THE WORK

1 | Activity center. This early-morning view captures the entire entertainment area of the house, complete with a hot tub, fountain, pool, pergola, patio, outdoor grill and sculptures.

2 | Circle of life. Flower beds and sculptures surround this circular garden space.

3 | Grand entrance. The moon gate leads visitors to the entrance of the front garden, which opens to a large circle.

4 | Rock on. The driveway entrance displays a 40,000-pound stone from China. The bamboo has matured and helps reduce the scale of the house.

5 | Back to nature. Surrounding the back lawn is a wildflower and meadow garden. One of its challenges is to keep weeds from overtaking the planted flowers; intensive hand weeding is the solution.

6 | Transformative experience. Dusk settles in on “Floating Peaks.”

Founded in 1982, Sterling, Mass.-based Anderson Landscape Construction focuses on building gardens for private estates with features such as baseball fields, football fields, tennis courts, seasonal colorscapes, private intimate gardens, ice skating rinks and more. Learn more at AndLC.com.
Scoring with ice rinks

Being Based in Blasdell, N.Y., Mike Pace could have relied on snow plowing to make up for lost revenue in the off-season. But the owner and president of Pace Landscaping & Ice Rinks chose to veer from the usual to build backyard ice rinks instead. As a former hockey player, it was the perfect fit for Pace’s winter business.

Of course, being on the ice versus actually making the ice are two very different things, Pace says. Therefore he spent an entire year just researching the process and what would be involved before launching the service in 2010.

“We’re the only ones in the area doing this so, there was no business model or price points to follow,” Pace says.

He turned to his hockey friends and anyone he knew who had owned or built a backyard rink to figure what they liked about it and, more importantly, what they didn’t like.

“Almost everyone told me it was fun to build,” Pace says. “But what nobody liked was maintaining it or having to take it down in March. Plus, nobody liked storing the materials for next winter. It was an eyesore behind the shed.”

Having pinpointed the need, Pace built his business around the “do-it-all” concept. His company takes care of everything—providing the professional materials, installing the rink, maintaining it, taking it down and even storing it until next season.

The company installed more than 70 rinks this winter and signed contracts to maintain about 40 rinks. Pace charges a package price based on rink size for installation, take down and storage. Rink maintenance is a separate contract, which is priced per visit. Ice rink install add-on options include lighting, nets behind the goals, curved corners and bumper caps.

Getting It Done

This winter kept employees on their toes. Pace averaged about six one- to threeman installation crews, plus two two-to three-man maintenance crews, eliminating any winter downtime.

As landscape work begins slowing in late summer and early fall, Pace starts pushing ice rink sales. Installation typically begins in November and crews are maintaining the rinks all winter long. In March, rinks are disassembled before grass comes out of dormancy, and landscape work picks up again.

Because Pace Landscaping focuses largely on design/build, it was already set up for this service in terms of construction equipment and vehicles for ice rink installations. As for maintenance, Pace invested in a portable ice rink resurfacer, which he turned to his brother to design.

“(It) uses one of our own landscape trailers to carry 450 gallons of water, which we convert to hot water instantly and flood the rink to smooth it out,” Pace says. “We typically do that twice a week.”

“The only thing we had to do was build a storage facility for the material,” Pace says, referring to the ice rinks the company stores for clients during the off-season. “Otherwise, we were pretty well set up. You couldn’t pull this off with a pick-up and a trailer. It requires decent sized trucks to haul boards and brackets, plus steady crews.”

Pace adds the service fit well into his region’s niche. It’s a huge hockey town and many families have children who play the sport. Plus, it’s cold enough to have ice.

“This definitely isn’t a service you could just start anywhere,” Pace says. “But I think my story is a testament to the fact that any business that doesn’t produce 12 months of revenue needs to think outside of the box because there are things out there you can do. For us, the hockey knowledge and background, the nature of our business and the equipment we already had made building rinks a perfect fit. In many ways it felt like the moon and stars all aligned perfectly but we also worked extremely hard to get where we are.”

Payton is a freelance writer with eight years of experience writing about the landscape industry.
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Arbor-OTC is a water-soluble injectable systemic antibiotic for the annual suppression of bacterial diseases in non-food-bearing trees and palms. The new container comes in two sizes. The 1-ounce (28 gram) jar treats 10 trees or palms at 10-in. diameter at breast height (DBH) in the same day. This container can be filled with water, covered/shaken and then poured directly into the formulation tank on trunk injection equipment. For bigger projects, the 5-ounce (140 gram) container makes enough Arbor-OTC to treat 50 trees or palms at 10-in. DBH.
Arborjet // Arborjet.com

Predator 360SW
The new Predator 360SW stump grinder features a turntable mechanism for frame swivel of up to 60 degrees for easy stump cutting and handling. Powered by a 14-hp Kohler CH440 engine, the 300-lb. unit has an above/underground cutting range of 8 in. and operating range of 32 in. As with all Predator machines, it employs Multi-Tip technology, which allows fast changing of the preset teeth.
Predator Power // Predator-USA.com

BC700XL
The new, 25-hp BC700XL is the smallest machine in the Vermeer brush chipper line. It’s ideal for small-diameter material. Its centrifugal clutch system engages the cutter disc without the need for a traditional belt tensioner: The operator increases the throttle, and the cutter disc starts to engage at 1,500 rpm. It is fully engaged at 2,000 rpm.
Vermeer Corp. // Vermeer.com

BugBarrier Tree Band
Banding trees with the BugBarrier Tree Band is a control option for climbing and crawling insects, including winter moths and spring and fall cankerworm. The pesticide- and pheromone-free adhesive banding system is so effective, the company says, that it is required to be registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a “mechanical pesticide.”
Envirometrics Systems USA // TreeBands.com

