and station retrofits, improving head layouts, using performance-enhancing nozzles and utilizing drip irrigation “like there’s no tomorrow.”

**EDUCATION IS THE KEY**

Sipe says the most important piece of the puzzle is educating the homeowner. Each Heads Up Sprinkler technician is trained to spend as much time with each client as necessary, explaining the issues, listening and answering questions. This method builds trust between the company and the client and helps clients make a connection between the irrigation system controller, or “that thing in their garage,” and their water bill, Sipe says. Once clients see that wasted water equals wasted dollars, they begin to pay more attention.

“We are the connection point between the automatic sprinkler system and the water bill,” Sipe says. “When you are the connection, you are more than an irrigation company. You are an information base that can help customers.”

Customers typically understand or have the “aha moment” when they see their water bill go from, say, $300 to $125, Sipe says.

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  ProgressiveCommercial.com
“Whether I spend an hour or an hour-and-a-half with a customer, it’s all billable, so I don’t have to race from one customer to the next,” Sipe says. “The customer always wants more knowledge. We take the time we need to take with each one.” With that, Sipe recognizes water conservation is a long-standing issue in Texas, which is why she says, now more than ever, it’s important to spread the knowledge. Alongside its hands-on approach to repairing irrigation systems and educating clients, Heads Up Sprinkler continues to educate people about water conservation on a larger scale.

For instance, as a member of the Water Efficiency Network of North Texas, Sipe voluntarily teaches water management techniques to homeowners as well as heads of city water management programs—many of whom are required to meet 10-percent conservation goals annually throughout their regions.

“The future of Heads Up Sprinkler is going to include giving a lot more of our time back to the community, teaching more classes and helping the water users of the world use less,” Sipe says. “But the focus of what we do has never changed. We work with the homeowners, we fix what’s broken and we educate.”

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Charlotte, N.C.

**The Ticker:**

**IRRIGATION**

**HydroPoint Data Systems** received the Best Savings Impact vendor award from the Irving Co. for its positive influence on the company’s water savings, primarily through the use of its WeaterTRAK Pro smart controllers.

Ewing promoted Warren Gorowitz to vice president of sustainability. Gorowitz will head the company’s outreach programs as well as evolve its sustainable product mix.
LANDSCAPING
TOOLS OF THE TRADE

GEAR UP FOR THE SEASON TODAY, AND SAVE 10% ON YOUR ORDER!
See back page for details.

PLUS
TECNUP® RASH RELIEF™ MEDICATED ANTI-ITCH SPRAY
A $12.00 VALUE FREE WITH YOUR ORDER!
**New! Oregon PowerNow**

**40V MAX Cordless Trimmer/Edger**
- No more cords, no gas-oil mixing, no warm-up, and no emissions
- Lithium ion battery pack offers long run time, premium cell technology, and constant no-fade power
- Holds a charge in storage for months
- Swift load trimmer head has dual lines for faster cutting
- Flip down guide for precise edging

| Part No. | Description                                      | Price  
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|--------
| 80183   | Repl. Swift Load Trimmer Head                    | $23.00 |
| 80184   | Trimmer/Edger (Tool Only)                        | $179.00|
| 80185   | Trimmer/Edger Kit w/2.4 Ah Battery               | $399.00|

**New! Oregon PowerNow**

**40V MAX Cordless Hedge Trimmer**
- Lithium ion battery pack offers long run time, premium cell technology, constant no-fade power
- Holds a charge in storage for months
- No gas-oil mixing, no pull cords, no warm-up, no emissions, and it is 4 times quieter than a gas trimmer
- 24” blade has laser-cut precision cutting blades for up to 3/4” cutting capacity

| Part No. | Description                                      | Price  
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|--------
| 80177   | Hedge Trimmer (Tool Only)                        | $179.00|
| 80178   | Hedge Trimmer Kit w/1.25 Ah Battery              | $329.00|
| 80179   | Hedge Trimmer Kit w/2.4 Ah Battery               | $399.00|

**New! Oregon PowerNow**

**40V MAX Cordless Chain Saw**
- Runs cleaner, quieter, and is free from the hassles of gasoline or cords
- 40V MAX Lithium Ion Battery holds a charge for months and provides high power
- 14” bar
- PowerSharp® System sharpens on the saw, on the job, in seconds

| Part No. | Description                                      | Price  
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|--------
| 80174   | Chain Saw (Tool Only)                            | $249.00|
| 80175   | Chain Saw Kit w/1.25Ah Battery                   | $349.00|
| 80176   | Chain Saw Kit w/2.4 Ah Battery                   | $399.00|

