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# THE TOP 100

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A GIE Media publication  
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LAWN & LANDSCAPE

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## ONLINE CONTENTS

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# TOP 100 TIME

Our annual Top 100 List is here! On it, you'll find plenty of mainstays and a few new faces. This year we've decided to do something different and take a look at a few shining stars behind some of the biggest companies in the industry. Hear what sets these employees apart from their peers and how they contribute to growth in this issue. Curious how the competition stacks up against previous years? You can head to [bit.ly/lawntop100](https://bit.ly/lawntop100) to compare our 2022 list and years past. We've got them all the way back to 2005 in the archives!



## SEE YOU THIS SUMMER!

Summer is almost here, and we'll be headed to sunny Las Vegas, Nevada, in August for the Lawn & Landscape Technology Conference. Don't miss this unique two-and-a-half-day educational event Aug. 9-11. Speaker sessions, exhibitors and more will continue to be announced as we approach the event. Visit [bit.ly/LLtechconference](https://bit.ly/LLtechconference) to register now!

Early Bird rates will expire next month.



## ARE YOU RECESSION READY?

If a recession is looming, is your business prepared to weather the storm? Harvesters Bill and Ed talk tips to survive if a recession hits. They talk about the "3 C's" — cash, customers and cost savings — and how those can be recession busters. Want to learn more? Take some time to view the quick, informative video! Head to [bit.ly/harvestersrecessionready](https://bit.ly/harvestersrecessionready) now to watch and learn.

## CALLING ALL HORTICULTURE STUDENTS

We're accepting applications for our Richard Foster Award. The \$2,500 scholarship is available to outstanding students planning careers in the landscape, lawn care or horticulture businesses. To be eligible, students must be enrolled at a recognized two- or four-year college or university working toward a degree in horticulture, turfgrass management, agronomy, environmental science or another field related to a segment of the green industry. Check out the full details here: [bit.ly/llscholarship23](https://bit.ly/llscholarship23)





**Brian Horn**  
Editor, Lawn & Landscape

“Does the hard sell ever work? Aside from getting the sale just to get rid of the salesperson, I don’t know that it does.”

# Hard sell, hard no

**M**y wife and I took our kids on their first plane ride to Florida for a quick Spring Break trip. Upon check in at the resort, we went through the normal process — keycards, Wi-Fi-password, etc. But instead of a “have a great stay” at the end, we were greeted with, “Do you think you’ll come back?”

What? We just got here, and you are asking if we are coming back. Then the sales pitch began about an exclusive opportunity that we couldn’t pass up. When we politely said no and turned toward the elevators, she hit us with a “I thought you’d say that, so how about this?” First off, why did you think we’d say no? Do we look cheap and like we don’t want to have fun? Maybe it was all the Cleveland gear we had on.

I understand that the approach is bred from opportunity. She knows that this is the last and best time she’ll have face time with us because we can check out via a mobile app.

I hear a lot of smart landscapers talk about how upselling services are

the key to increasing profit. But I can’t imagine they or their employees would show up at a property, and before touching the lawn, ask a customer if they wanted a patio put in.

Plus, does the hard sell ever work? Aside from getting the sale just to get rid of the salesperson, I don’t know that it does. I’ve always been much more open to buying something if the service is performed well and they follow up with information on what else they offer or how they could fulfill a need I have.

As it turns out, we only had an OK time, and determined we aren’t a beach vacation family (mainly due to a slightly whiny pre-teen). So, she could have promised us the deal of a lifetime and it really wouldn’t have mattered.

So, remember to communicate to your employees there isn’t a one-size-fits-all sales method. Some families may want to know about future deals they have upon arriving. Some just want to get to their room with their whiny pre-teen. — *Brian Horn*



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## Sperber Landscape Companies names Jeff Berg as CEO

Berg joins Sperber after 18 years as a partner at the global consulting firm McKinsey & Company.

**S**perber Landscape Companies, a commercial landscape maintenance company that ranked No. 8 on our Top 100 list this year, has named Jeff Berg as CEO.

Richard Sperber, who has been acting as the company's interim CEO and is the founder, will continue his active leadership of the company in the role of executive chairman.

Berg joins Sperber after 18 years as a core leader and partner at the global consulting firm McKinsey & Company. His tenure at McKinsey spanned a wide range of services businesses, industries, and initiatives. Before McKinsey, Berg was a submarine officer in the U.S. Navy, having served onboard the USS Bremerton, a Los Angeles-class nuclear submarine, and with the Deep Submergence Unit, the Navy's lone submarine rescue force.

"I have the greatest confidence in Jeff," Richard Sperber says. "His career at McKinsey built an unparalleled understanding of services businesses, and I know that he, alongside our exceptional leadership team, will be a strong driving force for the next phase of Sperber's growth."

"It is truly an honor to be joining Sperber and leading a company filled with such passion and talent," Berg says. "I believe we are in a unique position to build upon an iconic American legacy. The Sperber name is synonymous, not only with company culture and taking great care of people, but also with pioneering and disrupting the landscape industry. I look forward to building upon that foundation and honoring that legacy, while embracing next gen capabilities that allow us to work smarter and safer. It's an exciting time to be in landscaping."



