

**JULY 2021**  
Lawnandlandscape.com

JULY 2021  
lawnandlandscape.com

# Lawn & Landscape®


Leading business media for landscapers

Leading business media for landscapers

# The Water Issue



# Righting the ship



**ASI Landscape Management's irrigation department was running dry until Eric Rothell came on board. Now it's a thriving department generating more than \$1 million in revenue.**

0052 / 25080



FIRST  
EDITIONS  
SHRUBS & TREES

100+ ROCK STAR  
VARIETIES



# GET THE PARTY SWINGIN'

Introducing **Swing Low®**

Sometimes to take your landscape higher, you've got to Swing Low®. This distylium makes for a perfect low-growing evergreen groundcover and is adaptable for various landscape applications. Its dense, blue-green leaves respond well to pruning and are smaller and more compact than Vintage Jade Distylium.

GET TO KNOW ALL OUR HARDWORKING SHRUBS  
AND TREES AT **FIRSTEDITIONSPLANTS**

© 2021 First Editions. All Rights Reserved.



## Lawn &amp; Landscape

JULY 2021

A GIE MEDIA PUBLICATION  
VOLUME 42, NUMBER 716 Righting  
the ship ►

ASI Landscape Management's irrigation department was running dry until **Eric Rothell** came on board. Now it's a thriving department generating more than \$1 million in revenue.

The  
Water  
Issue

## 28 Erosion intervention

## 36 Rain gardens

## 40 Xeriscapes

## 42 Drought-tolerant plants

## DEPARTMENTS

4 **Editor's Insight:** What did you say?6 **LL Insider:** Latest industry news12 **Huston:** KPIs in relation to time14 **Wilson:** 5 ways to remove  
the stress from tech15 **Harvesters:** Hiring the right salesperson58 **An Average Day:** Ramona Mullins

## FEATURES

## Stay connected

46 Increasing your company's use of  
technology to communicate doesn't  
mean your culture has to weaken.

## BRAND SPOTLIGHT

WITH WEATHERMATIC

Labor and Water at the Crossroads 34







**Brian Horn**

Editor, Lawn & Landscape

“That lesson — that not everyone communicates or wants to be communicated with like I do — was a key take away for me.”

# What did you say?

**G**ary walks by Larry on a jobsite. Gary gives Larry a hearty hello and even asks how he's doing. Larry responds with a head nod and a “good, thanks.” Gary is left wondering what's wrong with Larry, while Larry wonders why Gary is always so loud. That's because they both communicate differently, and one way is not better than the other. That was one of the lessons I took away from two presentations at Lawn & Landscape's Top 100 Executive Summit and Awards Dinner last month.

Both of our speakers, Dr. Jermaine Davis and Dave Mitchell, have studied communication for years and were the keynote speakers at the event. That lesson — that not everyone communicates or wants to be communicated with like I do — was a key take away for me. Here are a few more lessons I took away from the presentations.

- **Look ahead.** Davis says feedback is important, but we lose sight of what he calls “feedforward.” Feedback lets people know what they got wrong, feedforward is about inspiration and aspiration. “Here's how you position yourself for success next time.”

- **Ask the right question.** In an interview, Mitchell recommends asking a candidate, “Tell me about a time you disappointed your boss, your parents or your teachers?” During the answer, they can either take ownership of the mistake or blame someone else. Who do you want working at your company?

- **Listen up.** Davis says there are three goals to listening: To demonstrate respect, to hear the person out and to seek to understand. But none of that means you have to agree with each other. It just means you have created enough space for the other person to share their perspective.

- **Remember perspective.** Mitchell says we are all delusional because we all develop how we see the world through the experiences we have. “We are all living in our own private island,” he says. Two people can have exactly the same experience but walk out with different feelings about the situation.

You can read more about Davis' presentation on page 6 and Mitchell's in the August issue of Lawn & Landscape. — *Brian Horn*

**Lawn & Landscape**

Leading business media for landscape contractors.

5811 Canal Rd., Valley View, OH, 44125

Phone: 800-456-0707 Editorial Fax: 216-651-0830 Subscriptions & Classifieds: 800-456-0707

**gie**  
media  
incorporated

**EDITORIAL**

BRIAN HORN EDITOR: bhorn@gie.net  
JIMMY MILLER ASSOCIATE EDITOR: jmill@gie.net  
KIM LUX ASSISTANT EDITOR: klux@gie.net  
JIM HUSTON J.R. HUSTON ENTERPRISES jhuston@giemedia.com  
BRUCE WILSON & COMPANY bwilson@giemedia.com  
THE HARVEST GROUP harvest@giemedia.com  
KRISTEN HAMPSHIRE CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**CREATIVE**

JUSTIN ARMBURGER ART DIRECTOR jarmburger@gie.net

**ADVERTISING/PRODUCTION INQUIRIES**

KAITLIN SELLERS ksellers@gie.net

**SALES**

DAVID SZY PUBLISHER dszy@gie.net  
TRACI MUELLER ACCOUNT MANAGER tmuel@gie.net  
BRIAN MAY ACCOUNT MANAGER bmay@gie.net  
DANNY WALSH ACCOUNT MANAGER dwalsh@gie.net  
RUSSELL WARNER NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER rwarner@gie.net  
THOMAS VIDMAR CLASSIFIEDS ACCOUNT MANAGER tvdmar@gie.net

**CORPORATE**

RICHARD FOSTER CHAIRMAN  
CHRIS FOSTER PRESIDENT AND CEO  
DAN MORELAND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
JAMES R. KEEFE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
CHRISTINA WARNER AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR  
MARIA MILLER DIRECTOR, CONFERENCES AND EVENTS  
KELLY ANTAL CONTROLLER  
IRENE SWEENEY MARKETING DIRECTOR  
MICHELLE WISNIEWSKI PRODUCTION MANAGER  
KEVIN GILBRIDE BUSINESS MANAGER, GIE VENTURES

LAWN & LANDSCAPE MARKET INSIGHT COUNCIL: BILL ARMAN, The Harvest Group, Trabuco Canyon, Calif.; MAURICE DOWELL, Dowco Enterprises, St. Louis, Mo.; BOB GROVER, Pacific Landscape Management, Hillsboro, Ore.; JIM HUSTON, J.R. Huston Enterprises, Englewood, Colo.; MOLLY JOHN, M.J. Design Associates, Plain City, Ohio; ED LAFLAMME, The Harvest Group, Wilton Center, Conn.; TAYLOR MILLIKEN, Milosi, Nashville, Tenn.; JERRY SCHILL, Schill Grounds Management, North Ridgeville, Ohio; ZECH STRAUSSER, Strauser Nature's Helpers, Allentown, Pa.; JOHN TAYLOR, TIS Services, Houston, Texas; BRUCE WILSON, Bruce Wilson & Company, Scottsdale, Ariz.

LAWN & LANDSCAPE (ISSN 1046-154X) is published monthly. Copyright 2021 GIE Media, Inc. 5811 Canal Rd., Valley View, OH, 44125. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted by any means without written permission from the publisher. Single copy rate: \$5.00 One year subscription rates, \$30 in the United States, \$35 in Canada and \$98 in other foreign countries. One year foreign airmail rate: \$218. Two year subscription rate: \$42. Subscriptions and classified advertising should be addressed to the Valley View office. Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster send changes to LAWN & LANDSCAPE, 5811 Canal Rd., Valley View, OH, 44125. Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement #40612608. Canada Returns to be sent to The Mail Group, PO Box 25542, London, ON N5C 6B2.





# Lawn & Landscape<sup>®</sup>

## TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 2, 2021  
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

THE LAWN &  
LANDSCAPE  
TECHNOLOGY  
CONFERENCE IS  
THE PLACE TO BE  
TO LEARN ABOUT  
THE TECHNOLOGY  
DRIVING THE FUTURE  
OF THE INDUSTRY.

---

**YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO SECURE  
EARLY BIRD PRICING (ENDS JULY 23):  
[LLTECHCONFERENCE.COM](http://LLTECHCONFERENCE.COM)**

Attendees can either attend the face-to-face event while following the latest health and safety measures or attend virtually from the comfort of your home, truck or office!



### KEYNOTES:

- **TECHNOLOGY AND BEYOND:** REIMAGINING THE FUTURE LANDSCAPE FROM A MACRO PERSPECTIVE
- **OPERATION OUTSOURCE:** MASTER EFFICIENCY USING TECHNOLOGY

### PRE-SHOW WORKSHOP:

- THE CASE FOR SOCIAL

### FEATURED SESSIONS:

- EYES IN THE SKY
- EMBRACE ELECTRIC
- TAKING LANDSCAPE OPERATIONAL TEAMS FULLY DIGITAL
- EFFICIENT ESTIMATING
- THE COMMUNICATION QUANDARY
- LOW TECH TO HIGH TECH
- TECHNOLOGY CAN TRANSFORM HUMAN RESOURCES
- **PANEL DISCUSSION:** TECHNOLOGY TODAY AND TOMORROW





# EXPANDING YOUR TOOLBOX

Dr. Jermaine Davis told attendees at Lawn & Landscape's Top 100 event that communication comes down to compassion.

By Jimmy Miller

**D**r. Jermaine Davis remembers conversations with his mother fondly.

When she passed away in 2005, he spoke at her memorial service and recalled that he could go to her with anything. But he admitted that if an old adage is true — that if the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem is a nail — she wielded her voice like a jackhammer.

Davis said that even today, when someone yells or curses at him, he shuts down. But the problem is that he naturally gravitated toward that communication style, and it was something he had to shake.

"Great leaders, great supervisors — they have multiple tools so they can adjust. You can't motivate everyone the same. People are different," Davis said. "I want to have an open relationship with my son. If he makes

a poor choice, I want him to open up and share it. But I know I have to earn that."

Davis spoke at Lawn & Landscape's annual Top 100 event in Nashville, Tennessee, where executives from the largest landscaping and lawn care companies nationwide attended to celebrate their successful years amidst a pandemic. And, in what Davis said was his first live presentation since the pandemic began, he told the attendees what he's learned in 25 years of working in communication at Frito Lay, Keebler Cookies and IBM.

Among those lessons? Leading while trying to gain someone's perspectives, even when you disagree, is the most effective way toward progress.

"When an individual is brutally honest, it can shut people down. I'm going to recommend you put some more tools in your toolbox so you can be more effective," Davis said. "What if you were honest while being compassionate? It doesn't mean you're weak. It doesn't mean you're soft. I'm going to say it in a way where people hear you."

**WELCOME THE CONVERSATION.** Davis said communication happens in one of three areas: someone's private life with immediate family; someone's personal life with close associates or friends; and someone's professional life at work or in a particular industry.

Conversations in any of those arenas can turn contentious in a hurry, and Davis recommended putting a stop to it and implementing a few quick tactics to avoid the talk from spiraling completely.

"Next time you're having a conversation that's going south, be mature enough to say, in your own words, 'hey, is this conversation working for you?'" Davis said.

Davis recommends asking:

- "Is this conversation working for you?"
- "Would you like for it to work for you?"
- "What's one thing you need from me to make this conversation work for you?"

As for identifying when those conversations need these tactics, Davis said it's important to acknowledge the productivity of the talk. There's a major difference between dialogue and debate. "A dialogue

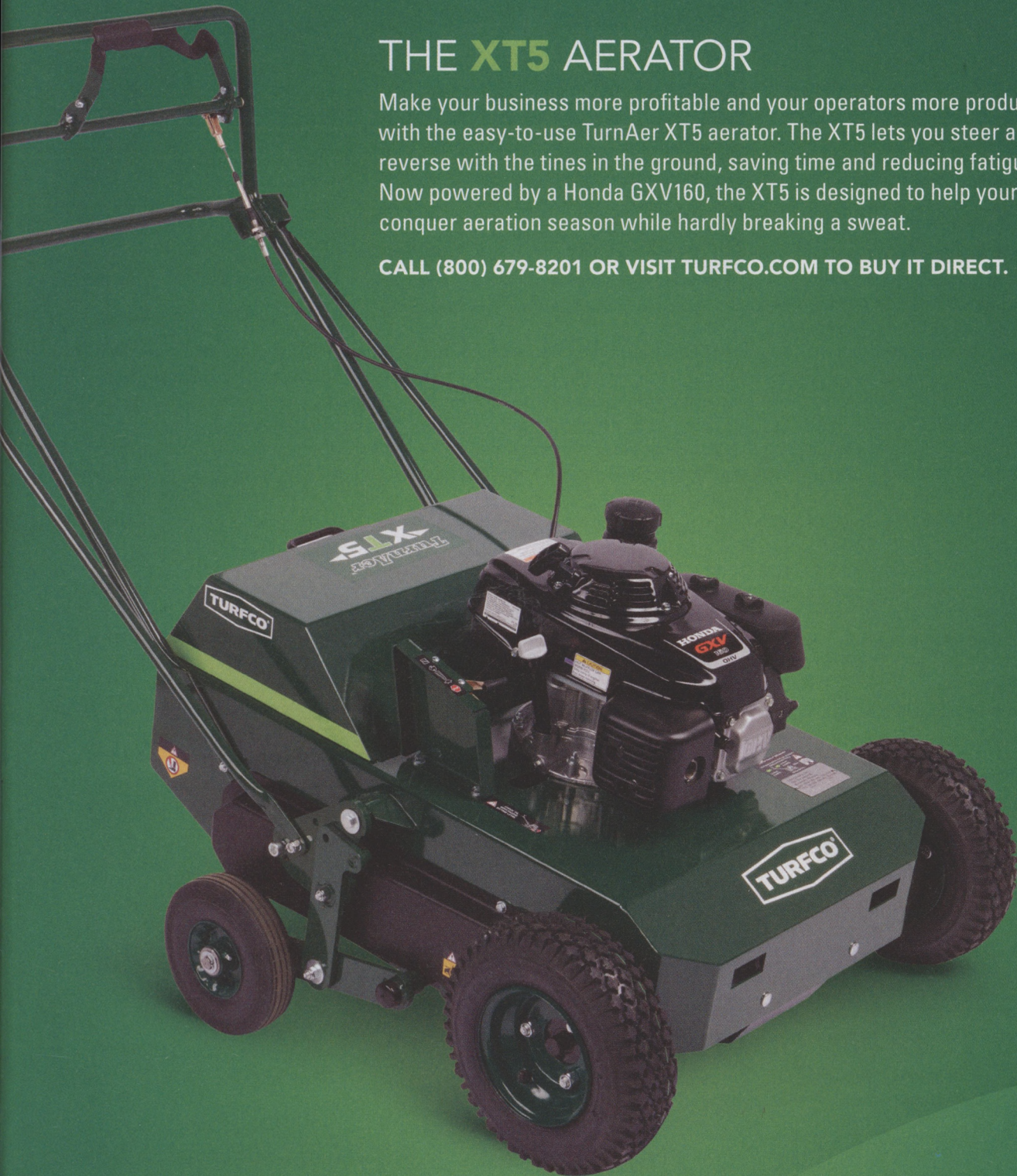


# More Profit. Less Sweat.

## THE **XT5** AERATOR

Make your business more profitable and your operators more productive with the easy-to-use TurnAer XT5 aerator. The XT5 lets you steer and reverse with the tines in the ground, saving time and reducing fatigue. Now powered by a Honda GXV160, the XT5 is designed to help your crew conquer aeration season while hardly breaking a sweat.

**CALL (800) 679-8201 OR VISIT [TURFCO.COM](http://TURFCO.COM) TO BUY IT DIRECT.**



WORKS HARDER.



WORKS SMARTER.

◀ DIRECT ▶



is an exchange between you and your stakeholders. They share, you share and then you make sense," Davis said. "But in a debate, there's yelling, screaming, jockeying for position. It drains people. When people are drained, (there's) no motivation to do the work."

**MEASURED APPROACH.** Davis said he practices a carpenter's golden rule: measure twice and cut once. In other words, he says know your goals — reaffirm your goals — and then make decisions.

Additionally, he also said establishing trust with your teams to help accomplish those goals is essential. Particularly as business leaders, making sure that employees feel empowered helps drive them toward effective communication.

"When people trust us, do you know



Dr. Jermaine Davis presenting at the Lawn & Landscape Top 100 event in June.

what happens? Communicate goes up," he said. "When people trust us, they take more risk. When people trust us, they open up more. When people trust us, they share their creative ideas. When they don't trust us, they hold back. They'll watch the organization tank."

Finally, Davis also told attendees that

when a "champion" loses a game, they go back and watch the game tape. They get feedback to review what went wrong. He recommends company leaders do the same thing several times throughout the year.

"Feedback is the breakfast food of champions," he said. "(Using it shows) here's how you position yourself for success next time."

