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GEORGIAN HOME IN LYCOMING, CO.

PHOTO COURTESY TERRY WILD STUDIO

THE VOICE OF THE GREEN INDUSTRY

# LANDSCAPE management

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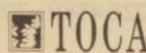
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Circle 116

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**T**he entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in the Green Industry. Landscapers continue to move forward at full speed. Some have more work than they can handle without outsourcing. Business is good, thanks to a robust economy. Quality and training standards are still too diverse, and only 10 percent of our State of the Industry survey respondents belong to an association. (Our report begins on page 19.)

Commercial work is booming, says Eric Christiaansen of Sylvan Nursery, Billings, MT. "I thought we'd see an end to this but it hasn't died down yet," he says.

"The amount of work I turn down is staggering," says Russell Schmidt of Hillsboro, MO.

"My concern is with people who take work they can't do, don't show up or otherwise make the industry look bad, which creates ill will. What also needs work is involvement in trade organizations. We all should get involved and leave our petty differences behind. It aggravates me when I see people who aren't

sharing information."

Can a company be too diverse? The pressure of the marketplace pushes companies into more services than they can maintain at a quality level, contractors tell us. When a contractor doesn't know how to calculate total costs, he loses money. Work is not fetching the right price, according to some. Consultant Frank Ross will tell you that the industry has never known how to make a profit, just get the job done. If they take work just to get work, they lose even more.

"General contractors get what they pay for," says Stephen Woods, Stonehenge Landscaping Co., Newington, CT. "Saving \$5,000 on the price may cost the client or contractor \$10,000 in the long run. We just stop bidding on the work if

the contractor has that attitude."

The golf industry seeks to raise the business acumen of the modern superintendent. To be a "professional" superintendent today means you can handle all the business aspects of turf management, from buying to budgeting to payroll, to recruitment to public relations.

This is a lofty goal, but let's not discount those superintendents whose first and best strength is in turf. Some of our best "self-made superintendents" have never balanced a budget, but have successfully maintained some of the world's finest golf courses.

The new era superintendent, "is the CEO of a multi-million dollar operation who is responsible for budgets, personnel, scheduling, purchasing and productivity, in addition to the final product," says Paul Latshaw, Jr., at Merion Golf Club, Merion, PA.

A question to ask, however is, How much of this emphasis on "superintendent as businessman" has more to do with image and public relations ("Our superintendent would never misuse pesticides, he's an MBA!") and not wanting to pay an accountant to handle the books? Is the golf industry downsizing, and we just don't recognize it amid all the talk about the "growth of golf"?

In the parks/grounds segment of the industry, the majority of the managers we spoke with say their corner of the industry is experiencing exciting growth and quality improvement thanks to training, technology, emphasis on quality and smart management. This industry segment is strong, in spite of pockets of downsizing. Yesterday's image of the custodial groundskeeper has experienced a metamorphosis, attracting many new and skilled people, writes author Robert Reaves. Those who begin without experience and training are sure to receive it, as it seems training programs have gotten better.

"We are looking at the PGMS Groundskeeper Certification Program," says Tom Dew of Texas A&M. "We also take several benchmarking trips each year. Benchmarking allows us to measure ourselves against others in order that we can improve our quality." **LM**

What's your opinion? Address comments to: [tmciver@advanstar.com](mailto:tmciver@advanstar.com) or 800-225-4569 x709.

## Green Industry focus goes beyond volume of work done



*Terry McIver*

**TERRY McIVER**  
Editor-in-Chief

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Circle No. 126 on Reader Inquiry Card

## Eastern Pine Shoot Moth is a Problem

*We are finding an increase in pine shoot borers. This appears to be a major problem where people have planted monocultures of white pine or Scotch pine. This is seen quite often in commercial grounds. The terminals of pines turn brown and bend down like an inverted 'U'. We think it is a problem with eastern pine shoot borer. What can be done for control?*

—PENNSYLVANIA

Eastern white pine and Scotch pine are favorite trees for eastern pine shoot borer, *Eucosma gloriola*. However, other pines, as well as, occasionally, Douglas fir and other conifers, can also be attacked by this insect.