## Fairway acquires 2 companies in Florida

Fairway has added Your Green Team and Next Level Turf.

**FAIRWAY RECENTLY EXPANDED** its presence in the Tampa and Sarasota markets in Florida with the additions of Your Green Team and Next Level Turf.

"Expansion in Central Florida is key to our growth strategy," says Greg Harbison, CEO of Fairway. "We are pleased to bring two well-run and growing companies into the Fairway family. They bring unique ser-

vice platforms and a focus on excellence that we are excited to build upon."

"Deciding to partner with Fairway was strategic for our business to expand what we can offer to our customers, and at the same time, offer innovative sales methods," says Shane Karlson, Founder and CEO of Your Green Team.

Brandon Melanson, CEO of Next Level

Turf adds, "Being part of a dynamic organization is exciting to us so as we look to grow our business and continue to offer excellent customer service."

By partnering with Next Level Turf and Your Green Team, Fairway strengthens their dynamic growth trend with the addition of more partners in an annual growing season market.



For more news, visit [lawnandlandscape.com](http://lawnandlandscape.com)

## Mariani Landscape adds Borst Landscape and Design

Borst is based in New Jersey and is a full-service landscape design company.

**MARIANI LANDSCAPE**, which ranked No. 11 on Lawn & Landscape's Top 100 list, has acquired Borst Landscape and Design, a full-service landscape design company in New Jersey.

"Borst Landscape & Design has been a respected member of the green industry for many decades. They share our values and consistently deliver a high level of service to their clients," says Frank Mariani, the company's chairman. "Their passion for creating outdoor living spaces that look beautiful, but also function properly, resonates with our mission at Mariani. We look

forward to welcoming the Borst Landscape & Design team to our family."

With headquarters in Allendale, New Jersey, Borst Landscape & Design was founded in 1989 by President Mark C. Borst. In 1995, the organic landscaping program was introduced, providing a complete lawn care program for clients. Today, the company focuses on maintenance and enhancements, including gardening, turf grass management, tree and shrub care, landscape lighting, seasonal enhancements, organic lawn care, as well as design build services.

"We are incredibly excited to join the Mariani family," Borst says. "Not only because it means we are now part of a nationally-recognized group of industry leaders, but more importantly, because we share the same values of exemplary customer service and a deep commitment to excellence that they do."

The acquisition news comes on the heels of record growth and major national expansion for Mariani. The company has also acquired the Berghoff Design Group and Designs by Sundown, two Top 100 companies from 2021.

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## Scythe Robotics adds Mayberry, Motycka to staff

The industry veterans will help Scythe roll out its fully autonomous commercial mower, Scythe M.52.

**SCYTHE ROBOTICS**, a company developing commercial-grade autonomous mowers, has added a pair of experienced landscape industry professionals to lead its customer success efforts and product development. The company is working to develop its all-electric, fully autonomous commercial mower, Scythe M.52.

Michael Mayberry joins Scythe as customer success lead and Emil Motycka as senior product manager at the quickly growing Boulder County-based company that was founded in 2018.



Michael Mayberry

Emil Motycka

Mayberry and Motycka will support M.52's continued development and deployment. Scythe has surpassed 7,500 reservations for M.52 from landscape contractors across the United States and it is currently mowing with multiple partners across Florida, Texas, and Colorado.

Mayberry brings wide-ranging green industry experience to his role directing Scythe's existing customer relationships to drive satisfaction and ensure successful robot deployment. Mayberry is a regular conference speaker and panelist who shares how technology can create new ways for the green industry to conduct business.

Rising from the field to executive leadership over the course of his decades-long career in the industry, Mayberry was most recently the Chief Technology Officer with Level Green Landscape in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, where he directed the company's strategic efforts and found ways for technology to support business goals while enhancing the company's products and services.

With more than two decades of experience in the green industry, Motycka is a seasoned product management leader with a proven record of developing innovative products that exceed customer expectations and drive business growth.

Mowing lawns from an early age, Motycka built a sizable local landscaping business throughout high school and college. This experience in the field launched him into product-focused roles at high-growth, venture-backed startups Rachio and Sunday as well as TruGreen, where he served as director of digital technologies. Throughout his career, Motycka has overseen the entire product development process, from ideation to launch, with a particular focus on defining and delivering a positive customer experience that aligns with business objectives.





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# Davey Tree acquires Mickman Brothers

Mickman Brothers' team of approximately 80 year-round employees is enhanced by roughly 200 seasonal employees.

**THE DAVEY TREE EXPERT COMPANY** has added Mickman Brothers of Ham Lake, Minnesota, to its family of brands.

Founded in 1975 by brothers Chris and John Mickman, Mickman Brothers provides landscape, irrigation, landscape maintenance and snow removal services to the Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Mickman Brothers also offers a garden center for their local clientele at which they grow most of the annuals and perennials they offer. Their family Mickman Christmas business, originated by John and Chris's grandmother, has a national customer base of non-profit organizations and corporate clients.

