

LANDSCAPE MANAGER OF THE YEAR

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1988 Landscape Manager of the Year
Roy Peterman

Entry forms are now being accepted by the Professional Grounds Management Society and LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT magazine for their third annual "Landscape Manager of the Year" award.

The purpose of the award is to recognize superior job performance among landscape managers, to challenge those involved in the industry, to achieve higher standards of excellence and to bring national recognition to deserving managers.

Any person directly responsible for the professional maintenance of one or more landscapes is eligible to enter. Applicants will be judged according to job performance, honors and awards, procedures and philosophies, and contributions to the green industry. Applicants will be asked, at the time of entry, to submit four 5 x 7 black-and-white glossy photos and 10 color 35mm slides of current work areas with a short narrative on each.

(clip and mail)

Applicant's name

Title

Applicant's company

Official entry form should be sent to:

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Title

Company

Address

City/State

Zip Code

Mail to: PGMS, Landscape Manager of the Year, 1201 Galloway Ave., Suite 1E, Cockeysville, MD 21030, 301-667-1833

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C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	48,122	47,830
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1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	1,000	658
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
Signed: Joe Bilderbach, Vice President/Circulation

WEEDS from page 38

only to have some action taken by the customer (either before or after the application) negate its effect?

For instance, on Friday afternoon at 1 o'clock, you make a post-emergence herbicide application to a fescue lawn which had not received a pre-emergent in round one. The application was textbook, with 100 percent coverage, perfect timing and perfect weather for maximum results. By 1:15, you are leaving the customer's property congratulating yourself on a "Pride-of-the-Industry" application. At 1:30, the automatic irrigation system (which was supposed to be turned off) comes on, drenching the turf for the next two hours. Total saturation and run-off occurs 30 minutes into the cycle.

At 3:30, the high school student next door shows up on his father's new riding mower with the patented "Whirler-Sucker-Vacuum-Catcher" apparatus, and scalps the fescue down to 1½ inches. The whirling, dull blades, turning at different speeds, chop the turf into chunks while the apparatus strips the soil surface of all organic matter not tied down by a mature root system.

What is the customer most likely to complain about in the coming weeks? You guessed it: weed problems.

What is your response? Perhaps this is the time to implement your new, get-tough, tell-it-like-it-is policy.

Our responsibilities

You might politely tell the customer you know what happened to the lawn after your Friday afternoon "State-of-the-Art" professional post-emergent application. You might also tell the customer that your unconditional weed-free warranty has been voided, and a re-spray will be an additional charge.

The customer will most likely respond by saying, "We appreciate your straight talk, and we don't deny that watering and mowing shortly after your application may have had a negative effect on your weed control program. But look at the issue from our point of view. We did not know you planned to make an application on Friday. We did not know you actually made an application on Friday. And we had no idea what we should or should not have done before or after the application, had we known about it. When will you be here to re-spray?"

The customer was not deliberately working against his or her own best interest, or against your best efforts. The customer simply did not know.

You may rationalize or argue that the customer should have requested a pre-call, or the customer should have memorized the fine print in your annual Customer Instruction Booklet.

But—the sad truth is—it is your

responsibility to give the customer clear, timely, step-by-step instructions on turf management before and after herbicide application. In some cases, the information can be just as important as the application. The delivery of one without the other will reduce or perhaps negate the benefits we sell.

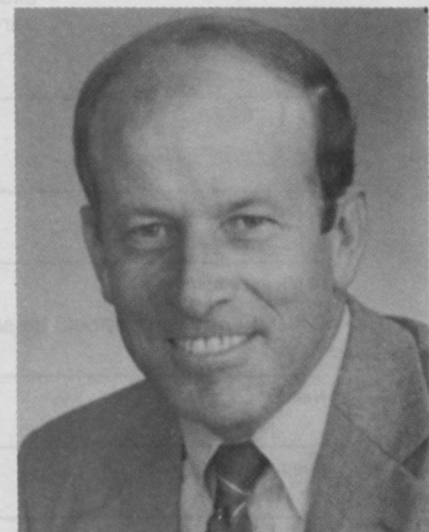
The widely-held belief that weed control is strictly a chemical problem unrealistically places the burden squarely on the chemical applicator's shoulders. A huge information gap exists between the realistic expectation for lawn care applicators and the customer's responsibility to be informed.

Is it possible we, the chemical applicators, are caught in our own web of "weed-free" marketing jargon and quick-fix chemicals? Do we believe that if our pre-emergent treatment is not effective, we will simply kill the weeds with the post-emergent?

