

© 2002 BASF Corporation. All rights reserved.



# MAKE IT BETTER.

**BASF  
PROFESSIONAL  
TURF™**



***Basamid® Image® Drive® Pendulum®***

When choosing a professional partner, you should demand a commitment to success equal to your own—the kind of commitment you get from BASF. While other companies were bailing out on the turf industry to chase profits in pharmaceuticals, BASF was actually divesting its pharmaceutical holdings to free up resources to serve you better. That means billions in R&D to add innovative new products to our already top-performing portfolio. It means unsurpassed customer service and a long-term commitment to the future of the turf industry. Most of all, it means working side by side with you to make it better.

**We don't make the turf.  
We make it better.**

**BASF**

Circle No. 101

# FAST, EASY, BEAUTIFUL

CLASSIC MOWING BY  
WALKER FOR OVER 22 YEARS

You need a beautiful mowing job (you are a landscape artist).

You need to do the job fast (time is money).

You need to be easy on the operator (the operator may be you).

You need a Walker Mower.

If you do not own a Walker, we invite you to see a Walker demonstrated on your property.

**It's time to move  
into classic mowing  
by Walker.**

**WALKER MANUFACTURING CO.**

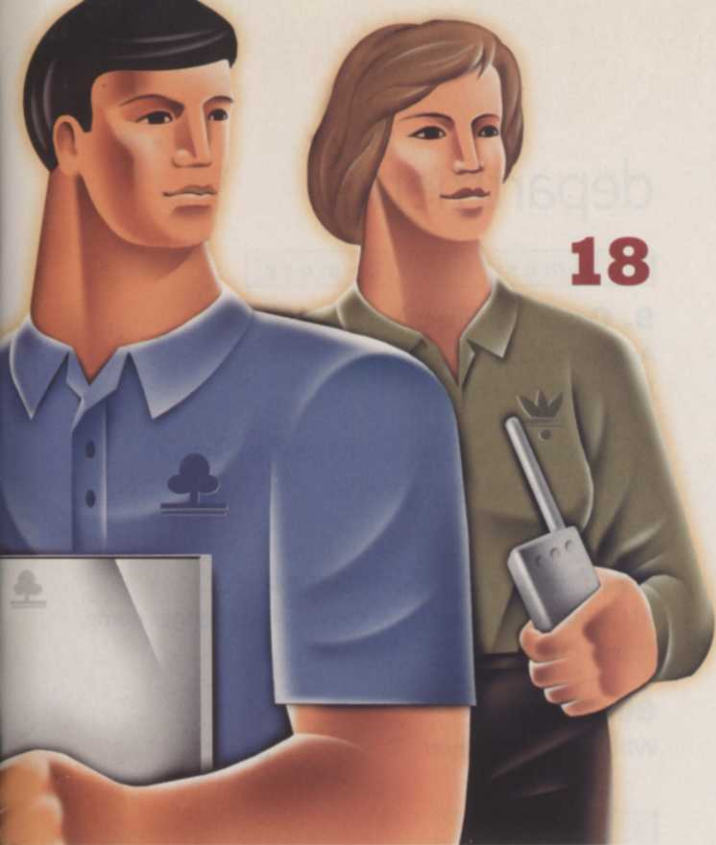
5925 E. HARMONY ROAD • DEPT. LM

FORT COLLINS, CO 80528

(800) 279-8537 • [www.walkermowers.com](http://www.walkermowers.com)

Independent, Family Owned Company Designing and Producing  
Commercial Riding Mowers since 1980

Circle No. 105



# Landscape MANAGEMENT

FEBRUARY 2002 / #2 / VOLUME 41

## features

### cover story

#### **18. Creating good leaders**

Successful landscape pros share what they've learned about developing leaders in their operations

By JASON STAHL / MANAGING EDITOR

#### **24. Fertigation for the residential market**

Feeding turfgrass and landscape plants with in-ground sprinkler systems offers hard-to-ignore benefits

By STEVEN KING



### grounds management center

#### **28. Award-winning landscape management**

Taking care of the Chicago Central Business District medians is a social cause

### irrigation center

#### **30. Irrigation's changing face**

The trends that will determine how you will soon irrigate your customers' properties

