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**VIDEOS** *continued from page 22*

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International Society of Arboriculture  
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Savoy, IL 61874  
or National Arborist Association  
P.O. Box 1094  
Amherst, NH 03031  
(603) 673-3311

**"Turfgrass Renovation"**  
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(800) 321-5325

**"Using Pesticides Safely"**  
*6-video set, 68 minutes total time*  
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*no price specified*  
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## TRAINING *cont. from page 20*

ticular process;

- be technically correct and complete; and

- be free of any sales pitches.

### Setting up the training room:

- ▶ Flat-screen monitors like those manufactured by Sony are the best: they allow you to fan the seating wider—as much as 45 degrees—to the sides. However, if you must fan seating too far laterally using one monitor, two monitors placed in the corners of the room, at opposite inward angles, are better than one.

- ▶ Monitors should be placed slightly higher than eye level to offer all viewers good sightlines.

- ▶ If you have a large training room, you might want to wire additional speakers near the back of the room.

- ▶ Avoid glare. Use lights that can be

dimmed, if possible. The best lighting is low, but not so dark that trainees cannot take notes.

- ▶ Check noise levels. Make sure heating, air conditioning, ringing telephones, and/or outside construction do not interfere with video viewing.

- ▶ Be especially careful with chairs, as your employees are not people who normally sit for long periods of time. Chairs should be comfortable, but not too comfortable. Contoured wood, plastic or fabric with schoolroom-type desks attached are best; cushioned seats should be avoided.

- ▶ Test your equipment. Then cue the video before showing it. You'll save valuable time—and, sometimes, embarrassment—by not having to fast-forward or rewind in front of the trainees.

### Showing the training videos:

- 1) Before the video begins, write its

main points on a board or provide summary notes to each trainee. Go over the points.

- 2) Encourage note-taking. The best teaching method is see/write/say/do.

- 3) Stay in the room as a proctor during the video, if possible. Actively supervise; you'll be sending a message that the information is important enough for you to watch (again).

- 4) Trainees should not view videos for longer than 20 minutes without a break of some kind. Sometimes, it's not a bad idea to pause the video every 10 to 12 minutes and lead a short discussion. It keeps viewers involved and interested. During the discussions, personal experiences help the viewers relate to each other. This is also a good time to reiterate key points.

- 5) Afterward, give the trainees a written exam.

—Jerry Roche

## How to select an accountant

by Dan Sautner,  
Padgett Business Services

- If you're in business for yourself, at the very least you'll need an accountant to help prepare your tax return, unless taxation is a major hobby of yours.

Use an accountant to prepare monthly, quarterly and annual reporting. Not following the government's strict regulations, can mean heavy fines, so it's best left to people who work with it every day.

The government has devised a tax system that places a large burden on the independent business owner. With few exceptions, the reports required of a five-person operation are similar to those required of much larger organizations.

Besides complying with government demands, a good accountant should also help with other financial considerations. This leads us to the major criteria for selecting an accountant:

### (1) Will you and your accountant understand each other?

The lines of communication must be clear, and the accountant must take time to review the financial information provided. A good accountant drops the jargon and speaks conversationally.

Select someone who appears interested in your business and someone with whom you feel you can develop a rapport.

Make sure you know your contact per-

son. Also: how will the communication work? On what schedule and under what circumstances will your calls be returned? Your new accountant cannot be available 24 hours a day, but it is reasonable to expect a return call within 24 hours.

### (2) Can you get good turnaround?

To be useful, accounting information must be on time. Find an accountant who can set a delivery schedule that gets you the information near the end of the period. If it's a monthly P&L, you need the information within 10 days. If it's quarterly information, it can still be useful within 20 days of the quarter's end. If it's annual work, the information should be available within 45 to 60 days.

To truly run your business properly, get accounting information every 30 days. A good accountant tells you what information to supply, when—and then will stick to the schedule.

### (3) Where do you fit in the accountant's scheme of things?

Your business will have to be important to the accountant. In the business, the largest clients are served first, because they generate the largest fees. Find out where your organization will fit into this scheme. If you are the smallest client your accountant is handling, can you really expect timely service? Look for a company that has selected your size of company as its target client.

### (4) What is the accountant's education/experience level?

Look beyond education and experience, to experience in your field, in your industry, or in businesses of your size.

