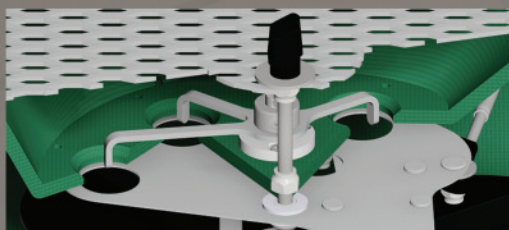


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# CONTENTS

MARCH 2018 • VOL 57, ISSUE 3

# IS YOUR COMPANY AT RISK?

## ON THE COVER

The legalization of marijuana in some states and the opioid crisis present a challenge for labor-starved landscape companies. Do you have a plan to manage this issue?

36

## NEWS & HOW-TO'S

### 10 Recommender

What stand-on mower do you recommend and why?

### 10 Issue Brief

BY BOB MANN

### 12 Step by Step

How to calibrate a stand-on sprayer.

### 14 New Stuff

Six products and services that are fresh to the market.

### 16 SafetyWatch

Lockout/tag-out procedures.

## PROFIT CENTERS

### 18 Turf+Ornamental Care

Lawn care experts discuss the benefits of ride-on spreaders and sprayers.

.....  
Learn more about partnering with a professional consulting arborist (page 24).



### 24 Mowing+Landscape Maintenance

Why partnering with a professional consulting arborist can add value to your company.

### 28 Design/Build+Installation

How one landscape company stayed afloat after doubling in size.

### 34 Irrigation+Water Management

Learn how to match soil types with irrigation systems.

## BUSINESS INSIDER

### 44 Business Basics: Planning

How to manage growth challenges.  
BY PHIL HARWOOD

### 46 Let's Grow

Tips for transforming long-term goals into action plans.  
BY JEFFREY SCOTT

### 48 Case Study: Our Way

Why one landscape company invested in video training.  
BY CASEY PAYTON

Find out how to identify soil types to improve the effectiveness of your irrigation system (page 34).

## IN EVERY ISSUE

### 2 Online Now

### 4 Editor's Note

BY MARISA PALMIERI

### 6 Big Picture

Embassy Landscape Group, Riverside, Mo.

### 50 Product Focus

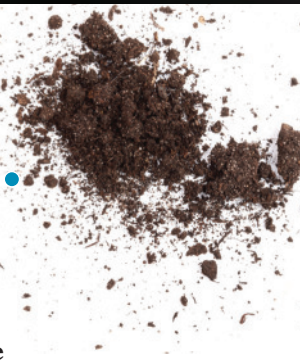
Insecticides + Cleanup equipment + Spreader-sprayers

### 55 Classifieds/Ad Index

### 56 Backstory

Chris Bright, CEO, Seabreeze Property Services, Portland, Maine.  
BY MARISA PALMIERI

ON THE COVER: ILLUSTRATIONS © ISTOCK.COM/TRAFFIC\_ANALYZER/FILO/SAMARSKAYA







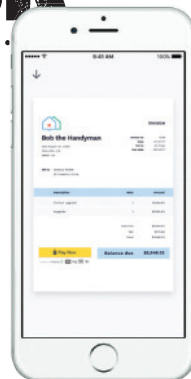
## LESSONS FROM THE PROS

➔ The 2017 *LM* Growth Summit brought together some of the brightest minds in the industry for a few days of networking and learning. With so many top professionals in one place, we had to get their take on a few of the most pressing issues facing the green industry, including how to keep good people, what their companies are doing to grow, how to provide high-quality turf and more. Head over to **LandscapeManagement.net/video** to check out all the videos.



## APP PICK

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

**MARISA PALMIERI**  
EDITOR

Contact Marisa at 216/706-3764 or  
mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net



## Do you know the costs?

**W**ith an unemployment figure near a record low and a problematic seasonal guest-worker program, landscape companies are strapped for legal labor options. Some landscape company owners confess they must resort to merely looking for “warm bodies,” which presents its own set of challenges.

In a country where states are legalizing marijuana and an opioid crisis is raging, employee substance abuse should be on your radar if it's not already.

Nearly 21 million Americans suffer from a substance use disorder, and three-quarters of them are part of the workforce, according to the National Safety Council (NSC). The Surgeon General estimates this situation costs the U.S. more than \$400 billion in lost workplace productivity per year. That's a big number, but what does it mean for your small business?

A tool on NSC's website clues us in. By plugging in your state, industry (it doesn't ask about landscaping specifically, but you could choose “construction” or “other services”) and employee count, it generates a report that reveals the financial impact of untreated substance use disorder on your business. The report comes from the latest research on employment costs with data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health.


For example, the average cost to a service industry company in Florida with 20 employees is more than \$8,000 a year. That includes lost time, turnover and health care costs. Employee errors and safety incidents weren't accounted for, so you can imagine how those costs

could quickly rise. The calculator doesn't ask about age or gender of employees, but the research shows industries with younger, male-dominated workforces—like landscaping—have high rates of substance use disorders.

I've seen discussions on this topic pop up on industry-related message boards and social media groups lately, and the response ranges from one of “zero tolerance” to “there's no way we could drug test—we wouldn't have a workforce.” I believe our cover story with its real-life examples from landscape professionals makes the case that the solution should be somewhere in between. Zero tolerance sounds good on paper, but it's only effective if it's applied consistently. What happens when a long-term employee or your “best guy” tests positive or comes to you confessing a problem? Are you going to fire him on the spot? It's complicated.

No matter your stance, I encourage you to have a plan. Confer with your legal and human resources advisers to come up with a consistent policy to control your risk and to do what's best for your people.

The NSC research shows employers can avoid significant costs if they can assist their employees in receiving treatment. The one-year cost avoidance for each employee who recovers from a substance use disorder is more than \$3,200. Plus, you've retained that person.

More importantly, giving people a second chance—with stipulations and follow-up drug testing, certainly—could be the push toward recovery they've been needing. And it could save their lives. 



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# Q+A

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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).

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"...takes a restorative justice approach versus a zero-tolerance approach."

"...is one that is enforced."

"...will need to keep up with changing laws."

"...should apply to both drugs and alcohol."



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# BIG PICTURE

## LAKE LIFE

### LOCATION

Weatherby Lake, Mo.

### COMPANY

Embassy Landscape Group

**THE DETAILS** The clients' intent for the project was to build access to their boat dock and the lake, create a lakeside gathering place and repurpose a rock pile left over from their home construction.

The final design used natural stone for the steps down to the water—an easier installation than forming and pouring concrete on the steep terrain. The team planted native seed mix on the hillside, and irrigated the native plants with lake water. A big block from the seawall was moved and used as a retaining wall near the boat dock.

The Embassy team met the clients' goals using additional creative solutions, such as channeling the roof drainage system into a dry creek bed along the hill to take water down to the lake and turning the rock pile into riprap lining the hillside.

The project earned Embassy Landscape Group a 2017 Grand Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

**PHOTO** Native plants and repurposed riprap surround natural stone steps that lead down to Weatherby Lake.

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

PHOTO: SANDY DEFOE





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<sup>1</sup> Offer available from March 01, 2018 - April 30, 2018. Prices and models may vary by dealer. Savings based on the purchase of eligible equipment. Offers available on new equipment and in the U.S. only. Prices and savings in U.S. dollars. See your dealer for details.

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# NEWS HOW-TO'S

LANDSCAPE  
INDUSTRY  
TRENDS,  
VIEWS  
AND TIPS

RECOMMENDER

ISSUE BRIEF

STEP BY STEP

NEW STUFF

SAFETYWATCH

## DIAL UP DIGITALLY

LABOR  
TIP

It's a repeated theme within the green industry: Everyone is concerned about the labor market. "It's basically shifted from an employer market to an employee market," says Steve Cesare, an HR consultant at landscape business consulting firm, The Harvest Group.

With so many available positions, how can landscape pros staff up? Cesare recommends dialing up digital presences to attract top staff. According to a survey on social media recruitment and screening on the Society of Human Resource Management's website, 66 percent of organizations are using mobile recruitment apps to target smartphone users.

While many companies already use Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to draw customers, posting on those platforms about company news, social gatherings and team building also can help tout a great company culture to entice job seekers and people who have never considered the landscape industry before.

Companies that can do this successfully are on the leading edge when it comes to recruitment. "We're no longer competing with

other landscapers for staff," Cesare says. "We're competing against the construction industry, the restaurant industry, janitorial, golf courses, so we have to get out there and compete not for our labor market, but against our competitor market."

**“(Lawn and landscape companies) are realizing that we're no longer competing with other landscapers for staff.”**



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## RECOMMENDER

# What stand-on mower do you recommend and why?

John Deere QuikTrak stand-on mowers are now available with the Michelin X Tweel Turf airless radial tires.



**DANIEL DIX**  
OWNER, COUNTYWIDE ENTERPRISES  
FLEMINGTON, N.J.

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is comfortable to operate, and it handles well. With a variety of attachments on the market and some set to be released in the future, there are options for everyone: plow, rotary broom, bagging/collection system, turbine blower and snow blower, to name some. The ease of preventive maintenance, attachment changes and operator use make this the best choice on the market for companies servicing through all four seasons like ours. We have technicians in the field who rush to be the first to deploy and use this equipment during winter storms, where in the past, it was difficult to find laborers for traditional snow clearing."



**CHAD M. JONES**  
OWNER/OPERATOR, C-JONES LAWN & TREE  
WINTER HAVEN, FLA.

"We love Hustler SS 52-in. and 60-in. platforms. They're amazing machines at a great value. We have three and plan to add two more this season. They fit residential and small to medium commercial properties perfectly. We keep 60-in. and 72-in. Hustler Hyperdrives for large commercial, though."

## ISSUE BRIEF



BY BOB MANN

The author is director of state and local government relations for the National Association of Landscape Professionals.

## LOCAL POLITICS MATTER


In my line of work, I attend a lot of hearings—state legislatures, city councils, county commissions and everything in between. Recently, I traveled to Florida where a county commission was deciding whether to impose fertilizer application blackout dates during much of the growing season.

The science is on our side; the judicious use of fertilizer on turfgrass is a net benefit to the environment, and if you follow published best management practices, virtually none of the fertilizer you apply will escape to ground or surface waters.