**New! Oregon PowerNow Battery Packs and Chargers**
- Lithium ion battery pack offers long run time, premium cell technology, constant no-fade power

| Part No. | Description                                      | Price  
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|--------
| 80171   | 1.25 Ah Battery Pack                             | $99.00 |
| 80172   | 2.4 Ah Battery Pack                              | $149.00|
| 80173   | C600 Battery Charger                             | $59.00 |
| 80174   | C750 Rapid Charger                               | $99.00 |
4691 New! Lawn Bagg™
- Free-standing
- 4 corner loops for easy lifting and hauling
- Foldable, polypropylene bags are puncture-resistant and will not tear

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8570 New! Brush Grubber Boss S.D.
- Pull tree stumps up to 8”
- 3.9” Diameter pads
- Heavy duty 1.5” steel

4773 New! Mag-Lok® Tools

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<tr>
<th>33271</th>
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<tr>
<td>#2 Round Point Shovel Head</td>
<td>Flat Spade Head</td>
<td>16-Tine Forged Bow Rake Head</td>
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$25.95 $27.25 $28.25

4773 New! Mag-Lok® Heavy-Duty Fiberglass Handles
- 4mm (wall thickness) fiberglass handles

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<tr>
<th>33267</th>
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<tr>
<td>28” D-Grip</td>
<td>40” D-Grip</td>
<td>48” Straight</td>
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$27.25 $29.25 $27.25

4808 New! True Temper® ClogFree Poly Leaf Rake with Cushion Grip

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<td>24”W w/11 Tines</td>
<td>30”W w/15 Tines</td>
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$18.50 $21.75

4675 New! Corona® MAX Diamond Blade Steel Spades

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<td>12” Blade, 26” D-Grip Handle</td>
<td>15” Blade, 54” Handle</td>
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$72.95 $98.95

7874 New! Hy-Pro™ 15-Gallon Professional Fuel Station
- Made of steel and can be used with all types of fuel
- 10’ hose with metal nozzle
- Gravity feed tank

$158.95

94721 Hy-Pro™

4717 New! Work Sharp® Knife and Tool Sharpener
- Made in USA

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<th>35680</th>
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<tr>
<td>Work Sharp</td>
<td>Belt Accessory Kit</td>
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$79.95 $9.95

75177 Boss S.D.

$239.95

www.forestry-suppliers.com/promo/landscape | 1-800-647-5368
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4616</td>
<td>New! CheckSpark Engine Ignition Analyzer</td>
<td>Can be used to test any two-stroke or four-stroke engine</td>
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<tr>
<td>4811</td>
<td>New! Oregon® SuperTwist® Platinum Gatorline™</td>
<td>Highly flexible co-polymer core, Resists welding up to 498°F</td>
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<tr>
<td>4608</td>
<td>New! Gasoline Tank Snake™</td>
<td>Absorbs both free and bound water in ethanol-blended gasoline, Becomes dark blue when saturated</td>
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<tr>
<td>7446</td>
<td>Echo® Gas-Powered Backpack Blower</td>
<td>25.4 cc Power Boost Vortex™ Engine, 22.3 fl. oz. see-through fuel tank, Noise level (ANSI): 65 dB</td>
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<tr>
<td>7459</td>
<td>Edgit String Trimmer Attachment</td>
<td>Trimming and edging guide for straight shaft trimmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7455</td>
<td>W.E. Chapps Trimmer Motor Cover</td>
<td>Proven at sustained highway speeds for open trailers, Also keeps dirt, excessive dust and water out of the carburetor, Fully adjustable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>W.E. Chapps Backpack Blower Cover</td>
<td>Custom fits and protects all backpack blowers, Waterproof, abrasion- and tear-resistant outer cover</td>
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<tr>
<td>93037</td>
<td>TruFuel 50:1 Engineered Fuel/Oil</td>
<td>Ready to use 2-cycle fuel, Ethanol-free, Remains fresh for more than 2 years after opening, Case of six 32 oz. cans</td>
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<td>W.E. Chapps Backpack Blower Cover</td>
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<td>Echo® Gas-Powered Backpack Blower</td>
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<td>Oregon® SuperTwist® Platinum Gatorline™</td>
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<td>Engine Ignition Analyzer</td>
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SAVE 10% ON YOUR ORDER! THRU 12/31/14. Use Key Code on back page when ordering.