PHOTO BY JIMMY MILLER

## POWER UP YOUR SOIL

# Take your Lawns to the **N-Ext** Level

Bring on the heat! Keep turf color and density through summertime.



## MOVING FERTILITY FORWARD

High Performance Plant Nutrients  
Fertilizers • Specialty Products  
Soil Amendments



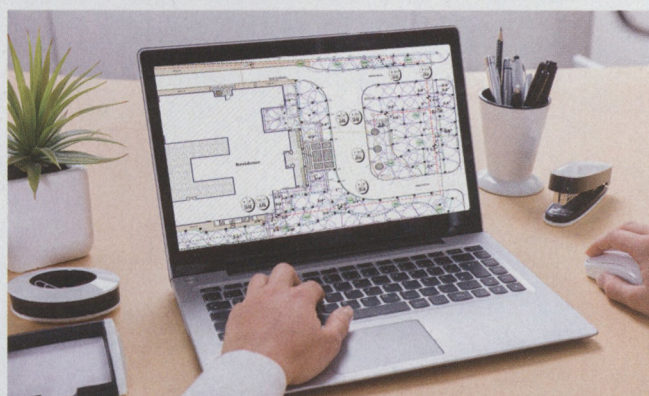
Greenecountyfert.com  
MFR BUY/SHIP DIRECT & SAVE

Our bio-based fertilizers & specialty fertility products are blended to feed plants, improve soil fertility and build topsoil.



## NOW YOU CAN DESIGN LIKE A PRO WITHOUT SPENDING HUNDREDS OR THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS ON DESIGN SOFTWARE!

Create your own landscape and irrigation designs for as little as a dollar a day!



Visit us online at [www.RainCAD.com](http://www.RainCAD.com) for details today!

Email: [sales@raincad.com](mailto:sales@raincad.com) | Phone: (936) 372-9884



➔ THE AUTONOMOUS MOWER FEATURES EIGHT HDR CAMERAS TO IDENTIFY OBSTACLES AND CAPTURE DATA.

## ▶ SCYTHE RECEIVES \$18 MILLION IN FUNDING

The company produces an all-electric, commercial grade autonomous mower, scheduled for distribution in Fall 2022.

Scythe Robotics (Scythe), the creator of commercial-grade autonomous robotic solutions for the landscaping industry, announced its first offering: an all-electric, fully autonomous mower, designed completely in-house.

Scythe also announced its \$13.8 million in Series A funding led by Inspired Capital with participation from existing investors True Ventures, Zigg Capital and Lemnos, bringing the company's total funding to \$18.6 million. The new investment will

be used to grow the company's existing operations in Texas, Florida and Colorado, expand with new customers and accelerate development of further products.

The machine features eight HDR cameras and a suite of other sensors that enable it to operate safely in dynamic environments by identifying and responding to the presence of humans, animals and other potential obstacles. Simultaneously, the machine captures property and mower performance data.

Founded in 2018 by Jack Morrison, Isaac Roberts and Davis Foster, distribution of the mowers is scheduled for Fall of 2022.

"To date, commercial landscape contractors haven't had a technology partner who enables them to keep up with demand and to operate emissions-free. We are that partner," said Jack Morrison, co-founder and CEO of Scythe. "Our autonomous mower gives them the ability to grow their business, while staying green. It's designed from the ground up to be an order of magnitude more reliable, more productive and safer than any existing machine by incorporating state of the art autonomy with a rugged, all-electric design."

Work here.  
Thrive  
here.

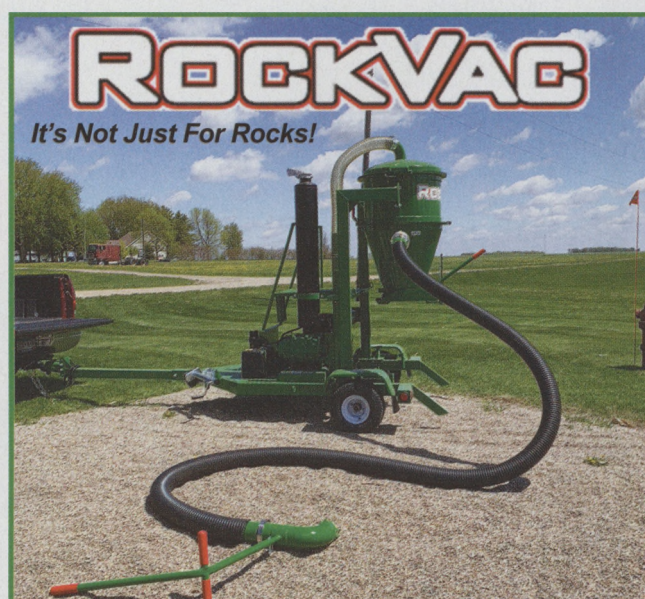


"After exploring a variety of careers within the green industry, I can honestly say that I've found the career, and the company, where I look forward to going to work every day. I feel fortunate to have found SavATree. I know that I am able to continue being a good steward to the environment and connect with an amazing clientele on a daily basis. As an Arborist with SavATree, what I do matters and is valuable. There's tremendous honor in that."

—Sara Jensen  
ISA Certified Arborist  
Lawn Consultant

Cultivate  
your career  
at SavATree

More information at [savatree.com/careers](https://savatree.com/careers)



**SAVE TIME! SAVE MONEY! SAVE YOUR BACK!  
THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS!**

The RockVac is a cost effective solution for landscaping and construction projects that saves both time and manpower. The self-powered machine will vacuum rocks, wood chips and shavings, sand, gravel, leaves, compost, mud, sludge, glass and debris. Fill a wheelbarrow in less than 3 minutes!

 **Christianson**  
Pneumatic Conveying Equipment

20421 - 15th Street SE  
Blomkest, MN 56216  
800-328-8896  
[www.rockvac.com](https://www.rockvac.com)  
[sales@christianson.com](mailto:sales@christianson.com)



# ▶ WORKWAVE ACQUIRES REAL GREEN

This move follows WorkWave's recent acquisition of Slingshot, a provider of customer call center software.

HOLMDEL, N.J. — WorkWave has signed an agreement to acquire Real Green Systems.

"(This acquisition) marks the beginning of a new chapter where WorkWave will help our customers focus on the future, helping them to go beyond service to create effective, fast-growing, highly profitable service organizations that also deliver the best service experience possible," said David F. Giannetto, CEO of WorkWave.

While the Real Green solution and PestPac will remain separate, additional

## ➔ REAL GREEN FOUNDER JOE KUCIK WILL JOIN TA ASSOCIATES AS MINORITY OWNERS OF WORKWAVE.

product offerings that support customer growth, including Coalmarch and WorkWave Agency groups, will work together.

Serent Capital, the former investor in Real Green, and Real Green Founder Joe Kucik will roll significant equity and join TA Associates as minority owners of WorkWave.

"Real Green believes in this same mission, and together we will allow every solution in this expanded WorkWave product portfolio to deliver greater value," Giannetto said. "We have tremendous respect for the Real Green team, and the goal of this acquisition is to not just allow them to continue to lead the green industries forward, but to help them make an even greater impact."

Bill Nunan, president and CEO of Real Green, will stay on as the head of Real Green operations within WorkWave.

"After years of watching WorkWave develop alongside Real Green, we've long known that the combination of these two companies would create something special," Nunan said.

This move follows WorkWave's recent acquisition of Slingshot, a provider of customer call center software.

Progressive Casualty Ins. Co. & Affiliates. Business and Workers' Compensation coverage provided and serviced by affiliated and third party insurers.

## Small business is no small task.

So Progressive offers commercial auto and business insurance that makes protecting yours no big deal.

Local Agent | [ProgressiveCommercial.com](http://ProgressiveCommercial.com)

**PROGRESSIVE**  
COMMERCIAL



➔ BAYTREE OPERATES IN SIX LOCATIONS  
THROUGHOUT GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA,  
NORTH CAROLINA AND TENNESSEE.

# ► BRIGHTVIEW ACQUIRES BAYTREE, WEST BAY LANDSCAPE

Baytree generated \$45 million in 2020 revenue, while West Bay is a landscape maintenance firm in Bradenton, Fla.

BLUE BELL, Pa. – BrightView Holdings acquired Baytree Landscape Contractors, a full-service landscape firm based in Atlanta. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

“Like BrightView, Baytree has achieved success across the spectrum of landscape services: design, development, irrigation,

maintenance and enhancement. We look forward to bringing their skilled workforce and leadership into the BrightView family,” said BrightView President and CEO Andrew Masterman.

Baytree operates from six primary locations: Atlanta; Johns Island, S.C.; Charleston, S.C.; Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Charlotte; and

Nashville. At peak, Baytree employs more than 370 team members. The company also ranked no. 49 on Lawn & Landscape’s Top 100 List this year.

“The team at Baytree is excited about the many opportunities that being a part of the BrightView organization will bring,” said Andrew S. Watkins, Baytree president and CEO. “The people part of our business is everything. BrightView has put a priority on that from day one of this process.”

BrightView has also acquired West Bay Landscape, a landscape maintenance firm in Bradenton, Fla. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

West Bay’s primary focus is commercial landscape maintenance, serving clients within a 30-mile radius of their base in Bradenton, south of Tampa Bay, on Florida’s Gulf Coast. **L&L**



Flexible.  
Powerful.  
Profitable.

Software that’s flexible enough to design on any platform, powerful enough for any job, and created so that your profits are as beautiful as your proposals.

**This is PRO Landscape.**

[prolandscape.com](http://prolandscape.com) | 800-231-8574 | [sales@prolandscape.com](mailto:sales@prolandscape.com)

## PRO Landscape®





## KPIs IN RELATION TO TIME

→ **THE MOST POPULAR REASON** new clients call me in to analyze their business is to see how they compare to other companies in the green industry. They want me to benchmark their operation. I tell them that I'll more than likely agree with 90-95% of what I see.

Think about it: If you've been in business for some time and are making money, you're obviously doing something right. It's the 5 to 10% that needs improvement. Once dealt with and corrected, this 5 to 10% can make a huge improvement on a company's bottom line.

I use a proprietary MS Excel benchmarking & budgeting program that I've developed to analyze a company and its key performance indicators (KPIs). It's during this process that I'm comparing a company's services productivity to various time units. These time units vary but are usually man-hours or man-years.

**Man-year KPIs per service sector.** Man-year KPIs can be useful when comparing your crew and technician productivity to that commonly found throughout the industry. They can also be useful for establishing revenue goals and performance pay incentives. When setting such goals, I first calculate the daily revenue goals and then extend them through the whole season or year. Here are some that I think you might find useful. For all of these, adjust your season length and revenue goals accordingly.

**Irrigation service technicians.** A typical service technician bills out at about \$75 per man-hour. This equates to \$675 for a nine-man-hour day and does not include parts. With parts, this technician would probably bill a minimum of \$800 per day. For a seven-month season, this would translate to sales in the vicinity of \$121,000.

- Seven months x 4.333 weeks per month x five days per week x \$800 = \$121,324
- My total revenue per year (or season) for such a technician is a minimum of \$100,000.
- My minimum net profit margin (NPM) per man-hour for this technician (with parts) is \$18.

**Lawn care technicians.** I like to set a daily minimum revenue figure of \$1,000 (with materials) for a lawn care technician. For a seven-month season, this would translate to sales in the vicinity of \$150,000.

- Seven months x 4.333 weeks per month x five days per week x \$1,000 = \$151,655
- My total revenue per year for such a technician is a minimum of \$150,000.
- My minimum NPM per man-hour for this technician is \$31.25 (\$125 per man-hour x .25 NPM).

**General tree work.** A three-man GTW crew usually bills \$80 to 90 per man-hour or about \$765 per man for a nine-hour day. This totals \$2,295 per crew-day or roughly \$48,000 per month. For a nine-month season,

this would total approximately \$432,000.

- Nine months x 4.333 weeks per month x five days per week x \$2,295 = \$447,490.
- Minus holidays and some rain days, this would be in the vicinity of \$432,000.
- My total revenue per month for a three-man GTW crew is in the vicinity of \$48,000
- My minimum NPM per man-hour is \$17.00 (\$85 x .2 NPM).

**Mowing or maintenance crew member.** My annual or seasonal revenue goal for a mowing or maintenance crew member is \$55,000 to 70,000. This calculates as follows:

- \$45 per man-hour x 9 man-hours per day x 21 days per month x 8 months = \$68,040
- The minimum NPM KPI per man-hour is \$4.50 (\$45 x .1 NPM)

**Landscape and irrigation installation crew members.** Installation crews usually bill between \$500 to \$600 per man per day (without materials). At \$60 per man-hour, this translates to \$540 per man-day. This totals \$11,340 per month (\$540 x 21 days) or just over \$100,000 for a nine-month season.

- My minimum annual revenue KPI for an installation crew member (with materials) is \$135,000.
- My minimum NPM per man-hour (without materials) is as follows:
- \$12 (\$60 x .2 NPM) for residential work
- \$9 (\$60 x .15 NPM) for commercial work

**CONCLUSION** These seasonal revenue KPIs for your field crews and technicians can be helpful for comparing your business to others. However, you need to adjust my figures to your season length, and take into account holidays and rain days. While I see these KPIs throughout North America, you need to take into consideration your particular production methods and make any necessary seasonal adjustments. **L&L**

↓  
**WHEN CALCULATING YOUR MAN-YEAR KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS,** adjust for the length of your season based on your market.





ASCA

# EXECUTIVE SUMMIT

## FACING THE FUTURE TOGETHER.

AUGUST 2 - 4, 2021

After a long year of online events, it's time to reunite the snow and ice management community, and there is no better place than the industry's foremost leadership event!

Reconnect with your peers for real, hands-on advice to recharge your business. Commiserate, share successes, and brainstorm solutions to the management issues companies such as yours face every day. We'll also raise a glass to the 2021 Leadership and Top 100 Companies during our special awards night.

Join us this August and let's face the future together.

To register and learn more: [ascaexecutivesummit.com](http://ascaexecutivesummit.com)



ASCA

# EXECUTIVE SUMMIT

**JOIN US NEXT MONTH  
REGISTER TODAY!**

[WWW.ASCAEXECUTIVESUMMIT.COM](http://WWW.ASCAEXECUTIVESUMMIT.COM)





**WORDS OF WILSON**  
WITH STEVE STEELE  
SYSTEMS & ANALYTICS PRACTICE LEADER

**WORDS OF WILSON** features a rotating panel of consultants from Bruce Wilson & Company, a landscape consulting firm.

## 5 WAYS TO REMOVE THE STRESS FROM TECH

—> **NO ONE CAME OUT** of the pandemic craving more Zoom. Everyone has told me as our industry emerges from a different kind of tech bubble. After a year working in the cloud, technology fatigue has never been higher, even as it allowed us to thrive during an unprecedented worldwide event.

If a jumble of apps and data sets has your employees feeling hijacked by systems they don't understand, you are not alone. Technology is one of the highest-ranking stressors in the workplace. As a tool, it is equally important as trucks, mowers and other equipment in ensuring consistent employee productivity and optimal customer satisfaction.

But, unlike how fixing an equipment problem results in a higher-performing tool, fixing a tech problem by upgrading the tech often upgrades the problem without any meaningful gains in customer satisfaction or employee productivity.

**Here are 5 strategies to reduce technology overwhelm and regain control:**

**1. Determine who owns the tech.** This may be one of the most overlooked pieces in many organizations. Just as your operations divisions have people responsible for ensuring they function correctly, your technology solutions should also have an owner to provide oversight, training, evaluation, implementation and integration. The real value of tech lives in how it integrates throughout your business, providing critical, accurate, actionable and timely data across all levels of the organization in a seamless, accessible manner.

**2. Evaluate the capabilities of current tech.** Technology is sometimes employed because it easily addresses a specific need. When lesser-known or unique uses of the program are overlooked, critical functionality is not employed, resulting in additional technology being implemented down the road that should have been handled by existing tech. This can lead to unnecessary expense, compatibility issues and increased workload where the same data must be entered into multiple systems. Being creative with tech implementation and use can often provide needed results even if the software was not specifically designed to function a specific way. This eliminates the need for multiple solutions.

**3. Implement the right tech for the right data.** Technology implementation should be done with a specific purpose in mind. Employing technology simply because of the cool things it can do is pointless if it does not ultimately increase the ability to better service your customer

base or improve employee productivity. For tech that you choose to employ, verify the information it provides is timely, accurate and useful.

Don't confuse data volume with usefulness. Useful data should provide you and your employees with critical, actionable data that benefits your customer, streamlines employees' workloads, or does both at the same time.

**4. Eliminate "app for that" thinking.** You'd be surprised at how many workaround tools your staff may be using, especially those that are free, easy to download or promote a quick fix. Solving a tech issue with a quick trip to the app store compounds your tech silos and fails to solve the problem. Be proactive. Make a list of all the apps your teams are using, authorized or DIY, then find out where the system limitations are and fix them. It could be as easy as more training.