Testifying at the county commission hearing, we had plenty of people on our side, such as scientists, manufacturers, lawyers and industry advocates like me. We did an excellent job laying out a solid case that responsible use of fertilizers is the way to go. On the other side were local residents who wouldn't know St. Augustinegrass from a palm tree. Their arguments were entirely emotional—utterly at odds with what the science tells us.

Guess who won? The local residents. We live in an age where facts don't matter, as counterintuitive as that might be. In that hearing room, everyone from the green industry who testified was from someplace else. No local companies testified.

As I drove back to the airport, I was struck by the number of lawn fertilizer trucks I passed. Each one of those companies had just been dealt a huge blow, and not one of them was in the county commission hearing room to defend themselves.

You may not be interested in politics, but politics is interested in you. This type of activism is coming to your town, too. Be vigilant, and be prepared to defend your right to do business. 



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## STEP BY STEP

# How to calibrate a stand-on sprayer

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Visit [LandscapeManagement.net/StepbyStep](http://LandscapeManagement.net/StepbyStep) to download a PDF of this page to use as a training tool for your team.

**C**alibrating a stand-on sprayer before arriving on a customer's property can save lawn care operators (LCOs) many headaches caused by over- or under-applying products. It's recommended that professionals recalibrate sprayers each time they change the spray pressure.

To calibrate a sprayer, LCOs must find three measurements: distance, time and volume. The distance it takes for equipment to spray an area of 1,000 sq. ft. can be found by dividing the effective spray width of the nozzle, which should be specified by the manufacturer, by 1,000.

To find the time, contractors can mark that distance on a lawn with cones, flags or paint. Use a timer to record how long it takes the equipment to travel that distance. Next, use the time to find how much a machine can spray for that duration. With a second person operating the sprayer, use a PVC pipe joint or other equipment to direct the spray flow into a graduated cylinder or other tool to measure the volume of a liquid.

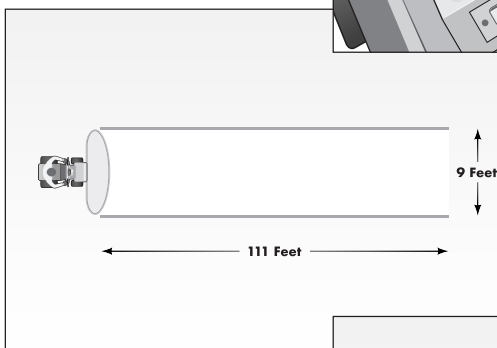
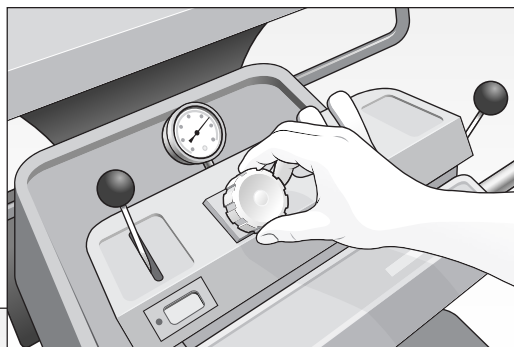
Using the measurements for distance, time and volume, calculate the amount of chemical per gallon to add to the tanks. To convert a measurement recorded in fluid ounces to gallons, divide the number by 128.

Follow these steps to properly calibrate a stand-on sprayer.

SOURCE: Turfco

## STEP 1

Conduct a precalibration check by inspecting the machine's filters and nozzles for clogs, cleaning tanks and setting the spray pressure to the manufacturer's recommendations.

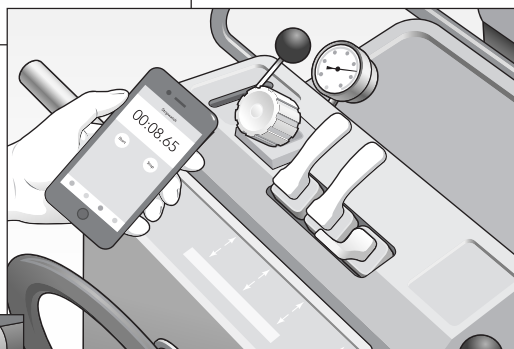


## STEP 2

Find the distance it takes for the sprayer to cover 1,000 sq. ft. by dividing the effective spray width of the equipment by 1,000.

## STEP 3

Time how long it takes to cover 1,000 sq. ft. Mark a course as long as the distance your sprayer must travel from Step 2 and time your sprayer driving this course three times. Take an average of those times for accuracy.



## STEP 4

Measure the output volume for the time it takes to cover 1,000 sq. ft. Have a second person operate the sprayer for the duration of the time found in Step 3, and use a graduated cylinder to measure the spray output for that time. Do this three times and average the results for accuracy.

## STEP 5

Use steps 2-4 to determine how much chemical to put in the tanks. To convert fluid ounces to gallons, divide by 128.

## SELLING TIPS

## HOW FUNGICIDES CAN SELL THEMSELVES

One LCO relies on his expertise and client relationships to convert customers to a disease-prevention program.

needed—because customers trust us.”

Ritenour’s approach to selling any service is straightforward: **“Just show them the results, and it should sell itself.”**

## PREVENTIVE PROGRAM

Disease control is one premium service Ritenour Custom Lawn Care offers its clients. Red thread, brown patch, dollar spot and leaf spot are four turf diseases the company may encounter on its clients’ lawns, which are primarily bluegrass or a mix of bluegrass, fescue and ryegrass. Similar to other lawn care firms in its area, the company offers a six-step lawn treatment program.

“For discriminating customers who want that super nice lawn, we recommend we apply a fungicide as a preventive,” Ritenour says.

Many of the company’s clients are on the preventive fungicide program, which starts in May and includes one treatment every 30 days for three months.

For the past four years, Ritenour has been using Syngenta’s Headway fungicide with the active ingredients azoxystrobin and propiconazole—with good results. **It’s effective and it outlasts competitive products, he says.**

## SOFT SELL

If the technicians identify a disease problem on clients’ lawns, they’ll recommend a curative fungicide application.

The technician starts by leaving behind a note about any concerns he identified along with an informational flier about the specific disease, plus an offer to do a curative fungicide application.

“We don’t go into super detail because most people don’t care what causes the disease, they just want it controlled,” Ritenour says.

## RESULTS MATTER

“Normally, after they see how good the fungicide works, it’s easy to convince them to sign up for the three preventive sprays the next season,” Ritenour says. This is the most common way clients end up on the preventive program. **He estimates that three-quarters of clients who are approached in this manner go for it.**

Word-of-mouth is another way clients upgrade to Ritenour’s preventive fungicide program.

“If one person sees their neighbor’s lawn, and they start talking about it, they’ll call and say we want the same program as the neighbor,” he says. “As long as you can show them the benefits and the results for the treatment, it’s not too hard to sell it to them.”



Rick Ritenour

## MARKETING HELP

Mentioning disease concerns and control recommendations in technicians’ notes and leave-behind fliers has been the most powerful way to promote the service. The fliers Ritenour uses are homeowner marketing materials developed by Syngenta, which are free for LCOs to use in their sales and marketing efforts. Visit **GrowWithSyngenta.com** to access them or to learn more.



Top: Untreated lawn succumbs to brown patch.  
Bottom: Same lawn treated with Headway fungicide on a 28 day interval.

**F**or Rick Ritenour, selling premium lawn care services begins with trust. He owns and operates Ritenour Custom Lawn Care in Butler, Pa., with his brother, Robb Ritenour.

The company was founded by their late parents in the 1960s when the lawn care industry was in its infancy.

“We’re still very hands on,” Ritenour says of himself and his brother. The family-operated nature of the company instills confidence among clients, he says.

“We still go out and service the customers every day,” he says. “In some cases, we’ve personally been doing these lawns for 30 years. I think the customers like that, which in turn is why we can sell extra services when they’re



## #LawnSellingTips



## NEW STUFF



### 1. HYDRAULIC PALLET FORKS WITH NURSERY SLEEVES

**COMPANY:** Case Construction Equipment  
**URL:** CaseCE.com

A new addition to Case's skid-steer and compact loader attachment line, the hydraulic pallet forks with nursery sleeves help protect the integrity of root balls on large trees during transport. The forks' hydraulically controlled tines run off of standard auxiliary hydraulics and can be positioned from a 10- to 44-in. spacing—all without leaving the cab. Additionally, the forks can transition easily between standard and nursery fork configurations, Case said.

### 2. GSE 600-GAL. SPRAY UNIT

**COMPANY:** Graham Spray Equipment  
**URL:** GrahamSE.com

Graham's spray unit features a 400/200-gal. compartmented tank, enabling one spray rig to service multiple grass types requiring different chemical treatments. Dual pumping stations allow two technicians to apply different treatments at the same time. The unit includes two under-bed storage boxes (18 by 18 by 30 in.), a large dry storage box (30 by 30 by 78 in.) and a 16-gal. water tank. Mechanical agitation and jet agitation are used in the 400- and 200-gal. tank compartments, respectively.



### 3. PRO-TRADE LED LIGHTING LINE

**COMPANY:** SiteOne Landscape Supply  
**URL:** SiteOne.com

The Pro-Trade LED lighting line features aluminum fixtures available in black and bronze and brass fixtures. Fixtures include up lights (pictured) and path lights. The 3W and 5W MR16 LED lamps deliver 250-350 lumens with a 38-degree beam angle at 2700K color temperature and a 30,000-hr. average life, while the omnidirectional T3 LED lamps deliver 2.5 watts and 180 lumens at 2700K with a 20,000-hr. average life. Transformers are also available in 150W and 300W options.



4



6



5

### 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).

#### 4. LAZER Z DIESEL COMMERCIAL ZERO-TURN RIDING MOWER

**COMPANY:** Exmark

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

The Lazer Z diesel includes a 96-in., rear-discharge UltraCut Flex Wing cutting deck, featuring a 48-in. center deck with two 24-in. wing decks, which can flex up to 20 degrees up and 15 degrees down. The machine's Yanmar liquid-cooled diesel engine is powered by Exmark's RED technology. The new model is also available with Exmark's 60- or 72-in. UltraCut cutting decks in side- or rear-discharge configurations.

#### 5. 120V PROFESSIONAL SERIES

**COMPANY:** Oregon Products

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

Oregon's new 120V series of cordless equipment includes the power and torque to match gas-fueled equipment and offers low noise and the ability to operate in any kind of weather, Oregon said. The series includes a backpack blower (pictured), string trimmer, extended hedge trimmer and edger. The tools are powered by Oregon's 120V battery, available in two capacity levels: BX975—a 973 watt-hr. option—and the BX650—a lighter, 648 watt-hr. option. Batteries are placed in a backpack-style carrier.

