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**LM MARKET MATCH** We've made your life a little easier by supplying icons that direct you to stories targeting your core business.

**B** – Business, **D/B** – Design/Build, **I** – Irrigation, **LC** – Lawn Care, **M** – Maintenance



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### LMdirect!

Following safe work practices during trenching and excavation activities can mean the difference between leaving the worksite safely to enjoy another day above ground ... or not.

### Athletic Turf News

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Many companies have turned to add-on services to keep the cash flowing year long.

### Get Growing

Using a less-common blooming tree with a unique flower breaks the monotony.

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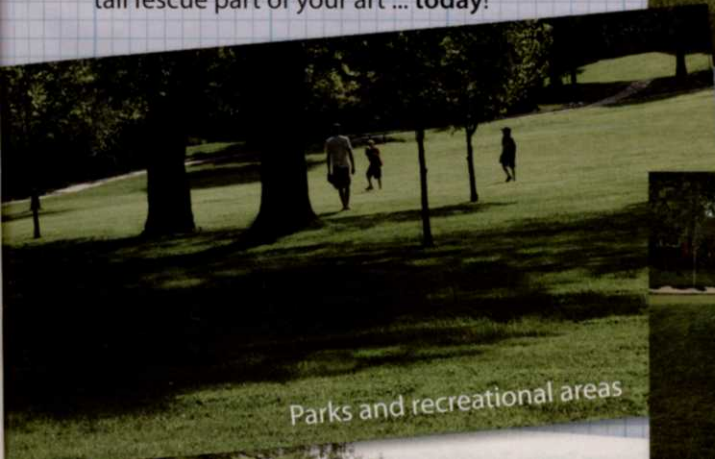
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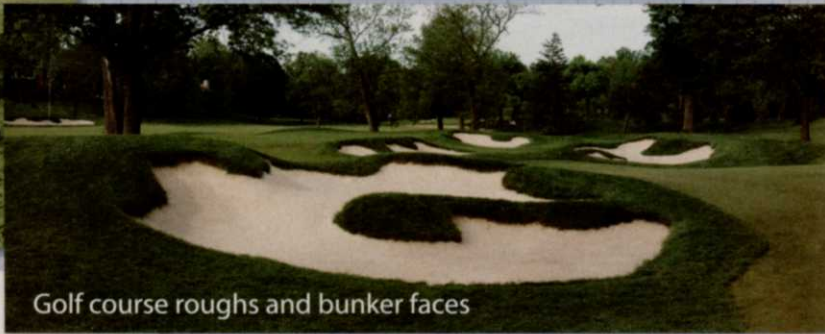
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## THE HALLMARK

RON HALL EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Contact Ron via e-mail at [rhall@questex.com](mailto:rhall@questex.com).

# 10 tips to beat the '09 recession

**H**ere are 10 suggestions to help get you through this season and prepare for better times. In the spirit of full disclosure, most came from friends in the business. I jotted some in notebooks, a few on loose scraps of paper I had in my pocket or handy by the phone in my office — and a couple on restaurant or cocktail napkins. Sometimes you get your best ideas after a drink or two. Here goes:

- 1. Reduce overhead.** Give a reward to any employee who comes up with an idea to cut overhead 5% or more. Employees often know where the waste is when owners and managers don't.
- 2. Trim equipment costs.** If a piece of equipment isn't making you money, sell it. Why pay insurance and worry about the risk of theft or damage on equipment you rarely use? Rent what you need for those occasional jobs.
- 3. Keep cash flowing.** Set up a system to monitor and manage cash. Stay on top of your receivables. Look at each customer's credit history before extending credit, especially for large projects. If you're having trouble meeting payment deadlines, talk to your vendors before the money is due. This goes double if the payment is to your bank.
- 4. Keep training your best employees and fire the troublemakers.** There are a lot of good people

---

Don't whine about the economy or other things you can't control. **Do what you can with your business, and stay positive.**

looking for careers in this tight job market. Cherry-pick bright young talent by building relationships with local high schools, vocational schools, community colleges and with local universities. Tip: Get to know the local FFA advisor. He or she can point out the most ambitious and talented students seeking careers.

