

# DIXIE CHOPPER

*The World's Fastest Lawn Mower*



## Check out these features that set the Dixie Chopper apart!

Velvet Touch Control Steering - Every "Z" Mower Should Be This Smooth

Lifetime Mower Frame Warranty\* - it Doesn't Get Any Better Than This

Top Ground Speed of All "Z" Mowers - Makes YOU More Productive

Engine Options Include Honda, Kawasaki, Kohler, and Yanmar Diesel Power

Call today to experience the Dixie Chopper and see what you've been missing in your business. We'll be glad to tell you and show you what tens of thousands already know; the Dixie Chopper is tops for "Price, Performance and Reliability".

**DIXIE CHOPPER**

*The World's Fastest Lawn Mower*

[www.dixiechopper.com](http://www.dixiechopper.com)

765-CHOPPER



If a guy is racing to finish 40 lawns in one day, would YOU want to be that 40th lawn?

## Customers are people first

**S**ome time ago I read that there's not a lot of customer loyalty in the lawn care business. I just don't buy that. Our company doesn't lose many customers because we don't treat them like numbers, concentrating too much on volume like some big companies. Proof of this is some of the things we do for customers that might seem a bit out of the ordinary.

### Don't be afraid to be different

After the economy took a plunge last year many people lost their jobs, including some of our customers. We've had longtime customers who, when they lost their job, told us they had to cancel our service. We didn't let them. Instead, we offered to continue our service for free until they got another job. We don't do that for all our customers or else we'd go broke. But, for a special few, we will. And you wouldn't believe what kind of loyalty that builds.

Big companies would never service a customer for free, no matter what the circumstances. If you can't pay the bill they let you go. They want sales and growth. They don't think long-term, about how we're all human beings living and working on this earth together.

Another thing that goes a long way in developing customer loyalty is doing some random and unexpected nice things for your customers. One time, a longtime customer asked me to come out and give her some advice on her landscape. I have a special relationship with a local florist and I thought, what the heck, I'm going to bring some roses to her. Needless to say, she was quite surprised. It just made her week.

### Be like the milkman

When I was a young boy growing up in Cincinnati, everyone had a milkman. After awhile, our milkman knew everyone in our family, plus the dog and the cat. Do you think my dad would have ever fired him? Heck no. He wasn't just providing us with milk — he knew us and cared about us.

We tell our employees to get to know their customers well, too, and take care of them in any way possible. We know they do a quality job because we pay them a salary so they're happy and comfortable. If we paid them on commission, quality would go out the window. If a guy is racing to finish 40 lawns in one day, would you want to be that 40th lawn?

We have customer appreciation parties where our customers and employees will mingle and further their relationship. If there's a new employee, we'll introduce him to a customer and say, "This is who's going to work on your lawn." This seems to work well. We have one employee who's been with us for seven years named Joe who customers will specifically request by name.

### Treat your employees right

Developing loyalty among employees is important, too. When goals aren't achieved, companies want to lay employees off. We've never laid anybody off. As soon as you lay employees off, you lose their loyalty.

Make sure to do special things for employees who've been with you for a long time. Whether it's increasing vacation time or offering some other perk, we always make sure to reward longtime employees so their loyalty stays with us.

— The author is owner of GroGreen, a \$2 million lawn care company based in Plano, TX. He can be reached at 972/578-6600.

# It's off to work we go.



## Workmobiles™



An innovator in the recreational-vehicle industry is getting down to business. Introducing the Professional Series Workmobiles™ from Polaris®. A new team of tough and gritty workhorses built specifically for your vocation... not your vacation.

From construction sites to golf courses, landscape jobs to government properties, you'll find a full line of vehicles ready to dig in and get the job done. Three powerful Utility Task Vehicles™ (UTVs) feature heavy-duty suspension. The

ATV Pro 4x4 comes equipped with VISCO-LOC® full-time 4-wheel drive. The Light Utility Hauler 6x6 will take you and a payload virtually anywhere while the All-Surface Loader™ is equipped to handle a multitude of tasks.

The Polaris® Professional Series Workmobiles™. See your local Polaris Professional Series dealer to check out our full line. For your nearest dealer call 1-800-POLARIS. Or visit [www.polarisindustries.com](http://www.polarisindustries.com), and click on "Polaris Professional Series."



