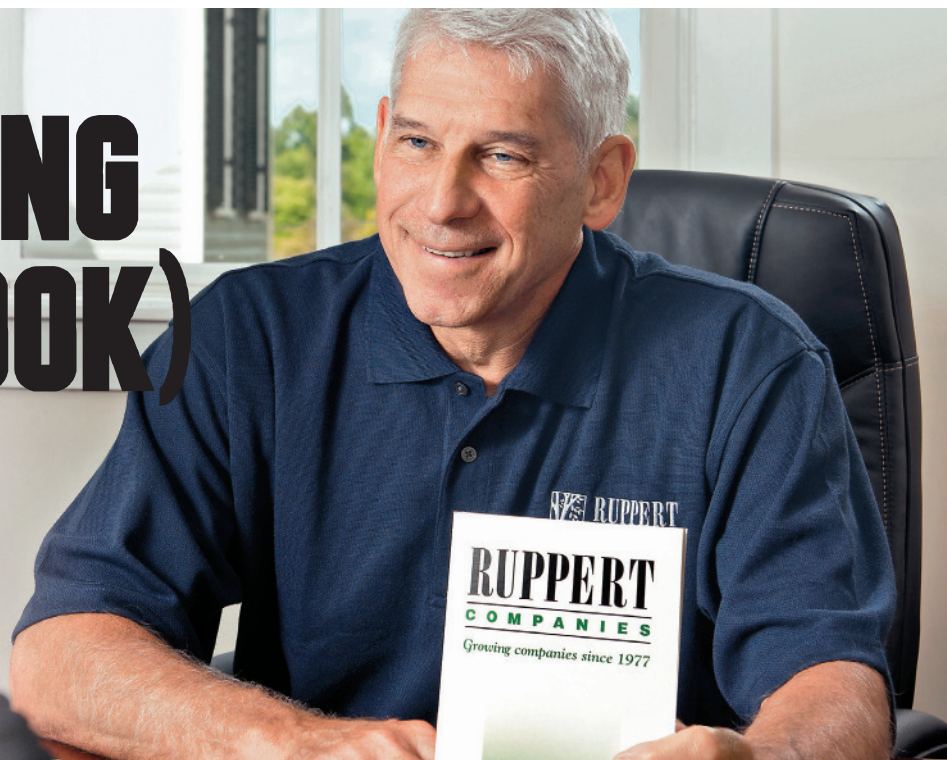
SEPTEMBER 2017 • VOL 56, ISSUE 9

## A HELPING HAND(BOOK)

### ON THE COVER

How an employee handbook can make your life easier and improve productivity.

34



### NEWS & HOW-TO'S

#### 10 Recommender

What shrubs are your go-to?

#### 10 Issue Brief

BY MISSY HENRIKSEN

#### 12 Step by Step

How to build a retaining wall.

#### 14 New Stuff

Three products and services that are fresh to the market.

#### 16 SafetyWatch

Fuel container filling tips.

### PROFIT CENTERS

#### 18 Turf+Ornamental Care

The owner of Lawn Plus took an unexpected path into lawn care.

Neave Group uses Oculus Rift goggles and a gaming laptop to present virtual reality designs to clients (page 48).



#### 22 Mowing+Landscape Maintenance

How to determine your ideal maintenance crew size.

#### 26 Design/Build+Installation

Get the most out of your landscape design software.

#### 30 Irrigation+Water Management

What's new with irrigation design software?

### BUSINESS INSIDER

#### 44 Business Basics: Planning

A 30-year industry veteran offers tips for creating careers.

BY PHIL HARWOOD

#### 46 Let's Grow

Run a sales meeting that gets results with these tips.

BY JEFFREY SCOTT

#### 48 Case Study: Our Way

One landscape firm closes deals with virtual reality technology.

BY CASEY PAYTON

A manager-turned-owner still finds time for his favorite pastime (page 56).



### IN EVERY ISSUE

#### 2 Online Now

#### 4 Editor's Note

BY MARISA PALMIERI

#### 6 Big Picture

Lawns of Dallas, Dallas

#### 50 Product Focus

Compact track loaders; mower engines

#### 55 Ad Index/Classifieds

#### 56 Backstory

Todd Huston, owner/president, Grounds Control, Phoenix, Ariz.

BY MARISA PALMIERI

ON THE COVER: PHOTO BY GREG DOHLER, WWW.GREGDOHLER.COM





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# EDITOR'S NOTE

**MARISA PALMIERI**  
EDITOR

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mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net

## Good form

**W**ant to make all your managers self-conscious at one time? Talk to them about business etiquette at a company meeting.

That's what our CEO did last month at our annual sales and editorial training meeting. I know his intent was to inform—not to make us squirm—but nothing ever has made me flash back through my career history and wonder what faux pas I've committed like that meeting did. Walking out of the presentation, though, I felt prepared and empowered. Our CEO handed out a book called "The Essentials of Business Etiquette: How to Greet, Eat, and Tweet Your Way to Success" by Barbara Pachter. It shares clear guidelines for nearly any situation you may encounter in the working world. I recommend you read it, or a similar guide on etiquette, and encourage your managers to, too.

We assume certain things are common sense. But they're really not. People come to work with their own set of manners and habits. We assume they learned good form from their families or previous employers, but that's a potentially brand-damaging assumption to make.

Like loading a trailer or planting a tree, unless you instruct employees on the accepted way of doing things, you can't expect they'll know the protocol.

Why not train your managers and salespeople on etiquette, so you're sure to set them up for success? After all, they're representing your brand at client dinners, chamber of commerce meetings, association golf outings and more.

Here are a few tips I flagged from the book that could be a good starting point for an etiquette conversation with your team.

**Put your phone away.** Don't place your phone on the table during a meeting or meal. Also, don't text under the table during a meeting or presentation. Both are noticeable and distracting to the other people in the room.

**Get name tags right.** Name tags are often used at receptions and conferences. Place your name tag on your right-hand side, slightly below the shoulder. This position makes it more visible when you shake hands.

**Keep your right hand free.** Before you walk into a meeting, move anything you're carrying to your left hand. When mingling, hold your drink in your left hand so your right hand is free and dry to shake hands.

**Add email addresses last.** We've all sent an email too soon by mistake—before we've finished writing and proofing it. Even when replying to a message, it's a good practice to delete the recipient's address and insert it only when you're sure it's ready to be sent.

**Avoid social media blunders.** What you post on your personal accounts can get you in trouble professionally. Privacy controls are no guarantee that something you post will stay private. Don't post offensive photos, videos or comments on any social media site. Don't put people down, curse or make racist or other off-color statements.

Even if you believe a book or talk about etiquette would be review for your team, I'd say go for it. You don't know what you (or your staff) doesn't know when it comes to decorum. And you never know who they'll encounter when wearing your logo out in the world. 📧



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#### MORE ONLINE

See more great advice and complete answers from our Editorial Advisory Board in the online version of this feature at [LandscapeManagement.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net).

"When you are implementing or creating an employee handbook, always consult legal help."

"Have it reviewed by an attorney that specializes in HR."

"They're nice to have, but if you teach your company culture correctly, then they aren't really needed."

"Find a good template to work from; don't reinvent the wheel."

"Make sure employees sign and date that they read it."

"Have somebody within your organization own it and be responsible for implementing it and following through!"

"A bad manual creates huge potential liabilities."

"Make sure you run your manual past your attorney before publishing."



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# BIG PICTURE

## A MIGHTY OAK DICTATES DESIGN

**LOCATION** Dallas

**COMPANY** Lawns of Dallas

**THE DETAILS** The homeowners desired a backyard with a garden feel that could also serve as an entertaining space for the many functions they host each year. They were open to starting over with everything, except for a beloved live oak, which framed the existing garage and office. They were adamant about preserving and protecting this tree at all costs throughout the project.

To that end, Lawns of Dallas installed temporary irrigation for the tree's root ball during construction, along with doing hand watering. The company also enlisted the services of a local tree firm for the proper root pruning needed when the new hardscape surfaces were installed.

The project earned Lawns of Dallas a 2016 Grand Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

**PHOTO** Note the large Cathedral live oaks, 'Nellie R. Stevens' hedge and planters with seasonal color, along with the evergreens and blooming azaleas (and preserved oak) in the foreground.

*See more photos from this project at [LandscapeManagement.net/BigPicture](http://LandscapeManagement.net/BigPicture).*

PHOTO: LAWN OF DALLAS - LANDSCAPE & SOFTSCAPE CONTRACTOR; KEVIN CLARK/NAUD BURNETT & PARTNERS - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT



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NEW STUFF

SAFETYWATCH

## REAL-TIME DATA



“We’re weaning ourselves off paper.”

The team at McKay Landscape Lighting in Omaha, Neb., is in flux between a legacy customer relationship management system (CRM) and a new, web-based field service management program. It hasn’t been a flawless transition, but already they’re seeing efficiencies.

“We’re weaning ourselves off of paper,” says Kim Moy, office manager.

The biggest impact of implementing the new field service software, Service Trade, has been the service technicians’ ability to pull up their clients’ account information on a tablet onsite and enter the work performed in real time.

“Before, we printed the ticket, they would take a printed ticket out in the field with them and then come back and enter everything on the computer,” she says.

Now, the office staff also can see when staff members clock in and out of job sites, which is helpful if managers need to reroute someone to a different location. Most importantly, it prevents lost service tickets (thus, lost revenue).

“Tickets got left in trucks, ripped, disappeared,” Moy says. “And of course, there’s the danger of a customer not getting billed because we’ve lost the paperwork. Or the technician does the job, but it doesn’t get updated in the office, so another service tech might go out to do the job again. If that’s an annual service call, that’s an expensive mistake.”



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## RECOMMENDER

# What shrubs are your favorite to install and why?

A Dream Greener Lawn & Landscape project showing two of its favorite plants, the boxwood and coral bells. Japanese maples are another go-to for the company.



**SETH AMBROSE**  
PRESIDENT, WHISKEY CREEK  
LANDSCAPES & HARDSCAPES  
RIDGELY, MD.

"We like the *Nandina* 'Fire Power,' 'Otto Luyken,' and 'Shamrock' holly, primarily for their attractiveness in the landscape. When properly placed, we've found them to make a landscape pop. In addition, we've had no issues with any *Nandina* or the 'Shamrock.' Odds are very good you will find one—if not all—of them in our landscapes.



**JON STANTON**  
SERVICE MANAGER, DREAM GREENER  
LAWN & LANDSCAPE  
BETHEL PARK, PA.

"We like variegated boxwood, coral bells and Double Knock Out Roses. The Double Knock Out Roses give you blooms all summer with low insect and disease issues. The variegated boxwoods and coral bells give our clients year-round color, so when they come home in the winter, they have the same nice view as they do in the spring, summer and fall. Both of those are also deer resistant. There are other plants we use, but those are some of the pillars we like to build around."

## ISSUE >>> BRIEF



BY MISSY HENRIKSEN

The author is vp of public affairs, National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP).


### MARYLAND VICTORY

**R**ecently, the industry had a major victory in the fight to allow professionals to manage landscapes according to best practices and federal and state regulations and not at the whim of local cities, townships or counties.

Two years ago the industry was rocked by a ban in Montgomery County, Md., that forbid the use of commercial pesticide applications by lawn care professionals, but still allowed homeowners to use pesticides. The rule restricted professional companies, while allowing homeowners to use the same products with no skill and no guarantees that they would follow the manufacturer guidelines.

This August, Montgomery County Circuit Judge Terrence McGann ruled in favor of the landscape professional community and struck down the countywide ban, explaining that "by generally banning the use of registered pesticides, the ordinance prohibits and frustrates activity that is intended to be permitted by state law, which conflicts with, and is thus preempted by state law."

NALP members and its government relations team were pleased that the opinion supported the notion of implied state preemption, guaranteeing that local jurisdiction follow state rules and stating, "While the ordinance claims to promote greater pesticide safety, its chaotic application is a blow to the uniformity of laws between the federal and state governments."

This case is an example of why it's vital to be informed, get to know your local legislators and speak up when issues arise that affect your company. It's been a long fight for professional lawn care and landscape companies who do business in Montgomery County, but that effort has paid off. 





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## STEP BY STEP

# How to build a retaining wall

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**R**etaining walls can add beauty to a landscape, enhance the value of a property and retain slopes to create usable, level ground. For stability, all retaining walls should be constructed with the thickness equal to one half of the wall's overall height and should be built leaning back toward the slope about 2 inches per foot of height.

For walls taller than 2½ feet, the use of bonding stones and installation of a drainage system are necessary for long-term stability. Bonding stones stabilize a wall and connect it to the slope that's being retained. Drainage is critical, as hydraulic pressure can cause a wall to fail. For walls of any size, landscape fabric is necessary to stop soil from washing through the wall, creating erosion above and behind it.

Before beginning construction, it's important to calculate the amount of materials needed. For stone, determine the length, width and height of the wall in feet. Average the width and the height if they are not consistent. Multiply the length, width and height to get the cubic footage. There are about 15 cubic feet in one ton of stone, so the next step is to divide the cubic footage of your wall by 15 to determine the quantity of stone needed in tons.

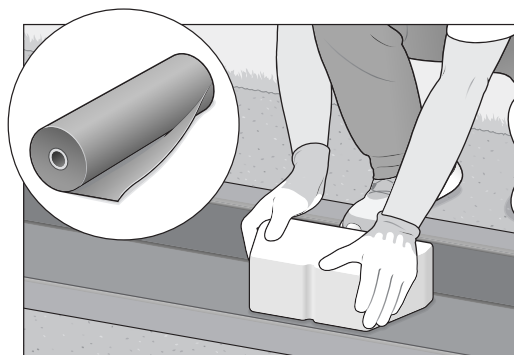
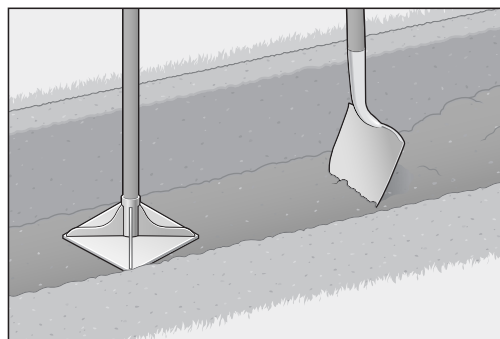
For landscape fabric, take the height of the wall, add 1.5 feet, then multiply that figure by the length of the wall to attain the square footage needed.

Follow these steps to properly install a retaining wall. 📌

SOURCE: Stone Plus Natural Stone Products

## ➔ STEP 1

Dig a level-bottomed trench wide enough for the base stones to fit into. Compact the bottom of the trench with a hand tamper.