**5. Address the learning curve.** Workarounds, like all shortcuts, fill a perceived need. Mostly, they're employed to overcome learning gaps with existing systems or humor a "because this is the way we've always done it this way" mentality that is resistant to change. The result is separate processes, outside tracking spreadsheets and individual-use apps, all of which create compatibility and reporting inconsistencies with existing systems while limiting access to critical information and requiring more effort to obtain it. Find out what employees don't know, what will help them become more fluent, and make learning a major part of any new technology initiative.

These actions will increase the visibility of usable data, help streamline critical processes, and ensure a better and more consistent service experience for your customers. **L&L**

↓  
**TOO MUCH  
TECH CAN BE  
OVERWHELMING,**  
so make sure what  
you're using is effective  
enough that it solves  
problems without  
creating new ones.





**CREAM OF THE CROP**  
WITH CHRIS DARNELL  
SALES/MARKETING CONSULTANT

**CREAM OF THE CROP** features a rotating panel from the Harvest Group, a landscape business consulting company.

# HIRING THE RIGHT SALESPERSON

→ **WE'RE ALL AWARE** of the current hiring challenges companies across numerous industries are facing. In the landscape industry, it's especially prevalent, as manual labor is a driving force behind every revenue stream.

However, before you can expect labor to perform, you first need top-notch salespeople to successfully sell your services. Labor shortage or not, finding the right salespeople for your team can be tough.

Creating a cohesive sales team is more complex than it seems, and you don't want to cut corners when it comes to those who represent your company or your brand. As with the entirety of your business, you can benefit greatly by quantifying the sales hiring process with key qualities you identify with and value.

**THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.** Hiring the first cookie-cutter applicant that walks through your front door won't do. You are looking for the rock star who is going to tenaciously acquire new business. In doing so, you may want to stray from the norm with a couple of these tips.

**Consider hiring someone outside of the landscape industry.** Sales professionals come from many backgrounds, and many great sales professionals find themselves working in various industries. Great sales professionals can sell anything, so a jump from tech or medical to landscaping might be the refresher they need. Do not pigeonhole your search by narrowing it down to just one industry.

**Role play: "sell me this pen."** There is no better way to observe a salesperson than to see them in action, so put them in a scenario where they must sell you something based on value. If they can close you under pressure, they can probably close a prospective client with time and resources at their disposal.

**Personality test: Myers-Briggs.** While different sales professionals with different personalities employ different tactics and can be effective in a myriad of ways, you should know how they will fit into your sales team. For example, a Myers-Briggs personality test will tell you if your prospect is an introvert, extrovert or relies more on their thinking vs. feeling.

**Understanding of digital sales tools.** In the era of "Sales 2.0," your sales and marketing efforts must be nicely integrated with a variety of technologies. A good salesperson should be well versed in the digital world and quick to learn new digital sales tools.

**WHAT THEY REALLY NEED TO KNOW.** There used to be a stigma surrounding experience or a degree in the landscape industry. While

this can be helpful, this is not necessarily the expertise they need to be successful. You should be able to teach them what they need to know about your business and easily get the job done. These days, expertise and experience rule, and there are a few skills your salespeople should possess that will help them perform.

**Value-based selling.** The best sales professionals are adept at identifying the true reluctance of a potential client and offering a solution. You want a sales professional that will emphasize the discovery process and use the information gathered throughout the rest of the sales process. Oftentimes discovery is overlooked, but to provide a solution, you must know their problem.

**Presentation: tools and ability.** Knowing how to use digital tools is vital, particularly when it comes to presentations. A good salesperson should be well-equipped not only to create and operate presentations but be comfortable confidently speaking in front of groups. They should have a variety of presentation styles in their arsenal for differing situations. Pitching is prime time in sales, and it is hard to teach charisma.

**Prospecting: old vs. new.** The line between sales and marketing is murky with debate on where responsibility falls to generate leads. A salesperson that is comfortable producing their own leads is going to be much more self-sufficient and effective than one who cannot.

Great sales professionals should not only be able to sell your landscape services, but also to sell themselves to you. Ultimately, think of yourself as a potential client as that is how they should treat you. Let them work to win your business and join your team. **L&L**

↓  
**WHEN LOOKING FOR SALESPERSONS,**  
ideal candidates should be self-sufficient, technology savvy and charismatic.







# Righting the ship

ASI Landscape Management's irrigation department was running dry until Eric Rothell came on board. **Now it's a thriving department generating more than \$1 million in revenue.**

Story by **Jimmy Miller**

Photos by **Zack Wittman**





Since starting at ASI Landscape Management in 2018, Eric Rothell has grown the irrigation department from four to 19 employees.

oe Chiellini has made some unconventional hires at ASI Landscape Management, leaving no stone unturned in his search for his next great employees.

One recently hired employee lost his security job during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another account manager on the ASI team used to work at Dunkin' Donuts. Chiellini, the company's CEO and president, met him as he worked behind the counter, and Chiellini noticed that the cashier knew his name, his wife's name and even his kids' names by heart.

"I said, 'Hey, have you ever thought about landscaping instead of donuts?'" Chiellini says. "Now he's been with us for two years."

Chiellini says they'll uncover people anywhere, with the obvious caveat that they're located somewhere near one of their three

offices in central Florida. The company is a full-service, commercial landscaping company that earned \$15 million last year, and Chiellini says some of his more recent growth can be directly attributed to the irrigation expert they uncovered three years ago — Eric Rothell.

Rothell, the director of irrigation, has taken a department of four employees earning \$300,000 in revenue into a team of 19 people making \$1.5 million for the department.

"Around here, passion is everything," Chiellini says, "and Eric had a lot of passion for water."

**FINDING FLORIDA.** Rothell calls it "dumb luck" that he got into irrigation work.

After graduating from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in the winter of 1997, he quickly realized the difficulties in

landing a job during Christmastime. Hiring employers were hard to find, and Rothell says he didn't have the connections he'd need to get a good job in agriculture or environmental science, industries he studied while earning his bachelor's degree.

So, Rothell says he attended a job fair with an open mind and ran into interviewers at what is now BrightView, who asked him to move to Florida to do irrigation work. Rothell, who grew up on a small farm in North Carolina, knew nothing about irrigation or about Florida — he had only been there a handful of times before receiving the job offer. But he packed up his life and moved to Florida and hasn't looked back since.

The work wasn't always easy, especially on days where Rothell joked he became a "human backhoe" and was constantly trenching. But he found the work rewarding and got hooked on the intricacies of irrigation, a passion only solidified by his first trip to the Irrigation Association Show that year. He started traveling the country training other employees for BrightView, at one point becoming a regional irrigation advisor.

"Once I learned more, I really liked sharing that knowledge, training other guys," Rothell says.

After a six-year stint as a branch manager, Rothell says he felt burnt out by the challenges of managing a branch and wanted to dive back into irrigation work. It was then, in 2018, that he found ASI Landscape Management, a company that was eager to bolster its irrigation department but didn't have the right pieces in place to make it happen.

Now, Rothell is educating his team at ASI, a unit that has grown from four employees to 19 and counting.

"(We had to) start from the beginning," Rothell says. "They had some basic knowledge, but they had a lot they had never been shown."





Register today  
to take advantage  
of our lowest pricing.

→ **THIS CONFERENCE IS  
CRUCIAL TO HELPING  
US FIGURE OUT WHERE  
WE CAN INTEGRATE  
TECHNOLOGY INTO  
OUR BUSINESS SO  
WE DON'T GET  
LEFT BEHIND."**

**TYLER HAGLER**

2020 CONFERENCE ATTENDEE  
SKB INDUSTRIES INC.  
LILBURN, GA.

# Lawn & Landscape<sup>®</sup>

## TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

**LLTECHCONFERENCE.COM**

Attendees can either attend the face-to-face event while following the latest health and safety measures or attend virtually from the comfort of your home, truck or office!

**EARLY BIRD RATES  
EXPIRE JULY 23, 2021**

**AUG. 31-SEPT. 2, 2021  
ORLANDO, FLORIDA**



**PLAYING NICE.** For ASI's Director of Maintenance Operations, Joe Amarosa, this fall will be an opportunity to finally topple Rothell's close-knit team.

Of course, that's all in fun and games: Amarosa's unit wants to win the company's ASI Olympics. This is an annual competition after the summer season winds down where every branch and team comes together in Tampa to compete in small games like an inflatable obstacle course.

Outside of the games, Amarosa says he and Rothell have grown to have a great professional relationship. They were hired relatively close to one another — Rothell was at the company first — and Amarosa was once a branch manager, so Rothell and his crews were involved in his day-to-day even then.

"From the very get-go, it was making sure we had a good relationship," Amarosa says. "His team helps my team every day, and my team does the same."

Building that relationship so quickly comes down to respect, Rothell says. He says he doesn't go out and



As a method of training employees, Rothell brings in outside vendors when possible to talk about specific topics like valves or smart irrigation.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ASI LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

NEW!

# FILTRAL UVC

THE ALL-IN-ONE SOLUTION

OASE's redesigned Filtral UVC combines mechanical, biological and ultraviolet filtration with a decorative element for a complete filtration solution

Visit our website to learn more!



 **Atlantic | Oase**

[www.ATLANTIC-OASE.com](http://www.ATLANTIC-OASE.com)



A woman with curly hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and jeans, is sitting on the brick steps of a house. She is holding a pair of yellow gloves. A STIHL BGA 57 leaf blower is on the ground next to her. The house has brown siding, white trim, and a blue door. An American flag is hanging on the wall, and a wreath is on the door. There are plants and a mailbox in the yard.

**STIHL**



## BATTERY POWER. BUILT IN AMERICA.\*

### ONE BATTERY. MULTIPLE TOOLS. REAL BENEFITS.

Legendary STIHL performance in an easy-to-use battery platform — and now built right here in America\*. One battery. Multiple tools. And the power to boost your bottom line.



\*The BGA 57 is built in the United States with domestic and foreign components. Batteries and chargers are sourced internationally. ©2021 STIHL

CHARGE UP YOUR BUSINESS TODAY: [STIHLUSA.COM/DEALERS](https://www.stihlusa.com/dealers)



# LET'S MAKE THIS PERFECTLY CLEAR

CONTROL INVASIVE WEEDS

*with*

## IMAZACAST<sup>®</sup> AQUATIC HERBICIDE

Learn more at [primesource-albaugh.com](http://primesource-albaugh.com).



©2021 Prime Source is a trademark of Albaugh, LLC and Albaugh and Imazacast are registered trademarks of Albaugh, LLC. Always read and follow label directions for use.

THE SOURCE MATTERS

**“I** always tell the guys (they shouldn’t) be afraid to train their replacements. They shouldn’t be looking over their shoulders because the company might have bigger plans for them.”

**ERIC ROTHELL**, director of irrigation, ASI Landscape Management

bark orders at his employees in the field, keeping a level head and treating his subordinates like equals.

“We’re all employees out there,” Rothell says. “The guys are not just another tool or piece of equipment. If you give respect, you’ll get respect.”

That respect goes beyond just the expected daily roles as well, Amarosa says. Take Florida’s recent drought, where many clients had a high demand for irrigation and fast. Rothell’s team was slammed, and Amarosa says his team knew now was a bad time to demand more from the irrigation techs. Amarosa’s team helped in any way it could.

Meanwhile, Rothell’s unit will point out hardscaping issues, shrubs that aren’t quite pristine and possible pest problems to Amarosa’s team after leaving the jobsites, notifying them that there’s still some extra work to be done for the client.

Amarosa attributes this to Rothell’s ability to build a great team culture immediately within the company’s irrigation department.

“What he’s done there in such a short amount of time is remarkable,” Amarosa says. “His techs would live and die for him.”

For Rothell and the ASI team, finding employees who collaborate well together is essential. Perhaps humbly, he says some of the hiring spike came down to luck, but his referral system surely helped: He encourages new hires by incentivizing referrals with gift cards after a new employee stays 90 days. And many times, employees in his department are out working by themselves, but Rothell says he can put any two of his employees together for a bigger project and they’ll work well together.

“When you have guys that work for you and buy in, they bring friends over, friends that they know will work and fit our system,” Rothell says. “We’re looking for people who want to win the game, not just play the game.”

**GOING BLUE.** Before hiring Rothell, Chiellini says he was anticipating a “going blue” movement akin to the “going green” movement over the last several decades, where people adapted their lifestyles to better protect the environment. Steps like energy-efficient appliances and paperless billing would eventually translate into smart irrigation controllers and limiting wasteful water practices.

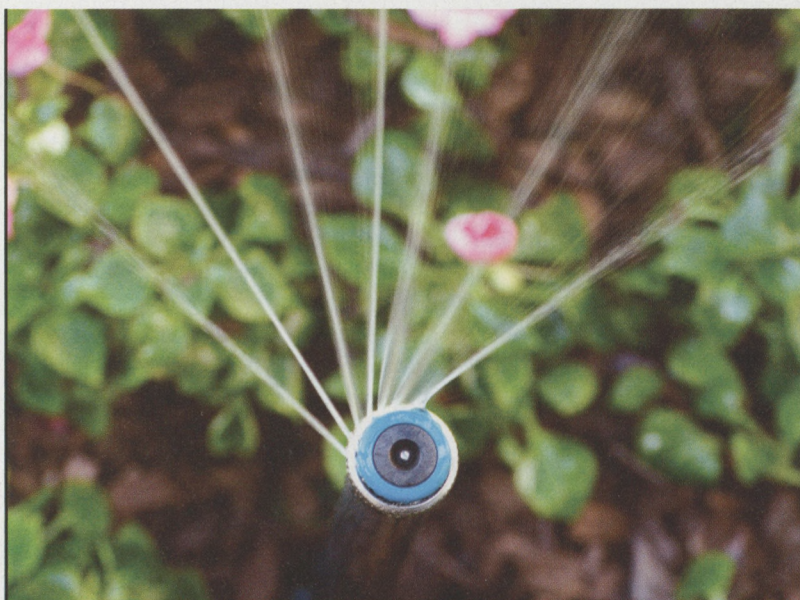
For Chiellini, this was an opportunity to become experts in that segment of the industry; he says most landscaping companies in his area aren’t fully in line with current irrigation practices and don’t know enough to educate the clients who would soon have a desire to be smarter with their water.





**Buy better, buy different, buy Horizon.**

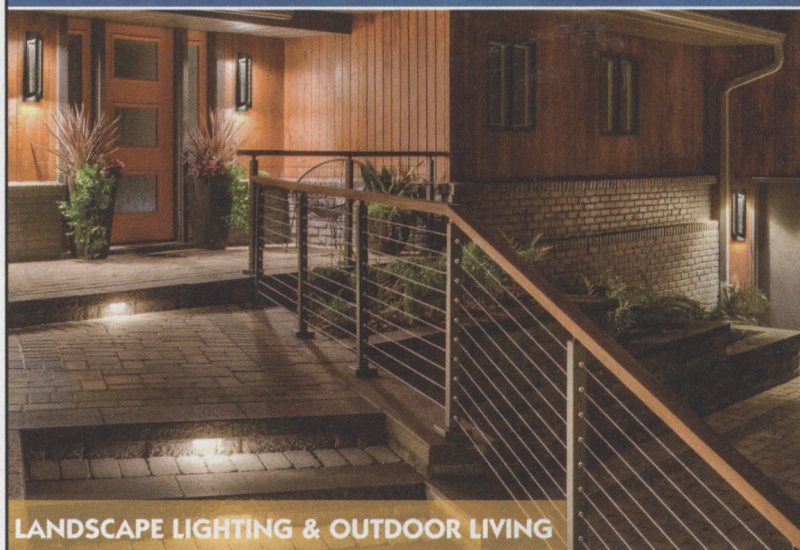
Horizon has the products you need, when you need them—all under one roof.



Horizon Distributors is one of the largest wholesalers of irrigation supplies in the U.S. With strategic partners like Hunter, Rain Bird, Toro, Lasco, NDS, ADS & more we have everything the irrigation contractor needs to get the job done.



**LANDSCAPE**



**LANDSCAPE LIGHTING & OUTDOOR LIVING**



**EQUIPMENT**



## MORE THAN A STORE.

Visit us online, or stop in to your local branch to experience the Horizon difference today.

| Irrigation  
| Outdoor Living  
| Landscape  
| Equipment



Get a lot more done, in a lot less time with Horizon 24/7, Horizon's online ordering and payment system.

@horizondistributors | HorizonDistributors



800.PVC.TURF | [HorizonOnline.com](http://HorizonOnline.com)  
shop online at [247.HorizonOnline.com](http://247.HorizonOnline.com)



"It is a very weak piece at a lot of companies in Florida," he says. "We wanted to really put an effort in it. If we wanted to be different, which is a big thing for ASI,

water was going to be an important part."