**4760 New! Helly Hansen Voss Jacket**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Size</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<td>21053 Medium</td>
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**7701 Peltor® No-Touch™ Earplugs**

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<td>94154 Without Cord</td>
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<td>94155 With Cord</td>
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**4204 Elvex® QuieTunes™ 660 Series AM/FM Radio Earmuffs**

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<td>94120 New! Rechargeable</td>
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**4760 New! Helly Hansen Voss Pant**

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<td>21058 Extra Large</td>
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**4714 New! JACKSON SAFETY® R10 Dual-Valve N95 Particulate Respirator**

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<th>Model</th>
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<td>23138 Box of 10</td>
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**7454 Strap Chapps™**

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<td>23443 Dark Green</td>
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**2863 Radians® Altitude™ Polarized Safety Glasses**

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<tr>
<td>23244 Black w/ Smoke Lens</td>
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<tr>
<td>23247 Tortoise w/ Brown Lens</td>
<td>$26.95</td>
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**4718 New! TURFgrabber™ Traction Gear**

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<td>23029 Small</td>
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<td>23013 Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>23014 Large</td>
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**4809 New! Outdoor Research BugOut Gaiters™**

<table>
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<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25103 Small</td>
<td>$35.95</td>
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<td>25104 Medium</td>
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<td>25112 Large</td>
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<tr>
<td>25114 X-Large</td>
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**4759 New! Carhartt® Carbondale™ Safety Glasses**

- Black/Tan Frame

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<th>Model</th>
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<tr>
<td>23051 Clear Lens</td>
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<td>23053 Gray Lens</td>
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<tr>
<td>23054 Bronze</td>
<td>$8.40</td>
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**4810 New! Uvex Stealth® Goggles**

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<th>Model</th>
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<tr>
<td>23454 Clear, Anti-Scratch</td>
<td>$18.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>23456 Gray Lens</td>
<td>$15.75</td>
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</table>

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**7664**
*Fiberglass Ironclad Handle Brush Grubber*
- Handles small tree stumps and brush up to 2” diameter!
- Eight no slip grip teeth per pad
- Spring operated jaws
- Grip pads rotate 360°

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12”</th>
<th>18”</th>
<th>22”</th>
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<tr>
<td>$20.95</td>
<td>$24.75</td>
<td>$27.95</td>
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**8005**
*Corona® Trenching Shovels*
- 35° angled handle for easy cleaning and digging of trenches
- 13 gauge steel blade
- 48” American ash wood handle

<table>
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<tr>
<th>3”</th>
<th>4”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$21.25</td>
<td>$21.25</td>
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**7761**
*Spear Head Spade™*
- 11”H x 9”W High carbon manganese steel blade
- Cushion grip

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<tr>
<th>33886 Spade</th>
<th>33887 Long Handle</th>
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<tr>
<td>$45.50</td>
<td>$46.95</td>
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**1760**
*Ontario Military-Issue Machetes with Hand Guard*
- Hand guard for protection from thorns, brambles, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12”</th>
<th>18”</th>
<th>22”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$20.95</td>
<td>$24.75</td>
<td>$27.95</td>
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</tbody>
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**4805**
*New! Gerber Gator Kukri Machete*
- Ergonomic Gator Grip handle, slip-proof grip, and hefty full tang construction
- 12-inch blade of corrosion-resistant 1050 Steel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>33867 Gator Kukri Machete</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$38.75</td>
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**7369**
*Tool Holder*
- 12” Long
- Perfect for storage
- Holds four pushbrooms or other tools of similar size
- Four pre-drilled holes for installation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>94720 Tool Holder</th>
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<tr>
<td>$6.95</td>
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**4684**
*New! UnionTools® Union Select Fiberglass Handle Bow Rake*
- 15-3/4”W head with 15 teeth, each 3” long
- Steel ferrule
- 48” Textured fiberglass handle

<table>
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<tr>
<th>33877 Model 2433200</th>
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<td>$23.50</td>
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**4685**
*New! UnionTools® Union Select Fiberglass Handle Round Point Shovel*
- 9” x 11-1/2” Heavy-duty blade with Dura-Torque® crimp collar, forward turned step, and open back
- 48” Textured fiberglass handle

<table>
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<th>33878 Model 2433000</th>
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**4686**
*New! UnionTools® Union Select Fiberglass Handle Square Point Shovel*
- 9-1/4” x 11-1/2” Heavy-duty blade with Dura-Torque® crimp collar, forward turned step, and open back
- 48” Textured fiberglass handle

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<tr>
<th>33879 Model 2433100</th>
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</table>
### Save 10% on Your Order!