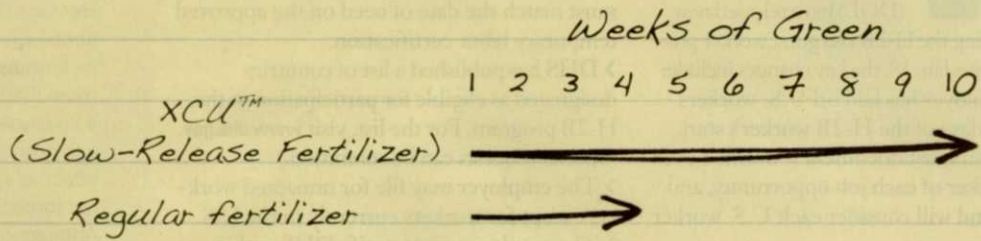
- 5. Seek better deals from subcontractors and suppliers.** Everybody's keen to keep cash flowing. In these conditions, it's not unreasonable to expect better service and lower prices for your loyalty.
- 6. Keep your best crews busy.** Make a deal with contractors in related but non-competing industries to share your crews to keep labor costs in line. Consider similar working arrangements to share costly equipment.
- 7. Ever hear of the Pareto principle?** This is the oft-quoted 80-20 rule of thumb — 20% of a company's customers generate 80% of its revenues or profits. This isn't necessarily true, especially for small independent service businesses. Even so, all companies have customers (or classes of customers) that are more profitable than others. Stay in touch with them. Make them feel special.
- 8. Be a bulldog when it comes to controlling costs.** Every dollar you save represents more than \$10 you don't have to sell to maintain the same profit level, assuming your net profit margin, for example's sake, is 10%.
- 9. Add more services.** What else can your employees do for customers while they're on their properties? Power washing? Gutter cleaning? Minor home repairs?
- 10. Reacquaint yourself with family, friends and fun.** Don't whine about the economy or other things you can't control. Do what you can with your business, and stay positive. Don't neglect your personal life, including your health. You're fortunate — more fortunate than most — if you're healthy, have family and friends and you're a part of this great industry. Enjoy it all.

# FERTILIZER 101

When the price of fertilizer goes up, how can I save money?

Use MORE slow-release fertilizer for MORE Weeks of Green

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- More time to get new customers
- Fewer applications, less work
- More profit 😊

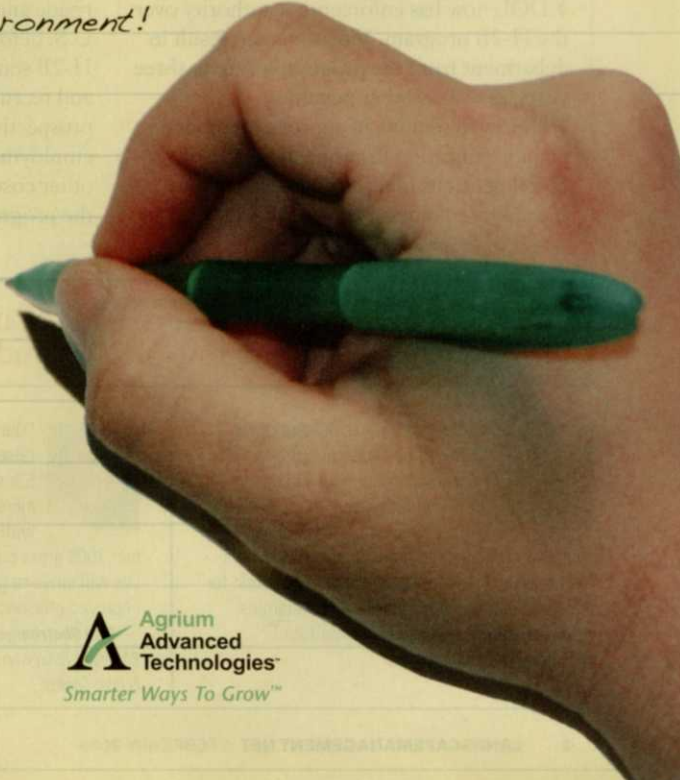


XCU Slow-Release Fertilizer is the best because...

- Keeps grass green up to 10 weeks, ordinary fertilizer lasts 4 weeks
- Most durable coating for gradual, consistent nutrient release
- Highest Nitrogen content, lowest Sulfur content
- Less leaching—better for the environment!



Note to Self  
Ask my distributor for a blend with at least 75% slow-release fertilizer. Insist on XCU!





# NEWS+VIEWS

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

## CLIPPINGS

### Heritage G fungicide receives EPA registration

GREENSBORO, NC — The EPA has registered Syngenta Professional Products' Heritage G fungicide for use on a variety of turf, including golf courses, sod farms, athletic fields, and residential and commercial lawns. Heritage G is a systemic strobilurin fungicide in a granular formulation that controls more than 21 diseases during a 28-day window. The products has been tested and proven effective against brown patch, red thread, Pythium, Anthracnose, gray leaf spot, snow mold, take-all patch, leaf spot, summer patch and necrotic ring spot, to name just a few turf diseases. The fungicide has the same efficacy as the sprayable versions, Heritage WG and Heritage TL.

### STIHL sponsors Tour des Trees

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA — Outdoor power equipment manufacturer STIHL is the title sponsor of this year's cross-country cycling and education event to benefit the Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund.