Once Chiellini decided to hire someone rather than contract the irrigation work out, he says ASI went through its fair

share of employees before finally finding Rothell, who knew someone already on Chiellini's staff. He now calls Rothell "exactly what we were looking for."

Rothell's work was cut out for him once he got hired. The employees who were already on staff had some skills already from working out in the field, but they also lacked some of the sophisticated know-how that Rothell started implementing right away.

Though there's not necessarily a formal training boot camp or anything like that for new employees, Rothell says he brings in outside vendors when possible (COVID-19 threw a wrench into this routine) to talk about specific topics like valves or smart irrigation. When there isn't someone else coming into train ASI, Rothell teaches the groups himself, which is a smooth transition given how much time he spent training others when he was at BrightView. Often, Rothell or these outside trainers are aligned with a topic of the month they select well in advance.

Beyond the classroom, Rothell says he tasked the crews with taking a closer look at their systems. Issues like sprung leaks that gushed out of the top were obvious, but could they identify gaps in coverage that were a little more hidden? Did they know how a valve worked, or how to adjust a head properly?

"How are we doing inspections? What are you seeing on the jobs?" Rothell remembers asking his crew when he first started. "It's a skilled trade, it's a skilled labor."

**CATCHING UP THE CLIENTS.** Rothell says many of the clients he has also want to be educated just like the employees. Of course, there's plenty of technical terminology in explaining irrigation to customers, industry jargon that would be difficult for an uneducated client to process.

So, to keep it simple, Rothell likens irrigation systems to a new car — every part needs attention and repairs, even if the whole system is brand new.

"A lot of people say, 'I have a brand-new irrigation system, why do I have to fix it or check it?'" Rothell says. "When you get a



## SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR THE NEEDS OF PROFESSIONALS

- Advanced genetics provide exceptionally high turf quality and density
- Water Star® varieties require up to 40% less water than ordinary grass seed\*
- Persistent turfgrass quality even under heavy use

**Water Star®**  
QUALIFIED GRASS SEED

To learn more about our selection of professional turfgrass products:  
CALL: 1.800.588.0512 | EMAIL: [proturfsolutions@penningtonseed.com](mailto:proturfsolutions@penningtonseed.com)

\*data on file

**PENNINGTON®**

Pennington is a trusted manufacturer and distributor of grass seed since 1945  
**pennington.com**

Pennington with design. Smart Seed and Water Star are registered trademarks of Pennington Seed, Inc. ©2019 Pennington Seed, Inc. SSP30\_v2





If we wanted to be different, which is a big thing for ASI, water was going to be an important part."

JOE CHIELLINI, president and CEO of ASI Landscape Management

brand-new car, you've got to change the oil, you've got to check the tires."

Rothell says visual components help his clients follow along as he explains irrigation systems. He'll place pieces and parts that would ordinarily be hidden underground on a table or let his clients hold them to see what he's talking about rather than just a verbal description.

Chiellini's goal of becoming experts in irrigation is well underway, as clients often thank him and Rothell for walking them through the issues they troubleshoot on jobsites or why each component is important during installation.

"People want to learn. It's just taking that time and offering," Rothell says. "Often-times, we'll get the comments, 'Nobody's ever taken the time to explain this to us.'"

**ROOM TO GROW.** The plights of the industry's labor shortage aren't foreign to ASI, even if they have been able to find employees in unique ways. Rothell says oftentimes, the best employees in his department are the employees they already have who simply took the time to be trained accordingly. The number of qualified employees out there who already know the irrigation skills necessary to be hired is limited.

"There's definitely a small pool," Rothell says.

Yet the company is still aiming to grow, as Chiellini says they're in the process of building a fourth office. He adds that despite the labor shortage, the company has continued to be selective when hiring new employees.

"We're picky because we do have a family atmosphere, but it's our culture. It breeds success," Chiellini says. "That makes it even harder. We already have a shortage, and we're being picky about who we want."

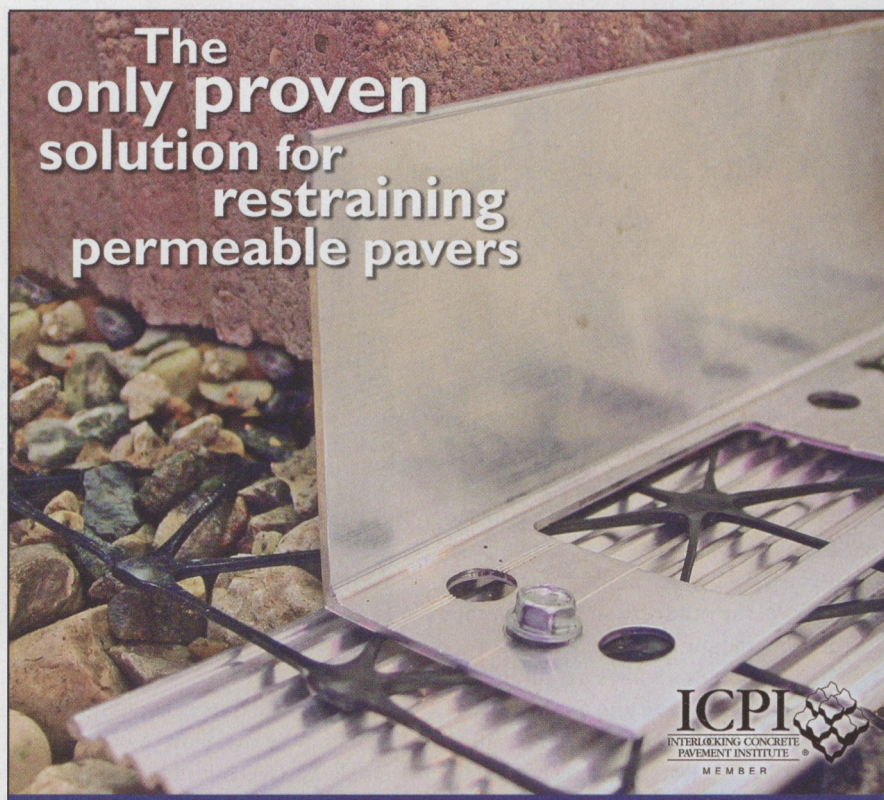
And for Rothell, his department that he has already quadrupled in size continues to grow larger.

At 19 technicians, he says ASI is aiming to add more, all with the understanding that he'll continue his role as an irrigation educator.

"It comes back to education to me: Know-

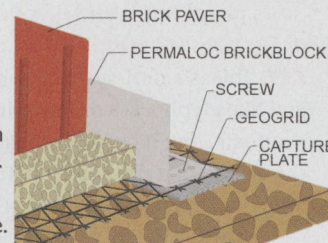
ing it, sharing it with other people," Rothell says. "I always tell the guys (they shouldn't) be afraid to train their replacements. They

shouldn't be looking over their shoulders because the company might have bigger plans for them." L&L



Permaloc's patented permeable restraint system is the **only proven edging system for restraining permeable pavers**. Independent testing demonstrates our system **provides 5X the strength** of a traditional spiked in place system. The **completely integrated system** allows a long-lasting, damage free installation.

- Unique, integrated restraint/capture plate/geogrid system acts in concert with the paver installation, reducing time and expense, while providing the most secure permeable restraint system available.
- Fast and easy installation requires no additional tools, and eliminates the need for additional base material and compaction.
- No need for bulky, expensive concrete curbs, which require a separate contractor and are damage prone.
- High quality aluminum parts outperform inferior plastic parts with a bonded grid proven to separate.



For more information on Permaloc's permeable restraint system:



800.356.9660



permaloc.com



**permaloc**  
SUSTAINABLE EDGING SOLUTIONS



## Q&A WITH THE EXPERT

### TURF & ORNAMENTAL



# Q&A WITH KYLE MILLER

Technical Specialist, BASF

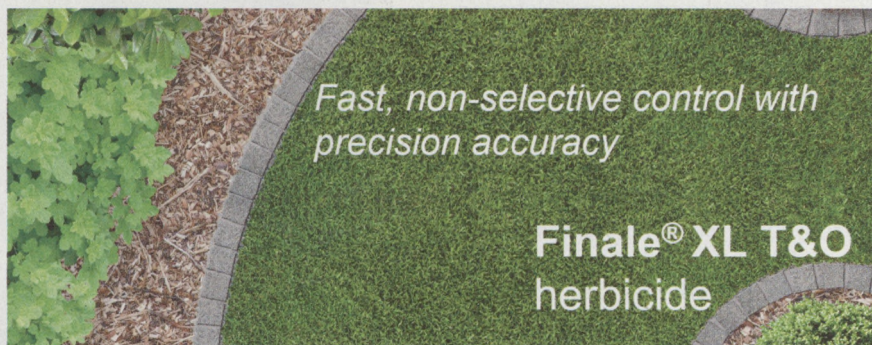
**Kyle Miller**, a technical specialist at BASF with 32 years of experience, gives us a closer look at the newest addition to the Finale herbicide lineup. Learn how Finale® XL T&O herbicide can help landscapers control weeds faster and more efficiently with lower use rates.

## 1 What is Finale® XL T&O herbicide and how is it different from Finale herbicide?

**Kyle Miller:** Finale XL T&O herbicide is our newest Finale formulation. It has a much higher active ingredient load, which means use rates are lower. This formulation has a red pigment, so it's very easy to see in the spray tank. Users of the product can very accurately determine how much material is in their sprayer. It's really easy for them to measure out, see and apply this product, and it's very fast. Under ideal conditions, it works within six to eight hours, so they can see that they've begun to control a targeted weed — the effect they're wanting to get from the product.

## 2 Is Finale XL T&O herbicide an option for landscapers who have previously used glyphosate or Roundup® brand products?

**KM:** This is a non-selective herbicide just like glyphosate or Roundup brand products, and it controls most of the weeds that they control. It's very effective on grasses, broadleaves, sedges and small brush, and it's more efficacious on broadleaf weeds than glyphosate or Roundup brand products. When we use Roundup brand products



or glyphosate during cool times of the year, they're very slow to work. With Finale XL T&O herbicide, it's still faster. A user can see the targeted weed is being controlled.

## 3 What are some of the advantages of using Finale XL T&O herbicide for non-selective weed control?

**KM:** This is a contact herbicide; it has pinpoint accuracy. With glyphosate or Roundup products, we treat an area and the plant moves that herbicide throughout, [then] a larger area is controlled than what's desired. If you're treating a certain spot, now the spot's larger. That's one of the big advantages of using Finale XL T&O herbicide — we have that pinpoint accuracy and it only controls where we spray.

## 4 Can landscapers tank mix Finale XL T&O herbicide with a residual herbicide to provide extended control?

**KM:** In order to control the target weed and get residual control or long-term control, we can add a herbicide like Pendulum® AquaCap herbicide, Tower® herbicide or another pre-emergent to the mix, to not only control what the user sees, but also provide extended control with that residual herbicide; that's another effective way to get three or four months of control on the targeted weeds.

## 5 What are some key attributes that landscapers should know about Finale XL T&O herbicide?

**KM:** [It has] very fast control of weeds and pinpoint accuracy — where you put it is what it controls and it doesn't migrate in the plant. •





# Finale<sup>®</sup> XL T&O

Herbicide

Fast, non-selective control  
with precision accuracy


Finale XL T&O herbicide is BASF's newest non-selective contact herbicide formulation with enhanced active ingredient loading. It delivers fast control of the toughest weeds at lower use rates than prior formulations.


It's the perfect tool for spot treatments and precision edging along walkways, fences and landscape beds.

 **BASF**

We create chemistry

 [Facebook.com/BASF.Turf.us](https://www.facebook.com/BASF.Turf.us)

 [@BASFTurf\\_us](https://twitter.com/BASFTurf_us)

 [YouTube.com/user/BASFTurfTalk](https://www.youtube.com/user/BASFTurfTalk)

For more Information, visit  
[betterturf.BASF.us](http://betterturf.BASF.us)

**Always read and follow label directions.**

Product may not be registered for sale or use in all states. Please check with your state or local Extension Service. Finale is a registered trademark of BASF.

©2021 BASF Corporation.  
All rights reserved.



## Preventing erosion all comes down to warding off the water. **By Kim Lux**

W

ater can be tough to tackle, and not all problems it causes are obvious at first. Enter erosion, primarily caused by high water levels and poor drainage.

“When we talk erosion, we combine that, in our field, with drainage because one typically leads to the other,” says Nathan Boliek, design/sales manager at TDH Landscaping in Monkton, Md. “I would say probably 30% of the people we see are dealing with some sort of erosion or drainage issue.”

Boliek says erosion issues are likely to become more apparent during the spring and fall months, when precipitation levels are up.

**DRAINAGE IS INDISPENSABLE.** But all is not lost. There are several ways to correct the problem and head off erosion.

“The first thing we tend to do is handle the water coming off the house,” says Allison Lewis, landscape designer and sales manager at Stauffer Lawn & Landscape in Auburn, Kan.

Lewis says her team at Stauffer has managed enough drainage issues that they now have a standard solution.

“I like to use, and we’ve kind of implemented it as a company standard, (a) 4-inch PVC sewer and drainpipe. It’s got a lot more longevity,” she says. “So, if we can get the water away from the house and get it so that it’s not circling back toward the foundation or down a hill, that’s helpful.”



**ABOVE:** Regrading and burying the downspouts in 4-inch PVC piping helped to correct water damage on this property.

On the other side of the coin, Boliek says TDH tends to try and find an alternative approach before installing drainpipes or anything else.

“First and foremost, we try to manage the water above ground,” he says. “Meaning if you can divert that water, or dissipate that water, in a way that allows it to be absorbed and run off to an area where it can be handled, it’s better than doing it underground. Although, that’s not always possible; sometimes drains or catch basins are required to manage water and avoid erosion.”

Boliek says he reverts to using catch basins

and channel drains in areas that are already at the lowest elevation point on the property or are enclosed by features in the landscape like buildings, driveways or patios.

Another tool in the arsenal against erosion is evaluating the grounds and re-grading when necessary to create a slope or slant within the landscape to change its elevation.

“Obviously grading is a huge part of it as well,” Lewis says. “We’re pretty hilly here (in Kansas). You’re going to run from completely flat to a steep grade all on one property. The front yard can be completely flat, and the backyard can drop off crazy enough that you can’t put a swing set on it or even patio furniture.”

Lewis says grading is essential to control-



# intervention



After

ling the drainage problem and ensuring that the water runs off to the designated location.

"Making sure we have that grade established is really good to make sure that we're controlling the run-off on that property, so it's not creating a water issue for the neighbor on the bottom or off to the side," she says.

**THE SWALE SOLUTION.** Grading is also key to designing drainage or open-lawn swales, something that Boliek says he tends to use quite a bit on residential properties.

"Some of the methods we use include re-grading the terrain to create what's called a drainage swale," he says. "Typically, for residents, it's one that is covered with seed or sod to convey the water... You'll want to

have at least 2-3% pitch for gravity to carry that water away and not have any puddling."

While swales are great for wide-open spaces, Boliek says they can be utilized in confined areas as well.

"When we have an area that will not sustain turf, or there's not enough area to maintain the turf there, meaning it's too small or too narrow to mow, we'll often do a swale lined with stone, which then will convey the water and slow it down and help to eliminate the erosion that's being caused," he says.

And these stone-lined swales can be as basic or as elaborate as the client wishes.

"We often do dry stream beds, which are more of an aesthetic version of the stone swale where we use gravel and boulders

and things to look like a stream bed, but it's really just a more attractive drainage swale," Boliek says.

Lewis says planting beds can be another aesthetic answer to stopping erosion. She recommends filling the beds with ground cover, mulch or decorative rock.

The benefits of re-grading and implementing swales or drainage beds is two-fold, Boliek says. Clients can get more use out of their landscape with a visual statement.

"You can make an area of a yard usable that's not usable if you can correct an erosion issue," he says. "And there's aesthetic impacts, too. Some of the prettiest gardens are planted primarily to stop erosion. So, in addition to correcting an erosion issue, you also get a lovely garden."

**PLANT WITH A PURPOSE.** And the planting doesn't stop at gardens — it's the finishing touch on any good swale. Both Boliek and Lewis say plant life can help combat erosion.

"Vegetation is a great way to deal with erosion," Boliek says. "Even trees help. All our watersheds in the metropolitan area are planted with trees and the trees help to absorb runoff and reduce some of the inert matter that winds up in the water."

"It's about getting something down on the ground to hold everything in place," Lewis adds. "It's about keeping the soil covered because it's super windy here so the wind will erode things away, the water will erode way, so if we can limit the exposure, that will help 100%. For lawn situations, we prefer sod. That's probably what 90% of the yards are here."