#### 6. RTV-X1120 UTV

**COMPANY:** Kubota Tractor Corp.

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

Kubota's six new RTV-X1120 models feature a three-cylinder, 24.8-gross-hp diesel engine. The machine's engine and VHT-X transmission provide a top speed of 29 mph. With the switch of a lever, the hydraulic-lift (worksites models only) cargo box rises to dump materials. Standard 2-in. receivers are located at the front and back of the vehicle, allowing a tow capacity of up to 1,300 lbs. The UTVs are available in Kubota orange or camo color options.



## SAFETYWATCH

### LOCKOUT/TAG-OUT PROCEDURES

**It's important for companies to implement and execute lockout/tag-out (LOTO) procedures.**

LOTO is necessary whenever cleaning, maintenance, repair and/or inspection is performed on any machinery, equipment or device that has a source of energy connected to it that represents a potential safety hazard.

Your company should have a formal LOTO procedure that:

- Communicates the company's commitment to LOTO standards;
- Provides direction for safe cleaning, maintenance, repair and inspection of all machinery

and equipment;

- Ensures all employees and external contractors are able to work safely when cleaning or repairing company equipment or machinery; and
- Ensures the policy is being followed by employees or contractors performing or completing work on energized machinery and equipment.

As an employee or contractor, you have specific responsibilities when it comes to LOTO procedures. You should:

- Read and understand company policy;
- Recognize when a lockout is required and confirm with a supervisor;
- Obtain proper training on lockout procedures; and

- Obtain appropriate lockout devices (tags, lock, red tape, etc.).

LOTO is an important and potentially life-saving procedure. When in doubt, ask your supervisor or manager for instruction.

#### WATCH AND LEARN

Visit [LandscapeManagement.net/SafetyWatch](http://LandscapeManagement.net/SafetyWatch) to view a video about lockout/tag-out procedures and use it as a training tool for your team.

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## SPLIT FOCUS

How one landscape pro  
balances his growing  
business and his  
passion for design.

➤ PAGE 28



## TURF+ORNAMENTAL CARE

# Easy rider

Ride-on spreaders and sprayers are being made with increased productivity, efficiency and safety in mind.

BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER

For lawn care operators (LCOs) who have embraced the benefits of ride-on machines, pushing a spreader or pulling a sprayer hose is now a thing of the past. Technology has made ride-on spreaders and sprayers easier to learn and operate while helping LCOs cover more ground in less time.

"The lawn care business for many years was stuck in the 1970s," says George Kinkead, president of lawn equipment manufacturer Turfco, based in Minneapolis. "Now, the idea that you would hire someone to push a spreader or pull a hose is ancient technology. These machines are really transforming the business, and we believe the ride-on market is here to stay."



George Kinkead



**USER-FRIENDLY**  
Manufacturers are focusing on making ride-on equipment simpler and safer to use.

See a  
spreader-sprayer  
product roundup  
on page 52.

### PUSHING PRODUCTIVITY

The challenge of finding and retaining quality labor is one of the biggest factors driving growth of the ride-on spreader and sprayer market. LCOs are able to cover more ground in less time using ride-on machines than they ever could doing the work manually. Lloyd von Scheliha, product manager for Exmark in Beatrice, Neb., says when the company entered the ride-on spreader/sprayer space in 2015, it looked for ways to make the machines more efficient, more productive and less fatiguing for the operator.

"Labor is an even bigger challenge for applicators because you have to get them through the process of licensing and training, and retaining them becomes that much more important," says von Scheliha. "There has been a renewed level of interest in ride-on machines from the productivity aspect of it."

Ryan Cecil, partner at Go Green Lawn Solutions in Louisville, Ky., says productivity is the main reason his company started using ride-on spreaders and sprayers about six years ago.

The company's technicians are now able to treat up to 30 lawns per day versus the 15 to 20 they used to treat with push spreaders and chest sprayers. Cecil notes that he sees the biggest gains in productivity on lawns 10,000 square feet or larger. For lawns 5,000 square feet or smaller, Go Green technicians still utilize chest sprayers because Cecil says they are quicker and easier to use in tight spaces. Go Green Lawn Solutions is a \$650,000 company that offers 80 percent lawn care and 20 percent pest control services to a 90 percent residential, 10 percent commercial clientele.

"On yards smaller than 10,000 square feet, you don't gain that much productivity, but on bigger lawns, the accuracy and the speed is just so much better than manually doing it," he says. "These machines have greatly improved our business. The accuracy with calibrations and the increased productivity have been game changing for us."

*Continued on page 20*

## NEWSFEED

### PBI-GORDON HERBICIDE

PBI-Gordon Corp. has developed a non-phenoxy, "three-way" herbicide, soon to be

branded SwitchBlade. The herbicide will provide extended post-emergence control of 34 broadleaf weeds.

### DOW TO BECOME CORTEVA

DowDuPont's agriculture division, which includes the Dow Agro-Sciences turf and ornamental business, will get a new name once its spinoff is complete: Corteva

Agriscience. The spinoff is expected to wrap up by June 1, 2019.

### NEW EXMARK AERATOR

Exmark rolled out a new 24-inch stand-on aerator, designed to perform work on small

or gated properties, said the company. It features a dual-hydro drive system and a Smart Controller system, which tracks machine hours and provides maintenance reminders.



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## TURF+ORNAMENTAL CARE



### ↑ PRODUCTIVITY

With increased demand for lawn care services, LCOs with ride-on equipment can add more clients and be more productive.

*Continued from page 18*

Kinthead says LCOs need this new-found productivity to keep up with the increased demand for lawn care services. He credits this demand to the growing number of millennials who are willing to pay professionals to take care of household chores like lawn care and maintenance. LCOs are adding more customers from this group of homeowners who do not have the experience or the desire to do this type of work, Kinthead says.

"If you go back 15 years ago, an LCO would struggle to get business and expand," he says. "But with millennials moving into subdivisions, there are so many more people willing to outsource this work. LCOs are now confronted with how to produce what they sell. The logical answer is technology, and that's where the ride-on applicators come in."

### KEEP IT SIMPLE

Manufacturers are also focused on making the machines easier to learn and operate. This focus helps reduce operator fatigue and get new employees trained and out in the field quickly. For example, Exmark designs its ride-ons with rear drives and front steering, which von Scheliha says gives better hillside performance and more control. Exmark also focuses on the machines' capacity, so they can cover more ground before needing to be refilled, and size, so they can fit through standard 36-inch gates and other tight spaces.

"For us, we look to reduce the wear and tear on the operator while still being productive," von Scheliha says. "As far

*Continued on page 22*



Lloyd von Scheliha

PHOTO: EXMARK

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## TURF+ORNAMENTAL CARE

*Continued from page 20*

as trends, LCOs are looking at capacity and the ability to cover more ground with the machines they have, operator fatigue and ease of use.”

Kinkead says the emergence of ride-on machines has helped expand the lawn care industry’s labor pool. Because they are easy to use and operate, ride-on machines allow technicians to stay in the industry longer and have helped improve employee retention.

“The image that we are a physically taxing business is a hard one for us to shake,” Kinkead says. “Lawn care company owners want to keep their older employees. To have a 55-year-old applicator is a big deal—we used to lose those guys.

“Every year we try to look at each lever and knob and think about how we

can make it simpler,” he adds. “We are trying to drive home the idea that you can get an employee up and running within a week.”

Cecil agrees that ease of use is important. Go Green operates three different brands of ride-on machines. The company utilizes manufacturer training programs when they purchase new machines and then takes that training in-house. Cecil says it takes a few months to get new hires accustomed to the equipment and out into the field on their own and adds that improved safety features, such as locking caster wheels and lower centers of gravity, have been welcomed additions.

“Safety has been a big trend I’ve noticed,” Cecil says. “We have enjoyed seeing this because we service a lot of properties with hills that we wouldn’t

have used these machines on before. Now we can because of this new technology.”

Cecil says that more competition in the ride-on market has required manufacturers to keep improving their machines. Social media and message boards are great places for LCOs to talk about the different types of machines available and to communicate with manufacturers about how to make them perform even better.

“I think manufacturers are definitely listening to the consumers,” Cecil says. “Competition has been good to push them to keep improving.”



Ryan Cecil

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.



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## MOWING+LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

# Tree talk

How you can offer clients added value by partnering with professional consulting arborists. BY MICAH PACE



### ◀ NEXT-LEVEL PRICING

Partnering with a registered consulting arborist can increase clients' confidence, allowing companies the opportunity to charge premium rates.

you partner with true tree professionals rather than the cheapest “Chuck-in-a-truck” outfit. Show your clients that you understand the difference between simple tree maintenance and professional management.

An RCA can benefit your company in many ways, such as:

● **Added-value services:** Working with an RCA provides a new revenue stream from the professional tree management recommendations identified by the arborist.

● **Increased professionalism:** Networking with an RCA helps your firm demonstrate increased technical knowledge, which increases your clients' confidence in you and allows for opportunities to earn premium rates. The more you learn, the more you earn.

● **Increased effectiveness of services:** Site-specific and tree-specific management recommendations based on real data improve the results of your services and allow for desired outcomes to be realized in a measured way. You can develop property management plans for your clients based on their actual property needs rather than generic industry recommendations.

● **Long-term management strategies:** Increasing the focus on long-term management rather than short-term maintenance enhances the life and value of your clients' tree resources or landscape and increases the cost-effectiveness of tree care over time. Promoting proactive management over reactive maintenance increases

*Continued on page 27*

**P**rofessional landscape management companies, especially those that focus on large estates, commercial properties and high-end clientele, understand that trees don't simply represent another management task or responsibility. Trees are the largest, most obvious and most valuable asset on any property—or at least they can be.

Property managers for both residential and commercial properties are increasingly required to do more with less, and—as a result of increased competition and low-bid tactics—sometimes for less. So how do you demonstrate the added value your company provides so the client easily understands why your services should be worth a premium?

Over the last couple of decades, research on both the environmental benefits of urban trees and the monetary value those benefits represent has expanded our understanding and appreciation of the largest, longest living organisms

in our communities. Programs such as iTree (iTreeTools.org) have given tree managers new tools to improve both the management for and communication about urban trees to the public. With this increase in knowledge about the value of trees comes an increased responsibility to enhance our care for them, especially since the benefit and value of trees increase with their size and health.