Good accountants are able to answer technical questions. Since no one practicing taxation can ever claim to know everything, your accountant should have the ability and resources to ask others for a second opinion.

### (5) What services will be provided?

You should know exactly what will be provided, and how often. Be skeptical of the following offers:

- (a) A person who says he or she will do everything. (No one can.) Worse, "everything" can be defined by the accountant.

- (b) The accountant who wants to build your tax return into the price. This may mean that your return will be competing with "cash" returns when it is due.

- (c) An accountant who says he or she will do the tax return for free. (In your own business, how much importance do you place on "free" work?)

### (6) What is the basis for fees?

Fees should be based on a combination of the volume and the condition of the accounting information. Also, you should not have to pay for extras that have not been discussed beforehand. You have the right to approve any fee increase before the work is done.

Fees should be affordable. For smaller companies, it depends on your location and volume of work. Shop for value. When comparing two different fees, make sure that you also compare the level of service.

—The author is chairman of Padgett Business Services, Inc., of Athens, Ga. This is the second in a series of basic accounting articles he is writing for *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*.

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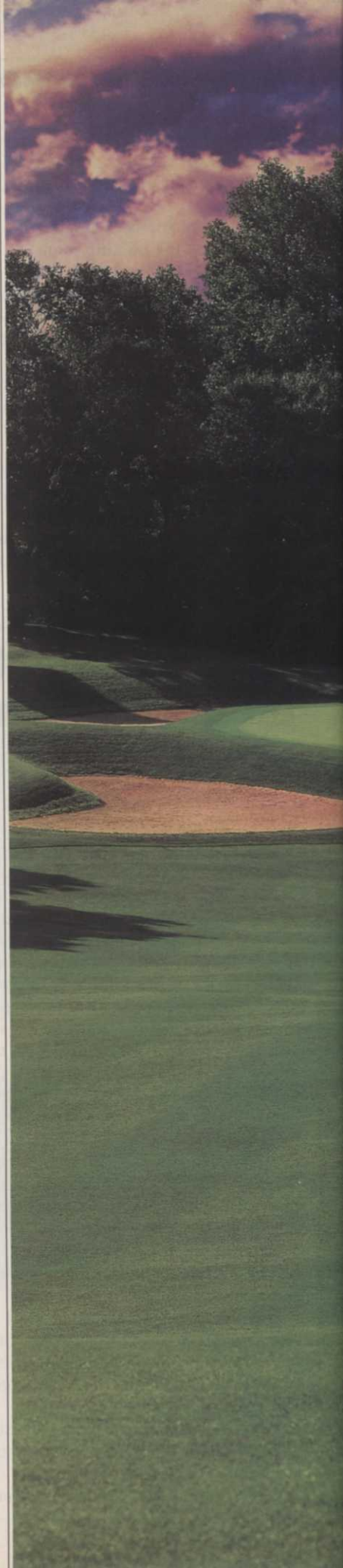
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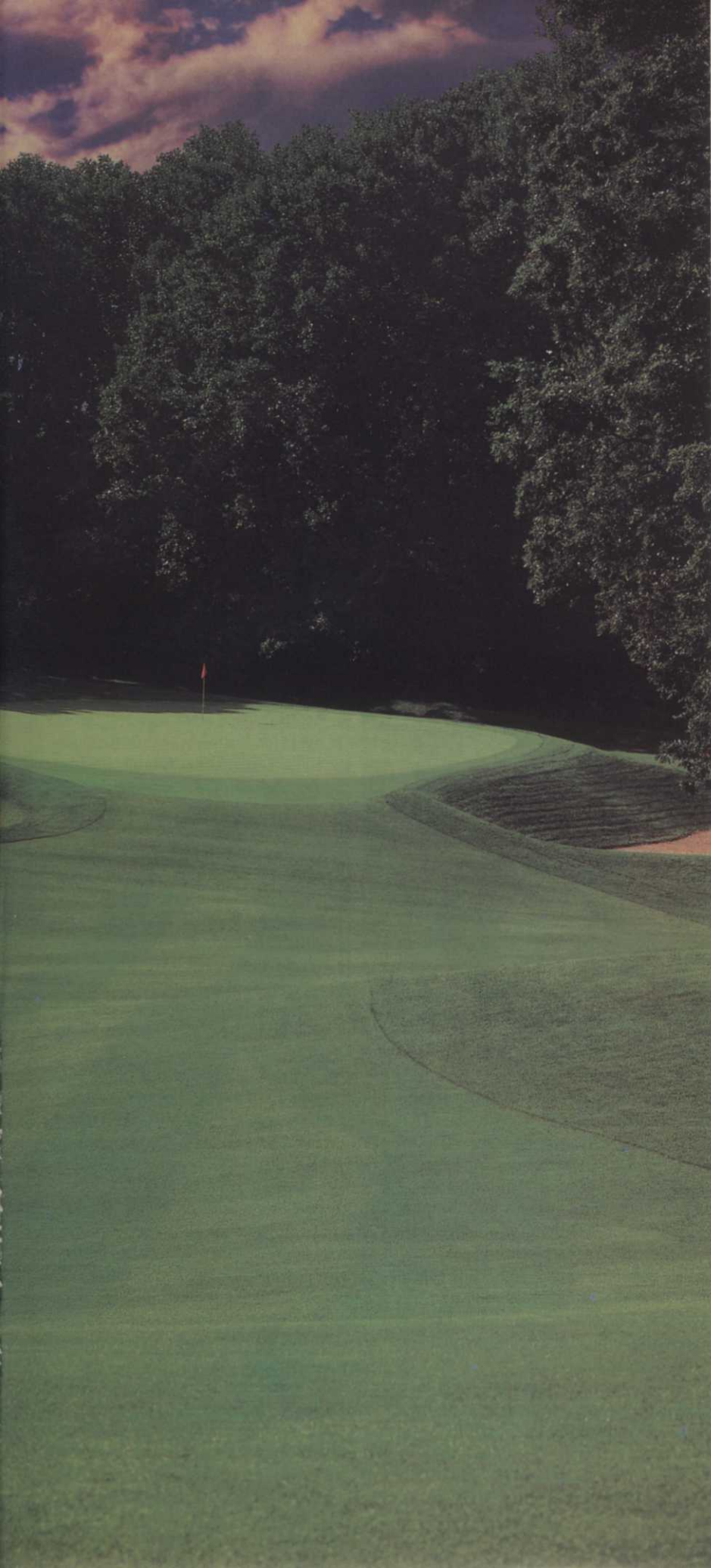
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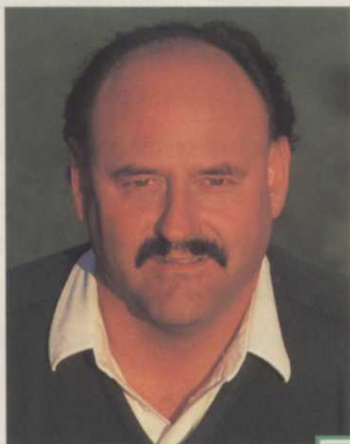
# Plant growth regulation of mowing time