Boliek suggests a groundcover with



surface roots like vinca or ivy. He adds turf works, too, to strain the sediment and help clean the water as it runs downhill.

Lewis says overseeding is also beneficial to getting seed down to hold everything in place. She adds that after overseeding, an erosion control blanket should be laid over the seed.

"It's basically a woven plastic," she says of the blankets. "It looks like straw. You see it on a lot of highway plantings because it works on steep grades. It's great because it will keep everything in place and holds the soil in place as well. And it'll just slowly decay over time."

**ADDRESS EROSION EARLY ON.** All these solutions can be used for new construction landscape design, where Lewis says erosion is a big problem.

"I would say it's not terrible," Lewis says



Stone swales are another option for diverting water — especially in narrow spaces.

of erosion in her market. "We've got pretty good ground cover and pretty good soil here in the state of Kansas. The biggest issues are on new construction sites."

She says that's just due to the nature of the homebuilding process.

"I'm sure they build houses the same way just about everywhere, but here what

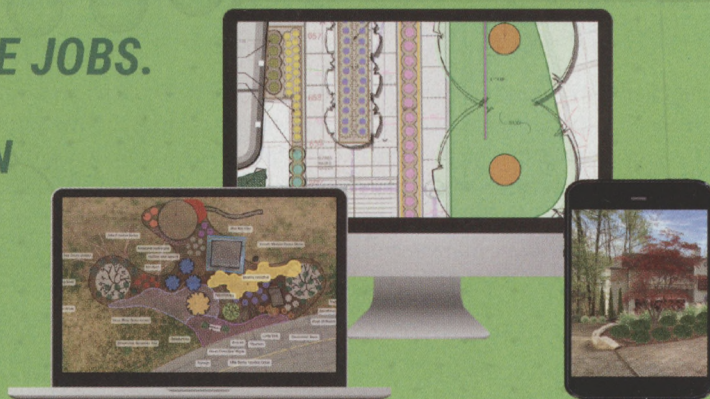
they do is strip the entire lot," Lewis says. "Basically, they harvest all the topsoil off and build a house on it for three to nine months or however long it takes, and then they bring that back and will wait on us landscapers to either seed it or sod it."

"And in that process, it'll rain or it'll snow, and that's where our erosion tends

# SIMPLE. ACCURATE. PROFITABLE.

## ONE SOFTWARE. THREE JOBS.

- **ENHANCEMENT DESIGN**
- **DIGITAL TAKEOFF**
- **PHOTO MARKUP**



info@landonetakeoff.com | landonetakeoff.com







EVERY CONTROLLER  
**\$500 OFF**

PLUS A FREE RAIN SENSOR



Ask about our Partner Referral Program

877-346-3333 | [SMARTRAIN.NET](http://SMARTRAIN.NET)



**Water is a very destructive element**, and left to its own devices, it'll find the least-traveled path into the problem and then become much more expensive."

**NATHAN BOLIEK**, design/sales manager, TDH Landscaping

to be the worst." Lewis says it can be difficult sometimes to get clients to invest in erosion control measures early on, as they usually have greater plans for their yards they would like to put the money toward.

"A lot of times, with new constructions especially, I try to express that these are the most important things for the longevity of your landscape," she says. "So, these are the things that I'd invest the money in first, because they are the things that will prevent problems down the line and keep you from having to redo things."

**MAKING THE PROBLEM KNOWN.** Boliek says he doesn't usually face pushback when he tells clients that they need to address the erosion and drainage on their property.

"Typically, if the erosion or drainage has gotten to a point where they have to

call a professional, it's something that they have to address," he says. "Water is a very destructive element, and left to its own devices, it'll find the least-traveled path into the problem and then become much more expensive."

For Lewis, she says there's a lack of awareness about erosion control and the benefits of early intervention.

"I think more emphasis needs to be put on it," she says. "It's always one of those hindsight's 20/20 situations. I think with new home construction especially, we're the last ones to go in, so there may or may not be as much funding as you'd like.

"If we can educate the homeowner on that and educate the home builder on those values it will add into the house, that would be tremendous."

With that lack of awareness, comes a

lot of failed attempts from clients. Having to correct a DIYer's mistake is a common occurrence for Boliek and Lewis.

"I'd say there's very little knowledge out there for the layperson when it comes to drainage and erosion," he says. "We see a lot of the time that people try to do their own drainage work and it's not working because people just don't understand the concept of proper grade."

Lewis says hiring a reputable company can save everyone a lot of headaches. She adds that taking the time to really get to the root of the issue and studying the property is also invaluable.

"Research makes a huge difference," she says. "We have had to come in and correct other people's mistakes because they thought they could do it and it just didn't work out." **L&L**



JAIN Unity is powerful and efficient. Clients like seeing the water savings compared to competing systems. That's smart irrigation—and smart business.

**STACEY STURNOT,**  
LANDSCAPES USA

## JAIN UNITY WORKS SMARTER—FOR YOU.

**Unity®** is a powerful cloud-based software used with JAIN ETwater smart controllers to deliver unparalleled efficiency for water management.



### REQUEST A FREE DEMO.

WEB: [www.jainsusa.com/Unity](http://www.jainsusa.com/Unity)

EMAIL: [sales@etwater.com](mailto:sales@etwater.com)

UNITY® is a registered trademark of JAIN Irrigation, Inc.



# KICKING IT BACK INTO GEAR

TEST, COMPARE & BUY NEW PRODUCTS • EXPLORE THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY  
NETWORK & LEARN FROM EXPERTS AND PEERS



**GIE+EXPO**<sup>TM</sup>

OCTOBER 20-22, 2021

LOUISVILLE, KY • [WWW.GIE-EXPO.COM](http://WWW.GIE-EXPO.COM) • 800-558-8767





# Labor and Water at the Crossroads

The #1 Green Industry challenge – LABOR is on a collision course with its customers' #1 fastest growing utility expense – WATER

**T**he facts around water are indisputable. Costs are rising. Restrictions are rising. But for many the resource itself is becoming scarce!

During peak season, landscape professionals manage 50 – 80% of a property's water! This is an incredibly important responsibility that is often overlooked. According to the EPA, 50% of outdoor water is wasted! Who's to blame? Well, the lack of focus and training can certainly contribute, but the waste is largely due to old-style, timer technology that runs your irrigation based on a fixed schedule as opposed to dynamic scheduling to match plant need. These traditional timers require exhaustive labor to keep up with programming changes, emergency shut off, and inspections. This is where a HUGE industry gap exists – there is a tremendous and growing need for water management, but not enough water management professionals to physically go around adjusting controllers! Unfortunately, increasing labor costs working alongside offline timers is only widening the gap.

So, what to do?

At the same time water and labor costs are going through the roof, there's good news! The cost of technology has been on a multi-decade decline. Just like your laptop today cost a fraction of the first one you owned, but now it's much more powerful. Same for smart irrigation technology. In fact, the cost to upgrade to an online smart controller is no longer \$5,000+ and now can be incorporated for as little as \$25/mo. with \$0 upfront cost – easily and affordably integrated into a landscape maintenance or irrigation service contract (typically 1-3% of a landscape maintenance contract). It's the ultimate win-win: the technology now pays for itself in water savings alone (38% average savings), but more importantly solves the labor issue preventing landscape professionals from managing water. Many landscape maintenance businesses who have partnered with Weathermatic save an average of 6 trips per controller annually through online access with each trip valued at \$75+ considering man hours, gas, etc. – not to mention the opportunity cost of unbillable time versus profitable work.





**Brodie Bruner**  
Executive Vice President,  
Weathermatic

This adds up to hundreds or thousands of trips annually across a portfolio, which using mobile technology can be freed up time to be repurposed for profit and growth. Many Weathermatic Premier Partners get a complete return of investment as high as 3 to 1 (\$3 dollars back for every \$1 invested) on their labor efficiency gain alone.

Let's look at how Weathermatic's SmartLink technology changes the game to make water management scalable for landscape professionals in need of labor efficiency:

**GLOBAL COMMANDS.** Global commands enable you to simply press one button to turn on/off all your controllers in your portfolio. For instance, if you know when a major weather event is on the way, you can set up a system delay with a single command across several or all sites that will prevent the controller from watering! Historically in the industry, that process often involved people literally driving around to sites and shutting them off manually on foot. Now, all those trips are saved and that labor resource can be committed to more profitable activities.

**ALERTS.** With over 20 different types of alerts, you'll receive updates when a system is turned off, new programming adjustments, weather changes, or if there is a shorted zone electrically that needs to be addressed. These types of alerts keep you up to date with notifications occurring across your network of sites. This allows you to proactively monitor your entire portfolio of sites — making it more profitable and efficient with labor. Traditionally, landscapers had fire drills where it ended up being too late to prevent landscape damage or reduce water waste!

**INSPECTIONS.** How many times have irrigation professionals run out of times and pushed back an inspection? Have all of your sites received one recently? While inspections are critical to a well-functioning irrigation system, they are a tedious task when old technology gets in your way. SmartLink, however, is different. What used



**Water is the fastest growing utility and 50% of all irrigation water is wasted. Monitor what's happening, when it's happening, and respond to prevent risk.**

to require two people on a job can now be done by one person — and in half the time with our mobile app! You can use the SmartLink app with mobile inspections to turn on zones, paperless mark issues, take photos, and upload pricing to generate and email proposals for your customers for digital signature approval of urgent repairs and enhancements! This saves your field and office team labor and paperwork.

**ASSET MAPPING.** If there's one consistent pain point for irrigation managers on new properties, it's asset mapping. Finding the controller, the backflow, the water meter, and other key components is critical to resolving customer issues quickly. In a few seconds with our SmartLink software, you can drop pins, shade areas, or draw lines on a satellite map of the property! You can even use our valve locator (it sends a loud pinging sound) to find those infamously hidden valves. No more aimlessly wandering and wondering.

**REPORTING.** Lastly, our platform enables our landscape Partners to accurately and quickly help their customers understand the properties' water usage. In the past, a point

of tension between landscapers and customers has been rising water bills. Whether you choose to install a flow sensor for real time readings or input usage estimates for a virtual flow report, SmartLink software accurately displays reports with how much.

The landscaping industry is at crossroads right now — most landscapers are facing increasing pressure to fill the water management gap because of the rising cost of water, the increasing attention to water waste, and the labor challenges that demand a technological solution. Ask yourself, "What am I doing to tackle these issues? Will I delay, dabble, or dominate with water management services and technology? Our answer: it's always better to be ahead of the curve than to let negative experiences force your hand. Here at Weathermatic, we've uniquely packaged a water management solution through our Premier Partner Program. We provide the hardware, software, technical support, marketing support, and millions of dollars in capital for upgrades. We partner with you to provide proven ways to incorporate water management services into your customer contracts and proposals!



# Recycle the rain

Not all gardens are made to only grow edibles. • Interviewed by **Brian Horn**

Rain gardens can have a number of benefits to a landscape, including an appealing look and being a sustainable component of an area.

However, there are a number of variables that can cause the installation to go sideways. To find out more about rain gardens, we reached out to Brandon Haley, CGM – grounds project manager at SSC Services for Education, a provider of support services for educational institutions. →



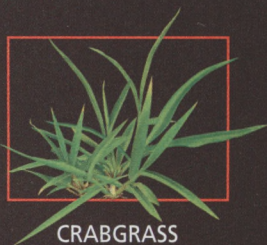


# GRASSY AND BROADLEAF WEEDS?

## YOU ONLY NEED ONE TOOL: **Q4® PLUS**



**Q4® Plus Turf Herbicide for Grassy & Broadleaf Weeds** delivers exceptional control of 80+ grassy and broadleaf weeds in an all-in-one formulation. That means less time and labor measuring and mixing, and less money spent on multiple applications.



CRABGRASS



NUTSEGE



BROADLEAF WEEDS

▶ **Q4 Plus: Fast, Dependable Performance!**

[PBIGordonTurf.com](http://PBIGordonTurf.com)

**pbi/gordon**  
**CORPORATION**  
Employee-Owned

Always read and follow label directions. Checkered Flag® and Q4® are registered trademarks of PBI-Gordon Corp. 5/19 05667



Rain gardens need management if you want them to grow and function as designed."

**BRANDON HALEY**, grounds project manager at SSC Services for Education



While exact species will vary by region, plants for rain gardens should be able to survive droughts along with being partially submerged.

## 1. What are the basics a landscaping company needs to know about if they want to add rain garden installation as a service?

**RAIN GARDENS** can be large or small. Their purpose is to slow runoff so it can infiltrate the ground instead of rushing into storm drains or streams. If the runoff ends up reaching surface water, it will be moving slower and will have many pollutants filtered out. Rain garden installation is more than just putting plants in the ground.

To get drainage effect, you want the soil to be sandy and have good drainage. It is also best to have the garden designed to hold water for up to 24 hours as it drains. This likely means that you will have to shape the land and replace the planting bed soil.

## 2. What type of maintenance is needed?

**RAIN GARDENS** need management if you want them to grow and function as designed. Just planting some plants and walking away will leave you with a weedy mess that will not filter water, will be unattractive and could attract rodents.

Weed control programs will be critical for a rain garden to succeed. Rain gardens are prone to weed infestations. If you can, use pre-emergent programs to prevent the weeds from germinating and always check the product label to make sure it can be used in your circumstance. Also, use non-selective weed control methods to keep your planting area free of unwanted growth.

It is also important to keep debris out of the rain garden. Decomposing leaves may be a great form of organic matter in normal landscape beds, but they can alter the drainage properties of a rain garden. Make sure rain gardens are blown free of debris to prevent this. Quarterly visits outside of leaf season will be fine with as-needed visits during the fall.

## 3. Where is the best place to install one in a home or business?

**THE BEST PLACE** to install a rain garden is wherever you have drainage issues or have free-flowing water that reaches a drain, water body or impervious surface. The goal is to slow down water and filter it before it reaches ground or surface water supplies. The sky is the limit.

For typical residential properties, this place is likely near gutters. Look for washout areas in mulch as well. Commercial properties can really benefit from using rain gardens in their parking lot edges instead of curb and gutters. Retaining this water instead of directing it into storm drains will take a huge strain off the local watershed. For large properties or projects, reach out to local Riverkeeper organizations to see if they can provide insight into the watershed and the impact that your project can provide.

## 4. What are the best plants to use, and does that vary on geography?

**THE BEST PLANTS** are ones that can survive being temporarily submerged as well as survive droughts. The best soil conditions for drainage in rain gardens also causes drought conditions when rainfall is low. Oddly enough, these qualities can be found in the same plants. In many plants, the same root structures that can hold water during droughts can also hold oxygen when submerged. Plants native to prairie and wetland ecosystems perform great.

Exact plant types will vary by region but will typically be grasses and flowering perennials that are native to your area. Throughout much of the country, black eyed susans, flag iris and coneflowers will work great. Check with your state extension service for local recommendations.

## 5. How big can they be; what is average time to install?

**THERE IS NO SIZE LIMIT**, large or small, for a rain garden. To estimate installation time, expect to excavate the soil a foot deep and replace with a sandy loam. Also, look to see if any berms are needed to contain the water. This may be a good use of the soil that you removed.

## 6. What type of equipment is needed?

**SMALL GARDENS** can be planted by hand, but anything with size will need either a skid-steer, mini excavator or compact skid-steer to be efficient. Remember that you may need to remove soil offsite. **Continues on pg. 54**



# Neely Coble Company

Now part of...

**VELOCITY**  
TRUCK CENTERS

## INNOVATIVE EQUIPMENT SOLUTIONS FOR THE LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY

### ISUZU N-SERIES LOW CAB FORWARD

12,000 lb or 14,500 lb GVWR  
350 HP 6.6 Liter Gas or 215 HP 5.2 Liter Diesel Engine  
GM Automatic Transmission

17,950 lb or 19,500 lb GVWR  
297 HP 6.0 Liter Gas or 215 HP 5.2 Liter Diesel Engine  
Allison or Aisin Automatic Transmission



19' Landscape w/Removable Dovetail



12' Dump w/Removable Dovetail



19' Irrigation w/Pipe & Fitting Boxes



19' Deluxe Landscape



12' Landscape Dump



18' Enclosed Landscape

[www.VelocityTruckCenters.com](http://www.VelocityTruckCenters.com)

Nashville, TN 800-367-7712  
Madison, AL 800-433-6351



Speed.  
Value.  
Trust.

**ISUZU**  
TRUCK



# An eco-conscious choice

Xeriscapes can reduce water use and provide colorful, engaging alternatives to traditional green spaces. **By Kim Lux**



When it comes to xeriscaping the possibilities are endless, according to Liz Haigh, co-owner of Xeriscape Design in Salt Lake City.