Working with a registered consulting arborist (RCA), credentialed through the American Society of Consulting Arborists, is an effective and smart way to improve the tree management services offered to your clients. These trained professionals offer a wealth of knowledge about proper pruning; pest and disease identification, prevention and management; risk assessment; tree preservation strategies during construction; and overall resource management planning. Clients that truly value their trees will view your company a cut above the competition when they learn

## NEWSFEED

### ASPIRE V4.1 AVAILABLE

Aspire Software Co. unveiled its latest version, Aspire V4.1. The new version includes

added functions such as equipment tracking, electronic client signatures and email integration.

### EXMARK ADDITIONS

Exmark introduced the next generation of its patented RED Technology, which is available in both gasoline- and diesel-powered options for

the first time. The company also unveiled its 2018 Lazer Z Diesel commercial zero-turn riding mower. The mower includes a 96-inch UltraCut Flex Wing cutting deck

with a rear-discharge design. The new model is also available with Exmark's 60- or 72-inch UltraCut cutting decks in side- or rear-discharge configurations.



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\*Based on U.S. Data study by Wiese Research Associates, Inc. Market Share and Additional Equipment Study (February, 2016).



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\* According to survey of lawn care professionals conducted in 2016 by Orman Guidance, Inc., an independent research firm commissioned by Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A.



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## MOWING+LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE



**MITIGATE**  
Working with a consulting arborist can help reduce potential risks trees pose.

inventories and management plans for large properties that require a high detail of management tracked over time. RCAs who also possess the Tree Risk Assessment Qualification, known as TRAQ and provided through the International Society of Arboriculture, offer even more value. They can help reduce risk to your firm and clients by identifying trees that represent a heightened risk on the managed property and can recommend mitigation to lower that risk. All these services mentioned here add up to an enhanced value for your company as well as to your clients' properties.

So how do you meet and get to know a consulting arborist? Well, while there's not yet an app for that, you can use the ASCA website located at [ASCA-Consultants.site-ym.com/](http://ASCA-Consultants.site-ym.com/) to search for one of the roughly 300 RCAs nationwide. Another advantage to consulting arborists is that they need not be local. Many RCAs travel nationally and internationally to provide professional consulting services. However, just as in any profession, not all RCAs are created equal. Do your homework by reviewing websites to see what services are offered and ask for references, project history or examples that most closely represent your company's needs. Confirm the consultant is properly insured and verify his or her credentials through both ASCA and ISA before hiring.

Don't let a lack of knowledge or experience limit your company's value. Professional consulting arborists offer the added professionalism and value your company needs to stand out in your crowded and competitive field. 

Pace is the director of consulting with Preservation Tree, the Consulting Group, is a registered consulting arborist (RCA), Professional Urban Forester and ISA Certified Arborist. He is also president of the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture and serves on the editorial committee for the American Society of Consulting Arborists. Reach him at [micahp@preservationtree.com](mailto:micahp@preservationtree.com).

*Continued from page 24*  
efficiency and reduces risk by addressing small concerns before they become unmanageable or too costly.

• **Increased property value:** The overall value of landscapes increases with the size and age of trees and plants. Better management leads to better trees. Real estate data has shown that in some cases, well-cared-for mature landscapes can increase property resale value by nearly 15 percent for similar properties in the same market. You can help add value to your clients' properties by simply partnering with a tree professional.

• **Increased environmental benefits:** The environmental benefits and services trees provide increase with the size and health of trees. The bigger and better the trees, the bigger and better the benefits. Trees are our 24-hour-a-day civil servants. They are continually providing important, yet overlooked services, such as clean air, clean water, enhanced property and community aesthetics, carbon sequestration and stormwater runoff reduction. Trees also help cool our homes and neighborhoods, making them a more enjoyable place to live.

Professional consulting arborists can provide important services such as tree

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# POWER OF ONE

*Chris Dempsey  
Vice President,  
Landscape  
Construction,  
Irrigation & Tree  
Elizabeth River  
Landscape  
Management  
Suffolk, Va.*



### What's your background?

I started doing basic lawn care in high school for a friend's father, Howard "Buck" Buchanan, who was a captain in the Portsmouth Fire Department. I fiddled around with my own lawn care company after high school for a year or two and then moved along to a larger company. Elizabeth River was always a "power house" landscape company in the area, and they had some big things going on in 2013. The owner, Jason Fawcett, and I had gone back and forth about me coming to work there, but never settled on terms. On Feb. 22, 2014, my son, Easton Dempsey, was born. I took a few weeks to myself during this time and then Jason and I made a deal, and it was full-speed ahead from there.

### Why did you first get involved in public service?

My father, Kevin Dempsey, did 30 years of service in the fire department for the city of Hampton prior to my hire date. I grew up in and around the fire house. We work a 21-day cycle and in that 21 days we work a total of seven 24-hour shifts. This leaves plenty of time to run your own company or work another job outside of the fire department.

### Who are your mentors?

My father and Buck Buchanan. They both worked in the fire department and had full-time jobs outside of the fire service to provide their families with everything they could ever want. I quickly adapted to this work mindset and never looked back.

 Read more at

[KawasakiEnginesUSA.com/Power-Of-One](http://KawasakiEnginesUSA.com/Power-Of-One)

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— ENGINES —



## DESIGN/BUILD+INSTALLATION

# Double down

How one landscaper managed to hold on to his creative passion as his company doubled due to an acquisition. BY SARAH WEBB

**W**hen Traven Pelletier acquired Lotus Gardenscapes in 2015, the size of his landscape company, Bloom Garden Center & Elemental Design, grew from \$1 million to \$2 million overnight.

He realized he would have to implement a set of systems to split his focus between being an owner managing a now-doubled company and a designer trying to uphold his creative passion.

“That whole year was organized chaos because we were operating out of two facilities and we had two different ways of doing things,” says Pelletier, CEO and owner of Lotus Gardenscapes, which now includes Bloom. “We had to strip down and move into 2016 with a unified plan and one set of systems and one location.”

### MAKING IT WORK

Pelletier says he was able to keep his company afloat during the transition

period for several reasons, one of which was joining a peer group in 2015.

“I didn’t really have the skills or the support to manage a company that large, and finances are my weaker point,” Pelletier says. “Joining a peer group is probably the best thing I’ve ever done in relation to running my business.”

Facilitated by Jeffrey Scott, the peer group Pelletier joined is comprised of 10 members from similar-sized landscape companies operating in noncompeting areas.

In addition to advice from peer group members, Pelletier credits the peer group’s uniform budgeting format—complete with cross-company and cross-industry benchmarks—for Lotus’s financial well-being.

“We’re having to discipline ourselves into using a particular budgeting system, and it completely revolutionized the way I was thinking about how my company was doing,” he says, adding that the accountability he feels toward other peer

### SYSTEM SAVVY

Incorporating a set of systems has allowed Lotus Gardenscapes to not only grow and but also produce award-winning designs.



group members makes him look at items more carefully and work harder.

Influenced by the peer group, Pelletier decided to build a leadership team of five Lotus staff members.

“I needed other key leaders to help me move the company forward and create systems,” he says.

Pulling from different sectors of the company, Pelletier’s team now includes an office manager, production managers, a designer/salesperson and the manager of GreenStreet Tree Care.

The leadership team meets every morning for about 10 minutes, with half-hour meetings on Mondays. The group also eats lunch together every Friday.

*Continued on page 30*

## NEWSFEED

### BOBCAT EXCAVATOR

Bobcat Co. expanded its R-Series excavator lineup with the new E85, the largest

machine in the company’s compact excavator family. The 8.5-ton E85 features the same design and

other cab upgrades as the E32 and E35 R-Series compact excavators. The E85 also features a new standard lift eye to help operators lift and place objects and 13

inches of tail overhang to work in compact environments.

### INSTANTHEDGE RELEASE

InstantHedge, a nursery based in Canby, Ore., will release its live,

ready-to-plant hedges this spring. Each panel—consisting of four trees—is 40 inches and is available in heights of 3 to 4 feet or 5 to 6 feet and a thickness of 16 inches.





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## DESIGN/BUILD+INSTALLATION

*Continued from page 28*

Additionally, each member of the leadership team completed a personality test—another idea Pelletier picked up from his peer group. He chose to use the Winslow Assessment System.

“Doing the personality tests gave us a nice way to discuss what our strengths and weaknesses are as individuals within the team and realize how we complement each other,” he says, adding that he has since requested that other management staff members complete an assessment, as well.

Leadership team members are aware of one another’s personality types, but for other management staff, that information is kept confidential.

Other company systems include an extensive online survey and charging a

\$100 consultation fee—eliminating free site visits.

Meant to save the company time, the premeeting online survey collects prospects’ information and includes more than 20 questions about prospects’ immediate and long-term goals, desired landscape elements, estimated budget and more.

The consultation fee has resulted in a 30 percent decrease in leads and a nearly 80 percent close rate, higher than the company’s close rate before the fee was implemented.

“We were following a lot of leads that weren’t panning out and needed to weed out the people who were less serious,” Pelletier says.

Pelletier also has incorporated several initiatives to ensure staff members are happy.



Drawing from his creative side, he invents “funny” employee awards, given out during the end-of-the-season party, and sends out a weekly email blast that includes company announcements and compliments from staff members to one another.

“It’s my business philosophy that you don’t really have a company without your employees,” Pelletier says.

*Continued on page 32*

**↑ APPRECIATE**  
Lotus’s owner recognizes employees at the end of each season with personalized awards.

PHOTO: LOTUS GARDENSCAPES



Paul Fraynd, Sun Valley Landscaping



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## PROFIT CENTERS

### DESIGN/BUILD+INSTALLATION

*Continued from page 30*

Despite Lotus's rapid growth, Pelletier says incorporating a set of systems has helped him hold on to his identity as a designer, but more importantly as a mentor to Lotus's other designers.

"As of 2018, all of our design sales staff have produced award-winning designs," he says. "For me, it's less about my own creative outlet and more about inspiring the whole team and building our creative potential as a whole." 📞

### Lotus Gardenscapes history

Lotus Gardenscapes, originally based in Ann Arbor, Mich., was founded in 1997 as a "guy and a truck" specialty maintenance company with a focus on small projects and garden care.

