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Mowing Outlook**

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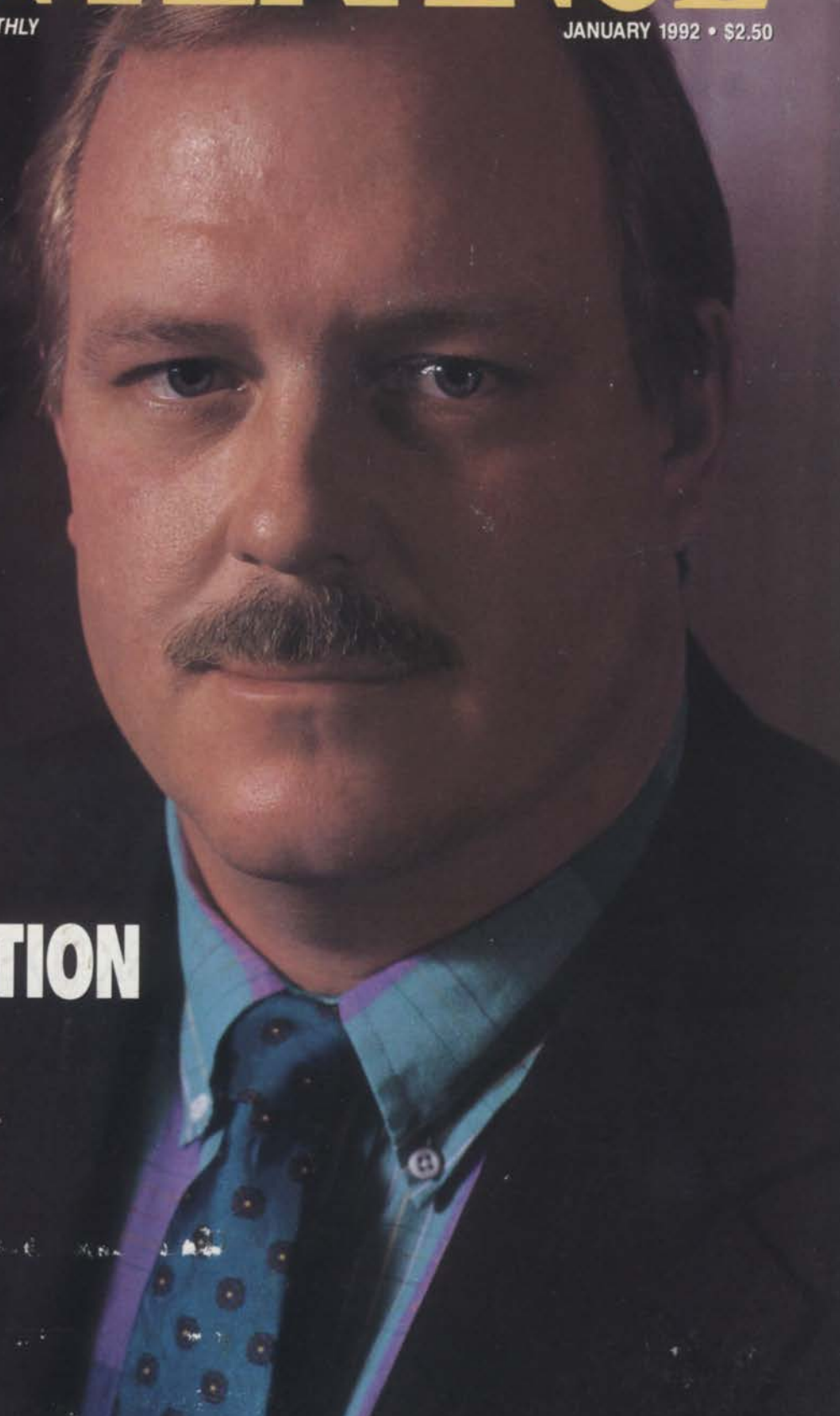
**Working with
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GIE Show Coverage

**Zoysiagrass
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USE READER SERVICE #33

Lawn & Landscape MAINTENANCE

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 1992

Cover Photo: Dwight Nale,
Appleton, Wis.

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Increasingly, landscape contractors are securing work traditionally done by in-house staffs. But winning and retaining such contracts are two distinct challenges.

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Now in its second year, the Green Industry Expo is convincing exhibitors and attendees alike that it's for real.



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Editor's Focus

IT SEEMS THERE'S MORE to this month's cover story than an interview with a ServiceMaster franchisee. The industry is abuzz with news of impending operating changes at ServiceMaster and TruGreen.

Just more than one year ago, the industry was speculating about the merger between ServiceMaster and Waste Management's TruGreen. The service industry pairings were said to reflect industry consolidation and a desire by ServiceMaster to increase its market share.

In a further effort to create economies of scale within the lawn maintenance industry, it's been decided that all future ServiceMaster franchises will be marketed under the TruGreen trade name. Current ServiceMaster franchisees have the option of changing their name to TruGreen over time, or continuing operations under the ServiceMaster trade name. Cities which offer competing TruGreen branch and ServiceMaster franchise operations will most likely keep their current names.

In any event, ServiceMaster's lawn care franchises will operate as a division of TruGreen. No staff changes are expected at the Memphis headquarters.

Richard White of ServiceMaster said the business restructuring was a collective decision between the two groups. While each organization has strengths, pooled efforts present added value to both the businesses and the customers. Material purchasing and combined training programs are two areas expected to see gains.

Although it appears that the move is a further sign of consolidation in the lawn maintenance industry, White said he fully expects aggressive franchise development. Franchise growth, however, will be better coordinated with the growth of branches.

Turn to page 24 to see how one ServiceMaster franchise operator has established a successful company in a relatively short time. Our cover profile shows how diversification can be achieved for the benefit of the customers as well as the firm.

Other news to ring in the new year: As repeatedly voiced in this column in 1991, the need for alliances throughout the green industry is strong. And although various groups within the industry have adopted a propensity toward unification, we haven't seen enough cooperative efforts just yet.

Most recently, the Green Industry Council of Missouri has recruited six local associations to band together for the betterment of all. In addition to the noble cause of promoting professionalism and education, the group hopes to present a



unified voice for communicating environmental issues to the industry and the public.

Charter member organizations include landscape contractors, landscape architects, irrigators, golf course superintendents, turfgrass managers and arborists. The group is headed by President Richard Moffitt of St. Louis University, and is already planning breakfast meetings with area legislators in both St. Louis and Kansas City.

Moffitt said his idea has been stewing for seven or eight years, and stems from industry backbiting. But instead of fighting an uphill battle, a positive reception enabled the group to turn a five-year-start-up into a successful organization within two years.

Moffitt sees the GICM as an organization not only for current members, but for the next generation of professionals entering the green industry. "I see only good things for us," he said.

Moffitt is a trained horticulturist and hopes to put forth a perception that landscaping is a well-educated industry. "We are a viable science industry and there's no reason why people who love the outdoors shouldn't get involved."

Membership information and applications are available by contacting Sheelah Yawitz, executive director, 314/537-1360.

By opening lines of communication with other state green industry councils in Massachusetts, Georgia and California, the group hopes to quickly spread its word across the country. Let's hope that this regional organization, as well as the quick growth of the national New Alliance, encourages all professionals in the green industry that we're partners not adversaries. *Cindy Code*

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USE READER SERVICE #44

Letters

After the Buy-Out

I want to congratulate you for your article on "ChemLawn: After the Buy Out".

The questions raised were appropriate, and it provides a positive image of our industry. Keep up the good work.

Guy Van Den Abeele
President
Nature Plus
Montreal, Canada

Wanted: Education

As an irrigation designer and consultant I was interested in your October cover story, "Bridging the Irrigation Gap." Training is certainly a major issue in the irrigation industry, as your panel members suggested. There seems, however, to be an additional gap between the perception of the problem and the willingness to solve it.

Our company's primary expertise is low-volume irrigation systems for landscape applications. This year, with California heading into its fifth year of drought, we offered a series of low-volume design and installation seminars for landscape professionals. The response from irrigation contractors was far below expectations. The bulk of our attendees were landscape architects and designers, which we expected. The second largest group, however, were representatives of water utilities and municipalities. Landscape maintenance contractors came in third with irrigation contractors a distant fourth.

It strikes me as ironic that government regulators, whom landscape and irrigation contractors sometimes accuse of trying to put them out of a job, appear to be more interested in low-volume irrigation than the contractors themselves.

On another note, I am pleased to see your magazine tackling landscape business issues. In today's economy, we need solid information about running viable companies. Keep up the good work.

Bob Galbreath
President
Garden Technology
Los Angeles, Calif.

Misleading

It was not appropriate for your publication to publish a photo of one of our former employees pictured in a Turf Service shirt in your November issue without our permission.

Dubious

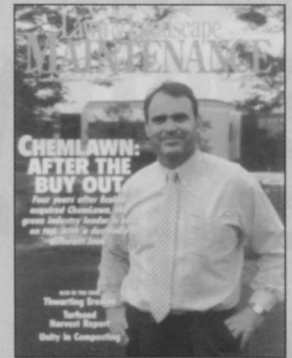
After reading the lengthy article about ChemLawn in your September issue, I would like to comment on the fact that ChemLawn said it has no intention of getting into lawn cutting or landscape construction. It seems someone forgot to tell that to ChemLawn of Upper Saddle River, N.J.

I've seen a 10-yard International dump truck with a 9-ton trailer at a local nursery picking up trees and pallets of stone. This truck was painted in ChemLawn colors with the ChemLawn logo on it. I have also heard from another local landscaper, that ChemLawn is cutting lawns in Upper Saddle River next door to his customers.

When the economy is down, and state legislation is forcing landscapers to either get licensed or subcontract chemical applications to the larger licensed chemical companies, this crossover action by a supposedly "chemical only" company is not going to help them gain business from landscapers looking for a licensed firm to do their chemical work.

What landscaper in his right mind is going to give his chemical work to a company who is now taking lawn maintenance and construction work away from him? This is not a good way to keep up positive relations with other professionals.

I subcontracted my fertilization work to Lawn Doctor this year. We complement each other nicely because I get maintenance and landscape work referrals from Lawn Doctor, and pass calls for pesticides and fertilization directly to Lawn Doctor. Both of us benefit all the way around by this relationship.



John Blazier
John Blazier Landscaping
Mahwah, N.J.

At the time of our interview, Dave Siegfried indicated that ChemLawn had no plans to bring mowing services in-house as a national service, but several branches across the country apparently are experimenting with mowing. Ed.

The picture by itself could even suggest that Turf Service has been canceled. This picture was taken seven or eight years ago on a property that we have served for nine or 10 years. Turf Service has been fortunate to experience a low rate of lawn management cancellations.

We are also in the lawn maintenance and irrigation business and do not wish to be associated with "soaring cancellation problems". We usually go to your publication for new information or ideas, not to find misleading information about Turf Service.

I'm not suggesting that you use a picture of one of our larger competitors. No one likes to see a picture of their company with the word canceled written across it. We do not need your help in making business more difficult in this day and time.

Dale Blaser
President
Turf Service Inc.
Cary, N.C.

LLM had no intention of targeting a specific company for cancellation. The stock photo was simply used to illustrate soaring cancellation rates — particularly in chemical lawn care — across the country. We apologize for any misunderstanding. Ed.

On Target

Just wanted to express my gratitude for and appreciation of just an excellent November issue. It hit a home run with many of us basics. I trust it did with the user segment of the industry as well. On behalf of the RISE government issues committee — congratulations.

David Duncan
Monsanto
St. Louis, Mo.

Letters to the Editor are encouraged. Send them to: Cindy Code, Editor, Lawn & Landscape Maintenance, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113. ■



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USE READER SERVICE #24

Business Watch

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE continued to erode through November, as recorded by a sharp drop in the Consumer Confidence Index for the second consecutive month. The November reading of 50.6 — a nine-point drop from the previous month — was more than three points below the lowest reading recorded during the 1982 recession, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Long unemployment lines was one factor fueling the fallen confidence levels. The unemployment rate rose in December to 7.1 percent, the highest figure since June 1986 when it reached 7.2 percent.

Low mortgage rates have helped the real estate market maintain some growth. Sales of existing homes increased to 3.15 million in October; but sales in the Northeast continued their downward trend from a year's high of 580,000 in July to a year's low of 490,000 in October.

Nationwide, housing starts were up a healthy 7.4 percent to 1.1 million in October, the highest level since November 1990. Starts increased in every region of the country for both single and multifamily units. Building permits were up 5.4 percent.

RETAIL SALES*

AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.
-0.7	+0.3	0.0	+0.3

*Percent change from preceding month.

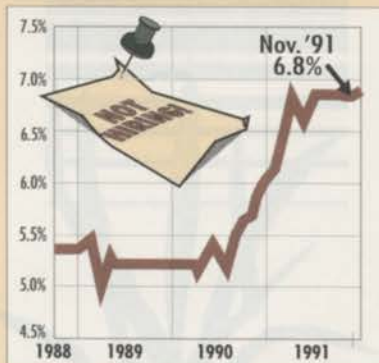
PRODUCER PRICE INDEX*

AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.
+0.2	+0.1	+0.7	+0.2

*Percent change from preceding month.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Percent of labor force, seasonally adjusted.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

MORTGAGE RATES

1991 posted yields on 30-year mortgage commitments for delivery within 30 days.



Source: National Association of Realtors

RETHINKING REMODELING

The amount spent by homeowners on remodeling in 1991 declined for the first time in nearly 20 years. But by the year 2000, spending is projected to nearly double.



Source: National Association of Home Builders



REGIONAL REPORT: FLORIDA

ACROSS THE NATION, states are trying to shake off the firm grip of the recession, and Florida is no exception. According to the National Association of Realtors, Florida's construction sector suffered a blow in the second quarter of 1991, costing the state more than 15,000 jobs and bringing to 78,600 the number of construction jobs lost since 1988. This sector will remain weak through mid-1992.

Long-term, however, Florida is expected to rank among the five fastest-growing economies in the United States, according to NAR.

Many landscape maintenance firms have felt this construction crunch, but report that maintenance accounts have remained somewhat stable.

"Consumer spending is flat, real estate is flat," said Marvin Gross, president of Marvin's Garden & Landscape Services, Sarasota. "The trend is like the rest of the country — people are value-oriented and buy only as much quality as they can afford."

Gross said that his design/build firm hasn't experienced a

tremendous downturn, but added that bidding is extremely competitive. "The profit margin is so narrow that it's almost non-existent," he said. "But negotiated sales are still profitable."

Bruce Bachand of Carol King Landscape Maintenance, Orlando, pointed to a "pretty significant" slow down in construction, but said his area hasn't been as hard hit by the recession as others.

However, less tourism has impacted his business. "Tourism is down and hotels are a large segment of our business... We're generating most of our business now in landscape rehabilitations," he said.

David Cimiluca, owner, Lawn Doctor/Daytona, noted a decline in the number of new residents entering the state. "More people are having trouble selling their houses up north, so there has been less of an influx."

The recession hasn't caused Cimiluca to lose accounts, he said, because many of his customers are retirees on fixed incomes. But it may have stifled potential growth. ■

News in Brief

NEWS DIGEST

Aquatrols Moves Company Headquarters

Aquatrols is now operating from a larger facility in Cherry Hill, N.J., in a site designed to offer more customer efficiency and allow for continued expansion.

Aquatrols' new address is: 5 N. Olney Road, Bldg. 26, CHIS, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003; 609/751-0309 or 800/257-7797.

Fax: 609/751-3859.

Jacobsen Streamlines Parts Operations

To better serve customers, Jacobsen consolidated its order entry, inventory and warehousing operations into a central department in Racine, Wis.

The new department, called parts and accessories supply, is directed by Jerry Betker, former manager of Jacobsen's service parts department. The recent conversion to a multi-million dollar, company-wide computer system will further improve parts service. The system will give Jacobsen distributors direct access to parts order and delivery information.

Advanta Seeds Fortifies North American Ties

Advanta Seeds West is the new name for VanderHave Oregon Inc. The name change and the addition of the North American grass research facility reflect its parent company's — Royal VanderHave Group — commitment to the North American grass seed market.

The new research facility in Albany, Ore., is directed by Kenny Hignight. Advanta Seeds West is managed by Ray Brubakken.

Roberts Retires, New Director Sought

Eliot Roberts, executive director of The Lawn Institute for the past 10 years, is retiring effective May 1.

Consequently, a search committee is looking for someone to oversee and manage the institute activities. Anyone interested in the position should send a resume to: Dr. Eliot Roberts, Executive Director, The Lawn Institute, P.O. Box 108, Pleasant Hill, TN 38578. Deadline for resume submission is March 31.

Tainted Fungicides Prove Costly for Du Pont, Growers

CLAIM SETTLEMENTS FOR Du Pont's Benlate, the fungicide recalled last March, reached \$120 million in December. Approximately 70 percent of all claims originated in Florida.

The fungicide is alleged to have caused plant damage in 40 states, according to Du Pont public affairs representative Gil Meyer. Last March, Du Pont recalled all dry flowable formulations of Benlate 50DF, Benlate 1991 DF and Tersan 1991 DF fungicides. Atrazine contamination was originally suspected, but Du Pont scientists have ruled out that possibility, Meyer said.

"To date, we have been unable to determine a general cause. There is a lot of information what it is not. To date, it does not seem to be a plant growth regulator; it does not seem to be a breakdown product. We are continuing to investigate."

As of mid-December, the company paid out \$105 million to the beleaguered Florida nursery and grower's industry. Claim settlements range from a hundred dollars to a few million.

Du Pont said that nearly half of the claims in Florida have reached final settlement, and an additional 17 percent of claimants have received interim assistance payments. Another 8 percent of the claims have been resolved by other means, including withdrawal of the claim and denial. Nationally, the percentages of resolved claims are similar to those in Florida, Meyer said.

Many growers in Florida have reported serious losses from the alleged contamination. Symptoms of Benlate DF contamination are generally chronic and include slow growth, poor root development and no response to fertilizer. The symptoms differ from the more acute ones exhibited by atrazine contamination.

According to Earl Wells, executive director of the Florida Nurserymen and Grower's Association, the impact on the Florida nursery industry is expected to be in excess of \$200 million.

"The \$105 million represents half the settlement claims. We believe the remaining 50 percent is a larger amount. Du Pont is attempting to resolve the claims and it's a very time-consuming process."

Wells said he hesitates to put a time frame on when all claims will be resolved. "It's taken from March until now to resolve 50 percent of the claims," he said.

Morris Bailey, Du Pont's Benlate team leader, said the process of claims assessment is "getting faster."

"At first, claims came in all at once, but now we've gotten much more streamlined. It is a fairly slow process."

Bailey also explained that the percentage of claims is highest in Florida because hot and humid weather contributes to disease problems, driving up demand for the fungicide.

Florida Operator Wins Chevy Truck

One is Vaughn Fine's lucky number. Fine, owner of a one-truck lawn maintenance operation in Port Charlotte, Fla., entered LLM's Chevy Truck Give Away exactly once, and now he's the proud owner of one new Chevy truck.

"You're kidding me?" was Fine's reaction to the news. In fact he still couldn't believe it a few days later when he called to confirm a few details.

Fine's company, Classic Lawn Inc., handles 150 accounts offering mowing, fertilization, pruning, mulching and bed work. Seventy percent of the company's business stems from residential customers while 30

percent comes from commercial.

Fine bought the company two years ago after 17 years at ChemLawn. He started with ChemLawn in 1972 in Troy, Ohio; became a branch manager in Kansas City; a branch manager in Solon, Ohio; and a Mid-Atlantic regional manager before resigning.

Fine moved to Florida and bought a small maintenance business with his wife Connie. In the first 18 months, the Fines and associate Darryl Martin, doubled the customer base. Classic Lawn reported 1991 sales of \$110,000.

Mowing represents 90 percent of Classic Lawn's business. The firm currently subcontracts its pesticide work.

A one-ton dump truck with a 16-foot trailer is currently used by Classic Lawn.

The truck gets a lot of use as 95 percent of his customers' clippings must be carted away.

Fine intends to keep his business small, but hopes to add another crew and a few mowers in the future. The transition from a chemically oriented service company to a mowing orientation wasn't difficult.

"There's not a lot of difference. They still want on-time, quality service," he said.

Licensed landscape contractors were eligible for the drawing. Entry ballots ran in seven issues of *LLM*, and were available at the Green Industry Expo in Tampa.

Fine, a runner-up, was awarded the truck because the original winner selected in the November drawing was disqualified.



Vaughn Fine, winner of *LLM*'s Chevy Truck Give Away.

Jacklin Brothers Bid For NK Medalist Turf

Three principals in Jacklin Seed Co., Post Falls, Idaho, have filed a letter of intent to purchase the NK Medalist Turf division of NK Lawn & Garden Co., Minneapolis, Minn.

Brothers Don, Doyle and Duane Jacklin said the investment is a personal one, and they intend to run NK Medalist as a separate company from Jacklin Seed. Details are expected to be worked out by the end of this month. It's expected NK Medalist will be renamed Medalist America if negotiations go as expected.

The purchase does not include packet seeds, lawn seed and fertilizer for the consumer market. These products will continue to be sold by NK Lawn & Garden.

EPA Unveils Strategy for Pesticides, Groundwater

The Environmental Protection Agency has released its strategy for managing pesticides that pose a risk of contaminating the nation's groundwater resources.

While current findings do not indicate a public health problem, the agency will

focus on preventive measures to minimize threats to groundwater resources associated with pesticide use.