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#### Jameson Big Mouth Pruner/Saw Package
- **80170** with Fiberglass Poles: $159.95
- **80190** w/B-Lite Poles: $234.95

#### Felco® Model 2 Hand Pruner
- **81130** 8-1/2” Long: $49.95

#### New! KURO Hori-Hori Soil Knife
- **33487** KURO: $29.50
- **33490** Leather Sheath: $11.75

#### Barnel® Ultra Reach® Telescopic Pruner
- **81160** 6’ - 10’ Telescopic Pole: $108.50

#### Corona® 13” Curved Pruning Saws
- **81262** Plastic Handle: $27.25
- **81272** Wooden Handle: $27.25

#### Fanno Pole Saw with 16-1/2” Blade
- **81023** Fanno Pole Saw: $34.95

#### New! Jameson® Barracuda™ Tri-Cut Pole Saw Blades
- **81316** 13” Tri-Cut: $15.95
- **81318** 16” Tri-Cut: $18.90

#### Porter-Ferguson Forester Heavy-Duty Brush Cutters
- **1-1/2” Capacity

#### Tree Bandage® Wound Dressing
- **79068** Model 0290F 16 oz. Bottle: $12.95
- **79101** One Gallon: $37.95

#### New! Treekote Pruning Tool and Saw Treatment
- **81290** 11 oz. Aerosol: $12.50

---

Prevents the spread of harmful pathogens

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New! Ooze Tube® Tree Watering System

- Holds 400’ of 5/8˝ hose.
- Heavy-duty frame, 6’ leader hose, chrome handle with cushion grip, and four 10” pneumatic wheels.

New! Agratronix™ Soil Compaction Tester
- Molded housing, rubber hand grips, and a 24” stainless steel rod
- 1/2” tip for firm soil
- 3/4” tip for soft soil

New! Turf-Tec Soil pH Meter
- For all turfgrass areas
- Weatherproof non-corrosive metal
- Readout: 3.5 to 9.0
- Overall Height: 48” Tall

LaMotte® Model AM-31 Soil Test Kit
- Individual modules of chemical test equipment
- Each includes instructions and reagents for 50 tests

Duckbill Earth Anchor Kits
- Patented Duckbill earth anchors work like toggle bolts in soil

1-800-647-5368 | www.forestry-suppliers.com/promo/landscape
1880 Neutralize Tank Cleaner

- One tablespoon cleans a 3-gallon sprayer
- One pound treats approximately 100 gallons

1855 D.B. Smith Contractor Series Sprayer
- Features a five-nozzle system
- Accepts TeeJet® nozzles
- 50’ hose, 21” heavy-duty poly wand

13298 2-Gallon Sprayer  $39.75
13299 3-Gallon Sprayer  $47.50

7583 EarthWay® EV-N-SPRED™ S25 Spray-PRO Mark III Sprayer
- Spray width of 2.5’ to 5’, and covers up to 13,000 square feet
- Heavy-duty epoxy-coated Diamond chassis
- 13” Pneumatic stud wheels

69012 New! Fertileeze® Fertilizer Applicator
- With each pump, the wand delivers one tablespoon of fertilizer
- Container holds 750 teaspoons

14013 New! SpotOn® Spray Tip Pressure Tester
- Digital display reads in PSI, Bars, or kPa

www.forestry-suppliers.com/promo/landscape | 1-800-647-5368
8284  
**CARB Compliant No-Spill® Fuel Cans**  
- Meet the California Air Resources Board (CARB) requirements for portable fuel containers  

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1.25 gal.</th>
<th>2.5 gal.</th>
<th>5 gal.</th>
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7646  
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Everybody can mow grass,” says Michael Lancaster, president of Florida Landscape Consultants (FLC). That’s why he stresses the importance of building relationships.