Traven Pelletier came on board in 2000, bringing with him a builder's license, a bachelor's degree in studio art and environmental science and a flair for building large-scale sculptures.

He bought into the business 10 percent every year for five years until he became an equal partner.

Lotus made its first acquisition in 2007 of a slightly smaller competitor and bought out a guy-and-truck operation two years later.

In 2010, Lotus was split into two divisions. Pelletier managed the Elemental division, which was focused on hardscapes and carpentry.

He left Lotus in 2012, taking the Elemental division with him. He says he needed a change after he and his business partner—no longer sharing the same vision—had become "stuck."

From there, Pelletier bought Dexter Gardens, located in Dexter, Mich., and started Bloom Garden Center & Elemental Design.

When his former partner retired and failed to sell the company on the general business market in 2015, Pelletier bought back Lotus and merged it with Bloom. Together, it's a \$2.5-million company that offers 90 percent design/build, 10 percent landscape maintenance to a 100 percent residential clientele. The company now operates out of the old Bloom facility in Dexter, Mich.

"It was either it got liquidated and sold for its assets or I was going to buy it," he says. "Because I had helped build it, I wanted to save the brand and keep it going."

The company will drop the Bloom branding by the end of 2018 and rebrand everything as Lotus Gardenscapes. Additionally, it will transform Bloom's retail nursery into the Lotus Landscape Design Center, complete with products for clients such as landscape stone, lighting and fire pits.

Lotus also purchased GreenStreet Tree Care, based in Dexter, Mich., in October. GreenStreet is still operating as a separate entity, but Pelletier says he eventually hopes to roll it into the Lotus brand.



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# Soil assessment

How to match soil types with irrigation systems. BY KAYLI HANLEY

Did you know different types of dirt impact the effectiveness of an irrigation system? How quickly a soil type can absorb water will help you determine what kind of irrigation to set up, according to Jeffrey Knight, Ewing's director of learning and development.

Take a look at the different kinds of soil and their maximum precipitation rates, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION RATE (INCHES PER HOUR)						
Soil Type	0-5% slope		5-8% slope		8-12% slope	
	cover	bare	cover	bare	cover	bare
Coarse sand	2	2	2	1.5	1.5	1
Uniform light sandy loam	1.75	1	1.25	0.8	1	0.6
Uniform silt loam	1	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.3
Heavy clay or clay loam	0.2	0.15	0.15	0.1	0.12	0.08

## Clay

Clay soils have a low infiltration rate, which means they have a higher risk for runoff.

"Clay soils hold lots of water, but it takes a long time for the water to infiltrate into the soil, so runoff is an issue if the water is applied too fast," says Knight.

To properly irrigate around clay soils, be sure the water is being applied at a slow, steady rate to avoid flooding the area and wasting water. Knight suggests using rotary type heads with low precipitation rates for best results when working with clay.

## Sand

Sandy soils react exactly the opposite of clay soils in that they have a high infiltration rate, which means a low holding capacity.

"Sandy soils don't hold much water, but they do allow it to pass through quickly," says Knight.

Because of this, sandy soils need to be watered more frequently, but not for long periods of time. Visual observation to see how the soil reacts to water plays a key part in helping to determine what kind of irrigation system is best to use.

Drought-tolerant plants thrive in sandy soils, and if possible, Knight suggests working to match these types of plants with this soil.

## Silt

Silt is the final soil type. Its infiltration rate is not considered high or low, but in between. Knight says the best way to determine what kind of irrigation system is best for this soil type involves visually observing how quickly the soil is absorbing the water.

"Silty soils can often handle runtimes of spray heads up to 10 minutes," Knight says. "But before making a final selection, be sure to visually observe the soil's reaction to water."

## Loam

The term loam is used to refer to a mix of clay, sand and silt.

"To know exactly what type of soil you have and to determine the amount of nutrients that are available to the plant material you're working with, request a soil test," Knight says.

Kayli Hanley is a former writer for Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply. This article originally ran on Ewing's blog at [EwingIrrigation.com/news](http://EwingIrrigation.com/news).



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# IS YOUR COMPANY AT RISK?



The legalization of marijuana in some states and the opioid crisis present a challenge for labor-starved landscape companies. Do you have a plan to manage this issue?

BY PHILLIP M. PERRY

**E**mployee drug abuse can threaten your bottom line in many ways. Higher absenteeism. Lower productivity. Costly accidents that spark customer lawsuits. Employers are facing a greater risk than ever from a growing culture of impairment that shows no signs of tapering off any time soon.

"We are seeing a real uptick in the number of employees testing positive for drug abuse," says Nancy Delogu, shareholder in the Washington, D.C., office of Littler Mendelson, a law firm that defends employers in labor disputes. The portion of U.S. employees testing positive for drugs reached a 12-year high in 2016, according to a report from Quest Diagnostics, based in Madison, N.J. More than 4 percent of employees fail their urine drug tests.

## MARIJUANA, OPIATES DRIVE PROBLEM

What's driving the upsurge? Reason No. 1: marijuana.

"More states are legalizing marijuana for recreational and medical use," says Calvin Fay, executive director of Drug Free America Foundation and founder of the National Drug-Free Workplace Alliance. "That has helped to normalize the drug and make it socially acceptable."

As marijuana becomes more popular, employers face greater liability when dealing inappropriately with individuals under the influence. (For more on this problem, see the sidebar, "So your state has legalized marijuana...")

Reason No. 2: pain pill abuse. "The opioid epidemic has become a significant issue for small- and medium-sized employers over the past year," says Donna Smith,

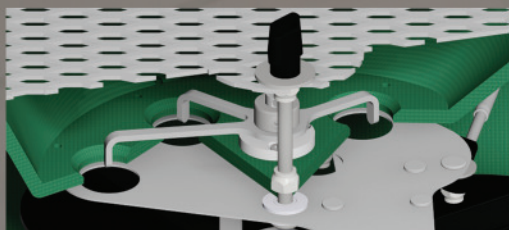
*Continued on page 38*



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## SO YOUR STATE HAS LEGALIZED MARIJUANA...

Has your state legalized marijuana for recreational or medical use? Or is it expected to do so? You may be wondering how the conflict between federal and state law will affect your ability to test your employees for marijuana and prohibit its use. Here's some insight into an evolving situation.

"It is still legal to test for marijuana in every jurisdiction," says Nancy Delogu, shareholder in the Washington, D.C., office of Littler Mendelson. "And it is still legal to decline to hire or employ workers who use marijuana for recreational purposes."

One caveat, says Delogu: If you don't want to know if your employees are using marijuana, don't test for it. "Knowing that someone uses marijuana and failing to take steps to ensure that he or she doesn't work while impaired could lead to liability if the employee does something that harms a third person."

As for medical use of marijuana, know your state law. "In a few states that ask employers to accommodate medical marijuana use, terminating the worker following a positive test without evidence of impairment could be risky," says Delogu. "In New York, for example, if marijuana is being used for medicinal reasons, the employer might have to determine whether it could accommodate that worker in some way so as to permit effective work." (Although, to date, no court has held that an employer must accommodate such use while federal law differs).

Finally, says Delogu, it is "absolutely and everywhere" allowable to terminate any employee who brings the marijuana substance into the workplace.

Consult with your attorney about your own state and local legislation. "It's important to know the current law in your jurisdiction and to watch for updates," says Delogu. "This area of the law is very dynamic and changing all the time."

*Continued from page 36*

Ed.D./Ph.D., regulatory compliance officer in the Tampa Bay, Fla., office of Workforce QA, a nationwide third-party administrator of drug-free workplace programs. Employers face the confusing task of responding appropriately to the abuse of these prescription drugs that employees can obtain legitimately or illicitly.

## DRUG ABUSE ERODES PROFITS

For employers, the risk is clear. "Workplace drug abuse is costly in terms of lower productivity, higher tardiness and absenteeism, greater use of medical benefits and increased incidents of pilferage and shrinkage," says Dee Mason, president of Working Partners, a consulting firm based in Canal Winchester, Ohio.

Then there is the higher incidence of accidents that can strain health care resources and lead to spikes in workers' compensation premiums. "The drug abuser is more than three and a half times as likely to have an accident on the job and five times more likely to have an off-the-job accident that impacts workplace performance," says Mason. "Some 47 percent of workplace accidents that result in serious injury and 40 percent of those that end in death have alcohol and other drugs involved." The role of drugs in workplace accidents is highlighted in a 2016 Quest survey, where 6.9 percent of employees tested postaccident were positive for drug use.

Accidents, in turn, can spark costly lawsuits. The view in the courts today is that when a customer is hurt, the employer is at fault.

"It's critically important for any business to protect employees and the public," says Joe Reilly, president of his own drug-testing consulting firm in Melbourne, Fla. "At smaller companies especially, one accident can be devastating."

## SMALLER BUSINESSES FACE SPECIAL PROBLEMS

"Smaller businesses with higher employee turnover are particularly at risk for workplace drug abuse," says Mason. Many drug users realize they will be turned down for the permanent positions offered at larger employers where pre-employment drug tests are a matter of course. These individuals will instead apply for jobs at smaller organizations, which may tend to skimp on drug testing. The risk is even higher at those businesses relying on part-time, temporary and seasonal workers.

"Contrary to popular belief, some 70 percent of drug abusers are employed," says Mason. "If they cannot get work with large established organizations, they will apply at smaller ones."

## DRUG TESTING CAN HELP

Drug testing can help you protect your own business from the costly effects of impaired workers. "Drug testing can be done on a pre-employment basis, as well as following workplace accidents," says Fay. "It can also be done randomly, which can serve as an especially effective deterrent to drug abuse." Indeed, employees very often cite random testing programs as the reason they don't get involved with illicit drugs.

You also can use "reasonable cause" as a test trigger. "Many employers have adopted what is called a 'reasonable suspicion' policy calling for intervention when the employer suspects the possibility of drug abuse," says Delogu. "Different things can constitute reasonable suspicion. Maybe it's behavior that suggests possible impairment. Or maybe it's a tip received from a couple of co-workers who are friends of the employee. Or perhaps you learn that an employee was arrested and charged with a drug-related crime."

Whatever the reason you test, you must conform to federal, state and

*Continued on page 40*





## LANDSCAPE PERSPECTIVE

# Chris Bright

CEO  
Seabreeze Property Services  
Portland, Maine

**T**he team at Seabreeze Property Services in Portland, Maine, has been touched by employee

drug overdoses more than once. Sadly, one of those cases resulted in the death of a female crew member who was in recovery, relapsed and died.