**POLARIS**  
PROFESSIONAL SERIES

Circle No. 108

© 2002 Polaris Sales Inc. ®/™ Trademark of Polaris Sales

# industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

## Minnesota passes fertilizer bill

**MINNEAPOLIS** — Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura signed bill SF 1555, the state bill that regulates use of phosphorus lawn fertilizer, into law April 29, 2002. Most of the bill's provisions go into effect January 1, 2004. See LM story in May issue or at [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net).

## IPM mandated for all PA schools

**HARRISBURG, PA** — Pennsylvania Gov. Mark Schweiker signed a bill this spring requiring all schools within the Commonwealth to adopt integrated pest management (IPM) plans by Jan. 1, 2003. The bill also imposes new pesticide notification requirements upon the schools.

## DHG acquires Express Blower

**CINCINNATI, OH** — DHG Corp., the parent company of Finn Corp., bought the assets of Express Blower from Rexus Forest By-Products and formed a new company, Express Blower, Inc. Both Finn and Express Blower will continue to operate as stand-alone companies based in Cincinnati and Eugene, OR, respectively.

## Becker Underwood now global

**AMES, IA** — Becker Underwood, Inc., says that the Canada and U.K.-based MicroGroup Ltd., which it acquired in 2000, has now officially assumed the Becker Underwood  
*continued on page 15*

## ALCA Maintenance event — be there

**ATLANTA** — Reserve the weekend of Aug. 9-11 and start making your travel arrangements for the ALCA Maintenance Symposium that will be held here.

Symposium Coordinator Steven Glover, CLP, CEO of Symbiot Business Group, Sandy, UT, has put together an ambitious agenda. Event sponsors for the event are Husqvarna and Weed Man. *Land-*

*scape Management* magazine is the media sponsor for the Symposium.

It begins Friday with ALCA certification exams, or join colleagues in an afternoon tour of the five-acre, 24,000-sq.-ft. facilities of HighGrove Partners northwest of the city. This \$18 million landscape company (the former Post Landscape Group) has offices in both Atlanta and Charlotte, NC.



Steven Glover,  
Symbiot Business Group

CLIPPINGS

### MAINTENANCE SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

#### Saturday (Aug. 10):



8-9 a.m. Roger Braswell, founder and owner of Southern Tree and Landscape Company, presents "Landscape Maintenance in the 21st Century."

9:15-11:30 a.m. "Sales, Getting the Job and Keeping It" covering the following topics:

- "Innovative Selling" by Bill Gordon, Signature Landscape, Olathe, KS.
- "Long-term Contracts" by John Allin, CLP, Allin Companies, Erie, PA.
- "Enhancements and Customer Upsales" by Joe Skelton, ASLA, Roswell, GA.

11:45-1 p.m. "Power Lunch" with a range of roundtable topics.

1:15-3:15 p.m. "Pricing it Right"

covering the following topics:

- "Using Job Costing" by Scott Chatham, ChemLawn and Landscape Services, Atlanta.
- "Pricing for Profit" by Dan Foley, CLP, D. Foley Landscape, Inc., Walpole, MA.

3:30-5:30 p.m. "Building Successful

Teams" covering these topics:

- "Using Incentives" by Bill Lincicome, HighGrove Partners, Atlanta.
- "Building a Successful Hispanic Workforce" by Angelo Mino, Summit Consulting, Lenexa, KS.

5:30-6:30 p.m. Ask the Experts.

#### Sunday (Aug. 11):

8-10 a.m. "Secrets You Need to Know" by Tony Bass, Custom Landscapes, Bonaire, GA.

10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. "Expanding Your Service Lines" covering these topics:

- "Hazards to Avoid, Why Did it Fail?" by Bruce Wilson, Wilson-Oyler Group, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- "How to Move into a New Line Successfully" by Mike Senneff, CLP, Plant Interscapes, Inc., San Antonio, TX.



1-5 p.m. Optional seminar, "Owners' Network" by Jim Paluch, JP Horizons, Inc., Painesville, OH.

For more information or to register, contact ALCA at 800/395-2522 or visit the Web site [www.alca.org](http://www.alca.org).

# Canada to overhaul pesticide laws

**OTTAWA, CANADA** — A nationwide ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides on lawns and parks is unlikely, Federal Health Minister Anne McLellan said earlier this spring. She made the statement while announcing a bill to overhaul Canada's Pesticide Control Products Act.