The reality is that—if we don't apply the pre-emergent on schedule, in accordance with the label, getting complete coverage of the area, and if we do not follow correct cultural practices—we will have an uphill battle.

We apply substance to the turf, but the customer is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied based on what we put down. They are satisfied or dissatisfied based on the result. The service is almost completely intangible. We are promising a result, and customers do not know whether they are being well-served until they get or do not get what they were promised.

If we allow the existence of weeds to become the evidence of our non-performance, we have stepped into our own trap. **LM**



Phil Christian III of Alpharetta, Ga. is a consultant with All-Green Management Associates in Columbus, Ohio. He is a frequent speaker at turf conventions.

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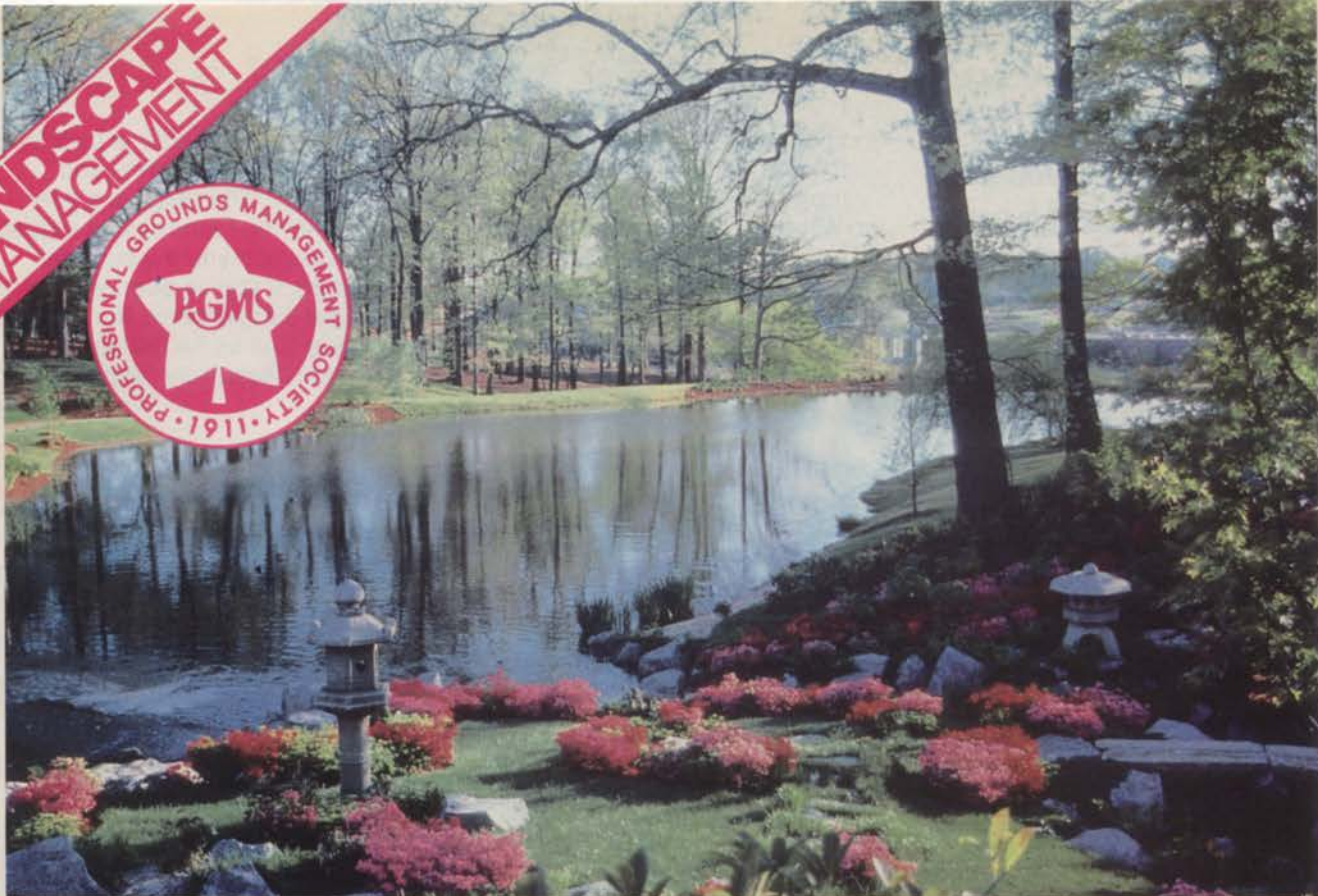
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Lee Martin's responsibilities include maintaining this view of the Japanese garden at the Carter Presidential Center.