■ Plant growth regulators (PGRs) aren't just for turfgrass growth control any longer. The newest generation of products has become a tool to help keep turf healthier, denser and greener. They can help turf managers deliver the high aesthetic quality demanded by today's homeowners, golfers, park patrons and other sports participants.

"Primo made the fairways appear highly groomed. In fact, after the first couple of applications, the turf seemed denser. And the *Poa annua* stood straight up, which made it very easy to cut off."

**Healthier turf**— Another benefit of PGRs is healthier turf. Roger Sudbury of

Ken Wentland of Lied's Landscaping used PGRs last year to slow growth for up to six weeks on the lawns of commercial accounts.



With labels for all major warm- and cool-season turf, PGRs are used for growth management, trimming and edging.



Yakubisin: the *Poa annua* stood straight up

For Ken Wentland, ornamental pest specialist at Lied's Landscape in Sussex, Wis., PGRs help his crews keep turf growth under control, even during peak growing periods. Wentland used PGRs during the Midwest's unusually wet 1993 spring and summer, when Lied's mowing schedule was squeezed between rain and rapid turf growth.

"Some of our commercial accounts are mowed on alternate weeks—just enough to keep them looking respectable," says Wentland. "Last year, our wet spring caused tremendous growth, which slowed mowing considerably."

