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to develop a diversity of upper division courses to fulfill the educational expectations of these students.

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This is the opportunity we've been waiting for to promote the industry to the next generation of leaders. — The author is Professor of the Practice, Plant Science Landscape Architecture, University of Maryland. Contact him at scohan@umd.edu.

**SCHOOL RULES**

That this is where the troubled kids go. We really educated them on professionalism in the industry.”

Besides jumpstarting the program and sitting as an advisor, Paluch and the other advisors — will occasionally serve as guest speakers.

“I’ll go in and I’ll talk about leadership,” Paluch says. “That’s really the key thing that the landscape contractor is looking for ‘Please send me some people that can become foremen, supervisors, eventually branch managers.”

Many students find part-time work to complement their education. These on-the-job experiences broaden their knowledge with real-life lessons.

“I very strongly encourage all of our students to be employed within the industry,” Richards says. It comes back to the ties with organizations like the OLA and PLANET, which have set standards for the industry.

“What that does is that gives us a bar that we prepare students for,” Richards says. “By having clearly defined goals or clearly defined targets, it gives us the opportunity to really start to fine tune our training programs.” It also gives landscape companies something they desperately need, new leaders. But none of that would have been possible without those same companies getting involved in the program.

“They are truly active and engaged partners,” he says. “Some of the people have worked in partnership by sending some of their more skilled trades people to work side-by-side with our students on large project-based learning experiences. It’s been phenomenal.” — Daniel G. Jacobs

**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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turbo TeeJet</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turbo TeeJet Induction</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC TeeJet</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG TwinJet</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turbo TwinJet</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XP BoomJet</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Droplet-size categories may vary with nozzle capacity, spray angle and spray pressure.)

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Fleet science

BY KAY OHLY

Two landscape trailers pull up at a stoplight. One is loaded with a rainbow of equipment—red, orange, yellow, green. The other is uniform in color, an advertisement on wheels for any given manufacturer. One trailer’s machines are brand-new, still shiny. The other contains a range of mowers: a barely broken-in walk-behind and a veteran, workhorse rider.

Which fleet will get the best mileage? “We have considered whether we can put together a cookie-cutter trailer of equipment that would get a landscaper started in the business,” says Edric Funk, marketing manager for Toro Landscape Contractor Equipment. But defining the perfect fleet just isn’t that easy.

Neither is predicting how long a fleet will last. “You can’t put a time period on a piece of equipment because that depends on use and abuse, and how equipment is maintained,” says Gilbert Peña, commercial segment strategy manager for John Deere.

There’s no exact recipe for building up a mower fleet, and there aren’t hard-fast rules on when to retire equipment. However, landscape contractors who think business first when investing in their working capital will assemble a more productive fleet. Maintenance records, parts commonality, trained crews and plain-and-simple preference figure into equipment purchases.

“There is not a blueprint on how to do this, but the most profitable and successful landscape contractors make a science out of it,” Funk notes. “They look at total cost of operation, and they engage in time studies or deeper analysis other than the initial equipment bill.”

Business first

Whether buying a startup fleet or replacing retired machines, landscape contractors should look at their client databases before shopping the dealership. Some questions to consider: Are jobs primarily residential, and if so, how large are the properties? Does a major commercial account warrant investing in equipment to manage an expansive space?

“Study your job requirements first—your lay of the land,” Peña recommends. “You make your money go farther by adapting your products to meet your job requirements.”

For most, demands call for a variety of equipment: a 21-in. walk-behind, a zero-turn mower, and perhaps out-front riders for certain sites.

The next order of business is to evaluate crew size and operating experience. “In some cases, having more people on smaller pieces of equipment fits in better to an owner’s overall plan,” Funk says. “Other contractors may need to do with as few people as they can, so they look for larger deck sizes to maximize their production.”

These decisions require crunching numbers, of course: deciding whether equipment or labor is a better investment, and calculating man-hours saved.
either by trading up to larger decks or adding more employees. Meanwhile, the way employees treat mowers determines equipment life span.

"A machine in the hands of an owner-operator will last a long time versus machines in the hands of crewmembers," Peña says. "If you can’t control how [operators] use equipment, concentrate on controlling things tied to machine life." These include properly loading, securing and unloading equipment, as well as, routine maintenance: changing oil, filters, belts and blades.

"If contractors overlook the importance of routine maintenance in a fleet, their machines will wear our prematurely and they will literally have no value after the warranty period is over," Peña says.

Warranties typically last one to three years, and contractors can expect mowers to operate smoothly for twice the warranty life. Some don’t wait that long, says Cheri Stange of Scag Power Equipment. "Contractors who trade up to the newest models more often generally rely less on warranty claims," Stange says. "Some swap out their machines will wear out before the warranty period is over," Peña says.

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