Yet despite its increase in popularity over recent years, Haigh says xeriscaping is still uncommon enough that it needs explained to most clients.

"People still don't know what xeriscape is," she says. "It's a word that not many

people know. They think it's all white rocks with a couple of Yucca in it. We really try to educate people...that it can be a cottage garden, or an Asian garden, a modern look, or a conventional look. And it's really all about the plant choice."

Haigh says there's a misconception that xeriscape means zero watering, when it's really about utilizing low-water plants and conservative irrigation practices. "You've got to make that distinction between a

low-water landscape and a no-plant landscape. That's really important," she says of describing it correctly.

Elizabeth Burns, who owns Zone 24 Landscaping in Torrance, Calif, agrees and says most clients don't come to her with xeriscaping in mind, but it's a suggestion she likes to make.

"When existing clients come to us now and want some changes, we usually give them ideas that are going toward the direction of xeriscapes," she says.

**A WORRIED WEST COAST.** As drought remains a concern in California, Burns says more and more people are trying to be water conscious and make changes to their lawns.

"We don't get that much of a request for it until it's a mainstream news item," she says.





Burns says she doesn't do enough xeriscape projects in a year considering her market's climate.

"It's basically when the news starts getting out and people are listening to them say 'there's a drought and you're not going to be able to water,' that's when people start to sit up and take notice of it," she says.

Haigh says she tends to associate xeriscaping with the arid west, as dryer ecosystems benefit from it the most. She adds that Utah is just now catching up to some other Western states when it comes to the trend.

"Utah has been a little asleep at the wheel," Haigh says. "New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and even California for the most part are way ahead of us. But we're waking up here. There continues to be a lot of interest and growth in the xeriscape sector."

Since Utah is experiencing a drought, Haigh says xeriscaping is more in demand. She says that some states offer financial support to homeowners looking to redo their lawns and curb water use, which con-

**BELOW:** Making sure the plants being used all have similar water needs is instrumental for a successful xeriscape project.

tributes to xeriscape's growing popularity.

"We lack rebates," Haigh says of Utah. "Nevada has done really big rebate programs to get people to get rid of their turf grass and put a low-water landscape in. We don't have a lot of those incentives here in Utah and those help people undercut the costs of doing this."

But even on the East Coast, Haigh says she sees xeriscaping becoming more mainstream eventually. "Ecosystems are changing, and weather is changing," she says. "Things are going to be different."

**MIX IT UP.** Burns and Haigh both say that a primary motivation for xeriscapes is to reduce turf.

"What we always talk about is sensible turf areas," Haigh says. "So, if you only step on it to mow it - why do you have it? If you want an alternative to it, that's a different material than lawn, you could do a large gravel area surrounded and softened by plants. We just recommend that the turf areas are small and used. We also recommend using a more low-water turf if you can find it."

Burns says Kurapia is a ground cover that mimics turf and is something she suggests

a lot. She also like to give her clients plenty of alternatives to traditional turf spaces.

"When we have clients that want to redo their turf areas, or if they have excessive amounts of it, we try to get them to tone it down a little bit and suggest some things to rework those areas with more drought-tolerant plantings, bocce courts, raised vegetable planters and doing things that are more responsible," she says. "If they're dead set on keeping their turf, we ask them to reduce the size of it."

Haigh says she wishes more people would consider mixing xeriscape elements into their lawns in order to decrease their turf.

**PICKING THE RIGHT PLANTS.** For Haigh, diversity and embracing native plants is what makes xeriscaping so special.

"A well-done xeriscape is pretty beautiful, and I would say has a greater sense of place," she says. "Turfgrass is not a native Utah thing. But a lot of the plants we use are found throughout the state. We have a really diverse flora here. You can get a really gorgeous landscape using low-water plants."

Continues on pg. 54







**Southeast: Helianthus  
SunBelievable Golden Girl  
(Danziger), Young's Plant Farm**

This helianthus just got bigger and better during the summer heat. Features a shrub-like growth habit that is absolutely full of bright, yellow sunflowers. Golden Girl was a showstopper in our summer garden.

# No water worries

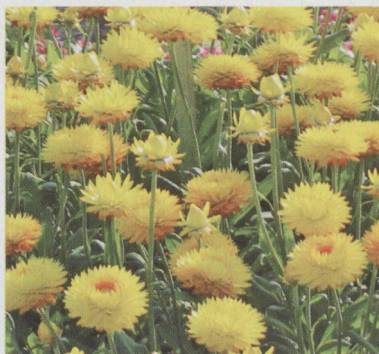
As tallied by trial garden managers around the country, here are 2020's top-performing drought and heat-tolerant varieties.



One way to conserve water is to use plants that don't need a drink that often.

For our sister publication, Greenhouse Management, staff compiled trial garden results, and trial garden managers from across the U.S. submitted what performed best in their region in a number of categories. We've only listed here the best drought-tolerant perennial, best heat-tolerant annual, and best heat-tolerant perennial. For all the results, visit [bit.ly/2020topplant](https://bit.ly/2020topplant). The 2021 results will be available later this year.

## ► Best Heat-Tolerant Annuals



**Midwest: Bracteantha  
Granvia Gold (Suntory  
Flowers), Plantpeddler**

The best bracteantha in the market. Large, long-lasting flowers on top of lush, dark-green foliage. There is also a new Pink in the series.



**Midwest: Lantana Bandana  
Gold (Syngenta Flowers),  
Raker-Roberta's Trial Gardens**

All the lantanas did well this summer. The Bandana series always performs and this one was full and robust all summer long.

## Trial Garden Managers

- Bernadette Clark, North Carolina State University
- Rachel Gooder, Plantpeddler (Iowa)
- Greg Michalak, Raker-Roberta's Trial Gardens (Michigan)
- Kristen Getter & Daedre McGrath, Michigan State University
- Penny Merritt-Price, Young's Plant Farm (Alabama)
- Laura Robles, Walters Gardens (Michigan)





# All-in-One Business Software

## with Estimating, Scheduling, & Automated Marketing

Discover why Arborgold Software has been the all-in-one business management software of choice for many of today's leading tree care industry companies for over 25 years.

### INCREASE SALES

Maximize team productivity with a robust CRM, lead capture forms, next-generation estimating features, automated follow-up, a digital message center, sales pipeline management, and automated renewals.

### STREAMLINE OPERATIONS

Improve scheduling capacity and reduce costs with integrated GPS crew tracking, route optimization, time tracking, real-time inventory management, resource management, project management, and intelligence reports.

### CLIENT CASE STUDY



"None of our business growth would be possible without Arborgold."

- Carlos Perez, Blue Native Landscape & Irrigation

In 2020, Blue Native was looking for a comprehensive software system that would remove the need for paperwork while streamlining design, quoting, project management, and invoicing for their landscape and irrigation company. After watching a demo of Arborgold Software, they knew that Arborgold's technology was the answer.

Since launching Arborgold, Blue Native has hired several new employees to keep up with the new business made possible using Arborgold's all-in-one business management software.

Discover how Blue Native overhauled their sales and operational processes in partnership with Arborgold's estimating, scheduling, time-tracking, project management, job-costing, and billing features.

Read the full case study at [arborgold.com/casestudies](http://arborgold.com/casestudies)

Designed for **Everyone**  
in your Organization

### FOR SALESPeOPLE

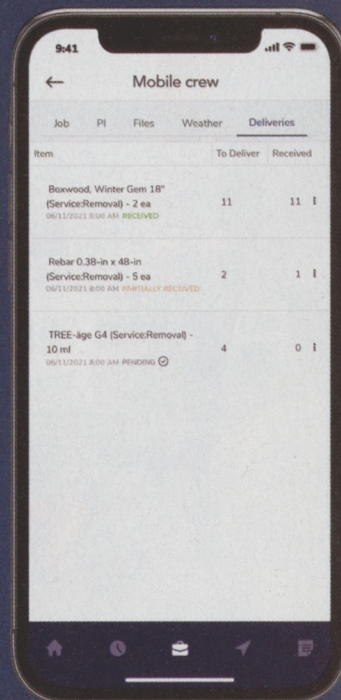
- Bids, Estimates & Proposals
- Autoprice Calculator
- Client Plant & Tree Inventory
- Commission Tracking
- Pipeline & Opportunity Management
- Marketing & Sales Automation
- Message and Appointment Center
- Automated Renewals

### FOR PRODUCTION

- Drag & Drop Advanced Scheduling
- GPS Routing & Time Tracking
- Chemical & Weather Reporting
- Mobile Job Management
- Project Management
- Resource Management

### FOR OFFICE TEAMS

- QuickBooks Integration
- E-Payment Solutions
- Recurring, Contract & Time and Material Billing
- Supply Chain Management
- Job Costing
- Business Intelligence Dashboards
- Standard and Custom Reports



Arborgold Crew App



## ► Best Heat-Tolerant Perennials



**Southeast:** *Penstemon 'Dakota Verde'* (Terra Nova Nurseries), North Carolina State University

Glossy, green leaves provide long-term interest. Flowers are a lavender/pink color; the showy dark seed heads that form after bloom are attractive. Can use both the flower and seed heads for cuts. Pollinators like these plants, which is a bonus!



**Midwest:** *Echinacea Sombrero Rosada* (Darwin Perennials), Raker-Roberta's Trial Gardens

The Sombreros always look good. This one's Pinkish Rose color stood out in our trial.



**Midwest:** *Kniphofia PYROMANIA 'Backdraft'*, (Proven Winners), Walter's Gardens

The six colors of Kniphofia in the PYROMANIA Collection are tropical-looking perennials but are hardy to zone 5b. 'Backdraft' has wide flower spikes that start out an intense reddish orange and open to a peachy yellow for a two-tone color effect. All members of the collection have excellent re-bloom until late into the season and grass-like, textural foliage.

### Professional Edges Made EASY with the DR® Lawn & Garden Edger!

- Stable 4-wheel design
- Curb Hop straddles a curb to make stable, precise cuts
- Pivoting blade for bevel cuts around garden borders
- Six cutting depths



**SALE!**  
Plus  
**FREE**  
**SHIPPING**  
Limitations apply.

**GoDRpower.com**

Request your FREE  
Product Catalog!

Toll Free: 877-560-8902



## Were You Featured In This Issue?

Reprints enable you to reuse your article and simply place it into the hands of your target audience. Having been featured in a well-respected publication adds the credibility of a third-party endorsement to your message.

Give yourself a competitive advantage with reprints. Contact us for more information regarding reprints and additional applications designed to meet your challenging market needs.



### Use Reprints As:

- Sales Aids
- Recruitment Tools
- Managed ePrints
- Trade Show Handouts
- Media Kit Supplements
- Educational Programs
- Employee Training
- Sales Presentations
- Conference Materials
- Direct Mail Campaigns

**Call 800-456-0707 or  
email [reprints@gie.net](mailto:reprints@gie.net)**



## ► Best Drought-Tolerant Perennials

➔ You can find the best drought-tolerant annuals at [bit.ly/2020topplant](https://bit.ly/2020topplant).



**Southeast:** Veronica 'Venture Blue' (Terra Nova Nurseries), North Carolina State University

Compact, low-growing plants that are covered in dark blue flowers. Continuous flowering spikes on sturdy upright stems. Low maintenance, easy to grow and no deadheading needed. Handles the heat well.



**Midwest:** Digitalis 'Camelot' Lavender (Syngenta Flowers), Raker-Roberta's Trial Gardens

First year planting. Still flowering into October. Series typically performs well.



**Midwest:** Perovskia 'Sage Advice' (Proven Winners), Walter's Gardens

This perennial is perfect for hot, dry climates, but performs well in a wide variety of environments. 'Sage Advice' has rich, lavender purple flowers that are a darker shade than other Perovskia to date. Compared to 'Denim 'n Lace,' this variety has darker flowers and calyces, broad (vs. dissected) foliage, and is slightly taller. L&L

## WE'RE LOOKING FOR YOU.

Join our lawn care family.

### Safer Lawn Care Naturally™!

34 YEARS

Industry Leader Since 1987

Avg. Gross Revenue/Owner: \$2.2 Million\*



Serving 115K+ Customers in 26 States & D.C.

Environmentally & Pet-Friendly



When I was investigating franchises, one of the things I was looking for was support. From agronomy to marketing, NaturaLawn of America provides great support.

Mike Weiner  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Franchise Owner



(800) 989-5444

NaturaLawnFranchise.com

\*Based on 34 owners and the 2020 gross revenue report. © 2021, NaturaLawn® of America, Inc. A division of NATURLAWN® Services and Products. All rights reserved.



HEAVY DUTY MESH & YKK® ZIPPERS • 10 HANDLES

## A MUST-HAVE TOOL for Landscapers & Grounds

“After fully stocking our 19 crews with Leaf Burritos, we were able to immediately reduce our cost and waste of plastic bags by 80%. The savings covered the cost of our Burritos in less than 5 months.”

Our crews love Leaf Burritos and how much easier they make it to contain, maintain, and manage their daily green waste.”

- Nathan Nielson, Ultimate Innovations Inc (Hawaii) -

- SAFER method to manage loads...ERGONOMIC!
- SAVES TIME - starts flat so quick to load, haul and empty material - cuts job times in HALF!



Made RIGHT in Charlotte, NC

Custom Branding Available

LeafBurrito.com | 800-BURRITO

Leaf  
**BURRITO**  
THE YEAR ROUND YARD BAG





Erica Orange



Crystal Washington

## Lawn & Landscape TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 2, 2021  
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

# Stay connected

Increasing your company's use of technology to communicate doesn't mean your culture has to weaken.

Erica Orange, executive vice president and COO at The Future Hunters and Crystal Washington, technology strategist and futurist, will be keynoting the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference and Tradeshow Aug. 31-Sept. 2 in Orlando. We caught up with them to get the latest on technology in the working world and how to keep employees together even if they are working a part.

**LAWN & LANDSCAPE:** What are some trends you are seeing when it comes to technology and business, especially in service-based operations like landscaping companies?

**ERICA ORANGE:** For starters, we first have to understand that the world is experiencing something we call Templosion. Templosion refers to the implosion of the biggest of events happening in shorter and shorter periods of time. It's the idea that everything from corporate lifespans to strategic planning cycles to the way in which we communicate is becoming

more truncated. We are experiencing time like it is on steroids. One of the biggest ways in which this Templosion effect is playing out is through the exponential rate of technological development, which is leading to the creation of entirely new business efficiencies.

Yes, artificial intelligence (AI), smart systems, robotics and the rise of deep learning/the neural net will be responsible for automating an increasing number of global human workers in the future. But it will also free up time in new ways. It will allow employees to perform tasks

faster, more accurately, more consistently, at greater scale. And it will allow them to act on insights from external data and user behavior, thereby better meeting the needs of customers. In an age of AI, humans will remain critical to the future of work. All aspects of the human job function will not go onto software. It is simply that the role of the human worker in this new ecosystem is going to change and evolve — and so, too, will the required skills and competencies.

**CRYSTAL WASHINGTON:** We're finding that as millennials are aging (the oldest millennials right now are about 40) they're wanting to book services in a more efficient manner. We're seeing a lot of companies that may have been a little apprehensive about leveraging apps, online payments, things like that — they're having to make the jump because they're seeing that they're losing out to the organizations that do make it easy for clients to book and pay and put down deposits immediately without having to call someone and wait for a call back.

**L&L:** Can technology negatively affect company culture as less face-to-face interactions are happening? If so, how do you minimize this?

**EO:** The hybridization of work — where workers can split their time between working from home and going into a physical office — is here to stay. As leaders navigate this evolving new work

Visit [bit.ly/lltechshow](https://bit.ly/lltechshow) to learn more about and register for the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference and Tradeshow.



# One fixture, multiple lumen levels.

Our Variable Lumen Output (VLO) product line with Lumen Effects System allows you to switch between lumen outputs easily within one fixture – all with the use of the Magnetic Key. Giving you and your team the flexibility to adjust on location before or after the initial installation has occurred.



## The Advantage of our VLO Product Line



**Lumen Effects System** eliminates the need to mechanically adjust or open the fixture, supporting product longevity.



**Flexible Lumen Levels** allows you to set and adjust the lumen levels as the landscape needs change.



**Sealed and fully encapsulated** to safeguard from water ingress and the outdoor elements – helping to extend the life of the product.



**Versatile IP66-IP68 rated** design provides protection against dust particles and water including powerful jets or submersion, based on rating.



**4,000-to-6,000-volt system surge protection** protects against power surges and irregularities, especially when paired with one of our transformers.



**10-15 Year Limited Warranty.** For details visit [Kichler.com/Warranty](http://Kichler.com/Warranty)

© 2021 Kichler Lighting LLC. All Rights Reserved.