The new strategy is not a regulatory measure, but describes how EPA intends to regulate some pesticides in the future. If EPA determines that a particular pesticide has or is likely to contaminate vulnerable groundwater as a result of normal use, and labeling and other national level restrictions are insufficient to protect groundwater, the agency may require individual State Management Plans as a condition of continued use of that pesticide.

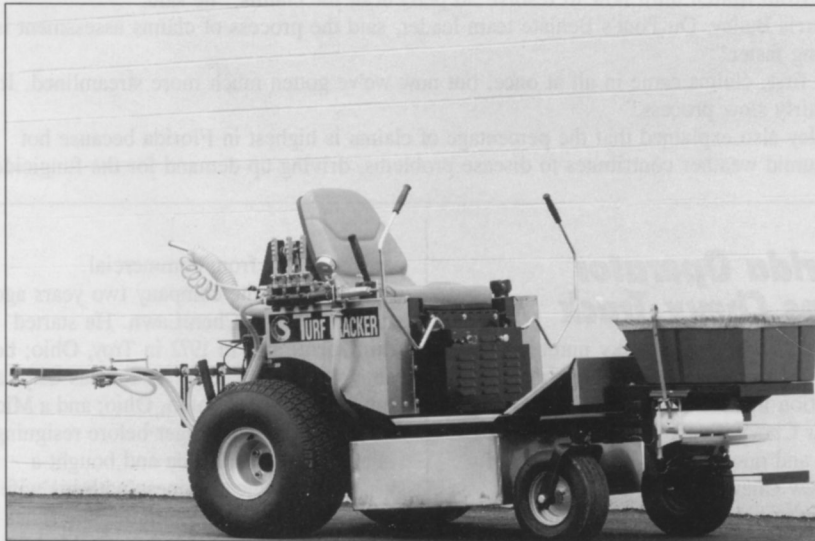
SMPs are essentially an alternative to cancellation. Since risks to groundwater are the result of localized conditions, national cancellation may not be necessary if an EPA-approved plan is followed.

New Herbicide Results From Joint Venture

Monsanto Agricultural Co. and Nissan Chemical Industries of Japan have entered a licensing agreement to market a new herbicide that controls purple and yellow nutsedge in turf at an environmentally compatible low application rate.

(continued on page 16)

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USE READER SERVICE #61

News

(continued from page 14)

The technology, invented by Nissan, will be developed by the two companies for the corn market initially, but the product will also be developed for turfgrass and ornamental markets.

The new herbicide is said to provide excellent control of both purple and yellow nutsedge without injury to established turfgrasses. In addition to golf course and lawn care markets, the new product has excellent potential for nutsedge control in container- and field-grown ornamentals.

The companies plan to jointly develop the technology and expect to present an initial data package to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this year. The product is not expected to be available commercially until the mid-1990s. No trade name has been chosen for the product.

New RISE Governing Board Members Named

The Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment announced new Governing Board members.

Nominees elected to three-year terms are Ken Bakshi, general manager, vegeta-

tion/pest control ventures, American Cyanamid Co., Agricultural Division; Marvin Moore, national sales manager, Riverdale Chemical Co.; and Duane Hagert, specialty markets manager, Wilbur-Ellis Co., Brayton Division.

William Culpepper, commercial director, specialty products, DowElanco Co.,



will serve as chairman of the governing board; Peter Machin, general manager, The Andersons, Lawn Products Division, will be vice-chairman; and Ken Bakshi will serve as treasurer.

Other members continuing their service include: David Duncan, director of government affairs, Monsanto Agricultural Co.; Allen Haws, manager, specialty products group, Mobay Corp.; Charles Nash,

business manager, professional products, ICI Americas Inc.; Richard Stahl, vice president and general manager, professional business group, The Scotts Co.

Bill Liles, director, turf and ornamental department, Ciba-Geigy Corp., served as chairman of the board last year and will continue to serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the governing board for one year.

EXPO Results Are In: Few Surprises in Survey

The results of an independent survey show that the International Lawn, Garden and Power Equipment Expo is moving in the right direction, according to Dennis Dix, president and CEO for the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute.

About 93 percent of survey respondents indicated they had buying influence, with 73.5 percent being owners or presidents of their companies.

Nearly half of the respondents would like to see more products for commercial use at future EXPOs. This did not surprise Dix, who said registrations in the commercial registration categories were up 130 percent in 1991. In response to this growing market segment, EXPO will con-

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tinue to feature the separate outdoor demonstration areas for commercial and consumer equipment.

EXPO reported a 5 percent growth in visitors between 1990 and 1991. Warren Sellers, EXPO show director, credits this growth to the dual effect of loyal visitors and a high percentage of first-time attendees the show continues to receive.

EXPO 92 is set for July 26-28. To receive a copy of the survey results and information about EXPO 92, contact EXPO Show Management, 6100 Dutchmans Lane, 6th floor, Louisville, KY 40205; 800/558-8767. FAX: 502/473-1999. In Kentucky or outside the U.S. call 502/473-1992.

FirstService Acquires ChemLawn Canada

FirstService Corp. of Toronto, Ontario, acquired ChemLawn Canada through a newly formed subsidiary, Greenspace Services Ltd. Greenspace is partially owned by existing ChemLawn Canada management.

FirstService has the rights to own, operate and franchise ChemLawn operations through Canada.

FirstService acquired substantially all of

Green Notes

Foley-PLP Co. installed new presses and other equipment to expand its manufacturing capacity for mower blades by more than 30 percent. Foley-PLP manufactures millions of blades each year at its plant in Rochester, N.Y.

Richard Tedeschi, president of Jacrist Gardening Services, Williamsville, N.Y., has been inducted into *Who's Who Among Rising Young Americans* for 1992. Tedeschi was recognized for his achievement in positioning his company, first started in 1978, as an industry leader in landscape design and site development using ornamental shrubs, grasses and perennials.

Lofts presented Rutgers University with royalty payments totaling \$490,234 for 1990 seed sales. Royalties are generated from domestic and foreign sales of varieties developed at Rutgers and sold through its partnership with Lofts in the development, introduction and sale of proven varieties.

The December issue of Inc. magazine listed the 1991 *Inc. 500*, a ranking of the country's top 500 fastest-growing privately held companies. Green Thumb Enterprises Inc. of Virginia is ranked 487 on the 10th annual list. This is the firm's third consecutive appearance. In 1989, it ranked 316 and in 1990, it ranked 477.

ChemLawn Canada's assets totalling about \$11 million Canadian for cash, notes and other consideration. Revenues of ChemLawn Canada are in excess of \$23 million Canadian.

Bill Black, former head of ChemLawn Canada is now president of FirstService's new operating subsidiary Greenspace.

In addition to ChemLawn Canada, other FirstService companies include College Pro Painters Ltd.; Cleanol Services Inc., a drapery, carpet and upholstery cleaning service company; and Superior Pool, Spa & Leisure Ltd., a provider of recreation facility and swimming pool management services.

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Fuqua Picks Kramers As Snapper President

Fuqua Industries has appointed Craig Kramers as president and chief executive officer of its Snapper Power Equipment division, effective immediately. Kramers had been president of Corporate Partners Inc., specializing in turnarounds.

Kramers succeeds Richard Robinson, who had been with Snapper since 1971 and served as president and CEO since 1989. Robinson is leaving to pursue other business interests.

Kramers has been CEO of four companies, including Courtesy Interstate Corp., Munson Sporting Goods, Graphic Arts Center and Metro One Direct.

New Brochure Provides Marketing Assistance

A new brochure from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America is designed to educate customers about the economic, aesthetic and health benefits of a well-maintained landscape.

"Landscaping: It Works for Everyone!" relates how quality landscaping can add 15 percent to the value of a home, cleanse

the air by absorbing ozone and producing oxygen and keep temperatures down, among other things.

Landscape contractors can include the brochure in promotional mailings or with sales material; or attach their business cards and leave them in real estate offices.

Copies are available at quantity discount prices. To order, contact ALCA, 405 N. Washington Street, Suite 104, Falls Church, VA 22046; 703/241-4004; FAX: 703/532-0463.

Strain Proves Active Against Pesky Insects

Ecogen Inc. and ChemLawn Services Corp. reported that a proprietary *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) strain isolated by Ecogen demonstrated significant activity against lawn and ornamental plant insect pests in greenhouse and laboratory tests.

The two common pests tested were the Japanese beetle and the northern masked chafer grub. In North America, more than \$50 million is spent annually to control these pests on professional turf alone.

The discovery was the result of a previously announced co-development and licensing agreement under which Chem-

Lawn would develop and market products containing Ecogen's proprietary Bt strains. Ecogen strains produce a natural protein with no known toxicity to humans, animals or plants. Insects ingest the Bt protein as they feed on lawns treated with the product. The protein arrests the pests' feeding and they subsequently die, reducing damage to the lawn or crop.

Draper and Kramer Wins ALCA Award

Draper and Kramer Inc. has been selected as the recipient of ALCA's 1991 "Landscape Contribution" award. This award honors major corporations and developers who create landscape awareness through their use of professional landscape contractors. Previous recipients of the award include Marriot Corp., Walt Disney World, Embassy Suites, McDonald's Corp. and the Koll Co.

Currently, Draper and Kramer manages approximately 13 million square feet of office and retail space and 30,000 residential units.

The corporation services more than \$2 billion in mortgages and continues to supervise construction and development.

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The Wiley Group's award-winning custom residential xeriscape project.

San Diego Firm Honored For Low Water Use

Wiley Group, a San Diego landscape architectural firm, received the 1991 Custom Residential Xeriscape award.

The firm received the award for a Rancho Santa Fe custom home project which incorporated a variety of low water use

techniques, from gravel and shredded bark mulches to reduce evaporation and retain moisture, to an advanced irrigation system with moisture sensors that lowered water consumption by 35 percent.

Kim Wiley of the Wiley Group said the firm began experimenting with drought tolerant landscaping in 1975. Since then, the company has won several awards.

Hahn to Manufacture Toro Turf Vehicles

The Toro Co., Minneapolis, Minn., and Hahn Inc., Evansville, Ind., have finalized an agreement giving Hahn exclusive manufacturing rights to Toro's multi-use commercial turf maintenance vehicles. The products will be marketed under the Toro brand name.

Toro will acquire a minority interest in Hahn through the purchase of the company's outstanding preferred stock. Toro will also have the option to acquire Hahn's business assets after two years.

The agreement is subject to compliance with Securities and Exchange Commission regulatory requirements.

Ben Street, marketing manager for Toro, said the agreement is a good opportunity for Toro to enter the sprayer industry. And, since the majority of Hahn's sales have been dedicated to Toro distribution in the past, the systems are in place to make a smooth transition of sales and distribution, according to Kent Hahn, executive vice president of Hahn.

The first vehicles manufactured by Hahn and unveiled under the Toro name were the Multi-Pro 1100, previously the Multi-Pro 418 and the Multi-Pro 5200, previously the Maxi-Pro 440. ■

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Association News



THE PROFESSIONAL LAWN Care Association of America is encouraging supporters to attend its 1992 Legislative Day on the Hill in Washington, D.C., Feb. 24-25.

The two-day affair gives lawn care company owners and managers an opportunity to visit with their representatives and senators in small groups and discuss current issues and legislation facing the lawn maintenance industry. Prior to the meetings, workshops will be offered on how to effectively communicate with elected officials.

Foremost on PLCAA's agenda is to push for the Senate and House industry-drafted bills, which were introduced to amend FIFRA and establish a national preemption of local pesticide ordinances.

The PLCAA hopes for a large turnout to demonstrate the industry's united front to government officials. Those within driving distance are asked to bring as many representatives as possible. The PLCAA will arrange appointments with local legislators.

There is no registration fee. DowElanco, the sponsor, will provide some meals. Attendees are responsible for travel, lodg-

For More Information...

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313/751-1190

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P.O. Box 22562
Seattle, WA 98122
206/784-6449.

PLCAMA

P.O. Box 35184
Kansas City, MO 64134
816/765-7616

CALCP

P.O. Box 903
Parker, CO 80134
303/688-2268

ILCA

2200 S. Main St.
#304
Lombard, IL 60148
708/932-8443

ing and meals not provided by the sponsor. Group rates are available from the Hotel Washington.

Members of the Lawn Sprayers Association of Michigan have approved a proposal to modify the group's name to the **Lawn Service Association of Michigan**. The change was made to better reflect the types of services that members offer to their customers.

"We are much more than just sprayers,"

said President Dave Andrusiak. "Our business is to offer the services that our customers need, regardless of the method of delivery."

In other association news, Kay Ruffino was introduced as the new executive secretary. She assumes responsibilities from Tim Doppel, president of Atwood Lawn-Care, who resigned from his managing director post to devote more time to family and business. Doppel had been manag-



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ing director of LSAM for the past six years and was president two years prior to that. He will assist in the transition.

The **Association for Women in Landscaping** holds its seventh annual Women in Horticulture Conference at the Seattle Airport Hilton, Seattle, Wash., on Feb. 22.

The 1992 conference, "Women in Horticulture: Past, Present and Future," will focus on women's continuing role in landscape design and plant selection and use. Keynote speaker is Becca Hanson, a landscape architect with the Portico Group of Seattle.

Preregistration rates of \$60 (\$45 student) apply until Feb. 3. Registration information is available from conference co-chairs Tory Galloway, 206/784-6449; or Gina McCauley, 206/567-4941. For exhibit information, contact The Waterwheel Group at 206/485-1283.

The **Colorado Association of Lawn Care Professionals** elected a new board of directors for the 1991-92 fiscal year. The officers are: Steve Hyland, Hyland Brothers Lawn Care, Fort Collins, president; Andy Beal, ServiceMaster Lawn Care of Colorado, Littleton, vice president; and Donette Faulk, SAJ Turf Products, Federal Heights,

secretary/treasurer.

The board of directors includes: Dr. Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Fort Collins; Dave Cromley, Hyland Brothers Lawn Care, Fort Collins; David Keilt, Lawn Doctor, Lakewood; Tom Tolkacz, Swingle Tree Co., Denver; Lyn Verretta, Keesen Enterprises, Westminster; and Gary Vitt, Lawn Doctor, Colorado Springs. Julia Marie of CALCP remains executive secretary.

The **Professional Lawn Care Association of Mid-America** is gearing up for the 1992 Mid-America Green Industry Convention (MAGIC) at the Hilton Plaza Inn, Kansas City, Mo., Feb. 3-5.

This year's theme is "Keys to Profitability." Speakers and their topics include: Ed Wandtke, how to make profits in mowing maintenance; Charles Vander Kooi, how to get profit-making jobs through bidding and estimating; J.F. Allen, when to add on to your business; Richard Lehr, PLCAA general counsel, hiring, firing and dealing with other legal hot spots; and Dr. Bruce Barrett, University of Missouri-Columbia, how to correctly diagnose turf and ornamental problems.

In addition, PLCAMA is offering the required worker right-to-know training for

managers and employees, in time for compliance with the March 1 deadline.

The **Illinois Landscape Contractors Association** holds its winter seminar at the Holiday Inn O'Hare in Rosemont, Ill., Feb. 25-27. The event is geared toward owners/managers, office personnel, supervisors/foremen and crews/technicians.

Technical sessions will confront economic and drought-related problems through topics such as plant and tree care, diseases and new cultivars, IPM and beneficial insects, safety, pond management and water gardening and estimating maintenance.

Also, management sessions will address customer relations, bidding and small busi-

ness paperwork. Members of ILCA, the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Illinois Nurserymen's Association will hold a panel discussion on "Working Better Together."

Keynote speaker David M. Kohl, Ph.D., will present "The Mega Trends of the Landscaping Business of the '90s." Kohl is a professor of agricultural finance and small business management and entrepreneurship at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Finally, a panel of ILCA past presidents will speak on "Surviving in the '90s." ■



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Irrigation News

RECORD CROWD ATTENDS THE INTERNATIONAL IRRIGATION EXPO

QUALITY IS A SURVIVAL issue. That's the message keynote speaker Bill Smith, vice president and senior quality assurance manager for Motorola, Sacramento, Calif., relayed to the audience at the opening session of the International Irrigation Exposition.

The show, held in San Antonio, Texas, wasn't affected by the recession, drawing nearly 3,600 visitors and exhibitors — about 1,000 more than the previous year. About 218 exhibitors displayed their products.

Smith's keynote speech preceded a slew of turf/landscape technical and management sessions; one-on-one product presentations; committee meetings; and the president's reception, banquet and awards ceremony.

Charles "Pepper" Putnam, new executive director of the Irrigation Association, said the San Antonio show was the largest in terms of attendance. The city and the good weather were said to be contributing factors for the increase.

Keynoter Smith had three questions for the crowd: "Who believes that if you do your work in a shorter period of time your work gets better? How many companies are measuring total defects per unit of work and cycle time per unit of work?" And finally, "Where are all the believers?"

Making fewer mistakes and doing work in a shorter period of time is the essence of Motorola's quality strategy. The firm won the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 1988.

"It's not really a quality strategy, but a business strategy — the way Motorola runs its business," Smith said. "We haven't really implemented a quality system. Instead, everybody is responsible for quality and therefore everybody will have a measurement of quality for which they are accountable."

Prior to establishing a vision of total customer satisfaction, former President and CEO of Motorola, Bob Galvin, had a policy of visiting with his customers. His typical agenda entailed talking with the company CEO, taking him to lunch, discussing relations between the two com-



Tradeshow attendees gain first-hand knowledge of new irrigation products, top. Tom Kimmell, 1992 president, left, and keynote speaker Bill Smith, right.

panies and returning home to record his conversations.

One day he asked himself: "Does that CEO know as much detail about how Motorola services his company as I know about how our suppliers service us?" He concluded: "If that were the case, we're really in deep yogurt," because he did not know all the details.

Galvin immediately changed the agenda of his customer visits. Instead of visiting with the big shots, he began talking to the people specifying and using Motorola products.

After discussing Motorola's quality improvement program, Smith concluded that by talking and taking care of the real customer, the business will take care of itself.

New officers for the IA include: Tom Kimmell, Olson Irrigation, president; William Koonz, Koonz Sprinkler Supply, president-elect; Joe Goecke, Valmont Industries, vice president; Jack Buzzard, Rain

Bird, treasurer; and Robert Emmerick, Toro Irrigation, past president.

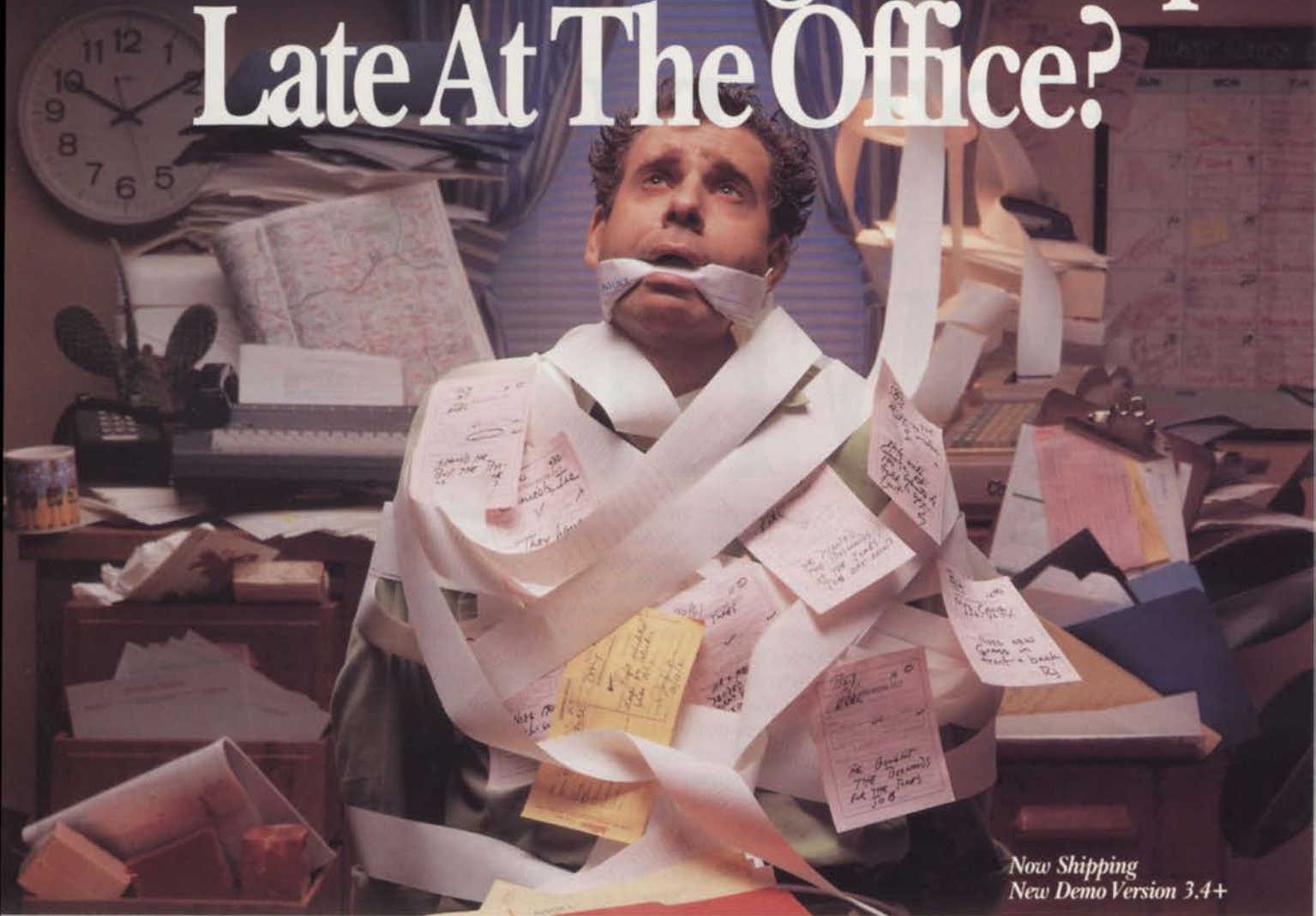
One of Kimmell's goals for the new year is to better promote the association and its members as water economizers rather than water wasters. The benefits of efficient water application need to be sold to the end user, he said.

