Prophesy™ – It’s no ordinary fungicide.

Flexible  Proven  Dispersible

Prophesy™
Fungicide Disease Control For Lawn
- Features the proven active ingredient propiconazole
- DG Pro dispersible carrier dissolves within minutes and transfers nutrients into the turf canopy
- Three use rates for flexibility in a variety of disease situations
- 25 pound bag / 42 bags per pallet / SGN 100

Formulated for use on:
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- Landscape areas
- Commercial turf areas and sod farms

Labeled for control of:
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- Take-all Patch
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That's intelligent.

Save 20% with Rain Bird® 5000 Plus Rotors featuring flow shut-off control.

Add our 5000 Plus Rotors to your jobs for quick installs and proven Rain Curtain™ nozzle technology. Unlike the competition's more expensive rotor, the 5000 Plus offers flow shut-off control, allowing you to turn off individual rotors instead of entire zones. Delivering higher-performing rotors at lower prices. Now that's The Intelligent Use of Water.™

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rain Bird® 5000 Plus Series Rotors</th>
<th>Rain Bird List Price</th>
<th>Hunter List Price</th>
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<td>Save 20% over Hunter® PGP ADJ™ Rotor*</td>
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NEW PODCASTS
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- Jeffrey Scott's 10-Minute Business Booster
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FEATURES
8 Digital slots
Playing the odds, landscapers move more marketing bets from printed business-directory ads to their Web sites, search engine optimization strategies, e-newsletters and pay-per-click spots.
BY MARTY WHITFORD

45 Ponds need not apply
Create a disappearing waterfall in 12 easy steps.

COLUMNS
6 The Hall Mark
BY RON HALL

22 Working Smarter
BY JIM PALUCH

24 The Benchmark
BY KEVIN KEHOE

25 Jacobs' Journal
BY DANIEL G. JACOBS

32 Best Practices
BY BRUCE WILSON

56 Whit's World
BY MARTY WHITFORD

IN EVERY ISSUE
52 Products
54 Classifieds
55 Resources

ON THE COVER
Photo illustration by Jeff Balasz

SPECIAL SECTION
33 SNOW + ICE GUIDE
Don't underestimate your value when pricing snow and ice services.

OUR MISSION: Landscape Management — the leading information resource for large, successful lawn care, landscape maintenance, design/build and irrigation professionals — empowers Green Industry professionals to learn and grow from their peers and our exclusive business intelligence. Serving as the industry conscience, we not only report on but also help shape news, views, trends and solutions.
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**Weeks of Green**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+

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**XCU**™
(Slow-Release Fertilizer)

Regular fertilizer

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Add up the benefits:

+ Great looking turf with less fertilizer

+ The more XCU in blend = Less total Nitrogen needed

+ Higher Profits ( $ $ )

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Granular Products Providing Immediately Available Calcium

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Be more productive — or take less

There are just three ways to weather a severe economic crisis: expect and take less, work more or become more productive. Most of us prefer the third option, although likely we’re all being forced by present circumstances to accept all three in various degrees.

One thing is clear: The age of extravagant waste is over. Gone. That era is as far removed from our realities as the reign of the dinosaurs. The housing and financial meltdowns of this past year have sobered us to the realities of our new economy, just as surely as the brutal slap in the face of 9/11 awoke us to our vulnerability in an unstable world.

Simply put, uncertainty over the prospects for a short or long economic recovery is not uncertain anymore. We’re in for a long, hard, painful slog. Economists are divided over when our economy will bottom and begin improving again. Some say we’re already there, and predict small, but positive growth by year’s end. Most aren’t so optimistic. Regardless, nobody is predicting that our economy will soon return to the level of activity it displayed just two short years ago.

Better than most
Acknowledging that, Landscape Management’s recent industry-wide survey revealed that the landscape/lawn service industry is faring better than many other industries through these tough times.

Consumers want their properties maintained and established lawn care, and many landscape businesses are plugging along at a steady, if hardly stellar, pace. Some are actually doing better than expected — perhaps because, spooked by events of this past fall and winter, they projected too-low sales and revenues. Other firms serve markets that have not suffered so severely from job losses and home foreclosures. Weather is a factor, too. Lots of rain in the U.S. Southeast caused the lifting of business-killing watering bans.

Other positive factors in our favor include:

- **We’re now an expected expense.** Many clients that have experienced the beauty and benefits of green, healthy lawns and maintained properties no longer view them as luxuries or extras but as essentials — probably not as essential as, say, cell phones or wireless Internet, but you see what I mean.
- **Our services are affordable.** The cost for lawn care and property maintenance for most homeowners is about the same as their cable or utility bills, and we’ve made it increasingly easy to pay for these services by promoting pre-payments, online payments and credit card payments.
- **We help protect property values.** Property owners, whether residential or commercial, realize they need to protect their properties’ value in the face of decreased property prices. Commercial and rental properties in particular must be maintained to attract traffic — and tenants.
- **We improve the “staycation” experience.** Many homeowners are forgoing expensive vacations and now view their properties as sanctuaries to relax and entertain family and friends.

Of course, if unemployment keeps rising, the construction industry remains in shambles and the credit crisis doesn’t improve (or worsens), even these advantages may evaporate and we will have to rejuggle the options of accepting less, working harder or boosting our productivity.
Introducing a granular that protects like a sprayable. New Heritage® G fungicide spreads evenly over large areas and the granules easily dissolve with just a heavy dew. It’s quick. It’s comprehensive. And it’s founded on a proven active ingredient that provides peace of mind for up to 28 days.

