Prepare now for the spring growing season

While not thought of as a gardening month, February can include a few yard and garden activities. There are plenty of things to do in anticipation of spring and the 2007 growing season.

If the weather is acceptable, start the process of pruning apple trees. Apples should be pruned on a regular basis to keep them productive, and February through early April is a good time to do it. Other trees and shrubs can be pruned, but be careful. Don't prune spring blooming shrubs because flower buds were formed last season. Cut them off and the shrubs will not produce flowers this spring.

Even so, old, neglected spring-flowering shrubs often require extensive pruning to rejuvenate or renew the plants. The best time to rejuvenate large, overgrown shrubs is late winter or early spring. While heavy pruning in late winter or early spring will reduce or eliminate the flower display for a few years, the long term health of the shrubs is more important.

Connecticut town goes pesticide free

PLAINVILLE, CT — This city of 17,000 people located about 15 miles southwest of Hartford is going pesticide free on its city property — all 167 acres. The town council on Jan. 10 voted to accept the recommendation of the 11-member Plainville Conservation Commission to quit using pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.

In addition, the town council is asking homeowners with property near the Quinnipiac and Pequabuck Rivers to quit using pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.

Plainville is reportedly the second town in Connecticut to try to maintain public property without synthetic products.
In the Know

BY DAVID FRABOTTA / Senior Editor, Golfdom

Charting a course for growth

Deborah Hamlin takes helm of Irrigation Association

SHE PERSEVERED OVER A FIELD OF 80 CANDIDATES to capture the executive director post of the Irrigation Association. But it won’t be the biggest challenge for Deborah Hamlin as she leads a “fragmented” and a growing Irrigation Association, which bid farewell to retired head Thomas Kimmell.

We sat down with Hamlin to talk about her goals and vision for the association, which is based in Falls Church, VA. She’s a certified association executive and the former executive director for the International Association of Plastics Distributors, which she ran for 10 years. During her tenure, she developed a comprehensive educational program, grew membership, reorganized the volunteer structure to streamline projects and bolstered participation at association meetings.

Q Why was IA a good fit for you?
I worked for an industry association that was basically manufacturers and distributors for the past 10 years, so that certainly helps my understanding of the business and the way things are manufactured and distributed. What I’m trying to learn more about are some of the technical issues and some of the political issues.

I’m very familiar with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America — and I know we’ve had a long-term relationship with them — but I’m hoping that my connections there and my existing relationships will help build a stronger relationship.

Q What is top of mind for you begin in this role? One of the biggest things is the fact that we’re partnering with EPA and its WaterSense program. The first rollout of this WaterSense program is individual certifications. (In 2007), they are going to roll out product certifications, where you would label a product like you would an Energy Star product, except for water conservation.

We’re hoping that all of our landscape and golf exams will be EPA endorsed. So if a person passed an IA program that has been approved, then the EPA will allow them to put a label on their business cards and brochures to prove that they are using water-saving techniques in their day-to-day business. That’s pretty cool.

Q How will you ensure that IA’s certification program is a premium credential? I envision a certification board for the industry where it is an umbrella, and we acknowledge all of the certifications out there under one body.

In conjunction, there needs to be some sort of training and assessment at the lower level, and I think we are missing that. The certification board is looking at that to determine whether it is their role, and if so, is there a market for that, or should that be something that stays on the education side of things?

Q What will be your biggest challenges?
Serving our diverse members. I was drawn to the industry association because you can do much more with more people and because you have the voice of everyone, but when you have everyone, each segment wants to be different. So we’re in the process of coming up with programs and services to cater to each of them. We can no longer just give the same information to everybody. But electronically, we can individualize our approach. It’s one-to-one marketing; we can figure out what one person gets out of the organization and then market that to them.

Q What are your main goals in the short term of your tenure? One of my personal goals is to grow our relationships with our affiliate organizations. There are hundreds of irrigation associations and turf and landscape associations out there; 50 of them currently pay membership dues to us.

So we have a staff person that currently is traveling around and meeting with those people; it’s been an emphasis for about a year now. But I’d like to formalize the relationship and benefits for those members.