LANDSCAPE MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Morris Lee Martin of Alfred L. Simpson & Co. believes education, higher pay scales and industry organizations can help solve Atlanta's workforce problems.

When we called to congratulate Lee Martin of Alfred L. Simpson & Co. for winning this year's Landscape Manager of the Year award, a light rain was falling in Atlanta. But rather than sit and watch the grass grow, Martin was entrenched in a weekly staff meeting. At these times, he and the company's other four division managers take care of business and solve the problems that get in the way of award-winning progress.

Martin is vice president of the company's Landscape Maintenance Division. As such, he is responsible for 182 acres of turf, 65 acres of shrubs and 10,000 square feet of bedding plants and floral displays. These include

such prestigious clients as the Carter Presidential Center and Library; the Business Center of the Northwoods; and One Atlantic Center, site of the IBM Tower.

Unparalleled growth

Martin joined Alfred L. Simpson & Co. 15 years ago. The company has since grown from 15 to more than 120 employees. In the last five years, according to operations manager James Brisky, Martin has taken his department's gross sales from \$560,000 to \$1.35 million. His goal is \$3 million.

"He has directed this steady growth," says Brisky, "while improving the department's quality and the percentage of its profits, as well as its

reputation in a highly competitive market.

"In addition to the technical care," Brisky notes, "Martin schedules all work, and meets with clients when necessary to insure high quality work and client satisfaction."

Brisky calls Martin a real innovator, and says one of his most important ideas has been in the delegation of day-to-day authority and responsibility to a highly-qualified management team.

"Lee started initiating this structural change around 1981," says Brisky, "and has modified it constantly over the years."

"The people on my staff deserve much of the credit," says Martin.

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Martin: "Work with people...to create situations where everybody wins."



One Atlantic Center is the site of lunchtime crowds and summer concerts, and therefore requires extra care and attention.

Brisky, Garry Agan, Boyd Russell and all of his 55-person staff "do a lot of things that go beyond the call of duty, and Mr. Simpson is more like a father to me than an employer."

Branch offices help

Martin has helped to direct company growth by adding and reorganizing resources to meet the department's changing needs while keeping work quality high.

"Over the past few years, we had problems in getting our manpower from one side of the city to another," explains Martin. "We elected to evaluate the expense of having two satellite offices. We then started to get in-house jobs like the Carter Center and Northwoods. Now, our area supervisors are a few minutes away from a job. The fast response time makes us more efficient, and there is less wear and tear on the



Martin believes the employee shortage can be intercepted with a three-pronged attack of horticulture education in high schools, higher pay scales and continued involvement of industry organizations.

trucks, less field costs."

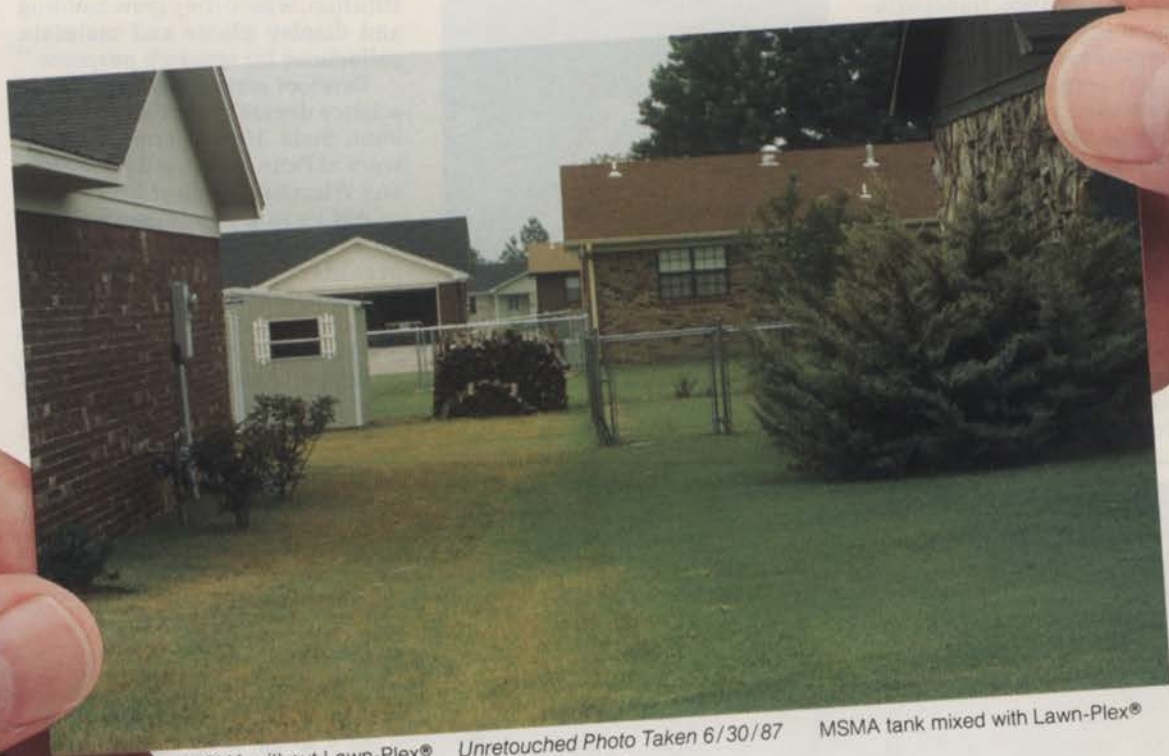
Martin believes the industry's employee shortage—which many predict as inevitable—can be intercepted with a three-pronged attack consisting of education in horticulture in area high schools, higher pay scales and continued involvement from industry organizations, such as ALCA and PGMS, two groups Martin believes have done much for the profession.