Mickman Brothers' team of approximately 80 year-round employees is enhanced by roughly 200 seasonal employees. All services will continue as part of the Mickman Brothers team within Davey's Commercial Landscape Services service line.

"Davey has been the leader in the green industry for almost 150 years, so its knowledge of the industry and breadth of services will help propel Mickman Brothers to the highest levels of service to our clients," says John Mickman, CEO. "We are all thrilled with the career growth opportunities this merger will offer to our professional staff of dedicated employees. The Mickman Broth-

ers team is thrilled about joining forces with our new Davey team members as we continue to grow our product and service offerings locally and nationally."

"One of the strongest attributes we admire about Mickman Brothers, in addition to its amazing corporate culture, is its passion for supplying the highest quality products and services to its clients, a key value shared by Davey," says Mark Svozil, vice president and general manager, CLS at Davey. "Prior to this merger, Davey had already made a strong commitment to the Minneapolis-St. Paul market, making this the fifth location for Davey. Adding a brand the caliber of Mickman Brothers highlights Davey's ongoing commitment to the region and should be great not only for Mickman Brothers' clients but Davey's as well. I am so excited to watch Mickman's employees grow in their careers through promotions and educational opportunities, as well become employee owners of Davey."

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# United Land Services acquires Herbafox

Herbafox is a full-service landscaping company in South Florida.

**UNITED LAND SERVICES** has acquired Herbafox, a commercial landscaping and pest control company based in Panama City Beach, Florida. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

United Land Services ranked No. 20 on Lawn & Landscape's Top 100 list last year. It reported a total revenue of \$153 million.

Founded in 1993, Herbafox is a full-service landscaping company specializing in commercial landscape maintenance, irrigation, pest control and landscape installation throughout South Florida. The company has 40 employees.

"United's acquisition of Herbafox strengthens our position in the Gulf/Panhandle area of Florida in both the main-

tenance, installation, and pest control side of the business" says Bob Blandford, United's CEO. "With Herbafox long standing reputation we will continue to grow in the Gulf/Panhandle area of Florida and add another well-run organization to our portfolio."

The owners of Herbafox, Kevin Miles and Jeremy Gilliam will all stay aboard with United, as well as their entire management team and staff.

"We chose to join with ULS because of their steadfast commitment to their employees and the high value they place on customer service," Gilliam says. "We look forward to realizing the potential this union will afford us and our community."

United Land Services ranked **No. 20** on **Lawn & Landscape's Top 100 list** this year. It reported a total revenue of **\$153 million.**



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# McHale Landscape Design acquires Dalton Ventures

This is the third acquisition in five years for Mchale, a family-owned company.

**MCHALE LANDSCAPE DESIGN**, a residential landscape architecture and design-build firm, has acquired Dalton Ventures, a residential estate garden care firm based in Middletown, Maryland.

This is the third acquisition in five years for Mchale, a family-owned company. Mchale ranked No. 64 on Lawn & Landscape's Top 100 list last year, pulling in \$45 million in total revenue.

Keith Bowman, president of business development at Mchale, describes the acquisition as "a successful partnership with a company that shares our values, vision and culture."

All Dalton Venture employees and owners will join Mchale Landscape Design. The

partnership further expands the Mchale presence in residential communities around metropolitan Washington DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

"We are excited to combine two uniquely qualified companies which align strategically with Mchale's long-term growth plans," says Mchale's Barrett Wolf, the director of business operations.

Charlie and Clayton Dalton, owners of Dalton Ventures, say they are thrilled to partner with Mchale.

"Partnering with Mchale Landscape Design is the best business decision we have made. The impact of the combined resources will be a huge benefit to our clients," Charlie Dalton says.

McHale ranked **No. 64** on **Lawn & Landscape's Top 100** list this year, pulling in **\$36 million** in total revenue.

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## PlanIT Geo joins Waverock Software

PlanIT Geo provides management and planning tools that help clients improve the quality of life of their constituents.

**PLANIT GEO**, an urban forestry software and consulting services, was acquired by Waverock Software, an enterprise software operating company. Support for urban forestry as essential infrastructure in liveable, climate resilient cities has skyrocketed over the past few years. Waverock's growth investment and long-term access to capital and resources bolsters PlanIT Geo's ability to meet the rapidly growing demand for smarter, more equitable green asset management.

Unprecedented federal investment, rising average temperatures, and development-driven deforestation, are all

accelerating demand for green spaces in urban areas. PlanIT Geo is well positioned to address these needs by providing valuable management and planning tools that help clients improve the quality of life of their constituents. This acquisition and growth investment has strengthened that position.

Waverock Software specializes in acquiring and scaling market-leading software companies by providing long-term capital and operational expertise. Waverock's team of former and active software and technology executives has substantial experience growing software organizations.

PlanIT Geo's technology, impressive list of marquee customers and partners, and mission-driven culture proved to be a perfect fit for Waverock's vision.

"We were looking for a partner that shared our values, was growth-minded, savvy, and believes in the tremendous value of greening communities through trees and technology. We found that home in Waverock Software and are elated for this next phase of our story to deliver innovative solutions to our customers," says Ian Hanou, PlanIT Geo founder & CEO.

