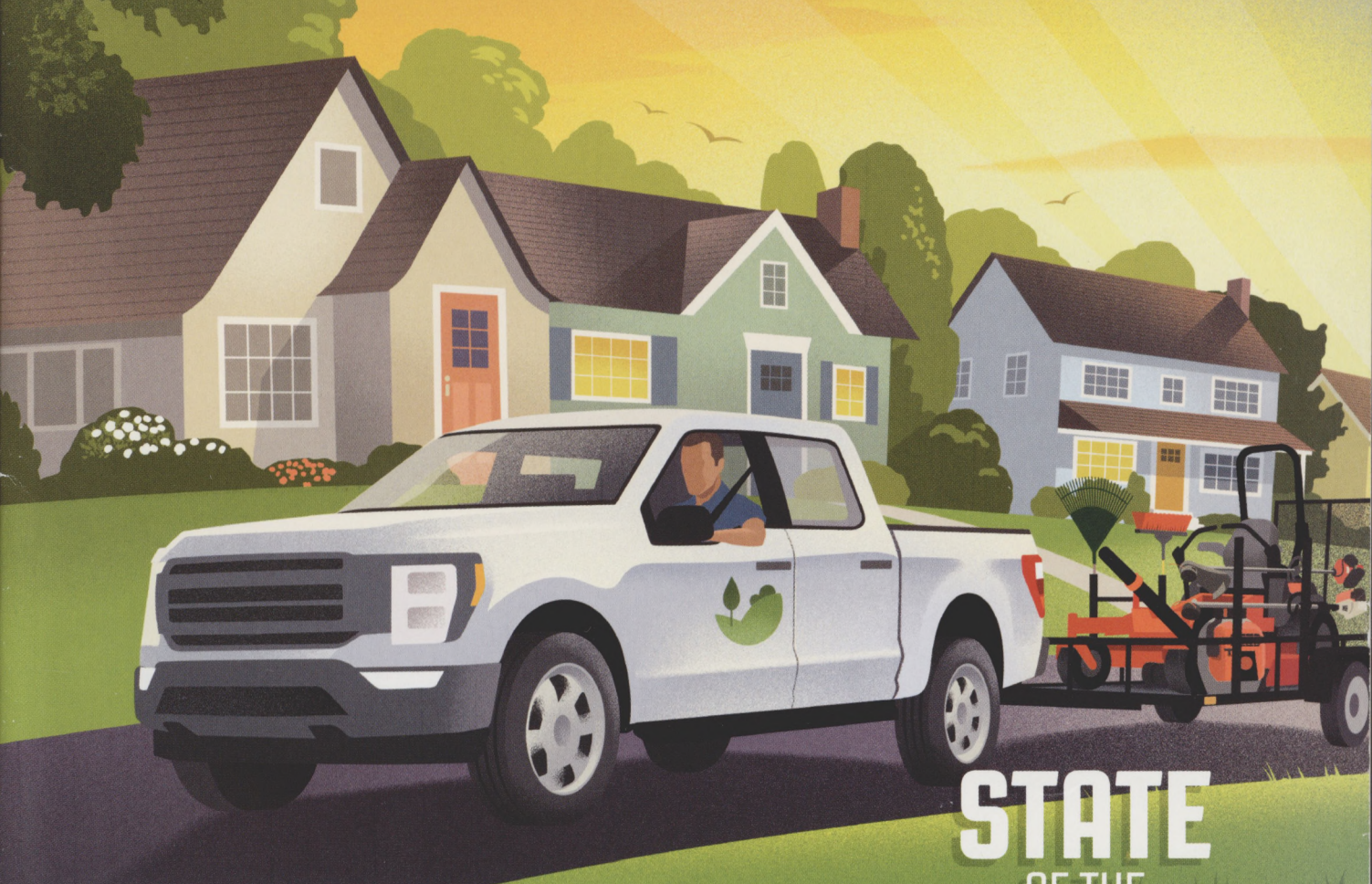


OCTOBER 2022

Lawnandlandscape.com

Lawn & Landscape®

Leading business media for landscape contractors



STATE OF THE INDUSTRY *Report*

Contractors are cautiously optimistic despite inflation, supply chain issues and high fuel prices.

#BXNDJNN *****AUTO**SCH 5-DIGIT 48823 MIX COMAIL
 #0038814380# 10
 CL 10/18/22
 16:39
 0050 / 26390
 436
 108118
 2001901
 58

ANDREW LUNDBEN
 COLLECTION COORDINATOR
 TURFGRASS INFORMATION CENTER
 306 W CIRCLE DR (10)
 EAST LANSING MI 48824-3700



Husqvarna



Buckle Up!

NEW



Husqvarna 580 Backpack Blower

And be blown away by the all-new Husqvarna 580 Backpack Blower!

Weighing less than 28 pounds, this lightweight blower packs a powerful punch with 1,000 CFM of blowing force and air speeds of up to 220 mph. And you'll stay comfortable all day long with the ergonomic harness and adjustable hip belt.

Learn more at [Husqvarna.com](https://www.husqvarna.com)

CONTENTS

OCTOBER 2022

Lawn & Landscape

A GIE Media publication
Volume 43, Number 10

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY *Report*

S3 STRONG RESULTS

Landscapers across the country reported growing revenue.

S10 BURDENS TO BEAR

Companies are contending with long-lasting issues like labor, plus new concerns and an uncertain economic future.

S16 HANDLING THE HEADACHES

Nationwide, contractors are sweating out supply chain and inflation pressures.

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 **Editor's Insight:** Smart people, smart insights
- 8 **Insider:** Latest industry news
- 51 **Huston:** The devil's in the details
- 52 **Wilson:** Inflation playbook for CEOs
- 54 **Harvesters:** The importance of relationships
- 56 **Women in Landscaping:** Callan Dudley
- 142 **Average Day:** Paulita LaPlante
- 143 **Classifieds**
- 145 **Ad Index**
- 146 **Raise the bar:** Justin White

Cover illustration: Michael Crampton

FEATURES

- 60 **All the technology you can handle:** The Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference featured tech-based education and exhibit floor.
- 100 **Identifying improvement:** Environmental Management achieved more than 30% growth in 2021 by prioritizing enhancements in all elements of the business.
- 115 **Shedding light on the future of landscape lighting:** Landscape lighting manufacturers say consumers are looking for more color, control and connectivity.
- 124 **'Farm'cation:** Metrolina Landscape's project showcases the company's hardscape team's ability to design and install a new pool deck and amenity area.
- 126 **First in line:** Early order programs are normally associated with golf course superintendents, but they are increasing in popularity in the lawn care industry.
- 130 **Mastering software:** Creating a personalized software has helped McMaster Lawn & Pest Services take the business to the next level.
- 136 **Get to know snow:** Snow contractors are facing the same issues as those in the green industry.
- 138 **A glimpse of what's new:** New products are popping up all over the place in various segments of the industry. Here's a look at some of them.

LAWN & LANDSCAPE

BRANDSPOTLIGHT //

WITH BAYER

Get to know Tetrino, Page 94

STATE OF THE MARKETS

- 75 **Fall CleanUp**
- 107 **Business Management Technology**

Smart people, smart insights

I'm on my way back from the inaugural Elevate conference hosted by the National Association of Landscape Professionals. It was great networking with all the attendees and vendors, as well as attending some of the educational sessions.

One session featured an executive leadership panel with LandCare's Mike Bogan, Weed Man's Jen Lemcke, Mariani Landscape's Frank Mariani and Davey Tree's Pat Covey. With that much knowledge and experience in one place, I'll turn this column over to the insights I gathered from them.

THE LONG HAUL. When someone interviews a potential employee at Mariani's company, they interview them for a career, not just a job. "It's huge if you start with the idea of switching jobs every 2-3 years, but we are not thinking that," he said. "We have to articulate that message because people don't realize it."

DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF. Being a leader is a time commitment. When the topic of finding balance came up, Lemcke said with a chuckle that the balance doesn't exist. When her company needed her, that was the focus. In those instances, she made sure she was present for the big family things, but acknowledged that sometimes she had to miss the little things. "You have to forgive yourself for doing that," she said.

LEADERS IN THEIR ROLE. Mariani acknowledged that along the way, he learned not everyone wants to be the CEO. You'll have employees who are happy in their role, and you should embrace that.

PRESENT TENSE. Bogan said you need to look at your career as a marathon and enjoy the journey. Early on he was too focused on the next step. "I failed to appreciate the role I was in," he said. He learned to enjoy the step he was currently on. "It's



Brian Horn
Editor, Lawn & Landscape

fun to be the CEO, but all the other roles were too," he said. "Don't race through, enjoy where you are at."

GENERATION GAP. Lemcke and Covey both acknowledged that generations get painted with a broad brush, and we need to stop doing that. "Everyone is different," Covey said. "Every person has a core need to feel needed...to make a difference day-to-day. I don't think that goes away from generation to generation. You have to find out how to tap into that."

— 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



EDITORIAL

BRIAN HORN EDITOR bhorn@gie.net
JIMMY MILLER ASSOCIATE EDITOR jmiller@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
JUSTIN WHITE jwhite@giemedia.com
KRISTEN HAMPSHIRE CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

CREATIVE

STEPHANIE ANTAL ART DIRECTOR santal@gie.net

ADVERTISING/PRODUCTION INQUIRIES

KAITLIN SELLERS ksellers@gie.net

SALES

DAVID SZY PUBLISHER dszy@gie.net
ANDREW HATFIELD ACCOUNT MANAGER/CLASSIFIEDS ACCOUNT MANAGER
ahatfield@gie.net
BRIAN MAY ACCOUNT MANAGER bmay@gie.net
DANNY WALSH ACCOUNT MANAGER dwalsh@gie.net
RUSSELL WARNER NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER rwarners@gie.net

CORPORATE

RICHARD FOSTER CHAIRMAN
CHRIS FOSTER PRESIDENT AND CEO
DAN MORELAND PUBLISHER EMERITUS
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

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 2022 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 N6C 6B2.



YOU'VE GOT THE POWER, LET ASPEN FUEL IT.

**YOU HAVE EVERY REASON TO
SWITCH TO ASPEN.**

Why Aspen?

Switch to Aspen fuels to eliminate harmful fumes, achieve higher performance, and minimize equipment downtime.

Aspen Fuel Types

Aspen 2 goes above and beyond in providing engine cleanliness and lubrication for the two-stroke engines found in clearing saws, hedge trimmers and power cutters. Aspen 4 delivers smooth, clean, efficient performance for all sorts of four-stroke engines.



FIND YOUR LOCAL ASPEN DEALER TODAY!

www.aspenfuels.us



NEW POWER GENERATION

Jeff Sebert worked diligently to scale the “one-man-with-a-mower” company he founded in 1985. After hours of door-knocking and thousands of neatly manicured lawns, he is now president of Sebert Landscape and Bluestem Ecological Services (Sebert Landscape) — a Top 50 commercial landscaping firm with a 75-acre nursery. The company has more than 450 employees at seven locations across Chicagoland and southern Wisconsin and has become a well-known fixture on the landscaping scene.

In 2021 Sebert Landscape began the switch to electric mowers and purchased 10 Gravelly PRO-TURN EV zero-turn mowers. Three of his ground crews are using the mowers and they haven’t touched a filler cap or fuel canister in months — that is, other than refueling the truck that takes them to job sites.

The goal of reducing the company’s fuel usage goes back to an epiphany Sebert had while building the company’s 30,000 ft² headquarters that was certified LEED Gold by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2010.

“Going through the process of completing a LEED-certified building got me thinking,” he remarked. “If I can make a differ-

ence with this building, where else can I lessen my carbon footprint? I realized that the biggest place I can make a difference is in the field.”

“I was always a little uncomfortable with battery-powered mowers because I didn’t think the technology worked for commercial equipment,” he explained. “Our teams run for long hours every day and don’t have time to change batteries that are hard-wired into the machine. But when I tested the Gravelly PRO-TURN EV and saw how the machine performed and how easy it was to swap batteries, it was a game-changer. It aligns with our corporate values in terms of being sustainable, giving back and nurturing environmental stewardship.”

Now, Sebert Landscape’s three all-electric crews — and the neighborhoods in which they work every day — are enjoying the benefits of Gravelly’s quietest commercial mower. At just 84.2 dB of noise volume, the machine generates the equivalent volume of a kitchen blender. When the landscaping teams do attract bystander attention, it’s invariably of the positive kind.



Jeff Sebert

SEE WHAT'S BEEN
QUIETLY CHANGING
THE LANDSCAPE
OF THE INDUSTRY.



PRO-TURN.
EV60 POWERED BY
FUSIONCORE

 GRAVELY

Mariani Landscape announces record growth, numerous acquisitions

The company plans on extending into multiple states in the near future.

Mariani Landscape has acquired seven family-owned companies and experienced 350% growth over the past 18 months, a record for the company.

The companies acquired are:

- Berghoff Design Group / BDG Maintenance; Phoenix
- Designs by Sundown; Denver
- Hoffman Landscapes; Wilton, Connecticut
- NatureWorks Landscape Services, Walpole, Mass
- Rocco Fiore & Sons, Libertyville, Illinois
- RP Marzilli; Boston
- Woodlawns Landscape Company; Chicago

Three of the acquired companies appeared on Lawn & Landscape's 2022 Top 100 list, which is based off 2021 revenue: RP Marzilli, number 43 with \$53.9 million in revenue; Designs by Sundown, tied at 71 with revenue of \$36 million; and Berghoff Design, number 75 with 2021 revenue of \$34.6 million.

CI Capital holds a majority investment in Mariani Landscape, but current Chairman Frank Mariani will remain actively involved in the company.

CI Capital previously owned SavATree before selling to Apax in September of 2021.

The acquired companies are maintaining their brands and leadership teams.

"As we seek to create the best residential landscape company in the world, we are partnering with companies that are the best at what they do in their local markets. We trust them and fully support their management teams, and we add value by creating services that elevate their client and associate experiences," Frank Mariani said.

"We didn't want to replicate what we've seen in the commercial landscape industry, where companies were absorbed, and local management was removed. The companies that have joined us so far have set a great precedent that this is a business model that works well and benefits everyone."

Bob Marzilli, president of RP Marzilli, added that, "Companies that join Mariani Landscape will find they won't lose their identity and that they're still in control of their destinies. When joining our group, owners remain an integral part of their company. They're not simply selling their companies and leaving."

One resource that the Mariani Landscape family of companies offers is what Mariani Landscape refers to as the "ulti-

mate peer group." This is a platform service in which leadership teams from across all companies in the Mariani family can draw insights, share experiences and solve problems.

"The peer group that has been created through the Mariani family of companies is invaluable. Everyone brings an incredible amount of knowledge and experience to the table," said Jeff Berghoff, president of Berghoff Design Group.

Charlie Noll, president and founder of Woodlawns Landscape Company in Chicago said the acquired companies all operate independently.

"We share resources and services, but the leadership team at Mariani trusts me to run my company, and doesn't want to change that," he said.

The new Mariani Landscape family of companies will also have a focus on green initiatives and landscaping best practices.

"Our industry hasn't progressed at the rate of other industries with respect to adopting technology and prioritizing things like career growth," said Matt Gramer, president of NatureWorks Landscape Services in Massachusetts. "We at Mariani plan to move the needle in that regard and set the tone for innovation for the industry."



Keep living the
small business dream.

Progressive Casualty Ins. Co. & affiliates. Coverages and discounts not available in all states or situations, for all vehicles or coverage selections.

Protect your small business from reality with over 30+ customizable coverage options and personalized discounts. Get a quote in as little as 6 minutes at [ProgressiveCommercial.com](https://www.ProgressiveCommercial.com)

PROGRESSIVE
COMMERCIAL

**Q&A
WITH THE
EXPERT**


Q&A WITH AARON HATHAWAY

Technical Services Manager, Turf & Ornamental, Nufarm

1 How does your product save time?

Premium herbicides like Horsepower®, Cool Power®, Escalade® 2, and Change Up™ broaden the overall spectrum of broadleaf weed control. This broadened spectrum means more consistent control on more properties. Since no one set of properties has all the same weed issues, premium herbicides allow an applicator to mix one product and be confident that it is up to each unique weed challenge. It also means an applicator doesn't have to meticulously scout each property to determine an appropriate tank mix for effective control of the different weeds. For those properties with crabgrass breakthrough, consider Quincept® and Sure Power®. They can provide excellent control of the crabgrass and any lingering broadleaves – again, saving time by reducing scouting and mixing needs at each site. In short, premium herbicides offer premium active ingredient combinations to broaden the overall spectrum of weed control, making them more reliable at more sites and requiring fewer tank mixes to boost weed activity.

2 How does your product save labor?

Difficult to control weeds are not well-controlled by typical 3-way herbicides and are a main source of costly customer callbacks. Effective weed control with use of

premium herbicides increases customer satisfaction and reduces labor-intensive return trips for repeat applications.

3 How does your product save materials or fuel?

Premium herbicides can save a second trip and repeat applications by better controlling difficult weeds in one spray. For example, ground ivy is a difficult broadleaf that isn't well-controlled by a typical 3-way herbicide (2,4-D + MCPP + dicamba). However, Horsepower and Escalade 2 both contain premium pyridines (triclopyr and fluroxypyr, respectively) that provide better control of ground ivy in conjunction with the other active ingredients. These premium pyridines provide excellent translocation through ground ivy stolons and better specific activity on the weed. One effective application not only saves herbicide product, but saves fuel from a planned or unplanned repeat trip to a property to finish the job.

4 How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

The use of one or two main premium herbicides with relatively broad spectrums of control can allow applicators time to focus on other aspects of turf management like plant nutrition and

soil health. Because premium herbicides are more effective on a broader list of broadleaf weeds, applicators can rely on effective control, worry less about possible misses or callbacks and upsell other services.

5 In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Some premium herbicides not only contain pyridines that broaden broadleaf spectrum of control, but also contain PPOs, which speed visual activity and aid increased efficacy – especially in the early spring or mid-summer seasons by helping to break down plant cuticles. Sure Power and 4-Speed® XT contain a PPO herbicide (flumioxazin and pyraflufen-ethyl, respectively) and can provide a boost on difficult weeds during less-than-ideal control conditions. 4-Speed XT has proven to be a great early-spring broadleaf herbicide and Sure Power is a hammer for tough broadleaf weeds, like ground ivy and wild violet, in cool-season turf. Sure Power also has some activity on crabgrass and nutsedge which makes it a great mid-summer herbicide as broadleaf weeds can be especially difficult to control at this time. These fast and ultra-effective herbicides can easily increase customer satisfaction and help grow a positive company reputation.

Nufarm *EDGE* 2023



INCREASE PROFITS, REDUCE CALLBACKS

WITH EARLY ORDER REWARDS

- 1) STRAIGHT-UP INDIVIDUAL PRODUCT REBATES
- 2) ORDER EARLY IN EOP PERIOD 1 TO MAXIMIZE REBATES
- 3) LOOK FOR EXTRA VOLUME REBATES ACROSS EIGHT PRODUCTS

Purchase two or more eligible Nufarm brands totaling our **LOW MINIMUM OF \$2,500** and maximize profits with valuable distributor credit rebates.



PERIOD 1

Sep. 12 – Oct. 31, 2022



PERIOD 2

Nov. 1 – Dec. 9, 2022

Distributor credit available
after June 30, 2023

REGISTER ONLINE TO QUALIFY

NUFARMREWARDS.COM

Must register between September 12 and December 9, 2022.
Previous registrants do not need to re-register for 2023.
Valid e-mail address required for eligibility.

©2022 Nufarm.

 **Nufarm**
Grow a better tomorrow

CenterOak Partners forms Turf Masters Lawn Care Services

The company combines Turf Masters Lawncare, All Turf Holdings and Green Group Holdings.

CENTEROAK PARTNERS, a Dallas-based private equity firm, has formed Turf Masters Lawn Care Services, a residential lawn services platform created through the combination of three providers: Turf Masters Lawncare, All Turf Holdings and Green Group Holdings.

As part of the transaction, the existing owners and management teams will continue to be active and will have an equity interest in the company.

Andy Kadrich, the founder of Turf Masters, will lead the company as CEO. CenterOak's investment will provide capital to support the growth of the newly formed entity. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Turf Masters Lawn Care Services provides recurring lawn, tree and shrub care services to over 100,000 customers annually. The company currently operates over 20 branches across 10 states and plans to grow organically and through add-on acquisitions.

"Turf Masters, All Turf and Green Group are high performing, leading residential lawn businesses led by strong local management teams focused on best-in-class customer service," said Jason Sutherland, co-managing partner of CenterOak. "CenterOak has a long history of partnering with talented teams to support rapid growth in highly fragmented industries. We look forward to expanding the Company's customer base, increasing service offerings, and recruiting additional strong local market leaders to join our new platform."

"We are excited to have CenterOak's resources and experience supporting our family-owned business in this next phase of growth," said Andy Kadrich, CEO and founder of Turf Masters. "With CenterOak's support, we have an opportunity to scale quickly by investing in our existing markets and by acquiring passionate, talented and customer service-focused operators in the residential lawn services industry."

SavATree merges with Tulsa's Preaus Landscape

This marks SavATree's first entry in the Oklahoma market.

SAVATREE has merged with Oklahoma-based Preaus Landscape of Tulsa. This merger marks SavATree's first office in the state.

Preaus Landscape of Tulsa specializes in care for residential and commercial clients, as well as numerous marquee properties in the Tulsa community including Philbrook Museum of Art, The Gathering Place, University of Tulsa, Utica Square Shopping Center, Garden Park HOA and the Tulsa Technology Center. Founders and Owners of Preaus Landscape of Tulsa Bill and Ken Preaus, and Co-Owner Tyler Cook, along with their dedicated team, will remain on board with SavATree as part of their ongoing commitment to building and maintaining quality relationships.

"We are very excited to be working with SavATree, a company that has a high level of professionalism and a great reputation in the industry," Cook said. "This partnership will provide our customers with the benefit of expanded programs, enhanced service offerings, and deeper resources to continue caring for their landscapes."

"We're thrilled to welcome Preaus Landscape aboard, a highly reputable company that has operated in the Tulsa region for 40 years," said SavATree CEO Carmine Schiavone. "We look forward to supporting clients in Tulsa with expanded service lines and science-backed treatment options to continue keeping their landscapes healthy and safe."



Verde Property Services acquires GreenRidge Landscaping

Verde is doing business as Juniper Landscape Company, a San Diego-based company.

VERDE PROPERTY SERVICES, DBA Juniper Landscape, has acquired substantially all assets of La Mesa based GreenRidge Landscaping.

Juniper Landscape Company, a San Diego-based provider of commercial and residential landscaping maintenance, and design-build services, has served the greater San Diego market for more than 40 years. The acquisition of GreenRidge will allow for the continued expansion of Juniper's landscape maintenance portfolio which now represents the majority of its business.

"Serving similar markets and customers, the acquisition of GreenRidge presents an obvious opportunity as we continue to invest in our own backyards," said Gabriel Galvez, one of Verde's principal investors.

Galvez said the company's acquisition, along with significant organic growth experienced in the last year will result in a nearly 400% growth in maintenance revenues.



CompanyCam

The only app every landscaper needs.

When you can't be in 16 places at once, there's CompanyCam.

Visit us at Equip!

You can find us at the following booths:

- 22007 for Hardscaping
- 4011 for Everything Else Landscaping

The image displays two devices showing the CompanyCam interface. The smartphone screen shows a home dashboard with options like 'Create Project', 'Users & Groups', 'Upload Photos', and 'Scan Document'. It also features 'Nearby Projects' and 'Company Feed' sections. The tablet screen shows a 'Project Feed' with a list of projects including 'Central Park', 'Johnson House', 'McDaniel', 'Smith House', and 'Sherman House', each with a photo gallery and project details. A QR code with the CompanyCam logo is overlaid on the bottom right of the tablet screen.

Scan the QR code or visit companycam.com/equip

Neighborly acquires Lawn Pride in Indianapolis

Founded 30 years ago, Lawn Pride has roughly 100 full-time employees.

NEIGHBORLY, THE PARENT COMPANY for The Grounds Guys, a Lawn & Landscape Top 100 company, has acquired Lawn Pride, a professional lawn care company in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The company expects to begin franchising the Lawn Pride brand in the U.S. in 2023. With this acquisition, Neighborly has reached a milestone with now more than 30 home service brands globally across 18 service verticals.

Joshua Sevick, president of The Grounds Guys, will oversee the integration of Lawn Pride.

“At Neighborly, we believe in the greater power of our collective, and welcoming Lawn Pride to our family of brands allows us to expand our offerings and deepen connections with homeowners,” said Mike Bidwell, president and CEO of Neighborly. “Lawn Pride’s fertilization, weed control, aeration and overseeding services have earned a remarkably high net promoter score and customer retention rate. We see tremendous opportunity to grow the brand to new heights beyond its home market.”

the Grounds Guys

a neighborly company

Andrew Neher founded Lawn Pride over 30 years ago. The company has roughly 100 full-time employees.

“While still in college, I started my entrepreneurial journey in lawn care. With a lot of hard work and a highly dedicated and talented team, we built Lawn Pride

GREEN PRO
Bravo

NO CABLES!
GreenPRO's cableless ramp door is safer with less maintenance and corrosion.

TRAILERS THAT WORK

Bravo
TRAILERS

to learn more visit us at BRAVOTRAILERS.COM/GREENPRO

BOBCAT.COM



HAVE A TREE-CLEARING, WOOD-CHIPPING, HAIR-RAISING GOOD TIME.

FEEL THE POWER OF THE NEW T86 COMPACT TRACK LOADER.

Start looking forward to bigger, tougher, nastier challenges. The Bobcat® R-Series T86 compact track loader is coming soon. Come see the most powerful compact track loader we've ever built at Equip Expo booth #3052.

 **Bobcat**
One Tough Animal

Bobcat Company is a member of the Doosan Group. Doosan is a global leader in construction, grounds maintenance and material handling equipment, power and water solutions, and engineering that has proudly served customers and communities for more than a century.

Bobcat®, the Bobcat logo and the colors of the Bobcat machine are registered trademarks of Bobcat Company in the United States and various other countries.

©2022 Bobcat Company. All rights reserved. | 1534






Celebrating **25** YEARS

of making
your success
our top priority.

Since 1997, we've worked with outdoor lighting contractors, electricians, landscape design/build contractors, and other professionals to make the world a brighter place.

We'll partner with you to provide expert advice on the best lighting solution to fit your project and budget. Our team also offers design and technical support at no additional cost. And to ensure the job gets done on time, our warehouse stocks a huge inventory of products ready for same-day shipment.

Call us today at 800.758.6359

CascadeLighting.com   

202209-LL

L&L INSIDER

into the thriving business it is today," Neher said. "Now, it's time for the Lawn Pride team and the Neighborly team to collaboratively write the company's exciting next chapters. Guided by Neighborly's entrepreneurial spirit, leadership team, deep bench and experience in home services, and a great capacity to grow the business, this is clearly the right next step in our evolution."

Both brands will operate independently with two distinct service models and systems under Neighborly's direction, providing unique value to customers who look to Neighborly as their hub for home services.

"As I've witnessed firsthand with The Grounds Guys, Neighborly's commitment to investing in the brands under its umbrella through the organization's proven franchise model is a game-changer for achieving accelerated brand growth," said Sevick. "I look forward to seeing Lawn Pride experience the same success under Neighborly that we've witnessed across all of our home service brands."

OLS acquires Stone Garden

Based in Wilmington, N.C., Stone Garden was founded in 1999 by Nina Brown.

OUTDOOR LIVING SUPPLY ("OLS"), a distribution platform for outdoor living products has acquired Stone Garden, an independent distributor of natural and cultured stone, landscape and hardscape supplies to the Cape Fear region of North Carolina. This acquisition further strengthens OLS's presence in the Carolinas and extends its footprint into the coastal market.

Based in Wilmington, N.C., Stone Garden was founded in 1999 by Nina Brown.

Brown will continue to lead the company's experienced team of employees, ensuring continuity and consistency for customers and supplier partners.

"We are excited to welcome Nina and her dedicated team to the OLS family of companies. This represents our fifth location in North Carolina and our first location in the fast-growing coastal market," said Brian Price, CEO of OLS. "Nina has built an outstanding business and shares our commitment to providing an exceptional customer experience. We look forward to growing with Stone Garden for years to come."

"For over 23 years, Stone Garden has been a trusted partner to our community of residential and commercial customers," Brown added. "Looking ahead, our partnership with OLS will allow us to continue doing what has made us successful while also creating new growth opportunities for the company, as well as for our employees and business partners. I am thrilled OLS shares our commitment to customer service and to the legacy of our brand."


BOSS[®]

Business Management Software

We do what other software companies don't.....

WE LISTEN



 Learn More

BOSSLM.COM

636-242-5574

Cumberland Landscape Group acquires 3 Atlanta landscaping companies

The acquisition includes Property Masters Landscape & Design, Property Masters Landscape Maintenance and Property Masters Commercial Landscaping.

CUMBERLAND LANDSCAPE GROUP, a regional, full-service commercial landscaping company, has expanded its presence and services in metro Atlanta with the acquisition of three companies: Property Masters Landscape & Design, Property Masters Landscape Maintenance and Property Masters Commercial Landscaping.

Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Marietta, Georgia, the Property Masters Landscaping brand has earned a reputation for maximizing property value for customers through expert landscape instal-

lation and maintenance. "The acquisition of Property Masters' landscaping, design and maintenance companies allows us to deepen our commercial capabilities and expand our best-in-class services to commercial and residential customers throughout greater Atlanta," said Billy Van Eaton, founder and CEO of Cumberland Landscape Group.

"We are excited to welcome Property Masters' professionals to our diverse and highly skilled team as we continue providing custom solutions to meet and exceed

each unique property need." Atlanta-based Cumberland Landscape Group is a recognized leader in providing commercial landscaping and facility management to small businesses and large property management firms.

Through this acquisition, the company is broadening its services to include Commercial Maintenance, Commercial Landscape Construction and Residential Landscape Design and Build. Approximately 110 employees from Property Masters will join the Cumberland family.

VISIT BILLY GOAT AT EQUIP EXPO AT THE BRIGGS & STRATTON® BOOTH #5016 INDOOR AND 6480D OUTDOOR.



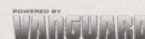
Introducing the NEW Leaf Dragon Leaf Loader

6900 CFM of high volume leaf removal burns through leaf cleanup fast

- **True curbside set up** offers 45 sq. ft. of clean-up coverage, 2x that of other units on the market
- **No-tool 2-pin door closure** accesses impeller and liner for quick inspection
- **12" wide, 10-gauge soft angle steel discharge chute** better spreads the load and offers reduced wear
- 37 gross HP* Vanguard® EFI for easy automotive-type cold weather starting and **fuel savings** up to 25%**
- 6900 CFM and 16" diameter intake for **high productivity**
- **Belt driven** with longer belt for increased life
- Road-ready DOT trailer is integral



*All power levels are stated gross horsepower at 3600 RPM per SAE J1940 as rated by Briggs & Stratton.
**Closed-loop EFI system fuel savings may vary based on debris loading conditions and other factors.



Take the chore out of the chore with Billy Goat!

Call 800-776-7690 or visit billygoat.com



ATTENTION DESIGN/BUILD CONTRACTORS!

Lawn & Landscape is looking for companies in the industry to submit the best work they've done. We'll feature some of the best submissions we receive in future issues of the magazine. All we need are a few high resolution photos (preferably before and after) along with some information on why you are submitting this project. We're open to taking a wide range of jobs - pools, patios, driveways, rain gardens, xeriscapes, etc.

HOW TO ENTER:

Send two to three high resolution photos (7X5 or bigger at 300 DPI) and 300-400 words describing your project with details like: Why you chose to submit it, challenges on the project and how you overcame them, how long the project took, etc.

~~~~~  
Please email submissions or any questions to Editor Brian Horn at [bhorn@gie.net](mailto:bhorn@gie.net).



## Kohler executive chairman dies

Herbert Vollrath Kohler, Jr. passed away on Sept. 3, 2022.

**KOHLER CO.** Executive Chairman Herbert Vollrath Kohler, Jr. passed away on Sept. 3, 2022, in Kohler, Wisconsin. He was 83. His ideas and hands-on leadership transformed the plumbing products manufacturer founded by his grandfather into a global and diverse family of businesses synonymous with unmatched quality, creativity and bold innovation.

He put his beloved home state of Wisconsin on the map as a global golf destination culminating with the Ryder Cup in 2021.

Herb's personal mission was to create delight. For him, there was no halfway. To warrant the "KOHLER" nameplate, a product had to be more than durable,

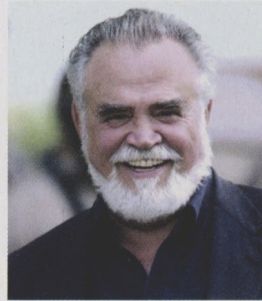
functional and attractive. It had to be joyful and memorable.

"His zest for life, adventure and impact inspires all of us. We traveled together, celebrated together, and worked together. He was all in, all the time, leaving an indelible mark on how we live our lives today and carry on his legacy," said his family.

He was admired by many as an accomplished, dynamic leader; independent-minded entrepreneur; courageous innova-

tor; and passionate creative. Herb, more than anyone, lived and breathed Kohler Co.'s mission of providing customers with gracious living each day.

He was a big personality who was steadfast in guiding Kohler associates in the relentless pursuit of the company mission, and he took immense joy in witnessing his customers' delight firsthand.



"If I sell you a bathtub, there has to be something about it that gives you pleasure not only at the time of the transaction. Years later, we want you to think this is one of the best buys of your life," he once said in an interview.

"The same applies with everything we provide – an engine, generator, toilet, table, hotel room, spa service, golf course, you name it. If you think about it five years later and, inwardly or outwardly, it makes

PHOTO COURTESY OF KOHLER CO.

# FABRICS FOR EVERY REASON...

## PRODUCTS FOR EVERY SEASON



**DeWitt Dew Right Tree Watering Bag**



**DeWitt PRO 5 Weed Barrier®**



**DeWitt Sunbelt® Ground Cover**

### One Company. One Call. Over 600 Products!

- Accessories
- Aquatic
- Edging

- Erosion Control & Geotextiles
- Fencing

- Ground Covers
- Landscape Fabrics
- Pet Products

- Plant Protection
- Retail Support
- Shade Cloth

- Tarps
- Tree Care
- Wildlife Control



800-888-9669 | [dewittcompany.com](http://dewittcompany.com)





HINO 

TRUCKS

A Toyota Group Company

# THE TRUCK IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

POWERON.



When you start up your new Hino truck, our journey with you is just beginning. That's because every 2023MY Hino comes standard with an industry exclusive Allison 5-Year Transmission Warranty, 24/7 HinoWatch, and Hino Edge Connected Vehicle Solution. Why? Because taking care of you and your truck is what we call the **ULTIMATE OWNERSHIP EXPERIENCE**.



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



you smile and we can do this consistently, then we're living up to our mission."

Herb was born in Chicago on Feb. 20, 1939. His father Herbert V. Kohler, Sr., son of Kohler Co. founder John Michael Kohler, served as Board Chairman and CEO of Kohler Co. from 1940 until his death in 1968. His mother Ruth De Young Kohler was a historian and former women's editor of the Chicago Tribune.

Herb was educated at the Kohler schools in Kohler, Wis., and at Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Conn. As a young man, he spent many summers as a laborer on the Kohler farms and in most of the manufacturing divisions of Kohler Co.

After serving with the U.S. Army Reserve, studying at the University of Zurich in Switzerland, and launching

a brief acting career at Knox College in Illinois, he completed his education at Yale University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in industrial administration in 1965.

He rejoined Kohler Co. full-time as an R&D technician shortly after graduation. He became a director of the company in 1967, and when his father died a year later, he became Vice President of Operations.

He was named Executive Vice President in 1971, was elected Chairman of the Board and CEO in 1972, and President of the Company in 1974 at the age of 35.

In 2015, he became the company's Executive Chairman, with son David taking the helm as president and CEO. He served Kohler Co. for 61 years.

David was named chair of the board in late September.

## Landscape Workshop acquires Burning Bush Landscape in Georgia

This is the fifth acquisition in 2022 for Landscape Workshop.

**LANDSCAPE WORKSHOP** has acquired Burning Bush Landscape & Turf Care based in Atlanta, Georgia.

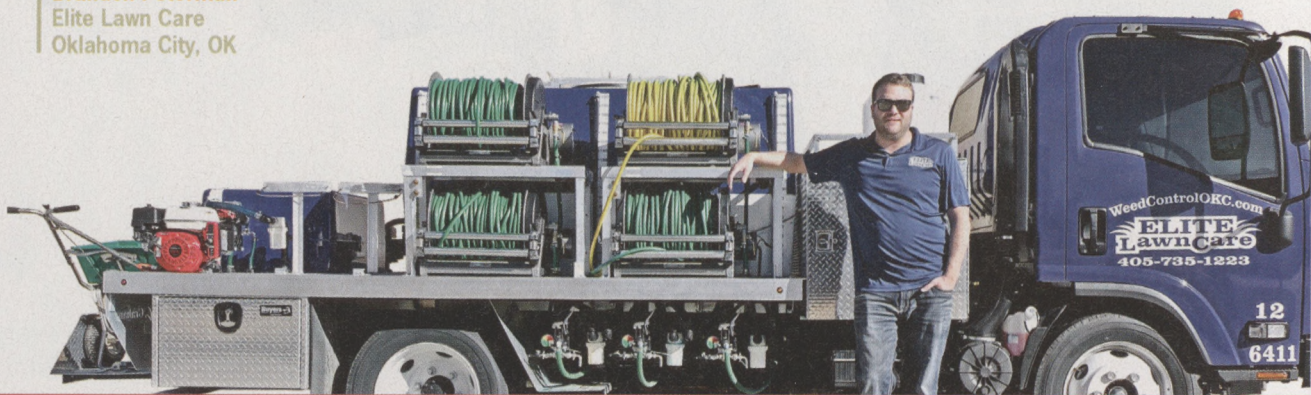
This is the fifth acquisition in 2022 for Landscape Workshop, which ranked No. 38 on Lawn & Landscape's Top 100 list last year.

"We are excited to have Burning Bush join our existing Atlanta operations. This acquisition increases our growth trajectory in the Atlanta market and allows us to combine our experience and expertise to provide top of the line customer service for our clients in the area," said CEO J.T. Price. "David and his wife Debbie have built a great reputation of delivering a high-quality product with excellent customer service. With David's

*Continued on page 26*

## "I have five Graham rigs and one great relationship."

**Brandon Peterman**  
Elite Lawn Care  
Oklahoma City, OK



The right rigs at a great price with no hassles or worries. That's why I'm sold on Graham.

 **Graham® Spray Equipment**  
PUTTING YOU FIRST IS WHY WE'RE SECOND TO NONE

- Well-built rigs that are easy for my techs to operate
- Confidence that everything's done right
- A smooth, simple process from start to finish



WE'RE INVESTED IN HELPING YOU

**GROW.**

Greenhouse Management's cutting-edge digital offerings give you nonstop information every day of the year. From our mobile-optimized website, to our e-newsletter delivered 3 times each week right to your inbox, to our year-long virtual conference series, Greenhouse Management offers you the continuous education you need to run your business — whichever way you prefer to get your information.

**Greenhouse**  
MANAGEMENT

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







# The M18 FUEL™ Dual Battery Blower Delivers the Power without the Emissions

**THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES**, there is a growing trend for requirements around the use of low noise and emissions-free equipment as an effort to curb air pollution. In 2021, California became the first state to pass legislation that will ban the sale of newly manufactured gas-powered equipment, starting in 2024. This new law is starting in California but is expected to gain momentum with other states in the near future.

Looking to stay ahead of this trend while also taking advantage of the increased ease of use, there are more professionals choosing battery-powered equipment as their primary equipment solution. By purchasing tools from a single brand with an interchangeable battery system, businesses can maximize their investment while driving long-term savings on gas and tool maintenance. Milwaukee Tool currently offers a variety of outdoor power equipment on both their M12™ and M18™ battery systems that meets the performance and durability needs of the landscape maintenance professional and allows businesses to get a head start on approaching requirements.

Municipalities, Homeowners Associations, hospitals, resorts, and other business around the country are starting to enact noise regulations on blowers, with more continuing to emerge. The M18 FUEL™ Dual Battery Blower has a noise rating of only 64 dB(A) and eliminates emissions so landscape maintenance professionals can stay compliant with all current regulations without sacrificing power. To meet performance expectations in certain high-demand applications while maintaining system compatibility, this blower requires the simultaneous use of two M18™ REDLITHIUM™ batteries. Delivering a maximum air volume of 600 CFM and reaching air speeds of 145 MPH, users can tackle demanding applications, such

as clearing wet leaves, while maintaining maximum control.

This battery-powered blower delivers the highest constant power on the market, reaching full throttle in under one second while providing the best clearing control. Harnessing the power of M18 FUEL™ technology, the blower delivers an output of 17.7 Newtons and maintains that power level throughout the full discharge of the battery without a drop in power. The advanced electronics package also allows the blower to reach full throttle in under one second, increasing the operator's control and productivity.

There are major advantages for landscaping companies that start investing in battery-powered equipment, but not all manufacturers can give professionals the performance and capability they need. As a world leader in battery-powered solutions, MILWAUKEE® is committed to developing high performance, sustainable solutions for landscape maintenance professionals. They will continue to leverage their extensive background in battery-powered job site solutions to provide game-changing outdoor power equipment solutions that increase safety and productivity.



**NEW**

**Milwaukee**

# M18 FUEL™

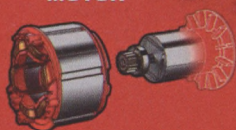
**DRIVEN TO OUTPERFORM.™**



**2 REDLINK PLUS™  
INTELLIGENCE**



**1 POWERSTATE™  
BRUSHLESS  
MOTOR**



**Dual Battery Blower**

**3 REDLITHIUM™  
HIGH OUTPUT™  
XCB.0 BATTERY PACKS**



**HIGHEST  
CONSTANT  
POWER**

**FULL THROTTLE  
UNDER  
1 SECOND**

**BEST  
CLEARING  
CONTROL**

M18 FUEL™ is engineered for the most demanding tradesmen in the world. Delivering unrivaled performance in a compact structure, all M18 FUEL™ products feature three MILWAUKEE® exclusive innovations — the POWERSTATE™ Brushless Motor, REDLITHIUM™ Battery Packs and REDLINK PLUS™ Intelligence Hardware and Software — that deliver unmatched power, run-time and durability. Simply put, the M18 FUEL™ Dual Battery Blower provides the most constant clearing power while offering the best control.

**LEARN MORE**



or visit <https://qr.mke.tl/2fk23>

**M18**

**PERFORMANCE DRIVEN  
TRADE FOCUSED  
SYSTEM WIDE**





Continued from page 22

help, we look forward to continuing to build on what Burning Bush has worked so hard to accomplish. Our shared values of providing exceptional service with a customer-first approach, makes this a valuable partnership for both companies and most importantly, our clients.”

As part of the transaction, Burning Bush owner David Stream is joining the Landscape Workshop Atlanta leadership team. Landscape Workshop’s Tim Christie will continue as general manager of Atlanta operations.

“It has been a pleasure working with the Landscape Workshop team on this acquisition,” Stream said. “We believe that with our combined resources and experience, we will be able to continue to deliver the exceptional quality and customer service that our customers are accustomed to. This deal will allow me to spend more time taking care of my customers and employees as we continue to grow in the Atlanta market.”

## Fairway Lawns acquires Plant-It-Earth Lawn and Pest Control

The acquisition provides Fairway Lawns a stronger foothold in Florida.

**FAIRWAY LAWNS** has acquired Plant-It-Earth Lawn and Pest Control. The acquisition provides Fairway Lawns a stronger foothold in Florida. The Clendenin Consulting Group helped facilitate the deal.

“We are excited to join forces with the Plant-It-Earth Lawn and Pest Control team and partner with their best-in-class operations,” said Kyle DeMilt, CEO for Fairway Lawns. “The addition of Plant-It-Earth, coupled with our recent acquisition of Luv-A-Lawn, represents our growing presence in the attractive Florida market. Both of these businesses enhance Fairway Lawns’ mission of providing industry-leading quality and service to our customers. We’d like to thank The Clendenin Consulting Group for their hard work getting this transaction complete and allowing us to partner with Plant-It-Earth.”

“It was important to me to sell to a buyer who I was confident in to continue the quality of service that we have maintained since the beginning of Plant It Earth Lawn and Pest Control,” said Brett Melanson, the owner of Plant-It-Earth. “We are also pleased with the plans that Fairway has to expand the business and to create more opportunities for the people of Plant-It-Earth.” **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



2022

# STATE OF THE INDUSTRY *Report*

Page S1



Contractors are cautiously optimistic despite inflation, supply chain issues and high fuel prices.

A SUPPLEMENT TO

Lawn & Landscape

SPONSORED BY

Kubota®



# Where do you want to be in 2023?

## IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE WE'RE NEARING THE END OF ANOTHER YEAR

and already looking toward 2023. But as we do, it seems there is a renewed sense of cautious optimism for our industry, even despite fear of a recession. Perhaps the year ahead is being greeted in this way because of all we've been through and all we've learned from it, or more likely from a desire to get back to life before the word "pandemic" even entered our vocabulary.

What this year has taught us, above all, is that we must keep moving forward, activating long-term plans, and looking past today to ensure a productive future.

For Kubota, we've been busy doing just that by significantly expanding our infrastructure. This year alone, we've announced commitments of more than \$320 million to our U.S. facilities. In fact, we recently celebrated the opening of our new North America R&D facility in Gainesville, Georgia, in addition to announcing plans to expand manufacturing capacity in the state. What this means for the landscape industry is more Kubota turf products are being produced here in the U.S. than ever before. Kubota commercial and residential turf equipment is proudly "Georgia Made," with more to come in the year ahead.

We know you can't do your job without quick access to the right equipment at the right time. And we've heard from you that even despite the challenges, like high energy prices, lack of quality labor, and supply chain issues, you are still growing. The better we can respond to your needs, the better chance you have of keeping your customers happy and your business growing.

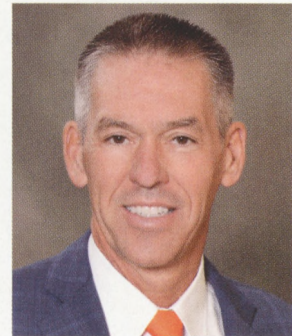
That is why we are also diversifying our product lines — introducing more stand-on mowers and walk behinds, more powerful zero-turn mowers; and more versatile utility vehicles and landscape construction equipment to carry your crew and your tools. Our product development and one-stop shop equipment offerings are in direct response to your specific needs, working with our dealer and landscape partners, and then backed by the best dealer service and support.

And that's just what we're doing today. For tomorrow, we are working to harness new technologies and innovation in our R&D facilities that will someday soon provide even more solutions to not only make your jobs better and more productive, but also to lessen our collective impact on the environment and create a better future for us all.

With that, let's use this time to review the year's learnings, renew our sense of optimism, and recommit to where we want to be in 2023. Together, let's put a plan in motion for a prosperous year ahead.

Best Wishes,

*Todd Stucke*



## Todd Stucke

Sr. VP Marketing, Product Support  
& Strategic Projects, Kubota  
Tractor Corporation  
Vice President, Sales & Marketing,  
Kubota North America





# Strong results

despite growing headaches



On a positive note,

**85%**

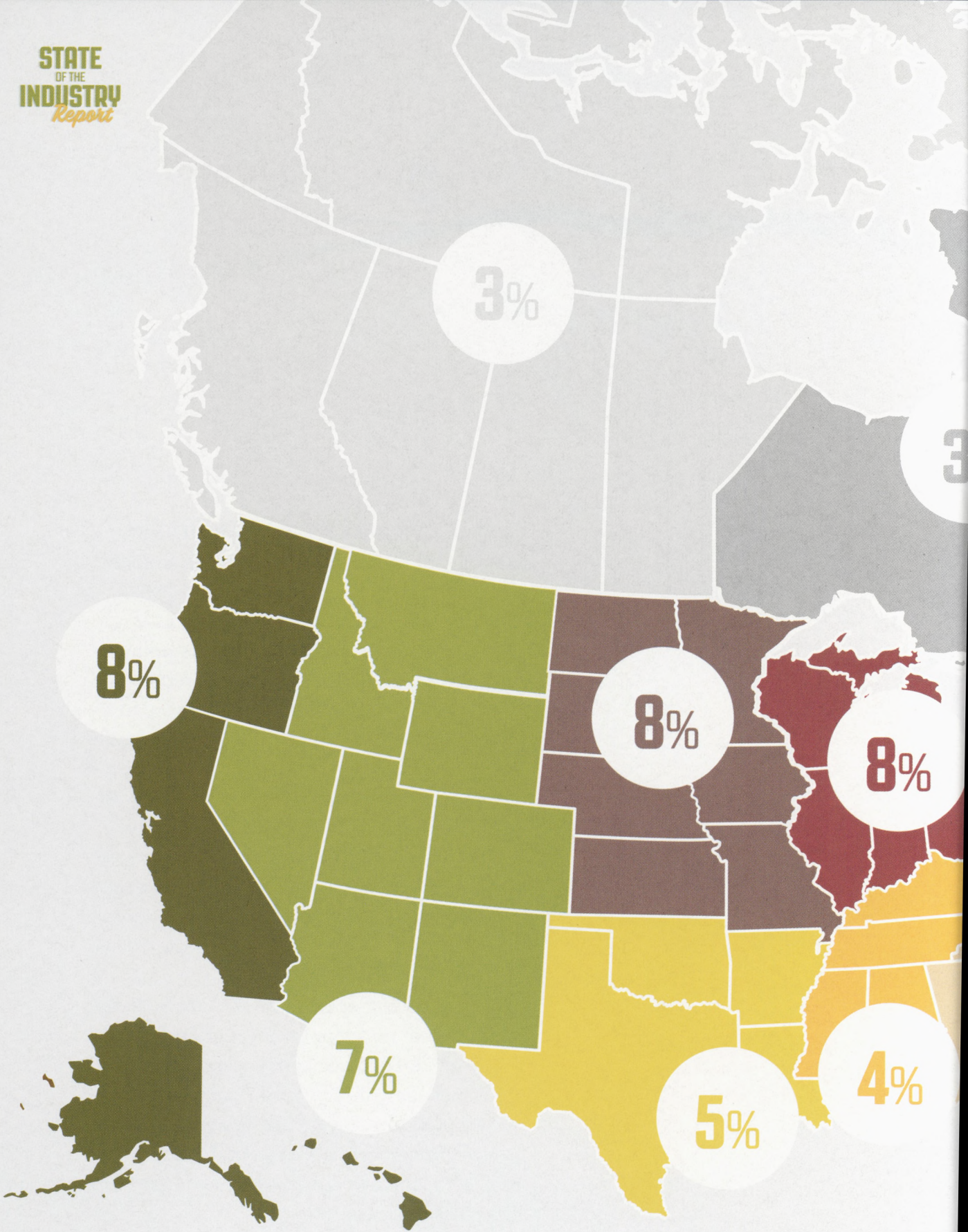
said they turned a profit compared to 79% in last year's report.

**LANDSCAPERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY AGAIN** reported growing revenue, profitability and expectations for more growth into 2023. One area that our survey showed a gigantic leap was the median revenue of landscaping companies. In last year's report, you reported median revenue of \$273,000. That jumped to a whopping \$604,000 for 2021 revenue. This could have been caused by a number of factors, one being that a decent number of companies with less than \$500,000 in revenue didn't take the survey compared to last year. Was that because they were too busy to take the survey, or just not in business anymore either because they closed or were acquired? We'll have to see how it plays out over the next few years.

As far as confidence, you aren't as sure as you were last year that your business or the industry will grow. Ten percent weren't confident at all in business growth, compared to 8% last year, while 8% are not at all confident in industry growth compared to 3% last year. On a positive note, 85% said they turned a profit compared to 79% in last year's report.

— *Brian Horn*

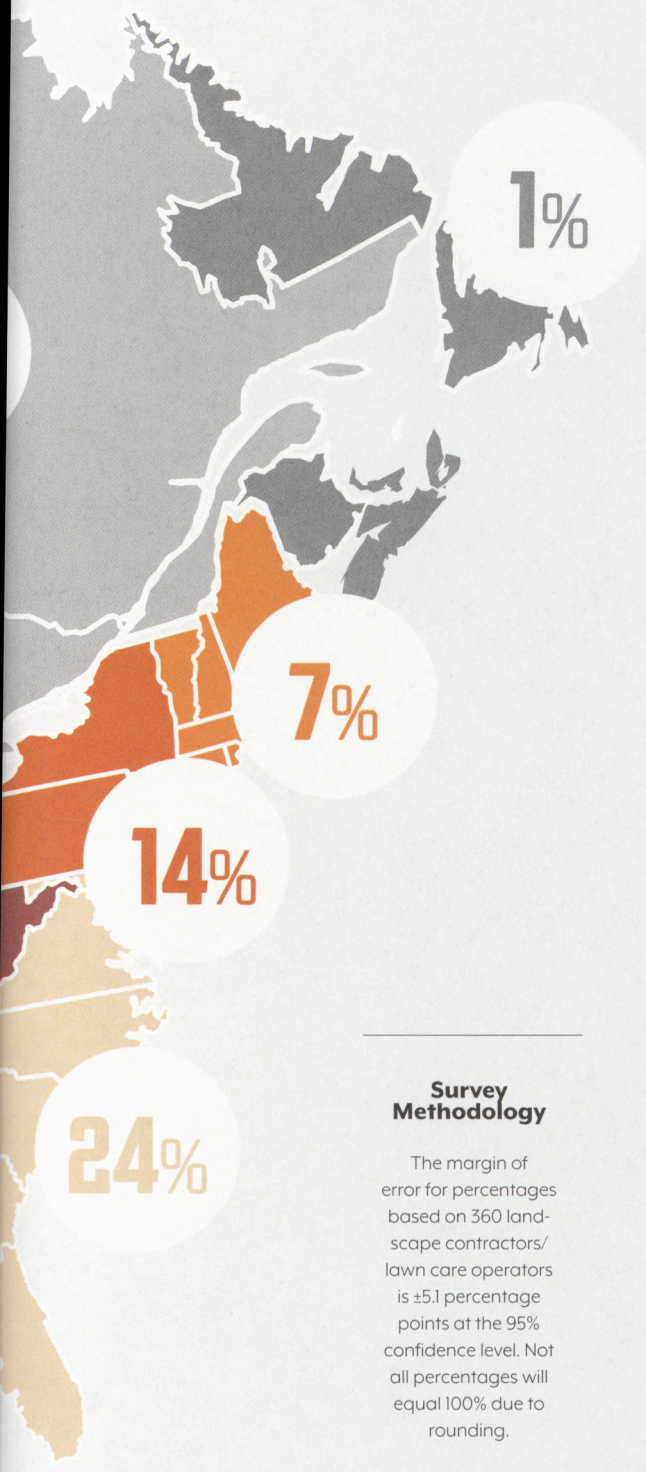








# In which state/ province is your company location?



## *Northeast*

- **New England**  
(CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT) ..... 7%
- **Middle Atlantic**  
(NJ, NY, PA) ..... 14%

## *Midwest*

- **East North Central**  
(IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)..... 19%
- **West North Central**  
(IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)..... 8%

## *South*

- **South Atlantic**  
(DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, PR/VI, SC, VA, WV)..... 24%
- **East South Central**  
(AL, KY, MS, TN) ..... 4%
- **West South Central**  
(AR, LA, OK, TX) ..... 5%

## *West*

- **Mountain**  
(AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY)..... 7%
- **Pacific**  
(AK, AS, CA, HI, OR, WA)..... 8%

## *Canada*

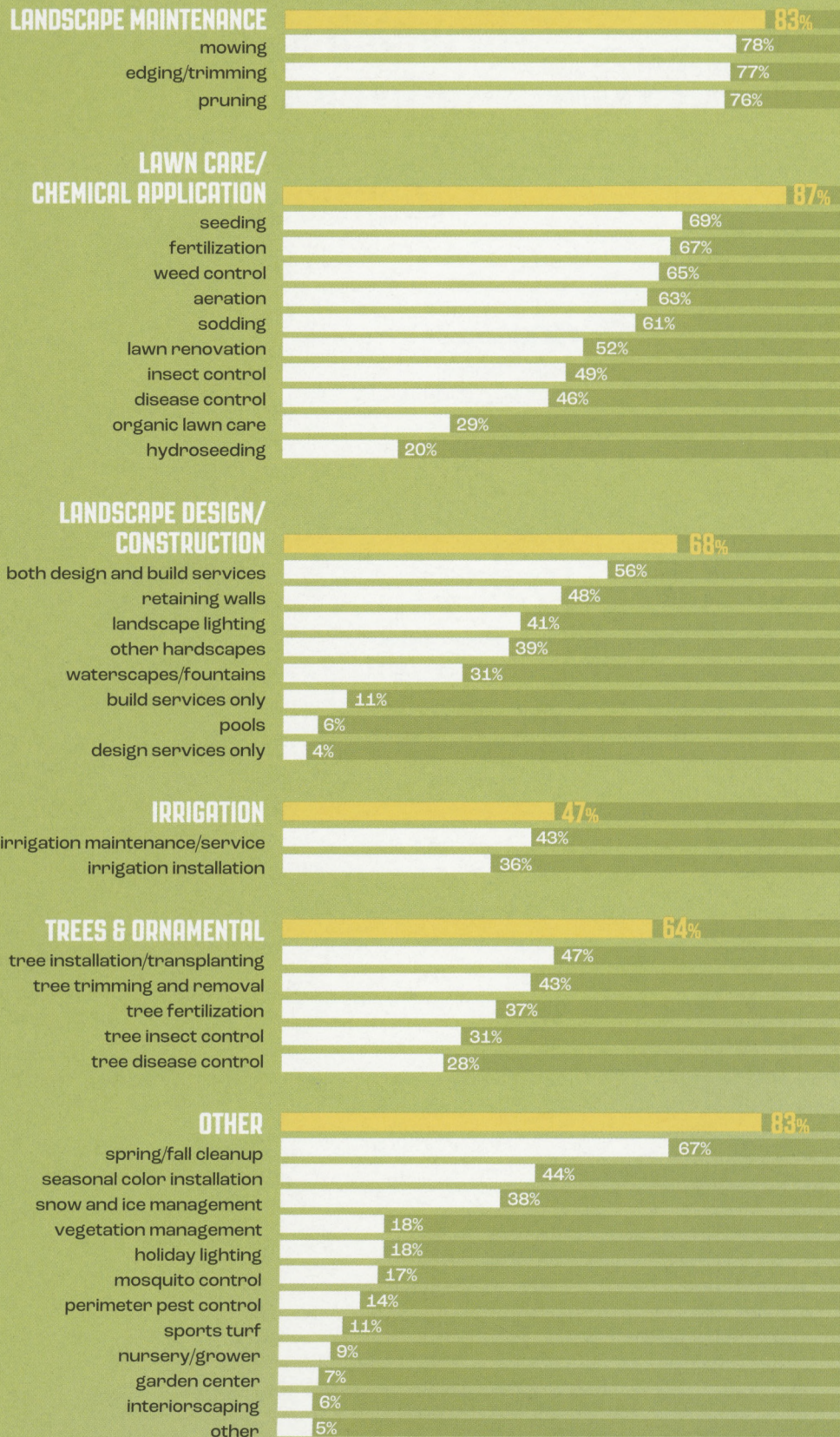
- **Atlantic Canada**  
(NB, NL, NS, PE) ..... 1%
- **Central Canada**  
(ON, QC)..... 3%
- **Western Canada** (AB, BC, MB, SK) ..... 2%

### **Survey Methodology**

The margin of error for percentages based on 360 landscape contractors/ lawn care operators is  $\pm 5.1$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Not all percentages will equal 100% due to rounding.



Which of the following services does your location currently offer?



INDICATED AT LEAST ONE: 100% • NO ANSWER: 0%



How many full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees does your location currently have?



**19**

full-time



**2**

part-time



**6**

seasonal



**27**

total employees



## MEAN

The average revenue of all respondents.

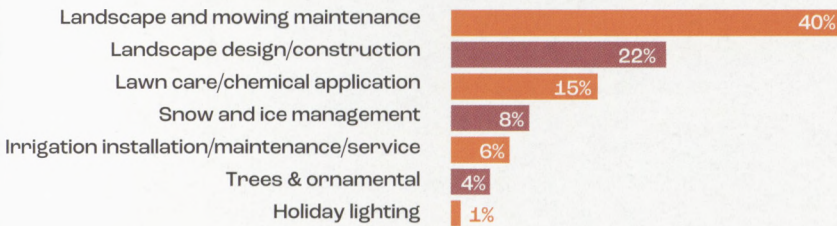
# \$1.74 MILLION

## MEDIAN

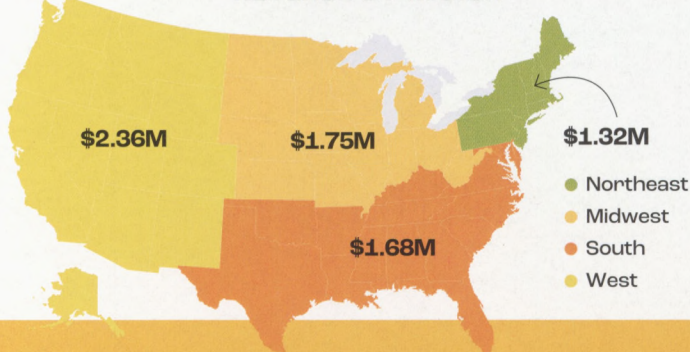
The revenue number in the middle where extreme outliers are removed like respondents with extremely high or low revenue.

# \$604,000

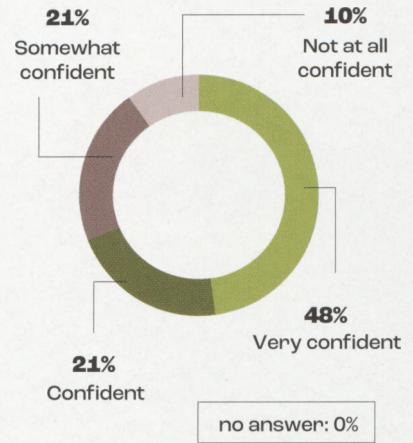
### Approximately what percentage of your location's 2021 gross revenue came from each of the following services?



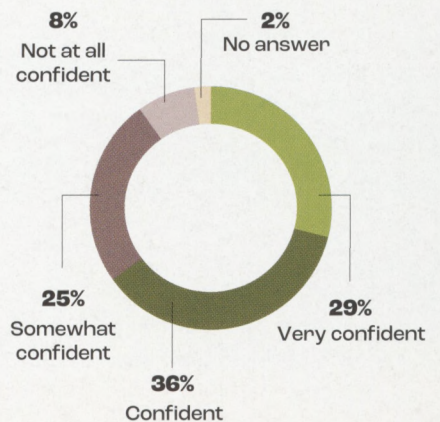
### REVENUE BY REGION



### How confident are you that your location's business will grow in revenue in 2022?



### How confident are you that the national landscape industry will grow in overall revenue in 2022?



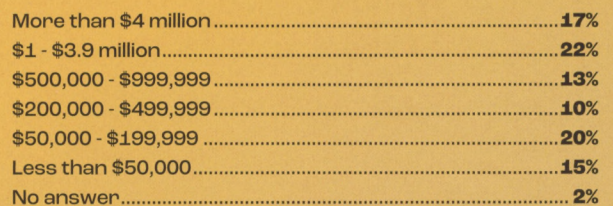
### Did your location turn a profit in 2021?

**yes**  
85%

**no**  
14%

no answer: 1%

### Approximately what was your location's gross revenue in 2021 (in USD)?





# Today's forecast: perfect conditions for growing your business.



Thick, wet grass. Uneven terrain. No problem with our full commercial lineup and comprehensive fleet program with special discounts and free loaner units to keep you productive. The Z700, SZ Stand-On and W Series. Built to mow it all. And build your business.

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

© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2022. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer. For the complete disclaimer, go to [KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers](http://KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers) and see the posted disclaimer.





Commercial Mowers

Fleet discounts

Free loaners



**Kubota**

Together we do more.®



RU

TO BEAR

*by Kim Lux & Jimmy Miller*

Illustration by Michael Crampton



# R D E N S



Companies are contending with long-lasting issues like labor, plus new concerns and an uncertain economic future.



# BRIAN PAIGE

*president, Paige Landscape Company*

Walpole, Mass.

**T**his year has been a rebuilding year of sorts for Paige Landscape Company. As a commercial landscape and maintenance business, the company did not see the COVID-era boom in design/build work like others did. But now it looks like the company is back to its 2019 numbers and it's still growing.

"2021 was a good bounce back year from 2020," Paige says. "Like a lot of people, we took a big hit in 2020. We don't do any residential work where people were working on their homes and doing outdoor projects. Most of our commercial clients kept the basics going on their maintenance contracts but weren't spending a ton of money on extras.

"We were back to where we were in 2019 and now are expanding the business a little bit further," he adds. "In 2022, we're projected to grow slightly. Our top line number is growing; however, our margins are a lot tighter with all of the inflation costs."

Paige says one of the biggest challenges he's facing right now is more competition in an already tight market.

"There are a lot more companies in the area that used to be strictly residential and are now getting into the commercial market, which obviously gives more competition to us," he says.

Though Paige adds he isn't too worried about the competition as he feels the talent of his employees sets the company apart from the crowd. This year, the company has about 27 landscape employees and 56 snow employees on staff.

"To me, it comes down to our employees," he says. "We all have the same trucks, trailers and mowers for the most part. So really it comes down to who are the people we're bringing out to these properties to do the work?"

Recently, Paige says he's been prioritizing training for all levels. This emphasis on learning includes a full training program for new hires plus weekly training events where various topics are reviewed.

And not only is Paige focused on training employees but retaining them, too. That's why the company started an incentive program utilizing poker chips that employees can earn and cash in for a little bonus money.

"These chips have a denomination to them, mostly \$5, and if a crew comes in on or below budget and there's no issues then everyone on the crew earns a poker chip for the project," he explains.

Higher-value chips worth \$100-200 are also given out for employee referrals.

"If people get compliments from a customer, they can earn one that way, too," Paige says. "Through training and plant identification practices, they can get poker chips as well.

"That program has made it fun for the guys and helps with retention," he adds.



In the past 3 years,  
have you been  
approached about  
selling your business?

*yes*  
43%

*no*  
56%

no answer: 1%

# JOHN LANE

*owner, Castle Rock Sprinkler Service*

Denver, Colo.

**JOHN LANE FEELS LIKE** masking and social distancing have all gone by the wayside, but the fallout from COVID-19 is still lingering on the workforce.

"If I could have three or four more people who want to be technicians, I could've kept them all busy," says Lane, who runs Castle Rock Sprinkler Service in Colorado. "But I just can't find them."

Lane believes COVID led to a workforce that's not interested in working outside all day long. At one point, his company, which does mostly irrigation but some lawn maintenance, offered a \$30-per-hour pay and a signing bonus but still couldn't get his phone to ring. Others who do call will schedule an interview but refuse to show up.

"It's unbelievable how people look at work," Lane says, adding that even still, his company has nine employees and earns \$1 million. "That's going to be the lasting legacy of COVID is how it changed our society."

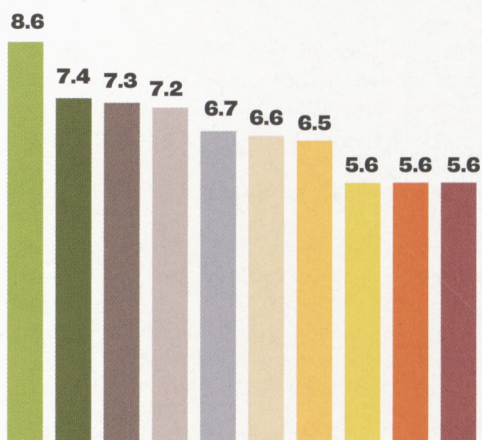
Worst of all, he's had people say they're experienced who don't have any experience at all. Lane says he's combated this by offering \$250 in cash to have them ride with him to a jobsite, which helps him feel good about an employee (or weed out those who won't work out) quickly.

He took one employee out in the field with him who claimed to have lots of experience. Lane says he and the employee were manually opening valves and



## How concerned are you about the impact of each of these issues on your business in the next three years?

10: VERY CONCERNED • 1: NOT AT ALL CONCERNED



- High fuel prices
- Quality labor shortage
- Economic recession
- Supply chain issues
- High health insurance costs
- High workers' compensation costs
- High fertilizer prices
- Personal life stress
- Customers cutting back/cancelling services
- Lower margins on work

going through zones when all of the sudden, Lane heard swearing. The employee prospect had stepped inside a valve box and crushed something inside. At the end of the day – and after repairs to the system – the employee told Lane he didn't want to accept the \$250.

"I cost you more than I was worth," Lane recalls the employee saying. But he told the man that he saw things he did like, too. He still paid him, even though he never heard from that prospect again.

"I'm not a guy to pile on," Lane says. "Isn't there enough piling on already? We're building a business

with respectful values."

At this point, he also acknowledges that he can't just find someone with a bunch of irrigation experience right out of the gate. He's prepared to do some training. He's just looking for people with mechanical ability and starting them out as helpers to travel with experienced technicians. Over the season, they could start earning more responsibility.

"At this point, the thought of finding an experienced technician – they're just not out there," Lane says. "Nobody in Denver woke up this morning and said they want to be a sprinkler guy."

# RYAN JANTZ

*general manager, Sorona Sprinkler*

Surprise, Ariz.

## WHILE 2021 WAS A BANNER YEAR FOR SORONA SPRINKLER

and the company made more money than ever before, Jantz says he would categorize 2022 as sporadic. The company reached \$1.4 million in 2021 and only expects to do about \$1.5 million this year.

"We've raised our rates 40% since COVID hit," Jantz says. "We'll put out four bids in a day and two people say they absolutely won't do the job for the price we quoted but the other two people won't even blink and say 'put us on the schedule.' It's been kind of tough to find where the market is at. That's been a challenge."

Last year Jantz says people wouldn't bat an eyelash at pricing but since earlier this year, they've had to be more strategic.

"The sky was the limit on pricing," he says. "The work kept coming in and looks like you could price a job at \$5,500 or \$7,500 and it didn't really matter. The close rate was right up there. And that rolled all the way into February 2022. Somewhere after that we peaked out and gently started falling. We haven't fallen a lot, but it has definitely plateaued."

Nowadays, Jantz says it's the little added things he can do for a prospective client that makes them say yes.

"People are still willing to spend money, but you've got to bring more to the plate," he adds. "You have to demonstrate more value or throw in more things for free just to get them over that close threshold."

Jantz says to try and grow this year he's made quite a few changes, one of the biggest ones being moving his technicians to commission-based pay.

"It's been going really well. I put them on a 30% commission," he notes, adding Sorona has a team of 12 employees. "Now when we get into our slow times, the technicians are thinking on their feet and coming to me with ideas like 'Why don't we put a coupon on our website?' It's really pushed them to where they have a desire to upsell. Before with upselling or things they could add-on to a project, there was very little motivation."

Jantz has also begun investing more in online advertising.

"In 2022 we've had to rely heavily on Google Ads," he says. "In 2021 we needed very little online marketing, but now to keep the men busy and calls coming in on a steady basis, I have to be pushing Google and Microsoft ads every week."

Jantz even hired a third-party company to run his ad campaigns, so he can ensure he gets the most bang for his buck.

"Before I'd set a budget of \$150 or however much a day and you'd get all this data at the end. I'm not a computer programmer to decipher who clicked on what and where the leads came from. But now it might cost me more per month, but they've been able to distill down to me where the traffic is coming from," Jantz says. "They've been able to help me more understand what the data means and guide the campaign in the right direction. That's been huge for us."



# LESTER ANDERS

*president & owner, Nature's Link, Inc.*

Bloomington, Ind.

**2022 HAS BEEN SMOOTH SAILING FOR NATURE'S LINK**, and Anders says he feels like bright days are still ahead. At least for now.

"2021 was very good. We had about 35% growth," he says. "This year I expect to beat that by another 20% or so. The last two years have been very good, but that being said, we are always cautiously optimistic."

Anders says the best part of the last few years has been an increase in high-value work for the company.

"The sheer size of our commercial projects going on has been a highlight for us," he says. "An average project five to 10 years ago was a lot smaller and around \$30,000-\$50,000. And now over the past couple of years, the projects are closer to \$200,000-\$300,000... and we had one recently for \$1.2 million."

While he hopes this trend will continue, Anders says he is concerned about rising interest rates.



"I'm afraid that once the rates go up that (it's) going to start going in the other direction," he says.

Anders recalls during the last housing crunch, professors in the college town he services were moving out of the city and there was a halt on major projects.

"When banks stopped loaning money, there was almost no new construction at all," he says. "All commercial work was impacted. We had to change gears pretty quickly and do a whole lot of little projects. That was pretty rough, and that's where my head goes as far as 2023."

In the meantime, Anders says his biggest challenge, like most everyone's, is labor.

"Most of my guys have been here 15, 18 or 20 years," he says. "We treat them very well. We offer retirement, insurance, we keep drinks and snacks there for them. So, we're lucky our core group has been here a long, long time. But trying to find those younger ones to come in and work is kind of a difficult thing."

And with labor rates up substantially, Anders says it only makes it more difficult.

To compensate for having less staff, Anders says he's been trying to have crews work smarter and not harder.

"We try to run as much equipment as we possibly can," he says. "Machinery has been replacing a third guy on crews. Since my guys are also getting older and older, I'm trying to make things less physical for them."

"If the labor isn't going to come here, you've got to be able to work more efficiently," Anders adds.

# BENJAMIN BODNAR

*owner, Integrity Landscape Management*

Stockbridge, Ga.

**BENJAMIN BODNAR BELIEVES THE BARRIER OF ENTRY** in the landscaping industry is incredibly high due to restrictive government policies on home-based businesses.

Several years ago, Bodnar – who is now doing all of his work as a one-man shop – had to terminate all of his employees. His municipality cited him for operating a business out of his home, urging that only employees who lived in the home could stay onboard at the company.

Now, he's talked with several local businessowners at community events and his church. It's become a situation where Bodnar – and he believes others – are stuck.

"If I'm going to take on more work, I need more employees to do that to get a commercial space," he says. "It's like Catch-22.

You can't get a commercial space unless you have the revenue to support it."

Bodnar says in his research, he's found that almost all businesses start as home-based companies. He doesn't believe anyone can grow except companies that already have existing commercial spaces, making starting a business next to impossible.

He adds that he's argued with policymakers on the subject and has attended city council meetings, but he says they've told him that they don't want parked cars lining residential streets. Bodnar says he's argued



that his employees would go straight to the jobsite, but they've created a no-excuses mentality.

"There's only so much one person can do," Bodnar says, adding that he's saving up to possibly leave the industry as a result of this. He had to cut 75% of his clients at the time. "Even if you have the tightest route with maintenance, supposedly a year with perfect weather, there's only so much you can do with one person."

Bodnar still operates with roughly 45 maintenance clients. He wakes up at 6 a.m. and basically works 12 hours. Then it's lather, rinse, repeat the next day. And sure, there are other issues plaguing the industry, he says. He points out problems like pesticide shortages, specifically glyphosate, where he loses money on rising costs despite having locked-in client contracts.

But this issue with home-based businesses is huge, Bodnar believes. He says he had COVID last January, the silver lining of which is that they weren't in season. But had he been sick in April as a one-man operation?

"It would've knocked me out," Bodnar says, "and I would've been out of business."



# KATHY WHEATON

owner, *Kathy's Corner*

Vashon Island, Wa.

**LABOR HAS BECOME A TOTAL “MONSTER”** for Kathy Wheaton, who believes the cost of living has priced possible employees off her island.

Usually, Wheaton says she's able to comfortably hire employees across the team's three departments. Over half the work they do is landscape maintenance and design/build, but they're also a retail garden center and grower. A lack of affordable housing has made it so they've struggled to just get three teams (her 14 employees and landscaping supervisor) out in the field.

“(Vashon Island) has become a rich man's paradise, and that's great, but at the same time, lots and lots of jobs and work are stymied because there's nowhere for people to live,” Wheaton says.