Phil Tropeano, president and founder of Larchmont Engineering and Irrigation Co., received the IA's 1991 Industry Achievement Award for his nearly 50 years of dedication to the design and engineering of irrigation products.

Dr. E. Dale Threadgill, professor and chairman of the Division of Biological and Agricultural Engineering at the University of Georgia was the IA's 1991 Person of the Year. The award is presented to someone outside the irrigation industry who has contributed to the acceptance of good irrigation practices.

This year's show is scheduled for Nov. 1-4 in New Orleans. ■

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USE READER SERVICE #36

NURTURING GROWTH

LOU WIERICHS JR. SPENT years moving from job to job, always searching for something that would allow him to work outdoors. He found what he was looking for in his own lawn care business, and he couldn't be happier.

Now, in his fifth year, he is broadening what has been mainly a chemical operation so he can offer more services to his northeastern Wisconsin customers.

Wierichs, 36, operates two franchises — ServiceMaster Lawn Care/Fox Cities and ServiceMaster Lawn Care of Green Bay.

The 6-foot-5, 280-pound Wierichs does business where he grew up. He is the oldest of six children in a family that played a big part in getting him established.

He earned a degree in hotel and restaurant management at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and started out in the restaurant business. Disenchanted with that, he became a loan officer with a finance company and then a credit union.

"I just didn't like working inside," Wierichs explained. "So I became an over-the-road truck driver. It was the closest thing to owning your own business without an investment."

After five years of driving, Wierichs went into the printing business. One day, he recalled, "I looked around, saw the four walls around me and realized I didn't want to be doing this the rest of my life."

He went back to truck driving, in a job that allowed him to be home in the evenings so he could take classes toward a master's degree in business administration.

He made the jump into lawn care one day over coffee with two men who own ServiceMaster cleaning franchises. They were looking for someone to start a lawn care franchise.

"I thought it was a good idea. I always had the intention of starting my own business," Wierichs said. "I like the outdoors, it sounded like a good business and ServiceMaster is a good name."

It was a smart move. Even the drought of 1988 couldn't keep Wierichs' first year in business from being a success.

"I did business of \$47,000 the first year," Wierichs recalled. "I won the National Eagle Award from ServiceMaster, an achievement award for the quickest startup. I was pretty proud — for not ever having done a lawn professionally before."

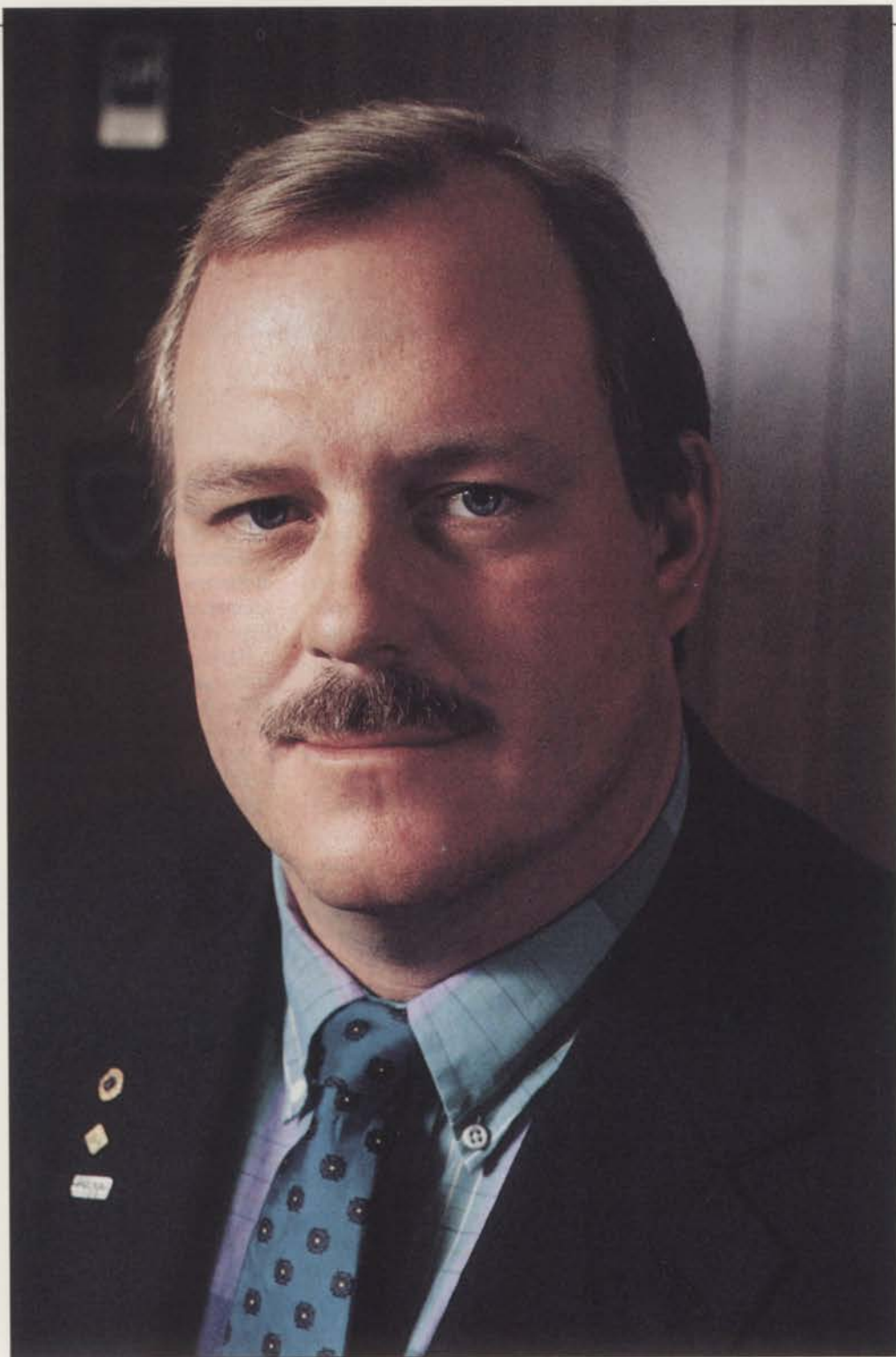
STEADY GROWTH. Since then, Wierichs' business has grown 40 percent to 50 percent a year, putting him in the \$150,000 to \$200,000 range for the 1991 season, with plans to pass the \$200,000 mark this year. His business is about 90 percent residential and 10 percent commercial.

His success led him to diversify. He offers snowplowing and winter lawn mower maintenance, and this spring will offer mowing after having subcontracted the work out for the past two seasons.

Landscaping is also an option for his customers. The landscaping business, however, is strictly a weekend operation that Wierichs won't allow to interfere with his

Once the need was perceived, personnel and equipment needs determined and diversification's effect on business considered, ServiceMaster franchisee Lou Wierichs decided to mobilize.

By Kevin Tanzillo



lawn care. He calls it "Landscape by Lou."

"I do this on weekends with my brother, Tom, and good friend Mark Spreeman," Wierichs said. "It's more of a hobby than a business. But it fills a real need. Really, it's a small part of my business. That's why I do it on weekends."

Wierichs shares an office, employees and equipment with the other two ServiceMaster franchises in a cooperative arrangement that offers him flexibility.

"We have about a 7,700-square-foot building in Appleton. We share expenses for a receptionist, accountant and bookkeepers. In Green Bay, we run our telemarketing and administration out of a small office, but production and everything else is run out of the Appleton office."

"In the cleaning end of the business, we have 10 trucks, all ServiceMaster identified. I can go into that fleet and use them in the spring rush, for instance. That's

in addition to my two full-time production vehicles."

IPM APPROACH. Wierichs' firm follows an integrated pest management approach to lawn care. Granular fertilizers are used and pesticides are generally loaded on the truck for spot spraying of weeds when needed.

"IPM entails keeping our eyes open when we're on the lawn," Wierichs said. "If we see weeds, we always have equipment on

hand to spot-spray them. We also spray weeds in the cracks of sidewalks and driveways."

At the peak of the season, Wierichs employs up to 15 part-time people, which includes telemarketers. This time of year, Wierichs has five telemarketers making "cold calls" to drum up business for the coming season.

At the end of last year, the telemarketers called existing customers for some service feedback and recommendations on poten-

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EMPLOYEES:
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15 seasonal

1991 NET SALES:
In the range of
\$150,000 to \$200,000.

Goodland Field, home of the Kansas City Royals farm team, was Wierich's first turf fertilization job.

tial new customers. His company averages a 17 percent customer turnover.

Key members of Wierich's team are Jeff Bellile, who handles ServiceMaster Lawn Care's books, and Terry Kuehl, production sales manager.

Their contributions are allowing Wierichs to move to more of a managerial role, as their skills balance against his. Wierichs explained:

"I'm the kind of guy who says, 'Hey, the paper work can sit, let's go get the job done. I am not particularly strong in organizational skills. If you would come into my office you would see that. My business partners, Don Fahrenkrug and Roger Noonan, on the other hand, their offices are meticulous."

Fahrenkrug and Noonan operate the two ServiceMaster cleaning franchises that share the office with Wierichs.

Wierichs' Green Bay operation



is going into its second season. Now the owner of a franchise that another man started in 1990, he sees an uphill battle in that area.

Competitively, Wierichs said, "We have some of the major players around here, and Green Bay is the tougher market, with bigger landscapers."

Barefoot Grass is his toughest competitor, but there are also ChemLawn, Spring Green, Valley Lawn Care, Greenscape and independent companies.

"We're not the cheapest lawn care company in this area, but we are a quality company," he said. "We don't have so many customers that we are forced to get things done in a hurry. We want to do it right. We're not out there on a questionable day letting your herbicide spray in the wind."

PLCAA, GMAW INVOLVEMENT.

Wierichs is a solid believer in industry organizations.

"I sent a check to the Profes-

sional Lawn Care Association of America even before I did my first lawn," he recalled. Now he is a recent addition to PLCAA's board of directors and chairman of a subcommittee for the Green Industry Expo in Indianapolis.

He was also a driving force behind organization of the Grounds Management Association of Wisconsin in 1990.

His GMAW efforts grew out of a PLCAA convention meeting on organizing state chapters. When

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he returned to Wisconsin, he said, "I started making phone calls, telling people this is a great idea, let's get a state organization going."

There was already a group in the Milwaukee area, and that became a nucleus for GMAW, which has its strongest membership penetration in Madison, the Fox Valley and western Wisconsin. Wierichs is vice president of GMAW, with Terry Kurth of Madison as president.

Wierichs is proud of an idea of his that grew into a positive public relations vehicle for GMAW. It was a poster contest for youngsters in sixth through eighth grades, with the winners and their families getting free tickets to a Milwaukee Brewers game and a free night in a Milwaukee hotel.

"The idea for this poster contest was that there are so many negatives in the press about pesticides, we wanted to get to the youth and show them we are not ogres. The youth are not only our future customers, but our future employees and future legislators," he said.

Wierichs, who never expected to be as "politically active" as he is now, said the industry needs his contributions and the contributions of other business people.

"I do these things because they need to be done. As an industry, we have to pull together. I'm just a normal businessman trying to get involved in the industry and make it brighter for myself and others.

"I'm proud of the industry I'm in. I've learned there is a lot more to life than money. You have to make a profit, sure, but I have grown so much professionally through these organizations, and hope to keep growing."

Wierichs also belongs to his local Lions Club and is involved in the Wisconsin Master Gardener program. That is a county extension agency effort in which he provides free advice on turf questions to local residents, since the county has no on-staff turf expert.

In his limited free time, Wierichs hunts, fishes and plays golf. He said he is much better at hunting and fishing than golf, but still likes being able to take just a cou-

ple of hours off for a round of golf.

"When I go fishing, I like to go for a whole day, I have a fishing boat that has been in my brother's garage; I've been in it only once since I started lawn care."

\$500,000 POTENTIAL. If all goes well, Wierichs said, his operation has the potential to be a half-million-dollar business in the next five years.

"ServiceMaster has done market penetration reports, and they can see this ultimately being a \$1.5 million business. I would hope in the next five years, depending on regulatory problems and whether we can operate in a somewhat free manner, to be a \$500,000 plus company. But if I am in the \$300,000 to \$500,000 range, I would still be very happy."

The company's growth, Wierichs said, will come from two sources: an added emphasis on commercial accounts and providing increased services to all his customers.

A stable economy in his area minimized any effects of the lingering recession, Wierichs said.

But he sees bigger problems than the economy.

"With all the paper industry and manufacturing we have here, we seldom get the big layoffs. So far the recession hasn't affected us. But the legislative bumps in the road are going to be tougher."

Issues of prenotification and mandatory posting concern him, as he and the GMAW strive to get their side of the story to Wisconsin legislators.

Wierichs' companies routinely post lawns, so he is less worried about that than the chance he could someday be required to notify several neighbors every time his crews need to service a lawn.

"We are already willing to prenotify on request," Wierichs said. "If the neighbor of a customer of mine has dogs or allergies and wants to be notified, we are more than happy to put a call-ahead notice on our computer.

"We have no problem if anyone requests to be called. If anyone requests Material Safety Data Sheets, we will send them. It's

(continued on page 30)

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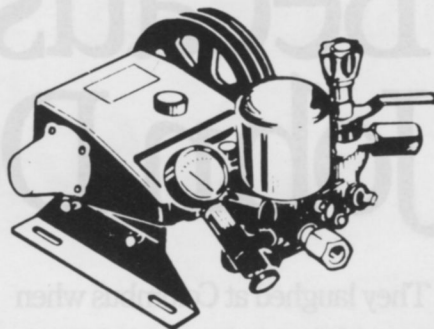
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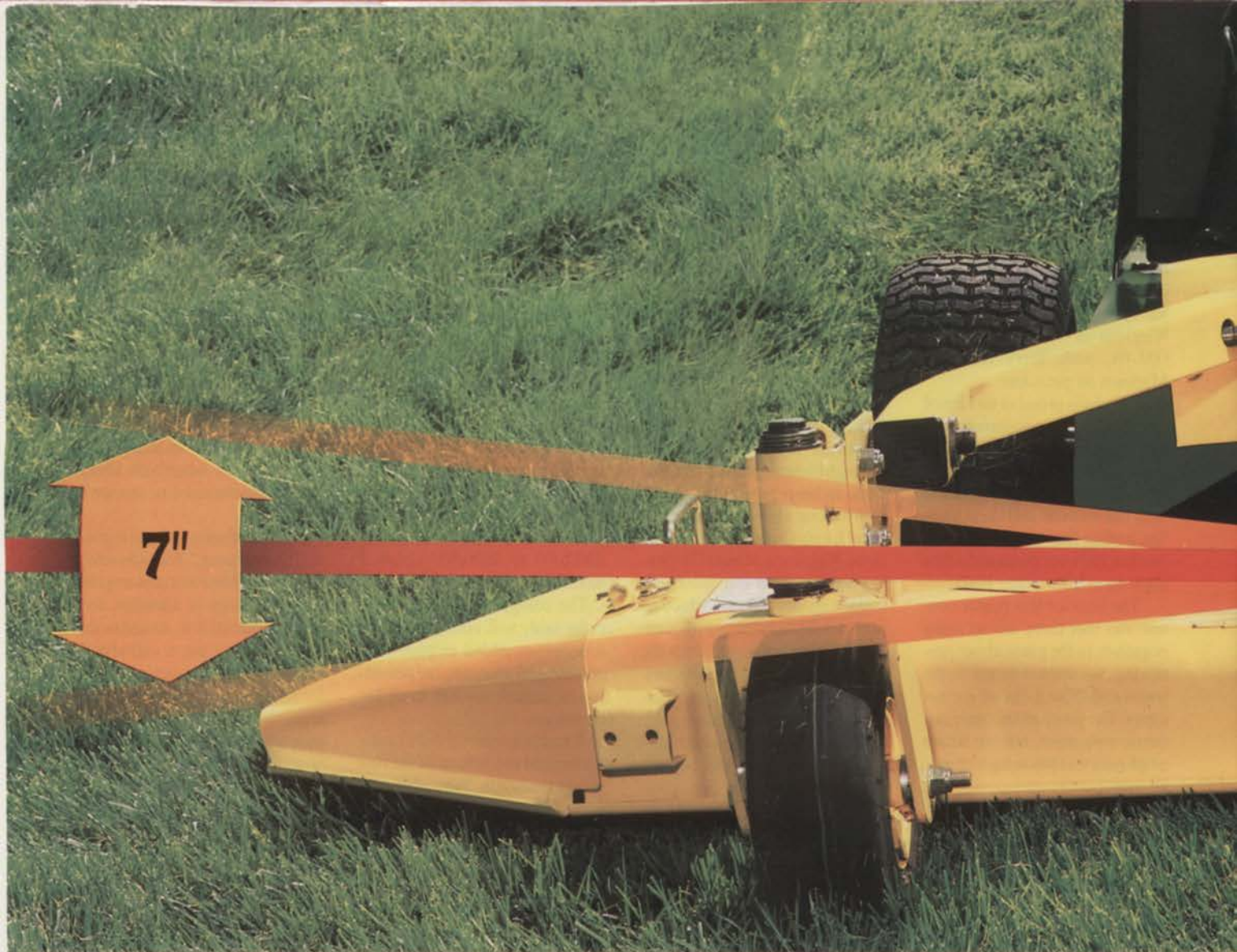


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USE READER SERVICE #57

ServiceMaster

(continued from page 27)

when these things are forced on you that it's a problem.

"Our costs could increase \$10 per application because of this type of required notification. Customers will just say 'forget it' and do it themselves. That means more trouble. They (legislators) would be taking chemical application out of the hands of the trained professional and putting it in the hands of the homeowner.

"Some of the biggest lawn chemical abusers are homeowners. It's human nature to think that if two ounces of a chemical is good, four ounces must be better."

FAMILY BACKING. Wierichs doubts he could have accomplished what he has without the help of his family.

"My wife, Cindy, has been the greatest supporter of this whole idea. We have been married for 13 years, and she understands that in the spring and fall she will hardly see me.



"My father lent me some of the money to get started. My sisters helped out in telemarketing and sales. One brother was my first part-time applicator. Another brother helps me in Landscape By Lou. One sister is still with me in telemarketing."

As he prepares for his fifth season, Wierichs has no doubts that he has found his calling.

"I would never give it up. I in-

end to be doing some kind of lawn work until I retire. I love the outdoors, I love this industry. ServiceMaster is a great franchise to own. My business is growing and we're financially solvent. I still don't take what I want out of the business, but I get enough to survive," Wierichs said.

"It's funny, because I always disliked salesmen, and now I am one. Any good salesman has to

Lou Wierichs and Marge Gibbons reviewing the books.

believe in what they're selling, and I have a product and service I believe in."

In the following interview, Wierichs discusses specifics about his company's diversification and his plans to bring mowing in-house this season:

Q: How have you diversified beyond basic lawn care?

A: We do lawn mower maintenance, and just got into snowplowing this year. We wanted to diversify and to generate cash flow in the winter. It enables me to keep a full-time worker on.

Q: How well does your mower maintenance shop do?

A: We get 10 percent to 15 percent of our customers taking advantage of the service. For \$35 we'll pick up the mower, sharpen the blade, change the oil and spark plugs, clean the air filter, pressure wash it, do a safety check and return it to them. It's a customer service; it's something that people don't like to do themselves.

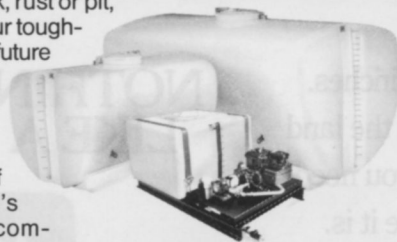
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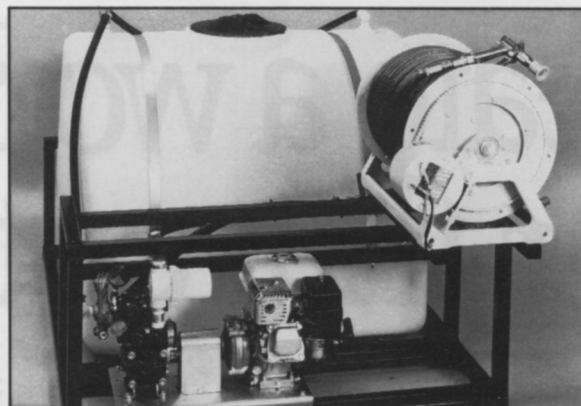
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Q: What was the deciding factor to expand into mowing?

A: I perceived the need, looked at the cost involved, manpower requirements and the size of my business, and decided this is the year I mobilize and further expand my services into mowing. It's good to be diversified. If all these regulations limiting our business go through, and there is no equitable way to get around them, you are going to need something to fall back on.

Q: You have offered mowing on a subcontract basis. How did that work?

A: Two years ago, I hooked up with a Wisconsin master gardener, a tree and shrub expert who does mowing. He does some fertilization, but not a complete program. In return, I do his weed spraying. I do all the billing. The negative aspect of the deal comes when there is a problem. The customer has to get to me, I get to the subcontractor and he gets to the mowing crew.

Q: Why are you going into mowing now?