"We are thrilled to partner with Ian and the team at PlanIT Geo, and to support the company over a long term. With over 83% of Americans and 75% of Europeans living in urban centers, the importance of green spaces within cities will grow and will receive increased funding. We feel fortunate to be joining forces with a technology and thought leader in this space," says Mike Rozenfeld, CEO of Waverock Software.

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## Ruppert Landscape expands into Tennessee, promotes several to new roles

Marvin Clermont will oversee Ruppert's branch in Nashville, while others like the company's new COO, Fred Key, also earned leadership positions.

**RUPPERT LANDSCAPE** has expanded its landscape construction operations to include a permanent location in Nashville, Tennessee.

This branch joins 30 existing branch offices located in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, D.C., Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia and Texas, supporting both the landscape construction and landscape management divisions of the company.

"We have frequently stepped out of our geographic footprint when opportunities

arise to take on large-scale landscape construction projects at a national level," says Patrick Luzier, regional vice president in the company's landscape construction division. "Our expansion into the Nashville market was initially determined by relationships we have with clients in other geographic locations, who reached out to us for projects in the Nashville market. The success of these initial opportunities and several subsequent projects, enabled us to develop a more permanent presence



Marvin Clermont



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in the region.” The Tennessee branch is overseen by Marvin Clermont, who has recently been promoted to branch manager.

In his new role, Clermont will oversee all planning, budgeting and personnel development in the branch and ensure customer satisfaction on all landscape construction projects within the Nashville region.

Clermont holds a master’s degree in City and Regional Planning from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a bachelor’s degree in marketing from Florida State University. He garnered several years of community development and project management experience before joining Ruppert’s Maryland landscape construction branch in 2015. He was promoted to production manager before transferring to the Georgia landscape construction branch in 2017. In 2021, he took the opportunity to

relocate to Nashville to help open the satellite office in the role of associate branch manager.

“Marvin’s strong leadership and customer service abilities have played a key role in our ability to turn the Nashville satellite operation into a permanent branch,” Luzier says. “We are pleased to see Marvin take this next step in his career and know that the future of Ruppert in Nashville is in good hands.”

Ruppert’s Tennessee branch serves large-scale landscape construction projects in the Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville regions.

**ELSEWHERE AT RUPPERT**, the company recently promoted Fred Key to the position of chief operating officer in the company’s landscape management division. This position has been newly created to help support the division’s current scale and future growth.

“Fred’s tenacious leadership style has helped drive the division’s success over the years and will undoubtedly continue to do so from this new position of expanded influence,” says Tom Barry, the landscape management division president.

Key has over 30 years of industry experience and has been with Ruppert for 21 years serving in a variety of positions including crewman, foreman, area manager, controller, division administrator, branch manager, region manager and region vice president. Key holds a bachelor’s degree in business from Salisbury State University and is a Certified Landscape Professional. In 2009, he received one of the company’s top honors, the Clyde Vadner Merit Award, which is presented to the individual who has demonstrated consistent hard work and dedication leading to exceptional contributions to the organization. In 2019, Fred graduated from Harvard Business School’s Owner/President Management







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(OPM) program, completing a significant multi-year investment in his management education.

In his new role, Key will continue to oversee the Northern Virginia, North Carolina and Atlanta regions and will now also oversee the Central Virginia region, working closely with the region managers to influence operational decisions to help better serve our customers and team members. In addition, he will now be working with the company's business development team to help support division-wide sales efforts.

Additionally, Ruppert Landscape recently promoted Dave Sharry to the position of region manager in the company's landscape management division. In this capacity, he will oversee landscape management operations in the company's Central Virginia region, which includes the Fredericksburg and Richmond North, South and East locations.

Sharry has been with the company for

over 11 years, has over 30 years of landscape industry experience and is a U.S. Marine Corps Reserve veteran. In his first year at Ruppert, he was recognized with the company's Branch Impact Award for his outstanding dedication and contributions to the organization. In 2018, the original Richmond branch split into North and South locations to accommodate growth in the region, and as the newly appointed Richmond South branch manager, he played an integral role in supporting a smooth and profitable transition.

"The Richmond South branch's success can be largely attributed to Dave's strong customer relationships and military-influenced leadership style," Key says. "He sets high expectations while still making time to help each individual team member and support neighboring branches. We feel confident that he will continue to support and grow the Richmond and Fredericksburg teams in this new capacity."

In his stead, Rob Groves has been appointed branch manager in Richmond South. In this role, he will be responsible for the overall welfare of the branch, including the safety and development of his team, strategic planning and budgeting, training, customer service, and day-to-day operations.

Groves has been with the company for over 15 years and holds a degree in ornamental horticulture from Pennsylvania College of Technology. He began his career at Ruppert as an enhancement field manager in the Gainesville branch, worked his way up to area manager, associate branch manager, and became branch manager in Richmond North in 2018. He led the branch until last year when he explored other opportunities within the company, supporting division IT projects and irrigation operations in the region, but embraced the opportunity to return to the branch manager role.

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## Project EverGreen, SiteOne Landscape Supply team up for new incentive

To attract new GreenCare for Troops volunteers, SiteOne will give out \$250 discount coupons.