Wheaton says people sold off some of their houses or turned their second houses into a summer home or Airbnb, which eliminated rental possibilities for low-income earners. Wheaton says rentals went from an average cost of \$800 per month to somewhere between \$2,500 and \$3,000.

And for those not living on the island, commuting became a logistical nightmare. Those employees have to arrive by ferry boat – Wheaton says she's always paid ferry fees for five of her employees. But those boats started eliminating departure times during COVID as they dealt with their own staffing shortages.

“I lost one guy who had been here for 15 years,” she says. “Those kind of things are painful because not only are you losing labor, but you're losing skilled labor.”



Wheaton says she built a house with her husband and had seven children, plus hosted their mother in part of it. It's set up for people to live in there, and four employees have for years, but “that's just a drop in the bucket,” Wheaton says. Because not only is labor scarce, but business is booming. Her employees are all working seven days a week.

Wheaton herself says she's only missed two days in the last three years, and both of those were for doctors appointments. Her field workers have one day off every fifth week and often work 12-hour shifts.

“You know how crazy our industry has been,” Wheaton says. “We're doing a 300% increase in business with 50% of the staff we used to have.

“Everybody has stepped up and has given me 150%,” Wheaton adds. “Everybody knows that they've just got to do more with less time, and they have.”

Wheaton says her company's been in business since 1971 and has seen hundreds of changes over the years, but this particular labor crisis is one she can't figure out how to solve.

“We're looking forward to December and January, so that we can work five days instead of seven for maybe a month. We don't know what to do. It's really a serious, serious problem,” Wheaton says. “I think, as an industry, our most serious problem is in fact labor. If we can't find a way to solve the (labor) situation, I think we're all in trouble.”

Do you anticipate your location's business will be sold in the next 10 years?



## What was your location's fastest growing service for revenue in 2021?



29%

Landscape maintenance (mowing, edging/trimming, pruning)



23%

Design/build services



14%

Lawn care



6%

Snow and ice management



5%

Irrigation installation/maintenance/service



4%

Tree and ornamental installation/care



1%

Waterscapes/fountains



1%

Landscape lighting

other: 6% | none: 6% | no answer: 4%

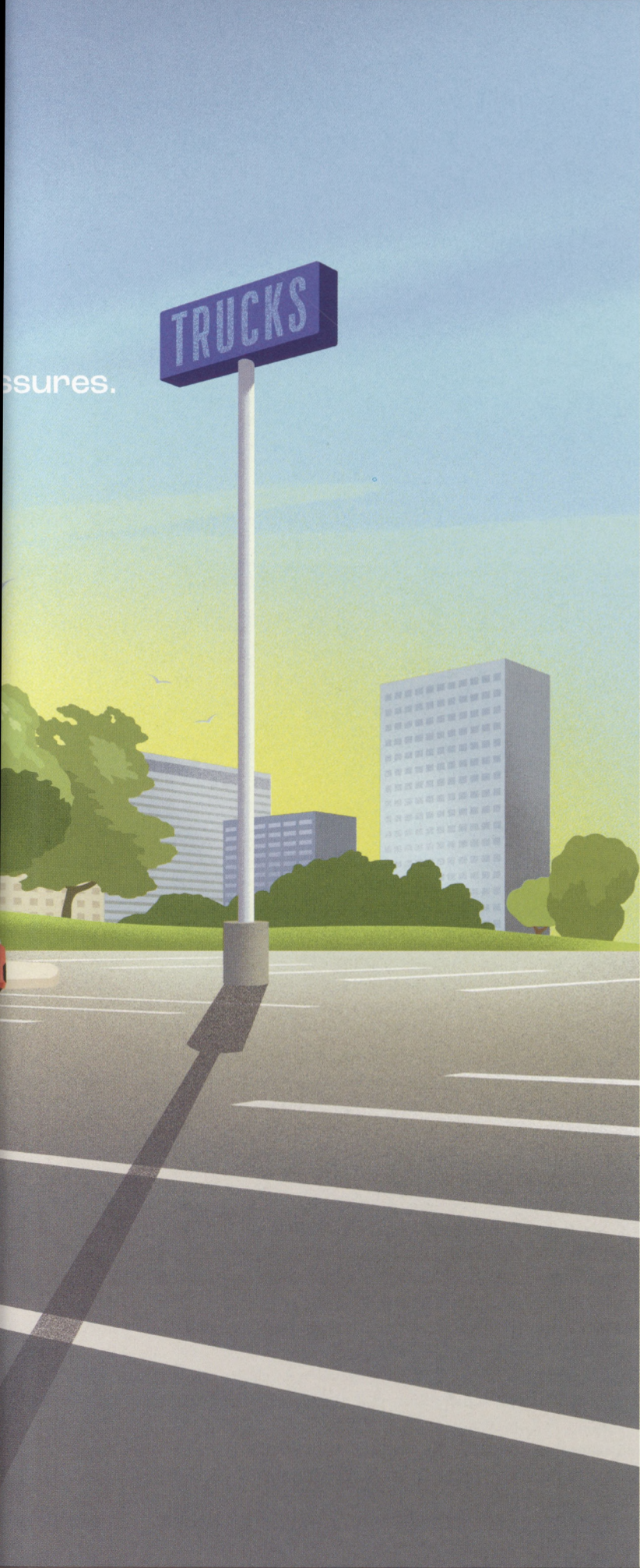


# HANDLING the HEADACHES

Nationwide, contractors are sweating over supply chain and inflation p







ssures.

Story by  
Kim Lux and Jimmy Miller

Illustration by  
Michael Crampton

**BUSINESS MIGHT BE BOOMING FOR MOST COMPANIES**, but that doesn't mean green industry companies aren't contending several challenges that are impacting their bottom lines. One common issue is supply chain disruptions.

Since early on in the COVID-19 pandemic, it seems like materials and equipment for all segments of the industry have been in short supply.

"There's been a labor and material shortage, which for us has been a big important thing — especially materials," says Ken Coggins, manager of Garden Design Landscaping in Farmers Branch, Texas. "It's carried on into 2022 but I think we're going to see some let up in 2023."

Hank Parker, president of Bay Landscaping of Mobile, Alabama, says these supply chain issues coupled with fuel costs and other increases has made it harder to stay under budget.



## DEALING WITH DELAYS

“Most of the supply chain stuff we’ve dealt with is trying to get trucks and mowers,” Parker says. “We’re starting to feel a pinch in our fleet.”

Fortunately for Bay Landscaping, Parker says the company upgraded its mower fleet last season. But they are still short on spare mowers in case of breakdowns.

“Right now, I think all four of our backups are all broke and waiting on parts. If nothing else breaks until those parts come in, we’ll be good. We’re getting by,” he says.

Parker adds that just like the mowers themselves, replacement parts for repairs are taking significantly longer to get in as well.

“We can’t seem to get parts in that have always been readily available. They might take two or three weeks where it used to only take a day,” he says.

Matt Singer, owner of John’s Home and Yard Service, based in Billings, Montana, says he’s happy that supply chain issues aren’t as bad this year compared to last.

“Sometimes we’ve had some supply chain issues still whether it’s landscaping or sprinkler supplies, but for the most part this year has been far better than last year,” he says.

“Last year PVC pipe for sprinklers was impossible to get,” Singer recalls. “So, when the pipe ran out here in Billings, I sent three trucks out to Wyoming and bought every piece of pipe I could and brought it back.”

Parker, too, is relieved that irrigation supplies are more readily available this year, but notes the price is still way up for it.

“The supply is there for now, but the cost is in some instances double what it was two years ago,” he says. “Any of that stuff is just through the roof.”

Machine delays have been the biggest headache for Singer.

“If I want a new lawn mower or mini loader, it’s months, or some will say even a year out, on a lot of things,” he says. “It’s the same with trucks as well.”

Coggins, who notes Garden Design works on a lot of new construction projects, says a shortage of plant materials has made things difficult.

“We had a crash several years ago and a



lot of nurseries went out of business. And it takes a long time to build up a family nursery. I think we’re seeing a little of that still, but a lot of the bigger nurseries have expanded. And some other people have started to get into it,” he says.

“But the lead time on growing stuff is pretty long — especially for trees. So, we have seen a shortage of trees and bigger ornamentals. We expect to continue to see that in some areas.”

But all of these supply chain disruptions haven’t put a damper on business.

“Things have stayed fairly steady in our markets, though we’ve topped out in what we can do,” Coggins says. “But there’s still plenty of work out there we could get but we’re limited on supplies, labor and what not.”

## SQUIRRELING AWAY FOR A RAINY DAY

With machines and parts taking longer to get in, companies are making sure they have plenty of inventory reserved for the unexpected.

“We keep a stockpile of everything now,” Parker says. “We never really did that before. But we’re trying to order enough. If we need two of something, we’ll order four. And then when we use the third one, we’ll already be ordering a few more.”

Singer notes keeping an ear to the ground and communicating with fellow businesses is the best way to see potential supply chain disruptions coming.

“I’m stocking a larger inventory on different things we’re worried about than I have in the past,” he says. “If I hear any sort of rumor on a supply that might be running low, then I fill up and make sure I have enough for the rest of the year or even part of next year on it.”

These holdups are also causing mechanics to be at the top of their game and get repairs done faster than ever before.



Supply chain shortages have caused green industry businesses, and their customers, to pivot from their original plans.



**“WE KEEP A STOCKPILE OF EVERYTHING NOW. WE NEVER REALLY DID THAT BEFORE. BUT WE’RE TRYING TO ORDER ENOUGH. IF WE NEED TWO OF SOMETHING, WE’LL ORDER FOUR. AND THEN WHEN WE USE THE THIRD ONE, WE’LL ALREADY BE ORDERING A FEW MORE.**

**— HANK PARKER, PRESIDENT, BAY LANDSCAPING**

“This year we’ve been repairing stuff way faster than normal and trying to keep the machines up and running,” Singer says, “just because the timeline for machines is out so far that it doesn’t even make sense to buy them. By the time I buy them, the summer is over. I have to be buying things now and thinking of next year.”

Singer adds he is already looking ahead to next year and just purchased four new aerators for the springtime because suppliers told him they’d be at least six months out.

When it comes to some supplies, like stone or plant material, Singer says they’ve been trying to replace out of stock items with different options.

“We’re trying to find alternatives and substitutes for some supplies, but sometimes you just can’t do that,” he says.

### **SECURING TRUSTED PARTNERS**

Having great vendors to work with has been a gamechanger in handling these supply chain shortages, Coggins says.



*When asked how concerned landscapers are about an issue,*

**DIFFICULTY RAISING PRICES**

**only scored a 5.2 on a scale of 8-10. Only 25% ranked it 8-10, with 10 being very concerned.**

Coggins says the company has made it a priority in recent years to foster relationships with the nurseries they receive their materials from.

“Several years ago, we started building plant pipelines, so we have a pretty good depth of vendors and they’ve helped sustain us through this period,” he says. “We’re looking for a good quality plant at a decent price. It doesn’t have to be the lowest; we understand they’ve got to make money.”

Coggins adds his favorite vendors to work with are the ones where Garden Design is their sole client, or at least one of very few.

“In Louisiana there’s a vendor we work with, and they grow primarily all we need to use. They may ship a truck a day to us, and they pick up a check every week. They don’t have to worry about a big overhead then; they just have to worry about growing plants and shipping them,” he says.

“So, we worked with them to develop that pipeline and it works well for them and works well for us... they can sell everything that they grow to us, and it just works well that way.”



**What does your location charge, on average, per hour for labor for each of the following services?**

**2022**

**\$98.60**

Snow and ice management

**\$88.20**

Landscape design/construction

**\$87.10**

Trees & ornamental

**\$86.90**

Irrigation

**\$78.30**

Lawn care/chemical application

**\$68.10**

Landscape maintenance

**2021**

**N/A\***

Snow and ice management

**\$73.50**

Irrigation

**\$73.10**

Landscape design/construction

**\$69.70**

Trees & ornamental

**\$66.20**

Lawn care/chemical application

**\$59.20**

Landscape maintenance

*\*Note: In 2021, the number of respondents for snow and ice management was not enough to calculate a valid result.*

Securing these loyal relationships with vendors has paid off for the company.

“It’s not about going out and shopping for plants; it’s about going out and developing a relationship with a vendor that would be able to supply you long-term even in the event of a shortage or a downturn or even high demand,” Coggins says. “And that’s proven true for us. We haven’t had the shortages like we’ve had in the past.”

### COMMISERATING WITH CUSTOMERS

Despite all of the disruptions in the supply chain, Parker says it hasn’t impacted customers yet as things have stayed on schedule and no routes have had to change due to less equipment being readily available.

“We’ll find a way to do it,” he says of the work. “Up to this point, we’ve found ways around it, but if it continues, I don’t think we’ll be so lucky.”

Coggins says he hasn’t had any problems with customers yet either because they are experiencing the same troubles.

“Our customers are in the construction business, so they understand prices are volatile, labor is short, and a lot of the projects we’re on are being delayed,” he says. “People are off six, eight months or even a year from the start of their schedule.”

Singer says he feels it comes down to the individual — but most have been empathetic.

“Most customers are pretty understanding because it’s affecting all their lives in some fashion or another,” he says. “When we run into a hiccup, or something gets back out a month, most are OK with it.”

Singer adds that customers have also been more accommodating to change as these supply chain issues continue.

“Some are willing to wait until next year when it’s in stock because that’s what they want, but other people will just swap a type of rock or pick a different size or color of something,” he says. “It really is up to each individual’s expectations. But overall, I think people are more willing to listen to a different option than before.”





SPONSORED BY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Kubota

Lawn & Landscape

State of the Industry

# webinar

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2022 | NOON ET

**Lawn & Landscape Editor Brian Horn** will moderate a discussion with green industry professionals about what has happened in the industry over the past 12 months and what to expect next year. Visit <https://bit.ly/2022soi> to find out who is on the panel.

Topics will include:

- Market trends
- Inflation
- What's gone well
- Supply chain
- Labor
- Thoughts on 2023

SCAN HERE  
TO REGISTER





“IF YOU CAN  
PROVIDE THAT  
WITH SOME  
COMMUNICATION,  
**YOU’RE NOT  
GOING TO LOSE  
CUSTOMERS ON  
PRICE, AS LONG  
AS YOU’RE NOT  
THE HIGHEST  
PRICE.”**

— **JED SHERMAN,  
FIRST LANDING LAWN &  
LANDSCAPE**

## **PASS DOWN THE COST**

As prices for materials and labor balloon with inflation, contractors nationwide are largely solving the issue by passing the costs on to the customer.

For Jed Sherman, a newcomer to the green industry at First Landing Lawn & Landscape in Cincinnati, Ohio, that cost increase hasn’t yet received lots of pushback. Sherman started his commercial landscaping company in 2019 and used COVID-19 as a way of experimenting with how to operate. They did the work largely on their own to sort out any pain points and learn more about what manhours it cost to do jobs, mostly at HOAs. Now, he’s up to five employees and 30 clients, but many of his relationships with clients are still relatively new – the company is just a few years old.

But Sherman says he also understands what his clients want. He owns a portfolio of hotels in Cincinnati and nearby Kentucky, and before entering the green industry, he noticed an annual challenge was earning a landscaping bid. “I was sitting down with one of our board members one day and I was telling him this gripe, and he says, ‘You could probably solve that problem,’” Sherman says.

So, as he’s upping the costs on renewals with his fledgling accounts, Sherman says he’s shooting for a 15% increase but settling somewhere closer to 10%. He may not have the problem of negotiating landscaping bids as a hotel manager, but now Sherman’s on the other side of the table, justifying raising costs by showing clients the higher prices he’s paying on materials, fuel and labor. A yard of mulch that recently cost him \$18 now costs \$35, and he’s passing those higher costs down to the client.

“Look, you’re going to lose some to pricing, but this really comes down to the problem that I said we were trying to solve: For most business owners, we just want the headache to go away,” Sherman says. “We just want to know that somebody’s going to show up each week and take care of the stuff that we want done. If you can provide that with some communication, you’re not going to lose customers on price, as long as you’re not the highest price.”

## **TOUGH CLIENT CONVERSATIONS**

That’s not been the case for John Fitzgerald, the founder and president of Landesign Construction and Maintenance in the Bay Area of California. They’ve been in business for over 30 years, offering commercial maintenance and service to high-end residential accounts, plus some work at the many nearby wineries. Fitzgerald’s got roughly 125 employees and they earned \$11 million in revenue last year.

Even still, explaining the cost to customers has been a hassle – Fitzgerald estimates half of his clients push back on increased cost proposals. Some have even just paid previous invoices and tried to pass it off like they’re not paying the increased costs. He adds that he hasn’t lost any longtime clients; it’s largely conglomerate customers running apartment complexes who are trying to squeak by with lower costs.

But as a company operating in California, where inflationary pressures are among the most expensive in the nation, long-standing relationships with clients have not made explaining higher prices any easier.



“Everything has gone up and we’re trying to get our customers to understand that we have to go up 8 to 10%,” Fitzgerald says, adding that a normal cost increase each year is closer to 3%. “It’s really hard to get through to the customers what we’re going through.”

Out in rural Wyoming, Kolby Nebeker of Cowboy Curbing & Landscape is putting clients on a time crunch. In the past, he’s given prospects 30 days to accept a bid before the terms of the contract could change. Now, with how fast material costs are ebbing and flowing, he’s resorted to giving them just seven days before he tells them he may need to reevaluate the costs and send over a new bid.

Nebeker, who primarily does design/build work, has also offered more job installments in phases than in the past. So, clients can order one part of the whole project, and if they like the progress that’s being made, they can continue to double down on it with another job later.

“We haven’t been able to meet everybody’s budget, but I don’t think it’s been a shock,” Nebeker says. “Most people are dealing with the inflation so they’re understanding that material costs are going up, but it does make it harder to get certain jobs.”

## DRIVING UP THE PRICE

Nebeker says he’s seen some materials double or nearly triple in cost over the last year, which means he’s been bulk ordering to try and lock in one price point and save the amount of trips he’s taking to his closest supplier.

Out in Western Wyoming, Nebeker says it takes roughly an hour to commute just about anywhere. Fuel has been a major pain point, one that’s called for careful attention to routing details. Now, when he goes to pick up plant materials for example, he’ll line up two or three jobs on the route there, even when the day’s schedule is already tight.

“We’ve had to group some stuff together so we can do less trips,” Nebeker says.

In Cincinnati, fuel prices also jumped this summer, but Sherman says his company didn’t add any fuel surcharges, even when gas hovered around \$5 a gallon. He’s been fortunate as a bootstrap start-up to operate without much overhead, so he leaned on employees he already had from other jobs to absorb extra work for the company. His net profit margin in 2021 was around 30%, and this year, it’ll still be closer to 20%.

Still, Sherman says he’s seen the pinch elsewhere – wage inflation. Last year alone, starting pay jumped from \$13 an hour to \$17, and that was hard to absorb. Sherman says he’s used to pivoting quickly like he does in the hotel industry, where the price of rooms can change several times a week or even a day without a problem.

And even at bigger companies in his area, Sherman says he’s noticed the labor pinch. In his own HOA where he lives, a landscaping company takes care of the property. Now, instead of four of their own employees, Sherman says they’re subcontracting two other employees to do the jobs.

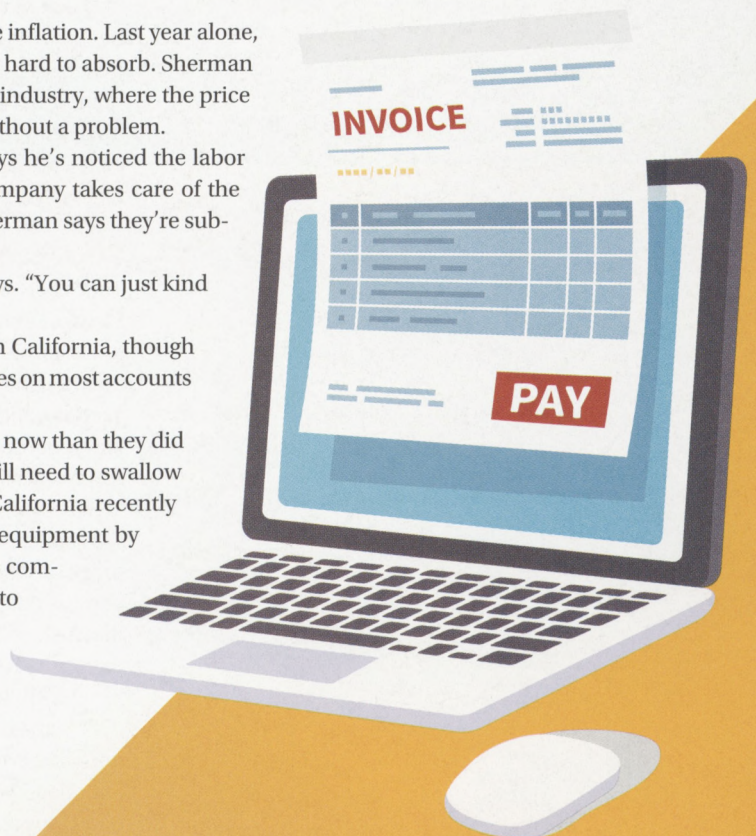
“I know that they’re feeling it somewhere,” Sherman says. “You can just kind of feel it in the service delivery.”

Fitzgerald has of course dealt with high gas prices out in California, though he’s managed that by adding \$20-\$30 in increased gas charges on most accounts during renewal season.

Plenty of materials like PVC pipes and fittings cost more now than they did before, Fitzgerald says, but one major cost his company will need to swallow in the coming years is on battery-powered equipment. California recently passed a bill that would phase out sales for gas-powered equipment by 2024, meaning Fitzgerald – who already equips 15% of his company with electric equipment – will need to adjust quickly to the new mandate.

Of course, that equipment’s not cheap. Fitzgerald says he’s already noticed prices balloon for that equipment as 2024 inches closer.

That’s putting a huge burden on us to figure out what to buy in the next two years,” Fitzgerald says. “It’s going to be really hard to recoup that.” **L&L**





# Worth their weight in word of mouth.

---



Commercial Landscape Lineup   All-day comfort   Efficient & Productive



Turn bare land into a beautiful piece of property with the Kubota landscaping lineup. The maneuverable SZ stand-on mower works well in tight spaces. Reliable, comfortable track loaders haul heavy loads. The RTV-X Series Utility Vehicle carries your crew and your tools. It's everything you need to build a reputation for getting the job done right.

Together we do more.®

[KubotaUSA.com](https://www.kubotausa.com)

© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2022. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer. For the complete disclaimer, go to [KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers](https://www.kubotausa.com/disclaimers) and see the posted disclaimer.





## TRAVELS WITH JIM WITH JIM HUSTON

JHUSTON@GIEMEDIA.COM

TRAVELS WITH JIM follows Jim Huston around the country as he visits with landscapers and helps them understand their numbers to make smarter decisions.

# THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS

→ **IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN PROFITABILITY**, account for changing costs, and thrive in spite of the surrounding chaos, it is imperative that green industry entrepreneurs have an information management system (IMS) for accounting, estimating and job costing that's granular enough to compensate for such volatility.

While you may have a granular system, it has to encompass correct management principles, methods and philosophies. Unfortunately, there are numerous mistakes (I refer to them as false mathematical assumptions) built into many of the management ideas and software being used in the green industry today. The purpose of my next few articles is to first, explain what a granular IMS looks like and how to use it. Then, I'll expose some of the false mathematical assumptions being espoused in today's marketplace.

**HOW IT WORKS IN THE REAL WORLD.** Eric Wewerka, president of Wewerka Construction Management (WCM) in northern Virginia, is a student of his business. As a result, he has embraced the management and financial systems that I teach. At the heart of my system is a detailed annual budget and cost estimating system. It may sound a bit circular, but the primary purpose of a cost estimating system is to estimate costs (materials, field labor, field trucks and equipment, rental equipment, etc.) accurately. Eric uses QuickBooks and a popular estimating and job costing software package to run WCM.

Eric and I create WCM's annual budget in July for the upcoming year. We make any necessary adjustments at year's end.

This budget primarily projects four important items: revenue, field labor man-hours and dollars, field labor burden and general and administrative (G&A) overhead costs — all broken down by division (construction, maintenance, snow, etc.). It also includes projected divisional costs for materials, field trucks and equipment (T&E), subcontractors and rental equipment. While these costs are estimated in the annual budget, they are more accurately identified in specific bids for maintenance accounts, construction projects and snow accounts.

The four primary items from the budget that we calculate allow us to manage and control risk. Risk management should be the primary focus of a management team. The purpose of risk management is to create certainty in the business. For instance, if you project \$1 million in revenue with a 10% net profit margin (NPM) at the end of the year, can you and your team make that happen? If you can, great! You are certain that you can meet or exceed your budget projections 100%.

### BUDGETING DIRECT COSTS.

**Material costs:** We project such costs based on history, knowing that we'll estimate these costs much more accurately on specific jobs being priced.

**Field labor costs:** We project field crew man-hours and dollars by division.

**Field labor burden:** This is the portion paid by the company and usually cal-

culates to be between 15% and 30% added to the cost of field labor. It includes such things as FICA, FUTA, state unemployment, worker's compensation and general liability insurance costs; holiday, vacation and PTO pay; health insurance and 401K costs for field labor.

**Trucks and equipment:** We project these costs based on historical percentages for fuel, repairs, maintenance and mechanics, auto and inland marine insurance, registrations, wraps, paint and set up costs and depreciation.

**Subcontractor and rental equipment costs:** We project these based on historical percentages.

Once each division's direct costs are calculated, we obtain its gross profit margin (GPM) and compare it to industry benchmarks. This provides an important key performance indicator (KPI) that we can use as a scoreboard for individual jobs and for the division as a whole.

**BUDGETING INDIRECT COSTS.** Indirect costs — I refer to them as general and administrative (G&A) overhead costs — are often misunderstood in the green industry. They make up all of the company costs that cannot be directly attributed to jobs. Hence, they are referred to as general costs. G&A overhead costs total about 25% of revenue for companies under \$10 million in annual revenue. Salaries for overhead staff and owners at pre-dividend levels normally total 50% of G&A overhead costs or 12% of revenue. This accounts for about 99% of all green industry companies. Larger companies experience lower amounts of such costs usually in the 15% to 20% range.

**NET PROFIT MARGIN.** Once you subtract G&A overhead costs, net profit margin (NPM) is what remains. This is earnings before tax, dividends and bonuses. My benchmarks for NPM are as follows: 10% tells me that the company is doing OK, 15% is excellent and over 20% means you're hitting it out of the park.

As you can see, this system is very granular and, as such, entails a lot of detail. You have to study it and your business to properly understand and use it. Next time I will explain how Eric uses this system to price construction and maintenance work and establish critical KPIs throughout Wewerka Construction Management. **L&L**




web extra  
For an Excel sheet  
budget sample, visit  
[bit.ly/lawnwebextra](http://bit.ly/lawnwebextra)





## WORDS OF WILSON

WITH BRUCE WILSON  
FOUNDER AND CONSULTANT,  
BRUCE WILSON & COMPANY

 BWILSON@GIEMEDIA.COM

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

# INFLATION PLAYBOOK FOR CEOS

→ **BASED ON CLIENT PERFORMANCE DATA**, the landscape segment of the economy is ending the year better than expected. The job market is strong, unemployment is stable, the labor market is easing and layoffs are mild, balancing the supply and demand for workers. But while supply chain challenges and inflation show no signs of cooling off, a recession remains top of mind.

Customers, like the rest of us, are frustrated with mixed signals. While there is no exact formula, it's important to sift through the data and make decisions about growth in a flexible way.

Caution and risk assessment should drive 2023 planning. As long as the market holds up, I would remain aggressive. Differentiate between strategic and nonstrategic spending and consider extending yourself by taking on strategic debt, as debt will keep getting more expensive. If it does sink us into a recession, that could be expensive.

If you want to act more aggressively, keep an eye on market conditions. If there's an opportunity to take on leverage at a low cost without jeopardizing long-term performance, you can use the cash to invest in expanding your business or improving the structural and operational aspects of your organization to improve productivity.

As you prepare for 2023, there are five ways to invest in activities that will deliver greater resilience and help you build a more scalable growth platform:

**1. Accumulate talent by hiring college and trade school graduates to deepen your bench.** When it's a buyers' market, talent gets expensive and companies will find that hiring experienced people could become harder. Going the trade school and college grad and intern route might be more fruitful. I am also a proponent of companies promoting careers, not filling job openings. Make your company a career destination of choice.

**2. Master new technologies and equipment. Many of them, like electric vehicles, robotics and renewables are emerging in response to climate regulations and customer demand.** California has already mandated the end of small gas engine equipment in the next few years. It's not too early to begin incorporating emerging technologies of the future into your operations and learn how to make it successful for your customers' bottom line.

**3. Although it may go against your instincts, don't cut back on marketing.** Instead, zero in on proactive, customer-first approaches. Show economic solidarity. Ask, "how can we help?" And make sure

the value you offer is clear. Customers want to hear from you about solutions that will help them stay on mission during good times and bad.

#### **4. Invest in building a customer-centric strategy and use your customers' goals to guide planning and innovation.**

Invest in surveys to gain feedback that will improve and personalize your services. Get to know your customers, both as individuals and as a whole, and revisit their websites to identify ways you can help them make strategic spending decisions about how they scale, plan and use their outdoors. Customer-centricity is not only good for customers; it's a business model that will deliver increased profitability and competitive advantage.

#### **5. If you're thinking of expanding but put it on the back burner, think again.**

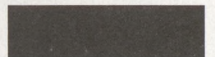
New services, products or brands that are launched during periods when others are cutting back have higher long-term survival and sales because there is less competition.

Inflation and concerns for recession are real, but these cycles are not new. Turbulent times should not stop companies from being a "first mover" and pursuing their full potential. Play both defense and offense to learn faster and out-manuever less proactive competitors and emerge on top, long after the volatility of this cycle ends. **L&L**



#### **IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CUSTOMER.**

From tailoring your marketing strategy to guiding growth, keep your customers' goals top of mind.





# aspire

A ServiceTitan Company

Software to power  
the fastest growing  
landscape businesses



**Aspire centralizes your data in a single platform, giving you real-time insights and reporting, so you can make the right decisions to grow your landscaping business.**

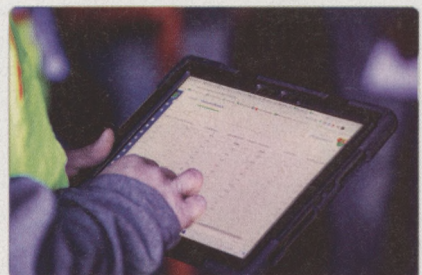
### **Grow your profits with better estimates**

Hit your profit margins with better estimates based on actual job costs. Plus, property intelligence tools like Go iLawn and LandOne help you build detailed quotes that win clients.



### **Labor management tools to empower your people**

Time tracking and two-way communication between the office and the field helps make your teams more productive—and every job more profitable.



Scan the code  
to schedule a  
free demo

[www.youraspire.com](http://www.youraspire.com) | 866.727.7473





## CREAM OF THE CROP

WITH ED LAFLAMME, LIC  
HARVEST GROUP CO-FOUNDER

HARVEST@GIEMEDIA.COM

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

# THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

→ MY HARVEST GROUP co-founder and friend Bill Arman and I were reminiscing at the end of the day at the recent Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference in Scottsdale, Ariz. It was a great conference. We were thinking about how far the industry has come and how lucky we are to work in the lawn and landscape industry. Entrepreneurial business owners work daily to improve their business, look for productivity solutions and share best practices with their peers.

While enjoying a great glass of wine, Bill asked, "What one word explains success in our industry?" Without hesitation I said, "yes, it's relationships!"

Later, on my four-and-a-half-hour plane ride home to Connecticut, I thought deeper into just how the relationships I fostered all these years helped me every step of the way. Truthfully, I never really thought about it before. So, I put together the following list to impress on you just how important relationships are.

**Suppliers/Subcontractors:** When I first started my business, I began a friendship with a college student working in a garden center. He taught me how to price my work and helped me get a substantial client. Other suppliers helped me get the best prices on materials and extend longer credit terms when my cash was tight. The largest account in my 30 years of business came from a subcontractor that set up a lunch with a facility manager that resulted in a yearly \$2 million maintenance contract.

**Consultants:** I used four over the years. Because of our relationship, they not only taught me how to make more money but connected me with people that proved invaluable in my career. My horticultural consultant, a professor at our state college, sent me his top students to work for my company. He also helped me produce a "killer proposal" that led to the award of the world headquarters of General Electric.

**Customers:** Because of the friendships I fostered with my customers, they referred me to their friends, which led to further great contracts. These folks also served as great referrals when I needed them.

**Organizations:** A turning point in my career was when I joined ALCA, now called the National Association of Landscape Professionals. As a result, I met my Harvester partners and dozens of landscape friends across the country. I also joined the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) and the local chamber of commerce in my city. After selling my business I became a member of NSA, The National Speaker Association. There I've made many friends and even some celebrities that have helped me immensely.

### Bankers, Attorneys and Accountants:

These professionals became part of my "mastermind group." Over the years they helped me grow, save a fortune in taxes and got me out of a few messes as well. I valued the relationships I had with them and couldn't have enjoyed the success I had without them.