Adults of this pest, a small moth (14-16 mm), are rarely seen. Their larvae produce characteristic straight tunnels, with frass tightly packed at either end. Also look for oval or oblong exit holes near the tunnel base. This area will be discolored and reddish-brown.

Understanding their biology will help manage them. The borer overwinters as pupa in duff under the host tree. Adults emerge about this time when new candles grow (around late-April or early-May in your area). Adults lay yellow, flat eggs, either one at a time or in groups, for two to four weeks on the new twigs or needle sheaths. After 10 to 15 days, the eggs hatch and the larvae enter the shoot behind needles, boring directly into the pith.

For the next 1½ - 2 months, the larvae make straight tunnels and move downward. They later move upward, packing the frass tightly on both ends of the tunnel. Most feeding activities are completed by late-June and girdle the shoot internally at the base. Damaged shoots may show a typical shepherd's crook (inverted 'U'). The larvae make tiny oblong or oval exit holes, drop to the ground and spin silken cocoons in the duff.

Within two days they pupate and remain dormant until the following spring. This pest has one generation per year.

Early detection of infested terminals is helpful for management, although this can be difficult. Look for slightly yellowed shoots with stunted or retarded needle growth. In some situations, wilting of terminals may be evident. Selective pruning of affected terminals will help manage this pest. Pruning should be done early in the season to avoid pest population build-up. Apply pesticide treatments, Orthene or Talstar, when eggs hatch and larvae are entering the shoots and in mid-summer when larvae are exiting to pupate. *B.t.* can also be used at the time the eggs are hatching.

Read and follow label specifications for best results.

## An Unpleasant Mess

*On the mulch bed once in a while we find some mold-like growth. Its appearance is ugly and resembles like some animal excrement or vomit. What is it? What causes this? Is it harmful to the tree*

*or shrubs growing nearby. Most of these appear as whitish yellow to start and later change to a black, unsightly crust like mess. Some of these range from 6"- 18" in diameter. Is there anything we can do to get rid of this?*

—MICHIGAN

From your description of the mold like growth on mulch, the problem appears to be caused by a slime mold. Their sudden appearance in ornamental beds or other areas cause concern to people. It is not a disease and generally is not harmful to nearby plants. It is primarily an aesthetic problem. It belongs to the class Myxomycetes, a group between bacteria and fungi. They have two developmental stages. The first stage is the slimy, often colorful, plasmodial, mobile stage. Under cool, moist condition it grows rapidly.

The second stage of their life cycle resembles more closely a fungus by producing fruiting bodies. In this stage they produce lots of spores for dispersal. The crust-like ugly 'mess' that you have described is their fruiting body. When disturbed these fruiting structures release spores which will be dispersed into the air.

Generally, there is no need to manage saprophytic slime mold growth. However, for aesthetic reasons the slime molds can be removed by raking, brushing or scooping with a shovel and then washing the affected area with a jet of water. **LM**



**BALAKRISHNA RAO**  
 Manager of Research and  
 Technical Development  
 for the Davey Tree Co.  
 Kent, Ohio

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**W**hatever the weather that occurs each year, there are insects, mites and diseases which are active under these specific conditions. Effective treatment requires accurate identification. But sometimes, the problem may be new, the symptoms may not appear typical or appear at the usual time of the year, or a combination of problems may exist which further complicate identification.

In many cases, taking a sample and sending it to a diagnostic laboratory is appropriate. The reasons for and the costs of the test can be explained to the client. In some cases, the lab will be able to make a visual identification, especially if they have been seeing a lot of that problem. However, the lab may need to carry out tests to identify a specific disease.

Sending a good sample is important for identifying a pest or disease. In some cases, a specific part of the plant is required. In other cases the actual pest or sign of the disease are necessary.

Proper packaging is necessary so that your sample gets to the lab in identifiable condition. Crushed, dried, mushy or just plain unidentifiable samples are useless, and so are dead plants.