Lancaster, 54, has worked as a sales representative, business owner and consultant for nearly 30 years in the Green Industry. During that time, he’s seen how relationship building—with other business associates and with customers—can affect success.

To that end, Lancaster attributes FLC’s fast-track growth to the bonds he’s formed with customers and colleagues. The Tampa, Fla.-based company is on pace to generate $4 million in 2014 and $10 million by 2017. He started the company in 2012.

ROAD TO SUCCESS
Lancaster entered the landscaping and lawn care business in the 1980s. He was working as a district sales representative for General Foods Corp. when a friend asked him if he’d like a sales position at ChemLawn’s commercial business unit in Tampa.

He said yes and took a crash course on agronomy and horticulture. Despite having no experience in the Green Industry, Lancaster quickly became a top sales representative.

In 1991, he decided to start his own commercial landscape business. After five years, Nanak’s Landscaping in Tampa purchased it, retaining Lancaster as an independent marketing consultant for nearly 16 years.

Lancaster witnessed firsthand the importance of customer relationships three years ago when ValleyCrest then acquired Nanak’s. He was displeased with the direction the company was heading, so he left after about a year to form his own firm with longtime coworker Beau Bohannon, who was a regional vice president at Nanak’s.

Lancaster handles most of the marketing and financial facets of FLC, while Bohannon is responsible for the operations. The company provides landscape maintenance, tree care, irrigation, design and outdoor lighting services for commercial clients. The duo relied on its experience and reputation to build FLC’s client base.

3 KEYS TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
Green Industry veteran Michael Lancaster offers his top tips for customer loyalty.

1 Be honest. “I don’t promise the moon if I can’t deliver it. Don’t promise clients a weed-free lawn (right away) if they have dead stuff everywhere because they didn’t look after their irrigation system or didn’t spray chemicals at the right time. Be honest with customers in assessing what their landscape is. I make sure I describe everything I learned during the property evaluation process. Have a good understanding of customer expectations, what you can accomplish based on existing conditions, what your capabilities are and how much it’s going to cost.”

2 Be reliable. “If we’re supposed to be at a customer’s property on Tuesday at 9 a.m., we’re there every Tuesday at 9 unless there’s a rain issue. And even then I still communicate with the customer to let them know when we will be there. Reliability, to me, is to be on time, on schedule all the time. We do that with high degree of success because that’s how we operate. A lot of that has to do with planning/scheduling.”

3 Stay in touch. “See the customer often. What I hear all the time from new prospects is that nobody ever comes to see them to assess their satisfaction, evaluate their needs or check quality to ensure they’re getting what you promised them. That’s huge. I try to see all of my customers at least once a month. Account managers, department heads and lead men see our customers routinely. Our account managers, who will have no more than three crews, go to the properties each day the crew is there—every job, every day. It’s one of the most important characteristics of our company that helps us retain customers and keep satisfaction high. One of my bosses once said, ‘If you’re not talking to your customers, I guarantee someone else is.’”
REASON FOR CHANGE
Ultimately, it was a clash in management philosophies that led Lancaster to strike out on his own. He says ValleyCrest’s leadership team redesigned labor budgets, changed account managers and split business among various branches. That meant, without an explanation, many customers lost account managers who had worked with them for years. The company lost a lot of business, Lancaster says. That culmination inspired him to go back into business for himself, bringing along Bohannon, who has many years of operations experience to complement his sales/marketing focus.

“All ways work hard to surround yourself with good people,” Lancaster says. “Every successful business has a good core group of folks who are like-minded.”

Employee empowerment is important for any business that’s planning for long-term success, he adds. Account managers must have administrative skills and take ownership of their properties, Lancaster says. He also believes in promoting internally.

“You want your people to understand they have a path to a career,” Lancaster says. “Our turnover rate is very low because we invest a lot of time and effort into our employees, and they can sense that. We treat them like they have a career here, and they act like it’s a career.”

Katz is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

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The Ticker:
MAINTENANCE
Aftermarket outdoor power equipment parts supplier Rotary Corp. joined the National Hispanic Landscape Alliance as a supporting member. “Rotary recognizes the growing impact of Hispanic Americans in the landscape industry and supports the efforts of NHLA,” said Ed Nelson, president and CEO of Rotary.