**SITEONE LANDSCAPE SUPPLY** and Project EverGreen have announced a new incentive to attract and retain volunteers for the GreenCare for Troops (GCFT) program which provides complimentary landscape and lawn care services to families of deployed military personnel.

Volunteers who register with the GreenCare for Troops program in 2023 and agree to help at least one military family with free lawn and landscape services will be rewarded a single use \$250 discount coupon toward products purchased in-person at any SiteOne's stores.

"It's important for military families

to enjoy healthy yards and lawns and to come together as a family during times of uncertainty when a member is deployed," says Kevin Laycock, director, category management at SiteOne Landscape Supply and current board president of Project EverGreen. "GreenCare for Troops allows volunteer companies to maintain the turf and health of the family's yard which supports Project EverGreen's mission. Quality turf provides the Earth with carbon sequestration and clean air for families."

The GCFT program has matched lawn and landscape professionals with deployed military families for 17 years. It's a natural

way for landscape companies to share their knowledge and skills of healthy yards and landscapes with military families during a stressful time. By providing a safe and healthy yard for families to relax and play, military families enjoy the environmental and health benefits of a greener, cooler neighborhood and community.

Project EverGreen will send new volunteers an email verifying their SiteOne account has been loaded with the coupon. Volunteers must be a registered SiteOne customer to redeem the coupon. If volunteers do not have an account, registration is free and can be done online. **L&L**

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## TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

→ **IF YOU OWN A COMMERCIAL MAINTENANCE COMPANY** in today's market, breaking up (exiting) from your business should not only be easy to do, but it should also be profitable. It's even better yet if you own a chemical application company. Lawn care, weed control, pest control, tree health care and similar companies often command premium prices upon the transition of ownership. It's the repeat revenue and high margins that make these companies so desirable. In the last year or so, residential maintenance has become highly prized by private equity investors. All of these sectors are experiencing a land rush of sorts as private equity, with its billions of dollars to invest, seeks investment opportunities that provide healthy returns.

But what about commercial and residential design/build and bid-build enterprises with minimal repeat revenue? How do such companies transition ownership? What are the options? This is the very challenge that many of my clients are facing today as they consider how to retire. Here are some thoughts and a possible way to do so:

**ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION.** Let's say that you own an installation company with annual revenues of \$5 million of which \$250,000 is maintenance. Your net profit margin is 15% (\$750,000) and your EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) is 18% (\$900,000). The company value would probably be 1.0 to 3.0 x EBITDA or \$750,000 to \$2.7 million. You have an employee, investor, son or daughter who would like to eventually buy your business, but they have limited resources. Here are some options:

1. The buyer(s) has the resources to buy a small portion of the business (i.e., 5% or 10%). They do so with the stipulation that they use their ownership dividends to purchase additional company stock until they own 49% of the business. Each year their equity would increase until it maxes out at 49%. You maintain majority ownership until you decide to retire. At this point, you could sell all, some or none of your stock to the minority owner as the two (or more) of you decide how to proceed. You retire and exit the business, but you still collect your ownership portion of the declared annual dividends. This could continue as long as you and the other owner(s) agree to do so.

2. The buyer(s) have no resources. The company loans the buyer(s) enough money to buy a portion of the business with the stipulation that the buyer(s) use their annual dividends to pay back the loan. Once the loan is paid off, the dividends would be re-invested as in scenario number one.

3. The buyer(s) have no or limited resources and you "gift" the buyer(s) the funds with the stipulation that they re-invest their dividends to purchase more stock as in scenario number one.

**ADVANTAGES OF SUCH A TRANSACTION.** The advantage to the buyer(s) is that they essentially buy the business over time for free or for a minimal investment. It's their dividends that allow them to purchase the remainder of the business while they earn a reasonable

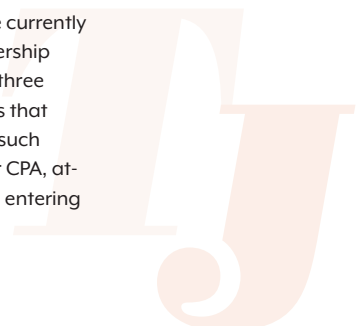
salary for their position in the company. (Note: Most people don't realize that buying a business is like buying a rental property. Done properly, it costs you nothing. It generates its own revenue to cover all expenses and is therefore *free*.)

The advantage to the original owner is that he or she now (1) has an exit strategy and (2) could earn hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars after they retire and exit the business. In our example, if the business remains steady at the \$5-million revenue level and the same net profit margin after the seller retires and exits the company, with just 25% ownership, he or she would receive \$187,500 annually *ad infinitum*. Over 10 years, this would amount to \$1,875,000. Yes, the buyer gets a good deal, but so does the seller since the options at this point in time for an installation company are so limited. The actual results would more than likely be better than this scenario as it assumes that the company would not grow either the top or bottom lines, which is pretty unlikely.

**CONCLUSION.** Breaking up with a green industry business with minimal repeat revenue can be hard to do; however, with time, a willing buyer and some creativity, you can do a deal that's good for all concerned.