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People & Companies

John Deere Landscapes, John Deere Golf & Turf One Source and the company's professional mowing segment will now come under the direction of David Werning, president of John Deere Landscapes and senior vice president, commercial segment, John Deere C&CE.

Phil Burkart, vice president and general manager of The Toro Co.'s irrigation division, was asked to serve on the Irrigation Association's Board of Directors.

Harvey Massey, owner of Orlando, FL's Massey Services, and his wife Carol donated $1 million to the Dr. P. Phillips Orlando Performing Arts Center, a proposed facility in downtown Orlando.

Arsenault Associates announced that David L. Reed has joined the company as Fleet Management Consultant. Reed brings more than 20 years of fleet maintenance and technology experience to the newly created position.

Amy Briones has been named branch manager of Greater Texas Landscape Services' new office in San Antonio.

Matthew Wilson has been promoted to service and compliance manager at RedMax/Komatsu Zenoah America. He will be responsible for the company's service, warranty and emissions compliance.

Ron Wolfarth, director of Rain Bird's landscape irrigation division, was named to the board of directors for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Alliance for Water Efficiency.

The Broyhill Co. of Dakota City, NE, named Lee Stone, senior product and division manager for Golf and Turf Equipment.

R. Douglas Cowan stepped down as chief executive officer of The Davey Tree Expert Co. at the end of 2006. Taking his place is Karl J. Warnke, who serves as president and CEO.

Charlie Lockerson has been named manager of Horizon Landscape & Design in Vero Beach, FL.
In the Know

Water district limits lawn irrigation to one day a week

BROOKSVILLE, FL — The Southwest Florida Water Management District executive director recently declared a water shortage and restricted lawn watering to one day a week in the 16 counties in the district, including the portion of Marion County west of Interstate 75, according to the Star-Banner in Ocala, FL.

The restrictions will be in effect from Jan. 16 until July 31, unless rescinded or modified. The limits are being imposed because of low rainfall levels, which are affecting river flows and surface and groundwater levels.

As of Dec. 31, the districtwide average rainfall deficit is about 11.6 in.

“Our rivers are clearly being impacted like that of our lakes and groundwater system,” said David Moore, SWFWMD’s executive director. “We are very early in our typical dry season. Conditions are already low. We are asking for everyone’s assistance in these six to seven months we anticipate this water shortage condition. We are asking the general public to really try to conserve as we move forward to this dry season.”

New versatility meets same optimum performance.

The new Brillion LSS6 seeder features mounting capabilities for both skid steer loaders and tractors, adding flexibility to landscape management.

The LSS6 seeder uses Brillion’s time-proven blade agitator metering system to provide accurate and reliable seed placement for a wide variety of seed sizes.

Lack of rain limits watering to once a week.

The LSS6 itself is 84 inches wide with a seeding width of 72 inches and a hopper capacity of 4 1/2 bushels.

To find out how the versatile new LSS6 Skid Steer Landscape Seeder can work for you, contact your local Brillion dealer or call Brillion Iron Works for more information.

Toro delivers Disney vacation

RIVERSIDE, CA — Two lucky Toro Irrigation customers will soon be going to the Magic Kingdom. Suzanne Heimbuch, commercial account manager for Choate Irrigation, and Sharon Holden, owner of Lubbock Turf Irrigation, were the winners of Toro Irrigation’s Walt Disney World Resort Vacation Giveaway at the 2006 International Irrigation Show in San Antonio. Toro is the official provider of turf maintenance equipment for Walt Disney World Resort.

Horticulture degree from UI

URBANA, IL — In fall 2006, the University of Illinois began partnering with Chicago area community and city colleges to offer a bachelors degree in horticulture. Students who have completed an associate degree can complete their final two years of coursework and earn a bachelors degree from U of I at Urbana-Champaign — without relocating.

For information, call 800-252-1360 or visit www.nres.uiuc.edu.

Minnesota Expo biggest ever

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Green Expo is one of the fastest-growing green industry trade shows and educational conferences in the U.S. The expo hosted 8,004 registered attendees Jan. 3-5. The show is presented annually by the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association and the Minnesota Turf & Grounds Foundation.
**Problem Solver**

Senior Horticulture Specialist Bruce Hellerick Tackles Common Problems

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**Before**

Problem The client is unhappy with the appearance of this area under the shade trees in the parking lot. What is the problem? What would you recommend?