By BRIAN VINCHESI



COVER ILLUSTRATION: VADIM VAHRAMEEV / WWW.VADIMART.COM

## Editorial staff

Associate Publisher / Executive Editor	SUSAN PORTER / 440/891-2729 / sporter@advanstar.com
Editor-in-Chief	RON HALL / 440/891-2636 / rhall@advanstar.com
Managing Editor	JASON STAHL / 440/891-2623 / jstahl@advanstar.com
On-Line Content Editor	LYNNE BRAKEMAN / 440/891-2869 / lbrakeman@advanstar.com
Senior Science Editor	KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D. / danneberger1@osu.edu
Group Editor	VERNON HENRY / 440/826-2829
Art Director	LISA LEHMAN / 440/891-2785
Sr. Graphic Designer	CARRIE PARKHILL / 440/891-3101 / cparkhill@advanstar.com

## Reader advisory panel

DEBBY COLE	Greater Texas Landscapes / Austin, TX
JOHN GACHINA	Gachina Landscape Management / Menlo Park, CA
JERRY GAETA	The Good Earth Inc. / Mt. Pleasant, SC
JUDSON GRIGGS	Smallwood Design Group / Smallwood Landscape / Naples, FL
BILL HOOPES	Scotts Lawn Service / Marysville, OH
DWIGHT HUGHES	Dwight Hughes Nursery / Cedar Rapids, IA
LARRY IORII	Down to Earth Landscaping / Wilmington, DE
RICK KIER	Pro Scapes / Jamesville, NY
DR. DANIEL POTTER	University of Kentucky / Lexington, KY
JACK ROBERTSON	Jack Robertson Lawn Care / Springfield, IL
DAVID SNODGRASS	Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping, Inc. / Portland, OR
DR. BARRY TROUTMAN	Environmental Industries / Sanford, FL
GEORGE VAN HAASTEREN	Dwight-Englewood School / Englewood, NJ

## Business staff

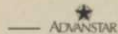
Group Publisher	JOHN D. PAYNE / 440/891-2786 / jpayne@advanstar.com
Production Manager	JILL HOOD / 218/723-9129 / jhood@advanstar.com
Production Director	ROSY BRADLEY / 218/723-9720 / rbradley@advanstar.com
Circulation Manager	DARRYL ARQUITTE / 218/723-9422 / darquitte@advanstar.com
Green Book Coordinator	MARY MOBLEY / 218/723-9127 / mmobley@advanstar.com
Vice President	TOM CONLON / 440/891-2619 / tconlon@advanstar.com

## Advertising staff

Eastern Manager	JOSEPH SOSNOWSKI / 610/687-2356 Fax: 610/687-1419 150 Strafford Ave., Ste. 210 Wayne, PA 19087 jsosnowski@advanstar.com
Cleveland Headquarters	7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130-3369
Western Manager	PATRICK ROBERTS / 440/891-2609 Fax: 440/891-2675 proberts@advanstar.com
Midwest Manager	KEVIN STOLTMAN / 440/891-2772 Fax: 440/891-2675 kstoltman@advanstar.com
Account Manager / Display	MICHAEL HARRIS / 440/891-3118 Fax: 440/826-2865 mharris@advanstar.com
Account Executive / Directory Sales	TOM CERMAK / 440/891-3170 Fax: 440/826-2865 tcermak@advanstar.com
Classified Showcase / Account Executive	LESLIE ZOLA / 440/891-2670; 800/225-4569 x670 lzola@advanstar.com

## Marketing services

MARCIE NAGY	Reprints (500 minimum) / 440/891-2744
TAMARA PHILLIPS	Circulation List Rental / 800/225-4569, ext. 773
ADVANSTAR MARKETING	Microfiche/film Copies 800/598-6008 Subscriber/Customer Service 218/723-9477/ 888/527-7008
TAMMY LILLO	International Licensing 218/723-9253 Fax: 218/723-9779 tlillo@advanstar.com For current single copy, back issues, or film/fiche/ CD-Rom, call 800/598-6008; 218/723-9180