Most labs have a form to send with any sample. Information includes: location and species, plants affected (one species or many), amount of plant affected, symptoms, plant parts affected, and date noted. Shipping should be swift and should not allow samples to sit over a weekend upon delivery. If a shipping delay must occur keep plant samples refrigerated

The basic points are:

**Woody plants:**

- ▶ roots and soil or leaves and soil for systemic or nutrient problems (check with the specific lab);
- ▶ send entire plant when possible;

- ▶ for cankers, dieback, swellings etc. be sure to cut to include any possible transition areas into unaffected areas;

- ▶ do not send wet samples or add water, including wet paper towels;

**Herbaceous plants:**

- ▶ send complete plants with roots intact (and for some labs, soil);

**Mushrooms and conks:**

- ▶ do not use plastic bags or jars; place in paper bag or wrap in newspaper

**Turf:**

- ▶ a sample with both healthy and diseased turf and the disease margin between the two;

- ▶ sample size may vary by lab, but should include the soil layer

- ▶ wrap in newspaper or aluminum foil to keep intact;

**Insects:**

- ▶ check with the lab for the legalities of shipping live samples

- ▶ most insects - in alcohol - not ethyl acetate, water or formaldehyde

- ▶ butterflies and moths - dry and uncrushed (tissue paper in a box)

- ▶ grubs - alive in some soil;

- ▶ caterpillars - alive on a portion of the host plant;

- ▶ mites, scales aphids, thrips - alive on affected foliage/stems

- ▶ include sample of affected plant material and multiple pests

**Final hints:**

- ▶ have the correct phone number and address as well as the name of any appropriate lab staff;

- ▶ find out how the lab wants samples sent, the type of packaging and their fees and the forms to include;

- ▶ keep this information where you can find it; a couple of places in your filing system might help (a file under "Insects" and/or "Diseases" or under "Lab Tests" or even in your file on suppliers).

- ▶ keep copies of the info you send so you remember what you sent and why. **LM**

Agree/Disagree? Comments/Questions? Column Suggestions? Let Nancy Stairs know at 440/891-2623. Fax: 440/891-2675. E-Mail: [nstairs@advanstar.com](mailto:nstairs@advanstar.com).

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*Nancy Stairs*

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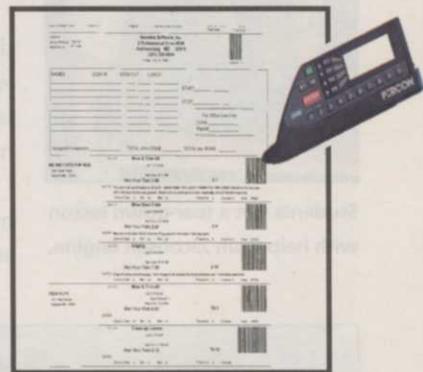
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# Daytona school steers mechanics in right direction

**DAYTONA, FL**—Tresca Industries, distributors of professional turf maintenance equipment in Florida, reports record attendance at its fourth annual Professional Service Seminar, at the Daytona International Speedway.

The two-and-a-half day event was held on April 27-29, with 120 in attendance from Georgia to Jamaica.

In attendance were reps from golf courses, sports sta-



Attendees at the Tresca maintenance school gathered in the winners circle at Daytona Speedway.



Students got a tear-down lesson with help from Jacobsen engine.



New Holland manufacturers rep Stuart Swiler answered lots of questions on hydraulics.

diums, municipalities, colleges and universities, parks, landscape firms and management companies.

Michael Sherotski, equipment maintenance supervisor at the Marriott Grand Vista,

home of Nick Faldo Golf Institute, has attended four of the seminars.

"We get mechanics from all over the state," says Sherotski. "The round table discussions bring out problems and solutions. Instead of always calling the manufacturers, we can talk to a mechanic who has experienced a similar problem. Engineers from manufacturers covered different things, which also gives someone a place to start to solve the problem. All this is to get us to a higher level."

Jim Torba, superintendent at the University of South Florida Golf Course, attended the seminars to increase his

equipment knowledge and better understand his mechanic's equipment needs.

"I want to keep as current as I can on all equipment issues," says Torba. "When you're in charge of buying you have to keep up. Now I know where my mechanic is coming from. There was lots of insight into preventive maintenance."

Tresca offered more than 12 hands-on classes, with technical help from Jacobsen, Smithco, Bush Hog, Briggs & Stratton, New Holland, Honda, Spraying Devices, Inc., Simplex Grinders and Husqvarna. □