"A college education is valuable because of the way it molds a person's way of thinking," says Martin. "Trade schools help give people some technical training to build on as well.

"Experience, however, is the most critical part of a landscape manager's background. He needs experience with people: pleasing clients, encouraging employees to motivate themselves and to work together like a team." **LM**

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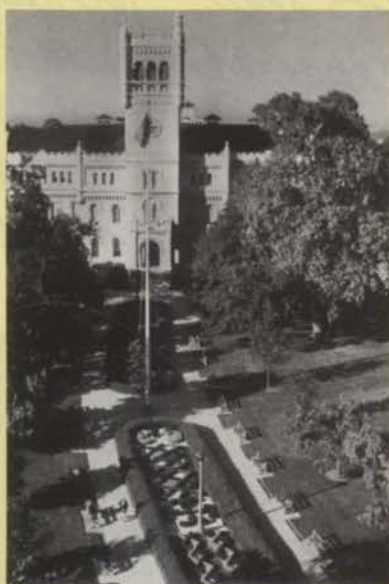
Joseph Paul Barefoot, our runner-up for Landscape Manager of the Year, is chief of grounds maintenance and landscaping for the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home in Washington, D.C. He is responsible for the maintenance of 320 acres, including a new nine-hole golf course.

He also directs both interior and exterior pest control, road and walkway maintenance, transportation around the grounds and vehicle and equipment maintenance.

The 260 acres of landscaped area are divided into two levels of maintenance: 150 acres intensely maintained, 110 nominally maintained.

Barefoot's annual budget is \$1.3 million, but periodic budget cut-backs are not uncommon.

For the past five years, Barefoot has conducted a continuing program of landscape improvements in the domiciliary and health care areas. Generally, \$25-30,000 is spent for landscape materials.



The Knot Garden at the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home.

"We've created many new perennial beds and replaced vast amounts of overgrown shrub-

bery," he says. His crews plant 30,000 perennials each year, and follow a replacement program of replanting three trees for each one that is removed.

"A five-acre plant nursery is maintained where we move damaged materials into for recovery purposes," says Barefoot. "The 50,000 square feet of greenhouses are leased to the Smithsonian Institution, where they grow bedding and display plants and maintain collections for research purposes."

Barefoot earned his bachelor of science degree in agriculture from Penn State. He has done master's work at Penn State, Delaware State and Wisconsin State at River Falls.

Active in grounds management for 25 years, Barefoot was national president of the Professional Grounds Management Society in 1972-73. He has also served as vice president and president of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents.