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DIGITAL SLOTS

BY MARTY WHITFORD
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Playing the odds, landscapers move more marketing bets from printed local business directories to their Web sites, search engine optimization strategies, e-newsletters and pay-per-click spots.

MARKETING AND GAMBLING ARE CLOSE COUSINS.

"With both, you gotta play to win — but you also have to know when to walk away," says Steve Chepurny, president of Beechwood Landscape Architecture & Construction, a $6 million-a-year business based in Southampton, NJ.

Every year, Chepurny, like many landscape company owners, spends thousands of dollars hoping his number comes up — his business' telephone number, that is, as homeowners leaf through pages of landscaping and lawn care ads in various printed local business directories. Last year, Beechwood Landscape spent more than $14,000 on print business-directory ads.

"Our Yellow Pages ads yielded just 11 calls and zero new business," Chepurny says. "The few leads that did come in were mediocre, and I'm being generous when I say mediocre."

After failing to break even on these marketing spends in recent years, Chepurny scratched 85% of his print business-directory advertising. He's betting — and winning — big on digital slots such as the company's Web site, BeechwoodLandscape.com, search engine optimization (SEO) strategies — to rank among the top listings when consumers search Google, Yahoo and other Web engines — and online ads with links on referral sites, such as SuperPages.com and AngiesList.com.

"Pulling most of our print business-directory ads was a difficult decision because every Tom, Dick and Harry has ads in those books," Chepurny says. "But digital marketing is where it's at. The odds on returns are much better. Our Web site and pay-per-click ads generated 125 leads and 30 new customers last year — and we invested just half the amount there that we spent on printed business-directory ads."

Chepurny no longer follows the marketing spends of Tom, Dick and Harry. His digital marketing returns place him at the front of a new and growing pack: hungry, savvy landscapers who bet with their wallets, not their peers.

Landscape professionals like Chepurny smartly are following their customers and prospects to the Web. They're shifting more of their marketing bets from traditional printed local business directories to their company Web sites, SEO strategies, customer e-newsletters and pay-per-click ad spots to attract more prospects, better serve their customers and green their bottom lines.

Playing the numbers

Beechwood Landscape recently invested $2,500 to upgrade its Web site and SEO, and routinely spends $500 to $600 per month on pay-per-click ads. The company also pays $400 per month for an expanded listing and link on SuperPages.com — the digital counterpart to Yellow Pages' print directories — and $125 per month for a similar spot on AngiesList.com. Monthly e-newsletters packed with landscaping tips and special offers help the company nurture its business relation-
ships, upsell maintenance services and reap referrals. (Note: For tips on launching a customer e-newsletter, read this month’s Whit’s World on page 56.)

“We’re spending more on digital marketing than ever before, and with good reason — our online investments pay for themselves many times over,” Chepurny says.

Printed local business directories help keep the phone ringing at New Castle, CO-based Dwyer Greens & Flowers, but owner Lynn Dwyer says the calls usually waste time.

“Most of the calls we get out of those books are from price shoppers or homeowners looking for free on-site consultations or phone advice,” Dwyer says. “I work 90 hours a week during our peak season. I don’t have time for monkey business.”

Dig Right In Landscaping in Brookfield, IL, is another digital marketing believer. During the past two years, the company cut its annual print business-directory ad spend by two-thirds to $4,000. The company reinvested part

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**WINNING THE WEB’S GREAT RACE**

Remember frantically racing your sibling, elbowing each other all the way to the side door, just to be the first to tell Mom your version of the story? Turns out, even those bruising experiences teach valuable business lessons.

Winning The Great Race to tell your story first is what search engine optimization (SEO) is all about, says Jon Wuebben, author of “Content Rich: Writing Your Way to Wealth on the Web.” Wuebben spoke at the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association’s (TOCA’s) 20th annual meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 12-14.

“An overwhelming majority — up to 70% — assume the companies atop Google and other search-engine rankings are the clear leaders in their fields,” Wuebben says. “Do you know where you rank — and why?”

Some of Wuebben’s SEO tips are:

- Subscribe to wordtracker.com ($275/year) or keyworddiscovery.com ($50/month) to stay abreast of the most-searched words online.
- Write down the search words most pertinent to your business — in order of their popularity.
- Write down the search words most pertinent to your business — in order of their popularity.
- Incorporate one to three of these search words on each page of your Web site(s), digital press releases, e-newsletters and blogs.
- Use three or fewer different keywords on each Web site page, taking care to not repeat the words more than three times per page because it will hinder your rankings on search engines.
- Use more-vague search words such as “lawn maintenance” on more-general Web pages, and more-detailed terms such as “zero-turn mower” on more-specific pages.
- Constantly add links to and from your Web site and measure your related traffic progress at linkpopularity.com.
- Hyperlink your press releases, e-newsletters and blogs to your Web site and offer RSS (reader subscription service) feeds.

“Want to grow your Web of influence?” Wuebben asks. “Follow these simple steps and you’ll race right past your online competitors.” — MW

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**TRUCK TIPS**

Insuring your vehicle is just the price of doing business. Luckily, that price can go down.

We know how hard you work to run your business. That’s why, in most states, Progressive Commercial Auto Insurance offers a discount to those who have been in operation for three or more years. And that’s not the only way you can save. We’ll give you a discount for paying in full. And even for having more than one kind of insurance. Getting the best for less. Now that’s Progressive.