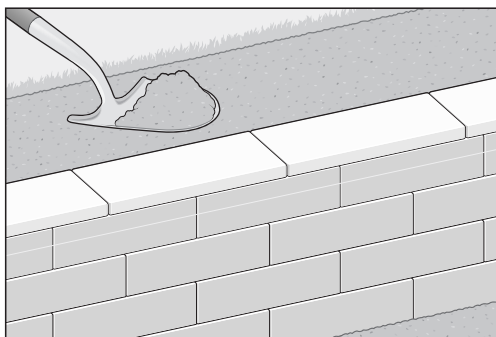
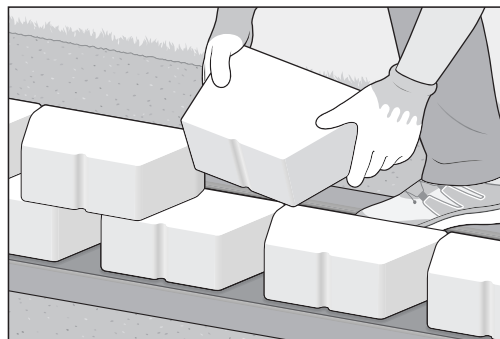


## ➔ STEP 2

Lay landscape fabric in the trench. Lay the base stones tightly together, covering the fabric to hold it in place. Ensure the foundation is level and stable by using shim stones and backfill to fill in voids and level individual stones.

## ➔ STEP 3

Start the wall's second layer using a staggered pattern. Apply an adhesive to the bottom blocks and firmly lay the next layer of blocks on top. Continue this process until the retaining wall reaches your preferred height.



## ➔ STEP 4

Make sure the wall is level. Fold the landscape fabric over the top of the wall, trimming off any excess. Install the cap stones tightly with adhesive to hold down and hide the landscape fabric.





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# NEW STUFF



## CHECK OUT MORE NEW STUFF ONLINE

To stay up to date on all the latest landscape industry products and services, visit [LandscapeManagement.net/tag/product-news](http://LandscapeManagement.net/tag/product-news).

### 1. EXPRESS MULCHER

**COMPANY:** Express Blower

**URL:** [ExpressBlower.com](http://ExpressBlower.com)

The Express Mulcher is a pneumatic blower built to apply mulches, playground chips, compost and other lightweight materials. It features the Hallco Live Floor with reversing capabilities for bulk offloading, a rear mount hydraulic hose reel and a polished aluminum material box. The Express Mulcher will be offered in two models: the SD with a 40 cubic yard level load capacity box and the EX with a 50 cubic yard level load capacity box. Both can blow up to 60 cubic yards of material in an hour.

### 2. X TWEEL TURF CASTER

**COMPANY:** Michelin

**URL:** [MichelinTweel.com](http://MichelinTweel.com)

This airless-radial caster tire-wheel assembly replaces the standard 13X6.5X6 front caster tire and wheel on zero-turn mowers. Because the Michelin X Tweel Turf Caster has no air, it cannot go flat and it eliminates the need to maintain air pressure. It's constructed with high-strength poly-resin spokes that carry the load and create suspension-like characteristics for the front of the mower, the manufacturer says.

### 3. RETRIEVER INSECTICIDE

**COMPANY:** ArborSystems

**URL:** [ArborSystems.com](http://ArborSystems.com)

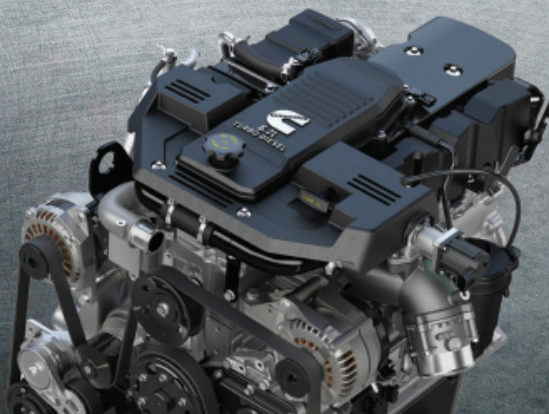
ArborSystems' direct-inject chemical product is designed for use in the Wedgle Direct-Inject Tree Injection System for application to ornamental or nonbearing fruit and nut trees. Retriever contains the active ingredient acetamiprid and is formulated to translocate in the tree's vascular system when injected. It controls aphids, caterpillars, scale, Japanese beetles, leaf miners, leafhoppers and other pests. It's available in 120 ml and 1000 ml Quick-Connect chemical packs.





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## SAFETYWATCH

### FUEL CONTAINER FILLING TIPS

It's important to train team members about fuel containers—sometimes called gas cans or jerry cans—that are typically used in the landscape business. They're often red, and will have a "UL" mark designating them as safe to use for portable fuel storage.

Some cans will be a different color to denote a different fuel. For example, diesel fuel is sometimes stored in yellow cans. Remember, fuel cans should be marked in some way to distinguish the type of fuel in them.

Here are a few filling tips:

- Remove the filler cap slowly. Pressure builds up inside the tank in warm conditions, and pressure inside the tank need to be released slowly.
- Be careful to "ground" the can being filled—simply place it on the ground while mixing and filling. Otherwise, a static electricity charge can build up

- and possibly ignite fumes from the fuel. Do not fill the can while it's in your hand or on a truck or trailer. Trucks with plastic bed liners are especially prone to a buildup of static electricity.
- Do not talk on a cell phone while filling. In some places this is forbidden at service stations due to the possibility of an electrical charge from the phone igniting fuel vapors. In any case, you should be paying attention while filling equipment, not using your cell phone.
  - Do not fill equipment in a spot where a spill will cause permanent damage: for example, on a lawn or on asphalt. Filling on concrete is best.

#### WATCH AND LEARN

Visit [LandscapeManagement.net/SafetyWatch](http://LandscapeManagement.net/SafetyWatch) to view a video about filling fuel containers, and use it as a training tool for your team.

SOURCE: Greenius

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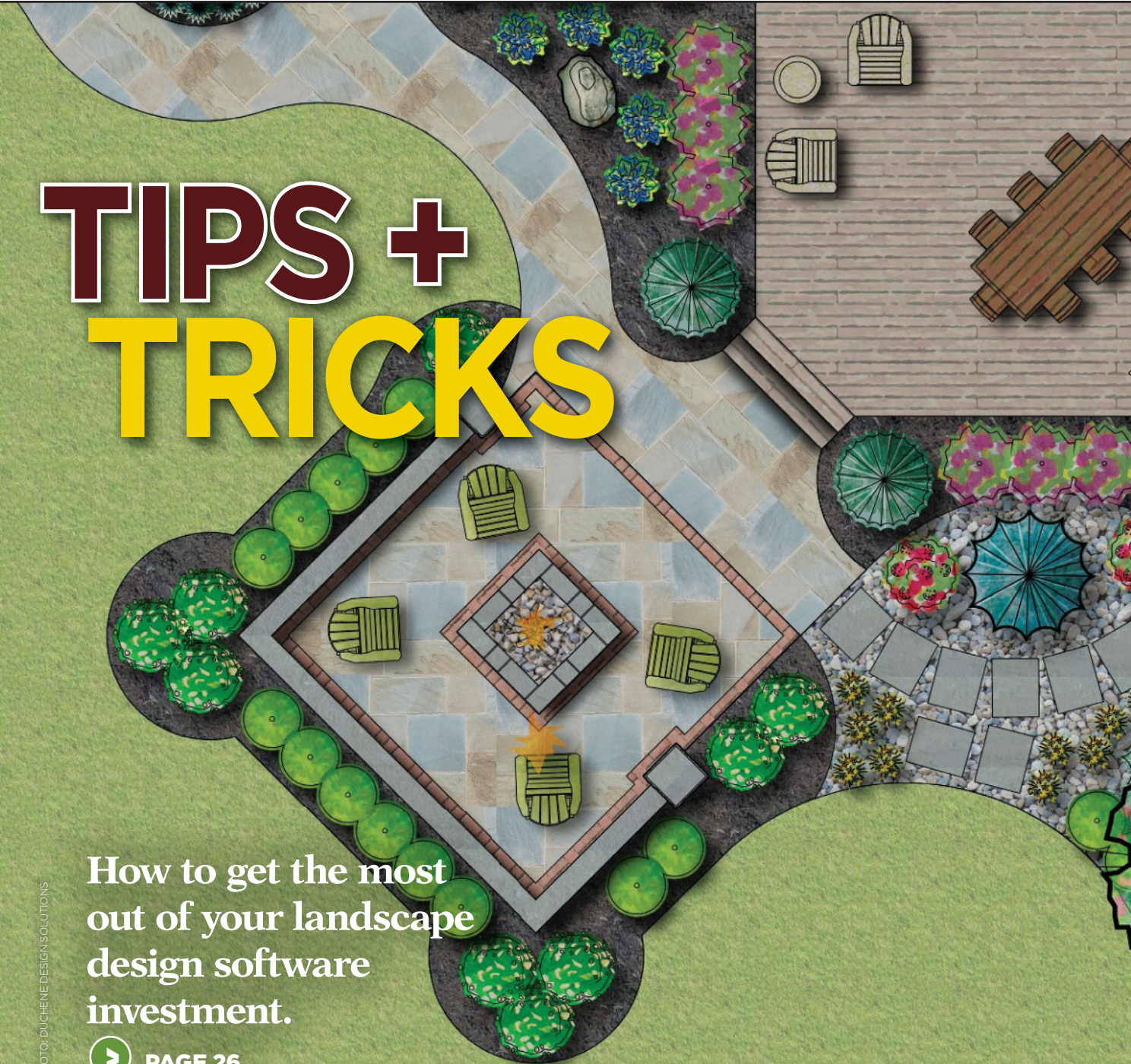
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## TIPS + TRICKS

How to get the most out of your landscape design software investment.

▶ PAGE 26





# An unexpected path

Rodney Creech turned his accidental lawn care business into a long-term, sustainable career. BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER

**BUY LOCAL**  
Lawn Plus competes against national firms by "being better."

**R**odney Creech always thought he would be a farmer. After all, his family farm goes back four generations. So it was a surprise when after college he found himself knee deep in the green industry.

"I technically had a lawn care business and didn't even know it," says Creech, owner of Lawn Plus in West Alexandria, Ohio. "I was licensed and insured but I had no name, no business model—I was just working out of the back of my truck."

With a "love and passion for corn and soy beans," Creech went to Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., to pursue an agronomy degree. One of Creech's professors introduced him to

turf science courses, during which he developed a strong interest in turf management. After receiving a bachelor's degree in agronomy and turfscience in 1999, Creech returned home and took a job in agronomy sales at a local crop store and spent his evenings providing lawn care for his clients.

"I fell in love with the industry," Creech says. "Never did I dream I would have a lawn care business, but when I got



home from college I started caring for the lawns of my parents, their friends and people from church."

Over time, Creech noticed how many people ultimately have bad experiences with their lawn care providers, and he began to realize that his accidental career could turn into something real. He launched Lawn Plus in 2005, serving about 40 properties, with a mission to deliver high-quality service at affordable prices. He left the crop store to go full-time in lawn care in 2007, and his first employee (his dad) joined the company that year. By fall 2008 he was hiring part-time help. Today the \$2.2-million company has 32 employees and offers

85 percent lawn health services and 15 percent pest control, tree and shrub care and athletic field renovations and installations to a 75 percent residential, 25 percent commercial clientele.

"Most of the lawns I cared for were only receiving three to four applications, and I kept hearing from local people that their lawn care company was doing six to eight applications, calling them all the time and showing up when not needed," Creech says. "It came to me that many of these people were being taken advantage of and spending too much money on too many applications from large corporate companies."

*Continued on page 20*



Rodney Creech

## NEWSFEED

### AN AERATION HOLIDAY

Ryan Turf named Sept. 16 "National Aerate Your Lawn Day." The "holiday" is a consumer

awareness campaign the manufacturer says is an opportunity for lawn care professionals to educate homeowners

on the benefits of aeration. Learn more at [AerateYourLawnToday.com](http://AerateYourLawnToday.com).

### AERATOR ATTACHMENT

Exmark introduced a spreader attachment for its 30-inch stand-

on aerator, enabling landscape professionals to offer overseeding



in conjunction with aeration programs. The spreader attachment is capable of carrying up to 80 pounds of seed and comes standard with a hopper cover to keep material dry during transport.





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## TURF+ORNAMENTAL CARE

*Continued from page 18*

“Our goal is for our customers to have amazing experiences and to change their thoughts about the lawn care industry,” he adds. “We really challenge and embed it in our guys to be better.”

### SMART DIVERSIFICATION

Creech is often asked why Lawn Plus doesn't offer landscape maintenance services, but he knew from the start that he never wanted to mow lawns. He likes the knowledge and expertise that comes with providing specialized lawn care, and he knows that “a 16-year-old with a trailer and a mower” will never be his competition. Over the years, Creech has continued to think strategically about the services he offers. For years he had considered offering tree and shrub care, but knew he just didn't understand the market well enough to dive in with confidence. Last year, Creech jumped on the opportunity to hire a tree care expert with 30 years of experience and a large existing client base. He says the new division was worth the wait.

The company's athletic field renovation and installation division is another relatively new addition. While Lawn Plus had serviced athletic field turf for the past 10 years, three years ago the company invested in specialized equipment to allow it to do any job pertaining to improving the safety or aesthetics of

athletic fields. Creech says there is very little competition in this market and believes he has a leg up on the two or three local companies that provide athletic field renovation as their “bread and butter.” Lawn Plus focuses on providing savings to schools and municipalities that maintain their fields under strict budgets, and the company recently hired a full-time salesperson, a former baseball coach, to grow the department.

To Creech, focusing more seriously on the athletic field market not only made sense strategically, but was also an important step toward diversification. As more and more state and local governments pass laws on pesticide and fertilizer use, Creech says restrictions are always in the back of his mind. He now knows Lawn Plus will have a solid business unit that will survive should chemical restrictions impact the status quo.

“I don't know what the future holds in terms of pesticide use,” Creech says. “But we wanted to add a service to reduce our risk and give us options if one day we decide not to go the pesticide route anymore.”

### REALLOCATING RESPONSIBILITIES

All of Creech's growth and success did not come without challenges. After about six years of running multiple businesses, he began to feel the burnout that small business owners often face. Too many

long days of acting as “accounts payable and receivable, collections, technician, assessments – everything,” and Creech knew he needed help if the business was going to survive. In 2011 he hired a family friend, Bob Brower, as general manager. Since then, Creech says Brower's personality, honesty

and strong work ethic have taken the business to a whole new level.

“I had to give something up and lawn care can be stressful,” he says. “But instead I decided to hire the most amazing person ever. If you can hire someone who cares about the business as much as—or even more than—you do, do it.”

This reallocation of the company's day-to-day responsibilities has allowed Creech the opportunity to step away from the business and focus on other endeavors. Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Creech has become active in local and regional politics. He served for several years as a township trustee and is currently a county commissioner in Preble County, Ohio. His goal is to serve in the Ohio state legislature by 2022.

“I've been bitten by the political bug,” Creech says. “The freedom I have from Lawn Plus has allowed me to do something I love.”

Because of his “great team that is moving in the same direction,” Creech now spends less than two hours a week involved with Lawn Plus. But he is still passionate about the business and its path forward. He describes the company as a “well-oiled machine” and cites the changing millennial workforce—whose members are not as keen as past generations on working overtime and on weekends—as its biggest challenge. It's a challenge, like all the others, the company is ready to face head-on.

“Our biggest challenge is the younger workforce—they are great, hardworking guys but they are not putting in a ton of extra hours,” Creech says. “But instead of having 25 employees working 60 hours a week, we just have more people working 40 hours a week, which we are OK with.”