—Terry McIver □

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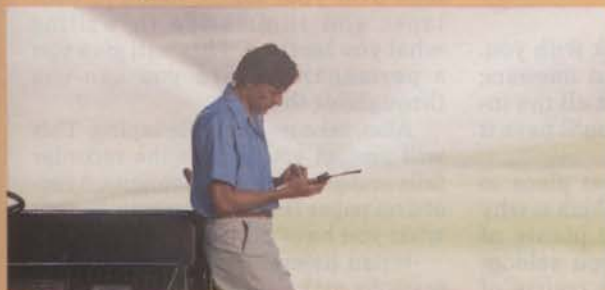
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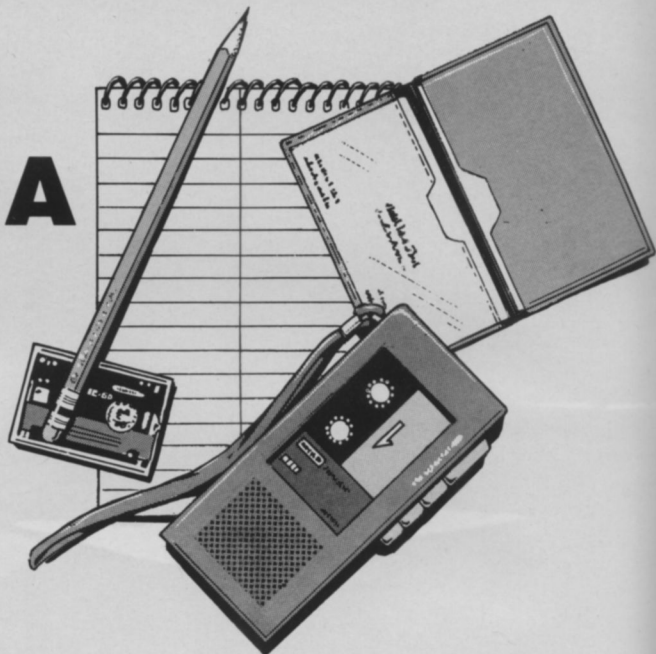
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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A TRADE SHOW



Trade shows have evolved from an excuse to party into essential business gatherings. By carefully planning your shows, you'll get more out of them.

by Rudd McGary, Ph.D.

The trade show season—October through March—is upon the green industry. And in order to get the most out of the trade show experience, it's important to remember to take steps before, during, and after each show.

The day is gone when a trade show was simply an excuse to socialize. With today's increased competition, government regulations and consumer "chemophobia," you need the information available at trade shows if you're to continue your personal growth in the industry.

Break down your show responsibilities into two parts: preparing for the trip and following through at the convention site.

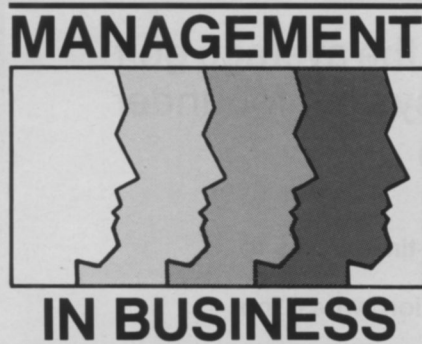
Preparation

Usually you'll receive the trade show program soon after mailing your registration fee. Take time to read the program thoroughly, or you'll end up wasting a great deal of time at the show. Send for a show brochure even if you plan to register on site.

The program lists names of the vendors and time and location of the educational programs and social activities. Look for educational topics and vendors that interest you. If you aren't sure what a topic entails, call the association offices for an explanation before committing your time and energy to attending.

Outline a plan that will allow you to conveniently visit all the vendors you wish to see. This is a great opportunity to gather information on their wares, particularly if they're showing

new products. It's a good idea to bring with you a list of questions for the vendor so your visit doesn't turn into simply a social meeting. (It's not bad to have social meetings, but if that's all you do at a show it's not a good way to use your time.)



Always have a notebook with you. Write down questions and answers; that way you're sure to get all the information you need and you'll have it for future reference.

Trade shows are a great place to make business contacts, which is why you should always carry plenty of business cards. Even if you seldom use business cards in the course of your daily business, they are very handy at a show—particularly a national show. If you want a vendor to send you additional information or want to make sure another attendee knows how to reach you, a business card is invaluable.

At the show

Get your show credentials as soon as you arrive. The programs and a listing of all the functions will usually be issued with your credentials.

Next, make out a schedule of the events you want to attend and/or vendors you want to see. Keep in mind that you're likely to make last minute changes and adjust your schedule accordingly.

Divide the show days between attending the educational sessions and visiting vendors on the trade show floor.

Your notebook will come in handy at the educational sessions. Most speakers don't mind if you record their speech on a cassette, but it's a good idea to ask first. A quick thought about tape recording: people often make tapes of sessions and then never listen to them again, particularly if there are multiple sessions in one day. When the show is over and you're back in your office, look over your notes, listen to your tapes and summarize in writing what you learned. This will give you a permanent record you can use throughout the year.

Also, take notes while taping. This will protect you in case the recorder fails and give you a permanent record on paper that you can supplement what you have on tape.

When listening to the educational sessions make sure you consider the information as it relates to your company. In some instances, specific information might not pertain to your company. But for the most part you should be able to use the information in some form or another. If you can't, you're wasting time by sitting in on the session.

Ask questions

If you don't understand what is being said or the presentation is unclear, ask questions. If there isn't enough time

Rudd McGary, Ph.D., is a senior consultant with All-Green Management Associates, Columbus, Ohio.