The ownership transition challenge described above is one that many of my clients are currently facing. The details (figures, values, ownership percentages and so forth) vary, but the three possible solutions outlined here are ones that many of them are considering. Like any such transaction, be sure to consult with your CPA, attorney and competent advisor(s) before entering into such an agreement. **L&L**

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## WORDS OF WILSON

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

# 2 CRITICAL DATA ANALYTIC TOOLS YOU SHOULD MASTER

→ **WHEN CEOS TELL ME THEY'RE DROWNING IN DATA**, they're not wrong. With increasingly more intelligent technology, it's getting easier to access information and harder to find the wisdom to understand it. But because we need data to make decisions, we dive in, unsure how to discern or extract the nugget that will change our business for the better.

If you are swimming through a sea of data, two foundational approaches to a data strategy can form a life raft, helping you know what to do and where to head next: dashboarding and benchmarking. Dashboarding is like the raft's base, consolidating the nuts and bolts of your business, providing key financial and production data that drives performance and gives a concise overview of overall health in critical areas. It provides insights that drive key decisions surrounding growth, pricing and profitability.

Benchmarking is a big-picture approach, the raft's rudder, measuring your historical performance against itself, competition and the industry. It powers your ability to grow in your market by showing you opportunities for improvement, or where you have a competitive edge. When paired together as the foundation of your business strategy, the value is immeasurable.

### Financial Dashboard Value

Good financial management occurs by actively controlling what is in front of you, not passively observing what is already behind you. Determining specific data needed and sources to supply it, along with a way to consolidate it, is at the very heart of a successful financial dashboard. Long gone are the days when simply reviewing an income statement and balance sheet after the month closes results in good decision making. Today's fast-paced environment of almost instant information demands timely, accurate data with which to make fully informed decisions.

### Data-Driven Decision Making

Data volume does not equate to data value, or even data validity. Conclusions based on timely, supporting data help take the guesswork out of evaluating performance and making strategic decisions, though only if that data is accurate and reliable. Good data is rooted in timely, scalable and consistent processes. For example, an electronic time system that is correctly used by field crews can accurately track time worked for payroll and time on each job, producing accurate labor cost data, which makes bidding and management decisions surrounding pricing timelier and more accurate. The better and timelier a company's access to reliable

data, the bigger their competitive advantage in the market.

### Finding and Correcting Weakness

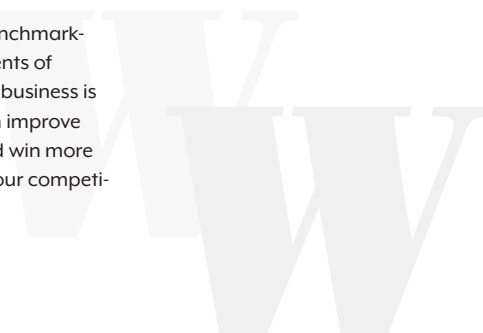
Customers expect to pay a fair price for the services you provide. Too often, they end up paying for inefficiencies, sometimes ultimately resulting in the loss of a good client. The industry generally benefited from generous price increases over the last few years as wages and other costs of production soared. Today, though, the market is in flux, and those increases won't be as easy to get. Dashboard analysis provides context for operational and administrative costs and gives the insight needed to improve margins and the bottom line. For example, knowing the benchmark gross margin for companies with a similar service mix to our own allows us to determine if we are producing work as efficiently as we should be. If not, we can begin to drill down into additional data, such as actual vs. budgeted job hours, to help determine where we may be falling short, then put an action plan in place to improve.

Dashboarding and benchmarking are two key components of understanding how your business is performing, how you can improve and how you can bid and win more business using data as your competitive advantage. **L&L**



**THERE ARE LOTS OF DATA POINTS OUT THERE TO CONSIDER.**

Benchmarking and dashboarding can help you wade through the numbers.



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

## A GOOD START

→ **LAWN AND LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS** are optimistic by and large. And, why not? They're entrepreneurs who are doing what they love to do: working outdoors; building and maintaining beautiful green spaces; and growing financially successful businesses that create solid careers and healthy green spaces.

They're positive about bringing the vision of residential clients to life by creating spectacular outdoor living spaces and sustaining the curb appeal of commercial properties and HOAs. This is more important than ever in the changing hybrid work environment.

Despite persistent labor challenges, most contractors are feeling good about 2023 and say they will meet and likely surpass budgeted goals. Next year is what contractors are worried about and they're working on contingency plans should the economy fall into a recession.

The diversity of the professional green industry can make tracking trends and patterns difficult to pin down.

The Harvest Group has been in your shoes, and in this month's column, three members of the group share their predictions for the second half of 2023.