Lawn Army expects to license 12 franchise locations in 2014, including one in Miami, pending as of press time. Established in 2011, Lawn Army is a brand of HomeTask, a multi-brand franchisor headquartered in Seattle. Lawn Army currently serves areas in Washington, South Carolina and California.
Learning curve

New York lawn care operator creates long-term customers through education.

By EMILY SCHAPPACHER

Brian Marcus started his career as a biology teacher. So it’s no surprise the owner of Morning Glory Lawncare & Design in Holbrook, N.Y., considers educating clients one of the most important parts of business, an approach that has helped the company expand from eight clients to nearly 150 in just three seasons—which also may account for its $100,000 in annual revenue. It’s all about providing information and establishing trust, Marcus says.

“Because of the whole teaching thing I never wanted to be that person who just tries to sell customers on, “This is what I’m doing,”” Marcus says. “I really try to explain to each customer the details about the products I use and what’s in them, what they’re supposed to do and the results they’re supposed to produce.”

Morning Glory Lawncare & Design, a one-man operation, specializes in lawn care and landscape design, primarily serving residential clients (90 percent) earned through word-of-mouth referrals. All clients have Marcus’s personal cell phone number, which they’re encouraged to call if there’s a concern. And he often makes visits to inspect any problems for free.

“You’re doing the right thing for them and that’s what it really comes down to,” Marcus says. “I want my customers
for the next 50 years, and I want their kids and their grandkids, too.”

**PROBLEM/SOLUTION**
A challenge Marcus came across time and again was a client’s lawn looking unhealthy because of inappropriate watering. He found many homeowners don’t know how to operate their irrigation systems and don’t realize they need to adjust them to provide their lawns specific amounts of water based on the time of year and the weather patterns. He made it a goal to teach all of his clients how to adjust their sprinkler heads and to educate them about proper watering techniques.

To do so Marcus created custom magnets for less than $150 that he’s provided to each customer for the past three years. These magnets detail how much water a lawn needs based on the temperature and the time of year. The simple and inexpensive marketing tool is an opportunity to educate the homeowner in a way that benefits everyone: Marcus has fewer problems to deal with and his clients have better-looking lawns all year.

“It was shocking how many phone calls I got saying, ‘Thank you,’” Marcus said. “What wasn’t so shocking is that when I’d go back to my clients’ houses, most of their problems were fixed.”

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**PLANET DAY OF SERVICE**

**NATIONWIDE, APRIL 22, 2014**

Each year, landscaping professionals from across the nation unite for a day of giving back to their local communities. On April 22, 2014, thousands of volunteers will participate in hundreds of projects that brighten communities, improve quality of life, and bring national awareness to our industry.

Giving back is a fundamental value we all share. Join in this nationwide effort. Visit [PLANETDayofService.org](http://www.PLANETDayofService.org) to include your project in the collage of caring.
Marcus knows not every issue can be solved so easily, though. That’s where his time and energy come into play. He makes it a point to drive by his customers’ homes in between visits to look at their lawns and try to prevent any significant problems before they start. If a customer does call with a concern, Marcus is at their home within two days, preferably at a time when the client also will be there so they can discuss the problem in person and Marcus can answer questions.

Marcus also knows a client’s lawn will only look as good as the product used on it. He opts for premium fertilizer, the same type he uses on his own lawn, and shares everything he knows about the product with his clients.

“Forming the bond of trust and honesty has helped expand the business, and the extra steps of being personable and sociable help my customers feel more secure in giving me money to take care of their properties,” Marcus says. “Knowing your product and being able to communicate well with customers or possible customers is a big thing.

“It’s actually just being a good person and an honest, actual human being—which is what you hope most people in the world are, but it’s not always the case,” he adds. “That is how I try to run my business.”

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Charlotte, N.C.
THE MISSION

When an unusually flat site threatened to consume the view of the yard, the homeowners let the design team take some risks—and were rewarded with an outdoor space that’s the envy of the neighborhood.

Brian Cossari, ASLA, a landscape architect for Wilton, Conn.-based Hoffman Landscapes, and his team were faced with a daunting challenge: The owners of a stately colonial wanted an outdoor space in which their young family could entertain, relax and play. But the flatness of the landscape presented drainage and wind issues.