The cause The ugly junipers growing under the shade trees are failing to thrive because junipers require full sun growing conditions. The junipers are also being damaged from applications of snow melting products and snow removal operations.

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**Solutions**

1. Quick fix, remove the ugly. Remove the junipers and redress the mulch and you are done.
2. Remove the junipers. Properly prepare the soil and install turf via seed or sod. (See photo below)
3. Remove the junipers. Install a ground cover that will grow in semi-shade conditions and with no irrigation such as Liriope, English Ivy or Euonymus coloratus. There are many other plant materials to consider.

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**After**

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**Why Spray Nozzle Selection is Critical to Your Success**

The consequences of inadequate spraying can be extremely costly. Under application can result in turf damage and the need to re-spray. Over application results in waste of chemicals. So, be sure you have the best nozzle for your specific application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nozzle Type</th>
<th>Herbicides, Fungicides, and Insecticides</th>
<th>Droplet Size</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turbo TwinJet®</td>
<td>Good, Excellent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turbo Induction</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC BoomJet®</td>
<td>Good, Excellent</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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(Droplet-size categories may vary with nozzle capacity, spray angle and spray pressure.)

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**TeeJet**

www.teejet.com

Circle 121
Hydroseeding

- Contractors find more efficient ways for sowing lawns

BY JANET AIRD

You always know where hydroseeders have been: they leave hillsides, golf courses and residential lawns a strange green-gray color that turns into tough native plants and lush, green turf.

Chris Haddock, owner of CBH Landscape Contractors in New Hampshire, added hydroseeding to his business in the early 1990s. The bulk of his company's work is residential, but he also does golf courses, shopping malls and new developments.

Obvious advantages

"Hydroseeding's a lot cheaper than hand-sowing seed," he says. "Hand-sowing a lawn takes about half a day. With the hydroseeder, it takes about an hour to an hour and a half. It doesn't take long to make up for the cost of the machine."

Hydroseeded soils hold moisture better than hand-seeded ones, Haddock says, so the seeds germinate more quickly. They usually have fewer weeds. Hydroseeding also can increase the number of your customers. "We have customers who call about hydroseeding, then ask us to do more for them."

Lots of applications

Jim Listowich added hydroseeding to his business, Norpine Landscape, in 1988. He does mostly housing developments and condos, across Maine with his 3,300-gallon model.

"It's the right size for big jobs, but we can still do small jobs with it," he says.

These days, hydroseeding is used for everything from lawns to erosion control, hillside stabilization and vegetation restoration after wildfires. In some places, though, such as high-traffic areas, Haddock says, laying sod can be more appropriate.

Hydroseeding begins with a slurry of water, fertilizer and mulch. For lawns and golf courses, use a high quality grass seed. For erosion control and stabilizing slopes, use a tougher, less-costly grass, or native plants, whose roots hold the soil in place.

The slurry binds with the soil and helps prevent erosion. On steep slopes, adding tackifier, a gum-based solution, makes the slurry hold onto slopes even better.

Haddock has a 900-gallon unit that he pulls behind his one-ton diesel truck. "This seems to be the best compromise," he says. The machine is big enough for large applications, but small enough to go down a golf cart path.

Quality counts

As hydroseeding becomes more popular, new manufacturers have come out with less expensive models. This has allowed more landscapers to get into the business. But Haddock advises buying an established brand from a reliable dealer.

Hydroseeding is a great method for sowing seed, but it's a method with advantages, not a miracle, Haddock says. You have to use the right ingredients for the job in the right amounts, and mix the slurry properly or it clogs the machine.

Both men agree their biggest problem is that customers don’t think they need to maintain their lawns, partly because they see tougher grasses growing on hillsides, and partly because their lawns come in so well.

They both give the same warning: "Take time to educate your customers."

― The author is a freelance writer in Altadena, CA.
Contact her at janet.aird@earthlink.net
Eight straight months of hand-weeding around the clock can take its toll on the average Worker.