“We are constantly trying to improve and learn and adapt,” Creech adds. “Really, the hard work is done—we have everything in place. We're just going to keep doing what we're doing and improve upon it.”

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.



**DIVERSIFY**  
Seeding, renovation and athletic fields are just a few ways Lawn Plus has branched out.



# FOUR STEPS TO COMBAT SPRING WEEDS NOW

**D**id you know that fall is the perfect time to treat for spring weeds? Summer herbicide applications have likely burned down top growth, but weeds will reappear once air and soil temperatures start to drop. With warm days and cool nights, weeds begin to store energy and send it to the crown and roots — and the herbicide moves with it, making it an ideal time for application. Many annuals and perennials will be present in the turf during this time, giving you the perfect opportunity to attack a broad spectrum of weeds. Follow these handy steps to create a fall weed control plan:

## 1. Identify problem weeds.

Don't waste time and money trying to control the wrong weeds. It's important to know your offenders ahead of time. Here are some weeds you can target with a fall application:

- Winter annuals, including chickweed, henbit and speedwell. They germinate in late summer and fall, survive through the winter and produce seed in the spring.
- Perennial weeds, such as dandelion, white clover and broadleaf plantain. They live for more than two years and reproduce by seed and the spread of vegetative parts. It is best to use systemic herbicides as they control the plant — roots and all.

## 2. Note weed hot spots.

Identify the places where you've had difficulties in the past. These weak spots will indicate when you should start your broadleaf weed control program in the fall.

## 3. Select the proper herbicide.

If you make your application prior to germination, you'll want to use a

preemergence herbicide, such as Dimension® or Gallery® specialty herbicides. Gallery prevents broadleaf weeds that germinate in the fall, winter and spring. Dimension controls crabgrass and other grassy weeds. In the North, lawn care operators can make preemergence applications as early as Labor Day. In warmer climates, they can apply as late as October.

If you are targeting perennials or weeds that have already germinated, try Defendor® specialty herbicide, a postemergence herbicide that works at preemergence timing. When applied in late fall or early spring, it will eliminate plant growth and prevent bloom.

## 4. Determine application timing.

This step gives you your application window for the most effective control. Preemergence herbicides should be applied two weeks prior to weed seed germination. If you are using a postemergence herbicide, such as Defendor, you can make applications into late November.



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# One size doesn't fit all

Follow these guidelines from U.S. Lawns to help determine your ideal maintenance crew size.

BY MIKE FITZPATRICK

**A**s you plan the future of your landscape management business, it's important to recognize that crew size drives profitability. If your crews are too big, you don't make money; if they're too small you don't make money.

Setting up your crews for the right size influences how profitable you are, but establishing the crew numbers to ensure you're operating at peak efficiency is a complex thing. For starters, you must calculate how much revenue you need per person to cover all your overheads and make the profit you want. To get to that number, you need to factor in four variables.

**1. Equipment.** The amount of equipment you have on the truck dictates how much revenue that equipment must produce to cover its own cost, and it also governs crew numbers.

For example, if you have a three-quarter-ton truck and a two-axle, 18-foot trailer with three mowers on it, this equipment is fixed overhead you have to



**SIZE MATTERS**  
Mower size is one factor contractors should consider when determining crew numbers.

pay for no matter what. So, depending on what your financials look like, you need to produce X dollars of volume to pay for that equipment. To produce that volume, you need X number of people in that truck.

Now, here's a key point on the subject of equipment expenses as well as other business costs: You cannot charge the customer for inefficiencies.

Think about it this way: Say you just started out and bought a 48-inch mower, which will only cut grass so fast. Then you go out to price a job that really requires a 72-inch mower, which is 33 percent more productive than a 48-inch mower.

You must bid the job based on that 72-inch mower, because your competition certainly will.

Then, if you win the job, you must decide whether you want to buy the 72-inch mower, and if you do, you need to start looking for work that fits that size mower.

It all comes down to having the right equipment for the jobs, and the right jobs for your equipment.

**2. Route density.** The distance between your job sites also plays a role in crew size. The farther apart the properties are, the fewer crew members you want in the truck, because you're paying each of those people for travel time, and you don't want to pay for any more unproductive time than you need to.

**3. Property/job size.** If you have small jobs, you can't send a five-man crew to do them, because all their budgeted hours get sucked up by travel time.

*Continued on page 24*



Mike Fitzpatrick

## NEWSFEED

**ROBOMOW JOINS MTD**  
F. Robotics Acquisitions, the makers of Robomow, is now a subsidiary of MTD

Products, parent company of Cub Cadet. The transaction closed July 2. Robomow's operations will remain

headquartered in Israel. Financial details of the transaction were not disclosed.

**BRIGGS EXPANDS MOWER OPS**  
Briggs & Stratton Corp. will move produc-

tion from its facility in Munnsville, N.Y., to neighboring Sherrill, N.Y., to expand capacity. The Munnsville facility produces commercial zero-turn mowers under the Ferris and

Snapper Pro brands and consumer zero-turn mowers under its Simplicity and Snapper brands. Some production will begin in the spring, and it will be fully operational in 2019.

PHOTO: U.S. LAWN



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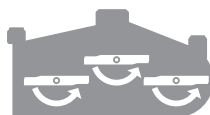
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## MOWING+LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

*Continued from page 22*

On the flip side, if you're serving a bigger job site, five crew members may be perfect. You can get the whole job done in one day, so you're not paying the extra hours and a second day's worth of travel time for the crew to go back and finish the work.

**4. Customer expectations.** Knowing your clients' expectations is another critical element. If you have a property that you could send 10 guys in and be finished in a day, but your customer expects to see your crew there every day, that's a whole different dynamic.

In this situation, it would be better to set up an onsite caretaker and just have the mow crew come through and spend a few days cutting the grass. That way you can be efficient with your equipment (it's not just sitting on

the job site all week) and you're still meeting the customer's need to have you there every day.

Or how about a scenario where you're running three-man crews, but you take on a big job where you're expected to arrive on the job site and do all the work in a day. You must send a bigger crew to make that happen, so be prepared.



### OPTICS

Contractors should consider client expectations about crew sizes and service frequency.

### WHAT TYPE OF WORK SHOULD YOU BE SELLING?


When you're first starting out, the jobs you bring on will automatically dictate your crew numbers, but as your business matures you'll find that your targets start to shift.

Just be aware. If your average crew is three people, don't take on a bunch of postage-stamp jobs that only need one or two guys to get the work done. You'll have too many people on the property (not to mention that you'll be paying for ever-inefficient travel time). On the other hand, you know you have that three-man crew, so don't target customers with big properties that need to be finished in one day.

If you're running all five-man crews, look for jobs where you can park that truck all day and all five of those guys can stay busy and not have to travel anywhere else.

Or, your goal may be to have several different sized crews so you can serve a variety of customers.

The most important point here is be selective about what type of work you take on and target work that fits your model.

In the end, it's all a matter of understanding how to balance route density, travel costs, equipment expenses, property sizes and customer expectations. This is U.S. Lawns' proven formula to determine more efficient crew numbers and ultimately, achieve higher profitability. It can work for your business, too. 

Fitzpatrick is vice president of U.S. Lawns, an Orlando, Fla.-based commercial landscape maintenance franchise system.

PHOTO: U.S. LAWN

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# Design software to-do's

**Landscape professionals offer tips and tricks for getting the most out of design software.**

BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER

**T**o Patrick DuChene, choosing the right landscape design software program is only half the battle.

"The software is important, but it's more about how you use it," he says.

Landscape design software can be a costly investment, so it's important for contractors to make sure they're using it to its full capabilities.

Here, three landscape design professionals offer advice for getting the most out of your landscape design software program of choice.



Patrick DuChene

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

DuChene, owner of DuChene Design Solutions in Somerville, N.J., began using DynaScape Design & Business Management Software

in 2003. He has since become an expert on the product and works with DynaScape to offer in-person and online training courses. He also helps demo the software in the DynaScape booth at green industry trade shows. DuChene provides designs and 3D modeling



### TASK ORIENTED

Design experts recommend landscape companies choose software by first considering what jobs they need their program to do.

to landscape contractors who serve a primarily residential clientele.

DuChene's first piece of advice is for contractors to decide what exactly they want the software to do and what feature will have the biggest impact on their design process, and then identify programs that specialize in that feature.

At the same time, he advises contractors not to buy a program with too many extra bells and whistles they will never use. Too many features will drive up the cost and will make the program more difficult to learn.

Because each program's design elements differ, it's also important for contractors to make sure the program represents them graphically and the

look of the finished design will impress their clients.

"You want to figure out what function you want the software to do for you and then find the program that does that the best," DuChene says. "Once you do that, you really need to discipline yourself to learn the function and the software."

DuChene says he's always surprised by the number of contractors who invest in landscape design software but then don't take the time to master the program. He adds that there are a number of different avenues contractors can take to learn the software, including videos and webinars. Most software providers also will hold onsite training events for

*Continued on page 28*

## NEWSPEED

### CASE ADDS EXCAVATOR

Case Construction Equipment added the CX145D SR minimum-swing radius excavator

to its D Series lineup. The CX145D SR was designed to provide ample digging and lifting power in a small

footprint. It has an operating weight of 32,100 pounds and a 102 hp Tier 4 Final engine, as well as bucket digging forces up to 21,400-foot-pounds, Case says.

### UNDERCARRIAGE UPGRADE

Bobcat Co. introduced a new compact track loader 5-Link torsion

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## DESIGN/BUILD+INSTALLATION

*Continued from page 26*

users who would benefit from face-to-face instruction.

"Once people get into the program and they start to realize how much time it saves them, it becomes addicting," says DuChene. "They don't want to go back."

DuChene also advises contractors to look for landscape design software that can execute multiple tasks within the same program. He says one of DynaScape's biggest selling points is that it integrates landscape design, estimating and job costing into one program.

"A lot of contractors are designing in one program, calculating estimates in another, like Microsoft Excel, and then typing up the estimate in yet another program, such as Microsoft Word. It gets very disconnected and inefficient," he says. "The more you can stay in one pipeline, the better."

### PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Ken Henriksen, president of Three Brothers Property Service in Farmington, Conn., says his company investigated different landscape design programs by watching YouTube videos and began using Pro Landscape Design Software last year. Before that, the company had done all of its designs by hand. Henriksen says the decision to switch to a software

program was driven by the need to have better visuals to present to clients.

Since using Pro Landscape, the company's job closure rate has increased from 30 percent to between 50 and 60 percent. Three Brothers

Property Service provides 60 percent maintenance and 40 percent design/build services to an 80 percent commercial, 20 percent residential clientele.

"We needed to get into the new program because customers love to see visual things and it's an easier sell," Henriksen says.

For contractors who are new to landscape design software, Henriksen advises them to "practice, practice, practice." Designers at Three Brothers Property Service learned the program using photos of their own homes and landscapes before using it on client projects. They also used training videos provided by the vendor.

Henriksen also suggests getting a program that helps contractors better communicate with their clients. He especially likes Pro Landscape's proposal builder feature that includes the names, prices and care instructions for each plant included in the design. The ability to use a photo of the client's house and to add and take out elements gives customers a clear, detailed image that helps them visualize the final outcome.

"We wanted to be able to communicate on the customer's level through what they see," Henriksen says. "Maybe they see a flower on the DIY Network and now we can say to them, 'This would look good here,' or, with the click of the mouse, 'Here are some different options.' The proposal builder helps on the sales end by giving the customer a lot of information."

### ALWAYS UPDATE

Amber Kurian, co-owner of Green Inspirations Landscaping in Whitemouth, Manitoba, Canada, has used Realtime Landscaping Architect software for the past six years. She says the company primarily uses Mac computers but, after doing some research, she found only two Mac-compatible landscape design programs, both of which had poor reviews. They purchased a PC specifically to use their new landscape design software program. Green Inspirations Landscaping provides 60 percent design/build, 25 percent maintenance and lawn care, 7.5 percent tree removal and 7.5 percent snow removal services. The company offers its design/build services to a 95 percent residential, 5 percent commercial clientele, and its lawn maintenance and care



services to a 60 percent residential, 40 percent commercial clientele.

**QUICK FIX**  
Finding an easy-to-learn program is important for some design teams.

"We went with this one because it had good reviews and was as close to a professional product that we could get without using AutoCAD," says Kurian, who does most of the company's designs.

Kurian recommends contractors take advantage of the program's annual updates provided by the manufacturer, which, for the Realtime program, cost \$100 per year. These updates ensure they're always working with the most recent version of the program and they don't miss out on new functions and features. For example, this year the manufacturer provided an update that made it easier to design on properties with grades and slopes, something Kurian says was difficult to do in the past. The upgrade provides more points to allow the designer to make the grade or slope look smoother.

"There aren't always new features, but there are usually new ways of doing things," Kurian says. "They also add more objects you can put into the landscape, such as new trees or new paving stones."

Simplicity also was an important feature for Kurian when selecting landscape design software. She didn't want something that would take hours to figure out how to use, and she also wanted something that would provide quick solutions for their clients.

"If you want to put together something quickly for a client, it has to come together quickly," she says. "You can't be sitting around on the computer while your client is waiting." 

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.



Ken Henriksen



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# Streaming services

What's new with irrigation design software and how contractors are using it.

BY LAUREN DOWDLE

Landscape design software has proven to be a valuable tool for contractors, giving them a way to show clients what their projects will look like once installed.

But with irrigation design programs, it's more about the calculations, parts, water flow, pipe layouts and schedules than showing aesthetic value. To better manage all the components of an irrigation design/install project, many landscape contractors are turning to irrigation software.

The irrigation software products are adapting to better meet contractors' needs with new features, as these professionals as explain.



Matthew Copp

### WHAT LANDSCAPERS ARE USING

The type of irrigation design/install software landscape contractors opt for mostly depends on the size and scope

of their projects and if it's going to help them streamline the design process.

Matthew Copp, PLA, ASLA — principal-in-charge of MRC Landscape Architecture — says he turned to irrigation software to become more efficient with his projects.

Located in Oxford, Miss., his company is a full-service land planning and landscape architecture firm that offers design services for drainage, planting, irrigation, hardscape, outdoor living, recreational and public spaces. It provides design services for commercial, public and residential properties and has an annual revenue of less than \$250,000.

"Even though we had integrated our own symbols and styles into standard CAD programs over a decade's time, we realized that our process or system for landscape and irrigation design was becoming very inefficient," Copp says. "Making revisions to a plan were taking as long or longer than the original design."

They looked at numerous software options and talked with other professionals, eventually choosing Irrigation

F/X from Land F/X, mainly because of its functionality and user support.

"The software utilizes 'projects,' and the user inputs information and preferences into a given 'project' and that information is used as a base for all the work generated on a specific design or project," Copp says.

It also allows users to input project-specific data that helps with pipe, valve and pump sizing, he says. There are ways for contractors to generate schedules for materials, water usage and watering, and they can all be exported to spreadsheets, Copp says.

"If changes need to be made to a design for whatever reason, the user can very efficiently make revisions and—with a few clicks of a mouse on the irrigation toolbars—regenerate new irrigation schedules," Copp says.