Learn more at [Kichler.com/VLO](http://Kichler.com/VLO)

# KICHLER



**Orange and Washington** also addressed how to stay in touch with customers who increasingly want more digital communication, and how to get past roadblocks that stop business owners from embracing technology. To read the Q&A visit [bit.ly/lawnjulytech](https://bit.ly/lawnjulytech)

landscape, the one critical piece ripe for redefinition is organizational culture. Many attempts to rethink remote work culture have centered around technological solutions, particularly those aimed at enhancing employee productivity. But at a time when people feel more socially disconnected and physically isolated, technological band-aids will only get organizations so far.

**Key questions to consider for the future of company culture include:**

- How do we measure, reward and drive true human resources?
- How do we create new metrics to measure human output?
- How do we empower human value creation?
- How can organizations reimagine human capital?

Companies that treat their people with greater fairness and consideration will emerge among the winners. This ultimately could correlate with a rise in a more empathetic workspace culture and style of leadership. In sharp contrast to the competitive business philosophies that marked traditional corporate culture decades ago, empathy has emerged as a powerful driver of culture and will become more critical as work continues to be distributed.

Rituals and well-established routines from the workplace will also shift and be ripe for redesign, particularly when it comes to recreating those rituals digitally. In times of uncertainty, rituals provide structure and a sense of control by imposing order — illusory or not. An extension of this is fostering a culture in

which spontaneous casual interactions can occur. Organizations will be increasingly tasked with revitalizing that feeling of serendipity across distances.

**CW:** I think that it can be negatively impacted, but I think it can be a positive thing as well. Technology is actually very neutral. It's all in how we leverage it, right? Like you can use a microwave to make something yummy or you can use a microwave to put an animal in and hurt it — it's terrible. When it comes to your company, having your employees and your team involved in technology decisions, polling them, seeing what issues are at hand all help. Have a listening session, saying, "We're actually considering these two different solutions and these solutions are going to fix these problems."

The team doesn't actually need to know how the sausage is made. They don't need to know how the technology works, but how will it make their jobs better? Get their buy-in and listen to their suggestions. It doesn't mean you have to use all of them.

Then, when you decide to implement something, come back and say, "Hey guys, after our conversation, based on what everyone was saying, we decided this was the best decision. Thank you so much for your input. James, when you said this, Sharon, when you said that," let them see how they're part of the process and they'll be more likely to utilize it properly without grumbling.

I'm a millennial. When I was in corporate America, there was nothing that I disliked more than meetings. That's

because most of them really were totally waste of time. And in my little young millennial mind, there were a few that were productive and that we needed to have. But a lot of them were just people talking and it just wasn't helpful.

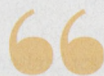
When we talk about less face-to-face, we can be more efficient and taking some of the meetings that maybe don't need to happen face-to-face (and make them virtual). But then make sure that we plan for in person on a regular basis, whatever that looks like for your team. Is that monthly, every two months, every two weeks? It depends on the business and the culture. But have some type of thing where people do see each other and meet up and just have that camaradery and build activities into that. In some ways, you can get rid of some of the things that maybe your team really doesn't need to meet on.

**L&L: If there is one thing you would want the lawn care and landscaping industry to know about technology, what would it be?**

**EO:** Technology can augment and streamline your core business offerings.

That is certain. But it cannot take the place of what really matters and that is the heart of a company. Keep your overall long-term vision — these are your guiding principles and declared set of goals. But keep the strategies with which to achieve that vision flexible. Do not stay wedded to your strategies because they will be ever-changing in an increasingly fast-paced world. If the future requires you to abandon a strategy, do not hold onto it. Do what serves your vision. A key part of that will be finding and implementing the most appropriate technologies to get you there, while also placing an even higher value on the people that get you there, too.

**CW:** We can leverage technology to make us not only more efficient, but also more appealing to our customers and prospects. All we have to do is be open to filtering what technology makes sense. **L&L**



**In an age of AI, humans will remain critical to the future of work. All aspects of the human job function will not go onto software.**

**ERICA ORANGE**, executive VP & COO with The Future Hunters



A person in a light-colored uniform and cap is kneeling on a lawn, working on a garden bed. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt, pants, and a cap. They are positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image, facing away from the camera. The lawn is green and well-maintained. The garden bed is in the foreground, and the person appears to be working on it. The overall scene is a professional landscaping or maintenance activity.

# PROBLEM SOLVERS

**Discover how businesses in  
various segments of the green  
industry can help landscapers  
overcome obstacles.**



# Extend Vermeer ATX Productivity with a Telescopic Boom

**V**ermeer compact articulated loaders (ATXs) offer great extendibility, and we're not just talking about their diverse jobsite application use. We mean quite literally the extensive reach provided by their telescopic booms. A telescopic boom extends straight out from the boom attached to the machine's chassis, enabling the operator to accomplish tasks quickly — tasks that would usually require much more maneuvering.

This ATX feature contributes to valuable maneuverability in a powerful, compact design, and enables access to areas comparable machines can't reach. Vermeer ATXs have booms that use the durable double-H design, and telescopic and self-levelling features, which contribute to the machines' strength. The self-levelling feature keeps heavy loads level to the ground, preventing the operator from continuously correcting the position with the joystick.

## Telescopic boom benefits

- Boom extension for more reach
- Horizontal reach if needed
- Minimal tail swing for tight spaces
- Accurate and precise positioning

## Imagine all the applications...

- Pick up material using pallet forks from the opposite side of a trailer.
- Dispose of jobsite debris quickly over the side of your tall dump truck or trailer — no need to drive around to the back.
- Pick up dropped-off landscaping material curbside.
- Place mulch on the other side of bushes.
- Put rock on the other side of a retaining wall.

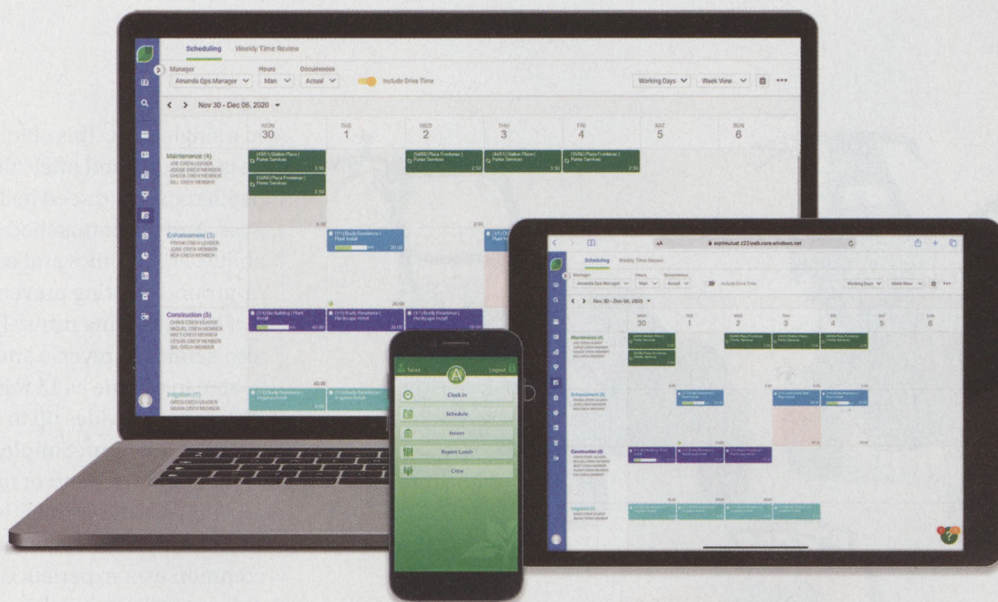
Vermeer ATXs can be equipped with a variety of attachments to help accomplish many jobs. To learn more about Vermeer ATXs and approved attachments, contact your dealer by visiting [vermeer.com](http://vermeer.com).



VERMEER	ATX530	ATX720	ATX850
<b>Pivot point height (extended boom)</b>	108.3 in (275.1 cm)	114 in (289.6 cm)	117.3 in (297.9 cm)
<b>Speed</b>	5.8 mph (9.3 km/h)	5.6 mph (9 km/h)	17.4 mph (28 km/h)
<b>Power</b>	25 hp	25 hp	57 hp

MultiOne, SRL Corporation reserves the right to make changes in engineering, design and specifications; add improvements; or discontinue manufacturing at any time without notice or obligation. Equipment shown is for illustrative purposes only and may display optional accessories or components specific to their global region. Please contact your local Vermeer dealer for more information on machine specifications. Vermeer and the Vermeer logo are trademarks of Vermeer Manufacturing Company in the U.S. and/or other countries. © 2021 Vermeer Corporation. All Rights Reserved.





# Is a Frankensystem Lurking in Your Business?

**S**ometimes running a landscaping company can feel like spinning your wheels in the sand. No matter how hard you work, your revenue growth doesn't seem to translate into higher profits. You're already spending 70+ hours per week on the company — what will it take to stay ahead?

The solution is working smarter, not harder. You need full visibility into every area of your business in order to make timely, informed decisions. Unfortunately, many landscape contractors don't have this level of visibility.

Companies across the industry are finding themselves losing out on profits because of missed upsell opportunities, late insight into job costs and inaccurate estimates.

It's a common problem, stemming from what we call the "frankensystem." Like Frankenstein's monster, the frankensystem is a disjointed (perhaps frightening) bundle of solutions cobbled together over time to keep a business running.

When you start a landscaping business as an owner-operator, staying profitable isn't overly complicated. You have a clear direction, manageable data and limited costs. As you grow, however, you need tools like software, spreadsheets, and reports to stay organized and manage your company. And before you know it — you've got a frankensystem.

Using disjointed systems and manual processes, however, can cause you to drive blind. They isolate data in silos and make reliable reporting virtually impossible. When you have questions about profitability, you may not know where to look. And even if you do, the answers you find are likely based on incomplete or inaccurate information.

Frankensystems hold you back. So, what's the answer? To run your landscaping company with confidence, you need a centralized business management software like Aspire Landscape.

With Aspire Landscape, you can handle all of your business operations in a single place. No more switching

back-and-forth between spreadsheets, timesheets and hand-written notes. Every area of your business — from estimating and scheduling to purchasing, invoicing, job costing, and more — is housed in one powerful platform.

When you use a solution like Aspire Landscape that offers true end-to-end functionality, you gain real-time visibility into your data, including labor hours, expenses, crew performance, job notes and customer communications. You can also track job costs against your estimates, making it easy to identify and correct discrepancies. And with Aspire, you're guaranteed to receive unlimited, lifetime support and training at no additional cost, following a robust 60-day implementation process that's designed to ensure your success.

Prepare your business to weather any storm by clearing the fog created by a frankensystem. Find out how you can use Aspire Landscape to ensure consistent processes, timely decisions, and — ultimately — higher profits. ■





# Choosing the Right Equipment for High Productivity Solutions

Completing jobs faster, more efficiently and with ease enables your lawn and landscape business to meet the increased demand of lawn care services.

**S**etting your business apart and positioning yourself as the value-add solution for lawn care services is a winning approach to successful business growth. And doing it with the right equipment is at the center of this undertaking. A focus of the Billy Goat reciprocating line of aerators and zero

turn stand-on Hurricane blowers is to double-down on productivity and provide ease of use, both for speed and for fatigue-free operation.

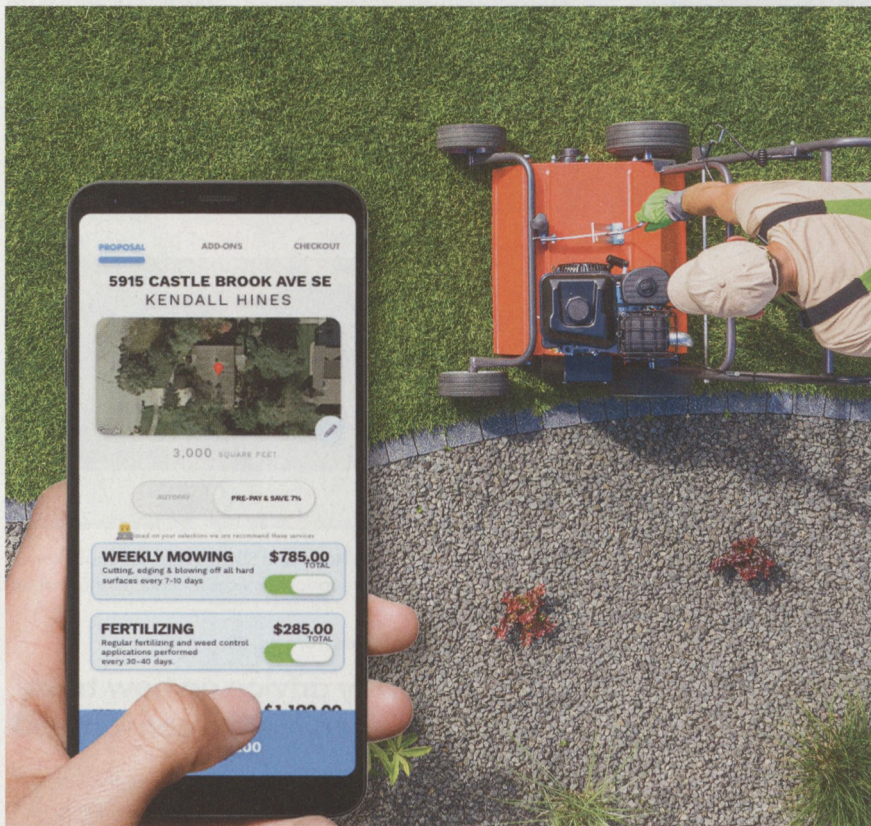
Our 25" PLUGR and 30" One and Done hydro-drive reciprocating aerators offer Variable Aeration Density (VAD™), creating 2-10x more holes depending on ground speed compared to drum units

in a single pass. This eliminates double pass aerating and offers the ability to do patch repair and seed bed prep in one pass. And for unmatched maneuverability, ergonomics and ease of turning, in-ground steering prevents damage to turf when making turns. The 30" model also aerates in reverse and completes ¼ acre in as little as 15 minutes and the 25" model provides up to 42,550 sq. ft. of aeration per hour. Simple, intuitive operation is at the heart of these machines and Billy Goat Controls™ is the only solution offered in this category providing a common user experience, offering variable speed fingertip drive controls with a common "feel" for ease of training and use across a contractor's fleet.

When clean-up opportunities emerge, whether for parking lots or other hard surfaces, or when the short window of leaf season sets in, a race against the clock for the finish line is the challenge at hand. If there were ever a time where profitability is strongly affected by productivity on a highly condensed schedule, fall is it! The right clean-up equipment is critical to the profitability of the season. Our expanded line of stand-on, zero-turn Hurricane blowers double down on productivity and now include the all new P2000, a compact version boasting fast, low-fatigue high productivity for virtually any application. Our patented dual deflector air flow system and undercut is manually adjustable on both the left and right for directing the twin air columns at the best angle for the most efficient cleaning. A convenient foot pedal allows the operator to quickly transition air output from the left to the right side when turning. The unit easily fits through a 36" gate and makes quick work of any mid-sized clean-up challenge on turf or hard surface.

Visit [billygoat.com](http://billygoat.com) for more information and solution-focused equipment for all your lawn and landscape needs. Billy Goat is a brand of Briggs & Stratton. ■





# Growing Your Company One Chat at a Time

**L**awnbot is designed to help green industry companies grow by making sales easy — helping them capture leads they might otherwise lose. Optimized for mobile users, Lawnbot meets customers where they are and guides them from estimation all the way through payment. Customers get the instant satisfaction

of a quote right when they're thinking of buying. You get the reward of the sale.

Lawnbot is a sales automation tool designed to make e-commerce simple via an AI-enabled chatbot that lives on your company's website. It lets your company respond to leads 24/7. When customers click on your Lawnbot, it guides them through the quote and sales process

with a brief text-based chat, asking them questions about their property and what they're looking for, providing them with accurate estimates, customized program recommendations and fast, seamless checkout. It's fully branded to your company, using your logo, your photos and your service categories. Customers don't see "Lawnbot," they see your business.

By automating many of the difficult, time-consuming parts of sales, Lawnbot streamlines the sales process. It ensures quick response to inbound leads, makes sure there's a standard set of probing questions for each prospect, records information for every lead, sends an instant proposal and makes it easy for customers to buy and pay instantly.

Plus, unlike other companies that act as the middleman between lawn care companies and their clients — you subscribe to their service, but they own the customer relationship — with Lawnbot you own your customer relationships. Lawnbot is heavily customized to each individual business using their logos and real-time pricing updates. You own your own custom-branded technology platform, set your own prices and own all of the customer relationships 100%.