To compensate, Cossari manipulated grade elevations to control views from the home while separating different areas for each hardscape element. Excavated material from the pool allowed the team to create raised masonry planters throughout the patio and pool area, without the feeling of being cramped.

“Drainage had to be carefully planned to integrate pitches of existing patio with proposed enhancements,” he says.

To complement the large scale of the home, the axis of the pool was brought as far away from the house as possible. “That brought the pool close to a rear yard setback line, so the pool was built slightly more narrow and longer than a traditional pool,” Cossari says.

Another unusual feature was the neighbor screen the Hoffman team built, featuring a large footing to withstand the wind sheer of cold Northeastern winters. The fake facade uses New England stone veneer to match the existing stonework on the residence. Its Rumford-style fireplace produces large, showy flames—ideal for chilly evenings outside.
1 | **Something to work with.** The builder of this brand-new home constructed egress stairs off the living spaces to a well-built, but simple terrace.

2 | **Add-on magic.** The existing terrace (shown in 1) provided a base for the outdoor kitchen and dining area, keeping both on the patio.

3 | **Bursts of color.** Planters filled with nepeta, day lilies, phlox, coreopsis, lantana and lavender bring color to the raised beds, providing sweet scents around the yard.

4 | **Water wonder.** A gunite swimming pool was installed with bluestone coping to integrate materials used on the existing builder’s patio. The pool patio is quartzite, which blends nicely with existing bluestone—yet is not as hot on bare feet around the pool. Note the pondless waterfall feature behind the two sets of chairs.

5 | **Dressed for dinner.** Designer Brian Cossari used biaxial symmetry in the pool layout. The center line of the door access spears through the dining room, pergola, lounging area, pool, spa, waterfall and backdrop berm planting.

6 | **Simple symmetry.** The other axis carries the view through the fence arbor, boxwood hedges, pool, living room and pergola, terminating at the outdoor living room and fireplace. Plantings include oak leaf hydrangea, inkberry, viburnum, butterfly bush and roses.

7 | **Privacy wall.** The shutters on this large, fake façade were crafted from recycled barn timbers with iron hinges and shutter dogs. These openings can be cut into doors to provide access to a future pool house, if desired.

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A decade ago Chris Lee went out on a limb when he decided to bring all tree services in-house for EarthWorks, located in Lillian, Texas. Now, garnering $75,000 in annual revenue from the add-on, the president of the $13 million company has no further reservations. Plus, the stump grinding facet of the service is one of EarthWorks’ most-desired services. Clients value it aesthetically and for liability concerns, Lee says.

EarthWorks subbed out its tree services for years but concerns arose due to “lack of control,” Lee says. “When we used subs, we constantly had to stay on top of them. At times they would not show up or be late and we were the ones that looked bad. With it in-house we have complete control over scheduling.”

Its current tree service options include installation, trimming/removal and stump grinding. The latter is much needed and profitable, Lee says. “Every tree we remove—unless in a native area—includes stump grinding,” he says.

But Lee says the company also found a way to secure some stump grinding gigs beyond its typical tree work. “We have been successful identifying old stumps from previous removals done by previous contractors and relating the liability involved to the client,” Lee says. “That typically leads to a quick approval of the job.”

Having grinders on hand has been a boon to landscape installation crews, too. Before purchasing the equipment, crews had to remove surface roots from planting areas with axes or mauls, which was time consuming and labor intensive. A grinder makes quick work of this task.

Lee says new stump grinders can be purchased for less than $6,000. The company purchased a single walk-behind grinder initially and now has three on-hand for full-time use.

EarthWorks primarily uses Rayco Mini Work-Force grinders because of the compact size. “We can get them into just about anywhere,” Lee says.

Stump grinding pricing differs depending on tree type, size and location, Lee says. Jobs typically range from $75 to $250 per stump. A separate two-man stump grinding crew typically conducts the work.

With stump grinding marketed as a component of its overall tree service offerings, Lee says the company most often promotes it to customers during existing tree service jobs, typically from employees identifying a stump and proposing the grinding service to clients while they’re on site.

Reflecting on EarthWorks’ implementation of the service, Lee says it was a smart business move. If it’s something a company has been thinking about and is in the market to do a lot of tree work, he encourages them to go for it. “If other owners are wavering on the decision as I was, I would say, like Nike says, ‘Just do it.’”

Payton is a freelance writer with eight years of experience writing about the landscape industry.