Gus Wesson, a licensed landscape architect, certified arborist and director of leisure services for the city of Gulfport, Miss., also has used Irrigation F/X, along with AutoCAD as a base program.

*Continued on page 32*

**RIGHT TOOLS**  
Like other irrigation components, software won't solve all your problems. It's only one tool.



## NEWSFEED

### FRANCHISES AVAILABLE

Conserva Irrigation is accepting potential franchise candidates. Russ Jundt founded the

Richmond, Va.-based company in 2010. The company is seeking single- and multiunit operators with a range

of experience levels, as well as those looking for add-on or conversion business opportunities. Potential franchisees should be willing to invest between \$43,550 and \$80,250.

### IRRIGATION SCHOOL

The Irrigation Association launched an elementary school lesson plan. Focusing on grades three through five, the curriculum shares the benefits and

history of irrigation, including agriculture and landscape. The program was rolled out to more than 10,000 schools in four states: California, Florida, Texas and Nebraska.

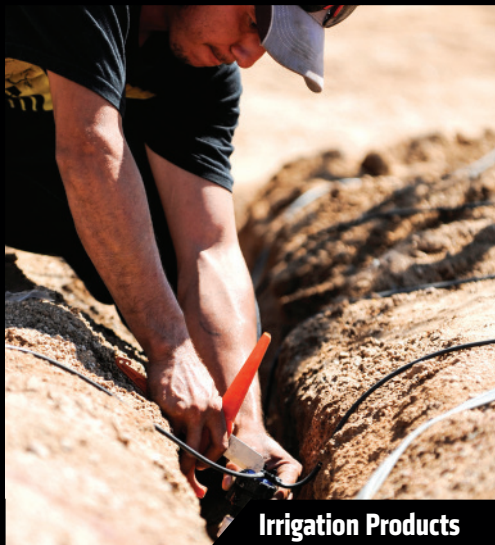




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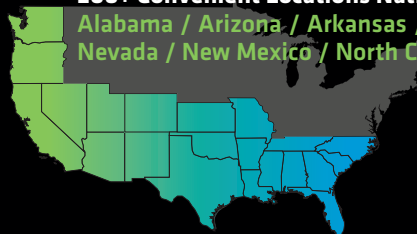
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## IRRIGATION+WATER MANAGEMENT

**PLAN IT**  
Symbols and parts  
lists are a software  
consideration.

*Continued from page 30*

"AutoCAD was the only program I used personally to complete construction drawings, so it was just an easy move to continue working in that program for irrigation," Wesson says. "Irrigation F/X automates the irrigation design smoothly in AutoCAD once you have everything integrated and set up correctly."

He says he never truly invested in Irrigation F/X because the majority of his work didn't involve irrigation, so he mainly used AutoCAD to produce drawings.

"This just requires more in-the-field knowledge of irrigation instead of trusting in a preset program," Wesson says.

**"The key is to remember that software is only a tool, so the user must have the knowledge base to create the proper design."**

—GUS WESSON

While there are lower-cost software options, Wesson says he doesn't feel like those are as accurate—although they might be fine for designing smaller systems.

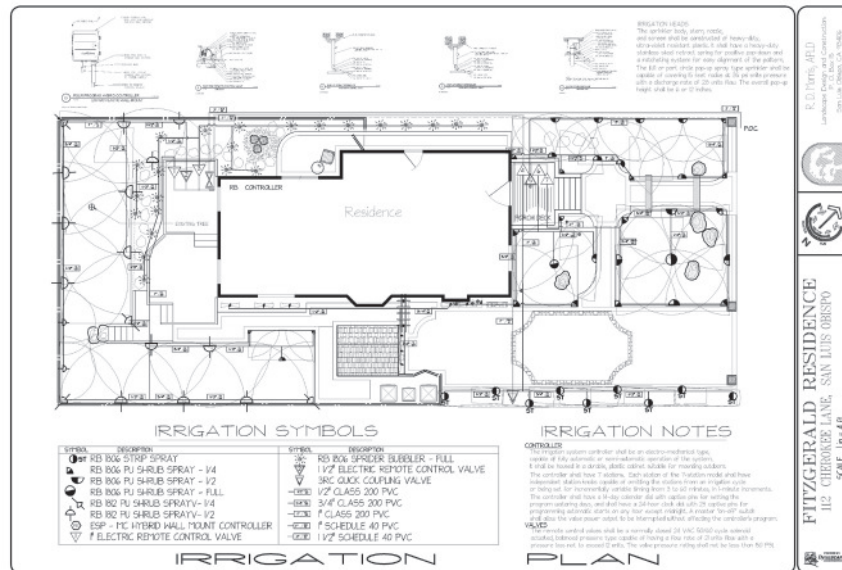
"There are other options available that are more economical and probably a bit easier to learn," Wesson says. "However, I would only recommend these for small designs that the contractor would personally be using for cost estimating and if they were installing it in-house."

He recommends investing in an AutoCAD-based software for any designs that are going to be included in construction documents for bid or were consistently large in scale.

"But the key is to remember that software is only a tool, so the user must have the knowledge base to create the proper design," Wesson adds.

### FINDING THE RIGHT SOFTWARE

Just like any other computer-based program, it's important to find irrigation



design software that's regularly updated to meet hardware and user requirements.

Copp notes Irrigation F/X's updates and modifications—like user commands, symbols and schedules—are based off of user input.

Other design options like DynaScope Design also see a steady flow of updates. DynaScope has an irrigation layout and design component and includes tools to calculate length of pipe, count parts and a way to export parts lists to MS Word or Excel. Users with DynaScope Design and Manage360 can transfer their irrigation plans to their cost-based estimate to streamline the process.

DynaScope recently has added the ability to create takeoffs, material lists and purchase orders to its software, says Joe Salemi, DynaScope product marketing manager. The software has some new irrigation symbols, as well.

There's no one-size-fits-all answer for which irrigation design software is best for a given contractor. It comes down to what they want to use the software for, desired features, their budgets and if the product will grow with them in the future.


"Are they needing something simple to help with basic system calculations for design/build, or are they wanting a program that will do a complete set of

plans that can be used for hard bids?" Copp says. "It may be better to invest in a software that is more than what they currently need and grow into the program rather than outgrow the program."

Another consideration is the software's system requirements and if the contractor's computer has adequate hardware to smoothly run the program, Copp adds.

Deciding which features and capabilities are must-haves is also important when narrowing down the search for software—and Salemi says the most important thing to confirm is that the software can easily count all the irrigation parts. That allows users to quickly produce a material list for estimating and ordering, helping to streamline the process.

But no matter the software product, irrigation design/install software is a way to make companies more efficient in something they're already doing.

"What we need to remember is that the software is just a tool," Salemi says. "While there are best practices and technical expertise built in, the tool relies on the designer to create the most effective irrigation system for the client." 

Dowdle is a freelance writer based in Nashville.



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# A HELPING HAND(BOOK)

How an employee handbook can make your life easier and improve productivity. BY PHILLIP M. PERRY

**W**hat commonly neglected business tool can help your workplace run more smoothly, orient new employees quickly and reduce your risk of costly legal battles? If you guessed “the employee handbook,” you’re right. Too often given short shrift, this vital document can play a vital role by communicating workplace policies and employee responsibilities. The result can be a more productive organization and a more profitable business.

“Employee handbooks are extremely important for businesses of all sizes,” says James Potts, CEO of the Pasadena, Ca.,-based human resources consulting firm Potts & Associates. “They can help everyone work more efficiently.”

The same handbooks that help veteran workers understand your business policies can be especially valuable for recruits.

“Giving your handbook to selected applicants can be beneficial in landing the best employees,” says Richard Avdoian, an employee development consultant in St. Louis. “Many times the ideal candidate has multiple offers, and your handbook can tip the balance in your favor by communicating the benefits of joining your team.”

The employee handbook, along with the job description, can set the framework for inducting new people into your business, adds Avdoian. “It communicates the company mission, states expectations and outlines benefits. And it sets the tone for a cooperative ‘we’ culture.”

Once aboard, the new employee should receive a handbook as part of a thoughtful orientation.

“The new employee should be given a tour of departments and be introduced to their managers,” says Avdoian. “This communicates the idea that each individual is part of a larger organization and is equally important in the success of the company.”

There’s one more benefit of a well-written handbook: reduced legal risk. Suppose, for example, one of your

customers is harmed by an employee impaired by alcohol or drugs. Having a record of an anti-drug policy can help mitigate liability.

“When you get sued, the first question an attorney will ask is ‘did you have a policy covering this?’” says Bob Gregg, co-chair of the employment practice law group at Boardman & Clark, based in Madison, Wis.

At small firms, where supervisors have limited time to communicate all the vital information employees need, handbooks can help fill the gap. At the same time, they communicate a valuable business image. “Like a website, an employee handbook is an expected part of today’s business operation,” says Avdoian. “It tells everyone you are serious about your organization.”

*Continued on page 37*

## WHAT GOES IN THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK?

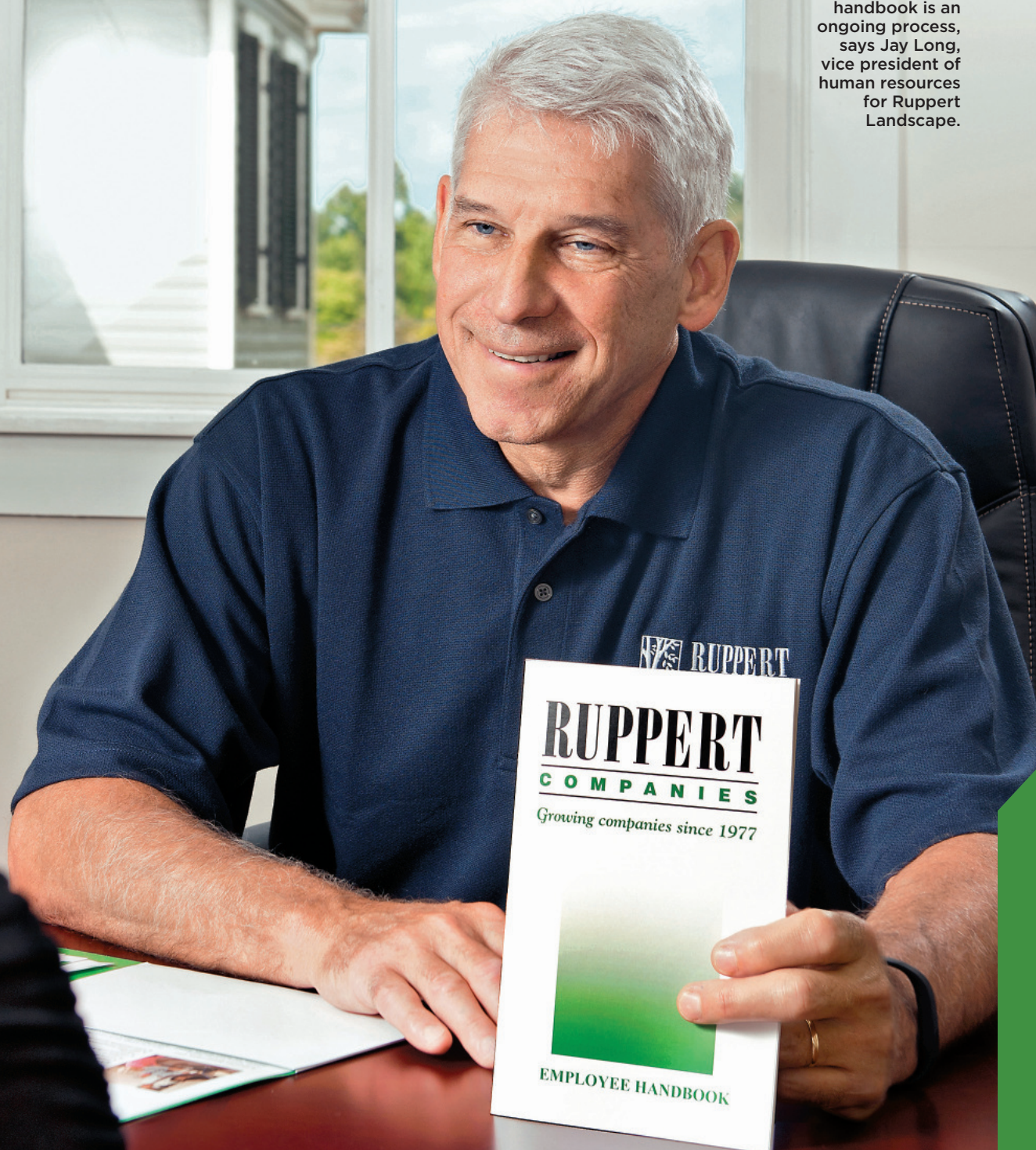
Employee handbook policies will be as varied as businesses themselves. You should consult with your attorney to understand what should (and should not) be included. Here are some questions that handbooks often answer:

- What is your policy on sick leave and vacation? On attendance and tardiness?
- May employees drink alcohol at lunch? Will you be testing for drug use?
- Will the employer be inspecting desks, email and voicemail messages?
- What insurance and other benefits will employees enjoy?
- How can employees ask for pay corrections related to overtime?

In addition to the above, many handbooks clearly lay out policies prohibiting workplace harassment, as well as the gathering of any genetic or family medical information.



Developing a handbook is an ongoing process, says Jay Long, vice president of human resources for Ruppert Landscape.





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## POWER OF ONE

**Tom Pilon**

Owner  
Perfect Earth Landscape  
Louisville, Ky.

## Handbook Q&A

**LM: What's your approach to an employee handbook?**

**TP:** Our employee handbook is not just a one-time use document that's handed out to each employee upon hiring. It has been very helpful throughout the seasons when an issue comes up. We have kept it detailed, simple and clear—without being a micromanaged procedure manual. It mainly serves as a reference guide for us and our employees, so everyone is on the same page. Written documentation is important and each new hire is given an updated handbook to review and sign. On the first page we say, "The guidelines presented in this handbook are not intended to be a substitute for sound management, judgment and discretion."

**LM: What topics do you include?**

**TP:** It covers many different topics, including our company philosophy, compensation, standards and expectations, benefits and more.

**LM: How and when it is distributed? How often is it updated?**

**TP:** It's distributed to a potential new hire at the first interview, in person. We go over it briefly and I highlight some of the more important parts (safety, attendance, pay periods, personal conduct, paid holidays and time-off policies). They must return the final page—signed—and they keep the handbook. I update the handbook about two or three times a year, as issues come up or I think of something to add. For example, I've added a stricter "no show, no call" policy. Next up, I plan on creating a more structured bonus policy, as well.

**LM: What advice do you have for other companies implementing a handbook?**

**TP:** Definitely have one! It sets a professional tone.

Refer to it. As an owner, check in on the document and refresh yourself, so you don't get caught off-guard on your own policy. This recently happened to us this summer with regard to paid vacation. The handbook helped to smooth things out.

Touch on workplace safety, for sure, but have a separate safety program in place.

Be specific with workday policies, such as smoking, start times, shop rules and cell phone usage.