"It's pretty prevalent all around us," says CEO Chris Bright, noting the company brought in grief counselors to assist team members. He adds that many employees have had friends or family members touched by the opioid crisis in one way or another, and he estimates 30 percent of the company's staff is in recovery for drugs or alcohol.

"We know there's a drug problem in our community, and a lot of our folks are in recovery or are dealing with friends who have died," he says. "What can we do? Let's give an alternate lifestyle to drugs and see if we can help pivot them to healthy choices."

That sentiment led Bright to install a CrossFit-style gym in the Seabreeze facility last year. The fitness center, which the company spent about \$6,000 to launch, includes a rowing machine, weight benches, squatting stations, a pull-up station, kettle bells and dumbbells. Bright partnered with a local CrossFit coach to come in and teach classes. The unpredictable winter schedule posed some

challenges, so the program was tabled until the spring, when Bright plans to offer morning classes to kick off the day.

Bright says he and the company's leadership team feel a responsibility to be part of the solution and also to look at the issue of employee drug use from a practical standpoint.

The company is working on implementing a pre-employment drug-testing policy, and it immediately tests employees involved in accidents. The legalization of marijuana in Maine is complicating matters, Bright says. It essentially requires companies to treat pot like alcohol and potentially not include it in pre-employment tests.

"If they're high or drinking on the job, we will terminate," he says. "There has to be that distinction. But if they are a good worker and (drug use) happens off the clock, we will work with them to get them the help they need."

That may include holding their job while they enter and complete a treatment program. —Marisa Palmieri



Seabreeze installed a CrossFit-style gym in its facility to help promote a healthy lifestyle.





*Continued from page 38*

local laws. "Some states do have limitations on drug testing," says Delogu. "So in those jurisdictions, make sure you know and comply with law."

## RESPOND CAREFULLY TO POSITIVE TESTS

And what to do if the drug test turns out to be positive? "There are two options," says Delogu. "One is adverse employment action like termination. Some employers do that from the first, especially if they have made it clear from the beginning that employees who need help can

come forward for assistance without fear of discipline."

The second option is to offer someone an opportunity to get assistance. "A second chance usually involves an evaluation by a substance abuse professional and the opportunity to complete an education and/or treatment program and then undergo follow-up testing," says Delogu. "Rather than just tell the employee to enroll in a treatment program, have the person evaluated by a professional and agree to do what is prescribed."

Many counselors urge employers to look seriously at a second chance for first

offenders. "A large percentage of people who test positive for the first time are not dependent yet, but have recreationally imbibed," says Mason. "If they are dealt with properly, including counseling, they will walk the line and do better. They often turn into excellent, loyal employees."

**"OPIOIDS ARE  
WIDELY AVAILABLE  
AND ABUSED  
DESPITE EFFORTS TO  
LIMIT THEIR ABUSE.  
SO IF YOU DO HAVE  
A DRUG TESTING  
PROGRAM, BE SURE  
YOU ARE TESTING  
FOR THEM."**

## HOW TO MANAGE COSTS

Of course, drug testing is not free, and you might be hesitant to engage in a program that adds to your expenses. Yet there are ways to save money without sacrificing quality. "Utilize nonprofit resources such as the Drug Free America Foundation to link up with consortiums of other small employers so your buying power increases," suggests Smith. The cost of a drug test typically runs around \$30 when purchased through a consortium, and around \$40 when purchased on the open market.

Other ways to save money: Test only for those drugs currently present in your community. "You can find out what drugs to test for by watching your local media," says Mason. "They are usually good at picking up these stories. You can also ask your local law enforcement agencies or the emergency rooms of area hospitals. They can tell you what drugs they are seeing and what drugs are on an upswing." Finally, in many states, employers with drug-free workplace programs qualify for reductions in workers' compensation insurance premiums.

Bonus tip: "Opioids are widely available and abused despite efforts to limit their abuse," says Delogu. "So if you do have a drug-testing program, be sure you are testing for them."

## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS POSE PROBLEMS

Bear in mind that testing will not uncover all drug use. "Drug tests are for the purpose of discovering illegal drug use, not legal use," says Delogu. "You will not receive positive test reports for use of a drug that is prescribed by a physician. In such cases, the medical officer will confirm the existence of the prescription and report the test as negative with no details included."

This can pose a problem: What if an employee is exhibiting erratic behavior as a result of legal use of prescription





drugs? In such a case, notes Delogu, you might still have actionable performance issues resulting from drug use. But you might also be required by law, or by your own personal preference, to accommodate the drug user with changes to job duties. Here, again, consult your attorney and conform to federal, state and local laws.

At the very least, your workplace policy can require employees to report any negative side effects of prescription drugs. "Many prescribed drugs have warnings about operating machinery or driving vehicles," says Reilly. "Every employer should have a policy with words such as these: 'If you are on prescribed medication, provide a statement from your physician as to whether or not you can perform your job.' And while you cannot tell people not to take their prescribed medication, you can monitor and respond to resulting performance concerns, says Reilly. "If it turns out an employee using prescribed drugs cannot do an assigned job, consider accommodating the disability by reassigning duties or granting medical leave for a set period of time."

### TESTING ALONE WON'T DO

A drug-testing program can be dangerous in isolation. "The worst thing

*Continued on page 42*

### LANDSCAPE PERSPECTIVE

## Elise Johnson

*Vice President of Human Resources  
Yellowstone Landscape  
Bunnell, Fla.*

**E**lise Johnson, vice president for Yellowstone Landscape in Bunnell, Fla., strives to keep the company's drug-testing policies up-to-date to manage risk. It's an ongoing effort, she notes. Currently the company drug tests on a pre-employment basis, post-incident and upon reasonable suspicion. She offers a few tips for other companies looking to implement a drug-testing program.

- Communicate upfront that you drug test. Yellowstone has signage and verbally informs applicants to deter drug users from applying, which keeps positive test results down.
- Consistency is key. For example, if a company says it has a "zero-tolerance" policy, and then doesn't fire an employee who tests positive, the company is at risk for a discrimination lawsuit. Any policy must be enforced consistently and fairly, she says.
- Consider oral swab tests to keep costs down. "It wasn't until we decided to go with oral swabs that it made sense to do pre-employment testing," she said. They cost about \$10 a test, compared with three or four times that for a clinical urine test. There are additional charges if an oral swab specimen is presumed positive, at which point it's sent to a lab for confirmation. —M.P.

**Communicating upfront that your company is a drug-free workplace is a good move.**



PHOTO: YELLOWSTONE LANDSCAPE

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*Continued from page 41*

you can do is wake up one morning and decide to start testing people,” says Reilly. “If you get a positive, you then have to ask yourself ‘What do I do now?’” On the other hand, if your testing program is part of a more encompassing workplace drug policy, you’ll already know what to do. “Maybe it’s termination, or maybe it’s giving the employee a second chance with counseling and treatment.”


Your drug policy should be part of a larger drug-free workplace program, which includes education on the

effects of drugs, supervisor training in spotting and responding to impaired employees and access to counseling resources such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). While many EAPs gear their services toward large corporations, you may be able to join a local consortium of smaller employers who utilize an EAP at a reduced rate. And the benefits can go beyond a reduction of drug abuse. “People might turn to alcohol or drugs to deal with depression

after the death of a loved one or after a marital breakup or other reasons,” says Fay. “Having a source to turn to for counseling is a much better alternative than drugs.”

Realize that when it comes to workplace drug policies, one size does not necessarily fit all. “Be mindful that a single policy about disclosure of medications and drug testing may not be suitable for all categories of workers,” says Smith. “Employees in safety-critical jobs, who drive vehicles, who interface with clients or go into customer homes, may be subject to one set of policies. People in accounting and sales may be subject to another less restrictive set.”

Put the above formula in place, and your employees will think positively about your treatment of this growing issue. “The public may think of a drug-free workplace program, with its drug testing, as punitive in nature,” says Fay. “But it is actually positive, with its emphasis on education, wellness programs and support for employees dealing with stresses in life.”

A well-designed drug-free workplace program can reduce the costly effects of employee impairment. “You can never completely stop drug abuse in the workplace,” says Fay. “But you can tamp it down and minimize its impact.” 

Perry is a freelance writer based in New York.

**“YOU CAN NEVER COMPLETELY STOP DRUG ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE. BUT YOU CAN TAMP IT DOWN AND MINIMIZE ITS IMPACT.”**



#### LANDSCAPE PERSPECTIVE

### John Reffel III

*President  
JLS Landscape  
Sedalia, Colo.*

**John Reffel III (lower right) says he does his best to keep up with employer drug-testing regulations.**

**“W**e don’t test that much. We’re a smaller company. Being in Colorado, that may change.

Our policy is if there is an injury or accident, you must immediately get tested. Luckily, we’ve only had to do that twice in the last 10 years. We don’t drug test when hiring. In our manual, it states that we reserve that right to drug test at any point.

The way we understand the law is we have the right to fire or discipline anybody who tests positive for marijuana because it’s still illegal under federal law. It’s been tested in the courts (*Coats v. DISH*). The employer prevailed. It was his right not to allow a worker on the job who was under the influence of marijuana.

For us, being contractors, if you put 12,000 pounds of truck, trailer and equipment on the road, you better make sure somebody isn’t drunk and/or stoned when they’re driving down the road.

We use the Mountain State Employers Council as a resource. Per their advice, marijuana is no different than alcohol. We wouldn’t allow someone to drink, take a truck out and drive across town. It’s the same with marijuana.” —As told to M.P.



# BUSINESS INSIDER

PRACTICAL  
ADVICE FOR  
RUNNING A  
PROFITABLE  
COMPANY

BUSINESS BASICS: PLANNING

LET'S GROW

CASE STUDY: OUR WAY

## DAY BY DAY

Jeffrey Scott shares his take on breaking down goals into achievable action plans.

➤ PAGE 46





**BUSINESS BASICS: PLANNING**

# Too hot to handle?



**BY PHIL HARWOOD**

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

**A** growing business produces many benefits, if it's managed properly. Growth often results in new positions, opportunities for advancement, a more stable management team, better technology utilization and more.

We can all agree that growth is generally a good thing. But how much growth is too much? What are the dangers of growing too quickly? What do we need to be on the lookout for as we grow? How will we know if our growth is too hot to handle? After all, what's the point of growing if it leads to failure?