To help his crews keep up, Wentland applied Primo, one of the newest PGRs on the market, to a bluegrass/fescue/ryegrass turf mix. "The PGR helped tremendously, for about six weeks," Wentland explains, "and when we did mow there were fewer clippings. That saved us a lot of time."

**How they work**— Although they share a common goal of controlling turf growth, the two types of PGRs work in different manners.

Type I or mitotic toxicants are cell initiation inhibitors and suppressors such as Embark and Limit. They inhibit plant growth by suppressing cell division.

Type II are gibberellic acid (GA) inhibitors that reduce GA biosynthesis, which results in shortened stems and leaf blades. Primo, Cutless and Scott's TGR are members of this group.

The way PGRs enter turf plants also varies. Some, like Primo, are foliar absorbed

Sudbury: healthier, stronger turf with good color



directly into the leaf upon application and do not require watering in. Others may require irrigation or rain to activate absorption through the root system.

**Improving appearance**— The PGRs on today's market claim varying rates of growth reduction and control, with some as high as 50 percent growth and clipping reduction. But Wentland also appreciates the turf enhancements provided by PGRs.

"We noticed a darker green turf color," he says. "And clippings reduction also was important. Our workers were much happier because they could mow quicker and didn't have to bag clippings."

Clipping reduction was the reason John Yakubisin, the superintendent at Rolling Rock Club in Ligonier, Pa., used PGRs on his fairways last year. "I wanted the most playable golf surface possible without any debris or mess from clippings," he says.

Winter Haven, Fla., notes stronger, healthier turf after using them. He oversees Willowbrook Golf Course and Chain of Lakes Complex, a baseball stadium and five practice fields, spring training home for the Cleveland Indians.

"The PGR allows us to keep up with turf growth during some monsoon-type rains last spring," says Sudbury. "With all that growth, we would have had to double- and triple-mow and could have had scalping. We didn't have any of those problems. What we did have was healthier, stronger turf with good color."

**A short history**— When PGRs were introduced in the 1950s, they were primarily used on low-maintenance areas due to their inconsistent performance. As new products were developed, PGRs became more widely accepted in most turf locations.

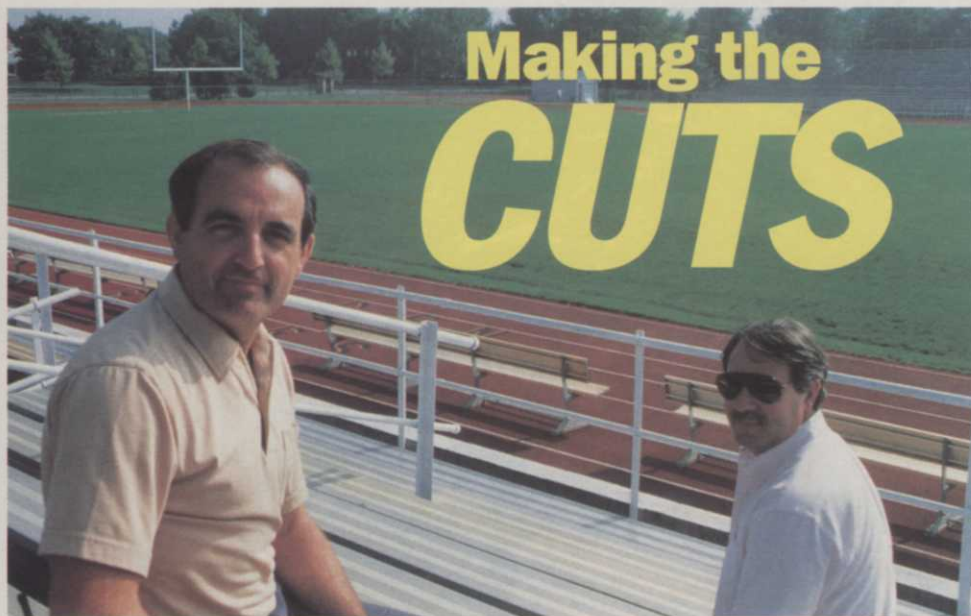
Depending on individual product labels, PGRs are available for all major warm- and cool-season turf. The products can be used for turf growth management on residential and commercial sites as well as for trimming and edging. They can control turf growth throughout golf courses and on other sports fields.