Don't focus too much on punishment. Outline the rules and reinforce kindly when issues come up. —*Marisa Palmieri*

*Continued from page 34*

**COVER THESE TOPICS**

The employee handbook is not a "one size fits all" affair. Every organization has its own requirements, and only your attorney can tell you what you should include (and omit) to be in compliance with the law. Nevertheless, there are some topics common to many handbooks. For a rundown, see the sidebar, "What goes in the

employee handbook?" on page 34.

Here are some remarks about the more sensitive topics:

● **Email.** Even if allowed to use personal devices for business purposes, employees have no right to privacy regarding any business emails that go through those devices, or any personal emails that go through the business system.

"Your policy should state that your business owns all emails that go



*Chris Parsons (right) runs Parsons Grounds Maintenance in Akron, Ohio, with his brother, Greg Parsons (center), and his wife, Tammy Parsons (left). All three are veterans of the U.S. Marine Corps.*

**How did you get involved with GreenCare for Troops?**

When I first retired from the military I did volunteer work with an organization called Team Rubicon, which does disaster relief. Starting the business, I didn't have the time anymore to deploy for a few weeks at a time to disaster zones, so I thought, is there any way the company could volunteer? I did a web search and Project EverGreen's GreenCare for Troops quickly popped up. This is our second year. We have two (accounts) currently. I've done both plowing and mowing.

**Why volunteer?**

It was ingrained in me growing up that volunteering is a civic duty—whether it's volunteering at a soup kitchen or donating landscape services for those in need.

**How do you make it work?**

I really don't worry about the cost at all. It's worth it in the end no matter what the cost is. I offer to take care of properties within our work area. If we're going to be working in those neighborhoods, I might as well swing through and spend some time helping these veterans.

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over your business system, even personal ones,” says Gregg. “Employees should not use the system for anything they do not want company management to see. They should also be informed that even if they hit the delete key the emails will be retained on the company hard drive or in the cloud.”

● **Overtime.** The 2004 revisions to the Fair Labor Standards Act created a “safe harbor” from liability for unpaid overtime when employers have adequate policies granting employees the opportunity to request wage corrections. “If you do not have such a policy employees can sue you for unpaid overtime without telling you first,” says Gregg. “On the other hand, if you have a clear, correctly worded policy, you can win the case.”

● **Privacy statement.** “Include a statement of your right to inspect computers, desks, and telephones,” advises Gregg. “If you don’t have it you can be sued for invasion of privacy for looking through what you considered company property.”

● **Compliance with the Genetic Information Non-discrimination Act (GINA).**

State that your business will not collect any genetic or family medical history information from employees. This will give your organization a “safe harbor” against a lawsuit for discrimination based on such knowledge.

“You should also tell medical providers you do not want information about your employee’s family medical history,” says Gregg. When communicating with your business about medical topics, the providers should use general language. For example, the physician might state

“Mary has a serious medical condition” rather than “Mary is absent for a heart condition that is common to her family.”

**WHAT TO OMIT**

Handbooks can be a two-edged sword. While they can help protect you from charges of discrimination or other illegal personnel acts, they can also create legal problems of their own. “Handbooks can be dangerous if you don’t know what you are doing,” Gregg says. He gives one example: Including poorly written statements in your handbook can affect the “employment at will” status normally enjoyed by businesses. “It’s easy to fall into the trap of creating a contract of employment.”

For example, you may be tempted to include morale-boosting statements such as “You will always be treated fairly here” or “We know you will enjoy your long-term employment” or “Our policy is to promote from within.” These can end up coming back to haunt you later when a disgruntled worker sues for a perceived violation of promises that he or she considers contractual.

There’s more. “Avoid falling into the trap of including policies that are not required by law,” says Gregg. “Suppose, for example, your business has only 30 employees. You are not required to comply with the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which only applies to businesses with 50 or more employees. Including a page about compliance with the FMLA can create a condition in which you are covered by that law even if you normally would not be.”

*Continued on page 40*



**Jay Long**

*Vice president of  
human resources  
Ruppert Landscape  
Laytonsville, Md.*

**LM: What’s your approach to handbooks?**

**JL:** Developing our policies and procedures and getting them down in an official handbook has been, and continues to be, an ongoing process. The first few years we were in business we were focused on the basics of our everyday business—keeping customers and employees onboard, trying to succeed and be profitable—so it was only after we started to achieve a certain level of success and started branching out that the idea of writing things down occurred to us. Our handbook has developed into a tool to provide our employees with the information they need to be successful and to provide our company with a consistent approach to the business.

**LM: What topics do you include?**

**JL:** Our employee handbook contains our mission and values—the philosophies by which we run the business. Beyond that, it helps communicate our benefits (insurance, time off, 401(k), etc.) and expectations (reporting times, safety, uniforms, etc.)

**LM: How and when is it distributed?**

**How often is it updated?**

**JL:** Every new employee receives a copy of the handbook when they are hired. All employees receive copies of or access to new versions when they are created. Generally, the hard copy is revised every few years. Any handbook, however, is a living, breathing document so keeping track of policies and procedures that change is important.

**LM: What advice do you have for other companies implementing a handbook?**

**JL:** Three things. 1). Start with the basics. It can be an overwhelming project, so provide enough detail to articulate both the employers and the employee’s responsibilities, but don’t include so much information that it’s overwhelming for the creator or the reader. 2). Use positive language. Rules and expectations can have a lot of “don’t” language. Always try to use positive statements when communicating your expectations. 3). Have an attorney take a look. It’s a must these days, as there are many places we can get tripped up compliance-wise. —M.P.





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## Chris + Sarah Coleman

*Four Seasons Nursery  
& Landscape Services  
Bel Air, Md.*

## Handbook Q&A

### LM: What's your approach to an employee handbook?

**SC:** The handbook was one of the first things we wrote up when we purchased the company from my mother-in-law four years ago. I took what I knew from being in a totally separate industry and the experiences and stories I'd heard from Chris over the years and figured out where to start. Chris was involved in the business when my in-laws owned it, and I was a government contractor. Neither one of us had any kind of experience running a business whatsoever.

### LM: What topics do you include?

**SC:** Compensation, benefits, holidays, parental leave, those kinds of things. We had a workman's comp issue come up, so now we have a policy on that. No matter what, you may not come back to work until you have a clear doctor's note.

### LM: How and when it is distributed? How often is it updated?

**SC:** When employees come in to fill out paperwork after they're hired, we provide a copy of the handbook. I used to read through it with everybody, but now it's up to 15 pages, so they can take it home. But they have to sign a form saying they're responsible for anything in the handbook. We've made some addendums, like a drug and alcohol policy and how we reimburse for education, so we had a company meeting, explained the addendums are policies and they had to sign off on those. Then we added them to the handbook at a later time.

It's updated quarterly and reviewed once a year. We make sure the attorneys check it over. I deal with HR, but I don't have an HR background, so we need to make sure we're compliant.

### LM: What advice do you have for other companies implementing a handbook?

**SC:** Definitely have a drug and alcohol policy. Be very clear on your leave policy, and include dress code, if you have one. —M.P.

*Continued from page 38*

And watch out for seemingly innocuous requirements that can land a business in hot water. "Some policies that seem good on their surface can violate federal, state or local laws," says Potts. "For example, an employer might state that departing employees must turn in company property such as cell phones or laptops before a final check is cut. That can be illegal in some states." Employers with operations in more than one state face special hurdles, he adds. "A policy that is legal in one state may violate the law in another."

In a related area, be aware of city and state laws and regulations that can require you to follow specific policies and prohibit others.

"Many cities have laws covering such areas as family and sick leave," says Beth Brascugli De Lima, president and principal of HRM Consulting in Murphys, Calif. "We are seeing this trend grow very quickly, especially in the larger urban areas."

Some policies are best left out of the manual altogether. Suppose an employee will be late coming to work. Whom should they call? And how far in advance? These are specifics that you might want to communicate orally, to avoid tying down your operations to procedures you might want to change later in response to changing conditions.



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## SIMPLIFY YOUR EXIT STRATEGY

The decision to sell your company is one of the most difficult decisions you will make in your life. The very best time to sell your company is when three variables — marketplace, business and personal timing — are at their peaks. Rarely do these variables peak at the same time. Your task in selling your firm is to determine when you believe each of the three variables will combine to maximize the value of your company.

### MARKETPLACE TIMING

Marketplace timing can be linked to several factors, but the two that generally have the greatest impact on the sale price of a business are the condition of the economy and the availability of similar companies — both of which are out of your

control. The good news is that you can determine when to enter the “For Sale” marketplace. While you wait, differentiate your company from similar firms already for sale.

### BUSINESS TIMING

Selling your business at financial and operational highs is difficult to arrange and emotionally taxing to actually pull the trigger. But that is often when it will bring the greatest purchase price.

Measuring and maximizing the market value of your company involves many factors: current and projected financial performance, cash flow, margins, equipment condition and value, strength of management staff, status/existence of renewable contracts, client mix,

your transition plan, deal structure, and the perception/reputation of your firm in the marketplace. We can help.

### PERSONAL TIMING

Are you ready to retire? Owners who plan carefully in advance of the exit date are most ready when the time comes and are best able to leave on their terms.

An exit plan is a comprehensive multifaceted written document that allows a business owner to efficiently transition out of his current firm into the next phase of his life. Do you have an exit plan? If not, consider assembling and maintaining an exit plan as part of your annual financial document preparations.



**1** How do you maximize the value of your company? Make your company as attractive as possible. Emphasize deal structure not sale price.

**2** What is most important to a buyer? Sellers often assume buyers are most concerned with past financial performance. However, sophisticated buyers are more concerned with future revenues.

**3** What is the most important decision for the seller? You will only sell your company once so it is imperative to surround yourself with competent advisors to maximize the value of your company.



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The Pro-Motion Consulting team has vast experience assisting companies with building their revenue streams, improving operations and increasing margins. Regardless of our clients' size, our experts provide a one-stop shop for their exit planning needs, including sales development, strategic planning, operations, legal, tax planning and more.

### GETTING ORGANIZED TO SELL

Business owners are experts at what they do. They work years and often spend entire careers building their businesses until it is time to move on to another chapter in their lives or retire. Unfortunately, there can be pitfalls when selling a business.

To maximize the return on all the years of hard work, it is imperative for business owners to surround themselves with experienced professionals to guide them through the business sale process.

You only get one shot to sell your company. The Pro-Motion Consulting team knows what makes a company attractive to a potential buyer. We help business owners organize all aspects of their businesses to help them get top dollar at closing and reap the maximum return for their years of hard work and perseverance.

### CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS

Every business is slightly different. Different businesses require different solutions to make them attractive to potential buyers. At Pro-Motion Consulting we recognize that not all businesses are the same. We will embrace the uniqueness of your company's attributes and customize a plan to bring you maximum value at the point of sale.

### THE TRANSITION PROCESS

Just like all businesses are slightly different, not surprisingly, so are the needs of their owners. Every business owner has different goals and objectives as they begin the process of selling their business. Pro-Motion Consulting understands these differences and tailors exit strategies to fit each specific situation.

The Pro-Motion Consulting team knows what makes a company attractive to a potential buyer.

## OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS



**Phil Harwood**  
MBA  
Managing Partner



**Kent Kohn**  
MBA, CEBS,  
CEPA, CM&AA  
Senior Consultant



**Jacob Stewart**  
JD, FINRA 65  
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**Dana Davis**  
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262-675-4105



That last point suggests a larger issue: A handbook can end up creating too many restrictions. Indeed, that's the reason why some companies eye them with suspicion.

"Many employers fear getting locked in to the handbook's wording," says Potts. "But that problem can be avoided if the handbook is written correctly."

As the above comments suggest, writing an employee handbook can be a challenging task. "It's a mistake to try to write the handout on your own," says Avdoian. "If you don't have a human resources professional on your staff, you need to consult an HR expert and make sure an attorney reviews the document so you are in compliance with federal, state and local laws."

## ALL ABOARD

The employee handbook does not have to be a big glossy production. It can be as simple as a half-inch thick three-ring binder of pages covering the core issues. But once that document is completed, make sure everyone reads it and signs a document stating so. Then make sure everyone understands the policies must be followed consistently.

"The most common mistake is creating an employee handbook and then not following it," says De Lima. "Often this is because supervisors are not well trained and do not understand the importance of consistency."

The result, says De Lima, can be a costly lawsuit. "Suppose Employee A is treated one way when violating a policy and Employee B is treated another way," she says. "If Employee B is a protected class under equal opportunity laws, he or she may have a cause for action." Laws on the federal level, and often on the state and local levels, prohibit discrimination by such characteristics as race, religion, sex and national origin.

## SMART ROLL OUT


Has your business operated for years without any handbook at all? If so,

introducing a new one can create a morale issue when employees feel as though they are being force fed a whole new slew of workplace rules. To avoid this, introduce the handbook as a tool for enhancing the working environment.

"I would introduce a new employee handbook as part of a morale-boosting celebration of the progress being made by the business," says Avdoian. He suggests distributing the handbook at a company luncheon, for example, using words such as these: "Thanks to everyone in this room we have grown to the point where we can further fine tune our business. We are now distributing an employee handbook. Most of you already know about our benefits, but perhaps you have forgotten some of them. This handbook includes all of them in one place and outlines the company's expectations for the future."

## UPDATE REGULARLY

Researched, written, published, distributed and signed off on. Once you have completed the employee handbook cycle you have positioned your business to operate more efficiently and profitably. But the handbook is not a "set it and forget it" affair. Laws, regulations, and workplace conditions undergo constant change. Keep asking this question: Does our handbook wording need to be altered to reflect new realities?

"It's critical to review your handbook on a regular basis," advises Gregg. Add policies that reflect new challenges and opportunities. And toss those no longer valid. "Clean out your policies like you would old clothes from your closet," he says. "Handbooks should not be designed by hoarders." 

Perry is a freelance writer based in New York.

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## VIRTUAL VIEW

Learn about how one landscape company allows clients to experience their future backyards using virtual reality technology.

 PAGE 48



**BUSINESS BASICS: PLANNING**

# Growing green industry careers



**BY PHIL HARWOOD**

The author is president and CEO of Pro-Motion Consulting. Reach him at [phil@mypmcteam.com](mailto:phil@mypmcteam.com).

**W**hen I was graduating from college in 1984 with my undergraduate degree in business and marketing, I had no clue that I would have a career in the green industry. I was simply looking for a company that would provide me with an opportunity, that would invest in me and provide me career potential. In return, I would give the company my dedication. This seemed like a fair trade, and it led me to the beginning of a green industry career of more than 32 years now (and counting).

I believe there are many prospective employees who feel the same way I did. Show them a good opportunity, explain how you will support them and invest in their future. People are looking for a place to call home, and it's up to us as employers to show them what their new home looks like.

Put yourself in the shoes of a person who just graduated from college or high school and is looking to start a career. The pressure is on. Parents, grandparents and other people in his or her life are watching, hoping that the outpouring of support they've provided leads to something great. Landing the big career job is step one, although many times the "big" career job isn't all that big.

My first "big" career job was an entry-level management trainee job with a regional lawn and garden retailer. My first day consisted of loading bags of cow manure into the trunks of people's cars, among other things. Not so glamorous. Not very big at all. However, I had been provided a clear vision of the career path I was on, and so it didn't matter what tasks were required of me. I was all in because I



knew the path entailed learning how to perform the tasks that I would be managing. I'm glad that I started at the bottom. It's much more rewarding to look back on my career and know that nothing was handed to me.