## Canadian pesticide history

**1969** Pest Control Products Act (PCPA) passed

**1987-1994** Several different government commissions recommend pesticide reforms

**1995** Pesticide responsibility moved from Agriculture Canada to Health Canada

**1998** Pesticide Advisory Council calls for PCPA amendments

**2000** House of Commons Environment Committee recommends PCPA overhaul

**2001** Supreme Court upholds Hudson, Quebec bylaw banning cosmetic pesticide use

**2002** Federal Health Minister Anne McLellan announces overhaul of PCPA

"Our jurisdiction is in relation to safety," said McLellan, responding to repeated cries within liberal governmental circles to phase out all use of pesticides on turfgrass for "aesthetic" purposes. "Once something is deemed to be safe, then it is up to the provinces or municipalities as to how that will be used."

McLellan was referring to the June 2001 federal court ruling that upheld a pesticide ban by the community of Hudson, Quebec, Province. (In a similar case 10 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the small community of Wauconda, IL, didn't have that right.)

McLellan said that amendments to Canada's federal pesticide act will call for the scientific assessments of pesticides, particularly as they may affect children and pregnant women. The amendments would also require an automatic review of pesticides after 15 years, more inspections and higher fines for violations, according to reports from the Canada press.



*continued from page 14*

name. "This consolidation further leverages the synergies between locations and products within a truly global entity," says CEO Roger Underwood.

## BlueBird closes Denver plant

**CLEVELAND** — BlueBird International, a division of Husqvarna Turf Care Company, closed its operation in Denver and is consolidating manufacturing in Beatrice, NB. The Beatrice plant, which now makes commercial mowers, will be making aerators, dethatchers, seeders, sod cutters, stump grinders, lawn vacuum systems and engine lifts when the move is complete.

## FMC Corp. unifies customer service

**PHILADELPHIA** — FMC Corp. has consolidated the customer service functions for its Agricultural and Specialty Products Business sectors. The result will be expanded hours and more customer service reps.

## CLIP Conference set at BWI

**IJAMSVILLE, MD** — The 13th Annual CLIP Users' Conference, "Ready, Aim, Fire!", will be held at the Baltimore/Washington International Marriott, Baltimore, MD, Nov. 19-22. Features of the conference include industry-leading speakers, roundtable discussions, one-on-one CLIP instruction, hands-on business workshops and more. Contact Karen Paulik at 800/635-8485, ext. 306, or visit [www.clip.com](http://www.clip.com).

## Free CD targets longhorned beetle

**LISLE, IL** — The Morton Arboretum is offering a computer-based training tool to aid in the early detection of the Asian longhorned beetle. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the tool helps landscape professionals and others in the Green Industry spot the beetles early and take steps to remove the threat.

The Arboretum has already distributed the CD to a number of professional groups, including everyone who attended Chicago's 2002 Greening Symposium. The training program is appropriate for both summary presentations and in-depth study.

For more information, contact the Morton Arboretum at [ALB@mortonarb.org](mailto:ALB@mortonarb.org) or visit the Web site [www.mortonarb.org](http://www.mortonarb.org). Green Industry pros can receive a free copy while supplies last.

**CLIPPINGS**

## Homeowners buying pro mowers



Modernization continues at mower-producing KMA plant

plant north of here in May. The KMA plant, which has undergone 10 expansions since it began operations in 1988, also builds front loaders, backhoes, lawn & garden tractors, and sub-compact tractors. Its newest entry into the sub-compact category is the BX 22, a beefed up four-wheel drive unit equipped with a six-ft. backhoe and front loader.

ATLANTA, GA — Sales of zero-turn commercial mowers keep climbing. This past year, about 115,000 riding rotary mowers were sold, most of them zero-turns.

Not all of them are going to contractors or other landscape professionals, not by a long shot. Many — including expensive high-production models — are now being purchased by homeowners. That fact didn't go unnoticed by Kubota, which began manufacturing its ZD-Series last year.

Magazine editors saw just how these units are produced during a tour of the Kubota Manufacturing America (KMA)

Like the ZD-Series mowers, the BX 22 (described by a Kubota market manager as "the ultimate Swiss army-type tractor") is most popular with homeowners. It's also being targeted for rental yards and at smaller landscape companies seeking a lot of versatility at a reasonable price.

"The green side has really started to take off," said Juichi "John" Shiraishi, president of KMA, who met with and accompanied the editors on the factory tour. "We perceive our future and our growth to be on the green side."