**Business Magazines:** The first that influenced my life was Inc. Magazine. I attended the organization's annual conventions, built relationships with their writers and they even did a story about me. But the most amazing relationship has been with Lawn & Landscape Magazine. This started more than 30 years ago. This led to publishing my book, Green Side Up, the Turnaround Tour, the Backstage Pass and the column you are reading right now. Our relationship has been truly amazing.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

I could go on and on but I'm sure you see the point. The relationships you build are everything. In order to build these relationships, you need to listen, and I mean really listen to people when they talk. Don't interrupt. Think about how you can help them. Do what you say you're going to do. Be totally honest. Share your knowledge, advice and friends. Do favors for them and, above all, stay in touch.

My final words of advice (and you've heard this before) are, you need to be a friend to gain a friend, so foster these relationships because they will lead to more so my friend. That's what it's all about. L&L

### FROM GARDEN CENTER WORKERS TO LAWYERS,

make sure to foster strong relationships with everyone who impacts your business. These bonds are the keys to success.



# SPRAY HEADS THAT EFFICIENTLY MAKE SENSE.



## **TORO® 570Z SERIES PRESSURE REGULATED SPRAY HEADS**

570ZPR and 570ZPRX spray heads offer a constant nozzle pressure of 30 psi to help ensure the entire zone is performing consistently across every head. Certified to EPA WaterSense® requirements, these spray heads have been proven to eliminate water waste caused by nozzle misting and overspray. When used with Toro's patented Precision™ Series Spray Nozzles, 570ZPR and 570ZPRX spray heads are some of the most efficient available.

Learn more at: [www.toro.com/570Z](http://www.toro.com/570Z)

**TORO®**





# Callan Dudley

General Manager,  
Southern Landscape Group

*Callan Dudley is an active member of the National Association of Landscape Professionals Women in Landscape Network (powered by Bayer) which provides a forum for industry professionals to support each other's professional growth. The Network is free to all industry professionals.*

**IN JANUARY 2014**, I was recruited from the private accounting sector to Southern Landscape Group as the accounting/HR coordinator, where my role developed from strictly accounting to building a human resources department. I had no knowledge of the HR world or landscaping and had to learn. I did not shy away from the challenge, but rather embraced it with lots of questions! I have learned that the only way you learn is to ask questions and that no question is a bad one. Whether it was questions about landscaping or checking in on my team members, I constantly asked. I quickly learned that leadership and people management were a passion of mine.

**WOMEN IN LANDSCAPING** is a column brought to you in partnership with the National Association of Landscape Professionals.

As I continued to build and refine our HR operations, my passion for Southern, our people, and my career grew. I knew that I wanted to build a culture of like-minded individuals with a passion for upholding our core values: passion, professionalism, quality and teamwork.

In January 2020, I was promoted to general manager. One of my greatest weaknesses (and largest challenge) going into this role was being a great delegator. I was so heavily involved with a lot of different areas of our business, as was everyone on our team. We ran super lean at the time, and I had a hard time giving more work to those that were already struggling. Right after I was promoted, I found out I was pregnant with our second child. At that point, I knew this was a skill I was going to have to work on, fast! There was going to be no way in the world that I could excel in my role, continue doing the tasks I was doing, and have a great home life. The only way I knew how to delegate was to find more of the right people to bring on our team that I trusted and get them trained.

I have spent the last several years building our leadership team and growing our talent pool. Being an empathetic leader is very important to me. No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care. I strongly believe that if we take care of our team, then our team will take care of our clients — in that order. This is not only showing appreciation through events and gifts, but genuinely caring and listening to their needs and questions, meeting with direct reports routinely, working alongside of our team members and giving everyone a sense of ownership in their role. Doing all these things helps to build the trust of those that work with you.

Getting to where I am today has not been easy. It has taken a lot of hard work, time physically and mentally spent away from family, and emotional ups and downs. I am lucky to have a great support system that values my passion for what I do. At Southern Landscape Group, we have and will continue to attract high-performing, quality talent to our team. While delegation has always been one of my weaknesses, attracting this talent and spending the time to train has allowed me to focus on my role and create a much better work/life balance. **L&L**





# Experience ECHO Performance!

Experience ECHO Performance! For over 50 years, professional landscapers and arborists have trusted the ECHO name as "The Professionals' Choice™".

Equip Exposition is all about experiencing the newest equipment and ECHO is pleased to say we've introduced 127 new models since 2017. Stop by our Indoor Booth #5112 to see what's new along with the ECHO eFORCE™ 56V Battery System and our ECHO X Series lineup with equipment that is Powerful, Light Weight, and provides the professional with Greater Productivity. But don't just see them, visit our Outdoor Booth #7451D and experience the performance yourself!



**ECHO X SERIES**



**RED ARMOR® FUEL**



**ECHO eFORCE™**



**ECHO-USA.COM**



**FEATURES  
ARE OPTIONAL.  
RELIABILITY  
ISN'T.**





# NEVER IDLE

Sometimes you want the latest tech. Sometimes you just want the essentials done exceptionally well. That's why we offer distinct levels of innovation, comfort, and performance so you can get done faster, more efficiently, and on budget.



**JOHN DEERE**

[DEERE.COM/TAKEYOURPICK](https://www.deere.com/takeyourpick)



# All the technology you can handle

Lawn & Landscape hosted our annual Technology Conference Aug. 10-12 in Scottsdale, Arizona. The event featured educational sessions spread over three days and a trade show floor. Here is a summary of some of those educational sessions. **By Jimmy Miller**

## THE FUTURE IS NOW

Jack Shaw opened up the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference with specific ways new innovations will affect the industry.

**J**ack Shaw knows it's tough making predictions, but he opened up the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference by forecasting what a future in landscaping might look like.

He offered a hypothetical couple, Luke and Annie, who live in Atlanta. In his scenario, Shaw told attendees that the couple lives in Atlanta and contacts a landscape designer to complete a new design/build project. Then, Shaw walked attendees through a technology-assisted pitch the company might use to sell their services to Luke and Annie.

Shaw described a scenario where the contractor used walkthroughs with augmented reality and virtual reality glasses.

Luke and Annie asked about an irrigation program, which the contractor says can instead be an AI-powered, weather-based irrigation controller and system. And, to sign contracts at the end of the virtual tour, Luke and Annie use facial recognition technology and fingerprinting. Within minutes, the necessary plantings are automatically ordered and the company's best landscape designer is assigned to the job.

Sound like a fantasy? Shaw warned attendees this could be the way their competitors get a leg up on them if they're not fast enough.

"Your competitors are going to be doing most of these very same things within the next few years," Shaw said, "and in some cases, much sooner than that."

So, Shaw broke down some of the emerging technologies for landscapers in his keynote address at the technology conference.

**AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY.** First, Shaw made sure to outline the key differences between augmented reality versus virtual reality. AR takes the physical reality in front of you and it overlays the existing reality with additional information like images and data. Shaw likened it to the yellow first-down marker football fans might recognize on broadcasts. Meanwhile, VR means an entire field of vision is covered by glasses or viewers and is a new environment entirely.





LLTC Keynote Jack Shaw explained how augmented and virtual reality are just two emerging technologies impacting the green industry.

Shaw said some of the benefits to both AR and VR include better design renders for client pitches. This means contractors can have more accurate quotes, more precise assessment of a project's timeline and a better understanding of the necessary construction materials and labor needs. Plus, there's no need to present physical samples with AR/VR — a design/build contractor doesn't need to pull out hardscapes to show off how they might look in an environment.

**INTERNET OF THINGS.** Any physical object can become connected through sensors, processing abilities and software — this is the Internet of Things. Shaw said fleet services is a great example of IoT.

Vehicles and landscaping equipment can communicate to one another through IoT. "This way you can not only track the location of equipment," Shaw said, "but even the utilization of the equipment." He told attendees they might be able to track how many hours they're getting out of each piece of equipment, which might help contractors evaluate whether they have equipment on trucks they don't need or how they can better price jobs.

**BLOCKCHAIN.** Blockchain allows you to create data that's signed, time stamped

and cannot be changed. This could be records of identity, ownership of assets, business transactions like purchase orders and payments, and of contractual commitments. These records could be shared among two or more entities without an intermediary providing a master set of records. The information is globally available with complete transparency to anybody authorized to see the data but un-hackable security to anyone who's unauthorized to see the data.

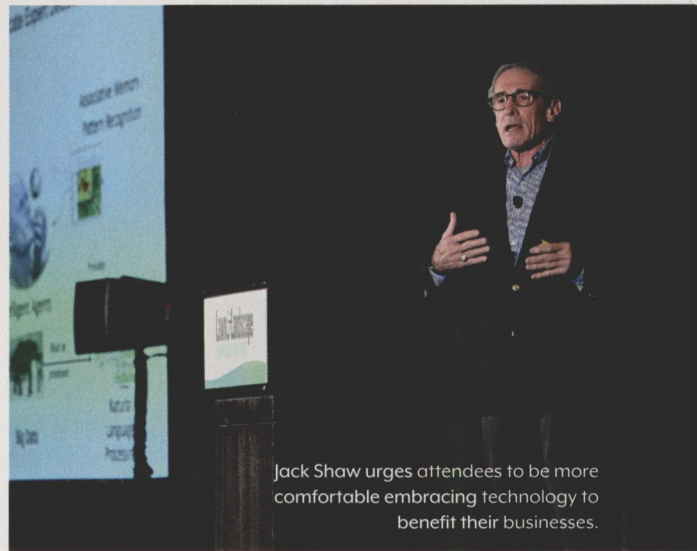
Shaw clarified that blockchain data is not stored on any one computer system; it's stored with identical copies on hundreds or thousands of systems all over the world. If someone hacks into one of those nodes, Shaw said that synchronization technology on any of the nodes will spot the inaccuracy or change in data. A Harvard business professor recently calculated how much energy it would take to use the computing power needed to hack into the blockchain. To do it successfully, it was roughly equal to the same energy emitted at one time by the sun.

"And I know some of you are thinking, 'So you could do it then!'" Shaw joked. "So if

you were able to hack into the blockchain, you'd have to hack into a majority of the nodes on that blockchain, and you'd have to do it simultaneously and very fast."

**MORE TECHNOLOGIES.** Shaw also covered autonomous mowing with cameras that can stop the machine when they encounter an unexpected obstacle and machines that are purely electric and are much quieter.

He also dissected artificial intelligence like IAs, or intelligence agents, that can help coach newer employees by using prompts like "are you sure you want to make this decision?" or "do you want to consider this alternative?" Shaw believes IAs can get so intelligent soon that they can lay out preliminary landscape designs and factor in material/labor costs, climate change considerations and even anticipate when faults may occur.



Jack Shaw urges attendees to be more comfortable embracing technology to benefit their businesses.



# ADDING AUTONOMOUS TO YOUR SERVICES

It may not be perfect, but panelists at the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference broke down how and why to introduce robomowing. **By Jimmy Miller**



Some contractors believe autonomous mowers like ones on the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference show floor will be largely popular within two or three years.

**J**anet DeNicola believes implementing autonomous mowing is the easy part; adoption is much tougher.

“(When you’re implementing), you get good training, you get explained how you need to lay your perimeter wire, and you get good training on the people that are going to need to maintain them,” says DeNicola, the chief technology officer at The Greenery in South Carolina. “Adoption is a whole different animal.

Adoption is cultural and involves people and how we think about it in our company. You still have to get everyone marching in the same direction.”

DeNicola admitted to Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference attendees that she’s still trying to get everyone fully on board. Her co-panelists, all speaking during the “Analyzing Autonomous” session, seemed to be in the same boat. Michael Mayberry, the CTO at Level Green, says executives trying to incorporate robotic

## GEORipper®

**“This is the best purchase the company has made. GeoRipper has boosted productivity and saved a lot of manual digging...”**

*Nate Litchfield, Hew Hampshire*

### GEORipper T/A

TRENCHING ATTACHMENT

Trenching just got better with the GeoRipper® T/A Trenching Attachment



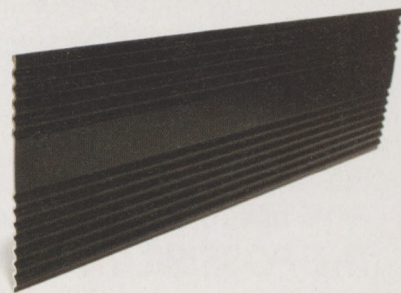
[www.GeoRipper.com](http://www.GeoRipper.com)





ProLine<sup>™</sup> is a complete series of residential/light commercial grade aluminum landscape edgings. ProLine is engineered to allow for effortless installation and creates a beautiful, clean edge in your landscape. Exceptional flexibility allows graceful curves and angles to be readily formed, allowing any landscape design to be achieved with accurate results.

- Engineered to maximize design sustainability and provide long-term durability by withstanding the demands of residential and light commercial landscapes.
- Designed with a unique, patented stakeless connection system that snaps down to permanently interlock adjacent edging sections - eliminating horizontal separation or possible weak points.
- Includes heavy-duty 12" interlocking aluminum stakes that securely anchor it into the ground, providing long-term durability and easy installation.





From left are Ben Collinsworth, of Yellowstone Landscape; Michael Mayberry, of Level Green; and Janet DeNicola, of The Greenery.



mowers should start the process of easing nerves now – it could be a bumpy road.

“It’s really important to talk to your crews now about what’s happening because you need to get their buy-in,” Mayberry says. “Their mindset may be that these robots are going to replace me.”

And that’s not the case, Mayberry adds. He, DeNicola and Ben Collinsworth from Yellowstone Landscape all believe autonomous mowing could actually enable crews to do more work.

**IMPERFECT IN THE PRESENT.** Collinsworth began looking into robotic mowers two years ago, and when research at the time indicated markets would more commonly have them by now, Mayberry started his search three years ago. DeNicola says she started weighing robotic mowers in 2017, and the first one went out into the field in 2019.

She says she narrowed down the scope of what she wanted the mowers to do or have. For her, it was all about safety, ensuring it had lights on it, and whether or not it had

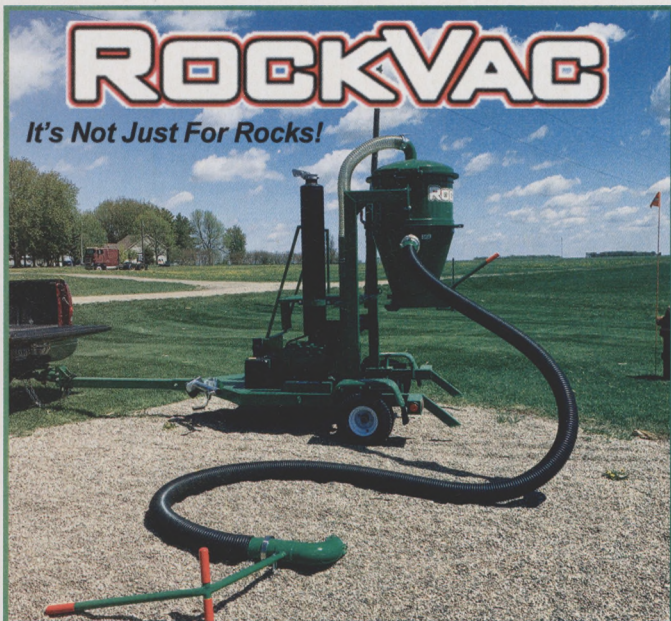
smartphone controlling capabilities. Of course, price also factored into the equation.

DeNicola did not see an immediate return on investment with the mowers. It was more about getting the process right than trying to roll them out widescale.

“It’s such a learning curve. It’s going to take a lot to get them up and running,” she says. “To be successful, just buy one and put it on one property that you trust so that if it flops, it’ll be okay. Pick a client you trust and have a great relationship with.”

Continued on page 68

PHOTO: GORDON MURRAY



**ROCKVAC**

It's Not Just For Rocks!

**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!



20421 - 15th Street SE  
Blomkest, MN 56216  
800-328-8896  
www.rockvac.com  
sales@christianson.com



**ADS**

LAWN DEBBI

Elm Creek, NE

1-800-657-2184  
lawndebbi.com

**Remove lawn debris with the push of a button.**

- Low Maintenance Galvanized Frame
- High Quality ShurCo Tarp Material
- Optional Wireless Controls
- Multiple Sizes & Configurations



# CUT COSTS NOT CORNERS SAVE 5% NOW



## GET OUR BEST DEAL ON LESCO MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT

Good help is hard to find. So we made good equipment easier to buy. Save 5% on select motorized LESCO products all year.\*

Do More with LESCO. See how at  
[SiteOne.com/LESCOEquipment](http://SiteOne.com/LESCOEquipment)

**LESCO**<sup>®</sup>

\*While supplies last. Must have a SiteOne account to purchase online and redeem the offer.



## Q&A WITH THE EXPERT FUNGICIDES

**BASF**  
We create chemistry

# Q&A WITH JEFF VANNOY

Senior Product Manager of Turf Solutions at BASF, explains how the BASF 2023 Early Order Program offers a simplified approach to planning, ordering and saving to help lawn

## 1 What does the theme **STRAIGHT FORWARD** mean for LCOs and what should their expectations be for the BASF 2023 Early Order Program (EOP)?

**JV:** Nobody has an easier, more viable program, and that's what this year's theme, Straight Forward, is all about. We work hard to give our lawn care customers great pricing on a great portfolio, and we don't make it complicated. We want our customers to know that when they partner with BASF and order through the most seamless EOP in the industry, they can look forward to delivering exceptional turf conditions while enjoying best-in-class savings.

## 2 How does 2023 EOP help simplify the planning, ordering and saving process for lawn care?

**JV:** We make it super easy for LCOs to do business with BASF during EOP by keeping our base program incredibly simple with industry-leading rebates to back it up. Our program only requires \$15,000 in spending to earn 10% in rebates. One of our competitors requires \$100,000 in spend to get to 10%, and the other requires nearly \$50,000. Through our years of market research for EOP, we've created a program that consistently scores the highest among end users, so we continue to have this very simple and rewarding EOP that delivers powerful chemistries and industry-leading savings for our customers.

## 3 Earlier this year, BASF launched Pillar® SC Intrinsic® brand fungicide. How can adding this innovative new lawn care product to their order help lawn care operators have an even more successful season?

**JV:** Pillar SC Intrinsic brand fungicide was formulated specifically for the lawn care industry. Its fast-acting, dual-active, one-easy-rate chemistry gives LCOs broad-spectrum disease control to tackle the toughest turf threats they deal with while also offering plant health benefits. We made sure that its price reflected the competitive nature of this market without pricing it

as a golf product, which is what often happens in this industry. It's packaged in a simple way, which makes it super simple for technicians to utilize.

## 4 Tell us about the new Pillar SC Kicker. How does it help LCOs save on their order and get the most from their EOP experience?

**JV:** This kicker is unique because while most rebates are 1-2%, this one is 5%. If an LCO wants to try our latest lawn care solution, all they need to do is add three cases of Pillar SC Intrinsic brand fungicide to their EOP order and they'll earn an additional 5% rebate on Pillar SC Intrinsic brand fungicide in addition to their base rebate. It's all about getting LCOs to give this product a try because we think they will be very happy with this fungicide.

## 5 Tell us about Across-the-Lawn Solutions. How do they contribute to the versatility of EOP?

**JV:** If an LCO spends \$15,000 and buys three cases of Pillar SC Intrinsic brand fungicide, they'll earn a 15% rebate on that product and earn an additional 10% rebate on our Across-the-Lawn Solutions portfolio, which includes stand-out products, like FreeHand® 1.75G herbicide, Alucion® 35 WG insecticide and Drive® XLR8 herbicide. No other program allows you to earn a 10% rebate at \$15,000, so it's an extremely competitive offering for LCOs.

## 6 If you had to give one reason why lawn care operators should start their season by ordering through BASF EOP, what would it be?

**JV:** The BASF 2023 Early Order Program gives lawn care operators an array of top-tier innovations supported by the year's deepest savings with no hassles. The 2023 BASF EOP offers extensive savings on some of the most cutting-edge innovations in the industry ensuring LCOs can buy exactly what they need while maximizing their rebates. This year, point your turf success in the right direction — Straight Forward. ●



**BASF**

We create chemistry

2023 EARLY ORDER PROGRAM

# STRAIGHT FORWARD

**POWER MEETS SIMPLICITY FOR YOUR  
MOST SUCCESSFUL SEASON YET.**



The BASF 2023 Early Order Program keeps planning, ordering and saving simple so that you can enjoy cutting-edge chemistries, industry-leading rebates and extended payment terms.

Stock up on the all-new Pillar® SC Intrinsic® brand fungicide this fall and receive an additional 5% rebate on this best-in-class turf science, formulated exclusively for lawns.

Let BASF help you start 2023 stress-free by pointing your turf success in one direction — **STRAIGHT FORWARD.**

**»»» Learn how you can save on lawn care solutions at [betterturf.basf.us/lawncare/eop](https://betterturf.basf.us/lawncare/eop)**

**CONNECT WITH US:**

-  @BASFTurf\_us
-  Facebook.com/BASFTurf.us
-  YouTube.com/BASFTurfTalk

Always read and follow label directions.

For more information and complete program details, including program terms, conditions, limitations and restrictions, visit [betterturf.basf.us/lawncare/eop](https://betterturf.basf.us/lawncare/eop).

Intrinsic and Pillar are registered trademarks of BASF.

© 2022 BASF Corporation. All rights reserved.



# DIAL UP YOUR DOWNTIME.



## THE OFF-SEASON STARTS WITH KAWASAKI GENUINE PARTS.

FROM KTECH™ ETHANOL-FREE FUELS ENGINEERED FOR LONG-TERM STORAGE TO OUR CONVENIENTLY ASSEMBLED KAWASAKI ENGINES TUNE-UP KITS THAT ARE READY WHEN YOU ARE, KAWASAKI GENUINE PARTS CAN HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR DOWNTIME THIS OFF-SEASON.



**Kawasaki**  
— ENGINES —  
GENUINE PARTS

## Lawn & Landscape TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE SHOW RECAP

story continued from page 64

Mayberry says there were issues he didn't think would come up that did when they got their robotic mowers. For example, his crews aerated the perimeter wires by accident even though they knew they were there. Also, they deployed their mowers on a large sports field (DeNicola says her machines wouldn't get to pointy areas of residential properties) but the machines kept getting stuck in soccer nets. To combat this, they'd sit on the property and just watch the machine go. That actually helped because it was seen as a major morale victory if they fixed the problems, Mayberry says.

"When we did have challenges we went out there to watch what was happening," Mayberry says. "It's about watching what's going on and making small adjustments."

For Collinsworth, he acknowledged during the session that labor was a major factor in opting for these mowers, adding that "we all have different ways to solve it." But reassuring current employees that their jobs are safe is important.

"There's many ways to fix (labor), but this is part of the solution," Collinsworth says. "For me, it's messaging, it's going out and telling people the benefits of what this can do in the future even if it's imperfect in the present."

**CLIENT DEMANDS.** Of course, the other side to consider is client expectations. DeNicola says reminding clients up front that there'll be a learning curve helps temper those demands. But the end result is totally worth it for the client, as a traditional mowing crew comes by once a week, but automowing is done three times a week. The grass never looks unkempt.

"Once you've got things cooking along, the client has a totally better experience with the product. The grass looks awesome all the time," she says. "The end product is superior...not to mention (the robomowers) are quiet, they're not intrusive, all these other benefits."

— Janet DeNicola,  
The Greenery

DeNicola adds neighborhood associations might be quick to adopt these mowers, too, because then they look like a progressive area to live. The Greenery slapped logos on their machines and has constant branding going on near tennis and pickleball courts.

For clients, that could be the ultimate win-win: It's branding for you and it's image for them.

"It's very focused-forward, it's environmentally great," she says. "You can sell it lots of ways."

Collinsworth says it's demoralizing for his crews and clients alike when you get them excited for the machines and then something goes wrong, but working through that is vital. He says 30-50% of the work his company currently does could be automated, but he wants to add even more properties and work that could be automated to increase that percentage.

"Just give me back my old mower," Collinsworth has heard them say.

Mayberry believes that even though his clients are buying into it in droves yet, it's going to become widely popular. He's actually lost some revenue on properties where they implemented robomowing, but it's still done with an eye to the future.

When autonomous mowing is more popular, Mayberry believes his company won't be one still trying to figure out how to set up and operate the machines. He encouraged attendees to all go home and figure out which properties might be good candidates to try out autonomous mowers.

"For the future, it's worth it. When it goes widescale, we aren't figuring it out. It will be economically beneficial at that point."

**"The end product is superior... not to mention (the robomowers) are quiet, they're not intrusive, all these other benefits."**



**Kawasaki**  
— ENGINES —

THE TRUSTED ONE

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



# STOCK UP

## AND RIDE ON.

**LONGEVITY IS THE PRIORITY.**

KAWASAKI GENUINE PARTS ARE DESIGNED TO HELP KEEP YOUR ENGINE'S PERFORMANCE STEADY AND SHARP DAY AFTER DAY, ONE JOB TO THE NEXT. AND BY HELPING TO PROTECT ITS MOST CRUCIAL PARTS AND PRESERVE ITS LONG-TERM VALUE IN THE PROCESS, OUR MAINTENANCE ITEMS HELP YOU STAY IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL. FROM ETHANOL-FREE FUELS THAT KEEP MOISTURE BUILDUP FROM YOUR TANK TO THE OPTIMAL LUBRICATION STANDARDS OF KTECH™ ENGINE OILS, BROWSE OUR FULL RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND MEET YOUR MAINTENANCE NEEDS.

**Kawasaki**  
FT730V





# Maximize Your Savings All Year Long With Corteva Ultimate Rewards

The foundation of your success is better-looking turf and landscapes. That's why maintaining beautiful, lush lawns and landscapes requires the use of proven turf management products. As you plan ahead, Corteva Agriscience is providing an easy way to earn cash back on the products you rely on. From Oct. 1, 2022, through Feb. 28, 2023, Corteva Ultimate Rewards is offering locked-in savings on qualifying products.

## What is Corteva Ultimate Rewards?

A simple, year-long rewards program designed to put money back into your pocket. With minimum qualifying quantities, the program provides a simple way to save when buying the products you need for exceptional weed, insect and disease control. As you purchase qualifying products, you can:

- Order on your own time through Feb. 28, 2023.
- Lock in year-long rates
- Secure rebate multipliers
- Receive cash-back incentives all year

## When to purchase products?

To make sure you have the right products to achieve and maintain superior weed, insect and disease control year-round, the Corteva Ultimate Rewards early-order program offers two flexible ordering periods. Purchase qualifying products before Dec. 31 to lock in your rebate for the full market year or by Feb. 28 to lock in rebates through September 2023.

## Which products qualify?

You know the difference between getting the job done and getting the job done right. As an industry-

leading preemergence herbicide that also offers excellent early postemergence control of crabgrass and more than 45 other grassy weeds, Dimension® specialty herbicide is the foundation of a turf management program you can rely on year after year. This No. 1-selling herbicide now comes with the ultimate offer:

**Bundle Dimension with up to three other premium turf management products to strengthen results, earn cash back and keep beautiful, lush lawns and landscapes. Putting flexibility at your fingertips, participating product categories include:**

- Herbicides
- Insecticides
- Fungicides
- Fertilizers/granules

## How to secure your savings?

Taking advantage of this timely program is simple:

1. Go to COREUltimateRewards.com, pick your distributor(s) and complete the rebate form.
2. Submit rebate form.
3. Lock in savings through September 2023.

**With Corteva Ultimate Rewards, the power is in your hands.**

™ & ® Dimension is a trademark of Corteva Agriscience and its affiliated companies. State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension® apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions. © 2022 Corteva.







To-do list, completed.



Bucket list, in progress.

**You could spend more time at work. But now you won't have to.** With proven, effective herbicides, insecticides and fungicides from Corteva Agriscience Turf & Ornamental, you won't be reapplying. You'll get more done in less time – and you'll have service and support the moment you need it. So you can make time for other things. Find more time at [corteva.us/lawn](https://corteva.us/lawn).

**SPECIALTY HERBICIDE** **Dimension<sup>®</sup>** **Crew<sup>®</sup>** **Defendor<sup>®</sup>**



<sup>™</sup> and <sup>®</sup> Trademarks of Corteva Agriscience and its affiliated companies. Crew<sup>®</sup> is not registered for sale, distribution or use in New York. State restrictions on the sale and use of Crew, Defendor<sup>®</sup> and Dimension<sup>®</sup> apply. Contact your state pesticide regulatory agency to determine if a product is registered for sale or use in your state. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions. © 2022 Corteva. CT38-000-025 (08/22) BR CAT02TURF051



# BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Selecting the right way to visualize data can be the difference between useless numbers and effective communication.

By Jimmy Miller

**A**t the press of a button, modern software is capable of generating hundreds of insights that landscape contractors can use to monitor the health of their businesses.

It could be sales team data like closing percentage, cancellations or discounts; it could be statistics tracking the call duration account managers have with clients; or it could be metrics on how efficiently the crews are out doing the jobs.

But all those numbers are completely worthless without being able to understand them. That's why Caitlin Justice, the director of finance at Blades of Green Lawn Care and B.O.G. Pest Control, walked Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference attendees through data visualization best practices. The advice she offered could help a contractor communicate the story numbers tell and let data guide their decision-making process.

Caitlin Justice, of Green Lawn Care and B.O.G. Pest Control, explains the benefits of using the right chart or graph to review data.



YouTube  
See it in action!  
[youtube.com/JRCOINC](https://youtube.com/JRCOINC)

QUICKLY ATTACHES TO JRCO MOUNT BAR (Sold Separately)

### Make fall clean-up a breeze with the Blower Buggy Carrier!

The JRCO Blower Buggy Carrier is designed to hold walk-behind blowers on the front of zero-turn and riding mowers. Move yard debris with speed and ease while riding on the buggy's heavy-duty tubular steel frame. The Blower Buggy adjusts to fit most walk-behind blowers.

## DO MORE WITH YOUR MOWER!



AERATORS

BLOWER BUGGY

DETHATCHERS

LEAF PLOW

SPOT SPRAYERS

SPREADERS

TRANSPORTER

SUN CANOPY

**JrcO**  
Heavy-duty Attachments  
for Commercial Mowers

See all JRCO mower attachments online!  
(855) 386-2745 • [JRCOINC.COM/LAL](https://JRCOINC.COM/LAL)

ACCENT LIGHTING  
**TOUCHSTONE**

# Paver Lighting

micro  
**Bullet**



Simply notch cut the corner of the paver

- 12V AC/DC
- 1W, 2700K LED
- ALUMINUM/GLASS
- WATER-PROOF



Innovative Outdoor Lighting Solutions  
Made in USA

**TouchStoneLights.com**  
info@TouchStoneLights.com  
**888-475-2112**

©2022 TouchStone Accent Lighting, Inc. All Rights Reserved





# Real Growth. Real Success.

Software and Marketing Services for the Green Industry



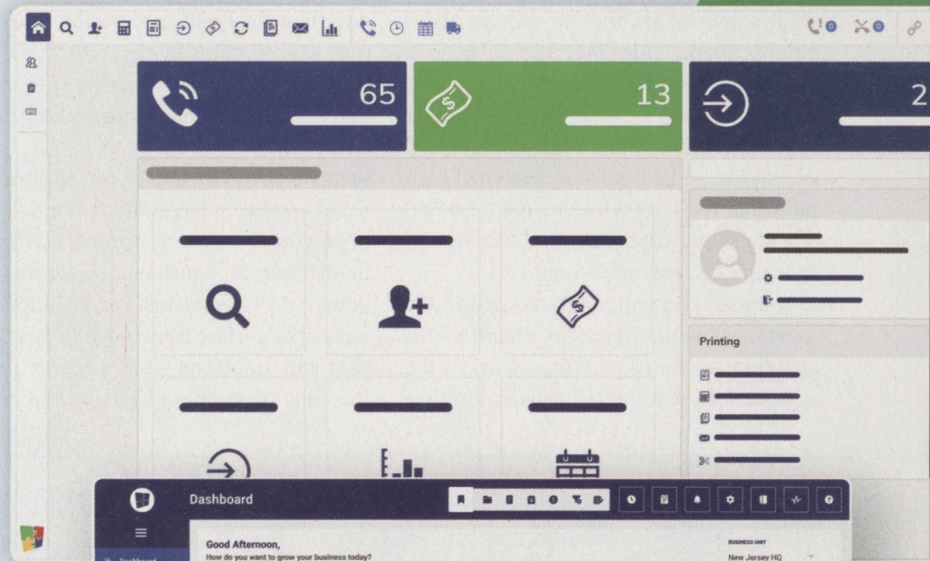
Since Real Green started in lawn care back in 1984, their goal has remained the same: to provide you with the solutions you need to grow and manage your business. From print to marketing to scheduling to billing and more, Real Green's full suite of integrated solutions is made with you in mind.

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



Real Green Lite is your lawn care business startup kit. Designed for your growing lawn care, landscaping or lawn maintenance business, Real Green Lite will save you time, money and effort. With a quick setup and easy-to-use interface, it was built to drive your success.

[realgreen.com/lite](http://realgreen.com/lite)



Scan here to find out how Real Green can help you do more, sell more and grow more!

**CONTACT US**  
[realgreen.com](http://realgreen.com) • (888) 345-2154



Marketing • Scheduling • Routing • Payments • Forms • Customer Portal



## SHOW RECAP

"It's critical to be able to turn (numbers) into meaningful insight," she said.

**CHOOSING YOUR CHART.** Though there's plenty of variations of these charts, Justice offered five basic types of visualizations: line graphs, number/gauge charts, bar charts, maps and heat maps.

Line graphs are mostly used to show how numbers change over a period of time. Justice showed an example comparing Blades of Green's cancellations year over year. Each colored line represented a different year, and the y-axis represented each month of the year. Visually, Justice could quickly show what years had the highest cancellation rates and when.

Number and gauge charts could help quite simply show how close a team is to its goal (i.e., we've sold this much, here's the end goal). They're often stylized to look like

a gas gauge in a car, showing how much of the variable remains.