It won't do your bottom line any good, either. Research shows that hand-weeding can knock your profits for a loop in no time. Maybe that's why so many nursery operators and landscapers are choosing the superior control of Snapshot® specialty herbicide. Snapshot can be used over-the-top of more than 413 field-grown and 235 container-grown ornamentals, for control of 111 broadleaf weeds and annual grasses – for up to eight months. That's more than any other preemergence product on the market. Plus, it's gentle on ornamentals. This year, knock out weeds and grasses – instead of your workers – with the proven performance of Snapshot.
PIECEWORK—
does it pay?

When this landscape company began paying based on production not hours, management discovered a whole new world of good and evil

BY CHARLES SIMON

FLEXIBLE WORK WEEK
Finish 40 billable hours in 40 hours

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

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Work 40 hours, get 40 hours of pay.

40 x $10 = $400

GET A PAY BONUS
Finish 45 billable hours in 40 hours

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

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Work 40 hours, get 45 hours of pay.

45 x $10 = $450

GO HOME EARLY EVERY DAY
Finish 40 billable hours in 35 hours

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

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Work 35 hours, get 40 hours of pay.

40 x $10 = $400

TAKE FRIDAY AFTERNOON OFF
Finish 40 billable hours in 35 hours

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

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Work 35 hours, get 40 hours of pay.

40 x $10 = $400

Would you like to increase productivity by 30%? Would you like your workers to make smarter decisions? How about controlling labor costs at the same time?

A piecework pay system may be the answer. Piecework pay is also called standard hour pay, incentive pay, variable pay, pay for results or pay for performance. Regardless of its name, though, it’s based on work completed instead of actual hours worked.

A standard amount of time is set to complete a specific job, and the employee is paid that set time — even if the work is completed in less time. For example, auto repair shops might set the standard time for a brake job on an F-350 at 1.5 hours. If the mechanic completes the work in less time, he still gets 1.5 hours of pay. If it takes more time, the mechanic is paid the normal hourly rate for the time spent.

Using a piecework pay system for landscaping is straightforward. You charge a customer 50 minutes in labor to mow, trim and blow a property. You pay the workers 50 minutes even if they finish early. It’s possible for a worker to complete 40 hours of billable time in 35. The continued on page 30
Meet the Kubota turf team.

ZD300 Series • F Series • RTV900

With Kubota on your side, you can tackle any turf job. Our new ZD300 Series zero-turn mower gives you the durability of a high-performance Kubota diesel engine, as well as the responsiveness of a high-capacity HST transmission system.

The F Series front mount mower with a Hi Pro 3 mower deck delivers greater capacity for enhanced cutting.

Of course, nothing is more productive than our RTV900 utility vehicle with turf tires, hydraulic utility valve and fuel-efficient 21.6 HP diesel engine.

Now go get 'em!
worker still gets 40 hours of pay even though he actually worked 35.

The workers are happy because they get to go home early, but still get a full 40-hour paycheck. Employers are happy because the work was completed efficiently without paying overtime.

**Real-world results**

Here's what happened when we tried it:

It was our practice to send three-man crews out on many days. The drivers would say they could not complete the work without the extra help. Once the new system was in place and they had to split the pay with the third worker, they decided they didn't want any extra help. Two-man crews ruled.

We were amazed by how quickly the work was completed. One crew achieved savings of 30%, another about 25% and the rest between 5% and 10%.

We knew we had some slow workers. Now drivers would not accept these men on their crews. We had to let to workers go because no crew wanted them. Our efficiency improved dramatically.

**Drawbacks, too**

It did not take long, however, for the complaints to start coming in. "Your driver cut me off," complained one caller. "Why aren't they mowing my whole yard?" asked a customer. "Stop racing your mowers," demanded another.

We found our best workers worked a little faster than normal and did a good job as always, no matter what the pay system. Other workers, though, were a little too highly motivated. They finished quickly by mowing at the highest speed, cut only areas that really needed it, skipped string trimming and raced back to the shop.

Our solution was to send the crew back to a job when we received a complaint. They didn't get any billable time credits for the return visit. If they messed up, they had to go back on their time. Unfortunately, many customers either called days later or didn't call at all. In the end, quality issues cost us four good customers.

We found out later that some of the workers believed their piecework pay rate would be cut if they mowed too many lawns in a day. Others were afraid they