ROBERT L. KRAKOFF	Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
JAMES M. ALIC	Vice Chairman & CTO
JOSEPH LOGGIA	President & COO
DAVID W. MONTGOMERY	VP/Finance, CFO & Secretary
ALEXANDER S. DEBARR DANIEL M. PHILLIPS	Executive Vice Presidents
ERIC I. LISMAN	Executive Vice President-Corporate Development
ADELE D. HARTWICK	Vice President-Controller & Treasurer

# departments

## columns, news & more

### 9. On the Record

Ask 'em what they think

BY RON HALL

### 10. Inside the Owner's Head

Help! A manager is in a slump!

BY RON HALL

### 14. Industry Almanac

ALCA Student Career Days coming, RBI changes name, "don't call" lists

### 66. Events

Who, what and when

## tech center

### 36. LM Reports: Sprayers & spreaders

BY CURT HARLER



### 48. Solutions Center

Building a 'grand' view, The account that got away (almost)

### 54. Saved by software

Upgrade your computer systems and train your staff to make those upgrades pay off

BY LYNNE BRAKEMAN

### 56. Easy with the N

Why slow-release fertilizers can eliminate problems caused with turfgrass growth peaks

BY BOB STAIB

### 62. Ask the Expert

Multiple stress syndrome, alternative options, dollar weed dilemma

BY BAL RAO, PH.D.

### 65. Products

## ending notes

### 72. Best Practices

LM's take on what you should be charging for mowing

[www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net)

LOG ON FOR BREAKING GREEN INDUSTRY NEWS



# OUTRIGHT OBSESSION

Day in, day out we work our hydros and gear-drives, too, but from a slightly different perspective. We routinely turn our walk-behinds over and over in our minds, obsessively looking for ideas that will enhance your profitability. Visit [www.exmark.com/innovationone](http://www.exmark.com/innovationone) to view just a few of the radical refinements we've come up with lately, and trust a lot more are on the way.



**Best-Selling Brand of Mowing Equipment for the Landscape Professional**

Circle No. 126

# next month

WHAT'S COMING UP IN MARCH

## ■ Cover story: Focus on your strengths

Learn strategies to get better at what you do best, whether it be design/build or maintenance

## ■ Common sod job screw-ups

10 ways to not get paid for your next turf installation project

## ■ Mow for profit

Tips to make sure you do better than break even with mowing

## ■ Herbicide options

What's out there for you, and what's coming

## ■ Skid-steers and accessories

In the market for a skid-steer? Want to save time and labor with a new attachment? Check this out

## ■ How to grow fast

Learn from one landscape company owner's bumpy ride on the acquisition trail

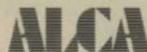
## ■ Plus: Former Major Leaguer

Paul Zwaska reveals more of his secrets in maintaining the perfect infield, landscape pros speak out in "Inside the Owner's Head," the latest news in Industry Almanac, and more.

# Landscape MANAGEMENT

VISIT US ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB: [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net)

Proud supporter of these green industry professional organizations:



**Associated Landscape Contractors of America**  
150 Elden Street, Suite 270  
Herndon, VA 20170  
703/736-9666  
[www.alca.org](http://www.alca.org)



**American Nursery & Landscape Association**  
1250 I St. NW, Suite 500,  
Washington, DC 20005  
202/789-2900



**Independent Turf and Ornamental Distributors Association**  
9864 E. Grand River  
Suite #110, BOX #326  
Brighton, MI 48116  
Voice: (810) 229-9405 / FAX: (810) 229-9406



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF  
**American Society of Irrigation Consultants**  
221 North LaSalle St • Chicago, IL 60601  
312.372.7090  
[www.asic.org](http://www.asic.org)



**The Irrigation Association**  
8260 Willow Oaks Corporate Dr. Suite 120  
Fairfax, VA 22031-4513  
703/573-3551  
[www.irrigation.org](http://www.irrigation.org)



**National Arborist Association**  
3 Perimeter Road, Unit 1  
Manchester, NH 03103  
603-314-5380  
[www.natlarb.com](http://www.natlarb.com)