We've all seen companies in our markets come out of nowhere, grow quickly and then disappear just as fast as they appeared. They couldn't overcome the challenges of growth.

## THE CHALLENGES OF GROWTH

The first challenge is being able to find qualified people. The labor shortage presents an even more difficult challenge. Growing companies need crew members, crew leaders, frontline managers, office staff, account managers, sales professionals and eventually top-level executives. Companies using a subcontracting model need additional qualified subs and increased capability to manage more subs.

My previous company was adding more than \$1 million in revenue a year during a labor shortage situation similar to today's. We invested in a bilingual human resources professional, year-round recruiting and myriad employee satisfaction and retention programs. Overcoming the people challenge requires significant investment and full dedication from everyone in the company.



Speaking of investments, the next challenge of growth is cash. Fast-growing companies burn through cash due to the many demands of growth. In order to serve new properties, we need more people, which means spending money on recruiting, onboarding, uniforms, training and more. We also need to add vehicles, expand parking areas, add facilities and so on. Then we need more equipment, tools and supplies. The list keeps growing.

My previous company had one administrative person working almost full time on purchasing, and we had a high-level CFO monitoring our cash flow daily. We also had excellent banking relationships and business partners to obtain working capital whenever needed.


A third challenge to growth is the stress it places on the factory. Your company is the factory. It uses labor, equipment, technical skill and systems to produce your product. As the factory heats up by speeding up the assembly line or adding more shifts, you place more stress on these systems. If the systems are not sufficient, they will fail. Most smaller companies have few systems in place, and growth creates problems because the systems can't support the stress.

The good news is that if systems are in place to support growth, growth makes life easier, not harder,

because the company's burdens are spread out over more people. In the best-run companies, there is almost a sense of it being too easy—that there is no burden at all. Contrast this reality with that of an owner-operator of a small company, working six days a week from the crack of dawn into the evening, rarely taking a day off and being frustrated by it all.

So how much growth is too much? It depends. As a rule, up to 10 percent revenue growth per year is considered to be the growth resulting from just doing a good job day in and day out. This is organic growth from referrals and increased wallet share with existing customers. For a large company, 10 percent feels pretty hot because adding 10 percent to a big number makes it even bigger.

At the other end of the spectrum, 10 percent growth for a small company is nothing. Smaller companies can easily sustain a 50-100 percent growth rate—or more—for several years if they're prepared for the challenges. A solid rolling budget and strategic plan are key for these companies. Companies growing more than 100 percent a year have compressed planning windows. They almost need a new strategic plan every quarter. It's doable but not without excellent management and probably some outside support.

For a midsized company, 10-20 percent is the range I see most often for steady, stable growth without getting too hot. Ten percent growth feels pretty comfortable, whereas 20 percent feels a little hot. Many times, midsized companies shoot for 20 percent growth but are happy with 15 percent or even 10 percent at the end of the day. 





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# Growth comes one day at a time



**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).

**J**ohn Joyce is a contractor with a heart of gold. He and his team have passion, integrity and a dream of dramatically growing their business. They work in a midsize market, and the potential to dominate is huge.

They have been enjoying consistent growth, but it came with no real plan, no true buy-in and too much stress. I helped John and his team put a success strategy in place. We focused on empowering the leadership team with clear responsibilities and accountabilities. We devised methods for greatly improving and growing profits, and we set the company on a path of diversification to balance out its revenue profile.

Having a success strategy is the start; the next step is having an easy-to-follow action plan. So we broke down the annual strategy into quarterly chunks, making it easy to follow.

That was a breakthrough, but it was not enough. The question arose: How do you ensure this plan gets followed every day out in the field, where the real money is made and lost? We needed a daily plan. To set that up, we took the annual budget and broke it down into weekly and then daily targets.

This is the silver bullet in business—breaking down your goals for every employee, so they know what they need to do each day to consider that day a win. Figuring that out is half the battle; the other half is staying accountable each day to these metrics.

## WHAT HINDERS ACCOUNTABILITY IN YOUR COMPANY?

When I met with Joyce and his team,

## FAST GROWTH HAPPENS



© 2018 Jeffrey Scott

we discussed what obstacles the division leaders would face in setting daily goals, measuring daily results and getting their crews to operate with daily systems and goals.

John's team never thought this way before. In the past, they focused on job costing and hitting budgeted hours. They never focused on truly maximizing production each day or on developing the right daily habits with their crews.

To achieve daily success, you have to be willing to follow the adage "one day at a time." This mantra pertains not only to one's personal life but also to one's professional and business goals.

For fast business growth, you first need professional growth. To underpin your business growth as we have described above, it greatly helps if you are also pursuing a professional growth strategy.

Professional growth happens when all team members take personal responsibility for how they show up at work each day and

what they personally accomplish. This takes daily planning and reflection. Some professionals do their planning and reflection in the evening, some do it in the morning and some do both. All successful people routinely reflect on what they're trying to achieve, what they are doing well and what they want to change and improve about themselves and their results.

For example, I have a morning routine that includes reviewing my successes of the previous day. This has two profound benefits: I start the day on a positive note with a strong sense of satisfaction, which trickles down to everyone I work with. Secondly, I document what I did the day before that worked well, so I can systemize and repeat it. By doing this review every morning, I am improving myself faster than the average person who is merely going through the motions.

What if you could get your entire leadership team to commit to a professional growth plan? Could you envision how it would help your entire company and all your staff to grow?

Making this switch to operating one day at a time will make all the difference to your business success. The "Fast Growth Happens" figure shows that you grow fastest when you are improving in all three corners of the top triangle and you are answering all three questions in the bottom triangle each day.

The successful journey of a thousand miles requires a sure and steady foot each day.

## Jeffrey's breakthrough idea:

Take time each day to be proactive in your planning and reflecting.



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**CASE STUDY: OUR WAY**

# A recorded approach

How one firm is training with videos.

BY CASEY PAYTON



One of the biggest training challenges is consistency. Based on who facilitates the training and even how busy things are, the experience at a landscape company can differ from trainee to trainee. To streamline messaging and make training more accessible, Perficut Cos., based in Des Moines, Iowa, launched Perficut University, a multifaceted approach that includes training videos.

The idea for the videos first came about in Perficut's snow division, says Cassie O'Brien, COO. The ISO 9001-certified company needed a way to ensure subcontractors—which they refer to as “service partners”—were educated in Accredited Snow Contractors Association and Perficut quality standards.

The solution to this challenge came in the form of 32 training videos on processes specific to best snow removal practices. For example, one video walks users through completing an incident report. Some videos may be only two minutes long, but O'Brien says they equip employees and service partners with the knowledge needed to succeed in the field and in the office.

The company says it has reduced its injury claims and payouts since implementing the videos and learning management system (LMS). Though the endeavor hasn't been cheap, Perficut has earned grants through the Des Moines Area Community College.

After each video, there is a short quiz that helps ensure the user understands the key takeaways, O'Brien says. Employees can go back and view videos as often as they like. The videos and other resources like maps, contacts, contracts and standard operating procedures are housed in a mobile app Perficut uses called Mission Control from Inside Out LMS.

Given the success in using these videos to fine-tune its snow business, O'Brien says the company began looking at other ways it could improve training. The team is currently in the process of developing similar processes and videos for the mowing division, O'Brien says.

To approach this initiative with “an educator's focus,” the company has relied on the skills of Julie Van Dike, the company's training professional, who has a background in education, including a master's degree, a teaching license for grades five through 12 and some classroom experience. That educator's focus includes using data and research to understand needs.

For example, the team analyzed quality service requests—a company tool for collecting information regarding client requests and complaints. It used prevalent issues (e.g., property damage, not following standard operating procedures and others) to inform which areas of training to focus on. It also looked at other data, such as site audits and

the shop equipment repair log, to identify further training needs.

While the snow videos were done professionally—costing approximately \$20,000—Van Dike says the company will produce future videos in-house, shooting and editing videos with smartphones. The training program will evolve over time, and the team will evaluate the results and improve as they learn, she says.

“When you spend money to have videos done professionally, there will also be an investment to have those videos maintained,” O'Brien says. “Documenting processes are critical. Keeping them updated is even more important. When you change your processes, you have to change your video and training materials. That's why we'll invest in doing them in-house.”

To ensure training is consistent across trainees, Perficut created training videos.

Payton is a freelance writer based in Philadelphia.

## BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

**COMPANY:** Perficut Cos.

**HEADQUARTERS:** Des Moines, Iowa

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:** 137

**REVENUE:** \$15.5 million

**CLIENT MIX:** 85% commercial, 10% residential, 5% government

**SERVICE MIX:** 75% maintenance, 25% design/build





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## INSECTICIDES

### TAURUS TRIO G

**COMPANY:** Quali-Pro

**URL:** [ControlSolutionsInc.com/Quali-Pro](http://ControlSolutionsInc.com/Quali-Pro)

Taurus Trio G, a triple-active-ingredient insecticide, delivers quick knockdown of fire ants, mole crickets, nuisance ants, fleas and ticks while providing long residual activity, Quali-Pro said. Available in 30-lb. bags, it's registered for use by licensed applicators for broadcast applications on turfgrass and landscaped areas including golf courses, residential, commercial, outdoor containerized nurseries, industrial areas, cemeteries, parks, campsites, schools, sports fields and sod farms. The granular insecticide also can be used for fire ant mound, perimeter and boundary treatments.



### ZYLAM LIQUID SYSTEMIC INSECTICIDE

**COMPANY:** PBI-Gordon

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

Zylam provides exceptional control of more than 100 listed insects, including aphids, bagworms, Japanese beetles, bagworms and scale, plus season-long control of Emerald Ash Borers. Labeled for use on residential and commercial sites, golf course landscape areas and school grounds, Zylam Liquid quickly translocates through the tree for fast control. When applied through bark banding or soil drench, Zylam can save labor and equipment costs while protecting the tree from insects and drill damage, according to PBI-Gordon.

### ACELEPRYN INSECTICIDE

**COMPANY:** Syngenta

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

One application of Acelepryn provides season-long control of white grubs, billbugs and surface feeders like turf caterpillars, according to Syngenta. Acelepryn also controls chinch bugs and fall armyworm and can be applied from April to mid-June to trees, shrubs and ornamentals to help control landscape pests like Japanese beetles, webworms, lace bugs and aphids. Its environmental profile has little to no impact on beneficial and nontargeted insects, including pollinators and earthworms, said the company.