Bar charts, like line charts, are also used often to compare multiple variables, though they're better served in comparing and contrasting data differences rather than a change over a set period (i.e., how many clients have cancelled in just one year and which month, rather than a year-over-year analysis). Maps are great for showing data that deal with geographic numbers (i.e., cancellations by zip codes), and heat maps can show data density (i.e., where on your website people are clicking most).

**WORDS OF WISDOM.** It's not all about the numbers; Justice reminded attendees that once you've built a graphical analysis of data, it's about figuring out what the story being told even means. For instance, they were able to effectively prove to their team that cancellations were a big problem. But they were able to solve the problem

because they determined the root cause.

"You look at it and go, 'What is going on?'" Justice said. "This is a great communication tool for our team."

Justice recommends some basic judgment when deciding how to showcase the numbers. For example, green numbers are often associated with good data, while red numbers will often communicate that the numbers have a negative connotation.

Additionally, she warned attendees that not everything is a key performance indicator - in other words, don't just send out a bunch of graphs and hope someone knows what to do with the numbers. Provide strong recommendations and divide up the work among your team to let each division handle the data most significant to them.

"You need to make sure that the data that you're sharing is being shared with those that's directly affecting those individuals," Justice said. "If you share too much information, it's going to be overwhelming."

*Continued on page 83*



**GRIDIRON™**  
Custom Tool Storage

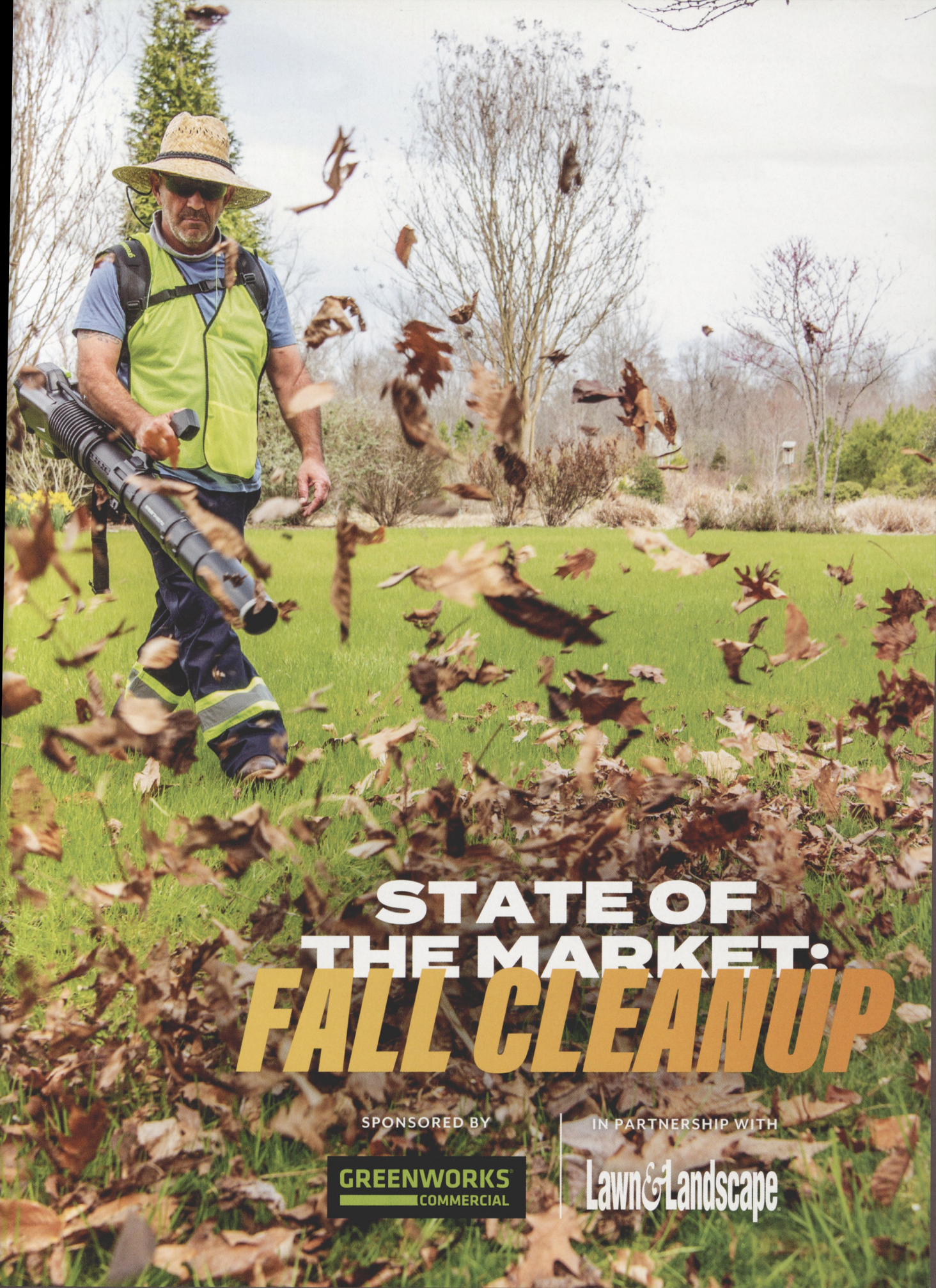
**PROSLIDE XT**  
(844) 240-8695    GridironCTS.com



**DEERPRO®** The ONLY one that works  
WINTER ANIMAL REPELLENT

**One application lasts ALL WINTER!**  
learn more at [DeerProProfessional.com](http://DeerProProfessional.com)





# STATE OF THE MARKET: *FALL CLEANUP*

SPONSORED BY

**GREENWORKS**  
COMMERCIAL

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Lawn & Landscape





By Kim Lux and Jimmy Miller

# CHANGE OF SEASON

The 2022 State of the Fall Cleanup Market shows you are raising prices and racing against the weather.

**A**s the busy summer season comes to an end, crews begin gearing up for fall cleanup services. Companies all over the nation are having to combat labor decreases and struggles, along with scheduling and competition concerns. Some are going out to service properties multiple times this fall and others are keeping the service exclusive to pre-existing clients. As inflation continues to be an issue, most are raising prices for fall cleanups as well. And, like most everything within the green industry, weather can play a major factor on the success of the season.

*Results based off approximately 220 respondents. Not all answers will total 100% due to rounding.*

## VENESSA ANDERSON

co-owner, Alaska Premier Services, Anchorage, Alaska

**GROWTH HAS SHOT UP THIS YEAR FOR** the full-service landscape company, and Anderson hopes that'll continue as fall approaches. The company achieved 53% growth year-to-date.

Anderson acknowledges this growth wasn't always easy to obtain as inflation and other factors caused the company to increase prices for all services — including fall cleanups.



"Historically, we raise prices about 3% or so. We've never wanted to raise them significantly and have to shock our clients," she says. "But everyone knew this year we had to. This year we raised our prices anywhere from 15%-35%. We lost a decent amount of clients to that, but we've also gained a decent amount of clients."

For the clients who've stayed, fall cleanups have always been a popular service. They appreciate having the crew that's taken care of their lawn all summer prepare it for winter. Anderson says she sells the service to clients as a money saver down the line.

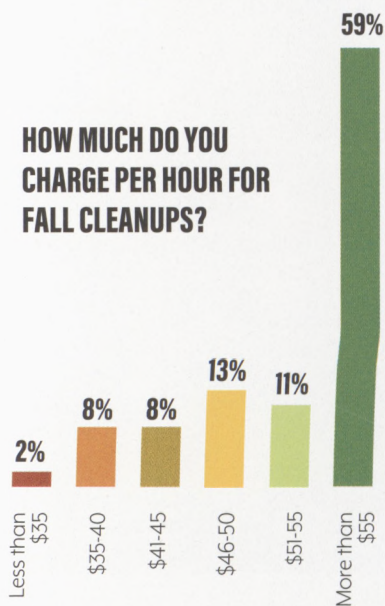
"The way we communicate it to clients is if they get their fall cleanup done this year it saves them money come springtime," she says. "We do have an upcharge where we increase the cost of a spring cleanup if a fall cleanup has not been done. And that's just basically because it'll take significantly more time to do the spring cleanup if there are a ton of leaves."

According to Anderson, the bulk of Alaska Premier's fall cleanup work comes from existing clients.

"I'd say about 85% are existing customers from our summer maintenance service,



## HOW MUCH DO YOU CHARGE PER HOUR FOR FALL CLEANUPS?



and maybe an extra 15% are new clients," she says.

Going into the fall cleanup season, Anderson predicts the two things to have the biggest impact will be weather and labor. This is the same every year, she notes.

"In Alaska, it's a race against the weather," she says. "Last year we had our first snowfall very early, so that put a damper on our fall cleanups. We had to split them in half, which this year we're really hoping doesn't happen.

"Our biggest challenge is that short timeframe we have mixed with labor," Anderson adds.

While the company had no problems finding employees early on in 2022, that isn't the case anymore and they're desperate to fill those roles and get new employees trained before fall.

"We have a pretty aggressive recruiting strategy. So, we're hiring new employees and trying to train them while doing fall cleanups," she says. "It's kind of tough because we always tend to lose some employees toward the end of the year."

Anderson says the best way to get the newbies trained fast is by sending them out with her husband, and co-owner, Mike.

"We've been sending them out with my husband, and he will personally train the new hires and spend time with them," she says. "It's hands-on direct training."

## JEFF DELINE

president, J&R Property Services, Cicero, New York



**DELINE SAYS HIS COMPANY DOES** hundreds upon hundreds of fall clean-ups every year. They have 10 mowing crews and five landscaping crews.

"We'll take our landscape crews and have them do our first round of clean-ups because there aren't that many of them," DeLine says. "Then when get to having hundreds of them, then each crew is doing seven to 10 a day."

And DeLine says crews are working on cleanups right up until the first snowfall.

"There's many years we're doing fall cleanups right up until the first snowfall and we'll switch all the equipment in the middle of the night and get on with snow," he says. "That's a headache when that happens."

The most requested time for the service is between Nov. 10-20, as most of the leaves have fallen and customers are eager to get rid of them.

"The customers that want to wait until later in November, we tell them if we end up getting a snowfall that makes it more difficult to clean up there will be an additional charge," DeLine says. "It depends on the weather and how bad it is."

And communication is critical when it comes to keeping customers abreast of how the weather will impact fall cleanups.

"We always believe in transparency with our customers," he says. "We can very easily send group emails to all of our fall clean-up customers and let them know the status. So, it eliminates questions, and we can give them better timeframes...this way the customer knows what to expect and we aren't just showing up like most companies do."

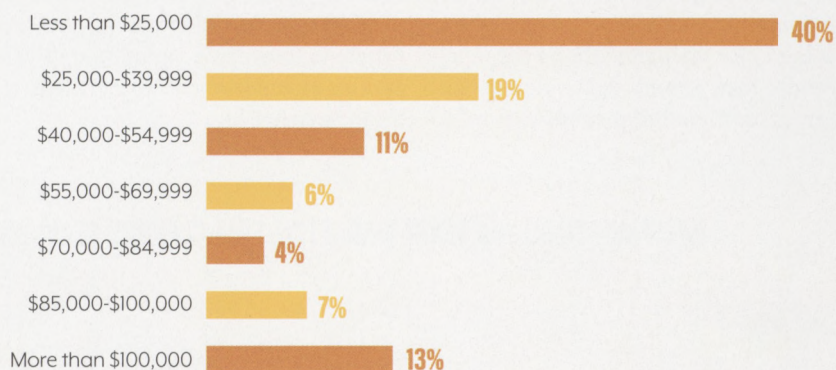
DeLine adds that the service is so popular the company is oftentimes turning down work.

"Once we fill up for X number of weeks, we stop taking them on," he says, "because then it becomes difficult to promise to get them done, and then we have to go back and tell the customer we aren't going to make it. We try not to do that."

Before, DeLine recalls having crews go out during mid-winter thaws and finish up some last-minute cleanups.

"We've had some seasons a couple years ago where, if we got snow, literally the moment it'd melt, we'd be back out there doing fall cleanups. The latest we've ever done one is January. Sometimes you get those thaw outs, and sometimes it's not possible because the snow comes, and it stays," he says.

## WHAT IS YOUR TYPICAL ANNUAL REVENUE FROM FALL CLEANUP SERVICES?





# EDWARD ARENS

owner, E&M Outdoor Services, Monticello, Minnesota

**WITH MOST OF HIS CLIENTS BEING BIG HOAS**, Arens says his crews perform their fall cleanups periodically as opposed to just once a year.

“Some of the properties, if we didn’t go out multiple times, there’d be a heavy amount of leaves for one time,” he says. “But HOAs like that nice, neat appearance, so we’ll always go twice sometimes three times in the fall.”

And while most clients appreciate this dedication, Arens notes he has noticed there isn’t the “wow factor” like there is when just one fall cleanup is performed.

“They like the periodic, but although I do think customers find a better satisfaction in that one-time event because they see all those leaves in their lawn and then we come and are there for a few hours and then when we’re gone, their lawn looks amazing,” he says.

Arens says he sells most of his fall cleanup services in the springtime when crews are performing spring cleanups and customers wish their lawns looked better after a long winter.

“It’s a great upsell in the spring,” he says, “especially when we’re doing spring cleanups. When we go do a spring cleanup for a new customer and there are wet, heavy leaves to pick up, that’s when I sell a fall cleanup. Then not only did we do a spring cleanup for them but they want us back



in the fall so we can do other services for them next spring.”

This fall though, customers can expect to pay more for their cleanups.

“I try to have at least a 3-5% increase, but this year we’ve decided to increase them 12%,”

he says. “Gas is so much higher now. We expect gas prices to remain high going into fall and throughout December and January. Then we’ll re-evaluate for the 2023 season.”

Arens notes customers are usually understanding of the increases, as it’s impacting their lives in other avenues as well.

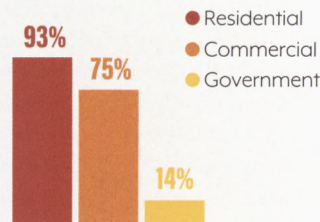
But, Arens says his market is making things more difficult, as other companies offer prices he sometimes can’t compete with.

“A lot of people just do fall cleanups cheap to keep their guys busy in the fall. I have no problems with that... but in our area there is such fluctuation,” he says. “There is some wide variations, and I’m sure it’s probably worse in other areas, but it can be a challenge.”



E&M Outdoor Services has increased its fall cleanup rate by 12% in 2022 due to high demand and rising costs.

## WHAT TYPE OF FALL CLEANUP SERVICES DO YOU PROVIDE? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)



## DO YOU ONLY PROVIDE FALL CLEANUP SERVICES TO THOSE WHO BUY OTHER SERVICES FROM YOU?



## WHAT MONTH DO YOU START MARKETING FALL CLEANUP SERVICES/DEALS? (TOP 5 MONTHS LISTED)

SEPTEMBER

35%

AUGUST

25%

OCTOBER

17%

JULY

6%

NOVEMBER

5%





82LM25S-8DP  
82 Volt 25" Self Propelled Mower  
Kit includes: (1) 8Ah Battery and  
(1) Dual Port Charger

**greenworks**  
COMMERCIAL **82 VOLT**  
LITHIUM **MAX**

## PRODUCTIVITY. POWERED BY GREENWORKS.™

**2X MORE TORQUE TO POWER THROUGH YOUR FALL CLEAN UP!**

- Dual blade design for up to 30% better mulching
- Heavy-duty 25" steel deck
- 2 in 1 cutting system: mulch or rear bag
- Dual port battery system with automatic battery switchover
- Self-propelled with variable speed rear wheel drive

Purchase online at [greenworkscommercial.com](http://greenworkscommercial.com)



## RICK CHASE

president, Chase Lawn Care,  
Fenton, Michigan

**AT THE HEIGHT OF THE LANDSCAPING SEASON**, Rick Chase has helped employees as they handle mowing and fertilizing in Fenton, Michigan.

But in the fall, when he's clearing leaves out of yards and flower beds, Chase is flying solo. By the time he reaches the first week of November, it's all on him. He'll keep doing fall cleanup until he stops getting phone calls or once the weather stops cooperating. Each property he services takes him roughly 2.5 hours.

"Sometimes (fall cleanup) is into December, sometimes it's into January," Chase says. "It really depends on what Mother Nature is doing to us."

Ever since he left the golf course management industry 15 years ago, Chase has operated his lawn care company. For the last eight years, he's done fall cleanup — but not once has he advertised the work. Existing customers will ask about the services that he tacks on as an add-on, or people will call around this time of year hoping to get Chase to come out.

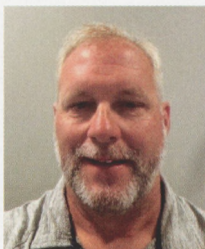
"They usually call me. I've already had a couple new clients," Chase says. "I have had one new client just last week ask me about fall cleanup."

Chase admits he's unsure if he's charging enough for his fall cleanup services, joking that nobody's given him pushback for raising prices this year. It's either they all understand that's the cost of doing business these days — inflation is rampant beyond the green industry — or that he's simply one of the cheaper options around.

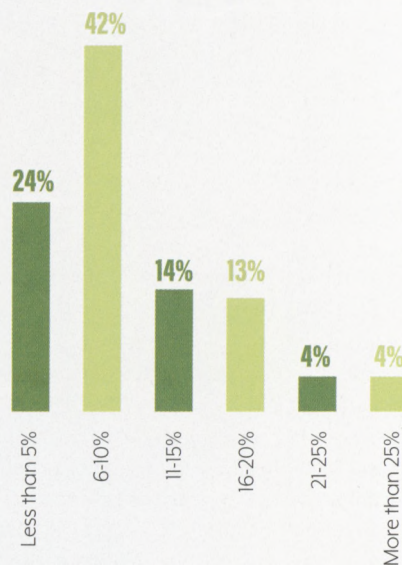
But he's still seeing a bit of a bump in total customers. During the height of COVID-19, Michigan was one of the more restrictive states nationwide, so he didn't see the dramatic uptick in clients that others saw across the country. However, he has still seen a steady incline, including 15 new customers this year alone. He assumes many of them will add on fall cleanup services even though he hadn't thought much about it by mid-September. He has roughly 20 clients who request fall cleanup as it is.

One of the things Chase also faces is scheduling problems. As a one-man show in the fall, it's difficult to manage fall cleanup services as it is, let alone the fact the weather can be wildly unpredictable. In past years, he's even done some fall cleanup services in early spring because the delays have been so dramatic.

"If it's crappy out we just don't go out, and I try to wait until it dries up a little bit, so we don't tear up the lawn picking up all the leaves," Chase says. "It's very hit and miss in the fall."



### HOW MUCH HAVE YOU RAISED PRICES ON FALL CLEANUP JOBS COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?







## JOSH POOL

chief operations officer, Timberline Landscaping,  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

**JOSH POOL PREVIOUSLY WORKED IN THE KANSAS CITY AREA**, so he knows how difficult fall cleanup can be in the Midwest. There, larger trees deposit mounds of wet leaves that can kill spots of lawns over the winter season.

“Here it’s a lot of evergreens,” says Pool, now the chief operations officer at Timberline Landscaping in Colorado. “You still have deciduous trees, but it’s nothing like back east. We don’t have big, mature forests.”

With 75 employees servicing roughly 180 maintenance accounts (some residential, some commercial), Pool says Timberline has built fall cleanup services into their full-service accounts. In other words, if you want Timberline to come out and do the final mowing before the winter, you’re going to sign on to a year-long contract.

The team transitions into fall work on Oct. 15, which includes one final cut before winter comes, ensuring the lawn isn’t too long or shaggy before getting buried in snow. They start shutting down irrigation systems and blowing them out to clean them, too.

“We get calls all the time wanting us to come and do their fall and spring cleanups, but manpower-wise, there’s not enough time for us to take away from our full year contracts,” Pool says. “It’s just not worth it, dollar-wise or customer relations-wise.”



That strategy has still worked to their advantage; Pool says they’ve received plenty of new clients who agree to full contracts because they want someone to help out in the fall right away. At Timberline, they’ve trained account managers to explain that fall cleanup as a standalone service is out of their contract, but that they can add them in to the fold now if they agree to sign on for next season.

That’s led to lots of peace of mind, Pool says, adding it helps them plan out for the following season knowing who’ve they’ve already got booked for the spring.

“It’s a good lead in to get you next summer’s work already booked and sold,” Pool says of fall cleanup services.

Pool says another reason they’ve moved away from offering fall cleanup as a standalone service is because they don’t have the labor to keep up with the demand. He says the company is heavily dependent on H-2B, and when they were denied that in 2020, they essentially cycled through 400 employees just to stay staffed. Though things have stabilized from that hiring nightmare, Pool says it’s better to not bite off more than they can chew.

“There’s definitely more demand,” Pool says, “and it’s all a matter of labor.”

Miller is associate editor and Lux is assistant editor at *Lawn & Landscape* magazine.

**HOW DO YOU ANTICIPATE THE AMOUNT OF FALL CLEANUP JOBS YOU’LL HAVE IN 2022 COMPARED TO 2021?**

8%

A LOT MORE

43%

SLIGHTLY MORE

39%

SAME AS LAST YEAR

7%

SLIGHTLY LESS

1%

A LOT LESS

1%

DROPPED FALL CLEANUP





82BA26-52DP  
82-Volt Dual Port Backpack Blower  
Kit includes: **(2)** 5AH Batteries and  
**(1)** Dual Port Charger

**greenworks** COMMERCIAL **82 VOLT** LITHIUM **MAX**

## POWER THROUGH FALL CLEAN UP

**THE MOST POWERFUL BACKPACK BLOWER ON THE MARKET!  
20% LESS WEIGHT THAN COMPARABLE GAS MODELS.**

The Greenworks 82-Volt Dual Port Backpack Blower provides incredible Power and Performance, with 195 mph max air speed and 690 cfm max air volume, while remaining 2.5x quieter than a gas-powered blower.

Purchase online at [greenworkscommercial.com](http://greenworkscommercial.com)



Continued from page 74

# KNOWLEDGE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Making the most of technology can help you boost profitability and make informed business decisions. **By Kim Lux**

**W**ith more than 18 years in the green industry, James Manske, owner of Elkhorn Lawn Care, knows how to generate more profit.

"For the first 15 years, I thought I knew everything," Manske said. "But I was wrong. And I didn't know I was wrong."

With anything, but especially technology, Manske said it's about first changing yourself before attempting to change your team.

Manske advised companies on how to use tech to improve processes while understanding the data and building your team concurrently.

"With every process in business you can reduce cost, increase output and define new sales all of these things you need to think about as you build your process documentation," he said.

**MAKE THE MOST.** Having a new client process cycle can be useful. Manske said it

starts with identification before moving into estimating, routing, completing the job and then billing and follow-up.

"You can take this and run with it and create sub processes for all of these things," Manske said.

Using follow-up as an example, a sub process might include making lists, establishing email/phone scripts, scheduling time to reach out and then converting these follow-ups into more sales.

"You need to have all this worked out so

**QUALITY MATTERS.**

**COXREELS®**

**EVERY TIME.**

**DURABLE. RELIABLE. HOSE, CORD, & CABLE PRO GRADE REELS**

**MADE IN THE USA SINCE 1923** We Are the Preferred Choice of Landscape and Lawn Care Professionals.

**SOLUTIONS FOR:** LANDSCAPE | IRRIGATION | FERTILIZERS | SEEDING | WASH DOWN | PEST CONTROL AND MORE

**LEARN MORE:** [www.coxreels.com](http://www.coxreels.com)

**TOLL FREE | 800.269.7335**

**FOLLOW US:** [Facebook] [Instagram] [LinkedIn] [YouTube]

**Work here. Thrive here.**

**SAVATREE®**  
We Care For What You Love

"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](http://savatree.com/careers)



SHOW RECAP

that a five-year old could do it," he said. "It has to be as easy as possible."

And once you have that overview it's easier to improve process times and document stats. This can lead to creating key performance indicators and identifying areas of improvement.

"I ask why for every single thing in every one of my meetings," Manske said. "Think about what areas have high cost. What takes the most time? And what's overcomplicated?"

Utilizing any and all technology from CRM, to estimating programs, GPS tracking and routing software, companies can truly understand its data and use it to grow.

"There's so much tech you can put into any portion of your business," Manske said. "You might only need one right now and that's great. But you will need more when

you grow. The first thing you should look for is what you need the most help with."

Storing data, or intellectual property, is the next portion of utilizing technology. Manske compared it to a vault so you can keep everything together. He added that this even allows for more efficient training.

"Without having a system to show you what your data is you can't analyze to make accurate decisions as a business owner... and you can't create a pricing structure without knowing what your costs are," Manske said.

And the more knowledge the better. Manske said he took the business from a simple one-page P&L to an elaborate 11-page one that broke out by every division and how it relates to profitability.

"This might be a good thing to do in the off season," Manske recommended. "The

more detailed you get, the more effective you can get in order to take you to the next level."

Manske said with the detailed P&L, you can see what shifts in the company need made. A service might need cut, or prices may need increased. It can also be used to identify top performers and double down on marketing in certain areas.

"All this comes from having a great CRM for great financial software," Manske said.

The 10% rule is another thing that can be analyzed from this detailed reporting. Manske explained the rule states no customer should allot for more than 10% of your revenue.

"I'm the devil's advocate; I want to make sure I'm protected," he said. "If it's less than

*Continued on page 88*

POWER UP YOUR SOIL

MAXIMIZE YOUR FERTILIZER EFFICIENCY



MOVING FERTILITY FORWARD

High Performance Plant Nutrients  
Fertilizers • Specialty Products  
Soil Amendments



GreeneCountyFert.com  
BUY/SHIP DIRECT

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



Cross Conveyor

- Mulch
- Sand
- Stone
- Topsoil
- Compost

- COMPACT DESIGN
- ECONOMIC VERSATILITY
- ENGINEERED IN INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE



Dump Trailer



Rear Discharge

www.SmartGateConveyors.com





YOU'RE BUSY.

# Let us do the layout for you!

We're here to help you check all the boxes, from initial sketches and bill of materials to product selection and final lighting design – our layout and technical team are with you every step of the way.



## How to get started

Send us a design request form, drawings and photographs and we'll create a professional landscape layout for you.

| Learn more at [Kichler.com/APS](https://www.kichler.com/APS)



© 2022 Kichler Lighting LLC. All Rights Reserved.

**KICHLER.**



ADVERTORIAL



**Ed Bryant | Unilock Founder**  
November 30, 1935 - January 28, 2021

## Laying a Foundation for Inspiration

When our founder Ed Bryant introduced the revolutionary UNI-Stone® paver to the North American market more than 50 years ago, he established Unilock as the hardscape industry leader.

Since then, Unilock has continued to set the standard for innovation, groundbreaking products and designs, and unmatched field support, and we're just getting started!





**“Our relationships with contractors have been a cornerstone of our company’s long term success.”**

~ Ed Bryant, *Unilock Founder*



**DESIGN LEADERSHIP**

Unilock has always set the standard with revolutionary products and design concepts. A decade after launching UNI-Stone, Unilock introduced Classico®, the first circle paver system. Following this was the introduction of our cutting-edge line of geometric forms, as well as the banding technique and design manual we initially dubbed “Paver Quilting!” Nearly 20 years ago, we debuted our Elegance products, which uses proprietary Reala™ technology, with paving products cast from actual flagstone, brick and cobblestone molds for a unique surface texture. Ultima™ concrete guarantees our products are up to four times as strong as conventional poured concrete. Finally, contractors can elevate their design creativity with our patented U-Cara® Multi-Face Wall System, to easily build fire features, pillars, retaining walls and more.

**INNOVATION AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION**

From the introduction of our first facemix technology, to our award-winning U-Cara Multi-Face Wall System, Unilock has led the pack with a vast array of exclusive paver and wall products, coatings and finishes that are beautiful, unique and fully customizable to fit any outdoor project. Our products fuel the creative expressions of hardscape contractors and we are proud to have played a part in creating countless beautiful spaces over the years.

**FIELD SUPPORT**

From the very beginning, Ed Bryant believed that the long-term success of the industry would depend on high-quality installation. Unilock has provided contractors with hands-on training through our Authorized Contractor program, forging a mutually beneficial partnership with the very best in the business. Our local Unilock Territory Managers are available by phone to help contractors succeed in their projects and businesses. Getting our boots dirty is part of the promise we make to our contractors, so no request is too big or too small.



Connect with a local Unilock Territory Manager for personalized support  
**1-800-UNILOCK** or **UNILOCK.COM**





SHOW RECAP

Continued from page 84

10% of total sales we can easily pivot, and it won't create a big impact."

Leading into that is identifying your top personas or ideal clients. Manske said use the data you're collecting to identify key characteristics in these customers to market for more of these clients.

It's also useful in building your team.

Manske breaks it down into three elements — attract, reward and retain.

Attracting is using online employment sites and social media to boost recruiting. Manske added that referrals are another great way to attract new staff. Elkhorn has brought in over 18 new employees this season with a robust referral program.

"I'd much rather pay out people," Manske said.

Using the data, if staff are meeting KPIs, then it's time to reward them. You can also utilize progression charts to entice staff to want to move up the ladder.

"If you show them that in the beginning, they won't want to just be a laborer all their lives," he said. "If they don't know where they're going they're going to feel stuck. You need to motivate them."

Adding commissions at all levels of the business is another way to reward staff and can be easily tracked through proper software.

"I want people to make money beyond just clocking in and clocking out," Manske said.

Retention is a huge component of success. Manske said clear mission and vision statements and a good culture help with this, along with regular team meetings where the staff can review all the data being collected.

"All this can happen once you start looking at the big picture," Manske said. "There is always a lifetime of opportunities at your fingertips."



Technology Conference attendees networked on the show floor during receptions.

## Let Us Be Your Guide To Sell Your Landscape Business

### Get to know Tom Fochtman, Ceibass, CEO.

Yes, even in this environment, there's never been a better time to sell. Obtain a valuation. Let us guide you to receive top dollar. Catch a bigger future. Call Tom today: **303-974-7577**. No one is better connected with buyers in the green industry. [Ceibass.com](http://Ceibass.com)



## GET TO KNOW CEIBASS

Catch a Bigger Future.

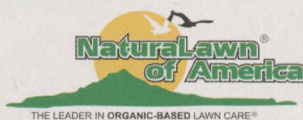


FRANCHISING OPPORTUNITY

## We're Looking FOR YOU

### Just ONE SPOT left for New Owners' Training in September!

There's never been a better time to join the Naturalawn® of America family. With major markets available, discover why owning and operating a franchise is the right choice for you.



(800) 989-5444

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



2 Additional Revenue Sources Available



Safer for Pets & the Environment



Avg. Gross Revenue Per Owner: \$2.2M



DIY Products Also Available



# MAKE LIGHT WORK OF HEAVY LIFTING.

With operating capacities ranging from 600 to 3,100 pounds, and dozens of versatile attachments, Ditch Witch® stand-on skid steers will shoulder the bulk of your load—working harder so you don't have to.

**Ditch Witch® . We're In This Together.**



SK600

SK800

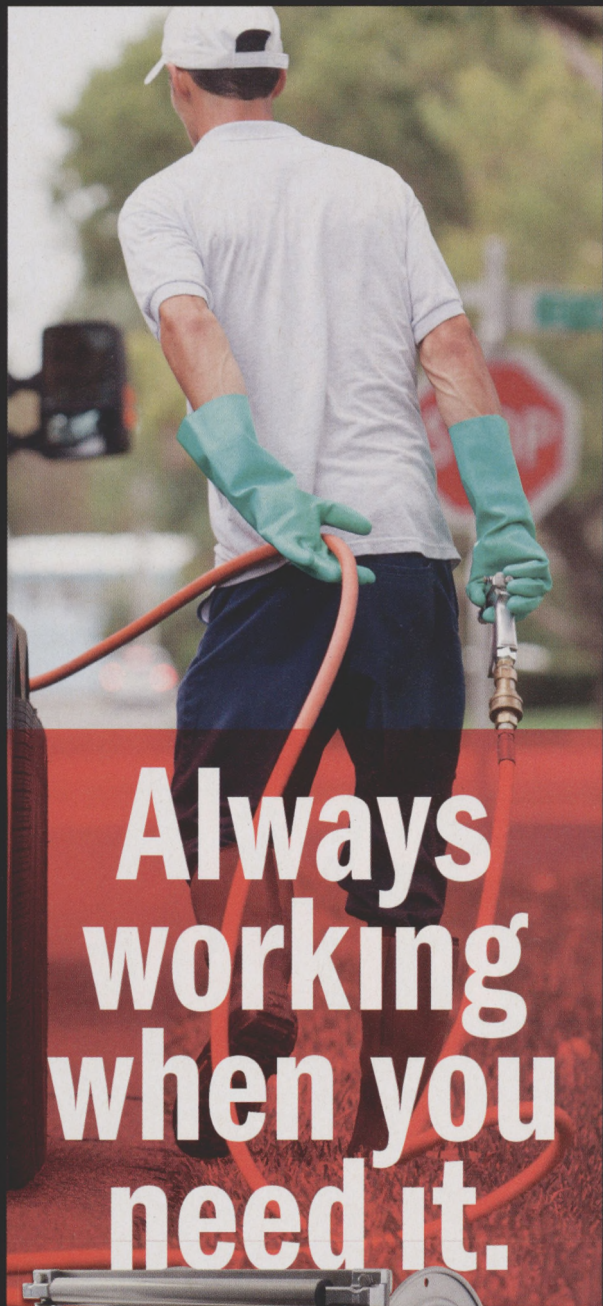
SK900

SK1050

SK1550

SK3000





Always  
working  
when you  
need it.



Stainless Steel  
Spray Non-Corrosive Reel



**Hannay Reels®**  
The reel leader.

[hannay.com](http://hannay.com) | 877-467-3357

**Lawn & Landscape**  
TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

## SHOW RECAP



Attendees gathered on the trade show floor to meet with roughly 50 different exhibitors during the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference.

## FAST FORMS

Automating forms in sales and beyond has helped save Image Works Landscape Management valuable time.

By Kim Lux

**T**ime is the one thing every company wants more of. Mike McCarron, founder of Image Works Landscape Management, notes companies don't value time until it's too late and they are losing money.

"We were so worried about trucks and everything else running well that we didn't realize the back of house wasn't running well and we were losing a lot of time trying to manage the office part of the business," he said.

Establishing custom forms can be a benefit as standardization saves time and gets everyone on the same page.

"If you create a form everyone is now using the same language so that's ease of use," he said.

McCarron added that it also helps to manage clients' expectations because the communication is consistent all the way through the process.

"Information flows very smoothly," he said.

McCarron noted it took Image Works a few years to perfect the custom forms they are using today. He said it takes time to get the right level of detail into them.

One example of a custom form they are using are hiring forms. Before the forms were in place, McCarron said whoever took the call or was sitting at the office desk when a prospective employee came in took down their information.



# Neely Coble Company

Now part of...



## 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' Deluxe Landscape



19' Landscape w/Removable Dovetail



12' Landscape Dump



12' Dump w/Removable Dovetail



18' Enclosed Landscape



19' Irrigation w/Pipe & Fitting Boxes

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

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



Speed.  
Value.  
Trust.

**ISUZU**  
TRUCK



**SHOW RECAP**

“We probably lost good people because we weren’t ready to capture that information from them quick enough,” he said.

So now there is a dedicated tablet at the front desk where prospective employees can fill out an application right there. McCarron noted that the applications, and really any documentation, needs to be multi-lingual.

“It’s easy for the front office to intake anybody at any time now,” he said. “You also can assess whether someone is good with a tablet right from the start. It’s a quick analysis because all of our techs in the field use tablets.”

Now that it’s all digital, it’s also easy to store the applications so they can find potential candidates when needed. And it eliminates any illegible handwriting as well.

On the sales side, custom forms help with consistency.

“We wanted to keep narrowing down the information and make it more and more accurate and consistent,” McCarron said of why they created the forms.

For most companies, speed may be the goal when it comes to giving estimates.

“These can be sent out within minutes,” McCarron said. “If you’re quick and efficient, the work will sell.”

And that helps Image Works rake in a ton of additional work in the \$100-\$700 range that they were just blowing off before because they didn’t have time to capitalize on it McCarron said.

“Work gets approved so fast now,” he said. “The quicker response time will allow you to sell \$40,000-\$70,000 more per account manager.”

These forms can also be beneficial during times of high fluctuation in pricing.

When fertilizing prices were skyrocketing, McCarron said they were changing their prices on the forms weekly. But having the custom forms kept everyone aware of these increases.

Image Works noticed that account managers were not upselling — leaving money on the table. So, a new custom form was established specifically for them.

“And it shows clients how a site has progressed since our company has been caring for it,” McCarron added as all the forms are sent to clients post visit.

McCarron noted it’s also helpful with turnover, as the forms are the same regardless of which account manager is handling a site.

According to McCarron, since implementing these custom forms, Image Works has saved over \$14,000 in direct labor savings between the sales department, front office and account managers.



**GrassRoots**  
TURFFRANCHISE.com



**Join Our Family, Secure Your Future!**



**WITH GRASSROOTS, YOU ARE IN THE LAWN CARE BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF BUT NOT BY YOURSELF! ALLOW OUR TEAM TO BE THE ROOTS TO YOUR SUCCESS!**



- Residual Income
- Customer Call Center
- Industry Innovation Leader
- Ongoing Training & Support
- Corporate Sales Center
- In-House Marketing Team



For More Information call our founder, Josh  
**770-215-2338**  
**WWW.GRASSROOTSTURFFRANCHISE.COM**



**TAKEUCHI**  
From World First to World Leader

# BUILT FOR PERFORMANCE



## TB235-2

The TB235-2 has an operating weight of 7,418 lbs, a dig depth of 10' 7.8" and a max reach of over 17'. It also comes equipped with a multifunction monitor, triple flange track rollers, heavy duty blade and a spacious automotive interior that provides all day operator comfort.

Visit [takeuchi-us.com](http://takeuchi-us.com) to find your nearest dealer.

## Low-Rate Financing

**ON ALL MODELS  
CALL FOR A RATE QUOTE**





**Dr. Jesse Benelli, PhD,**  
Bayer's Green  
Solutions Team

# Get to know **TETRINO**

The new product from Bayer controls pests through ingestion.

**Dr. Jesse Benelli, PhD,** Bayer Green Solutions Team

If you've ever read the classic Children's Book, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," then you are familiar with how pests can become a problem.