## KEEP PROMISING EMPLOYEES ON TRACK

Like many of you, I paid my dues. But, what kept us on track? Why didn't we bail along the way? There are three essential ingredients that made all the difference: career laddering (vision casting), professional development plans and feedback sessions. Let's look at each in more detail.

Before I worked one day in the green industry, a highly-skilled recruiter cast a vision of the future for me. He captured my attention—not only with a job offer—but with a vision of a career. The steps were laid out in front of me. I had a sense of timing for each step. All I had to do was make a decision to get started down a path. This is commonly called career laddering. Try it. It works. It is the first essential ingredient.


The second essential ingredient is a professional development plan. Before I even accepted the job offer, I knew what type of training and development I would receive over the next few years. Professional development was not an option. It was expected—required to advance in the company. It was obvious to me that the com-

pany was prepared to invest in me and my future.

I see many companies that take a different approach with professional development. They may invest in certain high-potential people but not everyone, creating an "us versus them" situation and negative feelings of favoritism. Investments are small and inconsistent. Sending everyone to a local trade show once a year, for example, has limited impact in the long term on a person's career. Unfortunately, this type of short-sightedness is the norm in our industry. Professional development does cost money, but what's the alternative?

The final ingredient is a regular feedback session to review career progress, discuss obstacles and identify support needed. These meetings are an honest conversation between a person and his or her boss. They're not intended to be formal performance reviews and should not involve discussions about compensation. They're informal, organic and positive.

I've had the opportunity to work with (and for) some of the best people I've ever known. The feedback I've received from them has guided me, corrected me and challenged me to be my best. Sometimes feedback is tough to hear. However, I'd rather hear the truth about the situation—even if it hurts—so I can respond accordingly, especially when it involves my career. Honest, transparent, regular feedback is critical.

How can we grow careers? We can do so by providing well-laid-out career paths, professional development and honest feedback along the way. 

## WEB EXTRA

Get Phil's free feedback session template in the Web Extras>Downloads section at [LandscapeManagement.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net).



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# Sales meetings that drive performance



**BY JEFFREY SCOTT**

The author is owner of Jeffrey Scott Consulting, which helps landscape companies grow and maximize profits. Reach him at [jeff@jeffreyscott.biz](mailto:jeff@jeffreyscott.biz).

**S**alespeople dread taking time out of their schedules to attend meetings because most meetings don't add enough value to their sales—or to your bottom line. Here's a solution.

To hold a great sales meeting, start with the primary ingredient: great salespeople. They come in two flavors: strong and natural (see "Pyramid of Salesperson Success").

Strong salespeople love the challenge of selling your services at the price you need to earn a healthy profit. They relish the competitive nature of sales. They do not get thrown off base by objections, flinches or challenges to their value. They have an abundance mindset.

The natural salesperson is a young or untrained salesperson that brings natural selling talent and would benefit from mentoring and training on your value proposition and your sales/estimating processes.

If your salespeople come in the third flavor—weak salespeople—then your sales meeting may not have enough of an impact. These so-called salespeople tend to sell at discounts or allow the price of a job to be beaten down. They get overwhelmed easily, and they are probably on the wrong seat on the bus.

Next, you need clear sales goals and metrics to review at each meeting. How is each person selling compared to his or her own monthly goals and compared to how he or she did last year?

This step is followed by a review and discussion of each salesperson's pipeline (visits, calls and proposals). Depending on the type of selling they are doing, this should be tracked and reviewed. Even the best per-

## PYRAMID OF SALESPERSON SUCCESS

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forming salespeople need to be held accountable to regular reporting of their progress. If nothing else, it's inspiring for the natural salesperson.

### AGENDA ITEMS

You also should have space on your meeting agenda for these discussions:

**1.** Have each person check in at the beginning of the meeting with his top 5 percent and bottom 5 percent, i.e., their biggest wins and their most important issues they are dealing with. This will give you a quick sense of the mood of the room and create talking points that can be addressed in or outside the meeting.

**2.** Keep white space each week on your agenda, so you can take time as a group to tackle and explore one or two big issues. Here is a list of potential issues.

- Representing the brand;
- Teaching costs and how they are developed;
- Cross selling among other departments;
- Qualifying "green light" leads;
- Role playing on difficult issues past or upcoming;
- Identifying enhancement and upsell opportunities (and the process);
- Relationship building and enhancing (making deposits in your

- clients' bank accounts');
  - Using an upfront contract; and
  - Addressing sticking points in your sales process.

**3.** Remember to spend time celebrating the wins, paying out bonuses and announcing new incentives. Selling is all about going from confidence to confidence. As a sales leader, your job is to pump up the confidence of your sales team and keep the excitement flowing. While it's true you can't motivate a salesperson who is naturally unmotivated, you can create a fun, competitive and inspiring environment to help your good become great and your best get better.

*Breakthrough idea:* A great sales meeting cannot turn a weak salesperson into a strong one. To drive performance, focus on hiring salespeople who have proven potential, and then invest in mentoring and training them.

*Take action:* To be successful at abundance selling do three things:

- Know your costs and be confident in them;
- Have a smooth selling process with no gaps that will lose a client's interest; and
- Spend the majority of your time building relationships with qualified, "green light" prospects.



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**CASE STUDY: OUR WAY**

# Virtual sales

How an emerging technology helps one landscape company sell more jobs.

BY CASEY PAYTON

**T**here's no question that a 3D design rendering can close a deal. Without a picture, many clients struggle to visualize what you're proposing.

But even a picture has its limits, according to Neave Group Outdoor Solutions, which is using an emerging technology—virtual reality—to bring its landscape designs to life in a way that wows and sells.

"I have yet to demonstrate it to someone who was not amazed," says Senior Pool Design Lee Kind, who's also a technology guru and introduced virtual reality (VR) to the company. "Everyone who sees their

project in virtual reality is blown away."

**WEB EXTRA**  
View a virtual reality property walkthrough video in the Web Extras section at [LandscapeManagement.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net).

Still, Kind says VR, which is the computer-generated simulation of a 3D environment that can be interacted with by a person using special equipment like a headset—is not without its kinks.

The biggest issue is clients sometimes get nauseated by the feeling of moving around in a virtual world. Kind says that he always gives the client a "warning" and points out that roughly one out of every four people tends to get a "seasick type of feeling" from the technology. It's easily remedied by taking a break.

But Kind says even the clients who've felt sick are still impressed.

"It gives them a better understanding of what the project will really look like when it's finished," he says. "Renderings can't give you the heightened sense of understanding that virtual reality will—because with virtual reality you're in the drawing. You can actually walk around in the space."

Implementing VR has meant investing in Oculus Rift goggles, which cost about \$500, as well as a "gaming laptop," which typically runs around \$2,500.

The larger investment is in time.

"Whereas an average rendering might have taken me 10 to 20 hours outside of using virtual reality, a virtual reality design is going to be more like 20 to 30 hours of design time," Kind says. "That's because every detail has to be precise. On a rendering, the client wouldn't notice one small thing out of place, but in a virtual world, they will. You can't have a boulder floating in the sky, for instance."

Because of the high level of detail required, Kind says it's too time consuming for smaller projects. But it's absolutely something he'll do for a large project—and it pays off.

"I have a higher closing ratio when I use the virtual reality than when I do not," Kind says. "That makes the time investment worth it for a larger project."

Kind says implementing VR capabilities also has kept the company on



the "cutting edge"—a place where he says it's always been and makes an effort to stay.

**Neave Group Outdoor Solutions is using Oculus Rift goggles to sell large projects.**

"I started using 3D rendering software back in 2006 when it was still brand new at that point," Kind says. "Now 3D has become commonplace—almost expected—and virtual reality is the new cutting-edge technology. If it follows the same pattern as 3D, it will become more commonplace down the road when something else takes its place—maybe holograms or another new technology. Our goal is always to keep up with what's new." 

Payton is a freelance writer based in Philadelphia.

## BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

**COMPANY:** Neave Group Outdoor Solutions

**HEADQUARTERS:** Wappingers Falls, N.Y.

**EMPLOYEES:** 83

**ANNUAL REVENUE:** \$10 million

**SERVICE MIX:** 26% pool installation, 9% landscape design/build, 65% maintenance services

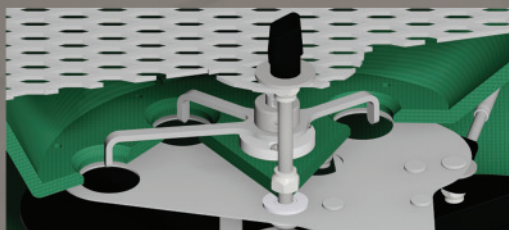
**CLIENT MIX:** 72% residential, 28% commercial



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## COMPACT TRACK LOADERS



### RT-75

**COMPANY:** ASV

**URL:** ASVLLC.com

The RT-75 compact track loader's Posi-Track undercarriage provides high ground clearance and superior traction for a variety of conditions, including fragile turf, mud, wet ground, slopes, ice and snow. It comes standard with 18-in. wide tracks, resulting in a ground pressure of 3.6 psi.



### DL450

**COMPANY:** Case Construction Equipment

**URL:** CaseCE.com

Nicknamed "Project Minotaur," the DL450 brings together the footprint and performance of a compact track loader with the power and dozing characteristics of a bulldozer. At press time, the machine was still in the concept phase and has more than 30 new patents pending. It was introduced at the ConExpo-Con/Agg in March to kick off Case's 175th anniversary.



### 200 SERIES UPDATE

**COMPANY:** New Holland

**URL:** NewHolland.com/na

The 200 series of compact track loaders features a low-profile undercarriage design, with track frame upgrades to models C227, C232 and C238. Angled track frame covers decrease mud and material build-up with dozer-style angled track frame and material scrapers, while duo-cone oil lubrication face seals offer greater reliability and lower maintenance costs.







### 331G & 333G

**COMPANY:** John Deere

**URL:** JohnDeere.com

These G-Series compact track loaders were inspired by extensive feedback from John Deere customers. They feature more power, lift height, dump clearance and reach and 40 percent more breakout force than their predecessors, John Deere says. The track frames are 6.75-in. longer for stability and balance. A two-speed drivetrain is standard with speeds of nearly 8 mph.



### T650

**COMPANY:** Bobcat

**URL:** Bobcat.com

Combining power, lift and reach, this vertical lift compact track loader handles heavy materials and clears tall truck boxes. It features a Tier 4 engine; a large, comfortable cab; wide visibility; panoramic serviceability and multiple grease points and attachment versatility, Bobcat says.



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## MOWER ENGINES



### GXV160

**COMPANY:** Honda

**URL:** [Honda.com](http://Honda.com)

Honda's HRC216K3HDA Commercial Series lawn mower is powered by the Honda GXV160, a vertical shaft engine that Honda says delivers smooth, quiet, reliable, fuel-efficient power and low emission levels. The four-stroke engine incorporates a precision camshaft design, offering precise valve timing and optimal valve overlap for fuel efficiency.



### 7500 SERIES PRO

**COMPANY:** Kohler

**URL:** [Kohler.com](http://Kohler.com)

Designed from the rugged, commercial Kohler Command Pro EFI engine, and made in the U.S., the engine is available with up to 27 hp. Consistent-Cut power keeps users cutting in tall, wet grass. The engine adjusts to gas with ethanol up to E10. Kohler estimates up to a 12.5 percent fuel savings.



### BRIGGS & STRATTON PROFESSIONAL SERIES 1000 ENGINE

**COMPANY:** Toro

**URL:** [Toro.com](http://Toro.com)

Toro TimeMaster 30" mowers are now equipped with a Briggs & Stratton Professional Series 1000 engine, offering increased gross torque and displacement compared to previous models. It boasts a Super Lo-Tone engine muffler and a dual-sealing, commercial-grade air management system.

The ReadyStart system is standard, eliminating the need to prime or choke the engine.



### YAMAHA V-TWIN EFI ENGINES

**COMPANY:** Gravely

**URL:** [Gravely.com](http://Gravely.com)

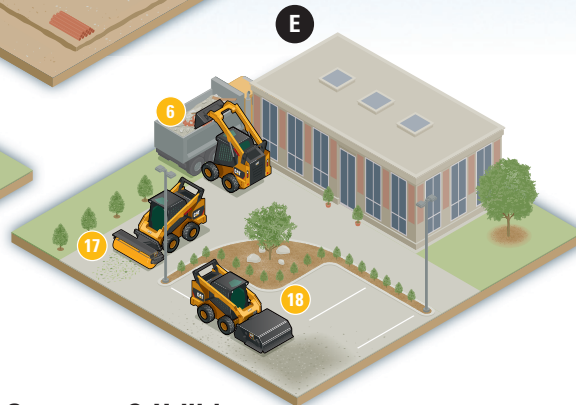
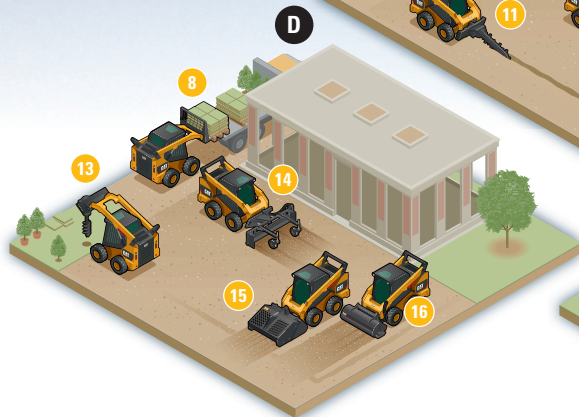
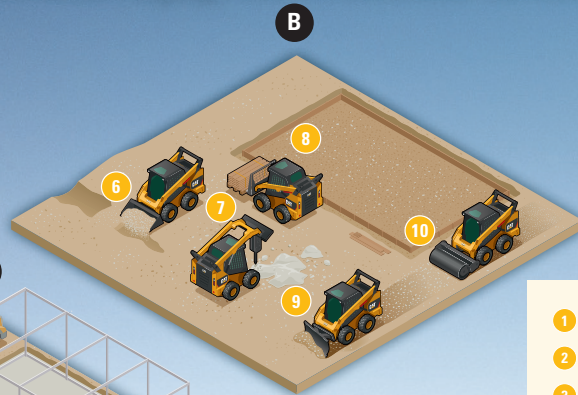
At press time, the Yamaha MX775 V-Twin EFI 29-hp and the Yamaha MX825 V-Twin EFI 33-hp engines can be ordered on the following zero-turn commercial mowers: Gravely Pro-Turn 260 (29-hp engine), Gravely Pro-Turn 452 (29-hp engine), Gravely Pro-Turn 460 (33-hp engine) and the Gravely Pro-Turn 472 (33-hp engine).