M-Tronic technology
The STIHL M-Tronic microprocessor-controlled engine management system optimizes chainsaw engine performance and compensates for changes in operating conditions, such as temperature, elevation, fuel quality or dirty air filter. The microprocessor electronically controls the ignition timing and fuel metering 33 times/second. Learn more at STIHL’s online chainsaw video library: bit.ly/SdCTvg.
STIHL // STIHLUSA.com

CS-370F and CS-400F
These tool-less chainsaws feature the new FasTension Tool-less Chain Tensioning System, which makes quick and easy chain tension adjustments or bar and chain replacements without a s snech or tightening tool. A rotating lever takes the place of locking nuts, and a tensioning wheel replaces an adjustment screw. Adjustments can be made anywhere in four simple steps, the company says.
ECHO // ECHO-USA.com
Timber Ax
As a new addition to the VMLogix line of products, the Timber Ax skid-steer attachment uses an exclusive knife system to efficiently cut grass, vines, brush or trees up to 6 in. in diameter, or intermittently cut material up to 12 in. in diameter. Its 17-in. rotor features a reverse-rotation design to lift material off the ground for proper cutting.

Loftness Specialized Equipment  // VMLogix.com

JAWZ Grabbing Tools
Paladin has partnered with Star Hill Solutions to introduce Bradco JAWZ Grabbing Tools. The tools provide a quick, easy and eco-friendly way to remove invasive trees and shrubs, complete with roots, the company says. They feature a patented set of T1 steel fingers (pinchers), powered by dual cylinders to grab the tree/shrub trunk with a skid-steer, compact tractor—or in the case of Mini-JAWS, a compact tool carrier.

Paladin Construction Group  // PaladinAttachments.com

STX-38
The 38-hp Toro STX-38 stump grinder has a travel speed of 4.5 mph. It’s equipped with operator-friendly TX-style controls and the new Toro Intelli-Sweep feature, which automatically adjusts the speed of the wheel when sweeping across a stump to help achieve optimum performance. The unit’s full hydraulic operation eliminates belt breaks or slippage and the need for tension adjustment.

The Toro Co.  // Toro.com

M15RX
As a new, compact chipper in the Beever line of tree care products, the M15RX offers a high capacity and lightweight. Its patented chambered air impeller system increases the chip-throwing velocity and reduces dust and material blow-back out of the infeed to pack more into the chip truck. Its TorqMax top feed wheel compression system generates more than 3,400 lb./ft. of material pulling force.

Morbark  // Morbark.com

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Spreader series
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TurfEx // TurfExProducts.com

S-Series aerator
Exmark’s 21-in. S-Series walk-behind aerator features a transaxle drive system with variable drive speed and powered reverse. Designed to centralize weight over the self-cleaning tines, the S-Series delivers maximum core depth. The S-Series aerator is powered by a single-cylinder Kawasaki KAI engine, delivering speeds of up to 4 mph and productivity of nearly an acre per hour.

Exmark // Exmark.com

Lawnaire V and IV
Ryan’s Lawnaire V and Lawnaire IV with Easy Steer Technology have a new tine assembly that enables the unit to turn easily while in the aeration process without removing the tines from the ground.

Ryan // RyanTurf.com

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The Grasshopper Co. // GrasshopperMower.com

Eco200
This self-propelled topdresser’s reverse spin, dual-wheel broadcast system delivers a uniform spreading pattern with sand, the heaviest of materials and more. Additionally, the Eco200 has a new four-wheel design for increased weight distribution and stability. While sporting the same 1/3-cubic-yard hopper, the Eco200 has an improved larger hopper opening.

EcoLawn Applicator // EcolawnApplicator.com

LS-22 lawn overseeder
Turco’s LS-22 lawn overseeder delivers maximum germination thanks to optimized 1.5-in. blade spacing and micro-screw depth adjustment, which allow accurate setting of the cutter blades for optimum seed-to-soil contact. Depth is adjustable up to 1.5-inches. The LS-22 can seed more than 30,000 square feet per hour, and large pneumatic tires allow it to roll easily over any terrain. Operators can quickly check seed levels with the convenient seed window and fold handles for safe transport and storage.

Turco // Turco.com
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Objects in mirror may be closer than they appear.

American Family Insurance .............................................33a
The Andersons ....................................................................3
Bayer Environmental Science ...........................................9a
Bridge Ventures ................................................................44
Central Garden & Pet ..........................................................7
ClipSensible Software ..................................................49
Dow AgroSciences ............................................................15
DynaScape Software ........................................................20
Ecolawn .............................................................................45
Ground Logic .................................................................47
The Grounds Guys .............................................................44
Hortica Insurance ..........................................................12-13
John Deeve .................................................................CV2-1
Kohler Engines ...............................................................CV4
Kubota Tractor Corp. .........................................................31
Landscaping Management Network ..................................26-27
MistAway Systems ..............................................................4
NAFA Fleet Management Association .............................35, 44
PBI/Gordon .................................................................23, 45
Permalene Supreme ..........................................................43
PLANET ..........................................................33b
Power Pusher ..................................................................45
PRO Landscape By Drafts Software .................................5
Project EverGreen .............................................................9b
Progressive Insurance ......................................................48
Propane Education & Research Council ..........................37
Qual-Pro ........................................................................CV3, 19
Schiller Grounds Care ......................................................21
Source One Outdoor Power Equipment ............................22
Turfco ......................................................................39
Valent USA Corp. ..............................................................25
Weed Master/Turf Holdings ..............................................45

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