"You have this hatchling, this caterpillar that eats anything you put in its way in the book, and that's essentially the fall army worm," says Dr. Jesse Benelli, PhD, with Bayer's Green Solutions Team. "Then it gets really big. It's feeling sick, then it needs to pupate, but instead of pupating into a beautiful butterfly, it pupates into an adult fall army-worm moth, and then the cycle will start all over again."

Benelli says one advantage of using Tetrino against fall army worm is you can get up to a 60-day residual control of the pest.

"In most years, that's a one and done approach," he says.

Here's more on Tetrino, including how it works, what it can do when combined with Bayer's COR3 and more.

## **What should lawn care operators know about Tetrino?**

To start off, the active ingredient in Tetrino is tetraniliprole. I bring this up because that active ingredient falls under the group 28 insecticides, which includes a number of really

high-performing products. But what separates Tetrino is this molecule was discovered, developed and manufactured by Bayer.

To have a group 28 diamide chemistry, which is what Tetrino is – what you know from that is it's going to have extended residual control at a very affordable cost, especially compared to some of the current standards on the market. Not necessarily from a cost perspective against contact insecticides like pyrethroids, but those longer residual products, it's an excellent solution at a very affordable price.

## **How does it work on white grubs?**

We offer excellent control across a full spectrum of white grubs, because depending on where you are, you may be dealing with Japanese beetle, European chafers, Asiatic garden beetles. And we have data that supports very strong activity of Tetrino against those using just one application. But what's really neat about Tetrino is in the lawn care space. This is probably more important down South or along the coasts is we control white grubs. We control fall army worms, black cut worms and sod web worms – all types of caterpillars. But really for the first time we have a group 28 product

**"... IT'S GOING TO HAVE EXTENDED RESIDUAL CONTROL AT A VERY AFFORDABLE COST, ESPECIALLY COMPARED TO SOME OF THE CURRENT STANDARDS ON THE MARKET."**

— DR. JESSE BENELLI, PHD, WITH BAYER'S GREEN SOLUTIONS TEAM



that actually has some real activity against both the hairy Chinch bug up North and the Southern Chinch bugs down South, which can be a huge problem.

### How does it work with COR3?

You can't really start talking about COR3 until you have an understanding of the problems that Chinch bugs can create. The COR3 program was built in mind for the lawn care operators that, among other things, battle the Southern Chinch bug, which in the Carolinas, you can have four or five, six or seven different generations of Southern Chinch bugs. In Southern Florida you could have 10 generations of Southern Chinch bugs a year.

And what we know about the Southern Chinch bug is that there is no silver bullet against that pest. And Tetrino is not necessarily a silver bullet against a Southern Chinch bug, but what would be the closest thing to a silver bullet is a program like the COR3. It uses three different modes of action – or three different insecticide classes – to combat not only Southern Chinch bugs throughout the year, but other things like sod and web worm and grubs that you could face.

With Chinch bugs, however, when we designed the COR3 program, we knew we wanted to include our new pyrethroid insecticide, which is Barricor. The active ingredient in that is deltamethrin. We know that has strong activity against the Southern Chinch bug. We know that Merit, a neonicotinoid, has strong activity against Southern Chinch, but we were missing that third element.

And what we needed out of that third piece of the puzzle is something that can provide some efficacy, some control in a program against Southern Chinch bugs, but also control some of the caterpillars and, and grubs that we may be facing. So really for the first time we have an affordable diamide insecticide that you can include in a Southern Chinch bug management



program. So that's kind of where the COR3 program was started. It's having not just three different products, but three different chemistry families controlling a Southern Chinch bug.

### How does it kill the pest?

There are contact insecticides, which would be a pyrethroid. Tetrino is not a contact insecticide. For it to work, the insect actually has to absorb that material and they do it through feeding. So, it works through ingestion. They'll attempt to feed on a treated plant material and as they feed, they're taking up that product and it causes immediate cessation of feeding. That's how that controls the insects. It works through ingestion.

Where it stands out from other group 28 insecticides is it works very, very quickly, whether that is caterpillars or white grubs. The other products that are group 28 chemistries, the manufacturer will recom-

mend that you put these down months ahead of before you'll even see the adult beetles.

For a Japanese beetle, instead of applying an insecticide in April for Japanese beetle, which is a problem in July, with Tetrino, you can essentially point and shoot. You can actually gauge the adult flight in season and make a decision if you think you need to spray or not. So, it works very quickly. It doesn't need to be in the soil months ahead of time. You can point and shoot. You see the insect, you can apply it and get strong activity.

### ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS.

Bayer Environmental Science, a Division of Bayer CropScience LP, 5000 CentreGreen Way, Suite 400, Cary, NC 27513. For additional product information, call toll-free 1-800-331-2867. [www.environmentalscience.bayer.us](http://www.environmentalscience.bayer.us). Not all products are registered in all states. Bayer, the Bayer Cross, Tetrino, Barricor and Merit are registered trademarks of Bayer. ©2022 Bayer CropScience LP.

LEARN MORE AT [ES.BAYER.US/TETRINOLAWN](http://ES.BAYER.US/TETRINOLAWN)



## PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

Implementing a new software can be a tedious task, but a worthwhile venture to improve efficiencies throughout a business. **By Kim Lux**

Installing customer relationship management software has made a major impact for The Finishing Touchez.

While it may have been a long process, Sarah Eckles, director of creative projects, and Jennifer Day, president and CEO, said it's been extremely beneficial.

"Our journey was pretty challenging, and we expect yours might be too," Eckles said. "We hope you won't be discouraged if you run into certain failures."

Before diving into software, most fi-

ancial reporting in the office was being handwritten, and the company felt like it was behind the times. There was data being repeated and just inefficiencies everywhere.

"We had a really, really archaic way of doing business for quite some time," Day said.

With some software background, Eckles decided to revamp the way things were being done. Finishing Touchez started working with a CRM designed specifically for the landscape industry,

But Day admits the first year, the software barely got touched. Even with training, it wasn't being embraced.

Eckles added that it took tracking progress and projects to really get the ball rolling. She took on the role of project manager to do this.

Eckles said anyone working to implement the new software should be in constant communication with one another.

Day and Eckles recognize that having the time to dedicate to a new software can be challenging. So, they decided to really fine-tune the process during the offseason in the winter.

**HITTING A STRIDE.** Once things got on track, Finishing Touchez start utilizing service estimates and timekeeping logs within the software.

"It's reassuring that we're doing things right," Eckles said of using these features.

With this real-time data, the business

## Check Out the New Way to Load & Unload Safe, Efficient, & Simple



Call Us: (704) 844-0900

### A Ramp That Makes Sense

- Opens and closes in seconds
- Makes loading & unloading a breeze
- Widest and tallest ramp system in its class
- 2,200 lb weight capacity
- More platform space to keep you & your equipment safe
- Available for ProMaster, Transit, and Sprinter models



Check Us Out at the... EQUIP EXPO SHOW October 18th - 21st Booth # 28088



# LESS IS MORE.

LESS HASSLE. MORE REWARDS.

What a concept. Prime Rewards uses a simple points-to-dollars system to help make earning your rewards quick and easy. Just choose from any of our 18 most popular products — plus newly registered Sublime™, Quintessential® and Surmise®. SpeedPro XT herbicides and AzoxyBio™ fungicide — then redeem your rewards online and you'll get gift cards that you can spend anywhere, any way you want. It's Time to Prime.



SIMPLICITY  
THE SOURCE  
MATTERS

PROGRAM DATES: SEPTEMBER 1 – DECEMBER 2, 2022 • MORE INFO: [THESOURCEMATTERS.US](https://thesourcematters.us)



## SHOW RECAP

also rolled out a bonus program for crews who completed projects faster than the allotted time.

“Because we had this bonus pull, it incentivized the staff to use the timekeeping app correctly,” she said. “It was a good way to marry the objects we had with buy in from the staff.”

Day and Eckles admit that having this software in place when the COVID-19 pandemic hit was a relief.

“It allowed us to focus on whatever our staff needed during those uncertain times,” Day said.

They also recommend breaking the implementation down into phases so that it seems less overwhelming. Start with one segment of the business and track that for a season before moving on to the next.

Eckles suggested any company looking to bring in software should start by estab-

lishing three things — an assignment log, software enhancement log and a monthly to-do list.

The assignment log lists due dates, priorities and a brief description. It can also function as a meeting agenda by filtering for specific tasks or staff members.

“Any time movement happened on a project, we just added to it,” Eckles said. “And we can all see it on a shared drive. It’s been a really instrumental way of keeping me organized.”

The monthly to-do list is also essential for Finishing Touchez.

“We have a lot of things that come up annually, so having a rolling que has helped bridge gaps with our software,” Day said. “Having those deadlines in place stopped us from having to recreate the wheel every time.”

Day said it’s also allowed the company to find gaps in the year where there’s down-

The enhancement log is where Day and Eckles keep track of any bumps in the road with the software. Therefore, they can paste any information learned in a place where everyone can find it.

“It also keeps our software company accountable to us,” Eckles said. “We can see how they’ve been serving us as their customer.”

She suggested sending a copy of the enhancement log to any new representatives from your software company.

By adding this software, both Day and Eckles said it’s allowed them to get back to what they love doing and spend less time worrying about the back-office tasks.

“The road for us hasn’t been easy but has been steady and exciting,” Eckles said. “While any software journey is going to have its challenges — we hope we’ve convinced you it’s worth it.” **L&L**

Miller is associate editor and Lux is assistant editor at Lawn & Landscape magazine.



## THE DEATH OF GAS.

For years it's been promised. Foretold. Predicted. Well, it's finally here. We've unlocked the true potential of Battery Power:

- 10x** Battery Life\*
- 2x** Power Output\*\*
- 8** Minute Charge Time\*\*\*
- Zero** Downtime

End your reliance on gas forever.  
Booth 1054.

**Kress**   
**Commercial**

Professional Outdoor Power Equipment and Robotics

\*Up to 10X battery charge/discharge cycles compared to 18650/21700 lithium-ion cells.  
\*\*Up to 2X maximum momentary power delivery output compared to 18650 lithium-ion cells.  
\*\*\*When charging 4Ah or 11Ah Kress® Commercial Batteries with the KAC875 Charger





**EXPAND  
YOUR BUSINESS.  
REDUCE YOUR RISK.**

## **GROWING FASTER TOGETHER**

The demand for residential lawn fertilization & weed control, mosquito control, and tree care continues to be on the rise and yields strong margins. By adding a Spring Green business, to run in conjunction with your existing business, Green Industry owners can diversify their portfolio and accelerate their growth while adding recession resistant, recurring revenue streams.

### **DIVERSIFY WITH THE SPRING GREEN INDUSTRY ASSOCIATES PROGRAM**

#### **Benefits Include:**

- ✓ **NO INITIAL FEES TO JOIN**
- ✓ **\$30K MARKETING LOAN <sup>1</sup>**  
*WITH UP TO 50% LOAN FORGIVENESS*
- ✓ **EQUIPMENT FINANCING**
- ✓ **NO CONVERSION REQUIRED**

**equip**  
**EXPOSITION**

Come see us at  
**Booth #597**  
for the Equip show!

To learn more about the Spring Green Industry Associates Program and the benefits of owning a Spring Green business call **1-800-777-8608** or visit [www.spring-green.com/associatesprogram](http://www.spring-green.com/associatesprogram).

<sup>1</sup> See 2022 FDD for specific details.

This information is not intended as an offer to sell, or solicitation of an offer to buy, a franchise. It is for informational purposes only. Currently, the following states regulate the offer and sale of a franchise: CA, HI, IL, IN, MD, NY, ND, OR, RI, SD, VA, WA and WI. If you are a resident of one of these states, we will not offer you a franchise unless and until we have complied with applicable pre-sale registration and disclosure requirements in your jurisdiction.







# IDENTIFYING IMPROVEMENT

**Environmental Management** achieved more than 30% growth in 2021 by prioritizing enhancements in all elements of the business.

By Kim Lux



As EMI set its sights on high growth over the past few years, a focus on employee recruitment and retention has allowed them to achieve this. The company has a goal of expanding its team to 450 people in 2022.

**2021 WAS A BANNER YEAR FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**, based in Plain City, Ohio. With a focus on growing the company not only financially but culturally ahead of its 30th anniversary (in 2022), EMI surpassed expectations and achieved 32% in growth for the year.

The company also expanded, adding its fourth location in the Columbus area with its Columbus East Branch.

The growth in 2021 also allowed EMI to reinvest within the company. They are now building a new sales building at their main headquarters and new operations buildings at several branches. It landed EMI at no. 51 on this year's annual Top 100 List.

This heightened growth can be attributed to a myriad of things, but senior staff say the biggest motivators were defining the company's ideal customer, a focus on recruiting and adopting EOS — the Entrepreneurial Operating System.

**A PICTURE-PERFECT PROSPECT.** Taking the time to define its ideal customer was a gamechanger for EMI. With a plan to provide more all-encompassing work to its commercial client base, management had to take the time to determine what made an ideal client then evaluate current customers and revamp its bidding process.



# "THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THIS MACHINE PUMPS OUT IS INSANE."

– Jamie Hageman, Manager, GreenLawn



**THE NEW TURFCO T5000 APPLICATOR** is the growth machine you've been waiting for. Designed for larger properties, the high-capacity T5000 sprayer/spreader is easiest to learn, the best on hills, fast and nimble. Add an optional 3-in-1 tank and spray up to 300,000 sq. ft. with one fill. With a 10-ft effective spray width, increase your productivity by up to 29%. Precision steering and patented boomless design lets operators maneuver in tight areas and zoom past obstacles, but won't tear up turf like a zero-turn. Call us now at **(800) 679-8201** or visit **Turfco.com**

**COME SEE US AT EQUIP EXPOSITION 2022**

October 18-21 / Louisville, KY / Outdoor Demo Area #6264D







“It allows us to bring more consistent deliverables across a broader scope of services,” says Sean Cramer, director of sales. “It’s about doing a more quality-rounded service from a maintenance standpoint, which encompasses snow, and the enhancements that go along with that.”

Eric Klopfer, EMI’s director of snow and maintenance operations, said the company focused on finding clients who wanted a long-term partnership rather than someone to show up so many times a month and mow the grass.

“We did not want those people who sign on for one year and then you got to go bid it out again,” he notes.

Klopfer adds that by pushing to offer more all-encompassing work, they were able to form stronger long-term contracts with new and existing clients.

“We now have three- or five-year partnership deals for some of the largest sites in Central Ohio...who previously with other vendors were on just one-year deals,” he says.

EMI entices customers into these long-term contracts first by educating them on the value of having a trusted partner and not just a vendor working for them. They also review the mutual benefits of keeping and retaining team members, lower year-over-year price increases and less paperwork/legal documents to sign associated with them.

“Many of our clients are invited to attend our annual team member appreciation party so they further grasp the level in which we care about and for our teams and the impact their partnership has on our team members and their families,” Klopfer says.

But like with any change, Klopfer admits there were some customers who EMI had to walk away from as they no longer fit the bill of an ideal client.

“We found out that some customers did not want long-term partners and they just want a commodity that you buy,” Klopfer says. “So, there were some decisions we had to make where people had been with us for a while but didn’t want to sign on in a timely manner, so we had to move on from them.”

Now when EMI goes out to bid, Klopfer says there are two main things to be considered.

“The first piece is, will they be with us?” Klopfer explains. “If they’re just looking for a piece of paper with numbers on it, then we’re not going to have that conversation. The second piece is scope of work. It needs to be really all-encompassing from fertilization of the turf all the way down to irrigation services...when we pull up to the sites, we want it to be our jobs that we’re presenting — not a 24-mow occurrence where they do their own fertilizer.”

Even though EMI has their ideal customer pretty well established, Cramer says it’s an ongoing process and something that

they are always revisiting as a team.

“We talk monthly about how to have better qualifications for the bidding process,” he says. “So, we are pretty choosy on finding the right clients before we just provide quotes. We’re asking enough questions so that we aren’t just going out and spinning our wheels.”

Cramer adds these questions can be as simple as: How is your current provider not delivering on what you expected, and how often is the opportunity open for bid?

Klopfer and Cramer both say the move has paid off tremendously as it’s rapidly grown EMI’s other service divisions such as flowerscapes, water management and winter services.

“Irrigation has grown 300% for us in the past three years just by adding these clients that have that scope of work to their business,” Klopfer says. “By finding larger sites that have the irrigation and then going out and being very proficient in what we’re doing on those irrigation sites has changed the market as well for us.”

The more encompassing service packages are a win-win for clients too, Cramer adds. EMI has better retention now that they are seeking these more valued relationships.

“With these customers where we have long-term partnerships and a large scope of work, we’re retaining about 95% of those,” Cramer says. “And our close rate





WANT AN EASY WAY TO TACKLE  
MORE JOBS WITH ONE MACHINE?

# PROBLEM SOLVED



TORO® DINGO®  
TX 1000

TORO.COM

©2022 The Toro Company. All Rights Reserved.



**“WE’VE HIRED 185  
PEOPLE. OF THAT WE’VE  
ONLY LOST 10 PEOPLE.  
OUR GOAL IS TO REACH  
450 EMPLOYEES  
THIS YEAR AND WE’RE  
ON TRACK.”**

**— ZACH ROHR, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, EMI**

for new business is in excess of 50%, which for some places, 10-15% is standard. But if you have a quality product and people are willing to talk to you, you can really fine-tune this. You want them to see you as an advisor and be there to help them along the way — that’s really what we’re interested in as partners.”

Crews appreciate this new strategy as they are able to spend more time on fewer sites and provide a higher quality of service.

“At the end of the day, it helps us staff and retain our people a lot easier once we have those relationships in place,” Klopfer added.

**CRAFTED RECRUITING.** And strong recruiting and employee retention is another factor for EMI surpassing its growth goals.

“One of the biggest things with recruiting is we’re recruiting every day,” says Zach Rohr, director of development. “And it’s

not just me who is doing the recruiting — it’s everybody. Everyone within the entire company is a recruiter because they are a walking, talking billboard. They have EMI on their shirts, on their car, and that’s the biggest thing that’s tied into the marketing, too. We’re creating that brand.”

Rohr notes two other useful ways to recruit are utilizing social media and referral programs.

“From the start, it’s about having the opportunity to talk about EMI. We have to build that culture,” he says.

EMI has several different referral programs where employees can earn \$100-\$200 per referral. The company also offers special location bonuses depending on which branch an employee wants to work at and a \$500 signing bonus.

Annabelle Weisgerber, marketing manager, has also been instrumental in improving recruiting by highlighting all of

the benefits of working for EMI on social media. She says posts like the ones showing the construction team using a helicopter to airlift trees onto a rooftop terrace went practically viral and drove an increase in applications.

“One of our objectives this year was to showcase things on our social media that makes us different and would entice people to apply,” she says. “But by highlighting the people, it’s really helped with recruiting. I think our people really take a lot of pride in their work and seeing themselves or their friends on social media has helped immensely. We get told all the time that people are excited about it... People are also so much more willing to share that than just a regular post. That’s given us a lot of traction just in our community as well.”

Concentrating on recruiting has paid off for EMI, as the company has lost only about 5% of their new hires for the year.

“We’ve hired 185 people. Of that we’ve only lost 10 people,” Rohr says of the start of the season. “Our goal is to reach 450 employees this year and we’re on track.”

**BOLSTERING EXPECTATIONS.** With all that hiring comes the need to reorganize internally. To do so effectively, EMI employed a well-known business management system.

“At the beginning of 2021, we really bought into EOS — the entrepreneurial operating system — and went through a process called ‘Traction,’” explains Gary Clark, COO. “That really spoke to defining everyone’s roles, making sure there were proper expectations for everyone within the organization and those expectations had to be quantifiable.

“It’s not enough to just give someone a path. You have to have certain markers along that path so they can feel like they’re succeeding as they reach those markers. As a leadership group, we’ve spent a lot of time in the last 12 to 18 months working on that.”

Clark adds that clearly defining roles for each position has helped improve productivity and communication — along with establishing clearer expectations.

“We’ve found that people are more successful if we put them on one single path and let them work on that task specifically,” he says. “As opposed to in the old



# A HIGHER STANDARD

FROM THE GROUND UP



*More performance, dependability and flexibility.  
Everything you need for a complete system.*

Engineering the world's best commercial irrigation systems starts long before the components go in the ground. It begins with innovative product development and rigorous testing, ensuring durability, reliability and performance. It's about an end-to-end solution that can overcome any challenge, backed by expert support that puts you first.

Higher stakes call for higher standards. Make Rain Bird your first call.  
See why at [rainbird.com/HigherStandard](http://rainbird.com/HigherStandard).

**RAIN  BIRD®**



days where you might've been somewhat responsible for operations and had some sales goals and helped with marketing, too, and stuff like that. We've really done a good job with this EOS system in defining what everyone's responsible for and making sure they're accountable for that."

A key component of EOS is that everyone is assigned mental 90-day "rocks." These rocks are quantifiable goals they are to achieve over the next three months. These goals can range from increase revenue by a certain amount this quarter to interview an established number of candidates to fill a specific open position.

"All the 90-day rocks need to be measurable. It's not, 'Oh I need to be better over the next 90 days.' It's over the next 90 days, I expect to see 15% improvement in this metric," Clark says. "When we meet as a group, we ask people, 'How are you tracking on these goals?'"

EMI holds weekly pulse meetings to review the 90-day rocks and offer collaboration where need be.

"The pulse meetings have about 10 different directors of various departments throughout the company," Cramer says. "And each of them has two or three rocks every 90 days, though a lot of them they are working with other departments to get accomplished. But we can measure success still, and in the first quarter, we accomplished 80% completion of the rocks. It lets you know you're working as one big unit to achieve greater things for the company."

Clark says he feels embracing EOS has brought on a new era of expedited growth for EMI.



"For a company, we grew by 32% and it's our 30th year in business," Clark says. "I never expected or have never seen that kind of growth since we were very young. I think that can all be attributed to us focusing on the little details and everyone focusing on pulling their portion of the weight for that overarching goal."

And the growth isn't stopping there. EMI is projected to see about 20% growth in 2022.

**BUILDING MORE GROWTH.** Something that's sure to fuel some of that growth is a focus on expanding the company's design/build division.

"On the construction side, we continued to keep as much market share as we can but a big thing we've done lately is build up the design/build side of what we do where we're privately designing and privately building," says John Loos, director of landscape construction. "It's a revenue stream we can add to what we've already done. We have a very healthy market share on the bid side, but the design/build is something we can add to."

Brandon Gepper, EMI's director of construction/

enhancement, says he believes this is doable since so much of their construction work comes from the same core client base.

"The biggest thing that has enabled us to grow is repeat business with customers," Gepper says. "We get that not because of our price, but by paying attention to safety and delivering a finished product that is as pain free as possible for the customer."

Gepper adds this is what delivering design/build work is all about — accomplishing the task, getting it done on time and getting it done safely.

"A lot of landscape companies struggle with the commercial construction side of safety and the deliverables," he says. "We've dived in and do our best to be the best at it."

Klopfers says this push for more design/build work will also lend itself to more maintenance work now that EMI is striving to provide more encompassing work to all its clients.

"On the construction and install side, we put a large focus on making sure the installs that we do turn into maintenance recurring revenue after the fact as well," Klopfers says. "That was something that five years ago we might have struggled with, but now it's almost a seamless transition that we are going to do the maintenance afterwards and they are on board." **L&L**

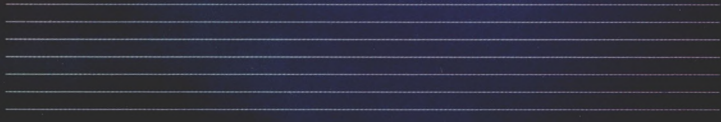
The author is assistant editor with *Lawn & Landscape*.





2022

state of the  
**BUSINESS  
MANAGEMENT  
TECHNOLOGY  
MARKET**



SPONSORED BY



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





# Software Technology Year In Review



**WE'RE FORTUNATE TO LIVE IN A TIME OF RAPID TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION**, and there's no question that modern software continues to transform the industry. That's why FieldRoutes is proud to sponsor this year's State of the Business Management Technology Market report by Lawn & Landscape magazine.

As the lawn care industry grows and evolves, technology's role is more vital than ever. Companies that benefit from time-saving automation are at a significant advantage over those that continue to struggle with antiquated solutions or generic tools that lack key, industry-specific features.

2022 has been an exciting year for FieldRoutes. We officially became a ServiceTitan company and joined forces with ServicePro—which has recently been rebranded as ServSuite® by FieldRoutes. This alignment allows us to collectively better serve our customers and truly become the best-in-class solution for the green industry.

All of us at FieldRoutes and ServSuite® by FieldRoutes are honored to be able to support this industry with the technology needed to grow quickly, operate efficiently, and compete effectively. We understand your struggles today with decades-high inflation rates, high gas prices, and the ongoing labor shortage. We recognize it's important to make the most of what you have available to you right now. That's why we've focused on advancing our solutions to help our customers overcome these challenges.

Lawn-specific features like the ability to optimize routes by vehicle chemical capacity, technician skillset and certifications, and same side of street routing get your team to their appointments quickly and efficiently. They also help minimize drive time, vehicle wear and tear, and fuel expenses—all of which contribute to your bottom line.

To combat the need to hire more sales team members, we've launched the new FieldRoutes™ Mobile app, which enables technicians to service customers efficiently and effectively close more business. It offers the convenience of accepting payments and getting contracts signed in the field, which makes it possible for technicians to start servicing customers the same day.

Our latest feature, Tech Tipping, provides a great way to increase your employee retention by empowering your customers to reward service that goes above and beyond at the time of payment or when a positive review is posted—all without impacting your bottom line.

Among all the results in this report, one of the most important keys to successfully scaling your business to optimum growth is choosing the right software and technology partner. We'd love the opportunity to see how we can help you. Give us a call, and let's talk about the future of your business.

**WILLIAM CHANEY**  
Chief Executive Officer





# Amplify Business:

## TECH TOOLS THAT UP YOUR GAME

Where to start? Business technology is on the move and keeping up is a job. Here's how green industry leaders are vetting, implementing, training and just dealing with all that's new. **By Kristen Hampshire**

**T**aussig Landscape in Wamego, Kansas, was teetering over the \$1-million revenue mark and operating on Excel spreadsheets, basic scheduling tools and QuickBooks—along with plenty of printouts, pen and clipboards. “We had a spreadsheet with an entire week’s work on it and if the wind blew, it’s out the window and lost,” relates Derek Taussig, president of the firm that now has 35 team members. “Then, you’d have to remember what work was completed, the start and finish times, job notes.”

Back at the office, Taussig would input labor hours into QuickBooks, deciphering times written on the fly in crews’ trucks.

**Note:** The survey results are based on more than 100 respondents. Not all survey percentages will total 100 due to rounding.



## HOW MANY EMPLOYEES DO YOU HAVE?

**9%**

100 OR MORE

**10%**

50 - 99

**31%**

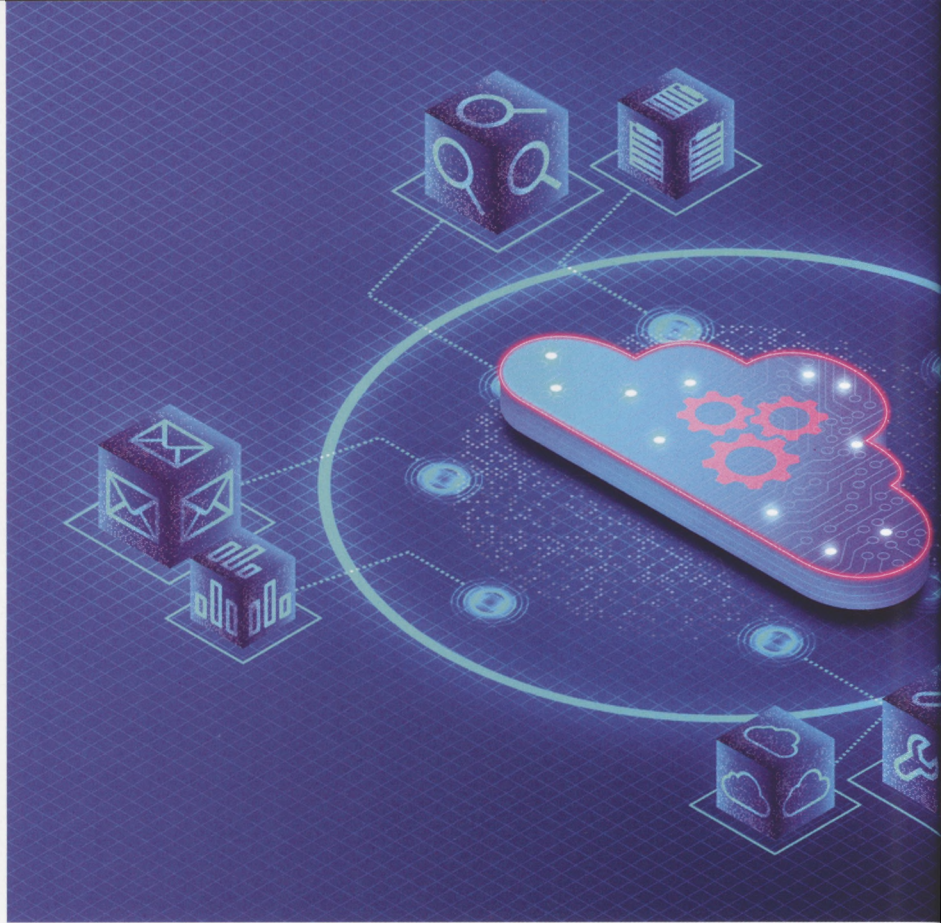
10 - 49

**16%**

5-9

**35%**

LESS THAN 5



Something, well a lot of things, had to change.

So Taussig consulted with an industry adviser he's known for years and took his advice, selecting software that would tie together all the pieces-parts, from scheduling to tracking time, estimating and accounting. "I wish I had done it sooner," he says. "We were a pretty big company to bump up into a system like this and it would have been easier to grow with it."

Since putting the system in place, Taussig says numbers aren't "falling through the cracks," and the company is capturing more billable work. "And it really helps manage the mental side of it all because

there were a lot of details I had to remember and input," he adds. "Now, I can put it in the system and it's off my mind, off my plate and on to the next task."

Beyond software and hardware—smart phones, tablets, laptops—business technology for landscapers also encompasses design tools, cloud-based apps like Google Docs, messaging and meeting hubs like Microsoft Teams and even enabling online stores where customers can click and buy services. Ultimately, the end goal for all this tech is to work smarter and drive revenues.

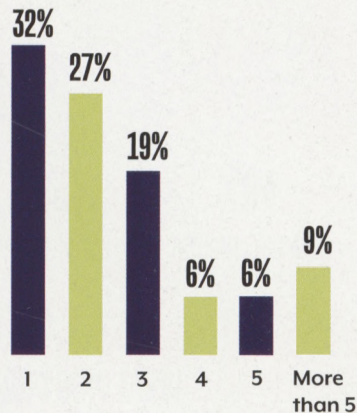
"We are a labor-intensive, field-intensive business and technology helps us manage our growth," Taussig points out.

## WHAT WAS YOUR 2021 REVENUE?





## HOW MANY DIFFERENT BUSINESS SOFTWARE PRODUCTS DO YOU CURRENTLY INVEST IN?



**“WE ARE A LABOR-INTENSIVE, FIELD-INTENSIVE BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY HELPS US MANAGE OUR GROWTH.”**

**DEREK TAUSSIG**

**IMPLEMENTING CHANGE.** Dealing with disparate systems is a common theme, and a need to “pull it all together” is what triggered a software hunt two years ago at Next to Nature Landscape in Olathe, Kansas. President Austin Hall arranged Zoom calls and demos with a few vendors he was considering. “We also talked to companies in our area about what they were using, and they were nice enough to provide their insight,” he adds.

He involved department heads in the vetting process. “We wanted them to see the parts they’d be using so we had a really good understanding of what the software could do for us before we made a decision,” Hall says.