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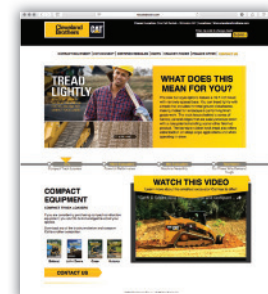
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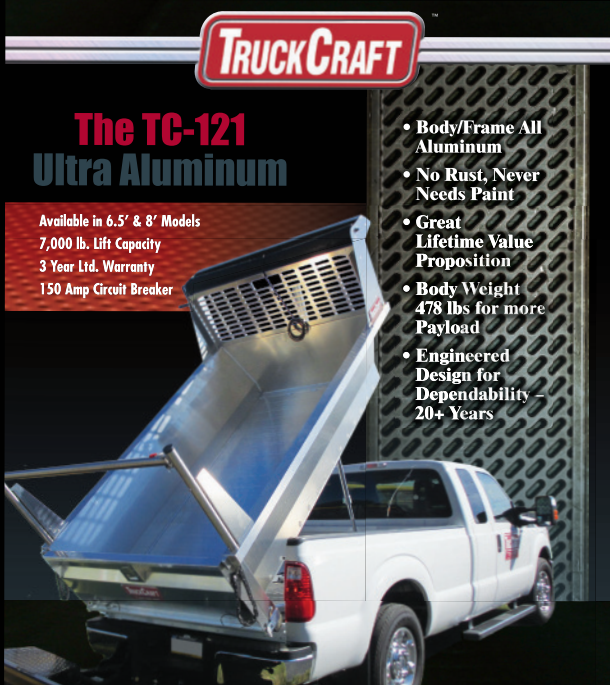


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## AD INDEX

Andersons, The.....	45
Aspire Software Co. ....	47
Bobcat Co. ....	27
Briggs & Stratton Commercial Power .....	13
Cleveland Brothers .....	24
Cub Cadet.....	11
Cummins .....	15
Dow AgroSciences.....	21
EcoLawn.....	54
Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply.....	31
GIE+EXPO .....	8, Insert*, 42
Honda Engines .....	39
Isuzu .....	3
Jacobsen .....	23
JCB .....	33
JRCO.....	5
Kawasaki Engines.....	36, 37
Koch Turf & Ornamental.....	19
Kohler Engines.....	CV4
Kubota Tractor .....	CV2
Little Beaver.....	2
New England Ladder Co. ....	54
Northeast CAT Dealers .....	53*
PermaGreen Supreme.....	49
PRO Landscape by Drafix Software .....	54
Progressive Insurance.....	29
Project Evergreen.....	53*
Pro-Motion Consulting .....	Insert*
Quali-Pro .....	25, CV3
Solu-Cal USA.....	16
TruckCraft .....	54
TurfBooks.....	40
TurfEx.....	41
Versa-Lok.....	51

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# BACKSTORY

INTERVIEW BY MARISA PALMIERI



## Todd Huston

**OWNER/PRESIDENT  
GROUNDS CONTROL  
PHOENIX, ARIZ.**

Huston with his son, Cory (far left); wife, Kellie; and daughter, Taryn (far right). "Just being around family and friends is something I love more than anything. And I play a lot of golf."



"Safety is our No. 1 priority—employees go along with that."

"I went to ASU to become an architect. I felt like school wasn't my thing. I took a job at ValleyCrest in 1986. I learned a lot there."

Terrain Systems was acquired by Grounds Control, the landscape subsidiary of Sanitors in 2002. "My passion is more construction than maintenance, but I like maintenance because it pays the bills. When Sanitors bought us, we got more into that."

"I'm a diehard Cardinals fan. I like my Diamondbacks, too."



"In 1990 I came to Terrain Systems to work with Dale Micetic. He was here through the Sanitors and ISS days and retired in 2012. He's a mentor and a big part of my success."

Grounds Control/Sanitors was acquired by ISS, an international facility services firm, in 2007.

Huston purchased the North American division of ISS Grounds Control in 2016. "Buying a company that was in business since 1974 was really a no brainer. I've been here so long, and I've seen every aspect of the business. The challenge was buying it and cash flow, but ISS really helped me out on the purchase."

### EDUCATION

Woodbridge High School  
Irvine, Calif.  
Class of 1983

Arizona State University  
1983-1985

### WORK EXPERIENCE

**1986-1990**  
ValleyCrest Landscape  
Estimator  
Phoenix

**1990-1995**  
Terrain Systems  
Estimator/Sales & Marketing  
Phoenix

**1995-2005**  
Terrain Systems/Grounds Control  
Sr. Project Manager/  
VP of Sales & Marketing

**2005-2014**  
ISS Grounds Control  
General Manager

**2014-2016**  
ISS Grounds Control  
Managing Director

**2016-present**  
Owner/President  
Grounds Control

**WORDS OF WISDOM** "Always be fair and true to yourself, your employees and your clients. Always give them what they expect—both employees and clients." • "One of my mottos is 'building your dream.' Ultimately, you have to keep the architect happy. That's where the project starts." • "'If you don't ask, you don't get' is one of my favorite sayings. If you ask for something, most of the time people say 'yes.'"



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\* Class defined as vertical-shaft, commercial 800- to 875-cc gasoline engines

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\*Cost savings based on standard oil maintenance with 100 hour interval versus Oil Guard System 500 hour service interval. Available on select models.[www.FerrisMowers.com](http://www.FerrisMowers.com)

# Visit us at GIE+EXPO!

Outdoor booth: 6470-D Indoor Booth: 5052



# Buffalo Turbine

**OUTDOOR BOOTH 6356D • INDOOR BOOTH 8206**

**B**uffalo Turbine has been manufacturing turbine style debris blowers since 1945, which are made using high-precision machined components resulting in long-lasting dependable products. These turbine units are being used worldwide by thousands of golf courses. Buffalo Turbine's product line allows companies to allocate employees to tasks that are usually unable to be addressed because of a lack of man power and time, improving the overall aesthetic appeal of the final product. The diverse product line provides customers with the ability to choose a product that best suits their application and various budgets. If you are ready to start making quick work of tasks that would normally cost your company more time and effort, now is the time to check out Buffalo Turbine!

Buffalo Turbine has continued to strive for industry progression. Examples include, the first self-contained tow-behind turbine debris blower, first PTO turbine blower and first wirelessly controlled rotation nozzle.

At this year's GIE+EXPO, Buffalo Turbine will have its full product



line of debris blowers. **The Cyclone KB4** is the still the most popular and versatile turbine style debris blower in its class. Over the years, competition has introduced products similar to the CKB4. Buffalo Turbine wants its customers to know that if it doesn't say **Buffalo Turbine**, it's **not a Buffalo Blower!** Buffalo Turbine has continued to adapt and improve the variety of blowers it's been making over the 70 years and doesn't want customers buying a second class product. Although the CKB4 is the most popular machine, there are many more products, both more and less powerful. The **Mega Blower** and the **Cyclone Squared** units are a

couple of the most powerful turbine blowers in the industry with 37 hp engines. These units are perfect for large clean up jobs, making these jobs much quicker and easier to accomplish. The **Cyclone PTO** only requires 20 hp at the PTO and is the lightest (240 lbs.), most powerful turbine style PTO driven debris blower in the industry. The **Hydraulic** unit is very popular among municipalities and sports facilities, and it includes a quick attach bracket to skid steers. The **Cyclone 8000** was designed with the homeowner and landscaper in mind. This unit is built tough and is strategically priced to fit most budgets.

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## **BUFFALO TURBINE**

180 Zoar Valley Rd., Springville, NY 14141

Phone: 716-592-2700

Website: BuffaloTurbine.com

Twitter.com/BuffaloTurbine



# Cub Cadet

**OUTDOOR BOOTH 6052D • INDOOR BOOTH 5116**

**C**ub Cadet® is bringing pro-tested, pro-approved strength and durability to GIE booth #5116, where landscapers will have the opportunity to see the new PRO HW™ hydro walk-behinds and the PRO Z™ commercial zero-turn mowers.

Designed and tested with the help of professional landscapers, the PRO HW and PRO Z Series are the epitome of durability. The new PRO HW hydro walk-behinds come equipped with a 10-gauge deck with reinforcements and a cutting deck heavy enough to stand up to abuse while performing exceptionally. Exclusive maneuverability features give this walk-behind mower stability on hillsides, easy-touch steering and easy maneuverability over curbs.

In the PRO Z 500, 700 and 900 Series models, the heavy-duty build is highlighted by the triple-7-gauge steel cutting deck — the thickest and strongest in the industry — featuring a 1/4" rolled leading edge and 5/16" steel side reinforcements. Along with being built to endure daily abuse, the PRO Z body will show less wear-and-tear over time thanks to an

automotive-grade "e-coating" corrosion defense.

Across the PRO lineup, you'll also find new heavy-duty spindles — a standout feature when compared with similar models. The robust spindle housing is designed to take on more impact and abuse from professionals. The two double-row ball bearings in the spindles are sealed, making them contamination-free and maintenance-free, reducing downtime.

Beyond its incredible durability, the PRO Z series delivers the professional-grade performance and comfort you expect. Triple high-lift Marbain blades and a rear striping roller (standard on the 700 and 900 Series) deliver a consistent professional cut. Opt for a model with larger fuel capacity or an efficient EFI engine, and you can increase your productivity day after day. And standard high-back suspension seats with armrests across the entire lineup make a hard day's work more comfortable than it should be.

While you're exploring the PRO Z Series, you'll want to enter for a chance to win Cub Cadet's heavyweight commercial zero-

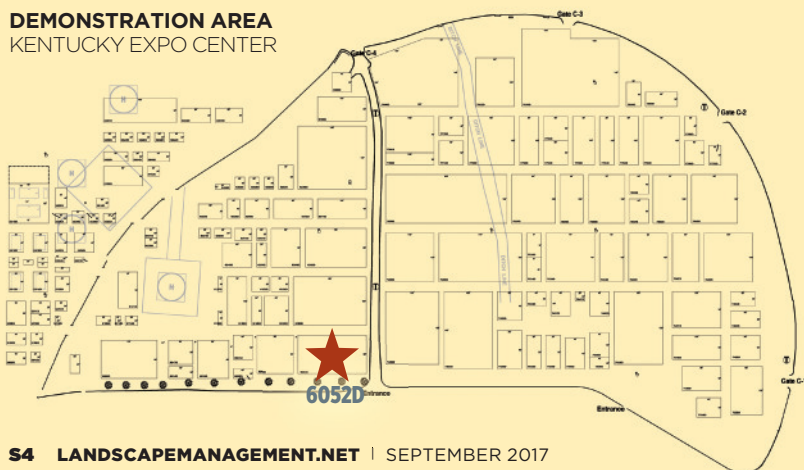


## Cub Cadet®

turn mower — the PRO Z 900. The flagship series of the PRO Z lineup, the PRO Z 900 sets new standards for strength, performance and comfort. The best-in-class triple-7-gauge deck, steel frame and beefy front-end construction are built to withstand the most demanding usage. A high-horsepower engine and 16cc transmission provide top speeds of 14 mph. And the comfort-enhanced PRO Z 900 L features performance-tuned lap bars, an isolation-dampening foot pan and an isolated air-ride suspension seat for a ride that takes it easy on you in even the roughest conditions.

Be sure to visit the Cub Cadet booth for your chance to win the mower that's been called "a beast."

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## CUB CADET

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# Exmark Manufacturing

**OUTDOOR BOOTH 7444D • INDOOR BOOTH 7080**

## Legendary Products. Evolutionary Designs.

For more than 35 years, Exmark Manufacturing has been building the world's best commercial mowers and lawn care equipment. Today, Exmark remains committed to developing innovations that increase the productivity, efficiency and profitability of landscape maintenance and lawn care professionals.

## Next-Generation Exmark RED Technology – Available on Gasoline- and Diesel-Powered Lazer Z Models

Exmark has introduced its next-generation RED Technology on select 2018 Lazer Z Diesel and Lazer Z S- and X-Series models. Designed to give users an increased ability to control mower performance and efficiency, with the ability to better track machine health and maintenance needs. RED Technology uses an electronic governor (EGov) and Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI) to increase engine responsiveness, so it can react more quickly to changing mowing conditions. This enhanced ability to deliver the right amount of power at precisely the right time retains engine RPM for more con-

sistent cut quality. It also allows a RED-equipped mower to operate at a lower, more efficient RPM range to reduce fuel consumption. RED Technology also includes an exclusive Clutch Saver, which momentarily reduces engine RPM during blade engagement and disengagement. This significantly increases clutch life while still allowing on-the-fly engagement.

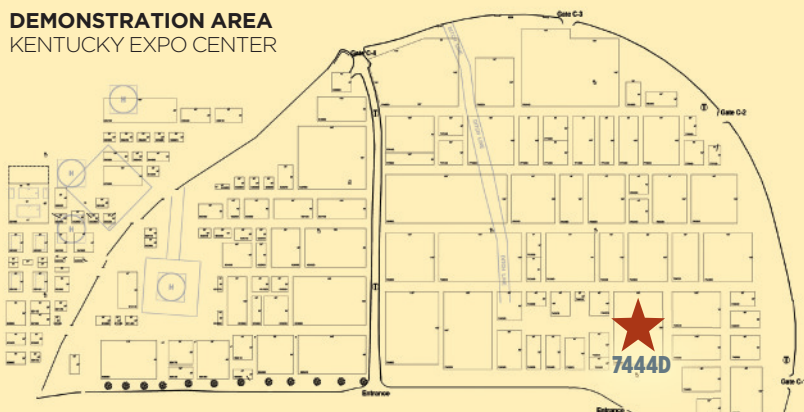
## All-New Lazer Z Diesel Zero-Turn Riding Mower Raises the Productivity Bar

The all-new Exmark Lazer Z Diesel zero-turn rider is the answer for landscape professionals that need maximum productivity and power to make quick work of large properties and challenging cutting conditions. Available with Exmark's new 96-inch flex wing cutting deck and state of the art RED Technology-equipped Yanmar liquid-cooled diesel engines, the new Lazer Z Diesel is the most productive zero-turn mower Exmark has ever produced. The design of the Lazer Z Diesel places the engine and radiator lower in the chassis for



improved handling and stability. A direct-coupled engine and transmission eliminates drive belts for a more robust, efficient drivetrain that reduces maintenance-related downtime. In addition to the rear-discharge 96-inch UltraCut flex wing cutting deck, the Lazer Z Diesel is also available with side- or rear-discharge UltraCut cutting decks in 60- or 72-inch cutting widths. Exmark designed the Lazer Z Diesel to deliver superior operator comfort, with a full-suspension operator seat and isolation mounts in the drivetrain, under the seat and below the footboard. Each Lazer Z Diesel model comes with the industry's best warranty – 2 years, no hour limitations, or 5-years, 2,000 hours. **See Exmark's latest innovations at GIE+EXPO 2017.**