## Iowa turf pros develop phosphorus policy

LISLE, IL — The issue of phosphorus in waterways (see pg. 18 in the May '02 LM) is causing turfgrass professionals around the country to reassess their use of phosphorus-containing fertilizers.

John Ausen, CGCS, Hyperion Field Club, reports in the May issue of *The Reporter*, the monthly publication of the Iowa Golf Course Superintendents Association, that the state's leading turfgrass groups are agreeing to limit use of phosphorus when:

- ▶ a soil test by a state certified laboratory indicates that levels of available phosphorus in the soil are insufficient to support healthy turf growth,
- ▶ deemed necessary by a licensed applicator, in their professional opinion or otherwise limited by the manufacturer's product line,
- ▶ the property owner is first establishing turf via seed or sod during the first growing year, or
- ▶ using organic turf fertilizers derived primarily from animal or compost waste that doesn't exceed a natural phosphorus content of 2% by weight.



syngenta

### Simply lasts the longest.

Among all broad-spectrum preventive fungicides, Heritage® is the longest-lasting. It works up to 28 days to prevent brown patch and most landscape ornamental diseases. That means fewer applications. And more time for everything else.

[www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com](http://www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com)



Important: Always read and follow label instructions before buying or using this product. ©2002 Syngenta. Syngenta Professional Products, Greensboro, NC 27419. Heritage® and the Syngenta logo are trademarks of a Syngenta Group Company.

Circle 109



## Sod is fine, but it's no Princess.



Princess•77 rules the bermuda grass kingdom. It will cost you a fraction of what you'd pay for sod, and it's the first and only true hybrid bermuda grass available from seed. It's manageable at 3/16 inch, uses one third less water than the most widely used vegetative bermuda, loves the full sun yet excels in the shade and provides excellent spring density. Now that's ruling with authority.

To learn more about the aggressive and beautiful Princess•77, call Pennington Seed.



1-800-286-6100, Ext. 281 • [sportturf@penningtonseed.com](mailto:sportturf@penningtonseed.com) • [www.penningtonseed.com](http://www.penningtonseed.com)



## PRINCESS 77

### Hybrid Bermudagrass

*Cynodon Dactylon*

#### **Plant Breeder:**

Dr. Arden Baltensperger,  
Experimental Designation - FMC 77

*Certified Princess 77 bermudagrass is the world's first dense, fine textured hybrid bermudagrass variety to be available in seeded form. Princess 77 is a very dense, dark green, fine textured hybrid bermudagrass that can be established from seed. It is the product of two self-sterile clones that are established vegetatively in certified production fields. Rated #4 out of 29 seeded and vegetative varieties and #2 out of 18 varieties tested in the National Bermudagrass Test – 1997 (NTEP No. 01-5).*

#### **Characteristics:**

- Higher overall turf quality than all commercial seeded varieties in U.S. and international tests
- Dark green color, medium fine leaf texture
- High leaf density
- Moderate spring green up and fall color retention
- Good drought tolerance
- Requires 29% less water than Tif 419
- Better divot recovery than Tif 419
- Excellent winter color retention

#### **Recommended Use:**

Golf Courses (fairways and tees), Sports Turf, Parks, Home Lawns

**Climatic Zones:** 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (may not be adaptable to all areas within each climatic zone)

#### **Establishment & Maintenance:**

Under ideal conditions, germination may begin within 7 days. After 14 to 21 days for full germination. Mowing may begin when grass is 1/3 taller than desired mowing height. It is recommended that no more than 1/3 of the leaf blade be removed per mowing.

Winter overseeding may be done for year round green color, but is generally not recommended on turf less than 6 to 8 months old.

This is a dense hybrid – periodical verticutting may be required under high maintenance conditions.

**Seeding Rates:** All applications

1 to 2 lbs./1000 sq. ft.



## Tree worker receives national safety award

An employee of Swingle Tree & Lawn Care won one of three National Arborist Association Safety Awards for saving the life of a co-worker.

Derek Stroden, supervisor in Swingle's Enhancement Services division, helped co-worker Robert Sasser escape a swarm of bees that attacked him after he cut into their nest while attempting to re-

move a tree limb. Stroden slowly lowered the bucket

Sasser was standing in, but Sasser panicked while he was still ten feet off the ground and attempted to jump out of the bucket. He was still in his safety harness, however, so Stroden stood underneath him so he could put his feet on Stroden's shoulders and undo

the harness. The two men then ran for cover in the customer's house.