## H-2B regulation changes

**W**ashington, D.C. — The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Labor (DOL) have released new rules governing the H-2B visa guest worker program. Effective Jan. 18, the key changes include:

- ▶ If the employer has laid off U.S. workers within 120 days of the H-2B worker's start date, the firm must document it notified each laid-off worker of each job opportunity, and that it has and will consider each U.S. worker interested.
- ▶ The employer must offer, and pay throughout the H-2B guest worker's period of employment, a wage equal to or higher than the prevailing wage. Competitive terms and conditions must not be worse for U.S. workers than for H-2B workers.
- ▶ The employer must keep documents related to advertising, recruiting, prevailing wage determination, supporting documentation, and additional attestations for three years.
- ▶ DOL now has enforcement authority over the H-2B program. Violations can result in debarment from the program for up to three years, as well as other penalties.
- ▶ DHS will require an approved temporary labor certification in connection with all H-2B petitions filed; employers will have the ability to request review with DOL if an

H-2B visa application is denied.

- ▶ Beginning Oct. 1, 2009 (FY 2010), the employment start date indicated on Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, must match the date of need on the approved temporary labor certification.
- ▶ DHS has published a list of countries designated as eligible for participation in the H-2B program. For the list, visit [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov). (Special requests can be submitted.)
- ▶ The employer may file for unnamed workers except for workers currently in the U.S.
- ▶ The employer must notify DHS within two work days when the worker either: has not come to work within five days of his/her start date designated by the employer; completes his/her contract 30 days before the petitioned end date; or is fired/laid off. The employer must retain evidence of DHS notification in such situations for one year.
- ▶ New rules also: reduce from six months to three months the time an H-2B worker who has spent three years in the U.S. must reside and be physically present outside the U.S. before he or she is eligible to re-obtain H-2B status; and prohibit H-2B employers and recruiters from imposing certain fees on prospective H-2B workers as a condition of employment or passing along application and other costs to H-2B workers participating in the program.

## WORD ON THE STREET

Overall, are you raising your prices, lowering them or keeping them the same in 2009 and why?



"BIO Landscape, a member of the Yellowstone Landscape Group, will be holding existing pricing during 2009 for landscape maintenance work. Given the current economy, and the financial state of our existing customers, a raise in pricing would be suicidal. New work, for the most part, will be bid with tighter margins."

— **Robert Taylor**, president of Houston-based BIO Landscape & Maintenance



"Our philosophy and practice is to raise prices and hourly rates 3% to 5% every year. In 2009 we are being more conservative and selective with increases. Departments that met 2008 gross profit goals will have no increase. We will strive to gain additional margin through improved efficiency."

— **Tom Shotzberger**, general manager, of Lancaster, PA-based Tomlinson Bomberger Lawn Care, Landscape & Pest Control



"For 2009, we have decided to put a freeze on price increases. However, we do hold multi-year contracts that will increase in the second and third years at around 2% to 3%. We are working harder than ever to become a lean company to maintain profitability."

— **Tony Sposato**, president of Milton, DE-based Sposato Landscape Co.

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PROVEN SOLUTIONS

## Irrigation Association participates in Congressional Water Caucus briefing

Irrigation Association (IA) staff recently attended the January briefing of the Congressional Water Caucus. The event was the first meeting of the Water Caucus for the 111th Congress.

The educational event was moderated by IA External Affairs Director Andy Smith. Fifty people attended the briefing, with the audience comprised of senior Congressional staff and water industry professionals. Attendees discussed the history and current issues facing the nation's water infrastructure, and viewed the PBS documentary "Liquid Assets: The Story of Our Water Infrastructure."

"Educating members of Congress on national water policy is imperative to our

Irrigation Association (IA) External Affairs Director Andy Smith moderated the recent Congressional Water Caucus briefing.



mission of promoting efficient irrigation," said IA's Federal Affairs Director John Farmer. "It's an honor for the Irrigation Association to moderate the inaugural briefing of the Water Caucus and Andy did an excellent job advancing the IA's message and credibility amongst key leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives."

The Congressional Water Caucus was founded in 2007 in response to the growing need for Congress to address the nation's water woes. The group established "Twelve Principles of Water Policy," a set of goals for the caucus that includes achieving a sufficient water supply for urban and rural areas; considering all available technologies for increasing water supply efficiently while safeguarding the environment; and implementing strategies to improve efficiencies.

The Irrigation Association is the leading membership organization for irrigation equipment and system manufacturers, dealers, distributors, designers, consultants, contractors and end users. Originally founded in 1949, IA includes more than 2,000 corporate and technical members and is dedicated to promoting efficient irrigation. For more information, visit [www.irrigation.org](http://www.irrigation.org).

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poor nutrition, are revealed with glowing colors (red, coral, pink) and reportedly can be detected two to 10 days before they are visible to the unaided eye. For more information, visit [www.underhill.us](http://www.underhill.us).

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