"They saved us a tremendous amount of time," says Sudbury.

Since time equates to money, PGRs save money through the hours they save and other benefits. They are an interesting, effective alternative for astute turf managers.



# Making the CUTS



**Why are Bob Meyer (left) and Joe Herchko smiling? Because, despite cuts, the Upper Arlington football field is often host to an Ohio high school playoff game in November.**

**In this upscale central Ohio school system, public support and versatile crews help stretch shrinking dollars.**

■ Bob Meyer no sooner took over the grounds department for Upper Arlington City Schools than the Board of Education ordered cuts. His newness (six months on the job, after transferring from the plant ops department) didn't help at all.

The grounds department was ordered to drastically reduce its workforce and budget last year, Meyer notes. "And it's something we struggled with, especially with a new person. Obviously, some things are going to suffer."

The most obvious result of the budget cuts is Meyer's schedule. He has been known to be "on the phone, on the radio and in a meeting" all at once, according to his secretary.

Another key to keeping seven athletic fields (four football, two soccer, one baseball) attractive and safe is parent and student involvement, Meyer notes. "It would be near impossible to sustain our maintenance program with half the people and 60 percent of the money that we used to have," he says. "We have parent-teacher groups and boosters who are very concerned. For instance, we didn't have enough money for all the weed treatments on the baseball field, so the parents purchased some material to kill the clover for us. There's a lot of pride in athletics here."

**Field maintenance**—The person Meyer succeeded, Joe Herchko, developed

an intensive maintenance program over eight years. Thankfully, Herchko remains in school management.

Usually, when the community sees field maintenance falling off a little, "its reaction will be overwhelming," Herchko believes. "They will take action on their own. That's not a good situation, but it happens. They'll let us know we're not getting the job done."

Another way Meyer has addressed the cutbacks is through crew scheduling. "We've gone to fully mobilized crews," he says. "Nobody is stationary, and they do everything. The difficult thing is scheduling where they'll be, especially accommodating the athletic events and special events like the Fourth of July celebration."

While he was in charge, Herchko defined three levels of field maintenance:

- 1) High—fully irrigated and year-round fertilization and weed control
- 2) Secondary—"do as much as we can"
- 3) Safety only

"The levels change according to the season and according to the bigger picture: school priorities and manpower," Herchko notes. "At the minimum, we mowed each site once a week. We did that for four years, when we also set time apart for working on the fields' other priorities."

At one time, the highest level fields received annual overseeding, topdressing and sub-soil conditioning; aerification four times a year; a full year-round fertilization program; and full irrigation with a Rainbird Maxi-Com system. The lowest level fields were mowed and lined prior to gametime, free of obstructions and pot-

holes, and smooth. "We've tried to irrigate even at the lowest level," Herchko says. "We irrigated 80 percent of everything the kids play on."

**Landscape maintenance**—The school grounds are another story. All areas are mowed, bushes and shrubs trimmed, and sidewalks blown clear each week. "We may not be able to mow it all once a week like we used to," Meyer observes, "but we'll do the areas people see."

The entire grounds is also given a weekly visual inspection by Meyer and head groundskeeper Roger Geers. "Ornamentals are done by a parent-teachers grounds committee at each school. And a lot of the elementary schools have student maintenance programs," Meyer relates.