Lawnbot's integration with Real Green Systems' Service Assistant 5 makes everything even easier. When a lead visits your website and engages with your Lawnbot, all of the information they share is captured and funneled into SA5. Their initial contact information, property details, accurate measurements — Lawnbot is able to capture amazingly accurate measurements through their measur.it tool, where the customer just traces their own property with their fingertip or their mouse — estimates and quotes, payment information. It's all there with no need for manual input.

To find out more about how Real Green Systems and Lawnbot can help you grow your business, visit [Lawnbot.biz](http://Lawnbot.biz) or call 877-252-9929 to schedule a free demo. ■





Xeriscapes are low-maintenance areas, but that doesn't mean they can be completely ignored.

Continued from pg. 41

Haigh says using native plants is elemental as it helps pollinators, too.

"It's really good for native pollinators to use native plants," she says. "For most of our designs, we're probably 50/50 natives versus low-water non-natives. There is a fantastic plant palate that we draw on that's good for the birds, the bees, the butterflies and the bugs."

Making sure the plants being used all have similar water needs is also instrumental for a successful xeriscape project.

"You don't want to throw any in that take more water than others. Then, you'll have a mess on your hands because some will survive, and others will suffer," Burns says.

Once installed, Burns says little upkeep is needed.

"When you do a xeriscape type of garden, we try to put them in and sit back and watch them grow," she says. "We try not

to do a whole lot of trimming and let the plants tell us what they like and what they don't like. You kind of just let them go and let them grow."

Nevertheless, in order to thrive, Haigh says some maintenance is still needed from time to time.

She says a comprehensive clean-up in the spring to cut back perennials and prune shrubs. Also, providing pre-emergent weed treatments in early spring, summer and fall can help target seasonal weeds as well.

"There is no no-maintenance landscape anywhere," she says. "The thing that dooms the xeriscape is when people don't do their maintenance. Xeriscape is presented as a low-maintenance alternative, but it's low, targeted maintenance at the right time of year – but not no maintenance."

"If people are educated on the maintenance components and they execute them, then it's great." **L&L**



Brandon Haley and SSC Services for Education provides support services for educational institutions.

Continued from pg. 38

## 7. Any advice on how to sell the services to consumers?

**RAIN GARDENS** are an opportunity to sell your clients a project that will add lasting beauty to their property while making a positive impact on their local environment. Having clean, clear water supplies is one of our basic human needs and installing a rain garden gives an individual the opportunity to make impact on their local water supplies.

Show your prospective clients the benefits that rain gardens can provide to their local watershed. Then, show them that they can make a difference through adding flowers to their yard and that you can provide the installation and management services to keep it thriving. Never mind the potential for increased property values. It is a win for everyone.

## 8. Anything else a landscaper should know about installing rain gardens?

**LIKE ANY OTHER INSTALLATION**, the final result will depend on the quality of plants and the technique used to install them. Take your time. Research your plant choices and visit some local installations to see what you like and do not like. **L&L**



**BUSINESS FOR SALE**



**FOR SALE FLORIDA**

**EAST CENTRAL COAST  
OF FLORIDA \$1.2M**

**SOUTH FLORIDA 2 MAN  
OPERATION \$95K**

Contact John Brogan 772-220-4455

EMAIL: John@acquisitionexperts.net

**BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

**1994 • 25 YEARS • 2019**

**SELLING YOUR BUSINESS?**

FREE  
APPRAISAL

NO BROKER  
FEES

**Professional Business Consultants**



Professional Business Consultants can obtain purchase offers from qualified buyers without disclosing your identity. Consultants' fees are paid by the buyer.  
CALL:

**708-744-6715**

FAX: 508-252-4447

pbcsmello1@aol.com • www.PBCbroker.com

**BUSINESS SERVICES**

**REDUCE PESTICIDE USE  
BY 50% OR MORE**



**ECO-505  
INJECTION SYSTEM**

Spot-spray pesticide while  
blanket applying fertilizer



**GREGSON-CLARK**  
Spraying Equipment  
A Division of Robert M. Clark, Inc.

Toll free - 800.706.9530  
Phone - 585.538.9570  
Fax - 585.538.9577  
Sales@GregsonClark.com  
GregsonClark.com

**BUSINESS SERVICES**

**Looking for  
Large Evergreens?**

From screen grade to specimen  
quality, 4' to 30'

Norway Spruce, Blue Spruce,  
Serbian Spruce, White pine,  
Douglas fir and much more!

www.Wefindplants.com

Call Us: 585-889-5933

or Fax 585-889-5815

Email Us: info@wefindplants.com



**H2-B Work Visa -  
Family Beneficiary Visas**

Reward your most valuable H2-B  
& H2-A workers. We process family  
visas for your workers.

**Your worker.....their family.....all  
together & safe in the United States.**

Excellent references. Call Todd Miller -  
Head Honchos - (210) 695-1648

www.mi-familia.com

**FOR SALE**

**FOR SALE**

**Lawn & Landscape Company**

- Established April 1990
- Proven profit
- Growth market in Raleigh, NC area
- Contracts in place
- 80% commercial & 20% residential
- All vehicles and equipment included
- \$425,000
- Contact: Mark Blackwell  
[markblackwell@centurylink.net](mailto:markblackwell@centurylink.net)

**LAWNANDLANDSCAPE.COM**

**FOR SALE**

**STORK'S PLOWS**

610-488-1450

Year round Snow and Ice experts  
With nearly every brand and over 1500  
plows and spreaders in stock

The largest plow part  
selection in the industry.

**Value, Selection, Honest, Excellence**  
**WWW.STORKSPLOWS.COM**

**Discount  
Small Engines & Parts**

Small engines & parts  
from Briggs & Stratton, Kohler,  
Tecumseh, Robin and more.

**www.smallenginesuppliers.com**

Also, look up your own parts  
and buy online at  
**www.smallenginepartssuppliers.com**

**Specimen B&B  
Stock!**

From 1" to 15" caliper Shade and  
ornamental trees  
and 4' to 20' shrubs.

www.WeFindPlants.com

For free quotes call 585-889-5933  
or Fax 585-889-5815

Email Us: info@wefindplants.com



**HELP WANTED**

**Florasearch, Inc.**

In our third decade of performing  
confidential key employee searches  
for landscape and horticulture  
employers worldwide. Retained.

Career candidate contact welcome,  
confidential and always free.

**Florasearch, Inc.**

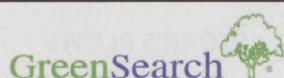
Phone: 407-320-8177

Email: [search@florasearch.com](mailto:search@florasearch.com)

[www.florasearch.com](http://www.florasearch.com)



## HELP WANTED

**Green Industry Leaders Start Here!**

Solve your key leadership hiring needs by contacting **GreenSearch**, the professional search and HR experts *exclusively* serving landscape contractors and the green industry nationwide. Contact us today!

[www.greensearch.com](http://www.greensearch.com)

678-778-3529

[info@greensearch.com](mailto:info@greensearch.com)

LinkedIn: greensearch-usa

**EXPERTS IN FINDING LANDSCAPE TALENT!****No upfront fees.**

We know what rocks to look under to find the hidden candidate.

**Need to upgrade or replace confidentially?**

We're the firm to call.

**Expanding your business?**

We're the firm to call.

**THE FOCUS AGENCY**

877-362-8752

[www.focus-agency.com](http://www.focus-agency.com)

[search@focus-agency.com](mailto:search@focus-agency.com)

*In business over 30 years with clients coast to coast.*

## LANDSCAPE EQUIPMENT



**Catch the Sunshine!**

Greenhouse Kits • Equipment • Supplies

PO Box 1564 • Mobile, AL 36633 • 800-531-GROW (4769)

[www.GothicArchGreenhouses.com](http://www.GothicArchGreenhouses.com)

**LAWNANDLANDSCAPE.COM**

## LAWN SIGNS

**PROMOTE TO NEIGHBORS****PROMOTIONAL POSTING SIGNS**

**RND SIGNS**

Marketing, Design & Print

*View Hundreds of Promotional Ideas, Layouts & Exclusive Images Online!*

[RNDsigns.com](http://RNDsigns.com) • 800.328.4009

Posting Signs • Door Hangers  
Brochures • Mailers More



## LINERS



Get your **FREE** starter plant catalog:

**Spring Meadow Nursery**

offers every Proven Winners®

ColorChoice® shrub variety and more.

Contact [sales@springmeadownursery.com](mailto:sales@springmeadownursery.com)

800-633-8859, [www.springmeadownursery.com](http://www.springmeadownursery.com)

## PLANTS, SEEDS &amp; TREES

**We Find (and Ship) it ALL!**

Need Plugs, Shrubs, Perennials, Evergreens, Shade Trees?

We Find Plants has you covered.

Just send us your list.

Free quotes, always.

[info@wefindplants.com](mailto:info@wefindplants.com)

585-889-5933



Powered by Horticultural Associates

## PLANTS, SEEDS &amp; TREES

**NATIVE SEEDS**

Largest producer of native seeds in the Eastern U.S. Hundreds of species of grass and wildflower seeds for upland to wetland sites. Bioengineering material for riparian areas and erosion control.

Contact **ERNST SEEDS** today.

[www.ernstseed.com](http://www.ernstseed.com) - 800/873-3321

**19'-21' NIGRA ARBORVITAE!**

Specimen Plants!

Located in SE Wisconsin

Shipping Available

Coast to Coast

Cell: (262) 949-4180

Fax: (262) 763-6501

[www.millersnursery.net](http://www.millersnursery.net)

Email: [perry@millersnursery.net](mailto:perry@millersnursery.net)

## SOFTWARE

**BILLMASTER Software®**

**Simple, Reliable, Affordable**

**Perfect for Small Business**

**Convert from any existing system**

**All at a price your business can afford**

**Call today to get started.**

**201-620-8566**

Email: [sales@billmaster.info](mailto:sales@billmaster.info)

[www.billmaster.info](http://www.billmaster.info)

**Want to sound off on something you saw in this issue?**

Have an idea that you think would be worth featuring in next month's Lawn & Landscape?

We want to know.

Call or email Brian Horn at 216-393-0250 or [bhorn@gie.net](mailto:bhorn@gie.net).

A WEBSITE **WITH YOU IN MIND**

**LAWNANDLANDSCAPE.COM**



Advertiser	Website	Page #
Atlantic Water Gardens	atlanticwatergardens.com	20
Bailey Nurseries	firsteditionsplants.com	2
BASF Corporation	basf.com/global/en.html	27
Bayer Cropscience LP	backedbybayer.com/ lawn-and-landscape	13
Central Garden & Pet	central.com	24
Christianson Systems	christianson.com	9
Exmark	exmark.com	59
GIE+ Expo	gie-expo.com	33
Greene County Fertilizer Company	greenecountyfert.com	8
Horizon	horizononline.com	23
Hunter Industries	hunterindustries.com	60
Jain Irrigation, Inc	jainusa.com	22
Kershaw Law Firm, The	kershawlawn.com	belly tip
Kichler Lamp & Lighting	landscapelighting.com	47
Land One	landonetakeoff.com	30
Leaf Burrito	leafburrito.com	45
Mean Green Products	meangreenmowers.com	44
NaturaLawn	naturalawnfranchise.com	45
Neely Coble Co	neelycoble.com	39
PBI-Gordon Corp	pbigordonturf.com	37
Permaloc Aluminum Edging	permaloc.com	25
Prime Source, LLC	thesourcematters.us	32
Pro Landscape/Drafix	prolandscape.com	11
Progressive	progressivecommercial.com	10
Savalawn	savatree.com	9
Scotts Miracle Gro	provistaturf.com	insert 19, belly tip
Smart Rain	smartrain.net	31
Software Republic	raincad.com	8
Stihl	stihlusa.com	21
Turfco MFG, inc.	turfcodirect.com	7
Weathermatic	weathermatic.com	34-35

#### Problem Solvers

Aspire	youraspire.com	51
Vermeer Corporation	vermeer.com/miniskids	50
Billy Goat Industries	billygoat.com	52
Real Green Systems	realgreen.com/mobilegrow	53

\* denotes regional advertising

**CURATED  
CONTENT  
FOR YOUR  
BUSINESS,  
RIGHT TO YOUR  
INBOX.**



**Lawn & Landscape**

SIGN UP FOR LAWN & LANDSCAPE NEWSLETTERS AND ELIMINATE  
THE SEARCH FOR INDUSTRY TIPS, NEWS AND REPORTS.

**LAWNANDLANDSCAPE.COM/FORM/NEWSLETTERS**



# AN AVERAGE DAY

**Ramona Mullins,**  
Owner, Mullins Lawn Enforcement



→ **Ramona Mullins'** husband, Wesley, was tired of being away from the couple's daughters and the amount of relocating he had to do as a helicopter mechanic, so in 2016, they made a bold move.

Interviewed by **Brian Horn**

"My oldest was going into high school and we just decided to basically sell everything that we owned and downsize and start over again," says the co-owner of Mullins Lawn Enforcement in Clarksville, Tennessee, a company she started in 2010. "So, we sold all of our earthly possessions except for our business things and a camper and moved to a campground and actually bought a campground four months later and started that business." Wesley ended up joining Ramona at the landscaping company while they also opened up an engine shop a couple of years ago.

#### **Here's Mullins' average day.**

Usually, I'm up and at it around 5 or 5:30 a.m. and my regular routine is getting my family out the door. Workday starts probably at 6 a.m., getting the guys ready, getting the trucks loaded up and then they head out. It's kind of a hectic morning. I get up, I make breakfast, I get the guys out the door, then get my daughter out the door and then I go right back into the next layer of the business, which is the shop that gets open.

The commute to work is right next door because we live and breathe our businesses. The landscape business is right next door to the equipment business. I literally just go take my daughter to school five minutes away and then come back and open up the doors to the store.

The first hour of my day is just checking all the emails, making sure that nothing got missed, nobody got missed and calling people, letting them know that their machines are ready. The morning stays pretty busy with people coming in and out, and they're buying things or bringing things in to be checked in for repairs.

It's definitely a working lunch. I have a fridge in here with my sandwiches and everything in there. That way I can eat in between the tasks that I'm doing. In between everything that I'm doing here,

I manage all the calls still for the landscaping company. I still do all the quotes for the landscaping company. The engine shop is closed Sundays and Mondays. So, I go out in the field with them either on Mondays or Saturdays — planting, mowing, whatever is needed in order to catch up from rain.

Post lunch, I do all of the scheduling for the next day for them. So I create their schedules for probably the next couple of days.

(My husband) has only really been out there running the crew for the past three years. I stay involved in all of the creation that has to do with the landscaping out there. So, he'll FaceTime me and get my input and make sure the plants are where I want them to be — if there's anything that I've seen that I need, that I want cleaned up or touched up like branches or dead trees in the yard, etc.

(I stop) usually around 4:30 p.m. At the beginning of the season, it can vary because that's when we get a lot of calls and a lot of quotes and estimates.

I used to check emails all night, but not anymore. I've had to set boundaries because now with two businesses, you can get easily swallowed into people pleasing, which I'm very big on. I put my phone on silent. At dinner time, 7 p.m. at the latest, it will just turn itself to silent mode and not bother me.

I usually go to bed around 10 p.m., wind down around 9 p.m. and watch a show or something, you know, just spend time together.

Saturday is a normal work day for us because the shop is open on Saturdays and we run two businesses with five employees, so we definitely do six days until about November. We really take our breaks in November, December and January. That's when we take a lot of time off and regroup. **L&L**





# THE EXMARK LEGACY

Professional cutters and homeowners alike have aspired to be a part of the legacy and experience the Lazer Z's superior cut quality, productivity, durability and performance. Built for easier maintenance and longer life, a Lazer Z is simply tougher and easier to operate. And since one size doesn't fit all when it comes to professional zero-turn mowers, Exmark offers a complete line of Lazer Z mowers to fit anyone's specific needs.

Learn more at [Exmark.com](http://Exmark.com)





# A SMARTER WAY TO WORK AROUND A TOUGH SITUATION



**NEVER TUNNEL UNDER OR CUT THROUGH A SIDEWALK TO INSTALL A FLOW SENSOR AGAIN!** When hardscape is in the way, the Wireless HC Flow Meter delivers critical flow data without labor-intensive trenches or costly wires. Simply pair the wireless transmitter and receiver with any HC Flow Meter to enable reliable flow-monitoring capabilities for your Hydrowise control system.

Wireless HC Flow Meter

For the ultimate in control and cost savings, **upgrade your Hydrowise system with the Wireless HC Flow Meter.**



<https://hunter.info/WHCflow>



Reliable flow and electrical  
monitoring with Hydrowise

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL IRRIGATION  
Learn more. Visit [hunterindustries.com](http://hunterindustries.com)

**40** Hunter®

**Hydrawise®**