A: There are three ways to look at it. The revenue is one. Being out on the lawn every week is important from a customer service standpoint. Also, I am offering another service to the people who purchase services. When you start a business you focus on your number one priority. Sure, there was a need for mowing my first year. But I couldn't invest in equipment and I didn't want to do something halfway. You've got to narrow your focus, and mine was residential lawn care.

Q: What will your mowing operation mean in terms of labor?

A: I am initially looking at hiring one person, but obviously if we get a lot of mowing work we would put two people on. The worker would be flexible. If he needed to cut on a Monday and a Friday and do lawns in between, that's what he'll do. The lawn work would supplement his income. We will probably bill a certain amount to cut and an additional sum to bag it.

Q: Do you anticipate a big demand for mowing?

A: A lot of people have asked us about it. One perception is that you can't bid successfully for commercial work unless you do mowing too. That is why I was subcontracting because I was too small. I have three commercial

accounts right now ready to go with mowing and I haven't begun to market it. These are above and beyond the ones I already subcontract out.

Q: What about residential mowing?

A: The maximum you can get for residential mowing is \$20 to \$40. People just won't pay more than that. You end up spending more time on residential than you do on commercial. If we have a customer request it, though, we will price it, but we're not going to lean toward it.

Q: What equipment will you use in your mowing operation?

A: I am in the process of budgeting where we want to be, and getting prices. I have been told that over 20,000 square feet, you want a rider. Under 20,000 you want a zero-turn-radius walk-behind. Two of our commercial accounts are 20,000 and one is three acres. Right now, I am leaning toward a 48- or 52-inch mower deck on a rider, a Toro mulcher with kicker blades in it.

Q: What service besides lawn care have you offered since your franchise's inception?

A: When we started, it was ServiceMasters' policy to build the residential customer base. They said you shouldn't get into pruning, for instance, until you have a 500-customer base. But I started doing that right off the bat. It was for the customers; you don't want them calling someone else. That someone else might also do lawn care.

Q: How about snowplowing?

A: We have a snowplow, and we may invest in a tractor so we can pile snow. We may also go into snowblowing. The more diversified you are with commercial accounts, the more likely you'll be that one call they want to make.

Q: What other off-season services might you offer?

A: We've talked about outside Christmas tree lighting and decorations, and we may do that, down the road. The problem is, everyone wants the decorations up the day after Thanksgiving and down the day after Christmas. I proceed cautiously, and try to develop services without spreading myself too thin or without too much capital investment. ■

The author is a free-lance writer based in Norwalk, Ohio.

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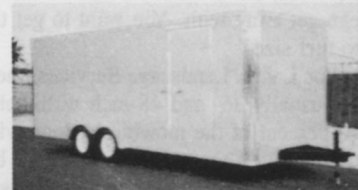
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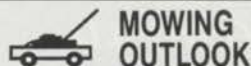
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USE READER SERVICE #65



MOWER SELECTION IN THE 1990s: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

From walk-behind to riding, belt-driven to hydraulic and two-cycle vs. four-cycle, the professional has much to consider when selecting the right mower for the job.

By Julie A. Evans

AS THE ECONOMY charts its troubled course, business leaders are looking for ways to cut expenses and streamline operations. Purchasing decisions have become more calculated, as managers pursue the top value for the lowest possible dollar.

In the lawn and landscape

maintenance industry, equipment purchases are being scrutinized in the areas of productivity and durability. The good news in the mower market is that technology has made possible more affordable, longer-lasting standard and optional features.

"In the last three years, I've seen



a substantial difference in mower quality. The industry is more competitive all the way around," said Mike Angles of The Brickman Group, Silver Springs, Md.

"Technology is getting better and better," agreed Gerry Chauvin, president of Green Thumb, Sterling, Va.

According to David Hayes, president of Pro Star, the mowing industry has been "revolutionized" in the last 10 years, primarily because of zero-turn-radius on riders and walk-behinds. "Landscape contractors who used to go with tractors are now going to midsize. In the ze-

WORK SMART, NOT HARD

THE NUMBER ONE consideration in mower selection is to work smart, not hard, said Rob Zolezzi, owner of L & L Landscape Services, Santa Clara, Calif. "Purchase as much mower as you can get away with. You want to get the largest mower, appropriate to turf size."

For L & L Landscape Services, the mowers that work "smartest" are usually 36- and 48-inch walk-behinds. Zolezzi estimated that 70 percent of the mowing is done with these midrange models.

"We find they are the best for us because they're agile enough to get in and out of fairly tight areas, they move at a fast walk and they cut up to a 48-inch width," Zolezzi said.

The company, which maintains 300 commercial accounts, stocks approximately 50 36- and 48-inch mowers, more than 100 21-inch self-propelled walk-behinds and only three riding mowers.

"I don't believe in riding mowers," Zolezzi said. "Once you get out of the 48-inch range, riders go into higher maintenance. You're almost better off staying with the walk-behind mower.

"With the walk-behinds, it doesn't matter who operates them. But with riders, you want to have one man familiar with the

machine for daily upkeep.

"I only recommend riders if you have large turf areas and can keep them operating to get your investment out of it."

He added that sulkies are an option for converting walk-behinds into riding mowers and reducing operator fatigue, a common complaint from operators of walk-behind mowers.

One riding mower that the company does find useful is the Hustler TurboShredder. "You don't need to catch clippings because it has a series of small blades that will mulch grass as you mow," he said.

In walk-behind mower purchases, consistency plays an important role for Zolezzi's firm. "Don't have five different brands of mowers. If you're consistent, you can stock parts. If there's a breakdown, you eliminate time."

Zolezzi recommends buying self-propelled models and suggests asking the dealer if he carries replacement parts. "Ask them: What's the first thing that's going to break and do they carry the part?"

Other features that Zolezzi looks for are zero-turning radius, side discharge and a heavier grade industrial/commercial (I/C) engine.

Improved technology for a competitive marketplace gives mowing professionals more to choose from. From various walk-behind models to riders equipped with options, contractors can surely select the best equipment for the job at hand.



ro-turn-radius industry, we predict the tractor will be almost obsolete," he said.

Much of the improved technology can be attributed to two related factors: Users of the equipment are getting more sophisticated in their demands, and manufacturers are responding amidst increased competition for the landscaper's dollars.

But new technology is not the only factor shaping buying decisions. According to Dick Tegmeier, president of Encore Mfg., Beatrice, Neb., landscape contractors today are swayed more by reliability than extra options.

"In this market today, people are not looking for bells and whistles. They want a mower that will do everything they want it to do, stay safe and keep costs down," he said.

Bud Muser, director of customer service for Ransomes, Johnson Creek, Wis., summed up the situation this way: "Predominantly, the commercial lawn care operators are purchasing rotary mower equipment. So once they've settled on rotary, the ques-

tion is what width of cut can they accommodate on the job, and what features they're looking for, whether it's bagging, side discharge or mulching," he said.

"The wider the mower they can use effectively, the more productive they can be."

Muser said that one limiting factor shaping buying decisions is the quality of terrain and whether it has rough modulations. "A wider width of cut will tend to scalp more in areas that are very uneven," he said. "So the advantage of productivity is offset in poor quality and damage to the mower."

Bagging performance is also an issue, he said. "Under ideal conditions, every mower on the market will do a good job of bagging clippings, but the commercial cutter can't always mow under ideal conditions."

Bagging performance is influenced by design of the cutter deck and blades, he said, and features like a fully baffled deck and offset-designed blades improve performance.

"Traditional flat blades and

decks that are completely open underneath have more difficulty giving a clean cut under adverse conditions," he said.

Another feature that has become important for mowing under adverse (wet) conditions is the drive system for walk-behind mowers. Muser said hydro drive units have been introduced to provide positive drive to tires under all conditions. This feature raises costs to mowers traditionally in that size range, he said. To help that situation, Ransomes is introducing the Pos-A-Drive™ in 1992. This drive system uses a sealed clutch system and toothed belts to the drive wheels to give the wet weather drive performance of a hydro drive with the cost of the unit closer to traditional systems.

RIDING MOWERS. More and more, the practice of weighing cost effectiveness with actual cost is playing a role in purchasing—especially when the choice comes down to a walk-behind vs. a riding mower. Although it's fair to say that a good riding mower costs

considerably more than its walk-behind counterpart, many companies have justified the extra investment in terms of cost-effectiveness and productivity.

Chauvin, for example, said he was reluctant at first to purchase riding mowers because of cost and the quality of cut. Now, however, he sees important changes in riding mower technology, specifically the midsize riders with zero-turn radius. Green Thumb plans to expand its fleet of riding mowers this year.

"We're hoping to increase productivity with riders. In the past, we were concerned with quality. To me the quality of cut in walk-behinds was hard to match in riders. Now I'm hearing more and more that the quality has improved," Chauvin said.

"We're also finding that productivity may be higher with the rider. Reducing operator fatigue is the main way to increase productivity."

Ed Gallagher, landscape management manager for Yardmaster, Painesville, Ohio, said he had considered midsize riders as an alternative to midsize walk-behinds. Although he is impressed by advances in technology, cost is still too high to justify, he said.

"Midsize riders are going to be the way to go in the near future, as the walk-behind was in the past," Gallagher said. "With the midsize rider, I see a potential for keeping better people on your labor force. You can also get an older group of people who can use them."

"Midsize riders get into specific areas just as well and efficient in tighter areas with less trimming. They can get into some areas that the walk-behinds can't."

Gallagher added that some customers may appreciate the efficiency of the midsize rider. "Sometimes with midsize mowers, clients have the impression that you're an innovative company, that you're doing things to improve their property and the efficiency of your crews."

Despite his expressed interest in the midsize riders, Gallagher

said, that price is still prohibitive. "We can buy two walk-behinds for the price of one rider," he said. "Until I can justify that better, I'll stick with the walk-behinds."

Bob Walker, president of Walker Mfg., Fort Collins, Colo., justified that extra cost by saying that one rider can do the work of two walk-behinds.

"Two walk-behinds *should* be able to do more. But the rider makes up for time in maneuvering and handling. If all mowing were on a straight line, the walk-behind should be able to keep up. But most mowing is sloped or has obstacles," he said.

"A real concern on a rider is how much it can produce compared to what they're using right now. If they're using a walk-behind, maybe they're interested in increasing productivity.

"Another major point that people are concerned about is retaining their employees and being able to offer them equipment that makes the job less demanding."

Walker said that most of his customers are coming over from midsize walk-behinds.

Arnie Sieg, president of The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin, Racine, Wis., pointed out that often the size and type of equipment is determined by the site itself. Sieg, who maintains many large commercial accounts, said he prefers to purchase the largest equipment available that still maintains a quality cut.

"It depends on the density of the site," he said. "The goal is to go on site with as large a piece of equipment as we can that gives the body of cut we're looking for."

But Walker added that bigger doesn't necessarily mean better.

"You should use the most productive, not the biggest. Some people equate big with productive. And there are cases where big mowers will do the job quicker — on large flat areas. But in many cases, a smaller midsize machine ends up winning the race because of its ability to maneuver quickly."

Comfort, design, weight, maneuverability and access to certain features are the primary concerns for Mark Gemmer, operations manager for Tecza Brothers, Elgin, Ill.

"We look for things like, how easy is it to adjust mowing height? Does the heat that comes off of the engine make the operator's back too hot? What about steering, maneuverability, ZTR, little niceties?" he said.

Finally, pricing remains a priority in any mowing purchase, large or small. "Pricing is key," Gallagher said. "You need to look at several vendors before making a decision. When you're buying that many mowers, you want to get the best cost for you and your people. Get input from mechanics, foremen and workers and analyze their comments."

WALK-BEHINDS. Walk-behind mowers are still the mainstay of many landscape maintenance operations due to cost and convenience. Selecting a walk-behind mower is easier when job sites are few in number. Not surprisingly, buying decisions are more involved when account types vary.

Encore's Tegmeier said to consider property size and type. If accounts are primarily residential, for example, mowers must be narrow enough to maneuver through gates and around walk-

ways. Small and intermediate walk-behind models work well in tight areas, but the trend is moving toward wider decks, he said.

"We used to think 36 inches was the best seller," he said, "but the 48-inch walk-behind is now the big seller because the walk-behind has become more maneuverable and cost effective."

Larger mowing widths are more efficient and cost-effective on large and flat areas, he added.

As for the walk-behind vs. riding mower debate, many operators simply prefer walk-behind mowers, while others find that customer preference dictates their use. Still others have struck a complementary balance between the two types of equipment.

Angles of The Brickman Group maintains the landscape for a retirement community where riding mowers are not permitted. "They don't understand that we've come a long way with mowers that are better than the old-style tractors. We've attempted to show them through demonstrations," he said.

But Angles doesn't think he's at any disadvantage without the riding mowers. The grounds he maintains are hilly with plenty of ditches, so "the walk-behind does a better quality job than the rider," he said.

When purchasing a new walk-behind mower, Angles said, he asks a lot of questions about the mower's staying power and whether it's had a fair run on the marketplace.

"I ask how long the machine has been on the market. If it has just been on the market for a couple of years, I like to ask a lot of questions. Are there any changes coming soon? Are they

changing from belt drive to hydraulic drive?"

Angles believes that eventually the industry will almost completely turn to a hydraulic drive machine — a change he welcomes.

"With the hydraulic machine, you don't have belts and adjustments, no belts or springs. But the disadvantage is that you have to train people to fix hydraulic equipment."

Angles stocks mostly 54-inch walk-behind mowers but says there is a place for every machine.

"The larger the machine, the less area you can take it into. There's more scalping with a larger machine."

To eliminate scalping, the company has added a tire to the center of the front deck of its larger machines, allowing for a more level cut.

As for two-cycle vs. four-cycle engines, Angles prefers the two-cycle models, explaining that he had too many maintenance problems with four-cycle engines in the past. Also, the company purchases push mowers only for its 21-inch mowing needs, espousing the attitude that less is more when it comes to these smallest of mowers.

"With different hands on the machine all day long, they tend to break down. Whenever you have a mechanical device on a machine, it's more likely to have a breakdown because there are more units to break. We don't buy electric start on walk-behinds and we stay away from fancy devices. Why spend the extra money?" he said.

Mike Zarrilli, mowing super-

(continued on page 77)

MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM WALK-BEHIND TO RIDING

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY Management of Laguna Hills, Calif., is phasing out its inventory of walk-behind mowers and replacing it with midsize riding mowers, according to John Berne, landscape operations supervisor.

"We originally bought self-propelled walk-behinds to do high productive mowing," Berne said. "But now we can get a riding mower that offers the same compact size and maneuverability, but less wear and tear on the operators. The riders make mowing go a little faster."

The company's current mowing inventory consists of 25 21-inch push mowers; 38 32- and 36-inch self-propelled walk-

behinds; and 27 42-inch riding mowers.

"Since we do so many small areas, we look for maneuverability. Our areas are sloped, so traction on slopes was a consideration."

Midsize riding mowers also have their drawbacks, Berne said. "Some riding mowers are labor-intensive, especially chain drive and multiple compound belts. Go to drive shafts, PTO shafts, anything that is gear driven. We use as much hydraulic as we can. Chains require lubrication almost daily, whereas gear driven requires a change of oil every six months," he said.

Professional Community Management maintains the landscape at Leisure World,

a planned retirement community of 22,000 residents. Approximately 50 employees are mowing the area's 500 acres on any given day.

Berne said that although initial cost is higher for riding mowers, they have helped reduce the size of the workforce.

"You can pick up a decent walk-behind for \$2,000, but small riding mowers cost up to \$8,000 on the average," Berne said. "There's a significant cash outlay. But since we're a unionized shop, we have to pay our workers a higher wage."

"If we can knock off 35 percent of mowing time, we can justify the difference in cost savings."

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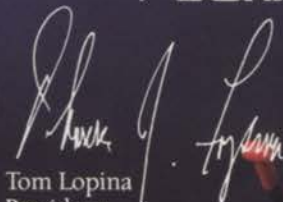
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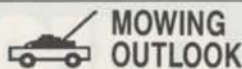
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CUTTING THROUGH BUDGETING OBSTACLES

Whether you're using intuition or arithmetic, you need a standardized scheme to establish profitable budget figures.

By Bob Gitlin

MORE SOPHISTICATED mowers have reduced manpower requirements of old, allowing contractors to become more creative in their job budgeting. For example, hydrostatic mower operation has meant less wear and tear on the equipment, translating into less downtime and longer equipment life.

Nevertheless, if a mowing professional doesn't use certain strategies to maximize mower productivity, better technology might be thrown out the window.

So how does a professional mower choose the proper equipment and make the most of it on any one particular job? Though many veteran contractors merely eyeball the grounds, taking into account all the open spaces and obstacles to make the determination, less experienced mowing professionals probably would do well to have a set system.

Otherwise, the new business owner might find his profits getting eaten up by men wasting time on such inefficient activities as using a 21-inch push mower in an area where a 48-inch walk-behind would finish the job faster and better, or struggling with stops and starts atop a 61-inch riding mower on a more difficult "open" area than it originally appeared.

All contractors contacted for this article agreed: No matter who makes the initial determination of mowers to be used, the foreman has the last word. And in cases where the foreman revises the game plan, he increases job efficiency, said J. Landon Reeve, owner of Chapel Valley Landscape Co., Woodbine, Md.

"We go out and actually measure square footage," Reeve said.



"That can be done by the branch manager or field manager. In one branch, we have a salesperson who can also make the evaluation of what equipment makes sense."

The evaluation, he said, will be fairly broad based. The ultimate decision depends on the foreman's experience and even intuition as to what will work best.

"We want the foreman to use his best judgment because he does it all the time and should be in a better position," Reeve said. "But at the same time, he needs to know how many hours are esti-

Selecting the right mower for the job is critical when figuring profitability.

mated to cut that job.

"Typically, we find that the suggestion from the foreman will be a little more efficient than what was estimated. From my view, if we've got 100 hours to mow a job, and he wants to change the percentages of use of the push mower and the walk-behind, fine with me as long as he stays within that 100 hours. He deals with this day in and day out. My concern is that

we've estimated 100 hours; we need to be able to do it in 100 hours or better. We need to get paid for what we're estimating, so everybody wins."

Chapel Valley owns more than 100 mowers and runs an active maintenance shop which standardizes all mowers the company uses. Every time somebody at the company calls for a 54-inch walk-behind, they know it cuts at X speed and is a certain model.

"We try to standardize our equipment from a shop standpoint to where we're using essentially the same kind of equipment. So when we specify a push mower or a walk-behind or a rider, we typically try to keep them the same make in each of the three categories," Reeve said.

What about job costing?

"The foreman tracks his mowing time on a daily worksheet," he said, "and that feeds into the system for cost accounting. From a billing standpoint, a job is sold on a yearly basis, and we typically bill ours in 12 monthly payments. So if it's a \$1,200 job, they play \$100 a month."

That sum is a "flat" rate, taking into account what Chapel Valley must spend on gas, new oil filters and other maintenance considerations, as well as daily labor costs.

In mowing, timing is crucial. The standard wisdom is that one should never cut off more than a third of a grass blade at any given time. During heavy rains, however, you can't get onto the grass on your scheduled mowing day. This can result in a lot of fast growth, particularly on well-fertilized jobs.

(continued on page 38)

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Budgeting Obstacles

(continued from page 36)

"If you missed two or three days," Reeve said, "you've got a problem. You're cutting too much, then you've got clumps and you've got to go back and re-cut and possibly re-bag."

Reeve said he sees some contractors trying to attract new customers by offering cheaper schedules based on 21 cuts a year. Such programs can be deceiving. Customers drawn into the 21-cycle program may end up paying more than they would have with a 31-cycle program, for example, as "additional" mowings come with extra charges.

"During the season, we try to mow every seven days," said Reeve. "Some people try to do a 10-day cycle, but when you have fast growth, 10 days gives you a whole lot of trouble."

On the other extreme, very dry periods in summer mean you can mow less, as is the case with many non-irrigated sites, he said.

Chapel Valley does not itemize mowing procedures and costs on its bills. "Our promise to the client is that we're going to keep the job looking right, and take care of it properly so it always looks good. We take the risk on how many times we mow and what materials we have to use, and obviously that goes back to how good we are at what we do."

The mowing crews at Carol King Landscape Maintenance in Orlando, Fla., generally team up with four mower sizes: the standard 21-inch push mower for trimming, 36- and 48-inch walk-behinds and 72-inch riders.

"Generally speaking, the big riding mowers (front-deck Kubotas) are for bulk mowing, anything over two acres," said Bruce Bachand, vice president in charge of maintenance at Carol King. The firm uses the 72s for most of the wide-open residential jobs (estates or even larger spaces), and the walk-behinds on smaller commercial and residential lawns.

Any time an estimate is made of mowing needs, he said, it must take into account the full possibility of lawn situations.

"When we do an estimate," Bachand said, "we try to calculate mowing time based on the size of machine we'll use and the number of obstacles we have to mow around: Whether or not the



property is fenced in, the size of the gates, etc."

An easy, wide-open mow thus becomes a "1." Medium difficulty is assigned a "2" rating and probably requires a walk-behind. A very difficult mow will get a "3" assessment, and most likely require a lot of work with a 21-inch push mower.

"Those three ratings are used to indicate two things: the obstacles in the yard and degree of sloping or hills on the terrain," Bachand explained. "A difficult job would be a severe slope. Moderate might be an undulating

Most progressive companies do that. Most have four or five categories of mowing equipment, and for those categories they have a square-footage-per-hour figure. That's how they come up with the number of hours it takes to mow the grass," Bachand said.

"Then there's the difficulty factor, which cuts down on the amount that will be mowed. Once you have the number of hours per category, you add them up and multiply them by the number of cuts. That will give you a very accurate estimate for mowing. Square footage is very accurate.