Stroden had minimal stings, but Sasser had many all over his body, including 16 on his head.

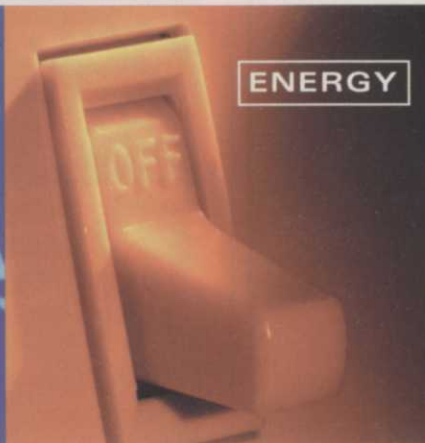
"Derek's regard for safety and his reaction to saving his co-worker's life is a tremendous acknowledgement to him and our internal dedication to safety," said Tom Tolkacz, president of Swingle.



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

WHAT'S NEW ON-LINE

- Features from the May issue of *LM*
- LM Week in Review
- The latest Green Industry news
- Sign up for the Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards 2002
- Read biographies of LM staffers



# Save Big.

Hire a Professional Irrigation Consultant

Independent irrigation consultants can help you save water, energy and money by applying their knowledge and experience to the efficient and effective design of irrigation systems. Find out how much by contacting a member of the American Society of Irrigation Consultants.



**American Society of  
Irrigation Consultants**

221 NORTH LASALLE ST.  
CHICAGO, IL 60601  
312.372.7090  
FAX: 312.372.6160  
WWW.ASIC.ORG

## Howdy pardner, let's do business

**GLENVIEW, IL** — Autumn Tree Care Experts of Glenview knows how to turn a fun time into a sales and marketing opportunity.

Case in point: the April Spring Fling held at company headquarters for the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA). The event drew more than 140 attendees.

Autumn Tree converted its industrial office space into a western hoedown complete with fence posts, barn doors, and mountain range backdrops. The casual setting lent itself well to putting guests at ease,

opening the door for friendly conversations and relationship building opportunities.

Autumn Tree vice president Dan Klindera said the tree care company invested upwards of \$10,000 from its marketing budget into the Spring Fling sponsorship this year.

He added that he believes the investment was well worth it, noting that over time, friendships established at the event will likely result in client relationships for Autumn Tree and other businesses and individual consultants in attendance.

"People came early and stayed late, and, overall, we think it was a sound investment of our marketing dollars," Klindera said.

"It just goes to show you that sales and marketing efforts don't always have to be strictly advertising-based, or direct mail pieces. Relationships are the most valuable marketing tool we have."

Most of the 140 attendees were landscape architects and contractors. Others included industry vendors, individual tree care consultants, and property management officials.



Among those "working the crowd" were Mariani Landscape of Lake Bluff, IL, Christy Webber, a Chicago-based landscaper, Mindy Maggio of Coromandel Home Owner's Association, Hendricksen, the Care of Trees of Chicago, and Bartlett Tree Experts of Ohio.


Contact Autumn Tree Care Experts at 847/729-1963, or visit the Web site at [www.autumntree.com](http://www.autumntree.com).

Ranked #1

## Weed Man®

North America's  
Largest Lawn Care  
Franchise Company!

- Ranked #1 in Lawn Care Franchise Satisfaction Rankings, *SUCCESS* magazine\*
- Protected territory enables you to market efficiently
- Systems that will increase profits and efficiency
- In depth training permits rapid integration
- Network of dealers provide a wealth of information
- Leaders in the industry will help mentor and grow your business



2001-2002 projected sales

1-888-321-9333 • [www.weed-man.com](http://www.weed-man.com)

Circle 112

## People & companies



**Seed Research of Oregon's Mike Robinson**

stepped down as president to become director of international sales and marketing.

**Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products**

appointed **Steve Chicken** managing director and **Michael Vickers** vice president of engineering — Turf Products.

**J. R. Simplot Company** named **M. Vincent (Vince) Restucci** director of Simplot Marketing Solutions.

**Syngenta Crop Protection** named **Bill Lewis**

vice president of its professional products business unit and regional business group, **Steve Ligon** vice president, national account management, and **Rob Neill** vice president, marketing.

**Dow AgroSciences LLC** promoted **Fred Pretzer** to technical accounts manager covering the western U.S.

**L.R. Nelson Corp.** named **Douglas Ramsdale** president of its turf business unit.