### SAFARI 20 SG INSECTICIDE

**COMPANY:** Nufarm

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

Nufarm's Safari 20 SG is a "super-systemic" insecticide with quick uptake and knockdown and lasting residual, Nufarm said. It controls a broad spectrum of ornamental pests, including Hemlock woolly adelgids, leafminers, glassy-winged sharpshooters and armored and soft scales. Additionally, Safari delivers proven preventive and curative control against Emerald Ash Borers and contains the only active ingredient labeled for basal trunk spray on the Emerald Ash Borer.



### ALTUS INSECTICIDE

**COMPANY:** Bayer

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

Altus is an insecticide for landscape ornamentals that provides systemic, broad-spectrum control of sucking pests, including targeted control of whiteflies, aphids and other harmful insects. Applications can be made before, during or after plant bloom.

It's compatible with honey bees, bumble bees and many other beneficial arthropods. Flupyradifurone, the active ingredient in Altus, contains a butenolide chemical structure.





## CLEANUP EQUIPMENT



### BR 700 X BACKPACK BLOWER

**COMPANY:** Stihl

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

The BR 700 X Backpack Blower, one of the most powerful blowers in the Stihl range, can tackle tough cleanup jobs and large property maintenance, Stihl said. It comes with two lightweight, fixed-length tubes (44.3 in and 33.3 in) and features a more flexible pleated connecting hose, reducing fatigue and increasing the speed of cleanups by up to 20 percent, according to the company.

### SKID-STEER BRUSH CUTTERS

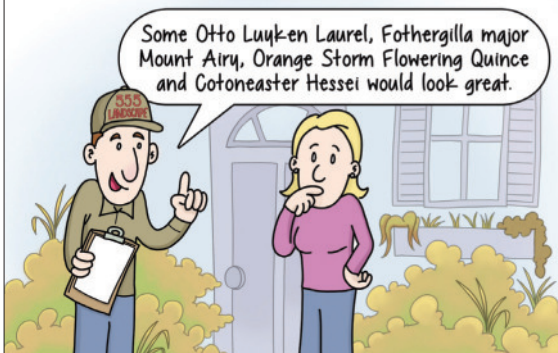
**COMPANY:** Solesbee's

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

The brush cutters, which can handle trees as thick as 5 in., come in 60- and 72-in.-wide mowing decks with reinforced 3/8-in. steel sides. The cutters' three bidirectional blades turn clockwise and counterclockwise, are made of 5/8-in. steel and fit in a double cloverleaf-shaped blade holder. The blades are sharp on both sides, allowing the operator to cut in both directions before needing to switch blades. A high-torque piston motor powers the attachment. The hydraulic system requires flows ranging from 17 to 30 gpm.



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## SPREADER-SPRAYERS



### STAND-ON SPREADER-SPRAYER

**COMPANY:** Exmark

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

Exmark's spreader-sprayer features lean-to-steer controls that give the operator one-handed control of steering and

forward/reverse speed, leaving the second hand free to manage spread or spray system controls or use the easy-access spray wand. Selectable narrow and wide spray nozzles increase versatility. Dual induction nozzles inside the 20-gal. tank deliver aggressive agitation to keep materials in suspension.



### S100-12011 RIDE-ON SPREADER

**COMPANY:** Spyker

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

Spyker's S100-12011 Ride-on Spreader includes large front and rear tires with turf-safe tread for easy handling and a smoother ride, even on rough or hilly terrain, Spyker said. The spreader provides a top speed of 5 mph, but a simple thumb switch can change the speed to 3 mph. It also includes marine-grade stainless steel cables, tie-down hooks for trailering and an extra-large single port rate gate for use of larger materials.



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### VENTURE SERIES

**COMPANY:** Ground Logic

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

The Venture Series features two models of zero-turn spreader-sprayers, the Venture 120 and the Venture 220 (pictured). The Venture 220, designed for larger residential and commercial properties, offers a 220-lb. spreading capacity, while the Venture 120 offers a 120-lb. spreading capacity. Both the 120 and 220 machines are built from 100 percent stainless steel, provide a 24-gal. spray capacity (dual tanks), feature a 14-hp Subaru engine and offer adjustable maximum ground speed.





## T3100 SPREADER-SPRAYER

**COMPANY:** Turfco

**URL:** Turfco.com

Turfco's T3100 is designed to minimize downtime and make operation easier for landscape contractors, said the company. Capable of fitting through a 36-in. gate and covering up to 132,000 sq. ft. per fill, the T3100 can treat residential and commercial properties, including sports fields. Operators can get up to speed quickly with the easy-to-operate steering wheel and hands-free speed control. A pivoting front axle and low center of gravity take the strain out of operating on uneven ground.

## TRIUMPH SPREADER-SPRAYER



**COMPANY:** PermaGreen

**URL:** PermaGreen.com

PermaGreen's Triumph spreader-sprayer features the patent-pending BreakThru Agitator System, which provides a clog-free, consistent flow of dry turf care products, including fertilizer, ice melt and seed. The machine features an extra-sloped 150-lb. hopper, a 12-gal. liquid capacity and a 5.5-hp Honda engine. The Triumph also provides a tighter turning radius and added traction from wheel weights, making it the most maneuverable PermaGreen made to date, according to the company.



## Z-MAX

**COMPANY:** Z-Spray

**URL:** Z-Spray.com

The largest and most productive of Z-Spray's spreader-sprayers, the Z-Max is large enough to handle large commercial properties, yet agile enough for residential properties, according to the company. It features a 320-lb. granular fertilizer capacity and a 60-gal. liquid capacity. Additionally, the Z-Spray chassis is made from 304 stainless steel.



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### AD INDEX

Andersons, The.....	33
Billy Goat.....	20
Bobcat Co.....	29
DIG Corp.....	2
Earthway Products.....	53
Ecolawn.....	54
Exmark.....	25
Go iLawn.....	22
Graham Spray Equipment.....	5
Greenius.....	47
Ground Logic.....	52
Honda Engines.....	11
Hunter Industries.....	31
Husqvarna.....	CV2
John Deere.....	8
Kawasaki Engines.....	26, 27
Koch Turf & Ornamental.....	23
Kohler Engines.....	CV4
Kubota Tractor.....	CV3
Little Beaver.....	16
LT Rich Products.....	21
NALP.....	30
Nufarm.....	32
PBI-Gordon Corp.....	39-41
PermaGreen Supreme.....	37
PRO Landscape by Drafix Software.....	51
Quali-Pro.....	19
Rain Bird.....	35
RISE.....	54
Syngenta.....	13
Turfco.....	3
Versa-Lok.....	45

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# BACKSTORY

INTERVIEW BY MARISA PALMIERI



## Chris Bright

**CEO**  
**SEABREEZE PROPERTY SERVICES**  
**PORTLAND, MAINE**



"I love scuba diving in the Florida Keys."



"I have four kids: 13, 11 and twin girls who will be 6 in May. We live 30 miles north of Boston, so I have an hour and 45 minute drive to work every day."

"I'm very lucky to have those (Army) experiences. I worked for some very strong leaders and learned if you legitimately care about your people, it goes such a long way."



**2014-2017**  
**RedCastle Partners**  
Managing director and partner  
Boston

**2017-present**  
**Seabreeze Property Services**  
CEO

"I use the (military's) 'commander's intent.' I tell the team, 'My intent is...' in a few sentences and say 'these are your right and left limits,' and then I check in."

### EDUCATION

Middlesex High School  
Middlesex, N.J.  
Class of 1994

U.S. Military Academy  
West Point, N.Y.  
B.S., Political Science  
Class of 1998

University of Missouri-St. Louis  
St. Louis  
Masters of Public Policy  
Class of 2004

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Mass.  
Masters of Business Administration  
Class of 2007

### WORK EXPERIENCE

**1994-2004 • 2005-2014**

U.S. Army  
Captain

**2003-2005**  
**Personal Growth Dynamics**  
Founder  
St. Louis

**2009-2012**  
**Calzoni**  
VP, North America  
Toms River, N.J.

**2012-2013**  
**Philips**  
Sr. director, government division  
Boston



"I've been in a couple bands here or there, and I went through three rounds on season one of The Voice."

"I learned how to sell to the government, make sense of the bureaucracy and create a path to success."

"This was my first step into senior corporate leadership, and I learned about how to have the right processes. A lot of the corporate structure and the way I think about things came from Philips."

**WORDS OF WISDOM**—"You have to stay laser-focused on your priorities, decide what your vision is and the three or four things that are going to get you there, and work at those despite the daily distractions." • "Think in terms of the customer—identify their 'what's in it for me?' Be the expert so they can focus on the other parts of their business." • "I tell my senior leaders all the time, you have to lead by example and live that example. You can't ask your guys to go out and work hard for you or (in the military) put themselves in harm's way if you're not willing to do that."





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#### Kubota Z700-2 Series



The Kubota Z700-2 Series terrain-hugging, zero-turn mowers provide all the horsepower you need to get the job done. This high-performing machine is Kubota's fastest zero-turn mower, handling speeds up to 11.2 miles per hour. The Z700-2 now features a standard factory-installed, adjustable, premium suspension seat and wide-stance rear tires for a comfortable ride all day.

**\$0 Down, 0% A.P.R. Financing for 60 Months\***

See your local Kubota dealer for details.  
Offer ends 6/30/2018.



\*\$0 down, 0% A.P.R. financing for up to 60 months on purchases of select new Kubota Z700-2 Series equipment from participating dealers' in-stock inventory is available to qualified purchasers through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A.; subject to credit approval. Some exceptions apply. Example: 60 monthly payments of \$16.67 per \$1,000 financed. Offer expires 6/30/18. See your Kubota dealer or go to [KubotaUSA.com](http://KubotaUSA.com) for more information. Optional equipment may be shown.

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



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## TALL GRASS WILL SOIL ITSELF.

There was a time when overgrown turf could parade around like a county fair pageant queen. Cocky, self-assured, untouchable. Then you came along. You got a ZTR loaded with a KOHLER® Command PRO® EFI 824-cc engine. And with best-in-class torque,\* there's nothing it loves more than decapitating tall, wet grass. Rest in peace, little green friends. Rest in peace.

**From engines to generators, we give the world power.**

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

**KOHLER®**  
IN POWER. SINCE 1920.