## GIE+EXPO 2017 DEMONSTRATION AREA KENTUCKY EXPO CENTER



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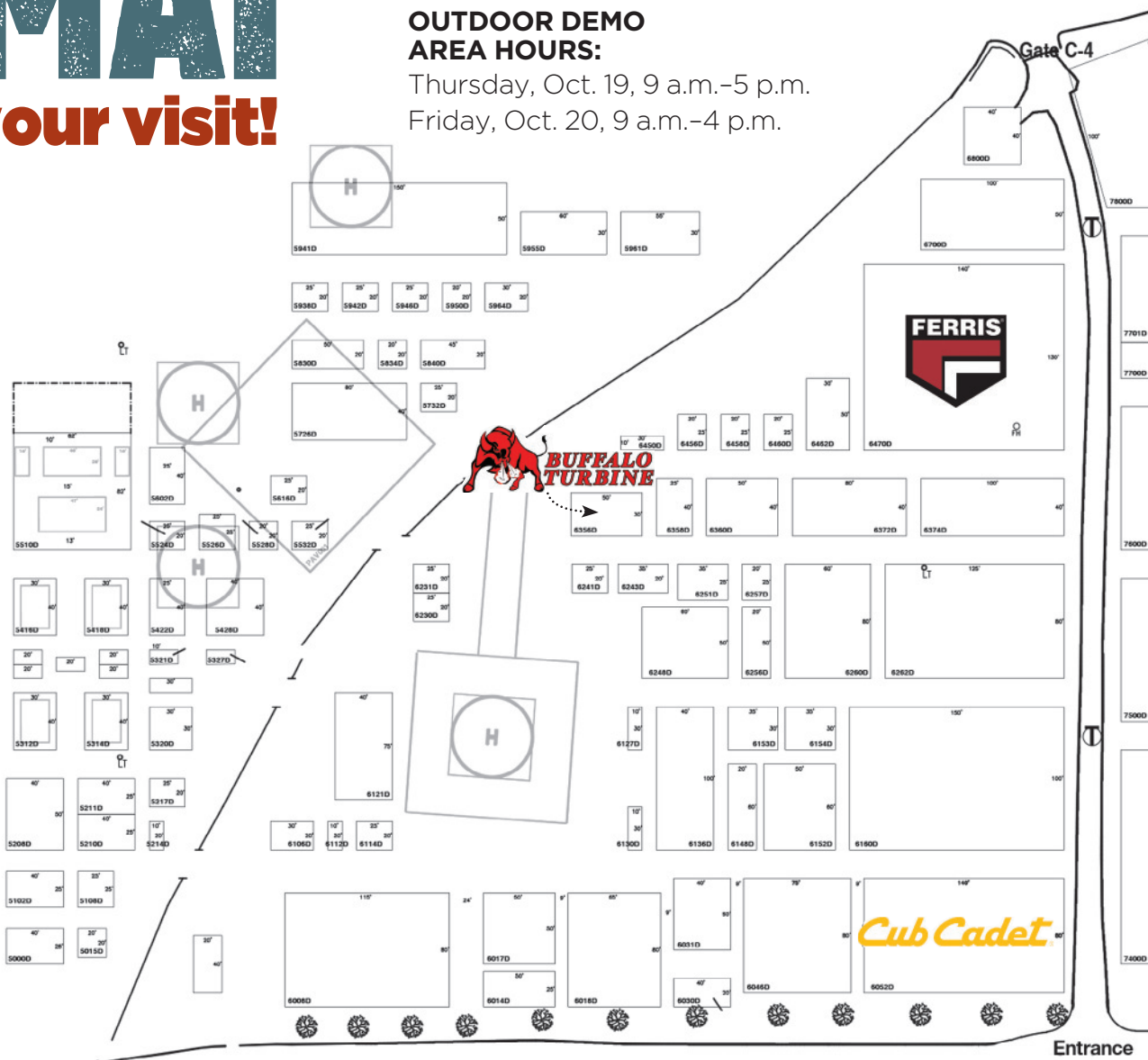
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Friday, Oct. 20, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



Agri-Fab.....	64620	Briggs & Stratton Corp.-Vanguard.....	63720	Echo.....	74510	iQ Power Tools.....	53200
All Access Equipment.....	60300	<b>Briggs &amp; Stratton Yard Power (including Ferris).....</b>	<b>64700</b>	Ecoturf Midwest.....	64500	<b>John Deere.....</b>	<b>78340</b>
Allen Engineering.....	63580	Brown Products.....	74320	Eliet USA.....	74380	Kage Innovation.....	60140
Alpha Professional Tools.....	55280	<b>Buffalo Turbine.....</b>	<b>63560</b>	<b>Exmark.....</b>	<b>74440</b>	Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA.....	74220
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Arctic Snow & Ice Products.....	57260	Canycom USA.....	76330	Franklin Equipment.....	74630	LT. Rich Products.....	74290
Ariens & Gravelly.....	61600, 62620	Case Construction Equipment.....	75460	General Transmissions.....	62480	Lift' Bubba Curb Machines.....	64580
AS Motor.....	60310	Caterpillar.....	76500	Grammer.....	61960	Makita Power Equipment.....	77140
Atlantic Water Gardens.....	50150	Chapin International.....	74340	Grasshopper Co.....	75420	Maruyama US.....	62510
Avant Tecno USA.....	77200	Coastal Source.....	51080	Greenworks Commercial.....	76300	Mean Green Mowers.....	60170
Bad Boy Mowers.....	75280	Cormidi USA.....	74390	Ground Logic.....	74430	Millcreek Manufacturing.....	62560
Bandit Industries.....	62430	Country Clipper.....	75340	Honda Power Equipment.....	60460	MiniTrencher.....	61060
Billy Goat Industries.....	63740	<b>Cub Cadet/MTD Products.....</b>	<b>60520</b>	Hulten Tool Co.....	52080	MultiOne America.....	76280
Bluebird Turf Products.....	73400	Deicing Depot.....	59640	<b>Husqvarna.....</b>	<b>78000</b>	New Holland Construction.....	75380
Bobcat Company.....	77010	Dixie Equip.....	75000	Hydro-Gear.....	60180	Odes UTVs.....	78220
Boxer Equipment/Morbark.....	75240	DR Power Equipment.....	77440	Innovative Concrete Technologies Corp.....	55240	Ogura Industrial Corp.....	63600
Breo.....	53270	Earth & Turf Products.....	62410	Intimidator & Soartan.....	77620	OilQuick USA.....	64540





Orec America.....	6230D	Ditch Witch.....	7634D
Oregon.....	6260D	The Toro Co.....	7600D
Pathfinder Systems.....	5428D	Tobroco-Giant USA.....	7460D
<b>PermaGreen.....</b>	<b>7436D</b>	Trac Vac.....	6460D
Prolawn.....	6114D	Tracked Lifts.....	6257D
Sarlo Power Mowers.....	6148D	Turf Torq Corp.....	7465D
Scag Power Equipment/Scag Giant-Vac.....	6008D	Turf Teq.....	7632D
Schiller Grounds Care.....	7506D	Turco.....	6152D
SEK-Surebond Corp.....	5526D	Turfmaker Corp.....	6190D
Silca System.....	5422D	Turfware.....	7772D
SiteOne Landscape Supply.....	7735D	Tym-USA Tractors.....	7448D
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Stone Edge Surfaces.....	5321D	Walker Manufacturing Co.....	7756D
Super Lawn Technologies.....	5961D	Wall Enterprises.....	6153D

Weber MT.....	5102D
Wolf Design(SnowWolf/ArborWolf).....	7768D
Worldlawn Power Equipment.....	7740D
Wright Manufacturing.....	7624D

**Highlight denotes advertisement in this guide.**  
List as of Aug. 9. Subject to change.



# John Deere

**OUTDOOR BOOTH 7834D • INDOOR BOOTH 1110****JOHN DEERE**

This year John Deere will offer attendees an opportunity to put its latest equipment offerings to the test at its outside demo booth during 2017 GIE+EXPO in Louisville, Ky. Showcasing a variety of commercial mowing and commercial worksite product offerings, including zero-turn and stand-on mowers, compact utility tractors, skid steers, compact track loaders and compact excavators, attendees will be able to demo equipment, experiencing the power and comfort that professional landscape contractors expect in John Deere machines.

John Deere will showcase several models from its expansive commercial mowing line, includ-

ing the ZTrak™ zero-turn mowers and QuikTrak™ stand-on mowers. Several models from the John Deere Commercial Mowing line will be available for attendees to take for a spin, including models equipped with the Michelin® X® TWEEL® TURF, an airless radial tire sold exclusively by John Deere. Unlike traditional pneumatic tires, the MICHELIN X TWEEL TURF virtually eliminates tire downtime and is nearly maintenance free. Now available for standalone purchase, the X TWEEL TURF has the same dimensions and bolt pattern as a standard 24x12x12 tire, and features automotive rubber technology, allowing the tread to last up to three times longer than standard turf tires.

John Deere will also have select models from its QuikTrak stand-on mower and Commercial Walk-Behind mower lines, allowing pro-

fessional landscape contractors to try out a variety of equipment offerings during the show.

In addition to the commercial mowing products on display in the outdoor demo area, John Deere will have several models from its commercial worksite products line-up, including skid steers, compact track loaders and compact wheel loaders. When combined with the John Deere commercial mowing line of equipment, John Deere offers professional landscape contractors equipment solutions to meet all of their business needs.



## **GIE+EXPO 2017** **DEMONSTRATION AREA** KENTUCKY EXPO CENTER



## **JOHN DEERE**

2000 John Deere Run, Cary, NC 27513

**Phone:** 800-537-8233**Website:** Deere.com [Facebook.com/JohnDeereUSCA/](https://www.facebook.com/JohnDeereUSCA/) [Twitter.com/JohnDeere](https://twitter.com/JohnDeere)



# Kubota Turf Equipment

**OUTDOOR BOOTH 7400D • INDOOR BOOTH 5094**

**K**ubota knows that when it comes to turf equipment, precision, performance, versatility and durability matter. That's why our customers continue to choose Kubota's intelligently-engineered line of zero-turn and walk-behind mowers, utility vehicles, tractors, pendulum spreaders and construction equipment.

For beautiful landscapes and professional turf care, Kubota's zero-turn mowers feature bigger engines, wider mower decks, enhanced comfort and advanced

technology to achieve optimal results in commercial projects. For turf equipment that exceeds your high expectations — count on Kubota.

## **NEW 21" Commercial Lawn Mowers (WG6-21/WGC6-21)**

Kubota's NEW 21" commercial lawn mowers feature ergonomic controls for easy operation and comfort and a combined cutting, mulching and bagging performance for professional landscape services.

- Kawasaki FJ180 Commercial Duty Engine
- High Vacuum, Rear Discharge Mower Deck
- 3/4" - 4" Deck Height Adjustment Range
- 3-Speed Gear Drive Transmission
- Cast Aluminum Deck and Wheels
- Serviceable Aluminum Wheels with Dual Ball Bearings and Replaceable Wheel Treads

## **NEW Z700**

Kubota's NEW Z700 zero-turn mower is designed to continue the performance and durability of our commercial turf products that lawn care professionals have come to



expect. With a new standard Premium Suspension Seat, the Z700 delivers premium comfort at a competitive price.

- NEW Premium Suspension Seat
- Competitive Pricing For Maximum Return On Investment
- 3" Suspension Travel Vertical
- 6" Seat Travel (Fore & Aft)
- Low Center of Gravity for Improved Stability

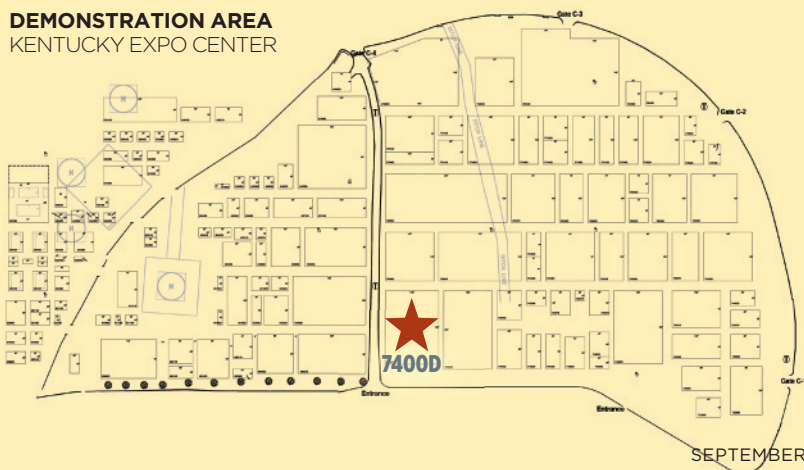


## **Contact Kubota**

Visit [KubotaUSA.com](http://KubotaUSA.com) to locate one of Kubota's dealerships to demo our line of commercial turf equipment, and be sure to stop by a Kubota booth at the show!



**GIE+EXPO 2017**  
**DEMONSTRATION AREA**  
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## **KUBOTA TRACTOR CORP.**

1000 Kubota Drive, Grapevine, TX 76051

**Phone:** 1-888-4-KUBOTA

**Website:** [KubotaUSA.com](http://KubotaUSA.com)

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# PermaGreen

**OUTDOOR BOOTH 7436D • INDOOR BOOTH 1030**

**S**top by the PermaGreen™ booths to check out the flagship Triumph Spreader Sprayer, as well as, the new battery-powered RECHARGE™ Sprayer for LESCO® push spreaders and the revolutionary BREAKTHRU™ Agitator for LESCO® and PermaGreen™ 3-hole spreaders.



## PermaGreen™ Triumph Spreader Sprayer

The PermaGreen™ Triumph is the industry gold standard of spreader sprayers. It features exclusive, patented features, such as SmartSteer™ power-assist steering, automatic pressure regulation based on fixed ground speeds, and dropdown handles.

The Triumph is designed to treat nearly every property size, from small residential with 36" gates to large multi-acre properties. Spread and spray at the same time and cover 3,650 square feet per minute (an Acre in 15 minutes).

PermaGreens are backed by a 60-day moneyback guarantee, plus a 15-month bumper-to-bumper warranty and 24-month warranty against corrosion failure.

## RECHARGE™ Sprayer

The well-balanced 2.25-Gallon RECHARGE™ eliminates the costly second trip across your accounts by providing 8,500 square feet of liquid coverage while leaving room in your hopper for a bag of dry product.

A low-drift spray nozzle provides a 9-foot pattern, and a spray gun is included for trimming. The spray switch can be mounted on either handle. A battery charger is included to recharge the battery at the end of the day, each charge provides 100,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of spraying capacity. The entire kit comes completely assembled and ready to install in minutes without drilling any holes.

**permagreen**

## BREAKTHRU™ Agitator

The patent-pending BREAKTHRU™ Agitator is guaranteed to reduce clogging of your LESCO® and PermaGreen™ 3-hole spreaders. The unique claw design sweeps the inside of the hopper openings, breaking up clods and maintaining an even flow in all types of weather. The BREAKTHRU™ is backed by a 90-day moneyback guarantee and can be ordered direct or through participating dealers nationwide.



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## PERMAGREEN

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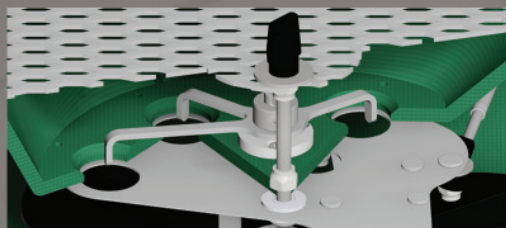
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# permagreen

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**BREKTHRU** AGITATOR



Featured on the new 2017 PermaGreen Triumph, the revolutionary **BREKTHRU** Agitator is guaranteed to reduce clogging of your LESCO® or PermaGreen™ 3-hole spreader or your money back.

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