When it came time to implement the system, Hall started the process in the off-season and brought in vendor representatives for training. “The closer we got, we went in with the attitude of the day we went live, we were going all in, 100%,” he says. “We knew there would be a lot of mistakes and some fixes, but we didn’t want our mentality to be, ‘We’ll do a little bit here and there.’”

Hall admits, he didn’t realize how much data his company had collected over the

years. A team of three internal leaders spent a few months entering information into the new system. “It was basically a fulltime job,” he says.

After using the program a year, Hall invited the vendor in for some retraining. For example, the maintenance department reviewed contract templates and how to fill those out. “We gave them more knowledge on how to type in notes and more details, not just the basics,” Hall relates.

The company runs more efficiently now. “We looked at our labor cost by running numbers through July and the labor costs have gone up by 8% but labor percentage has only increased by 1% of revenue,” Hall says.

Purchasing has also improved now that the company knows how much materials are required for every job. “When we were a small company with a lot of pen and paper, everyone was able to do everything, but this software is making us focus on, ‘This is your role,’ and gives our team more focus,” Hall says.

Regarding implementation, Taussig advises hiring a consultant to help put complex systems in place. He tried all winter to get a new software program set up. “We really weren’t there and spring was coming,” he says. So, he enlisted in the vendor’s pro and invested in a 12-hour intensive training session with leaders.

On the other hand, rather than jumping in 100%, Taussig Landscape started with the budgeting and CRM tools, and then came estimating and scheduling. Phasing in the software was easier for his team to manager.

“Now we are at a point where we don’t even use a time clock,” he says, relating that crewmembers use the app to track time. Payroll is also run through the system.

Throughout the process, Taussig Landscape leaned on the vendor’s training videos, available on YouTube in segments that range from a few minutes to an hour of instruction.

Taussig says, “It doesn’t hurt to hire someone to help you implement it properly. It may seem expensive at first, but in the long-term, it will save you money and time.”



## WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED TOOL TO DO OFFICE WORK?

**BEYOND CRM—SMART TECH TOOLS.** Beyond software, business software encompasses hardware and cloud apps—and of course, tools accessible by smart phone that streamline administrative tasks like tracking labor hours. Taussig taps into software that allows the business phone number to ring on multiple devices. So basically, his crewmembers get a company phone within their own phone so they aren't carrying around two devices.

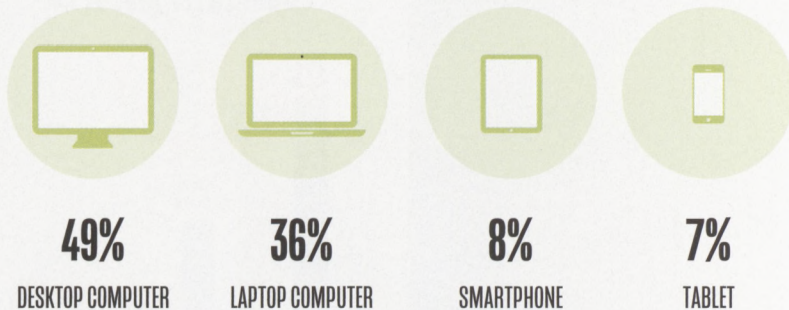
Taussig gives team members the option of a company cell phone or a monthly stipend if they wish. "But most have an unlimited plan so they don't care," he says.

Robert Brandstetter, president of Rob's Lawn Stars in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, has his crew members track time on their smartphones by logging into the online platform. And a real focus for his business is leveraging their online presence. "I have not put fliers out and we consistently get customers calling us because they see us online," he says.

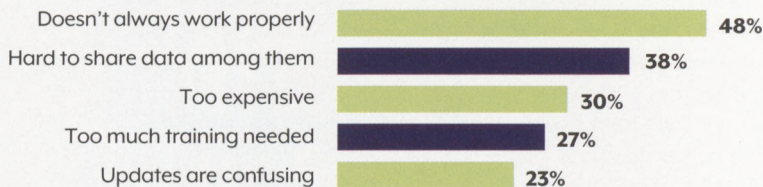
Rob's Lawn Stars invests in Google and Facebook ads. "It's our main source of advertising," he says. He is also looking into ecommerce options so he can power a web store for his mowing services. It would use a mapping device to measure the property. "People could get an instant price and make an instant purchase," he says, hoping to have something in place by 2023.

At Avalon Landscapes in Meridian, Idaho, Microsoft Teams allows crews to communicate messages related to scheduling and routing. "We post all of that information on Teams, and our account managers can get information out to crews for specific details on their projects," says Sean Cooke, general manager.

The company is currently implementing Microsoft Project on the construction side of the business to help streamline processes. "That way we can get budgets rolled out in greater detail and help crews lay out projects from start to finish, what



## WHAT PAIN POINTS DO YOU HAVE WITH YOUR BUSINESS SOFTWARE SYSTEMS? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)



they accomplished each day and how many days it takes to complete the job," Cooke says.

Tapping into the cloud at Taussig Landscape has allowed the company to house forms that everyone in the company can access. And it's free. "As a landscape designer, I can save a design on Google Drive, and if I'm not in the office and a client calls in with a question, anyone can open up the document and answer questions," Taussig explains.

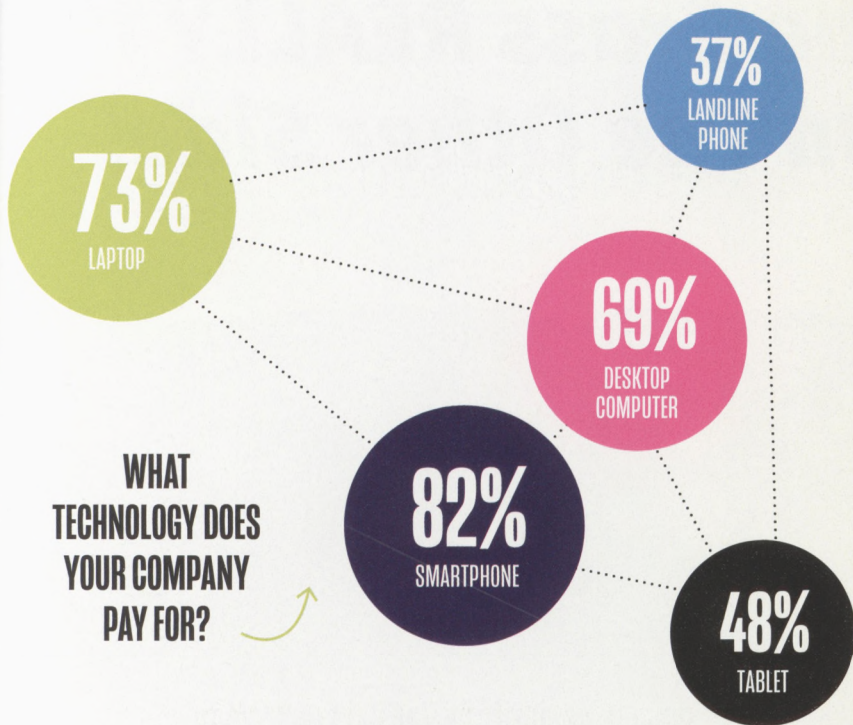
The company drive contains training sheets, employee evaluations, blank forms, the company logo, "everything we need to save for the business is all right there and everyone can access it," Taussig says.

Tech can smooth out HR functions like recruiting, too. Cooke is exploring software with centralized job posting,

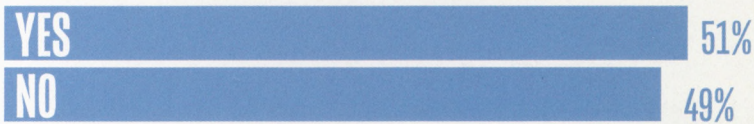
applicant screening and hiring best practices. The company says the platform is "like a dating app for recruiting" with automated pre-screening text message questions that give applicants chances to verify or show interest. "That could really help on the front end when people apply for a job, and it's all automated," he says.

**WHAT'S IT WORTH?** Budgeting for technology can be tough because of the need-it-now factor—a smartphone dies and you're out \$1,200. But there are recurring expenses like subscriptions to apps and software systems that are easier to plan for. Taussig figures \$8,500 per year for subscriptions, another \$4,000 for computers and internet service, and he generally replaces two computers annually. There are eight total in the office, one for each member of administrative staff.





**DO YOU HAVE A “SOFTWARE/TECHNOLOGY CHAMPION” AT YOUR COMPANY WHO RUNS POINT ON THE PRODUCTS?**



“I have a few employees with phones and those usually last only two to three years, but my desktop is 12 years old—it works great and I’ve never had any problems, but that’s not common,” Taussig relates.

For Next to Nature Landscape, gradually adding devices to the fleet of technology has allowed the company to equip the team as they evolve. “We estimate a ballpark of \$10,000 for computers and tablets every year,” Hall says.

Shopping apps, tech tools, software and devices and comparing costs helps the budget for Cooke. “We consider technology ‘ease of use’ because we are paying for something that is not going to produce revenue, so we base the cost analysis on the time it will save us,” he says. That said, the company will budget for hardware this year by forecasting what

needs to be repaired or upgraded. Avalon Landscapes consults with an IT firm that advises on what equipment and software needs to “phase out” or in.

“Whatever we need, they keep us updated,” Cooke says. “They get us software licenses, updates and are essentially a subcontractor.”

Having worked through a major technology integration at a previous company, Cooke knows firsthand that the expertise, time and training required can be costly—but going it alone is even more of an investment with the expense of lost billable working hours.

And at the end of the day, business technology is not only an essential budget line item, it’s what customers expect. As Taussig says, “Anymore, it’s just weird to see someone pull out a paper invoice and write you a ticket.” **L&L**

**HOW MUCH HAVE YOU INCREASED YOUR INVESTMENT IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY IN THE PAST YEAR?**

10%  
A lot

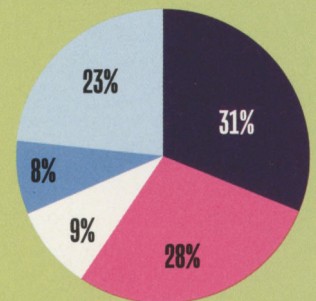
43%  
Somewhat

36%  
The same

1%  
Somewhat less

10%  
A lot less

**HOW LONG AFTER FIRST IMPLEMENTING YOUR CURRENT BUSINESS SOFTWARE DID YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE THAT IT WAS BEING USED CORRECTLY AND EFFICIENTLY?**



- 3 or less months
- 4-6 months
- 7-9 months
- 10-12 months
- More than a year



# *It's True! The Grass REALLY IS Greener On The Other Side!*



## **Lawn Care Software and Integrated Marketing To Automate And Grow Your Business**

As part of ServiceTitan we help all our customers achieve immense success — with software that automates, not complicates.

**Drop by booth #1164 at Equip Expo and be the first to know about the innovative solutions we're building for your business.**



**Visit Us At Equip**

972.630.3342 | [FieldRoutes.com](http://FieldRoutes.com)





While more consumers are looking to add color to their landscape lighting, there is no replacing the traditional look of a warm, white light.

S H E D D I N G   L I G H T   O N   T H E   F U T U R E   O F

# L A N D S C A P E

# L I G H T I N G

Landscape lighting manufacturers say consumers are looking for more color, control and connectivity. **By Gregg Wartgow**

**D**emand for landscape lighting has continued to grow in line with the trend toward outdoor spaces in general, a trend that gained additional steam during COVID-19.

“The industry has evolved from just garden lights to where things are now,” says Mark Hanson, owner and president of TouchStone Accent Lighting. Hanson is referencing how some products now exist for specific elements of a contemporary landscape, from walkways and water features to kitchens, patios and hardscapes.





# TOUGH EQUIPMENT FOR TOUGH JOBS

**LARGE EQUIPMENT DELIVERY | FLEXIBLE RENTAL TIMES | TRUSTED BRANDS**

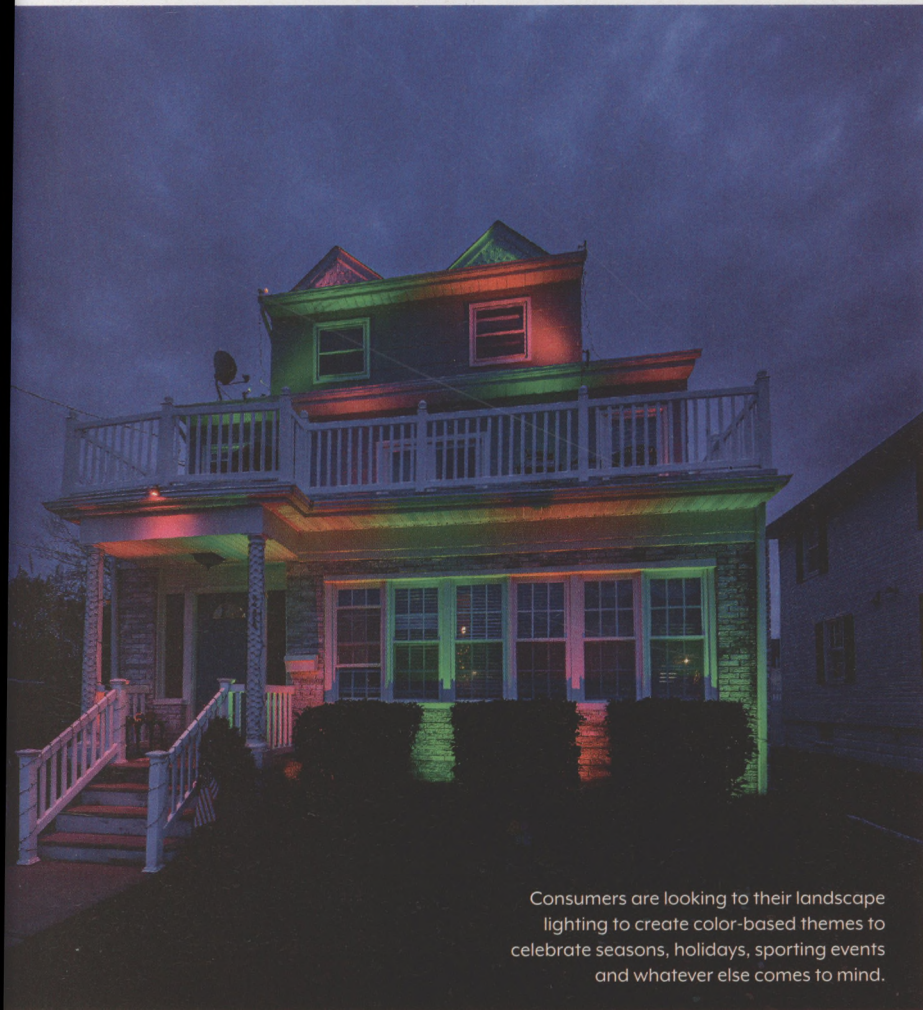
The Home Depot Rental is your one-stop shop for all your lawn and landscaping needs. Rent tools, trucks and large equipment to take on lawn care, landscaping, tree trimming and more. All backed by the performance of brands you trust with daily, weekly and monthly rental durations.

[homedepot.com/rental](https://homedepot.com/rental)



**RENTAL**





Consumers are looking to their landscape lighting to create color-based themes to celebrate seasons, holidays, sporting events and whatever else comes to mind.

Another part of the landscape lighting evolution has been the shift to LED lamps. As a result of that shift, lighting systems have become easier to install.

“With LED, voltage drop has become a thing of the past,” Hanson says. In the past, lighting manufacturers wanted to design a system that would stay just under 12V in order to maintain maximum longevity in the lamps. But now with LED, a system can normally work within a range of roughly 9V to 17V.

“That makes installation easier because you don’t have to run as heavy a gauge of wire anymore,” Hanson says. “In the past,

10- or 12-gauge wire was typically needed, but now contractors can run 14- or 15-gauge which is smaller, lighter and easier to work with. Transformers are also smaller and lighter. Prior to LED, some were as large as 900 to 1,200 watts. Now the typical transformer might be 75 to 150 watts simply because the voltage load on the system is up to 90% less than in the past.”

Another installation-related trend is the move toward surface-mountable LED indicator fixtures. A backplate is mounted with two screws, and then the faceplate simply slips on and is secured with an Allen screw that is embedded into the side of the



## COMPACT TO IMPACT MORE JOBSITES.

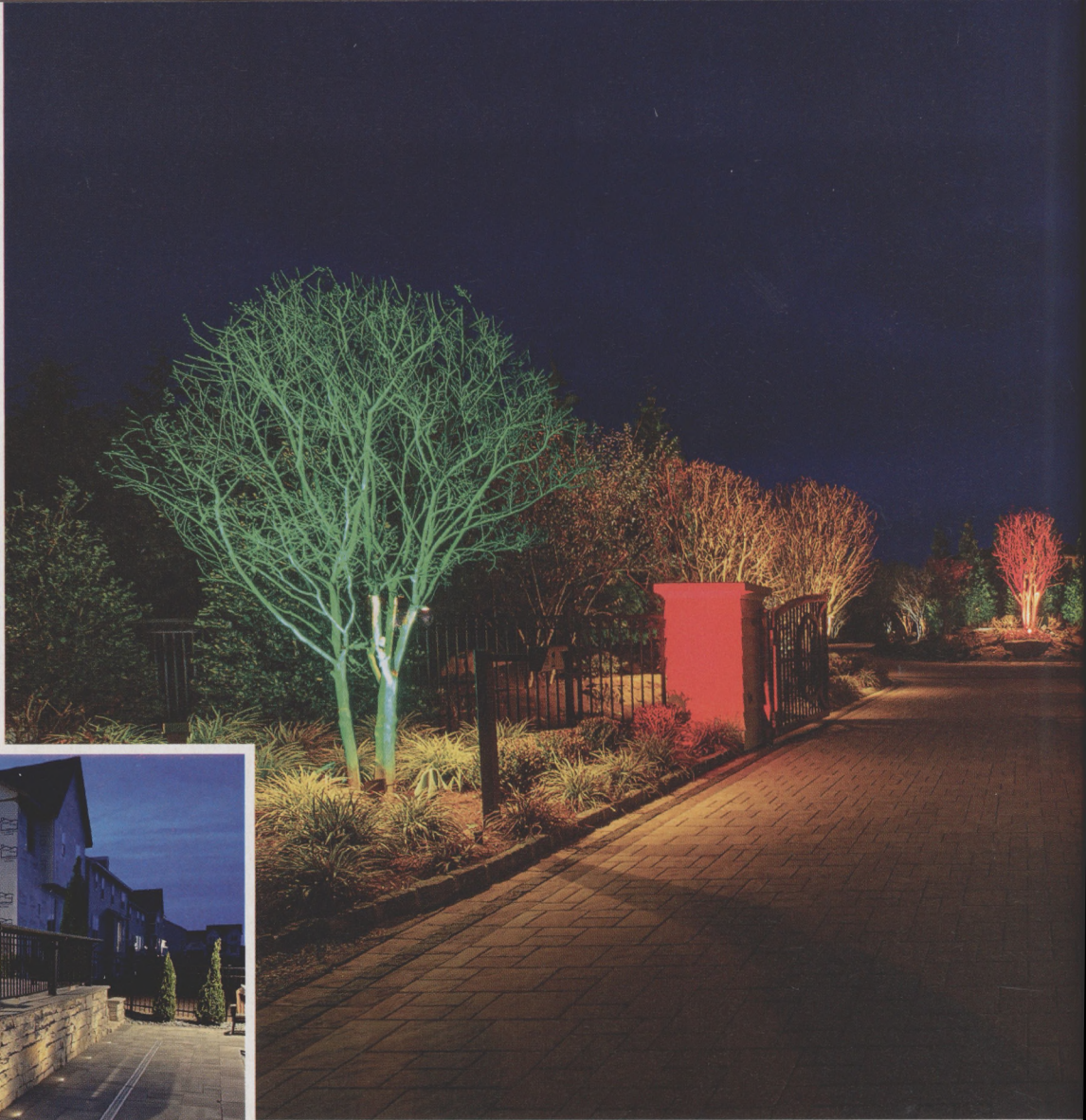
ATX COMPACT ARTICULATED LOADERS THRIVE IN TIGHT SPACES.

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. © 2022 Vermeer Corporation. All Rights Reserved.





**BELOW:** As homeowners look to add lighting throughout the landscape, companies have created specific lighting products for specific landscaping elements, such as these Bullet Lights that are designed specifically for quick installation in pavers and driveways.



top cover plate. That helps save time and money on installation.

“We’re seeing this type of fixture used throughout the landscape,” says Todd Goers, director of sales for WAC Landscape Lighting. “Many people call them ‘marker lights.’ These lights can outline a path, be used as step lights, line a driveway, or be used as a safety marker to denote a change in elevation. They can also be used on

porches, gazebos, decks, piers, porte cocheres, porticos and other outdoor spaces.”

As important as the installation process is, both consumers and their contractors are primarily thinking about aesthetics when it comes to landscape lighting. An interesting trend has been developing here with respect to fixtures.

**BLACK IS BACK.** “The predominant fixture color has been in the bronze family, often a darker brown that blends in well with the landscape,” says David Oborn, sales manager at FX Luminaire. “But now the

whole black-and-white theme is very popular on things like house trim. So now we’re seeing the color of lighting fixtures going to black.”

“Homebuilders are driving the transition,” Goers adds. “Many new homes are gray and black or white and black, and consumers want the landscape lighting fixtures to ‘match’ the fixture color on the house, which is trending black. So black is becoming more popular with fixtures that are visible in the landscape such as path and area fixtures, accents, wall wash and even hardscape fixtures.”

Hanson has been witnessing the same trend. “In the past three years, it’s funny





how black has come back from when it was really big 20 or 25 years ago," he says. But it's not the black finish of the old days. As Hanson says, the popular choice today is more of a black texture, as opposed to glossy black. "It's more of a matted appearance similar to the powdercoated finishes you see on decks. It looks great and is also very durable," Hanson explains.

**COLORED LIGHTS ADD CHARACTER.** More consumers are also looking for a change in the color of the lights themselves.

"Color-changing fixtures represent a trend that continues exploding," says Brian Qualls, national business development

manager at Unique Lighting Systems. "When it first came out, I thought it was nothing but a gimmick. But now my own backyard is even color-changing LEDs."

Homeowners are looking for a range of colors to light up virtually all facets of a landscape, including the architecture. Qualls says this trend has prompted lighting manufacturers to continue offering more color options, enabling homeowners to create a variety of color-based themes geared toward the season, holidays, sports teams, etc. Case in point, Qualls had his yard blanketed in red, white and blue for Independence Day.

Oborn says some homeowners are taken



**MORE  
REACH  
WHEN IT  
MATTERS  
MOST.**

**EQUIPPED  
WITH  
TELESCOPIC  
BOOM**

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. © 2022 Vermeer Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

**Vermeer**





“ H A V I N G  
C O N T R O L  
O V E R T H E  
L I G H T I N G  
B E Y O N D  
J U S T A  
T I M E R I S  
S O M E T H I N G  
H O M E -  
O W N E R S  
R E A L L Y  
W A N T N O W . ”

—BRIAN QUALLS  
NATIONAL BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER,  
UNIQUE LIGHTING SYSTEMS

aback by the idea of adding colored lights to their landscape. “They don’t want some kind of insipid green or obnoxious red all of the time,” he says. “But color can actually be used to enhance the natural colors of plant materials and other landscape features. Color can also be used to highlight water features, statues or other architecture to make things pop even more.”

Once homeowners are educated on the possibilities of using color tastefully, their attitudes often begin to shift. That said, Oborn says the traditional white light is still something homeowners want to continue utilizing as well. When one of the colors of a multi-colored LED is white, homeowners can have the best of both worlds.

**CONNECTED SYSTEMS OFFER APP-BASED CONTROL.**

More consumers are looking to control their landscape lighting through an app. At the same time, many are no longer content with just having their entire outdoor lighting system turn on and off at a certain time.

“We’re seeing more requests for some type of controller that can control groups of fixtures as well as intensity,” Oborn explains. “On the interior of a home, there are often many dimmable switches, allowing the consumer to create themes. That is now extending to the exterior where consumers want different themes for normal evenings, evening entertainment, romance and security.”

With the FX Luminaire system, an app helps control the lighting via Bluetooth or Wi-Fi. Furthermore, the technology allows for lights to be easily groupable, enabling the homeowner to turn certain groups of lights on or off, change intensity or add color.

“Having control over the lighting beyond just a timer is something homeowners really want now,” Qualls says. “Consumers want something they can control from their phones, tablets or other smart devices. They want to be able to adjust the on/off times and other programs, and they want it to be right at their fingertips.”

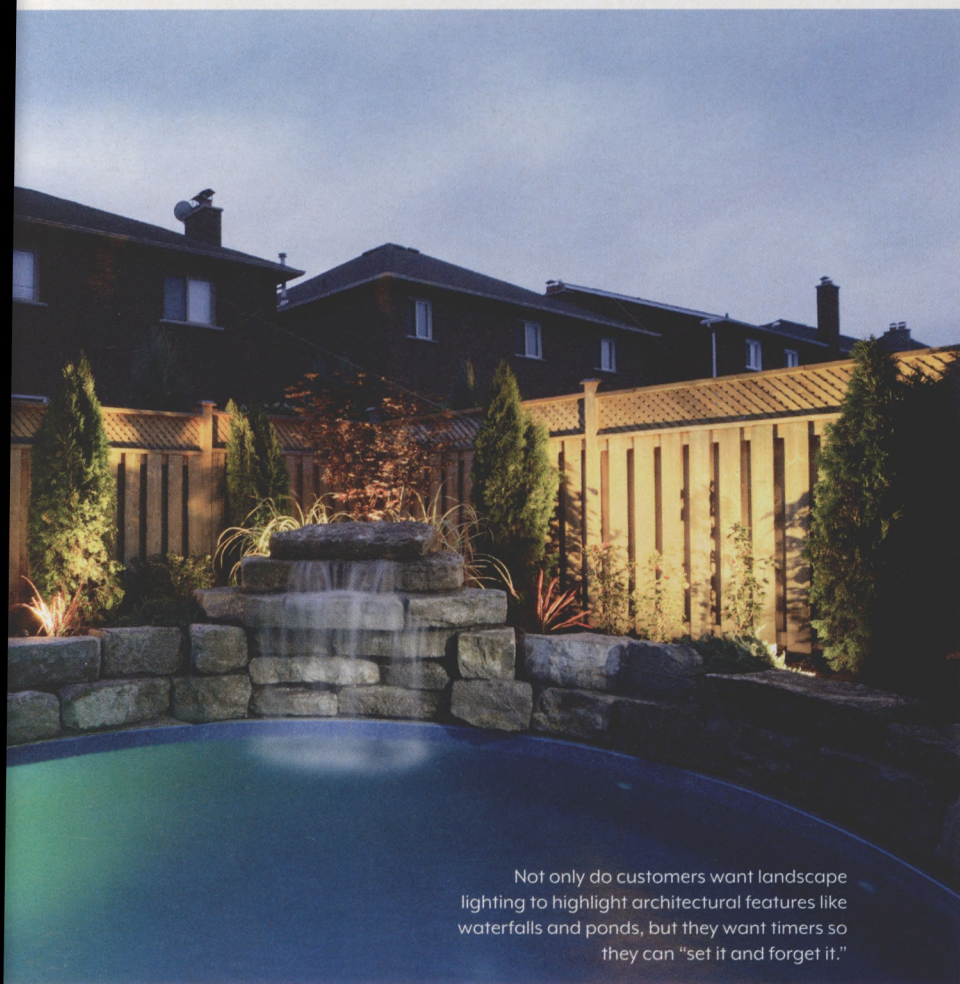
Qualls says Unique Lighting Systems’ cloud-based system is intelligent enough to recognize where an account holder is located. That enables the system to know when to turn lights on and off.

“The system also intelligently knows how to make seasonal adjustments based on location for dawn and dusk,” Qualls points out. Homeowners can also set intricate programs. For instance, lights could turn on at dusk, turn back off at 10 p.m., come back on at 4 a.m., and then turn back off at dawn. Finally, homeowners can use the app to make manual overrides of any preset programs. And because the system is cloud-based, those adjustments can be made from anywhere and at any time.

With WAC Landscape Lighting’s app-based system, the user can control a single fixture or a group of up to eight fixtures. “The technology is Bluetooth from any Apple device directly to the fixture so no Wi-Fi is needed,” Goers points out.







Not only do customers want landscape lighting to highlight architectural features like waterfalls and ponds, but they want timers so they can “set it and forget it.”

While many of today’s homeowners are digital-savvy and love the idea of controlling their lights with a mobile device, some prefer to get a little assistance. In those instances, Qualls says there is an opportunity for the landscape contractor to add value.

“I’ve seen some contractors who became the app account holder for their client,” Qualls says. “Then if the client is having an issue with their lights, the contractor could log into the account remotely and see what’s going on without having to drive over to the property. It’s another way for the landscape contractor to build a lasting relationship with the customer.”

While TouchStone Accent Lighting does offer an app-driven system and demand has increased, Hanson says most homeowners still want a simple, timer-based system that

is just set it and forget it. “We’ve actually had customers ask us to switch them back to an astronomical timer because they never ended up spending a lot of time changing the lights and creating different scenes,” Hanson says.

It’s all about giving today’s homeowners options — from the color of the fixtures and lights to the manner in which those lights are controlled.

**TIMES HAVE CHANGED, BUT THE FUTURE'S STILL BRIGHT**

There is a lot of uncertainty about the economy right now. Some analysts have begun using the phrase “discretionary spending recession,” meaning that with inflation such that it is, more Americans have less money to spend on things like landscape

# LINE UP FOR MORE WORK.

ATX COMPACT ARTICULATED LOADERS

ATX530



ATX720



ATX850



Is the Vermeer compact articulated loader right for your job?

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. © 2022 Vermeer Corporation. All Rights Reserved.







lighting. Whether or not that's true remains to be seen. In the meantime, leading light manufacturers aren't losing any sleep over it.

"A lot of people still have what I call 'COVID money,'" Oborn says. He's referencing the fact that a lot of consumers have been spending more money on their homes, money that historically was spent on travel and going out to dinner and events. While consumers have more recently been spending on those types of items again, there is still a considerable amount of money being spent on home improvement, including landscape lighting.

"While some prognosticators think it's going to be doom and gloom next year, I believe it's going to be more of a correction," Oborn says. "Contractors who had three months of work out in front of them might have one month. That's not a bad thing. For a while now, a lot of contractors have been struggling to keep up. When that happens, quality can sometimes go down a little bit. The nice thing is that people with money will always

see value in a service like this. If things slow down a little bit, quality can actually go up and some normalcy can come back to the business."

Qualls is sensing that the typical consumer still has a strong desire to invest in their home. "I'm seeing more and more backyards that have a resort-like feel," he points out. "Plus, as outdoor lighting continues to become more technologically advanced, contractors have the opportunity to make this landscape feature even more exciting and easier to use. That's why I think the landscape lighting segment will continue to hold its own through any ups and downs in the economy."

"It's going to get dark regardless, so the need for outdoor lighting isn't going to change," Hanson adds. "I also believe that outdoor lighting is moving away from being a luxury item to being more mainstream. There are more ways to accessorize a landscape today, and people are doing that and using the exterior of their homes more. I don't see that going away, and lighting is just one more way to help people enjoy their outdoor areas." **L&L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Wisconsin.

Even as the COVID era boom on outdoor living projects slows, lighting is still expected to be a popular service to provide.



# ISUZU



## **FALL INTO THE ISUZU FAMILY LINE OF CLASS 3 - 7 LOW CAB FORWARD TRUCKS**

**WITH BODIES FROM 12-30 FEET.**

*Visit your local Isuzu dealer to learn more about  
the full line of Isuzu trucks.*

**[WWW.ISUZUCV.COM](http://WWW.ISUZUCV.COM)**



Isuzu vehicles are assembled from component parts manufactured by Isuzu Motors Limited, its affiliated companies and by independent suppliers who manufacture such components to Isuzu's exacting standards for quality, performance and safety. Vehicles shown with optional equipment. Some equipment is dealer installed. © 2022 Isuzu Commercial Truck of America, Inc.





BEFORE



IN PROGRESS



FINAL PROJECT



# 'FARM' CATION

Metrolina Landscape's project showcases the company's hardscape team's ability to design and install natural stone for a new pool deck and amenity area.

Photos courtesy of Metrolina Landscape



POOL DECK STEPPING STONES





ON-GRADE POOL DECK

THE OWNER WANTED TO CREATE AN AMENITY AREA that offers a resort feeling just steps away from his home, located on a farm in Lincolnton, North Carolina.

“Nature was a big part in planning this design, especially with the surrounding environment. The goal was to create a rustic, yet high-end pool deck and amenity space that would enhance the at-home experience,” says Taylor McKillop, who works in the marketing & business development departments at the North Carolina-based company.

Along with the hardscape installation, Metrolina also installed the irrigation, landscape and lighting. The residential project took four weeks to complete.

**1** Metrolina used Tennessee crab orchard natural stone for the pool deck and amenity area. Differentiated patterns for both areas created defined spaces.

**2** The pool deck used an irregular flagstone pattern, while the pool house amenity area utilized a six-piece pattern of cut stone.

**3** Another defined space leading out from the pool deck created a secluded area for the fire pit. Metrolina used a three-inch slab irregular stone pattern for this area.

“Everything in the design from the pool deck, pool house amenity area, and fire pit does a phenomenal job working together to create a harmonious naturalistic environment,” McKillop says. “From this point forward, guest and family will all enjoy the unique experience of visiting the exquisite rustic oasis.”



# FIRST IN LINE

Early order programs are normally associated with golf course superintendents, but they are increasing in popularity in the lawn care industry.



## BAYER/ENVU

From Oct. 1 to Dec. 5, lawn care operators can save in four ways, including off-invoice volume discounts, select product rebates, agronomic pairing incentives and fall purchase tier rebates.

**PRE3 Agronomic Pairing Incentive:** Applying the PRE3 program in late fall provides proactive resistance management for maximum control of *Poa annua*. The solution is based on mixing Specticle FLO, Tribute Total and simazine for a PRE and POST combination approach.

**Dual-Defense Agronomic Pairing Incentive:** In the defense of lawns against weeds, lawn care operators need effective preventative and curative strategies. Bayer has it covered on both ends with Specticle FLO preemergence and Celsius® XTRA postemergence herbicides.

Visit [es.bayer.us/fall-solutions](https://es.bayer.us/fall-solutions) to enroll in the rewards program and download a calculator spreadsheet

## Nufarm EDGE 2023

### NUFARM

To participate, register on Nufarm's Edge Rewards website, purchase at least two eligible Nufarm brands totaling our low minimum of \$2,500 or more from a Nufarm authorized distributor and maximize profits with valuable distributor credit rebates.

Nufarm's 2022 program is designed to deliver an added edge with significantly increased rebate savings during Period 1: Sept. 12 – Oct. 31, 2022.

Extend your time to save during Period 2: Nov. 1 – Dec. 9, 2022.

The Volume Bonus offers the highest rebates on a number of lawn and landscape solutions which are only available for orders placed during Period 1, Sept. 12 – Oct. 31, 2022.

- Top products this year on the Volume Bonus include:
  - SureGuard SC Herbicide: Save \$60 per jug.
  - Aloft LC SC Insecticide: Save \$50 per jug.
  - 3336 F Fungicide: Save \$40 per jug.
  - Pinpoint Fungicide: Save \$30 per jug.

Premium herbicide solutions included in this year's program include:

- Escalade 2 Herbicide
- Celero Herbicide
- Cool Power Herbicide
- Horsepower Herbicide
- Certainty Herbicide
- Change Up Herbicide
- Manor Herbicide
- 4-Speed XT Herbicide

Visit [NufarmRewards.com](https://NufarmRewards.com) and submit the registration form. Previous registrants are automatically registered and do not need to register again.



## PBI GORDON

The PBI-Gordon early order program runs between Sept. 1 and Nov. 18, 2022.



# Light Up Their Holidays

Holiday lights and  
accessories stocked  
and ready at your  
local Ewing location.



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



Scan the  
code to  
learn more  
about our  
holiday lighting



## LAWN CARE

The 2022 EOP features 16 of PBI-Gordon's most popular products, including Union Fungicide SC, Q4 Plus Turf Herbicide for Grassy & Broadleaf Weeds, Segway Fungicide SC and SpeedZone EW Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf.

Program participants who have registered online in previous years will be automatically enrolled in the 2022 EOP.

Level I EOP program participants can earn a (\$500-\$999) an additional 15% rebate. Level II EOP participants (\$1,000 or more) can earn an additional rebate of 25%.

All orders must be made through a PBI-Gordon distributor.

More information on the program and access to the rebate calculator and planning tool can be found at [eop.PBIGordonTurf.com](http://eop.PBIGordonTurf.com).



### PRIMESOURCE

Prime Rewards uses a simple points-to-dollars system to help end users earn more rewards with less hassle.

Customers can choose from any of Prime Source's 22 most popular products, including newly registered Sublime, Quintessential and Surmise SpeedPro XT herbicides and AzoxyBio fungicide, and redeem their rewards online for prepaid debit cards.

Several products are offered in varying case sizes with different point values. Mix-and-match products and the points add up.

A minimum of 200 points is required to qualify. Gift card earnings increase in increments of 100 with no limit.

Program promotional period is Sept. 1-Dec. 2, 2022.

Invoices must be submitted by Dec. 31, 2022, at [www.thesourcematters.us](http://www.thesourcematters.us).



### QUALIPRO

Quali-Pro is offering special incentives now through Nov. 30. Take advantage of the SGT early order program by Oct. 31 for the biggest rebates.



To qualify, the participating end-user must earn a minimum rebate of \$100. When 50% or more of the total rebate is derived from Platinum Products, a Double-Base Bonus will be added to your rebate total.

Products must be purchased from an authorized Quali-Pro distributor between Aug. 15, 2022, and Nov. 30, 2022.

This is an end user promotion, distributors and dealers are not eligible for this rebate. Purchases used to qualify for this promotion are not eligible for any other free goods, cash back or rebate programs. Internet sales and purchases do not qualify.

All submissions must be uploaded by Jan. 16, 2023. Visit: [simplygrowtogether.com](http://simplygrowtogether.com)



### SYNGENTA GREENTRUST 365 PROGRAM

Spend at least \$5,000 during the Early Order Period (EOP), Oct. 1-Dec. 8, 2022, to earn the best savings of the year – up to 26%.

Purchases of on-fertilizer products made through May 31, 2023, also qualify as EOP purchases.

The Acelepryn Grub, Billbug and Caterpillar Prevention program guarantees control of these insects all season. Purchasing during EOP can earn you up to 11% in rebates plus additional savings of 10% with the Acelepryn volume discount.

Add 3% to your yearlong rebate by purchasing Barricade brand herbicides during EOP, which also comes with a performance Guarantee.

The Warm-Season Herbicide Solution includes Barricade 4FL herbicide and Monument 75WG herbicide and is available Oct. 1-Dec. 8, 2022, with 10% savings.

Save up to 15%, on complementary products packaged together.

SummerPay: Manage your expenses more easily throughout the season by deferring payment on your purchases until June 20, 2023.

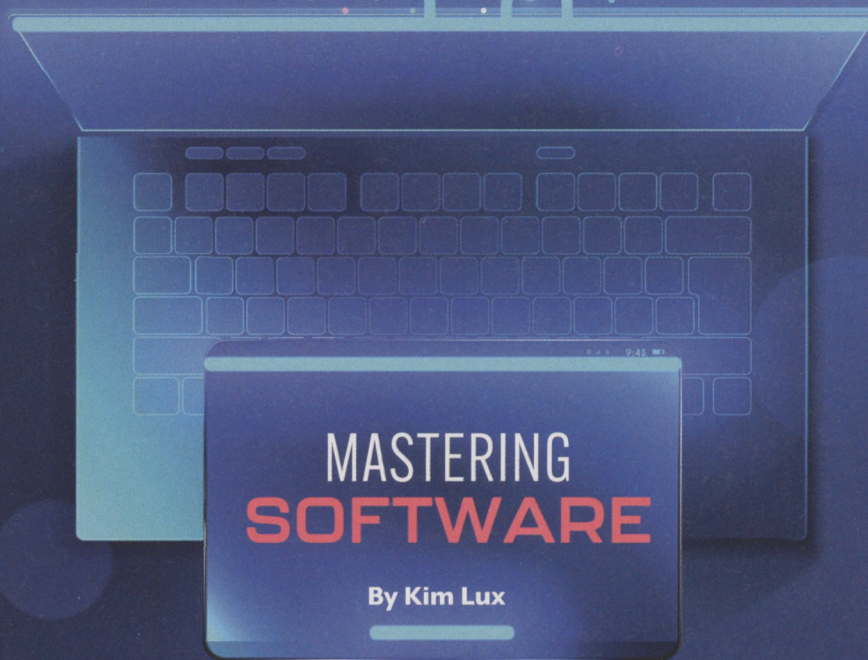
Syngenta also has a rebate calculators at [GreenTrust365.com/Calculators](http://GreenTrust365.com/Calculators)

For more information: [www.greencastonline.com/greentrust365/lawn-overview](http://www.greencastonline.com/greentrust365/lawn-overview) & L









Creating a personalized software has helped McMaster Lawn & Pest Services take the business to the next level.

**M**cMaster Lawn & Pest Services knows a thing or two about capitalizing on opportunities. The Central Florida, family-owned business started as a sod company before quickly becoming a full-service lawn care and maintenance company.

“People were always asking, once we installed the sod, what do we do now?” recalls Brian McMaster, the company’s vice president. “You have to fertilize it and take care of it, so we started getting into that industry more and eventually got into mowing lawns through some commercial contacts as well. We’ve been doing this business for 10 to 12 years now.

“We started by planning to do residential fertilization and just build a recurring business model...and it’s just grown from there. We’ve seen opportunities and had to take them,” he adds.

So, when the company’s business management software wasn’t up to par, McMaster saw an opportunity to create something tailored specifically to meet the company’s needs.

**BUILDING SOMETHING BETTER.** When the company was first starting out, McMaster says they were utilizing a business management software geared toward the pest control industry. He had done an internship with the company in college and was very familiar with how it worked.

But, because it wasn’t really designed for landscapers, they switched to a software designed specifically for the green industry.

“We used it for several years but started to feel some limitations with it,” McMaster says.

McMaster adds he was also looking for a more con-





# Cloud-based, takeoff and design software

Sell more with less effort.

Bring your enhancement designs to life in minutes.

## Better bids with more accurate measurements

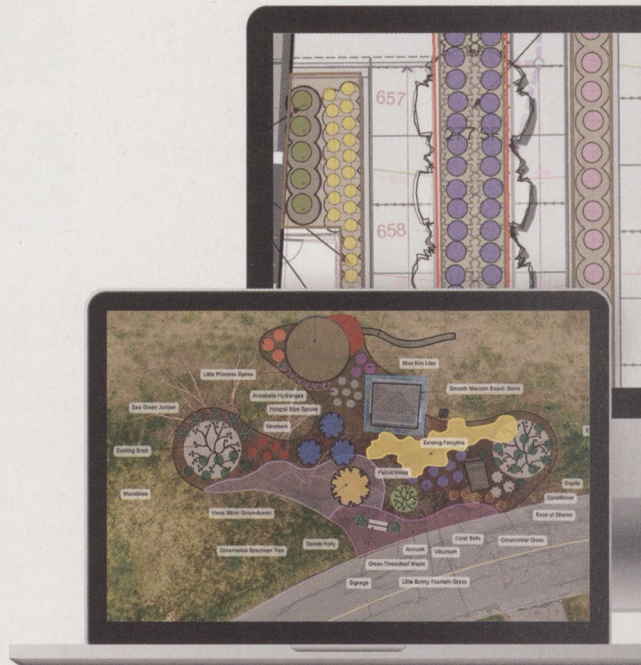
Build more profitable takeoffs at any time, from anywhere. Cloud-based precision measuring tools, high-res aerial imagery, and material calculating features provide accurate material cost estimates instantly as you're measuring.

## Streamlined workflows

Imagine a simpler way to create accurate and profitable estimates. With accurate measuring and mark-up tools, you can quickly calculate accurate takeoffs from anywhere using PDFs or aerial imagery. Markup, edit, and annotate plans for easier handoffs to your production teams.

## Communicate a clear vision to your customers—and win more jobs

Generate detailed, polished enhancement proposals quickly with intuitive and easy-to-use measurement, design, and estimating tools. LandOne enables you to cut down the time it takes to create professional designs your customers can instantly visualize.

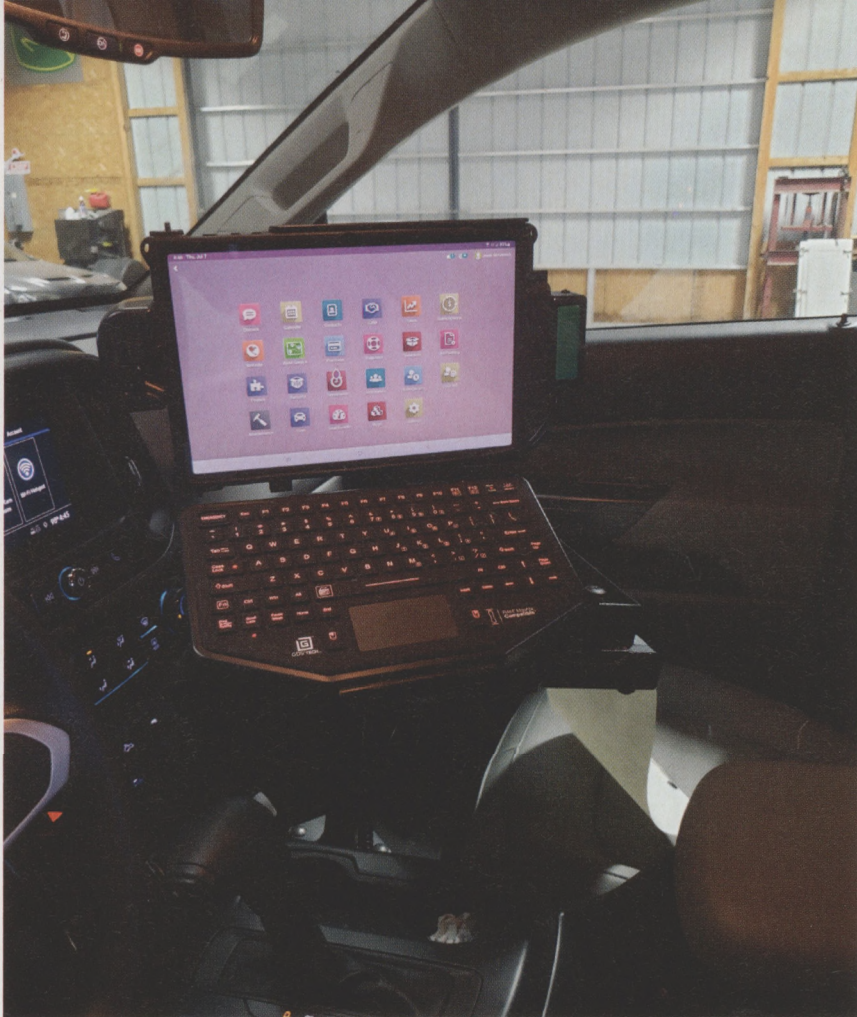


Snap • Draw • Done

No commitment  
14 day free trial







Each service vehicle has a tablet, keyboard and printer — so technicians can use the software anywhere.

nected system as they were utilizing one software for accounting, the green industry business management software and something else for inventory management. He says it was difficult to get all the different elements “talking” to each other and working cohesively.

“I started looking for something that would do this all together — one unified system,” McMaster says.

But after searching for something for awhile and having no luck, McMaster decided to take matters into his own hands. Having taken some programming classes in high school, he sought out to create his own software.

“I happened to find a program that was open-source language, so everything was visible for you to read, learn and add to,” he says.

Open-source language programs can be found online, and the language (or code) is not proprietary so that it can be modified by individual users.