Any time an estimate is made of mowing needs, it must take into account the full possibility of lawn situations.

or regular surface. Easy would be a flat surface. Then there's the factor of how many obstacles: fences, trees, swing sets, light posts and so on."

On a 200,000-square-foot property, 50,000 is generally difficult mowing, 50,000 moderate and 100,000 easy, he said.

"The only 'equation' we have would be the square footage that a mower can mow in a given time.

Most companies that conduct time studies have very good figures on what it takes them to do grass," he said.

Two Carol King estimators regularly go out to determine how difficult the mowing is. Then a mower is "plugged in" to fit the bill.

"We have a square-footage factor for each type of mower—how much we expect it to be able to

In most cases, the company foreman selects the mower to complete the designated job.

mow in an hour. So if you take the property, get the accurate square footage of turf to be mowed, and break it down into the amount each mower will mow, you come up with your hours," Bachand said.

Job costing is no hard science. Bachand uses no set rate for billing time spent mowing. "We use a full range of mower sizes and brands in taking care of our customers. No one person decides what mower to use, nor is there any sort of form or formula that's followed. It's just part of our expertise."

Carol King Landscape Maintenance does not "track" each mower for its own billing or accounting purposes, he added.

"We just have the four categories. We charge the customer so much an hour for the time that machine works. That includes repair, gas and oil, maintenance and machine cost depreciated over two years. We input how many hours the mower will work, at base labor rate," he said.

"I just gave a speech in Tampa on lawn maintenance estimating. Almost everybody is using square footage on an hourly basis, just assigning mowers to specific areas and then multiplying it by the cuts."

The cuts vary by what part of the country you're in. Figuring a certain number of cuts gives you your yearly total hours.

"Down here in Florida," Bachand said, "we can mow as many as 48 times, where, say, in parts of the Northeast they may only be able to do 20 or 22 times. The mowing is actually the easiest thing to figure out."

More difficult job costing surrounds trimming bushes and cleaning flower beds and things of that nature. Production rates in those areas can fluctuate tremendously, while mowing figures aren't subject to as much change.

"You can even call the manufacturers of most mowers and they'll tell you how much their unit, in an ideal circumstance, can mow in an hour," Bachand said. "Then all you have to do is factor in for the type of grass you're mowing, and other variables."

(continued on page 42)

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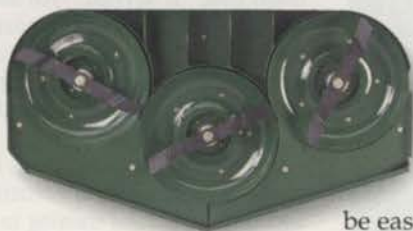
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SUSTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Increasingly, landscape contractors are securing work traditionally done by in-house staffs. But winning and retaining such contracts are two distinct challenges.

By Julie A. Evans

AS THE MIDDLEMAN, property managers provide an important link between the landscape contractor, building owner and, in some cases, the developer. Through this liaison, all parties voice their concerns and, hopefully, communicate needs.

From the landscape contractor's perspective, the advantages of cooperation can't be overlooked: Contracts can be won or lost through the property manager, who, at the very least, has the power to recommend one landscape contracting firm over another.

But building communicative ties is not always an easy process. The high turnover of property managers, especially in the residential sector, forces the landscape contractor to re-establish ties with a different personality, someone who may already have a company in mind for landscaping needs.

Adding to the challenge, property managers in the residential sector have not one, but many "bosses" — the homeowners — each with varying needs and concerns about the way the property

is maintained. This adds stress to the landscape contractor/property manager relationship.

"The community association presents a different challenge for the property manager than the apartment or commercial property," said Doug Kleine, president of Professional Association Services, a consulting firm in Reston, Va. "The property manager is not the boss (in the community association). Any homeowner can pick up the phone and complain. There are a lot more eyes on the contractor, eyes of the owners who

can make life miserable for property managers.

"With rental and commercial properties, there is more ability to deflect criticism and not respond to that pressure," he said.

Learning to effectively communicate with property managers can pay off quite handsomely. According to Kleine, 4,000 to 5,000 community associations are created every year, and only the largest of those can afford to hire an in-house landscape maintenance staff. The majority of new community associations, working through property management firms, contract out their landscape maintenance needs.

Opportunities also continue to open up for landscapers in rental and commercial properties.

So winning the bidding war is only half the battle; sustaining relations with the property manager is often the greater challenge.

COMMUNICATIONS. "The key is communications," said Brandt Vroman, area manager for Northwest Landscape Industries, Tigard, Ore. "Most property managers readily admit they don't know much about the landscape;

A PROPERTY MANAGER'S PERSPECTIVE TO SELECTING A

WHAT DO PROPERTY managers look for in a landscape maintenance contractor? According to the Community Associations Institute, Alexandria, Va., the answer can be summed up in four words: experience, size, references and facilities.

The non-profit organization for condo, co-op and homeowners' associations publishes a guidebook, "Selecting the Landscape Maintenance Contractor," to help its members through the process of bidding, hiring and maintaining relations with the landscape maintenance contractor.

The good news for the landscape contractor: The book stresses quality and the importance of the landscape as a long-term investment. Association members are warned against accepting a bid based on cost alone.

"Securing a firm with specially trained staff members is normally more expensive, but in the long run it may be worth the addi-



A property manager should be able to approach anyone on the team to strengthen cooperative ties.

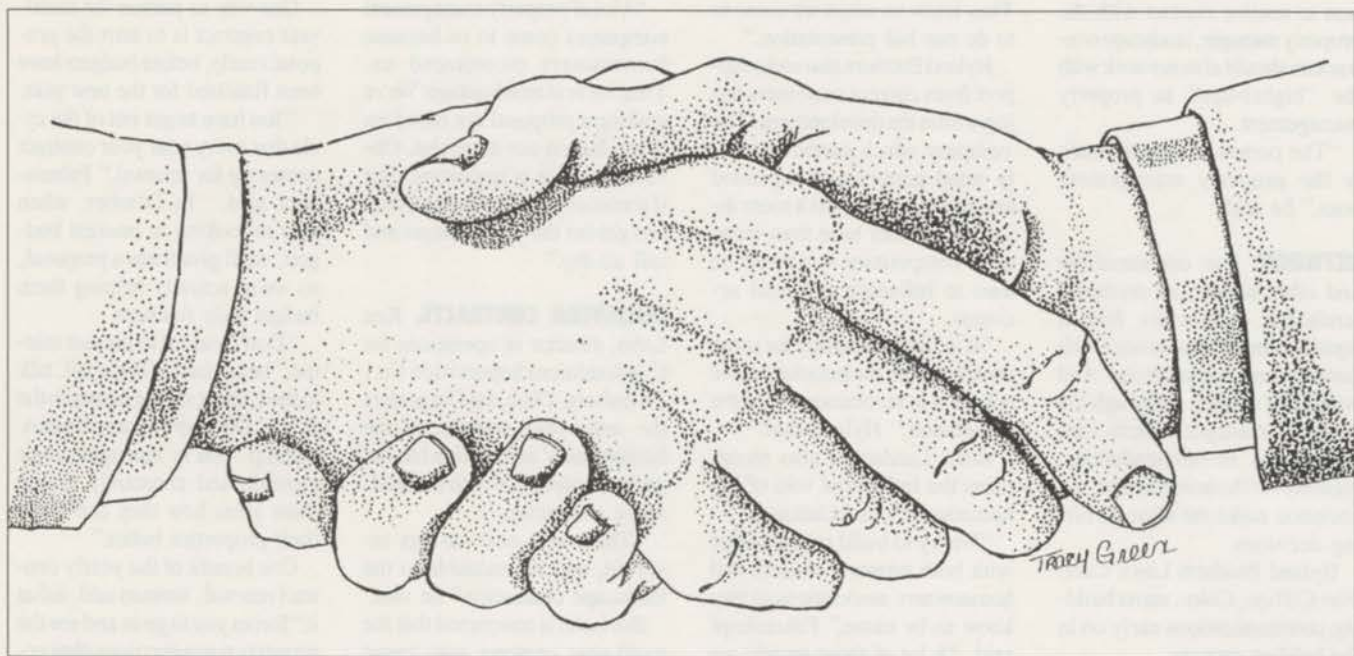
tional cost," it advised. "An additional 10 percent to 15 percent in contracted maintenance fees is a small price to pay compared to the cost of replacing an entire turf area damaged by disease."

Other recommendations:

Experience. The contractor's key employee is an ornamental horticulturist, with knowledge and training to correct problems encountered in the landscape.

The remaining staff should be educated or experienced in the landscape maintenance field. This means that employees in lower level, non-supervisory positions are undergoing education or training in landscape careers.

Although the recommended "ideal" staff includes an ornamental horticulturist, an agronomist and a civil engineer, many associations do not need this "ideal" staff. However, it is important to determine if such expertise is readily available and what, if any, additional costs would be incurred.



they need us to tell them what to do.”

Vroman, who works with anywhere from 15 to 20 property managers (the company works with about 50), said the company communicates with property managers through telephone calls, frequent visits and a monthly newsletter. Customer evaluations also help strengthen cooperative ties.

“That allows them to at least air problems they may have or any concerns,” Vroman said.

“We are looking for long-term

relationships. Most property managers are too,” he added.

Charles Fahrenkopf, vice president, sales and design for Adsit Landscape and Design Firm, Memphis, Tenn., said that when working with property managers, “you are part of their team.”

“I get them involved with our associations (Associated Landscape Contractors of America and American Society of Landscape Architects). I also get them involved in the design process,” he said.

“This year we won an award

through an association, and I let them know what I did to win that award. I let them know that the award is not just a ‘gimme,’ ” he said.

Fahrenkopf also joins his clients’ associations, including the Building Owners and Managers Association. He is in charge of setting up monthly speakers for the association, a move that not only raises his company’s profile, but keeps him aware of and responsive to the client’s needs.

“The biggest thing is communications and playing catch, listening to their needs,” he said. “Always call in and tell them what you’re doing, so they don’t have to call you to find out.”

Another bridge to building relations, he said, is letting that client know that everyone on staff — from supervisors to foremen — is a link to your firm.

“The client knows he can go to any person on site. We want to be part of their team, and we want them to be part of our team.”

Educating the property manager on cost-saving measures is yet another helpful strategy, Fahrenkopf said, because it appeals to their budget-conscious side.

“Show them how you can spend their money wisely using new techniques,” he said. “For example, composting and grasscycling — now that we can compost grass clippings back into the lawn, we’re protecting the environment and saving them money.”

Kleine, who provides consulting services to community associations, also suggested education as a communications tool.

“If I were the contractor, I would include in my proposal that I will write two articles for the community association newsletter to educate homeowners about their environment. They could be very self-serving articles,” he said.

Like Vroman and Fahrenkopf, Bill Davids, executive vice president of Clarence Davids & Co., Blue Island, Ill., said that communicating with property managers is top priority.

“We try to invest in them,” Davids said.

To do so, the company hosts seminars on such topics as selecting a landscape contractor and landscape renovation.

Additionally, the company publishes a newsletter two to three times a year designed to keep property managers and building owners up to date on landscape issues, new equipment purchases and personnel changes.

Davids acknowledged the high turnover rate for property managers, but said it doesn’t discourage him from working hard at building relations.

“Property management is not a long-term profession. They’re leaving every three years,” Davids said. “So if one manager is happy with what we’re doing, he’ll bring us to another. If you have good contact with one firm, ob-

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR

Size. When evaluating a potential landscape maintenance contractor, avoid placing too much emphasis on size alone, because size has little to do with competency or the ability to perform.

Although larger firms may have the advantage when it comes to purchasing bulk supplies at a savings, smaller firms may negotiate a better deal up front, negating the bulk purchasing advantage of the larger firm.

References. Each contractor should provide references, preferably from homeowners’ associations of similar size and landscape. Each reference should include three key items:

- The length of time the contract has been in force;
- Historical data relative to any price increases;
- A specific contact person for more information.

Facilities. The CAI recommends visiting the contractor’s office and other facilities, including the maintenance shop, if applicable.

Finally, the board or manager should determine if the purchase of improper equipment or the misuse of equipment by the contractor’s personnel will result in any escalation of service fees.

“Selecting a Landscape Maintenance Contractor” is available from the CAI. To order, send a check for \$12 (\$10.50 plus \$1.50 shipping/handling) to CAI, P.O. Box 25037, Alexandria, VA 22313.

viously if they grow, you do too."

Kleine suggested that in addition to routine contact with the property manager, landscape contractors should also network with the "higher-ups" in property management.

"The person to take to lunch is the property management boss," he said.

NETWORK. For condominium and other residential accounts, landscape contractors find it equally beneficial to network with homeowners' associations. And with good reason: Although the property manager solicits bids and makes recommendations, members of the homeowners' association make the ultimate hiring decisions.

Hyland Brothers Lawn Care, Fort Collins, Colo., starts building communications early on in the bidding process.

"Even before we bid, we ask the property managers for the names of people on the (association) board and introduce ourselves via letter," said co-owner Steve Hyland. "We let them know

who we are and how we differ from others. It works very well. They know us when we come in to do our bid presentation."

Hyland Brothers also seeks support from current customers living within the development. The company, which started as strictly weed control and expanded into maintenance, has a more diverse customer base than many of its competitors — a factor he uses to influence potential accounts.

"If we do fertilization for some owners within the association, we ask them to recommend us to the association," Hyland said.

Adsit Landscape also recognizes the influential role of the homeowner's association.

"We try to build relationships with both property owners and homeowners' associations so they know us by name," Fahrenkopf said. "A lot of those people we know through community activities.

"In many ways homeowners' associations tell property management, 'I want this company to do the work.' We're not selling

price; we're selling a service," he said.

"A lot of property management companies come to us because homeowners recommend us. Then we're at an advantage: We're making a proposal not based on price, but on our expertise. Obviously, price is important. But if someone just wants price, they can get out the yellow pages and call all day."

MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTS. Ken Lahn, director of operations for Condominium Supervision Co., Twinsburg, Ohio, said he prefers the multi-year contract *if* the homeowners' association has become comfortable with the landscape contractor.

"There is a cost savings involved, and it's valuable to the landscape contractor," he said.

But Lahn is concerned that the multi-year contract may cause contractors to get a bit too "comfortable" during the term of the extended contract.

"Our concern is that the level of service doesn't drop off because the landscape contractor knows

he's guaranteed the contract for so many years," he said.


One way to pursue the multi-year contract is to start the proposals early, before budgets have been finalized for the new year.

"You have to get out of the cycle that every year your contract comes up for renewal," Fahrenkopf said. "In October, when they're looking at internal budgets, we'll give them a proposal, so we're actually helping them budget their finances.

"Don't leave it to the last minute," he advised. "In the fall, talk to them about saving money in the spring. Develop this ongoing partnership. You're managing their grounds and constantly giving them ideas how they can make their properties better."

One benefit of the yearly contract renewal, Vroman said, is that it "forces you to go in and see the property manager on another occasion. You allow them to get to know you better." ■

The author is Associate Editor of Lawn & Landscape Maintenance magazine.



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USE READER SERVICE #42

MEIDILAND:

A ROSE IS A ROSE, OR IS IT?

Rather than thinking roses when considering the uses of Meidiland, think shrubs or ground covers.

By Steve and Suz Trusty



Pink Meidiland sports two-inch blossoms of single flowers with five deep pink petals and a white center, top. Scarlet Meidiland forms a three- to four-foot tall mass planting, covered with clusters of tiny scarlet flowers, bottom.

ROSES BRING AN elegant touch of beauty to the landscape scene, but all too often a frown to the faces of maintenance personnel. Though nearly everyone loves roses, they do require special care.

Proper watering, frequent fertilization and weekly or at least bimonthly insect and disease control are essential to maintain plants at acceptable standards. Unfortunately, in today's climate of tightly controlled budgets and limited labor forces, many commercial locations and residential complexes find the costs of such care prohibitive.

If only there were a way to have that mass display of blossoms and foliage and keep maintenance costs to a minimum. Enter Meidiland (pronounced May-D-Land) hybrid flowering shrubs, currently a family of seven distinctly different plants.

Though botanically they are roses and were developed during rose breeding processes, the trademarked name Meidiland has been used to set these plants apart from the traditional flower bed specimen roses. Each plant has been selected and developed as much for its hardiness and low maintenance characteristics as for its beauty. Each is grown on its own rootstock.

Rather than thinking roses when considering the uses of Meidiland, think shrubs or ground covers. Two of the varieties are best used in hedge or shrub situations; two varieties serve well as low growing ground covers; and the remaining three grow as mounding ground cover plants.

These plants are hardy through zone 4, and may be handled as any other hardy shrub. No special winter protection is needed. Insect problems, though infrequent, can be treated with normal integrated pest management procedures.

For best results, make two applications of fungicide each year.

The plants are tolerant to most preemergent weed controls. (As always, follow the directions on the product label.) To stimulate the best blooming on the two taller Meidiland varieties, cut them back to one to two feet in the early spring. No pruning is recommended for the ground cover varieties.

All of the Meidilands need bright, well drained locations. Usually, if grass will grow well in a spot, so will the Meidilands. As with any new planting, adequate water is essential until the roots are well established.

Bonica ('Meidomonac' P.P. #5105) was designated an All America Rose Selection in 1987. A plant of beauty, vigor and versatility, Bonica will reach a height of 3 to 5 feet and spread to 4 1/2 to 5 feet tall. Flowers are double, tight and full and pastel pink. Bonica blooms from spring to frost, with the heaviest blooming occurring in summer and early fall. The plant holds a heavy crop of orange-red hips through the late fall and winter, adding a flush of color to the winter landscape.

Bonica is showy enough to be used as a single specimen shrub, but is even more effective in a massed planting or as a hedge. Its tight branching structure makes it an excellent barrier planting. For group plantings, space Bonica on 3 foot centers.

Pink Meidiland ('Meipoque' PP5956) sports 2-inch blossoms of single flowers with 5 clear, deep pink petals and a white center. The intense color holds up even on the hottest summer days. Pink Meidiland blooms from spring to frost, with heaviest blooming from late spring through early fall. A good crop of reddish hips provide winter color.

Pink Meidiland grows to a height of 3 to 4 feet, with a width of 2 to 3 feet. Plant on 3-foot centers for mass plantings, or to use as a midsize hedge or tall

(continued on page 50)

N



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S

Meidiland

(continued from page 48)

border. Branching is full and tight enough to serve as a barrier planting where the intermediate height and spread are sufficient.

With its aggressive, horizontal branching habit, white Meidiland ('Meicoublan' PP6088), forms a dense ground cover. It can spread from 4 to 5 feet wide, and reaches a height of only 1 1/2 to 2 feet. Foliage is deep green and stays on the plant until early winter. Blossoms are a crisp, pure white, very double and can be as large as 4 inches across. The most profuse blooming is from midsummer to early fall.

Space plants on centers 3 to 4 feet apart. Stagger rows for best results. Because of its vigorous growth, white Meidiland is excellent for slopes and banks in both large and small areas.

Scarlet Meidiland ('Meikrotal' PP6087) forms a taller, mounding ground cover, reaching heights of 3 to 4 feet, with a spread of 5 to 6 feet. The individual branches are long and arching, giving an

undulating effect to mass plantings. Full clusters of tiny scarlet flowers appear throughout the season, and nearly cover the branches in late summer and early fall.

**Usually,
if grass grows
well in a
spot, so will
Meidilands.**

Plant scarlet Meidiland in large areas, on slopes and banks. Set plants on 4-foot centers in staggered rows.

The three latest Meidiland introductions are all excellent ground covers. Pearl Meidiland ('Meiplatin' PPAF) has showy clusters of double blossoms in pearly white, with a delicate blush of pale pink. The heaviest bloom-

ing period is from late spring through late summer. The lovely pastel blooms are accentuated by the deep green foliage. Leaves remain on the plant well into the fall.

Pearl Meidiland forms a mounding ground cover, 2 1/2 feet tall and 5 to 6 feet wide. Place plants in staggered rows on 4 foot centers on banks, slopes or in other large areas.

The single blossoms of red Meidiland ('Meineble' PPAF) have five bright red petals surrounding yellow centers. Blooming continues from spring to frost, including a burst of blossoms at the end of summer. Colors remain clear and bright despite intense summer heat.

At a ground-hugging 1 1/2 to 2 feet tall with a spread of 4 to 5 feet, red Meidiland is effective in both large and small areas. As with all the ground cover varieties, it is vigorous enough to cover slopes and banks. Plant in staggered rows on three to four foot centers.

Alba Meidiland ('Meiflopan' PPAF) forms a mounding ground cover. It reaches a height of 2 to

2 1/2 feet and a width of 5 to 6 feet. The only Meidiland to send out anchor roots along its stems, it is a good choice for areas where erosion control is needed, such as hillsides, slopes and banks.

The small, clear white flowers have a light touch of fragrance. They form large clusters along the outer tips of the branches, giving a delicate effect that is unusual for such a sturdy, aggressive plant. It blooms throughout the growing season, with flowers the most abundant from later spring to early fall.

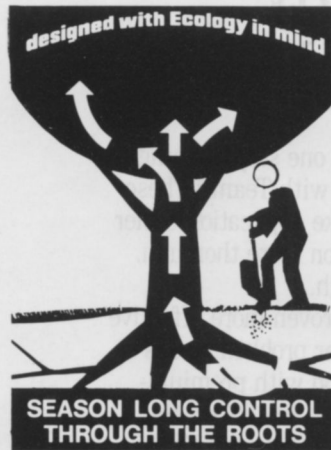
As with all new plant varieties, it is wise to consider the effect they will have on the aesthetics of the landscape; the problems they may be able to solve; and the upkeep they will require.