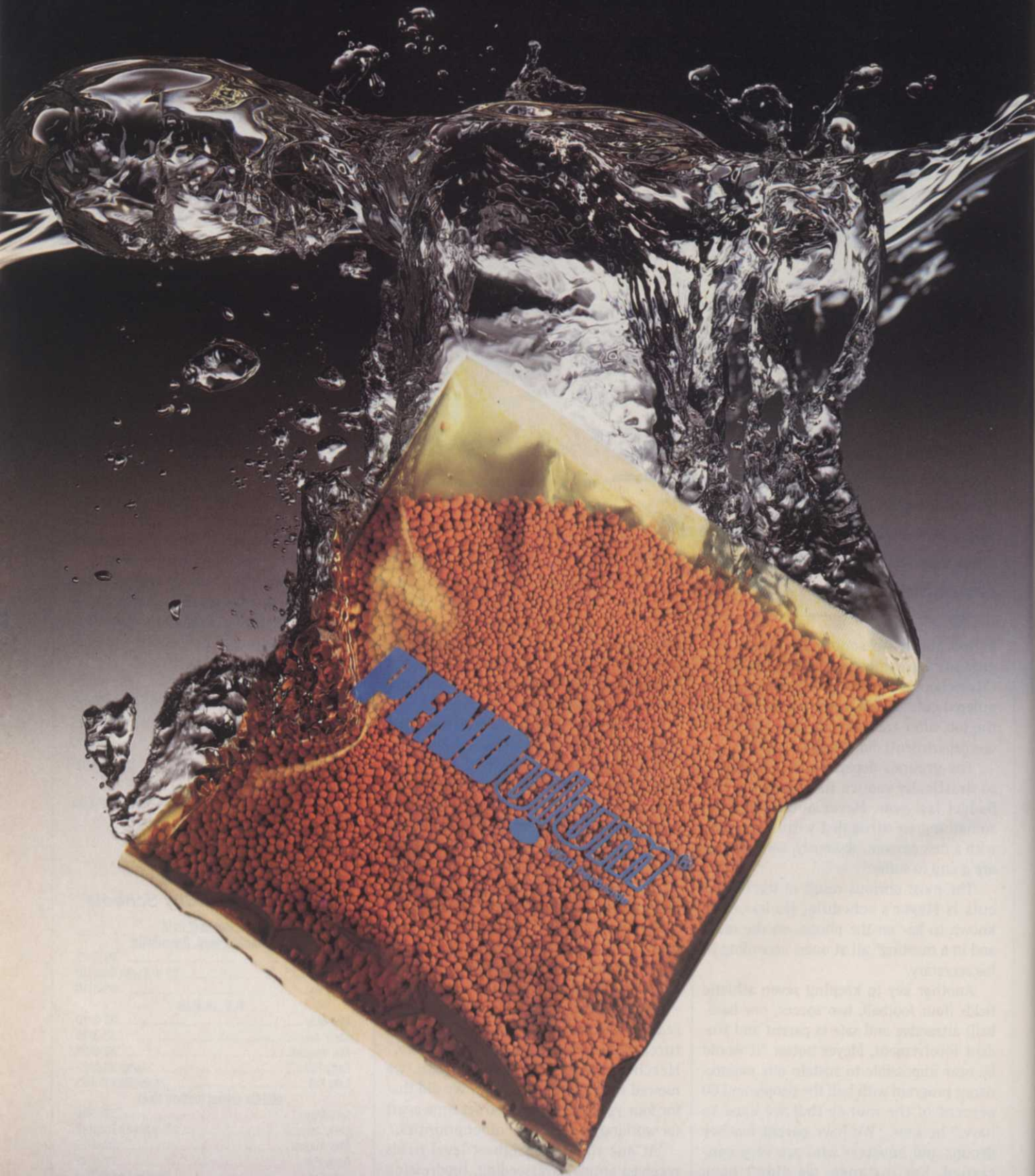
Geers himself has also accepted added responsibility. "Lately, I've had to also handle the playground equipment, basketball hoop repair and replacement, picnic table and trash can maintenance."

This is all new to Meyer. "I've worked in maintenance and management for many years, but this grounds thing at times is very intense and very busy," he says. "Everybody has an opinion because it's so visible."

—Jerry Roche

## Fertilization schedule Upper Arlington City Schools

H.S. baseball field	
H.S. softball field, if available	
Mid-May	22-0-22
Early July	32-4-3 with Dicot III
Early Fall	32-3-10
H.S. stadium	
Mid-May	32-3-10
Early July	32-3-10
Mid-August	22-0-22
Early Fall	Starter 22-0-22
Late Fall	Starter Sports Turf
Middle school football field	
Mid-May	32-3-10
Early July	32-4-3 with Dicot III
Mid-August	22-0-22
Early Fall	22-0-22
Late Fall	Starter Sports Turf
Jr. high football field	
Mid-May	32-4-3 with Dicot III
Tremont soccer field	
Mid-May	32-4-3 with Dicot III
High-view areas	
Mid-May	32-4-3 with Dicot III



**PENNWOODS**  
Pet Care

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