Nearly mid-way through the year, 2023 is not all that different from a year ago. Some key things that stand out, according to Ed Laflamme, LIC, are:

- **Work backlogs** are not quite as large for extra work or new work but still a bit greater than pre-COVID.
- **Design/build companies** are not getting as many jobs but what they are getting are much larger than even last year.
- **Landscape maintenance companies** are getting some pushback on price increases and customers are beginning to look around often at the expense of quality.
- **Supply chain challenges** are easing up with equipment, vehicles and materials but are still not normal and a bit hit and miss. Sometimes contractors have to settle for brands they don't usually purchase.
- **Crew level job applicants** are increasing, but not by much.
- **Contractors** are trying to keep prices "tight" for basic work but increase enhancement work as much as the clients will accept.
- **This year, maintenance contractors** are focused on cost increases and multi-year agreements when it's renewal time.
- **Snow contractors** everywhere are trying to get seasonal pricing with "limits" for excessive snow instead of the typical inch pricing because of erratic snow years.

Jud Griggs, an expert in design/build, says this segment of the landscape industry had strong backlogs coming into this year and are booked into early fall. Residential contractors in particular are benefiting from strong demand that built during the stay-at-home pandemic days.

However, new leads seem to be slowing down according to many design/build contractors, although the quality of leads is still good. Residential clients are still interested in major renovation projects with budgets starting at \$150,000 and in some cases approaching \$1 million.

On the supply side, plants are still in short supply – especially larger specimens and large evergreen material – and service from re-wholesalers is spotty. Only

partial orders are showing up on delivery trucks and quality is inconsistent. The demand is still outstripping supply, forcing astute contractors to look for alternative supply options.

With the unemployment rate still in the 3- to 3.5% range, many contractors are finding some good new crew level hires. While they still could use more people, they are having better luck filling some of their most glaring needs on the crew level than in the past two years. Experienced project managers, account managers and salespeople are still difficult to find.

What many landscape business owners want to know is, are mergers and acquisitions still a big deal for the landscape industry?

Alison Hoffman, the Harvest Group's M&A specialist, says there is still plenty of interest and activity in the green industry M&A market. Private equity buyers are still buying, the big consolidators are still buying, and new entrants have joined companies like Mariani Enterprises in the residential markets.

The consensus among advisers is that prices and numbers of deals peaked in December 2021 but transactions – especially for quality companies – continue to be strong.

The landscape industry is learning how investors increase value for the companies they own. The best companies of all sizes can benefit by implementing new value-creating strategies. These may include:

- **Vendor relationships** with technical support and information provided by vendor management software with a focus on supply chain management.
- **Data analytics** for decision making.
- **Cash management** focus and improvements in company's processes, staffing and technology.
- **Sales team support** via CRMs and automation of marketing support.

Bottom line, lawn and landscape professionals can thrive through anything the economy and the environment throw at them as long as they offer service diversity and know their numbers. **L&L**



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– Curby Hughes, Owner, Curby's Landscape





# Jenny Girard

Area Manager  
R.M. Landscape

## MENTAL HEALTH.

Those words hold so many different meanings to so many people. Something so vitally important to our well-being, yet most times it is ignored, not talked about or forgotten. When ignored, it manifests itself in every part of your life, becoming so loud it cannot be silenced, yet most of us endure in silence.

I am by no means an expert in the field; I am only speaking on my own experience. I want to bring awareness around mental health by sharing my experience — share what it is like to face some of my darkest moments and what helped me come out on the other side.

I first started noticing something was off when I started college. It started slowly, I ignored it, I kept pushing, making up excuses, kept going as though nothing was wrong. On the outside I portrayed the happiest person, I looked fine, high functioning, I was successful at school, work, happily married, smile on my face and fun to be around.

On the inside I was slowly breaking, feeling weak, embarrassed, lost, lonely, but not wanting to admit there was

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



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

something wrong with me. Some days were so difficult to put on the happy face to the outside world. My ignored symptoms manifested in many ways like anger. There were days where I struggled to get out of bed. I would become distant and dissociative to the world around me, working to the point of exhaustion, continuously seeking perfectionism and more.

I did not like the person I had become to hide this problem and I sought out help. I suffer from anxiety paired with major depression disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. I have been and continue to be in therapy. Therapy has helped me realize who I am, how I think and how I can improve to continue to be the person I love.

One of the reasons why I felt comfortable seeking help was because I felt supported to do so. Not just from my family or friends, but my job. That support from work provided me with the security I needed to be open about what was happening and acknowledging that not everything was fine.

So, what can you do for your team? Be there, be supportive, lead your team with empathy, be open to conversation and even share your own experience if you are comfortable doing so. Build relationships with your team, ask them how they are doing and recognize when they need help or support. Realize that even the highest functioning people can suffer.

Your company can open avenues to allow team members to seek mental health. There are many great ways to incorporate this into your company. For example, some companies offer counseling services to team members and family through company benefits or mental health tips in a monthly newsletter. Opening that conversation and avenue is crucial to providing the space and security to team members to open up and seek help.

If you are experiencing mental health difficulties, please know you are not alone. Take time for yourself and listen to your body. Know that you are strong and that you matter. It is okay to say you're not fine and there is nothing wrong with asking for help. There will be better days no matter how dark they may seem.

*If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis, please call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988. The Lifeline provides 24-hour, confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. L&L*

# THE TOP 100

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# MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**DEAR MEMBERS OF THE LAWN & LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY,** for the umpteenth year in a row, Kohler takes part in the Lawn & Landscape Top 100, with a deep sense of pride in what we have built with this association and with a sense of gratitude to all members who actively participate and make their knowledge and resources available to the community. Mutual support is something truly special and is what sets the Lawn & Landscape industry apart from all other associations, and what has driven us to achieve some excellent results as companies.