Before making a decision, it can be helpful to observe the uses of other plants of the same general forms and sizes, noting especially effective plantings in situations similar to those under consideration. Then visualize the new varieties in the same setting. Weigh the pros and cons of each alternative.



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Drawing #4 shows bottle in position with tool ready for use.

APPLICATION

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Pull the tool up about one inch, turn the handle on ON and count slowly to six before turning to OFF. Be certain handle indicates OFF and remove tool from soil. Repeat this procedure around the tree to complete applications. If the complete distance around a tree cannot be covered because of blockage by a sidewalk, building or other obstacle apply the remaining amount to cover evenly the area available.

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For example, a sloping bank planted with creeping juniper will eliminate a mowing hazard, deter foot traffic and provide yearlong color. Various shades of green, yellow-green or blue-green could be used to repeat or contrast with the colors of surrounding vegetation.

Now visualize the same area

with red Meidiland as the ground cover. The effect on mowing and foot traffic will be the same. Instead of basic green, the site will change colors with the seasons. The green foliage of early spring will be accentuated with bright red, yellow-eyed blossoms throughout the spring, summer and fall. In late fall, after the fol-

Bonica is showy enough to be used as a single specimen shrub, but is even more effective in mass plantings.

iage has dropped, the stark lines of the arching branches will display numerous red hips.

Consider the look of the slope as observed from a distance and close up; for those viewing it from a building; a passing vehicle; or on foot. How often will the location be seen, and in what seasons of the year? Is the location along a major roadway where it will be seen both by daily travelers and from surrounding buildings? Does the slope border the driveway to a golf course clubhouse, or is it located within the course itself, adjacent to a fairway?

Sturdy, low maintenance, flowering plants such as Meidiland bring a broad range of choices to the landscape. Use them in place of more familiar shrubs or ground cover plants, such as juniper, potentilla, spirea, lilac, cotoneaster, privet or barberry. Use them in parking medians; to mask an unsightly fence or screen a composting area; use them to fill wide

flower beds or replace long, narrow strips of turf. Or plant barriers of the shrub or mounding Meidiland varieties to control vehicular, pedestrian and equestrian traffic.

**Each plant has
been developed
for its
hardiness,
and beauty.**

Any new plant varieties that can trim maintenance time and dollars, while retaining the same, or an even greater, degree of beauty in the landscape are worthy of consideration. ■

The authors are partners in Trusty & Associates, Council Bluffs, Iowa, and are consultants to the horticulture trade.

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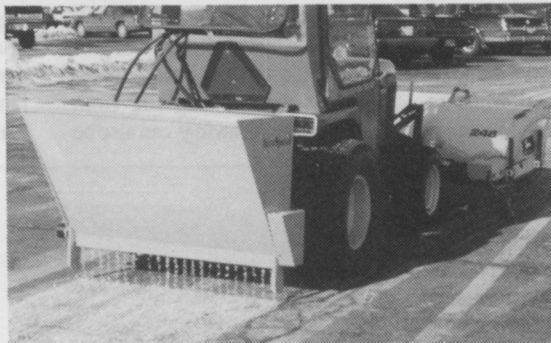
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USE READER SERVICE #75

INNOVATIVE CADDs

LOW ON MUNDANE, HIGH ON PRESENTATION

CADD systems have the potential for dramatically changing the way irrigation systems are designed and managed, offering an exciting slant to irrigation installation and maintenance.

By Stephen Smith

COMPUTERS HAVE HAD a dramatic impact on every aspect of the business world. Within the irrigation industry, professionals are already influenced by computerized ordering and inventory systems, computerized irrigation controls, hydraulic network analysis programs, as well as other now routine word processing and spreadsheet applications.

Computer-aided-design and drafting, or CADD, has potential for dramatically changing the way irrigation systems are designed, construction documents are produced, projects are bid and, ultimately, the way irrigation systems are managed. Hopefully, the increasing use of computers in irrigation design is not intimidating, but viewed as an exciting new aspect of the irrigation process which can decrease the mundane aspects of design work while improving both speed and accuracy.

Bill Strickland of Atlantic Irrigation Co., Crofton, Md., said his firm has been using CADD for all of its irrigation drawing production for two years. Presentation and marketing impact are key advantages.

The benefits of CADD, other than speed and accuracy, are many. Standardized symbols are feasible, colors enhance presentation and plots, drawings are more readable, line widths improve presentation style, individual drawing symbols may have numerous descriptive attributes, layers can be used to create the specific draw-

ing information desired, lines and symbols can be easily edited or moved and computer-aided-engineering is possible.

Of all these benefits, the most dramatic may be computer-aided-engineering or CAE. Design processes such as sprinkler layout and pipe hydraulics can be accomplished by computer, leaving the designer with time and energy for creativity or evaluation of alternatives.

USING CADD. The CADD process has notable parallels to manual drawing production methods. With manual practices, the designer starts with a base drawing sheet. With CADD, the designer starts with base line work in a drawing file. The drawing file is produced by "digitizing" appropriate line work or by simply receiving the drawing file from others. Base drawings can also be

produced by "scanning" the hard copy of a drawing.

When working manually, information concerning the work of different contractors within the landscape design process is often "stacked" via a pin bar registration system so that various landscape professionals can use the same base information. With CADD, the information concerning different trades is contained on a layer or layers within the drawing file. Layers contain similar or related information and are frequently identified with a specified color as well as line type.

A mental shift is necessary for a person switching from manual to CADD drawing production. Possibly the best example is dealing with a computer screen in lieu of a drafting pen and paper. Experience with the computer and familiarity with the new and dynamic capabilities should help

with the transition.

The primary benefits of CADD design include:

- Layering to "build" drawings with appropriate information
- Edit/Move/Copy drawing lines and symbols
- Design assistance (CAE)
- Drawing presentation improvements
- Efficiency in making design changes

Larry Karter of Easy Living Lawn Care in Sterling, Va., has been using CADD since 1987. As the cost continues to come down, Karter said, everyone eventually will begin using CADD.

About half of Easy Living's irrigation drawings are produced on CADD for several reasons. CADD helps from the marketing point of view as well as forces the key questions that must be answered as the design process progresses. Easy Living does its material takeoffs in CADD, and produces the irrigation "as-built" drawings when the project is closed out.

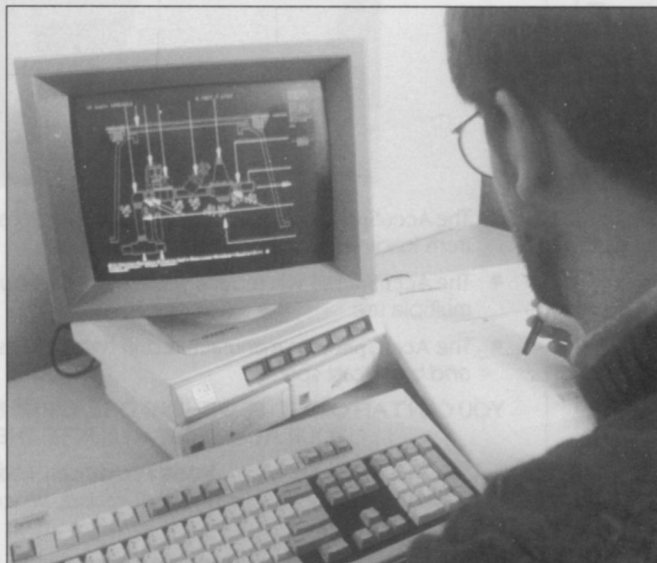
APPLICATIONS IN LANDSCAPING.

Some five years ago, work began on a landscape irrigation design program which is a "wrap around" program and complementary to AutoCAD. The program is called irrigation design assist or IDA, and it is currently marketed by Rain Bird Sales.

The basic capabilities of IDA are contained in the program as:

- CASL: computer-aided sprinkler layout
- CAPS: computer-aided pipe sizing

(continued on page 54)



CADD has become an important part of drawing production. Photo: Aqua Engineering.



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Innovative Cadds

(continued from page 52)

- TAKE OFF: computer-aided symbol counts

- MENU: specialized irrigation design menu

- DATA BASE: irrigation equipment "mapped" to symbols

An important and time consuming part of the landscape irrigation design process is laying out sprinklers in the irregular areas so commonly found in landscapes. The procedure for using CASL inside AutoCAD is:

- Identify the perimeter of the irrigated area.

- Pick a sprinkler symbol and input spacing criteria. (Default spacing criteria is presented to the user as it is obtained from the data base. If the user wants to use this data, a simple keyboard [ENTER] is all that is required.)

- Visually evaluate the CASL conceptual layout.

- Develop an alternate layout(s) or move/swap sprinklers to achieve a final layout.

An equally important and laborious task in irrigation design

is lateral pipe sizing. Computer assistance is provided within IDA through CAPS. The CAPS procedure is as follows:

- Identify the lateral pipe working downstream from the valve.

- Identify the lateral "legs" working downstream.

- Input the pipe type (schedule or class of pipe).

- Size the pipe using CAPS.

- Relocate the size symbol as necessary for presentation.

The pipe size symbol is placed in a position which is offset from the pipe segment and placed midway between sprinklers. The user can then visually evaluate the placement, move pipe sizing symbols at will and a pigtail can be inserted if desired for size clarification.

As an afterthought to the design process, the user can easily produce a count or "take off" of all the irrigation symbols used in the drawing file or files. This is accomplished by:

- Entering the drawing name or drawing the list name.

- Entering the output file name.

- Complete the symbol counts using TAKE OFF.

- Edit the output as necessary for presentation.

The menu in IDA constitutes an expeditious way to accomplish certain commands, insert symbols or start other design processes. As with the basic AutoCAD menu, the IDA menu can be modified or adapted by users according to their preferences.

The data base which is inherently tied to many IDA capabilities is possibly the most important aspect of the program. Imagine that the designer need not refer to a catalog for sprinkler performance data, but simply inserts a sprinkler symbol, and all necessary design information is "attached" as well.

This capability is powerful in its own right. For example, if a particular symbol represents a Rain Bird 1804 with a 15-series nozzle, then each time you insert that symbol into the drawing file, IDA knows the flow rate, the distribution rate curve and other essential information. The data base can contain other pertinent

information as well, including product cost data.

THE FUTURE. No one knows what the future will hold in this arena, but some possibilities are:

- Improved hydraulic analysis capabilities.

- Symbol counts which lead directly to complete material quantities suitable for order placement.

- Concept irrigation designs which result quickly in material takeoffs, cost estimates, projected annual water requirements and other information so that alternative designs can be analyzed and compared.

- Analysis of irrigation system efficiencies as per the equipment selected and the design.

It is safe to assume that the irrigation design process will become less laborious and, at the same time, more accurate in the future. ■

The author is president of Aqua Engineering Inc., an irrigation engineering firm in Fort Collins, Colo.

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HERE COMES CHINESE ZOYSIAGRASS SEED

It's been more than a decade since zoysia has been in abundance, but a good supply of Chinese common zoysia seed means good news for U.S. landscapers.

By A. Douglas Brede, Ph.D

WHEN I WAS GROWING up in Pittsburgh in the 1950s, the U.S. steel industry was undergoing a shift in production from the United States to Tokyo, spurred by lower labor costs and modern plants.

During a recent visit to Japan, I pointed out to a Japanese colleague a rotting steel mill in Yokohama as we drove down the freeway. "It's those #%&! Koreans," he said.

Because of rising wages and aging plants, steel production was shifting from Japan to neighboring Korea, where labor was cheaper and plants modern. Even now, the Koreans are nervous about steel plants in Malaysia and Singapore taking away their business. Somehow, in all of this, I felt justice was served.

The steel business is not uncharacteristic of other industries. Products are produced where labor is cheapest and most abundant. Zoysiagrass seed is a good example of this.

The Japanese were the first to harvest and sell zoysia seed. Zoysiagrass grows naturally and abundantly throughout the Orient

and sets seed with no special care or tending. But as labor costs in Japan rose and land became restrictive, Korea got into the act.

During the 1960s and 1970s, thousands of tons of zoysiagrass seed flowed from the Korean peninsula to turf sites throughout the world. Common zoysia seed from Korea became so commonplace that the words "Korean" and "common" just naturally stuck together. Today, everyone refers

As China edged toward capitalism, zoysiagrass seed was seen as a potential export item.

to common zoysiagrass seed as Korean common, regardless of its origin.

The Japanese lost the zoysia seed business to the Koreans because of cheap labor, but also be-



Perhaps known best for one of the seven manmade Wonders of the World, China is now becoming recognized for its zoysiagrass.

ing out of zoysia seed production, another country was gearing up. Right across the bay from Seoul is Jiao Zhou county of China. The birthplace of zoysia's evolution is a circle encompassing western Korea and eastern China. The landscape of eastern China is dotted with numerous spots of native zoysia plants.

As China began to edge toward capitalism, zoysiagrass seed was seen as a potential export item and a source of much needed foreign currency.

Today, all of the zoysia seed produced in the world originates from Jiao Zhou and neighboring counties in China. Its culture and harvest are quite unique (see accompanying sidebar).

But the road toward capitalism has not been a smooth one for China. Last year, in an attempt to flex their capitalistic muscles, they pulled a feat reminiscent of the Hunt brothers and the silver fiasco: They tried to corner the zoysia market. Just as with the

cause of a revolutionary secret seed treatment process, developed in Korea, that enhances the germination of zoysia. Untreated zoysia seed has about 3 percent germination — not a very promising proposition if you're planting a lawn. With the Korean treatment, germination rates soar to 80 percent.

The secret treatment is a two-stage process. First, the seed is placed in water. Light, empty seeds float and are skimmed off. Then, the heavier seeds are bathed in a harsh chemical — similar to Drano™ — that etches the thick, waxy seed coat, allowing water to reach the embryo. For every 100 pounds of seed going into the process, only 50 pounds of treated seed come out. Naturally, the process is costly, and the secrecy of the process helps keep it that way.

As of today, Korean common zoysiagrass seed production is extinct. "Labor costs got too high in Korea," said Dr. K.S. Kim of Seoul National University. "Korean common is a thing of the past."

At about the time of the Seoul Olympics, when Korea was phas-

Hunt brothers, however, there were too many players in the game, and soon zoysia seed began leaking out of China from a number of sources. Prices slid. Suddenly, the Chinese government was sitting on a huge mound of zoysia seed with international prices at a new low.

A slide in price and a good supply of Chinese common zoysia seed has been good news for American landscapers. It's been more than a decade since zoysia has been in ample supply and a generation of landscape architects have been schooled without zoysia seed being a viable option. Now things are different, and future prospects point to a steady supply of zoysia seed.

PLANTING THE SEED. Most Chinese common zoysia seed being sold in North America has been treated to increase germination. Sunrise is a U.S. brand name for treated Chinese common. When working with zoysia, it's always a good idea to ask your seed vendor whether your zoysia seed has been treated, just to be sure. After all, who wants 3 percent germination?

Zoysia is a warm-season grass and its planting can be handled similarly to other seeded warm-season grasses:

- The best planting date is late spring to early summer, after danger of frost is past.
- Distribute the seed directly on the soil surface and incorporate very little if at all.
- Because the seed is at the soil surface, water very often and very lightly — more often than with

other turfgrass species.

- The optimal seeding rate is 1 pound to 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Use the higher rate for quicker establishment. Zoysia seed can be mixed with tall fescue at a rate of 1 pound zoysia to 4 pounds fescue for a yearlong, wear-resistant turf.

A slide in price and a good supply of Chinese common zoysia seed is good news for landscapers.

- Siduron (Tupersan) can be used for preemergence weed control at establishment.

- Soil temperature dictates the length of time until emergence. If the 1-inch soil temperature is below 70 degrees Fahrenheit, the seed will sit there and do nothing. Some northern turf managers have laid clear plastic over newly seeded areas in spring to encourage faster growth.

Seeded zoysia has a much wider adaptation than other warm-season grasses. I've heard of seeded zoysia being used in New York, Massachusetts, Washington and even southern Ontario. In these northern areas, spring planting is imperative to allow a long enough summer growing period for the grass to establish. Covering the seedbed with plastic really helps. Without the plastic cover in north-



Natural outcroppings of zoysia are found in the Shandong province.

ern areas, complete ground coverage may take several years. In southern or transition zone areas, I've seen seeded zoysia cover the ground six weeks after sowing.

Zoysia is most readily established onto a bare-soil planting bed. However, it is possible to use zoysia seed in overseeding or turf renovation — establishment just takes a little longer. Zoysia is more aggressive than cool-season grasses and will gradually edge them out.

Even if you do a meager job of

overseeding zoysia seed into an existing stand, the zoysia will increase in population each year until it dominates the lawn. Remaining cool-season grasses can be later removed from the lawn by a February application of Round-up® when the zoysia is dormant.

No matter how you look at it, zoysia will be a grass we'll all be using more of in the future. ■

The author is research director for Jacklin Seed Co., Post Falls, Idaho.

HARVESTING CHINESE ZOYSIAGRASS

Recently, the author, Dr. Brede, toured the zoysiagrass seed production areas of Jiao Zhou and Jiao Nam counties in eastern China. The following are excerpts from his field notes:

ON THURSDAY, Li Min (seed scientist from Beijing Agricultural University) and I traveled to the Shandong Province of China. The most surprising thing to me when we toured their zoysia "fields" was that there were no fields. The zoysia was truly being collected from nature.

Their zoysia "pickers" would collect zoysia in spots usually 10 or 20 feet across, and generally found on mountaintops, riverbeds and cutbanks. We also went right down to

the edge of the Pacific Ocean to find some zoysia growing in native patches on the beach.

Li Min indicated that the pickers randomly select spots of zoysia. *Zoysia japonica* from China can contain as much as one-third *Zoysia sinica*, a similar species with rounder seeds.

Zoysia in China averages about 100 pounds of seed yield per acre unwatered and unfertilized. They harvest it quite adequately even though seed matures during the rainy months of June and July. They said that one woman harvesting zoysia by hand from dawn to dusk can harvest 8 pounds per day.

In Jiao Zhou county, they hire 1,000 women each July to do the hand harvesting

and seed cleaning. They have an ancient, hand-cranked seed cleaner, although it will not reach the 98 percent purity required for export. They use hand screening, a run through the machine and another hand screening to reach 98 percent purity.

I tried to gauge their interest in planting zoysiagrass in regular seed production fields. Large production fields in Shandong are planted with wheat and vegetables. They indicated that wheat and vegetables were higher dollar crops than zoysiagrass, and they enjoyed growing zoysiagrass on areas where they couldn't grow their other high value crops. Furthermore, they liked not having to put water and fertilizer on zoysiagrass, and still harvest a crop.

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Finelawn I	5.6
Trident	5.4
Pacer	5.3
Mustang	5.3
Apache	5.2
Tempo	5.1
KY-31	5.0
Falcon	5.0
Hounddog	5.0
Adventure	4.9
Jaguar	4.9
Bonanza	4.8
Olympic	4.8
Maverick	4.7
Willamette	4.6
Rebel	4.5
Clemfine	4.4
Brookston	4.4
Johnstone	4.0
Kenhy	3.4

Data from USDA National Turfgrass Evaluation Program

Drought Tolerance (Dormancy) Ratings of Tall Fescue Cultivars

Dormancy Ratings 1-9		9=No Dormancy	
Name	Mean	Name	Mean
Arid	7.7	Chesapeake	5.7
Olympic	7.7	Tempo	5.3
Apache	7.3	Hounddog	5.0
Jaguar	7.3	Pacer	5.0
Finelawn I	6.3	Johnstone	5.0
Mustang	6.3	Kenhy	5.0
Rebel	6.3	Maverick	5.0
Bonanza	6.0	Brookston	4.3
KY-31	6.0	Clemfine	4.3
Adventure	5.7	Trident	3.7
Falcon	5.7	Willamette	3.3
Finelawn 5GL	5.7		

Data from USDA National Turfgrass Evaluation Program

Brown Patch Ratings of Tall Fescue Cultivars

Brown Patch Ratings 1-9		9=No Disease	
Name	Mean	Name	Mean
Arid	6.3		
Adventure	6.2		
Jaguar	6.1		
Rebel	6.0		
Pacer	5.9		
Maverick	5.8		
Falcon	5.8		
Clemfine	5.7		
Apache	5.6		
Tempo	5.6		
Olympic	5.6		
Hounddog	5.6		
Chesapeake	5.5		
Finelawn 5GL	5.5		
KY-31	5.5		
Mustang	5.5		
Bonanza	5.5		
Trident	5.5		
Johnstone	5.5		
Finelawn I	5.3		
Kenhy	5.0		
Willamette	4.9		
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GIE SHOW WEATHERS RECESSION, REPORTS INCREASED ATTENDANCE

Now in its second year, the Green Industry Expo is convincing exhibitors and attendees alike that it's for real. Not only was the tradeshow a success, show goers flocked to conferences and the outdoor demo as well.

THE GREEN INDUSTRY Expo weathered a murky business climate and attracted nearly 2,000 lawn and landscape maintenance contractors to the Tampa Convention Center, Nov. 19-21.

Now heading into its third year, the Expo is a joint effort among the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, the Professional Grounds Management Society and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

Prior to the show, organizers remained optimistic that attendance would hold, despite the economy. Ann McClure, executive vice president for PLCAA, said she was encouraged by trade show attendance figures.

"We were very pleased with attendance, in light of the fact that some who were coming said they were bringing half as many people as last year," she said.

"But in fact, we had about 100 more than last year attend. Our guess is that more companies were represented in lawn care and landscape management than ever before."

Free passes, good the second day of the trade show, helped boost show attendance.