**Ohio Turfgrass Foundation**  
1100-H Brandywine Blvd.,  
PO Box 3388  
Zanesville, OH 43702-3388  
888/683-3445



**The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute**  
341 South Patrick St.  
Old Town Alexandria, Va. 22314  
703/549-7600  
[opei.mow.org](http://opei.mow.org)



**Professional Grounds Management Society**  
720 Light Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
410/752-3318



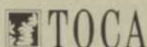
**Professional Lawn Care Association of America**  
1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite C-135  
Marietta, GA 30068-2112  
770/977-5222  
[www.plcaa.org](http://www.plcaa.org)



**Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment**  
1156 15th St. NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
202/872-3860  
[www.acpa.org/rise](http://www.acpa.org/rise)



**Sports Turf Managers Association**  
1375 Rolling Hills Loop  
Council Bluffs, IA 51503-8552  
712/366-2669; 800/323-3875  
[www.aip.com/stma](http://www.aip.com/stma)



**Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association**  
P.O. Box 156  
New Prague, MN 56071  
612/758-5811

Get the latest e-newsletter covering the landscape industry delivered to your desktop—

# FREE



## Growing Trends

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

**BASF PROFESSIONAL TURF**



Sign up for your own Growing Trends e-newsletter today! It's fast and easy. Just log onto [www.GrowingTrendsLawncare.com](http://www.GrowingTrendsLawncare.com).

# One-Man Crew!

## Bobcat MT50 Mini Track Loader

**Landscapers...Contractors...  
here's the perfect complement  
to your loader fleet!**

### What can it do?

You name it. The MT50 digs, drills, tills, trenches, moves material — and all kinds of other jobs you'll think of when you're out on the worksite.

### Only 36 inches wide!

The MT50 mini track loader lets you work in tight spots, both indoors and out...slips easily through most doorways and fence gates.

**Get versatile! Hook up your MT50 to a wide choice of hard-working Bobcat attachments, including:**

Angle Broom • Auger • Bucket • Landplane • Pallet Fork • Tiller • Trencher  
Utility Blade • Utility Fork • Utility Grapple



Tiller



Auger



Grapple



Trencher

148-1



Call or visit our website for a FREE "Bobcat: One Tough Animal"  
Video Catalog and a 2002 Buyer's Guide

Bobcat Company • P.O. Box 6000 • West Fargo, ND 58078 • 701-241-8700

[www.bobcat.com/mini](http://www.bobcat.com/mini)

**Bobcat**  
*One Tough Animal*

Circle No. 121



# Nu-Gro Technologies Providing All Your Nitrogen Needs



Nu-Gro Technologies, Inc. is a leading manufacturer and marketer of controlled release nitrogen sources throughout the world. Our goal is providing the highest quality, environmentally acceptable products for the market place.



Nu-Gro Technologies, Inc. 2680 Horizon Drive SE, Suite F5, Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
Telephone: 1-888-370-1874 [www.nugrotech.com](http://www.nugrotech.com)

## Ask 'em what they think

**H**ow would a weekend at the Chicago Ritz Carlton sound to you? Would you treat yourself to a great meal? Check out a blues club? Take in an afternoon Cubs game at Wrigley? I can think of about two dozen things to do in Chicago on a weekend, particularly if somebody else is picking up the tab.

Robert Kinnucan is president of Kinnucan Total Landscape Management. I sat with him and several other landscape pros at an ALCA round table this past November.

Robert's company, based in Lake Bluff, IL, competes in the take-no-prisoners Chicagoland market. Some of the biggest and toughest regional operations in the nation duke it out there. Thousands of smaller operators growl over pieces of the market the big guys don't snap up.

If you want to be in the landscape business (and stay in business) in this market, you can't afford to be timid. And Kinnucan's firm is not timid.

### Give to receive

Several seasons ago, it put up the money for the Ritz Carlton weekend and offered the promotion in a survey to homeowners in several upscale neighborhoods it wanted to penetrate. The Ritz Carlton agreed to a special rate, realizing it would reap some positive publicity in those neighborhoods. The response from potential clients was great, says Robert.