“They had a partner network with people who’d help implement the program for you and help design any additional functionalities you might need,” McMaster explains of the program. “The system comes out of the box with accounting, inventory, CRM, help desk, payroll and pretty much all the stuff that runs a generic business.”

After contacting a partner to design a

field service specific version of the program, McMaster says the price tag was too high, so he built one himself.

“I just took what little spare time I had to learn it and started building a program that would handle the bare-minimum field service requirements,” he says. “There’s a community of developers and partners who’ve implemented this program for other companies and they have a network online where you can post your code and basically share and collaborate. Somebody was developing a field service module, so I got hooked up with them and helped push that development along. Now, that’s the program we’re using today.”

McMaster says the new program has been instrumental in boosting the company’s efficiency — therefore making them more profitable and growth driven.

“It allowed us to grow quicker because

once we got everything all in one single location it’s been a lot more efficient,” he says. “Everybody in the office and out in the field uses the same system and it seems like things happen a lot quicker. It’s been really good for us.”

**EASY IMPLEMENTATION.** When implementing a new software, McMaster says it can be tough. But the best thing a business can do is take it slow, put in the work and know it’s worth any hiccups or mishaps that might happen at first.

“We were fortunate because we were still pretty small at the time — it was just myself and my sister-in-law in the office running everything day-to-day,” McMaster says of implementing the new program. “We started slow and got accounting switched over first. And then with accounting ready, we got our sales team switched over.”



# STIHL



## BATTERY POWER. MADE BY STIHL.

**GAME-CHANGING VERSATILITY  
BUILT FOR PROFESSIONALS**

The new battery-powered STIHL KombiMotor delivers truly game-changing professional performance. With one powerhead and 14 attachments, the KMA 135 R delivers the versatility, power and durability pros need to tackle a range of landscaping jobs.



**KMA 135 R KOMBISYSTEM**

### 14 ATTACHMENTS & ACCESSORIES



Attachments assembled in the USA or sourced internationally.  
Batteries and chargers sourced internationally. ©2022 STIHL



McMaster acknowledges that there will be difficulties in getting employees on board with something new, but with time and proper training, it can be done smoothly.

“There’s always a learning curve when it comes to getting everybody on the same page and trying to adapt our previous processes to a new system with slightly different processes,” he says.

When they were busy making the switch, McMaster Lawn & Pest Services was relatively small, so there were less employees having to break old habits or “we’ve always done it this way” mindsets.

“The biggest thing that made it easier for us is that the people we were hiring at the time didn’t know the previous system, so we brought them in and were training them right on the new system,” he says. “That really made it an easy transition for everybody.”

But as the company continues to grow, so will the software.

“There’s a lot more it could do but it’s just a matter of development time and man hours and what kind of budget we want to put toward it,” McMaster says. “There’s really nothing it can’t do.”

McMaster adds one of his favorite things about the software is how it makes the business look and feel more professional.

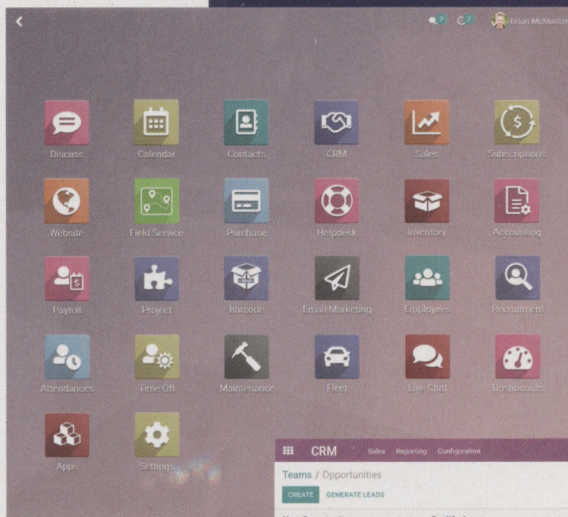
“It’s something that’s bigger than what our business needs right now, but it’s allowed us to become a more corporate style company,” he says. “We’re a small family business but we’re trying to become bigger.”

**SETTING SIGHTS ON SUBSCRIPTIONS.**

And something that comes along with that corporate-style approach is a subscription-based business model. McMaster says it was easy to implement with the new software.

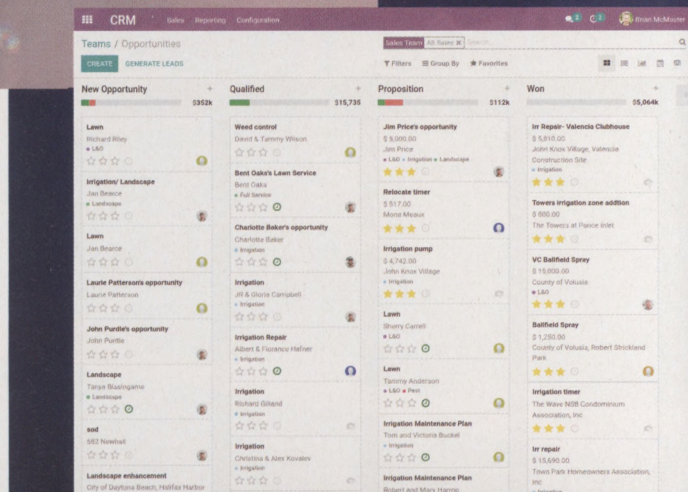
“Switching customers over to a subscription-based model ties into the program as well,” he says. “They had a basic subscription application already.”

McMaster says what really drove the business to this model was having clients who utilize multiple services from them in different times of the year, leading to sporadic billing. He notes that customers who receive lawn care treatments and irrigation



Left: The homepage for the custom software provides access to all of the business apps under one roof.

Right: The company's CRM allows them to track leads and their progress easily.



services may have gotten two bills in one month, none other months and so on.

“The subscription model basically means if you’re an application customer, then we’ll go out every other month so six applications a year,” he says. “If you’re spending \$100 an application every other month, we’re just going to charge you \$50 monthly. A lot of people like that. They set it up with their bank to pay it on a certain date, so it’s easy for them. For people who like automatic credit card payments, it was the same thing — nice and easy.”

McMaster says the company didn’t do much to roll out the subscription-based model except make clients aware of it.

“The program really helped us get on board with that idea because the feature

was already there and we didn’t have to do anything custom to make it work,” he says. “We just switched customers over and with the new ones we just told them this is how we do it. And didn’t really get any pushback.”

And while reception of the change has been great overall, McMaster notes there are still some holdouts who prefer to be billed per service.

“About 10-15% of the customers who’ve been around for a long time haven’t switched over,” he says. “We just let it be and keep billing them that way. You’ve got to keep the customer happy. We have less and less of those to do now, which is nice.” **L&L**

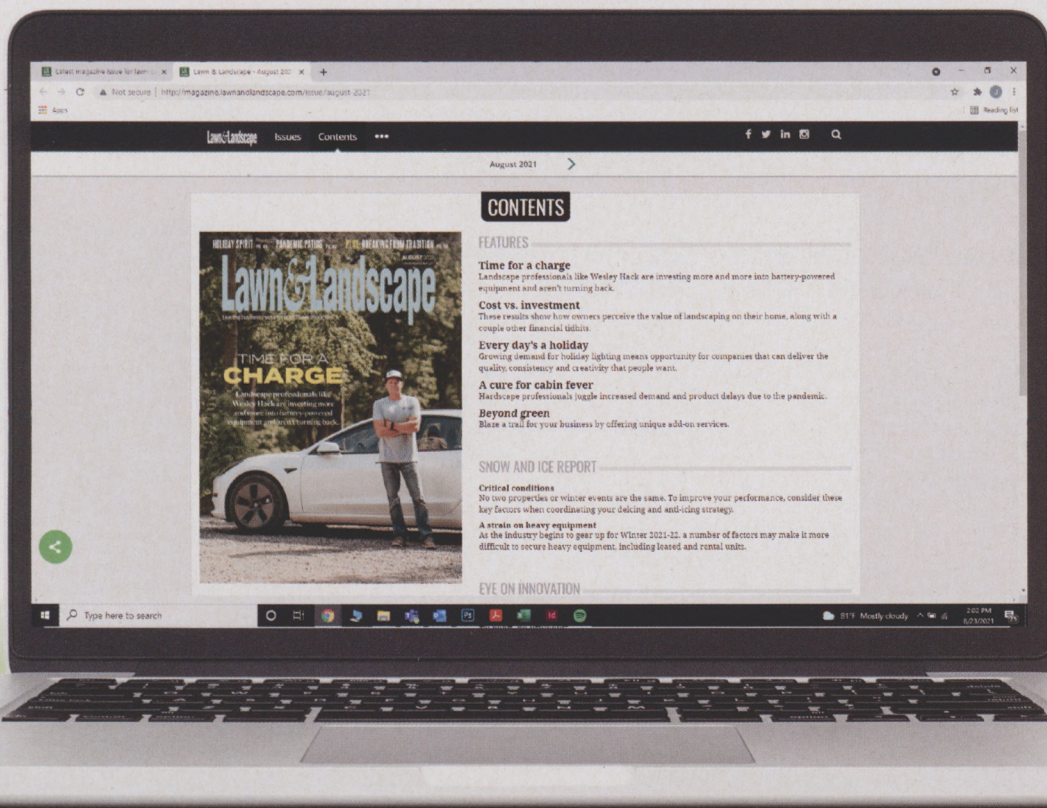
The author is assistant editor with Lawn & Landscape.



LAWNANDLANDSCAPE.COM

# DESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND

**YOUR ONE-STOP, MOBILE-FRIENDLY SHOP** for breaking industry news, podcasts and full monthly issues as well as our Top 100, Benchmarking Your Business and State of the Industry reports.



**Lawn & Landscape**



# Get to know SNOW



## Snow contractors are facing the same issues as those in the green industry.

The following data was pulled from the Lawn & Landscape State of the Industry survey. These numbers are the results of those who responded and said they provided snow services.

### HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT THE IMPACT OF EACH OF THESE ISSUES ON YOUR LOCATION'S BUSINESS IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS?

|                                                 |     |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| High fuel prices.....                           | 8.8 |
| Quality labor shortage.....                     | 7.8 |
| Economic recession.....                         | 7.4 |
| Supply chain issues.....                        | 7.3 |
| High workers' compensation costs.....           | 6.9 |
| High health insurance costs.....                | 6.8 |
| High fertilizer prices.....                     | 6.6 |
| Lower margins on work.....                      | 5.8 |
| Personal life stress.....                       | 5.7 |
| Customers cutting back/cancelling services..... | 5.6 |



### HOW DO YOU PAY YOURSELF?

|                             |                                          |                                                 |                                     |                                                            |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>29%</b><br>Weekly budget | <b>12%</b><br>Weekly budget plus bonuses | <b>12%</b><br>I do not determine my rate of pay | <b>9%</b><br>A percentage of profit | <b>7%</b><br>A little when it's slow; a lot when it's busy |
| <b>7%</b><br>Hourly         | <b>1%</b><br>A percentage of revenue     | <b>2%</b><br>Trial and error                    | <b>14%</b><br>Other                 | <b>7%</b><br>No answer                                     |

### WHAT WAS THE AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS?

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| President.....                     | \$115,000 |
| Chief operating officer (COO)..... | \$109,000 |
| Chief financial officer (CFO)..... | \$108,100 |
| Owner/CEO.....                     | \$95,500  |
| Salesperson.....                   | \$66,300  |
| Account manager.....               | \$64,200  |
| Supervisor.....                    | \$59,900  |
| Office manager.....                | \$53,200  |
| Crew foreman/leader.....           | \$50,900  |

**36**

TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

**\$2.7** MILLION

MEAN REVENUE

**\$850,000**

MEDIAN REVENUE





\$

DOWN

DOWN



**AND 0 PAYMENTS FOR 6 MONTHS\***

Start gearing up today! When you buy select BOSS products by Oct. 31, 2022, put zero money down with zero payments for six months. See your BOSS dealer for more details and gear up for the weather with BOSS snow and ice products that are built to BACK YOU UP.

\*This finance program is offered by Western Equipment Finance, Inc. for commercial customers. Subject to dealer participation and credit approval. Minimum amount financed is \$5,000. Minimum time in business two (2) years. See Dealer for details.



**SNOWPLOW**

©2022 BOSS Products. All Rights Reserved.



# A GLIMPSE OF WHAT'S NEW

New products are popping up all over the place in various segments of the industry. Here's a look at some of them.



## StaCool Vest

**The pitch:** The StaCool Vest Core Body Cooling System is helping workers beat the heat to stay cool and productive.

- ThermoPaks in the front and back of the vest provide hours of cooling; a spare set of ThermoPaks are included with each StaCool Vest.
- There are models available that can be worn over or under normal clothing to suit any style, preference and application.
- The StaCool Vest provides ultimate body core cooling; a thermal barrier is built in to ensure wearer does not get too cold.

**For more info:** [www.stacoolvest.com](http://www.stacoolvest.com)



## CASE Minotaur DL550

**The pitch:** The Minotaur is the company's first-ever compact dozer loader.

- Weighing in at more than 18,000 pounds and working with 114 horsepower, the new machine delivers dozing and grading performance, as well as site loading capabilities and compatibility with hundreds of attachments.
- Comes standard with Case Universal Machine Control, which makes the machine ready for any of the major three providers of machine control technology (Leica Geosystems, Topcon and Trimble), which are sold separately.
- It's also available with an optional, fully integrated ripper for tearing up tough terrain to simplify dozing and earthmoving operations.

**For more info:** [www.casece.com](http://www.casece.com)

## KIOTI ZX Series mowers


**The pitch:** KIOTI's debut line of stand-on zero-turn riding lawn mowers.

- With the ZX548 and ZX554, customers can choose from 48- or 54-inch decks.
- Tool-less removal of the operator pad reveals ample space and easy access to all serviceable components.
- The large 7-gallon fuel capacity helps operators avoid lost time on the jobsite due to refueling.

**For more info:** [www.kioti.com](http://www.kioti.com)







**OPENING AND CLOSING  
ON TIME SINCE 1967.**



**RUGGED  
FOR A REASON**  
#ruggedforareason

Trusted for over half a century, Irritrol® residential valves are made tough to work reliably the first time and every time. Simple install, easy maintenance, more time in your day.



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

©2022 Irritrol



FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Irritrol®**  
[Irritrol.com](http://Irritrol.com)



## Rain Bird ESP-LXME2 & ESP-LXME2 PRO

**The pitch:** The commercial-grade controllers provide retrofit and new-install options with 40 programs and connectivity for up to 48 stations.

- The controllers can be expanded from 12 to 48 stations using 12-station modules, and both models support Simulstation capability, enabling them to run up to five stations at once for maximum efficiency in tight water windows.
- The LXME2 and LXME2 PRO offer 40 programs and up to 10 start times per program, so users can tailor their irrigation schedules to meet the needs of any site. Both controllers have capacity for one weather station and one master valve.
- Remote access to the LXME2 and LXME2 PRO is available via Rain Bird's IQ4 Central Control with an NCC Network Communication Cartridge that uses a cellular connection as well as other connection methods.

**For more info:** [www.rainbird.com](http://www.rainbird.com)



## Earth & Turf Products Multispread 415 SP

**The pitch:** Earth & Turf Products is introducing its new stand-on top dresser.

- It's a 4-wheel drive, 4-wheel steer, 15 cubic foot machine.
- Featuring a 48-inch wide brush dispeller, the 415 SP is the widest and largest of the self-propelled top dressers from the company.
- The MultiSpread 415 SP will spread efficiently up to 7 MPH. The box will hold 1,500 lbs. or nearly 1 cu. yd. of heaped material.

**For more info:** [www.earthandturf.com](http://www.earthandturf.com)



## RedMax SRTZ235 & LRTZ235 Articulating Hedge Trimmers

**The pitch:** These trimmers, distinguished by their short- and long-reach configurations, are the lightest trimmers for their blade size.

- At 24 inches, the trimmers' blade length allows lawn maintenance professionals to cut more in one pass and extend so the operator can reach hedges and shrubs without requiring a ladder or bending down.
- Operators can select from one of the trimmers' 10 locking positions to change the angle of the blade, which improves maneuverability around bushes, shrubs or other vegetation.
- The 21.6 fl. oz fuel capacity of the SRTZ235 and LRTZ235 trimmers enables long running time, while the commercial-built gearbox allows users to quickly switch between cutting angles with a single pull-down motion.

**For more info:** [www.redmax.com](http://www.redmax.com)



## Snowbot

**The pitch:** A fully autonomous, safe and energy-saving snow removal system.

- Snowbot removes snow up to 12 inches deep and can throw snow up to 16.5 feet away.
- Key features of the robot include autonomous navigation, an intelligent route plan, autonomous obstacle avoidance, remote control, mobile app control and more.
- Additional safety features include buzzing alarms, yellow warning lights and an emergency stop button.

**For more info:** [www.thesnowbot.com](http://www.thesnowbot.com)

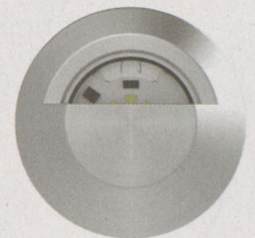


## WAC Surface Mount Indicator LED Light Fixtures

**The pitch:** The new light fixtures from WAC Landscape Lighting have an IP68 rating and are able to withstand continuous immersion underwater.

- Easy to install, save installation time and avoid core drilling holes in the homeowner's patio or driveway with the new LED Indicator Fixtures which mount right on top of the desired surface.
- The luminaires are available in stainless steel or bronzed stainless steel finishes.
- Various styles are offered with a 60,000-hour rated life.

**For more info:** [www.waclandscapeighting.com](http://www.waclandscapeighting.com)







# GIVE US FIVE MINUTES, WE'LL TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

Transport materials and equipment safely and efficiently with AmeriDeck™, the in-bed lift system for pickup trucks

- Safer ground level loading of equipment and material
- Easy installation, operation, and maintenance of the Lift System
- Convenient storage inside truck bed under the deck
- Safer alternative as compared to trailers or ramp accessories

**AmeriDeck**  
A Division of Federal Equipment Corporation

[amerideckproducts.com/landscaping](http://amerideckproducts.com/landscaping) • (866) 890-2311



# AN AVERAGE DAY

**Paulita LaPlante**, chief strategy officer and managing partner, Prescription Landscape



Paulita LaPlante's morning is for the birds — literally. After waking up at 5:30 and completing a 10-minute stretch, she gets interrupted by other pets and feeds them before turning her attention to the bird feeders.

"This immediately makes me either happy, mad or guilty," says the chief strategy officer and managing partner of Prescription Landscape in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. "Happy if there is a pileated woodpecker on the suet. Mad if some stupid deer head-butted the sunflower feeders to emptiness. Guilty if its sub-zero and everything needs to be refilled."

It's obvious that birds are high on LaPlante's morning priority list. During growing season, she cleans or refills feeders, checks vegetable gardens and refills her bird baths.

Interviewed by **Brian Horn**

## Here is LaPlante's average day.

Breakfast is liquid — coffee, water, milk — I drink all of this while I assemble my meals to-go for the day. When I say "assemble," I mean it. I use a bento box approach to meals, so I put 4-5 containers of the main food groups (protein, grain, fruit, veg) into a small food cooler. When I get to work, I will eat whatever makes me happy. That may be hot curried noodles, or it may be buttered bread with sliced apple and cheese.

My commute is 23 minutes. I listen to Minnesota Public Radio News to get the headlines, the weather forecast and the market open.

Mostly, I like to be in between 8 and 9 a.m. I say "hello" to whomever is in, fill my tumbler with water, then set up my Surface and log into Microsoft Teams.

I go through the daily e-mail I receive from Microsoft Viva. This permits me to quickly review commitments and follow-ups from all the emails that I have sent, mark them as done, or pop them into a follow-up queue. This utility makes a person look awesome but seriously, it's the software. I then check for bids and contracts that I need to review/sign and flag them by due date. I do the same for emails. Depending on the day and appointments, I also use Viva to block time into my calendar to prep for meetings. I am a huge believer in leaning on software to help me be more productive.

I have lunch booked into my schedule 12-1 p.m. every day. Depending on the day, that can change a bit. As I previously said, I typically make my lunch so it's pretty easy — a hardboiled egg, cubed cheese, nuts, a veg, a fruit, whatever salads/soups I made on the weekend and bread. It's a lot easier to eat healthy this way. Also, if I have to

hop in the car to go to a jobsite or to another branch office, I can easily take this along.

1-3 p.m. is a popular meeting time, especially because we use Teams and can get a lot of meetings completed. This time slot is usually when I work on solutions to issues brought up in morning meetings or field work.

I leave the office between 5-6 p.m. Again, I listen to Minnesota Public Radio News to catch up on what happened during the day. I know a lot of people will keep tabs on news throughout the day, but I find that can send me into a rabbit hole so drive time is news time.

I don't mind occasional text message exchanges in the evening, but I don't want phone calls since that requires more concentration which revs your brain and body metabolism when you should be in the home zone. Sometimes, there are issues that come up on a Friday that you need to work on over the weekend. When that happens, it's best to agree to what everyone can commit to doing over the weekend. Sometimes that simple exercise of commitment and talking through priorities reveals that the issue can actually be handled during the week.

At 9:15 p.m., I get a mindfulness alert from my Apple watch. There are a variety of topics. I read the topic but don't begin the session right away. Instead, I think about the topic while I get the dishes done, clean the kitchen, throw a load of clothes in the wash, pet duty, etc. This is meant to be a 15 min. effort — pick up the big stuff, pack up my Surface and briefcase, and make sure there are zero opportunities in the kitchen for counter-surfing pets. Around 9:30 p.m., I get a wind down reminder that 10:30 p.m. bedtime is coming up. I check the people/groups I follow on Instagram which takes all of 10 minutes and then I read a few magazine articles or a few chapters from a book. **L&L**



BUSINESS FOR SALE



ACQUISITION EXPERTS LLC

**FOR SALE EAST COAST OF FLORIDA**

**LANDSCAPE BUSINESS & NURSERY  
15 ACRES OVER \$5M  
WIP ASKING \$3.6M**

**40 ACRE FOLIAGE BUSINESS & NURSERY \$8.120M**

CONTACT JOHN BROGAN 772-220-4455  
EMAIL: JOHN@ACQUISITIONEXPERTS.NET

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

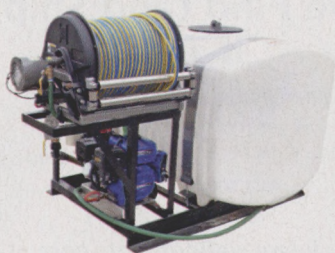


**We Find Plants**  
Powered by Horticultural Associates

**Lawn & Landscape**  
**Place your classified ad here today!**

Please contact Andrew Hatfield at 800/456-0707 x291 or ahatfield@gie.net.

FOR SALE



**LAWN CARE POLY SKID UNITS AVAILABLE NOW!**

Whether you're a company who's just starting out or a veteran with multiple rigs on the road, you'll find our rugged skid sprayers are a valuable asset. Graham builds poly skid sprayers like all of its products - with reliability and longevity in mind.

We have several on our lot today that are ready for purchase, but they're going fast. If you're in the market for a skid sprayer, call us at **770.942.1617** today to get pricing information and reserve your unit.



**Graham Spray Equipment**  
PUTTING YOU FIRST IS WHY WE'RE SECOND TO NONE

**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



**We Find Plants**  
Powered by Horticultural Associates

Lawncandlandscape.com

FOR SALE

**Discount Small Engines & Parts**

Small engines & parts from Briggs & Stratton, Kohler, Tecumseh, Robin Subaru, Hydro-Gear and more.

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

**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](http://WWW.STORKSPLOWS.COM)

HELP WANTED



**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

search@focus-agency.com

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



**Catch the Sunshine!**

Greenhouse Kits • Equipment • Supplies

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

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

PLANTS, SEEDS & 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



PLANTS, SEEDS & 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

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)**



**REACH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE!**

Place your **classified ad** here today!



Contact:

**Andrew Hatfield**

800/456-0707 x291

[ahatfield@gie.net](mailto:ahatfield@gie.net)

Advertiser

Page #

|                                                                                                                              |                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Ariens/Gravelly .....<br><a href="http://gravely.com">gravely.com</a>                                                        | 6-7                    |
| Aspen Fuels .....<br><a href="http://aspenuels.us">aspenuels.us</a>                                                          | 5                      |
| Aspire .....<br><a href="http://youraspire.com">youraspire.com</a>                                                           | 53                     |
| BASF Corporation .....<br><a href="http://basf.com/global/en.html">basf.com/global/en.html</a>                               | 66-67                  |
| Bayer Cropscience LP .....<br><a href="http://backedbybayer.com/lawn-and-landscape">backedbybayer.com/lawn-and-landscape</a> | Belly Tip*, 19*, 94-95 |
| Billy Goat Industries .....<br><a href="http://billygoat.com">billygoat.com</a>                                              | 18                     |
| Bobcat Company .....<br><a href="http://bobcat.com/lbuildquote">bobcat.com/lbuildquote</a>                                   | 15                     |
| BOSS Landscape Management .....<br><a href="http://bosslm.com">bosslm.com</a>                                                | 17                     |
| Boss Snowplow .....<br><a href="http://bossplow.com">bossplow.com</a>                                                        | 137                    |
| Bravo Trailers .....<br><a href="http://bravotrailers.com">bravotrailers.com</a>                                             | 14                     |

Advertiser

Page #

|                                                                                        |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Cascade Lighting .....<br><a href="http://cascadelighting.com">cascadelighting.com</a> | 16    |
| Ceibass Venture Partners .....<br><a href="http://ceibass.com">ceibass.com</a>         | 88    |
| Christianson Systems .....<br><a href="http://christianson.com">christianson.com</a>   | 64    |
| CompanyCam .....<br><a href="http://companycam.com">companycam.com</a>                 | 13    |
| Corteva Agriscience .....<br><a href="http://corteva.us">corteva.us</a>                | 70-71 |
| COXREELS .....<br><a href="http://coxreels.com">coxreels.com</a>                       | 83    |
| DeerPro .....<br><a href="http://deerproprofessional.com">deerproprofessional.com</a>  | 74    |
| DeWitt Co. ....<br><a href="http://dewittcompany.com">dewittcompany.com</a>            | 20    |
| Ditch Witch .....<br><a href="http://ditchwitch.com">ditchwitch.com</a>                | 89    |

Advertiser

Page #

|                                                                                                        |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Echo .....<br><a href="http://echo-usa.com">echo-usa.com</a>                                           | 57      |
| Ewing Irrigation Products .....<br><a href="http://ewingirrigation.com">ewingirrigation.com</a>        | 127     |
| Exmark .....<br><a href="http://exmark.com">exmark.com</a>                                             | 147     |
| Fieldroutes .....<br><a href="http://echo-usa.com">echo-usa.com</a>                                    | 107-114 |
| Graham Spray Equipment .....<br><a href="http://grahamse.com">grahamse.com</a>                         | 22      |
| Grass Roots Turf .....<br><a href="http://grassrootsturf.com">grassrootsturf.com</a>                   | 92      |
| Great Northern Equipment .....<br><a href="http://gnedi.com">gnedi.com</a>                             | 72      |
| Greene County Fertilizer Company .....<br><a href="http://greencountyfert.com">greencountyfert.com</a> | 84      |
| Greenworks Commercial .....<br><a href="http://greenworkscommercial.com">greenworkscommercial.com</a>  | 75-82   |

\* denotes regional advertising






| Advertiser                                       | Page # | Advertiser                                       | Page # | Advertiser                                                | Page #        |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Hannay Reels<br>hannay.com                       | 90     | Milwaukee Tool<br>milwaukeetool.com              | 24-25  | Savalawn<br>savatree.com                                  | 83            |
| Hino Diesel Trucks<br>hino.com                   | 21     | Mini Trencher<br>minitrencher.com                | 62     | SiteOne Landscape Supply<br>siteone.com                   | 65            |
| Home Depot<br>homedepot.com/rental               | 116    | NaturalLawn<br>naturalawnfranchise.com           | 88     | Smartgate Conveyors<br>smartgateconveyors.com             | 84            |
| Horizon<br>horizononline.com                     | 23*    | Neely Coble Co<br>neelycoble.com                 | 91     | Spring-Green Lawn Care<br>spring-green.com                | 99            |
| Hunter Industries<br>hunterindustries.com        | 148    | North American Ramps LLC<br>checkoutourramps.com | 96     | STIHL<br>stihlusa.com/products/battery-products/ap-series | 133           |
| Husqvarna<br>husqvarna.com                       | 2      | Northeast CAT Group<br>necatdealers.com          | 135*   | Switch-N-Go<br>switchngo.com                              | 141           |
| Isuzu<br>isuzucv.com                             | 123    | Novae Corp<br>gridironcs.com                     | 74     | Takeuchi MFG<br>takeuchi-us.com                           | 93            |
| John Deere Company<br>johndeere.com/mowpro       | 58-59  | Nufarm<br>nufarm.com/usturf                      | 10-11  | The Toro Company<br>toro.com                              | 103, 131      |
| Kawaskai Motors Corp<br>kawasakienginesusa.com   | 68,69  | Permaloc Aluminum Edging<br>permaloc.com         | 63     | Toro Irrigation<br>toro.com/psn                           | 55, 139       |
| Kichler Lamp & Lighting<br>landscapelighting.com | 85     | Prime Source, LLC<br>primesource-albaugh.com     | 97     | Touchstone Accent Lighting<br>touchstonelights.com        | 72            |
| Kress Commercial<br>kress.com                    | 98     | Pro Landscape/ Drafix<br>prolandscape.com        | 26     | Turfco MFG, inc.<br>turfcodirect.com                      | 101           |
| Kubota<br>kubotausa.com                          | 27-50  | Progressive<br>progressivecommercial.com         | 9      | Unilock LTD.<br>unilock.com                               | 86-87         |
| Land One<br>landonetakeoff.com                   | 129    | Rain Bird<br>wifi-pro.rainbird.com               | 105    | Vermeer Corporation<br>vermeer.com/miniskids              | 117, 119, 121 |
| Lawn Debbi<br>lawndebbi.com                      | 64     | Real Green Systems<br>realgreen.com/mobilegrow   | 73     |                                                           |               |



# UPGRADE YOUR FEED

Join us for industry news and expert insights.



-  @lawnandlandscape
-  @lawnlandscape
-  @lawnlandscape





**RAISE THE BAR**  
**WITH JUSTIN WHITE**  
 CEO OF K&D LANDSCAPING  
 JWHITE@GIEMEDIA.COM

**RAISE THE BAR** is a monthly column by Justin White, CEO of K&D Landscaping, written to help improve professionalism in the green industry.

# RAISE THE BAR

→ **FIRSTLY, I WANT TO THANK BRIAN HORN**, editor of *Lawn & Landscape*, for presenting the opportunity to share my story through this monthly column and bring my dream to a reality. I remember as a kid reading this magazine in my father's office and imagining how awesome it would be if I could one day be a columnist. I think it's important to explain why I have committed to writing this column, as it all ties back to our purpose at my company K&D Landscaping, which is to raise the bar in the landscape industry.

I grew up on the jobsite and saw first-hand how poorly the public and other trades treated landscapers. I saw how hard my parents and our employees worked to create beautiful landscapes, yet due to low wages in the industry, they still struggled financially. I have made it my mission to lift our industry up by first walking the walk, and then sharing my story to help inspire others. This means not only charging clients what we deserve, but also giving back to our community, promoting and growing our workforce and creating a new standard for landscapers across the country and globe.

I am the second-generation CEO of K&D Landscaping, located in Watsonville, Calif. K&D is a full-service company that believes in market diversification. We provide commercial maintenance, residential design/build, water management and commercial bid/build. We have 110 employees and are growing rapidly toward our next milestone of 300 employees. Our current revenue for 2022 is on track for \$13 million.

My background is rooted firmly in the landscape industry; I was born in 1989 just a short three years after my parents, Kendel and Dawn, founded K&D Landscaping. I got involved with field operations at a young age and started operating tractors when I was just 8 years old on our family ranch. In 2006, (against my parents wishes), I decided to drop out of high school at 17 to start my career and join one of the K&D crews full time. I worked my way from laborer up into foreman, and eventually into COO as my dad's right-hand guy.

Taking over as CEO in 2015 was my next big opportunity and challenge. I created my vision for what K&D could become and facilitated buy-ins from the family and employees.

I worked closely with mentors, coaches, family and our team to bring the short term vision to fruition and continue to evolve and enhance the long-term goal of \$30 million by 2030.

#### Topics I'll discuss in future issues:

- Sharing my experience growing and running my family's business.
- What is currently happening inside our operation and what

type of decisions we are making based on economic and industry trends.

- A focus on culture, not only building culture but utilizing it as a strategic differentiation with clients and candidates.
- How we implemented an entrepreneurial operating system five years ago and the ways we continue to evolve and add to the operating methodology.
- Sharing experiences and ideas being discussed in my peer groups.

Approach this column with an open mind. We can sometimes avoid new ideas simply because they did not originate from inside our organization. Be open to change and the opportunity to try new things. At the same time, I welcome feedback and discussions. Please feel free to reach out directly via email.

Much of my columns will include not only success stories, but also failures and mistakes made. Utilizing some of the lessons I share can help you prepare your company for those same challenges. Anticipation is a key differentiator within our industry the more you know, the better leader you can become.

Share this with your team and challenge them with implementing change. **L&L**

↓  
**THE MISSION OF THIS COLUMN IS TO PROMOTE THE INDUSTRY**

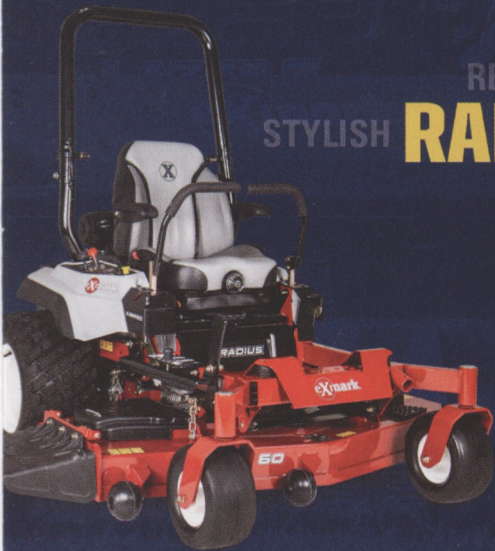
by helping us create a new standard for all landscapers.



# WE ARE ALL GETTING UPGRADED IN 2023

See all our updates in person at Equip Exposition  
this October in Louisville, KY, booth 7080

REDESIGN  
STYLISH **RADIUS<sup>®</sup>**  
COMFORTABLE



INNOVATIVE  
ADAPTIVE **LAZER Z<sup>®</sup>**  
TECHNOLOGY



NEXT LEVEL  
**COMMERCIAL 21**  
BATTERY



DYNAMIC  
**Z-SPRAY<sup>®</sup>** STYLISH  
REENGINEERED



**eXmark**

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



**Z TURF  
EQUIPMENT<sup>®</sup>**

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





# NOW IT'S EASY

*to Color Between the Lines*

**The vibrant and versatile SRP RGBW Strip Light** makes it easier than ever to illuminate stairs, patios, hardscapes, and more — with elegant colors, no hot spots, and all required accessories included. Install it with the SRP-CC Color Controller and any low-voltage transformer to brighten the night with unmatched color-changing effects. Beautiful.



[fxl.com/SRP](http://fxl.com/SRP)