The number of exhibitors also increased, from 256 in 1990 to 292, McClure said, but the amount of booth space sold did not increase proportionately to the number of new exhibitors.

"A lot of new booths this year were single booth companies," she said.

Show officials hope to "grow the show" each year and make use



Salsco's Jon Mattson operates the Stallion chipper at the outdoor demonstration.

of more exhibit space. This year, exhibitors displayed their wares over 55,800 net square feet, an increase from last year's 54,200 net square feet.

Reactions to the Tampa location were mixed. Most attendees enjoyed the southern location, but many noted that a more central location, such as 1992's Indianapolis, will attract a larger crowd.

"I'm really encouraged. I think the show is moving in the right direction," said Bob Walker, Walker Manufacturing, Fort Collins, Colo. "I had some valuable con-

ferences and the outdoor demo as well. more regional than he would have preferred. Tegtmeier said he looks forward to the Indianapolis show, which he feels will attract a broader base of landscape contractors.

Nick Dennis, owner of Pro Lawn Plus, Jacksonville, Fla., said that the hotels in Tampa were too far apart, making networking difficult.

Show management is considering expanding show hours in response to some complaints that 10 hours isn't enough. Others were disappointed in the lack of irrigation equipment.

EDUCATION. Seminars were held at the convention center daily, before and after trade show hours. Attendees chose from business and technical topics that zeroed in on current events and concerns facing the lawn and landscape maintenance contractor.

"Every year, the topics vary a bit because we meet new and different challenges, depending on the economy and where they (attendees) think their companies ought to go," McClure said. "Or a lot of people are thinking, should I be offering these services?"

Two conference tracks were available to attendees: The Landscape & Grounds Management conference for members of ALCA and PGMS, and the education conference provided by PLCAA for its members. Topics were diverse, ranging from broadleaf weed control and maintaining turf in a drought to planning for the

(continued on page 60)

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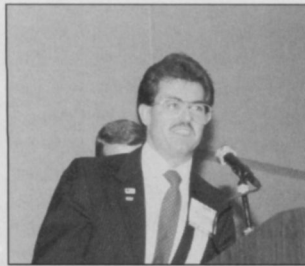
Debra Dennis, ALCA executive director, said attendance at the Landscape & Grounds Management Conference increased to nearly 500 despite quite a few late cancellations. She attributed the cancellations to inclement weather across much of the country. About 82 of the conference attendees were first-timers.

David Koback, president of D & J Lawn and Snow, East Detroit, Mich., said that some of the business seminars were informative, especially, "Surviving a Recession," and "Pricing Your Work to Make Money."

He said he was disappointed in the irrigation presentation, primarily because the information was too "basic" for those already involved in irrigation.

Steve Chapman, grounds manager for Digital Equipment Corp., Salem, N.H., suggested that future seminars focus on regional maintenance, because problems and solutions vary by region.

Dennis of Pro Lawn Plus said



PLCAA leader Neal DeAngelo

he was displeased with many of the seminars and the hours they were offered. The seminar he conducted on business diversification was poorly attended, he said, because it was offered at 4:15 p.m. on the final day of the indoor trade show.

McClure said that show planners are going to survey attendees to gauge the importance of the seminars. "We want to know what draws people. Is it the seminars? We want to know, did you come because of the seminars, or were the seminars the icing on the cake? My guess is that if they're on the fence as to whether to come, seminars are what make the final decision to take the trip."

Keeping with the separate seminar tracks, two keynote speakers were on hand. Josephine Cooper, founder and senior principal of



Keynoter Josephine Cooper

Capitoline International Group, Ltd., a Washington, D.C.-based issues management and public affairs company, addressed PLCAA members. Her firm represents PLCAA on federal issues facing the lawn maintenance industry.

Jay Conrad Levinson of Guerrilla Marketing International, Mill Valley, Calif., shared low-cost marketing secrets with members of ALCA and PGMS.

Active in environmental affairs for 23 years, Cooper said lawn maintenance operators face serious business challenges. Next to the economy and the drug crisis, the American public views the environment as a major concern. And the leading governmental agency dealing with the environment — the Environmental Protection Agency — can't seem to please Congress, the public or ac-

tivists, she said.

Cooper said there is a heightened emphasis at the EPA for right-to-know legislation and the EPA is trying to become more regulatory in nature. Until then, various bills and ordinances will continue to be passed at the state and local levels.

Operators should position themselves with important issues and make sure their staffs, peers and customers are educated on the topics concerning the lawn maintenance industry.

Cooper said it's encouraging to see associations and various interest groups working together. Consistent messages and solid performance are vital to the perception of the green industry.

As experts in their field, lawn maintenance operators should contact their Congressmen, both in their home district and at legislative days in Washington, D.C.

The three associations hope to host one keynote speaker in Indianapolis for all attendees. Show management has discussed that a two-hour preview of the trade show and cocktail party follow the keynote speaker. No definite plans are set.

(continued on page 62)

STAYING AFLOAT IN A SINKING ECONOMY

BUSINESS SEMINARS WERE a popular draw at the Green Industry Expo, and the recession was an underlying theme for many of the sessions.

Rick Randall of Randall & Blake, Littleton, Colo., tackled the subject head on, with a question and answer session entitled "How to Survive In a Recession." Among his suggestions:

- The CEO must demonstrate strong leadership skills and coordinate the preparation of a mission statement. When everyone has a goal, management needs a strategic plan and contingency plan for business continuation.
- If sales volume or net profit is falling, find out why. If the market is drying up, consider downsizing and/or overhead reduction. Also, the CEO should go to the front lines and personally call on customers.
- If the market is shrinking, reduce the scope of work to the areas you excel in and subcontract areas that you are average or less at.
- The CEO should personally approve purchases and sign all checks to control costs.
- Communicate with your banker often and with confidence. Present him with a strategic plan.
- Do not panic. Prepare yourself to accept the worst then make sure the worst never happens.

Randall also presented a list of "leading indicators" that point to eminent danger of business failure. They include: lack of a detailed business plan, declining profits despite increased sales, more jobs showing up underbilled on financial statements, decreasing gross margins, lower sales volume and rising inventory as a percent of sales.

In a related seminar, Gerry Sweda, corporate training manager

for O.M. Scott & Sons, Marysville, Ohio, said managing the employment process is the most important survival tactic for the small business owner in the '90s.

In his seminar, "Employee Management: Effective Use of Employees and Personnel Development," Sweda presented some alarming trends that threaten the future of the small business owner.

According to Sweda, one out of six established small businesses are eliminated by competition every year. And that competition is only going to intensify, he said, as the trend toward big business downsizing continues to pump eager entrepreneurs into the marketplace.

In 1990, corporate cuts continued at twice the rate of the highest year in the '80s, he said. And two-thirds of those dropped from the corporate ranks try to make it as small business entrepreneurs.

The record high expansion of franchises further increases competition among small businesses, he said.

A second trend to watch is the shrinking labor pool. Small businesses will find it increasingly difficult to hire quality people as their numbers decline. The solution: Change the strategy from 'let's find quality people,' to 'let's get quality people to find us.'

To do so, the small business must make itself more attractive to top employment prospects and be prepared to communicate that attractiveness during the hiring process.

Equally important is developing productivity in current employees, Sweda said. The small business needs to introduce performance standards and expectations and provide employees with challenges. It should also communicate the seriousness of work and the consequences if goals are not achieved.

Finally, the company must provide growth opportunities and empower its employees to get motivated.

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CONVERSING WITH THE CHAMPIONS

THE BREAKFAST WITH Champions proved once again to be a popular draw for ALCA and PGMS members. Approximately 225 preregistered attendees and additional walk-in participants crowded 20 tables each day of the three-day event and chose from 40 business and technical topics.

According to Mike Guthrie, president of Ground Control, Orlando, Fla., the breakfast provides a meeting place for industry leaders to share solutions and freely exchange ideas.

"If you had to take one thing back from the show that you could implement for your company, I think you could find it at the Breakfast with Champions," said Guthrie, who coordinated the event.



Interacting with peers is a highlight of the annual conference.

"The Breakfast with Champions stimulates a lot of good conversation," agreed Steve Chapman, grounds manager for Digital Equipment Corp., Salem, N.H.

Three topics proved to be especially popular and filled tables all three days — a first for the breakfast: Bidding and Estimating Landscape Maintenance, Bidding and Estimating Landscape Installation and Customer Service. Other topics explored personnel issues, sales strategies, technical problem-solving and business planning.

Discussion leaders or "champions" select their topics in advance, based on areas of expertise or interest. "Ninety-five percent come prepared with notes," Guthrie said. "It's not something they walk into cold."

A "champion," he added, is typically a recognized leader in the industry, "someone who's been through the trenches."

At the final breakfast, participants were asked to suggest changes for 1992. Two improvements will result: Breakfasts will extend from 1 1/2 hours to 2 hours; and a break between the first and second hour will allow members to move to another table and switch topics.

GIE Show

(continued from page 60)

FUND-RAISING. The PLCAA-sponsored Education Foundation held a breakfast at the Hyatt Regency to raise awareness and update supporters on its fiscal plans. To date, the 2 1/2-year-old foundation has received pledges of \$150,000, and expects that total to rise in 1992.

According to Russ Frith, foundation president and president of Lawn Doctor, Matawan, N.J., the foundation's first project is to help fund a technician training program, in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment and other groups.

Additionally, the foundation has initiated memorial activities to honor industry leaders who have passed away. Contributions

can be earmarked as memorials.

Sixty items went up for bid at this year's live auction, raising \$17,415 for PLCAA's issues management and public relations efforts. Auctioneer Harry Collins of Total Lawn Care Services, Tupelo, Miss., kept the bidding lively for bargain-seeking landscape contractors at the Hyatt Regency in Tampa.

High bid was \$1,100 for 840 bags of limestone; low bid was \$35 for a measuring wheel.

In total, 49 companies donated products and equipment to the annual event.

Last year's auction raised more than \$20,000 for the association. This year's figures were down because fewer high ticket items went up for bid, according to Carol Mocerri, PLCAA executive assistant and assistant GIE show manager.

OUTDOOR DEMO. A sunny and 80-plus degree day greeted visitors to the outdoor demonstration site at Horizon Park in Tampa. More than 600 attendees and 54 exhibitors participated in the annual show's final event.

The outdoor site provided landscape contractors with the opportunity to test equipment from a variety of manufacturers. Formerly a PLCAA tradition, members of ALCA, PGMS and PLCAA attended the three-hour event.

McClure said she was extremely pleased with the turnout at the demonstration site and would like to continue to improve conditions for exhibitors and attendees. That would include providing more space for larger exhibitors and allowing more time for equipment to be set up.

Encore's Tegtmeier said that it's difficult for exhibitors to move

their equipment from the trade show floor to the outdoor demonstration site overnight.

"You get spoiled by Louisville (Expo)," he said. "At Louisville, you can display your wares every hour that the show goes on. At Tampa, you have to get up at six in the morning and move equipment five miles down the road for a three-hour demonstration."

Chapman of Digital Equipment Corp., said the outdoor demo site is a valuable component of the GIE show. But site conditions for the 1991 show were less than ideal, he said. "I wish they'd found a better park," he said.

"In Florida, the sandy soil is poor, so a lot of aerators didn't do that great on that type of soil."

Chapman also noted the lack of tree care demonstrations, a feature he enjoyed at the Nashville site in 1990. ■

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- Keep your marketing plan to no more than seven sentences. This keeps everyone focused on the firm's goal.
- Establish an identity, not an image. An identity is more straightforward.
- Rethink your hours of operation. Living in a 24-hour-a-day society, voice mail and/or year-round operation are additional pluses for your customers.
- Community involvement. If you work your tail off for the community, a potential customer will think you'll work for him.
- A good phone demeanor increases profits. Don't show your bad mood to clients.
- It's easy for customers to agree to a

free consultation. Set a time limit for the consultation and be prepared to leave at the agreed upon time unless you're asked to stay.

- Every company should have a catalog, even if it's black and white. About 92 percent of Americans bought something from a catalog last year.

- When you say hello and goodbye to your customers, smile, make eye contact and use the person's name.

- Spy on yourself and others. See how you're doing.

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USE READER SERVICE #43

Compost Digest

Bush Takes a Stand on Recycling, Composting

President Bush recently issued an executive order that directs federal agencies to initiate recycling programs that encourage waste reduction and recycling, including "the composting of organic materials such as yard waste."

According to the Solid Waste Composting Council, Washington, D.C., the order marks an important departure in White House policy. As the largest single generator of wastes and the biggest potential consumer of recycled products, the Federal government will now be required to establish waste reduction and recycling programs, procurement preference policies favoring recovered materials, and agency recycling coordinators.

Agencies must report their "affirmative procurement program" to the EPA within 180 days of Oct. 31, 1991; and issue a compliance report within a year of the order.

(continued on page 66)

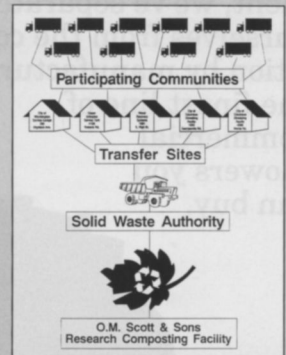
Composting Site Offers Disposal Alternative

THE O.M. SCOTT & Sons Co. has opened a composting facility at its headquarters in Marysville, Ohio. The new facility is part of a five-year pilot project in cooperation with the Franklin County Solid Waste Management Authority. Scotts owns and operates the facility, under contract to the Authority, in a public/private partnership.

The Marysville facility is the latest addition to Scotts' national network of composting operations. Scotts and its subsidiary, Hyponex Corp., operate 10 facilities in California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Alabama, Texas, Georgia and South Carolina. Other sites are being planned, according to George Martin, manager of composting for Scotts/Hyponex.

Each of the facilities handles organic waste from a number of sources, including landscapers, golf courses, tree companies, lawn care companies, utility companies and municipalities.

The Marysville site will process 50,000 tons of grass clippings, leaves and brush each year. To minimize collection and transportation costs, local communities have established five transfer stations to hold the wastes before they are shipped to the composting facility.



Scott's composting plan gets communities involved.

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February 14, Phoenix, AZ
March 5, Las Vegas, NV
Enfields Tree Service
Elkhorn, NE
ND, Eastern SD, NE, MN, CO,
Western IA, MO, KS, OK,
Southeast WY
(402) 289-0804 FAX
(402) 289-3248 (Phone)
(800) 747-8733
January 24,
Oklahoma City, OK
January 31, Kansas City, MO
February 10, Laramie, WY
February 15, Bismarck, ND
February 29, Denver, CO
March 13, Elkhorn, NE
March 27, Bloomington, MN
Guardian Tree Experts
Rockville, MD
MD, VA, DC
(301) 881-8550
January 30,
Gaithersburg, MD
Michigan Injection Systems
Grand Rapids, MI
Michigan
(800) 423-3789
(616) 364-4558
February 5, East Lansing, MI

Warne Chemical Co.
Rapid City, SD
Western SD, WY
(605) 342-7644
(800) 658-5457
February 6, Rapid City, SD
February 18, Evanston, WY
February 20, Casper, WY
Forrest Lytle & Sons, Inc.
Cincinnati, OH
SW Ohio
(513) 521-1464
February 7, Cincinnati, OH
The Tree Doctor Inc.
Hendersonville, NC
NC, SC, North Georgia
(704) 253-8733
(704) 891-TREE
February 11, Athens, GA
February 13, Charleston, SC
February 19, Durham, NC
February 20, Charlotte, NC
Gem Spraying Service
Jerome, ID
Idaho
(208) 733-4206
(800) 869-7741
February 17, Pocatello, ID
February 18, Twin Falls, ID
February 19, Boise, ID
February 20, Lewiston, ID
Liqui-Green Lawn & Tree Care
Peoria, IL
Illinois, Eastern IA
(309) 243-5211
(800) 747-5211
February 28, Chicago, IL

Professional Tree Care
& Injection
Winter Park, FL
Central & South Florida
(407) 647-3335
(800) 356-4351
February 26, West Palm, FL
February 28, Miami, FL
March 4, Fort Meyers, FL
March 6, Sarasota, FL
March 13, Orlando, FL
Lanphear Supply Division
Cleveland, OH
Ohio, W. VA
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(800) 332-TREE
March 2, Mayfield, OH
March 3, Columbus, OH
March 4, Toledo, OH
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Oregon, Washington
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(800) 635-4294
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Compost Digest

(continued from page 64)

New Video Cooks Up Compost Recipe

"Composting: A Recipe for Success" is a 21-minute video that takes viewers step-by-step through the composting process. From Compost Productions, the video is hosted by syndicated columnist Cort Sinnes. A written copy of the "recipe" with additional information is enclosed with every order.

The video is available for \$14.95 plus \$3 for postage and handling; additional postage will be added for orders outside the United States. Contact: Compost Productions, c/o International Marketing Exchange, P.O. Box 775, McHenry, IL 60051-0775; 815/363-0909. FAX: 815/363-0933.

Wildcat Takes on Peat With Wetlands Theme

Wildcat Manufacturing, a maker of commercial composting equipment based in Freeman, S.D., launched its "Save Our Wetlands, Demand 100 Percent Compost"

campaign to encourage the use of compost over peat moss harvested from wetlands. Peat, mined from wetlands, is a non-renewable resource.

According to the Professional Grounds Management Society, Cockeysville, Md., Wildcat shares all of its information on the compost vs. peat issue with its dealers, customers and the public.

The peat research data answers the one major stumbling block to composting, said Cal Kuska, a representative for Wildcat.

"The first question people ask me is if there will ever be too much compost. Just look at peat purchases in garden stores, nurseries, florists and by all government entities," he said. "You will see that if we replace peat we may never have enough compost to go around."

The Rot Line Answers Composters' Questions

Composters in Alameda County, Calif., call the "Rot Line" when they need information about backyard composting. Operated by the county's Home Composting Education Program, Oakland, the telephone service provides information on composting workshops and other activities

and features an answering service for residents with specific questions.

Composting services from the county include: regularly scheduled workshops (it presented 20 such workshops from June through September); special workshops for garden clubs, neighborhood organizations and businesses; slide presentations; and a mobile display unit to attract potential composters.

NYC Recycles Sludge, Markets as Fertilizer

New York City officials and the New York Organic Fertilizer Co. have reached an agreement to process and recycle nearly half the city's sludge into fertilizer, according to industry reports.

Under the agreement, Enviro-Gro Technologies will build, own and operate a facility to process sludge into pellets, which are marketed as fertilizer. Both New York Organic Fertilizer Co. and Enviro-Gro are units of the JWP Energy & Environment Group, Purchase, N.Y.

Enviro-Gro has plants in Largo and Tampa, Fla., Cobb and Clayton Counties, Ga., and Hagerstown, Md. A new facility is planned for Boston Harbor. ■

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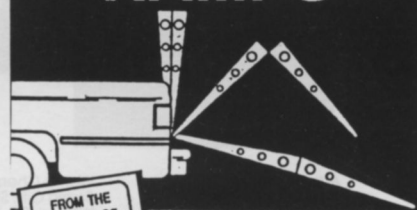
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USE READER SERVICE #68

People

THE O.M. SCOTT & SONS CO. appointed **Theodore Host** president and chief operating officer. Prior to joining the company, Host was senior vice president, marketing, at Coca-Cola USA.

Host is responsible for Scotts' Consumer Products Group, Professional Business Group, operations, information systems, research and development and human resources.

Miles Inc. (formerly Mobay Specialty Products Group), is expanding and reorganizing its agricultural division's field sales team. The sales force is now divided into four territories: Northeast, Southeast, Midwest and West.

Steve Chaney, formerly a field representative, relocates to Kansas City as turf and ornamental product marketing manager.

Dan Meek, formerly turf and ornamental product manager, remains in the Kansas City area to serve as midwest area manager.

Midwest field representatives include **John Spaulding**, Liberty, Mo.; and **Richard Skorepa**, Dublin, Ohio.



Host



Chaney

Additionally: **Rick Robb** now serves as marketing services manager, a new position; **Jim Schell** is the national accounts and governmental sales manager; and **Brad Filson** is product packaging manager.

Randy Malkin was appointed product manager for the commercial division of Rain Bird Sales. He is responsible for the justification and development of new rotors and valves, as well as maintaining quality standards for existing products.

Malkin joined the company in 1989, serving as the area specifications manager for southern Nevada and the northern portion of Southern California.

Also within the commercial division,

Ken Williams was named area specifications manager for the Midwest, the Great Lakes and the Northeastern U.S.. He serves as the liaison between Rain Bird management and landscape architects, irrigation consultants and city and county officials on equipment specifications.

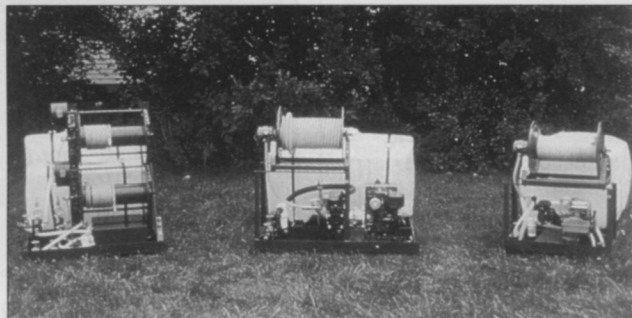
Recent changes in The Toro Co.'s irrigation division are: **Bill Thoele**, vice president and general manager; **Mark Faris**, communications and customer service manager; **Steve Swenerton**, director of sales and marketing, residential and commercial; and **Jane Payne**, government marketing manager for the division, after two years as the controller marketing manager.