Even though that was a one-shot deal, Kinnucan preaches the value of ongoing customer contact. He regularly mails clients a one-page survey folded in

thirds that they can complete and return within 30 seconds. Respondents are eligible to win \$100 in free services from his company. Drawings are held quarterly.

The mailer's purpose is to measure client satisfaction. If there's a problem with his firm's services, it will show up on the survey and his managers can take action.

Kinnucan says the surveys keep his company's name and services in front of customers' eyes, serving as another form of advertising, subtle but effective.

But even the lure of winning a valuable prize sometimes can't generate the kind of response, at least not quickly enough, that Kinnucan sometimes feels he needs to keep his operation on track. "Often you get a delayed bounce on these surveys," he says.

Then it's time to call or meet with customers personally and find out what they think about your services and, perhaps, find out what else you can do for them.

Nobody in this business can afford to offer an expenses-paid weekend or \$100 in free work to a client every time you contact them. But almost all customers will appreciate that you've asked them what they think anyway.

Take this opportunity to thank clients for allowing you to serve them, too. Your brief and simple customer satisfaction surveys probably pack a lot more goodwill than you think.

Contact Ron at 440/  
891-2636 or e-mail at  
rhall@advanstar.com



Brief and simple customer satisfaction surveys probably pack a lot more goodwill than you think.

BY RON HALL / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## Help! Manager is in a funk

**E**verybody, including great performers like Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan, suffers the occasional slump.

Those of us in the landscape and lawn industry are far from immune. Our business is intensely competitive, the work can be physically and emotionally demanding, and sometimes the days and weeks never seem to end. It's understandable why some of our most proficient managers or top-producing employees sometimes lose focus.

"Ouch! This scenario sounds similar to situations that we have encountered," says K. Biene Schaefer, Landscapes By Atlantic Nurseries, Long Island, NY. "Our biggest error was avoidance. We didn't know if the employee perceived the company to be the root of their situation or if it stemmed from elsewhere."

She advises to come right out and find out what's bothering the employee. "Ask the question and be prepared for a tough

answer or criticism. Then we can tackle the problem and perhaps arrive at a win/win situation.

"Or, we may be able to extend a helping hand. In either case, the outcome will be better than if we avoid the situation. We don't have to play therapist, but we should provide a listening ear. We don't have to fix their personal problem, but we may be able to do a bit of legwork and come up with outside resources for the employee," says Schaefer.

Experienced landscape company owners are on the lookout for struggling employees, and try to get them out of the slump before their behavior affects co-workers and the organization. Or, threatens their own careers.

Steve Corrigan, Mountain View Landscape, Chicopee, MA, favors having a "heart-to-heart" with an employee whose performance suddenly sags.

"I ask the employee, 'what's happening? We have customers and team members that aren't happy with your attitude and performance. Is there something wrong at work or at home? Is there something that we can do?'"

"The team member will usually start to tell you the problems and issues that are causing this unacceptable behavior and performance. That's when we must listen!"

Corrigan says that after he and the employee talk over the points that have been discussed, they'll lay out a path to get the employee functioning as a valuable team member again. After that, it's

### Stopping the slump

- Discuss the problem with the employee. Listen!
- Determine if the problem is personal or work-related
- Jointly plot a path to get the employee back on track
- Provide adequate support for the employee to succeed
- Establish a plan to monitor the employee's progress
- Acknowledge improvement or, if performance does not improve, dismiss the employee



K. Biene Schaefer, left, says it's a mistake to ignore the signs. Steve Corrigan says act early.

### Reasons for a slump

- Same routine, same tasks each work day
- Little or no opportunity for career advancement
- Lack of direction, supervision, support from management
- Physical or emotional burnout
- Dissatisfaction with employment, pay

up to the employee.

Some problems are beyond a business owner's control. "Family issues are tough," admits Corrigan. But if the employee is suffering burnout, the solution might be as simple as some time off. "Work will be there tomorrow," he says.

— Information provided by the Owners' Network, [www.owners1.com](http://www.owners1.com), a program of JP Horizons.