Thoele joined the company in 1961 and most recently was managing director of international irrigation. Faris has been with the division for nearly six years, most recently as retail, residential and commercial marketing manager.

Swenerton has been with Toro's irrigation division for eight years, most recently as director of sales. ■



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Products

The 1991/92 edition of the Turf & Ornamental Chemicals Reference book is now available from **Chemical and Pharmaceutical Press**. Products are indexed by brand name, manufacturer, common and chemical name, product category, plant and site use and pest use.

Appendix I is a Department of Transportation information table. Appendix II provides conversions and storage and temperature tables, and lists state pesticide control officials and state extension program leaders. Appendix III includes OSHA and EPA regional offices.

Product labels and Material Safety Data Sheets comprise the remainder of the book. **Circle 126 on reader service card**

Curv-Rite offers flexible and durable aluminum edging to define landscaped areas. A patented telescoping design provides easy installation and reduces labor and material waste. Extruded channels and stamped stakes anchor the edging in the soil.

It is available in natural aluminum, deco-black or black anodized finish for planting beds, paver areas or stone retention.

Circle 127 on reader service card

The 65-h.p. 9400 UTR™ from **Excel Industries** features all-wheel drive/all-wheel steering with zero radius turning for reliability on steep slopes and rough terrain. The hydrostatic, 4-wheel drive and the steering system are designed to get in and out of tight places quickly and safely.

The deluxe seat has a tilt suspension system that keeps the driver upright when mowing on hillsides. A limit control dampens the swinging motion for control.

Circle 128 on reader service card



Product Spotlight

The new PRO-Line HYDROsense mower from **Encore** is designed to increase productivity with fewer moving parts. The drive system features a simplistic design and consists of a single load sensing gear pump and a single modulation valve.

The heavy-duty oil cooler ensures proper operating temperatures, and a two-gallon oil reservoir with high capacity oil filtration keeps the oil clean. The open loop hydraulic system maximizes oil flow through the filter.

Model 48K250 has a 48-inch cutting width and a 14-h.p. Kawasaki single cylinder engine. Model 60B450 has a 60-inch cutting width and an 18-h.p. Briggs & Stratton Vanguard V-twin engine. Both engines offer overhead valve, full pressure lube with filter and recoil starting.

Forward, reverse, turning and stopping functions are all within reach on the pistol-grip hand controls. They operate with low hand pressure to lessen operator fatigue.

Circle 125 on reader service card



The All-Pro No. 100S fine-pointed digging trowel has a one-piece design, plastic handle grip and stainless steel construction. From **Wilcox All-Pro Tools & Supply**, the trowel has a long, sharp point to aid in weeding and digging. A leather thong is attached.

Circle 129 on reader service card

Ariens LM2lsp professional mowing system is available in a choice of two self-propelled models. One features a 5-h.p., 4-cycle Briggs & Stratton Quantum I/C; the second model has a 5-h.p., 2-cycle Briggs & Stratton Zenoh I/C engine.

Both models perform mulching, side discharging, rear bagging, vacuuming up leaves and other yard debris and dethatch-



ing (with optional attachment).

Standard features include a 21-inch Flex-N-Float mower deck; and a Bagger-Vac collection system, a 2 1/4-bushel capacity rear bagger.

Circle 130 on reader service card

The **John Deere** 320 hydrostatic lawn and garden tractor features a liquid-cooling system, an 18-h.p. V-twin powerplant, a hydrostatic transmission and a hydraulic equipment lift system.

The engine is an overhead valve design and has a full pressure lubrication system with a replaceable oil filter.

Travel speeds range from 0 to 7 m.p.h. in forward and up to 2.9 m.p.h. in reverse. Other features include a high-back

seat, 12-volt battery, electronic ignition, cast iron front axle, one-inch-diameter steering spindle and front bumper.

Circle 131 on reader service card

Jacobsen's 548-100 seeder plants seed up to three inches below the surface for good germination. Its floating action follows ground contours for even planting on a 48-inch planting path.



The seeder holds 100 pounds of seed. The seed rate is regulated by a Flo-Rate gauge, and a high-speed sprocket is available for heavy seeding rates. The seeder can also aerate, dethatch and vertical mow.

Circle 132 on reader service card

Maruyama offers a hedge trimmer with an extended reach blade. Model HT242L is designed to give the operator extra reach and sweep. The blade is 40 inches long and made of induction hardened chrome steel. The unit is powered by a Mitsubishi 24.1 cc engine.

Circle 133 on reader service card

The 1992 **Exmark** Turf Ranger® features the Trans-Guard motion control system which reduces peak loads by 30 percent, extending transmission life.

Other features include the outfront, 60- and 52-inch full-floating, anti-scalp cutting



decks; dampened hydrostatic speed control; and Kohler Magnum 18- or 20-h.p. twin-cylinder engines.

Circle 134 on reader service card

Yazoo has added two models to its product line. The 22-inch walk-behind mower features a 5-h.p. Briggs & Stratton engine and 16-inch rear wheels. The 26-inch walk-behind mower has up to a 9-h.p. Briggs & Stratton or Kawasaki engine and 20-inch rear wheels.



"We have been using Yazoo for almost 20 years. Yazoo mowers give us great maneuverability. It's a rugged machine"

Dave Burton, Vice President of Palm Mortuaries and Memorial Parks, Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Both units offer blade disengaging for easy starts, mulching kits and close trim capability.

Circle 135 on reader service card

The Tree Pro-Tector is designed to protect young trees from damage caused by string trimmers and lawn mowers. Constructed from high density polyethylene, the product provides cushioning around the base of trees up to 4 inches in diameter and is expandable by linking two or more together. It is reusable, ultraviolet protected and available in gray and red/brown colors.

Tree Pro-Tector is produced by **Seaberry Landscape**, a residential and commercial landscape firm.

Circle 136 on reader service card

Yard-Man has introduced three models of commercial mowers with 36-, 48- and 52-inch cutting widths.

The mowers feature 14-h.p. Briggs & Stratton OHV Vanguard engines, cast iron cylinder sleeves, full pressure lubrication, 4-speed drive systems, 4-speed, shift-on-the-go transmission and 1- to 4-inch cutting height adjustment. A blade/brake safety system disengages the engine and blade when handles are released.

Circle 137 on reader service card

The new **Bomford B577** mower has a maximum sideways reach of 18 feet, 8 inches and a down bank reach of 8 feet, 9 inches measured on a 45-degree slope. An independent hydraulic system eases coupling up and reduces the risk of oil contamination. The arms and cutting head are protected by a two-axis safety breakaway system. A dual-purpose flail is fitted as standard.

Circle 138 on reader service card

StoneWall Landscape Systems offers a new lighting concept for its decorative, lightweight, mortarless retaining wall. StoneWall now includes a system that can

FYI...

Estimating made easy. Means Landscape Cost Data 1992 contains new and expanded unit prices, indexed by geographical areas and illustrated assemblies. The 5th annual edition has 380 pages.

Circle 159 on reader service card

Catalog lists more than 4,000 products. The 30th edition of the LESCO catalog details fertilizer, seed, equipment and accessories, aftermarket replacement parts, irrigation equipment and more.

Circle 160 on reader service card

Salco offers drip irrigation literature. Included are specification data, flow charts and illustrated components. Two new products — an emitter and complete valve manifold assemblies — are featured.

Circle 161 on reader service card

What does LP-22 mean when it's stamped on lumber? The answer is in the *California Landscape Standards*, a 180-page reference that sets minimum standards for landscape construction and maintenance. It's available from the California Landscape Contractors Association.

Circle 162 on reader service card



accommodate a low voltage electric cable within the block for on-the-wall lighting.

The system is installed as the wall is built. A variety of lighting plans are compatible with StoneWall modules.

Circle 139 on reader service card

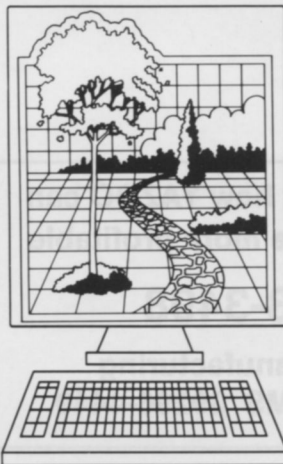
Parkway Research introduces its Big Foot blue spray pattern indicator in new water soluble bags. The new package eliminates spillage, measuring and the use of dispos-

able containers. Each bag colors 50 to 100 gallons of spray solution.

Circle 140 on reader service card.

New "billboard" liftgates from **Del Liftgates** provide companies with additional advertising opportunities. The level-lift rail gate uses an aluminum platform that can double as a billboard. A roller chain and sprocket eliminate the need for cables or arms. All power components are built into the housing.

Circle 141 on reader service card



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We'll also take a look at irrigation certification, compost uses in the landscape, the value of landscaping and liability insurance. In addition, you'll find our regular assortment of departments covering industry happenings.

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Great Salt Lake Minerals & Chemicals Corporation

USE READER SERVICE #58

Calendar

JAN. 31-FEB. 2

The Management Clinic, co-sponsored by the National Landscape Association, Garden Centers of America and Wholesale Nursery Growers of America, The Galt House East, Louisville, Ky. Contact: The Management Clinic, 1250 I St., NW, #500, Washington, DC 20005; 202/789-2900.

FEB. 3-4

1992 Penn-Del ISA Shade Tree Symposium, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, Pa. Contact: Elizabeth Wertz, International Society of Arboriculture, P.O. Box 293, Bedminster, PA 18910; 215/795-2096.

FEB. 3-5

Mid-America Green Industry Convention, Hilton Plaza Inn, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: Olivia Golden, Professional Lawn Care Association of Mid-America, P.O. Box 35184, Kansas City, MO 64134; 816/765-7616.

FEB. 3-5

National Symposium on Pesticide and Fertilizer Containment: Design and Management, Westin Crown Center, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: Glenn Church II, MidWest Plan Service, 122 Davidson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-3080; 515/294-4337.

FEB. 4

Annuals Plant Program, Tom's Country Place, Avon, Ohio. Contact: Charles Behnke, Cooperative Extension Service, 42110 Russia Road, Elyria, OH 44035; 216/322-0127.

FEB. 4-5

Capital Region Turf & Ornamental School, Eastern Section, Holiday Inn, Granville, Pa., Western Section, Embers Convention Center, Quality Inn, Carlisle, Pa. Contact: James Welshans, Dauphin Co. Cooperative Extension, 1451 Peters Mountain Road, Dauphin, PA 17018; 717/921-8803.

FEB. 4-6

Garden State Nursery & Landscape Conference & Trade Show, Garden State Convention and Exhibit Center, Somerset, N.J. Contact: S. Howard Davis, New Jersey Nursery & Landscape Association, Building A, Suite 3, 65 S. Main St., Pennington, NJ 08534; 609/737-0890.

FEB. 5-7

American Sod Producers Association's Mid-winter Conference and Exposition, Bally's Casino & Resort, Las Vegas. Contact: ASPA, 1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008; 708/705-9898.

FEB. 10-17

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, 63rd International Golf Course Conference and Show, New Orleans Convention Center, New Orleans, La. Contact: Linda Fortunato, GCSAA, 1421 Research Park Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049; 913/841-2240.

FEB. 18-21

International Erosion Control Association, 23rd Annual Conference and Trade Exposition, Reno, Nev. Contact: Ben Northcutt, IECA, P.O.

Box 774904, Steamboat Springs, CO 80477; 303/879-3010.

FEB. 21-22

ALMA Expo, sponsored by American Landscape Maintenance Association, Clarion Resort, Orlando, Fla. Contact: ALMA, 2126-A Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, FL 33020; 800/992-ALMA.

FEB. 24-25

Professional Lawn Care Association of America, Legislative Day on the Hill, Washington, D.C. Contact: PLCAA, 1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112; 404/977-5222.

FEB. 26

New Jersey Landscape '92 15th Annual Trade Show, Meadowlands Convention Center Plaza Drive, Secaucus, N.J. Contact: Skip Powers, 630 Valley Court, Westwood, NJ 07675; 201/664-6310.

FEB. 27-28

Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado, Landscape Conference and Trade Show, Holiday Inn I-70 East, Denver. Contact: Joyce Richardson, 5290 East Yale Circle, Suite 100, Denver, CO 80222; 303/757-5611.

FEB. 28

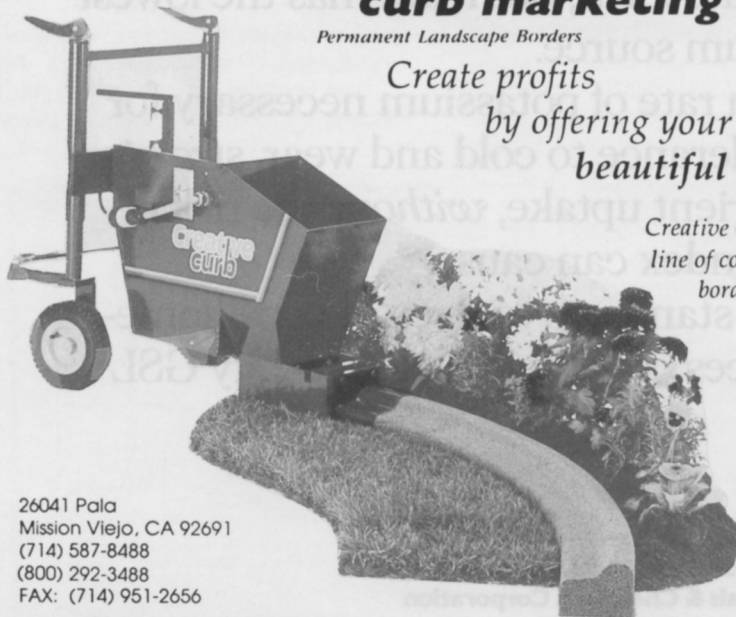
Turf Management Seminar, sponsored by Cuyamaca College and University of California Cooperative Extension. Contact: Ray Meredith, Cuyamaca College, 2950 Jamacha Road, El Cajon, CA 92019; 619/670-3544. ■

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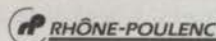
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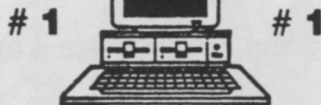
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Mower Selection

(continued from page 34)

visor for Tailored Lawn Service, Plain City, Ohio, said he looks for hydrostatic drive to get away from the problems associated with belt drive, such as poor traction in wet conditions, no automatic reverse (which leads to scuffing) and continuous adjustment.

Unlike Angles, Zarrilli said he never con-

siders two-cycle engines because the cost of mixing oil and gas are too high.

Tegtmeier said hydraulic drive is the company's most requested drive system. "There is an advantage of the hydraulic over hydrostatic. There are less moving parts. More than anything, they filter 100 percent of oil, whereas hydrostatic filters about 7 percent maximum. Contaminated hydraulic fluid equates to shorter life of the pump and motors."

Tegtmeier said that one way to achieve

riding capability while holding costs down is to employ a steerable sulky. "This greatly reduces the initial cost of the equipment, yet gives the operator the opportunity to ride rather than walk.

"Also, whereas the rider is dedicated to riding, a walk-behind with sulky can be removed in tight quarters."

Chauvin said he looks for durability. "The use or abuse they get is a real factor," he said.

Good tip speed is also important. "I want

something that is able to maintain its power. A lot of properties have slopes," he said.

MULCHING MOWERS. Mulching mowers have recently attracted much attention and potential buyers are weighing the benefits and drawbacks of the technology.

Ecological and financial incentives are among the most frequently cited reasons for their use, as mulching mowers not only return clippings and nutrients to the soil, but reduce dumping fees as well.

"For those contracts where the cutter can mulch clippings rather than side discharge or bagging, mulching has certainly

started to be popular," said Ransome's Muser.

"It's strictly a question of whether or not the feature of mulching can be sold to the customer. It provides advantages to the lawn in addition to being a cost saver to the contractor," he said.

Muser said that returning the clippings to the lawn can provide up to 25 percent of the nitrogen that a lawn needs, thereby reducing the demand for chemicals. It also helps build a deeper root system than a lawn that has its clippings regularly removed, he said, and a deeper root system reduces irrigation demands.

"The environmental aspect is one way that contractors are going to be selling mulching," he said.

Despite their resurgent popularity, some landscape contractors remain skeptical of the results. Many are taking a "wait-and-see" approach to the technology, while others are simply satisfied with their current mowing inventory.

Gallagher said that his company has given little thought to mulching mowers. "We don't bag very much as it is," he said. "We've always been under the philosophy of 'don't bag it.' The only time we do bag is for safety reasons or if clients ask for it — only a small percentage request bagging.

"With that experience, we probably won't look at mulching mowers," he said.

But Rob Zolezzi, owner of L & L Landscape Services in Santa Clara, Calif., said that his company recently purchased a Hustler TurboShredder with excellent results.

"You don't need to catch the clippings because it has a series of small blades that mulch grass as you mow," he explained. "You save a ton of time as far as mowing goes...You never have to stop the machine and unhook the basket and dump. And you don't have to haul the clippings and pay fees in a dump site."

He added that leaving clippings on the ground is horticulturally a better practice for the lawn.

But not all accounts are amenable to recycling clippings, he said. "In high visibility accounts, we don't use it because visually you can still see some grass on top."

Mulching kits are a lower cost alternative. Mulching plates attach to the walk-behind mower and redirect the clippings, allowing the blade to cut the clippings a second time.

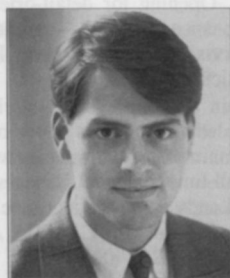
Muser said that contractors benefit from a mower that converts from mulching to side discharge or bagging. "This enables the contractor to satisfy his customers whether or not he can use the mulching mower on a particular account, as well as satisfy the problem that all mulching mowers will suffer performance problems under some conditions." ■

The author is Associate Editor of Lawn & Landscape Maintenance magazine.

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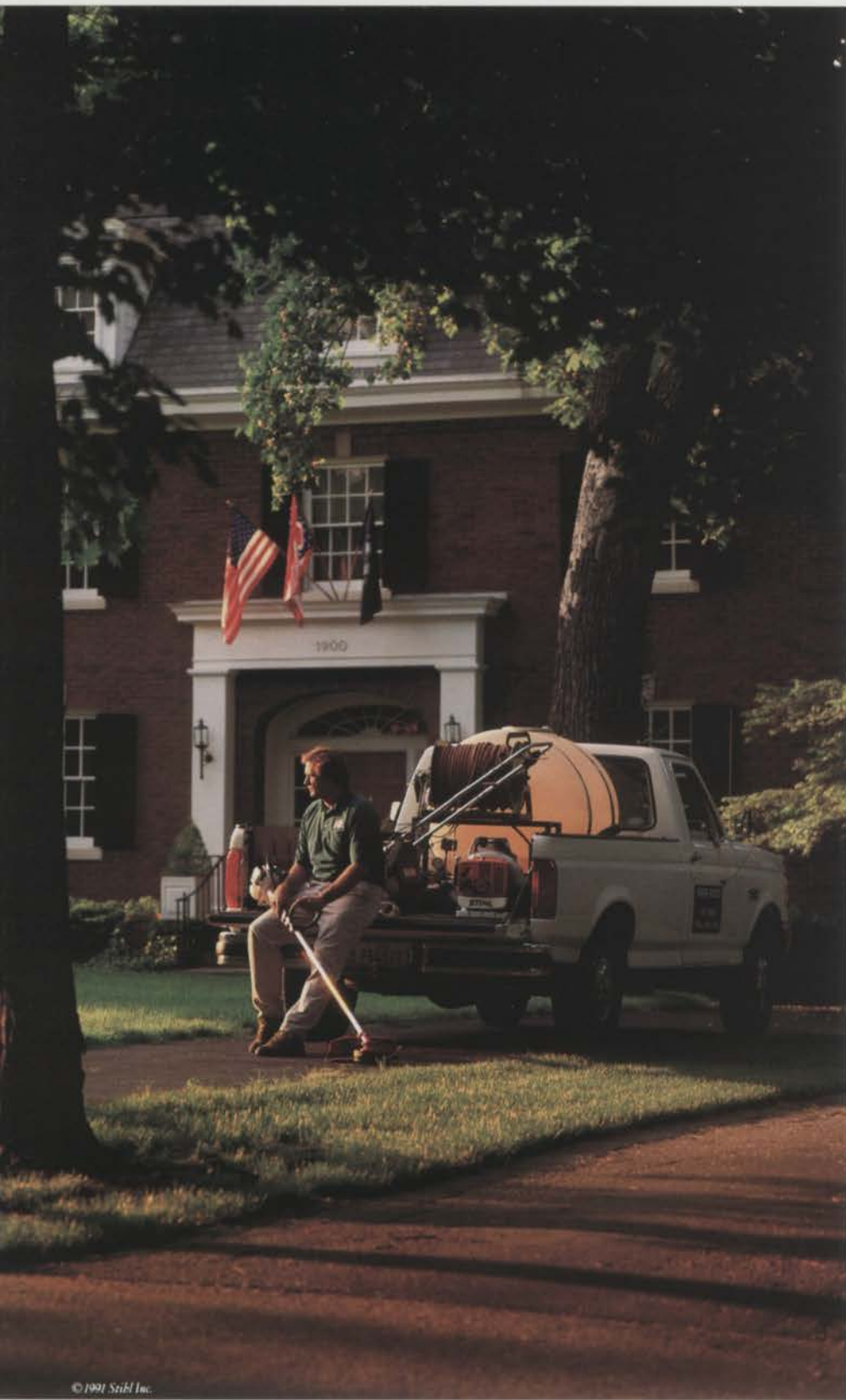


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