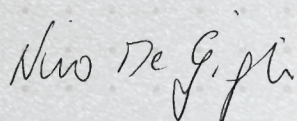
It is important to mention that these are times of great change for our industry, with new technologies and innovations emerging at a rapid pace. The industry is adapting and growing with new ways to improve the services and offerings that we provide to our clients. As members of the Lawn & Landscape industry, we have the opportunity to stay on the cutting edge of these developments and to continue to push the boundaries of what is possible in the field of landscaping.

Kohler has recently introduced a new corporate strategy that aims to create a more sustainable future, with a plan to transform the company from a power producer to an energy supplier. We understand that the current and future scenario of our industry can be complex, but we are responding with determination and an unwavering commitment to making a positive impact.

We are not just talking about change; we are taking concrete steps to make it happen. The pillars of Kohler's new strategy include the use of alternative fuels, the development of electric and hybrid solutions to achieve the zero-emissions mantra, and the development of green-fuel engines including hydrogen.

The decarbonization of our industry is a key step toward achieving our goals for the environment but it also represents an opportunity for us to strengthen the industry's capacity for innovation and competitiveness. Together as a Top 100 list, we are making a real difference, and I am excited to see what the future holds for us all as we continue to evolve in this ever-changing landscape.

Sincerely,




**Nino De Giglio**  
Director – Marketing Communications &  
Channel Management, Kohler Engines

✦ ✦ ✦

**“WE ARE NOT JUST  
TALKING ABOUT  
CHANGE; WE ARE  
TAKING CONCRETE  
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# NO TASK TOO TALL

SAMANTHA GOMEZ-TRAUTZ IS KNOWN AFFECTIONATELY AS THE "QUEEN OF EVERYTHING" AT **YARDNIQUE**, WHERE EVERYONE APPRECIATES HER DILIGENCE AND GRACIOUS SPIRIT.

BY KIM LUX

Samantha Gomez-Trautz has worked her way up from temporary receptionist to payroll integration manager at the company.

PHOTO: SEASON MOORE



#25



**HEADQUARTERS**  
MERRIAM, KANSAS

**REVENUE**  
\$97,000,000

**EMPLOYEES**  
420

In 2017, Samantha Gomez-Trautz took a leap of faith and moved across the country from California to North Carolina with her then fiancée and now husband.

She started as a temporary receptionist at Yardnique and over the past six years has worked her way up now being known as “The Queen of Everything” by co-workers. With her on board, Yardnique reached \$97 million in revenue in 2022 and is No. 25 on this year’s Top 100 list.

While Queen of Everything has a nice ring to it, Gomez-Trautz’s official title with the company is payroll integration manager. She adds she never imagined having a career in the green industry but is thankful for the opportunity.

“It’s been a new path for me,” she says. “I actually have a degree in criminal justice, so I always thought I was going to be in that field. My husband is a police officer, and I don’t think I’d be able to do that and enjoy it.”

Barrett Hines, regional manager with Yardnique, says it was evident to everyone early on that Gomez-Trautz was someone special.

“Samantha started with us in 2017 and came in and started as a receptionist. Very quickly, we saw that she was capable of so much more and wasn’t afraid of new tasks and taking those on,” he says. “Without sounding too cliché, she is the backbone of our operation. When it comes to everything behind the scenes — it’s her.”

**METICULOUSLY SUPPORTIVE.** Norma Avalos, an executive assistant, agrees with Hines and says it’s Gomez-Trautz’s attention to detail that makes her so vital to the team and allows them to grow exponentially.

Avalos, too, says she noticed this in Gomez-Trautz early on. “She was taking calls and doing any administrative task we needed help with across the organization, and quickly we realized she was a rockstar,” she says. “Anything Sam has ever touched has excelled at a high level.”

Whether it’s helping solve fleet problems or cellphone issues for crew members, calling the company’s IT partners or planning fun team-building events, Hines says Gomez-Trautz is always the first to step in.

“As we’ve grown, she’s seen a need to help bring folks together and help plan company outings — whether it’s minor league baseball games, axe throwing or anything like that. She’s always the one to coordinate those and get the information out so everybody knows where to be,” Hines says.

Both Avalos and Hines call Gomez-Trautz a key cog in the wheel, and without her handling all the behind the scenes tasks the business wouldn’t function as efficiently.

“We couldn’t do it without Sam,” Avalos says. “She is an integral piece of the way we grow. She serves everyone at such a high capacity.”

“We need people who care about the details and know that to get to the finish line for any kind of growth, you’ve got to have someone who cares about the details,” Hines adds. “And she is that person who is making sure we are crossing our T’s and dotting our I’s.”

But it’s more than her attention to detail or willingness to get things done that makes Gomez-Trautz stand out at Yardnique, Avalos adds.

“Her drive and her ambition make her essential,” she says. “She is a go-getter and very self-motivated. She takes initiative and, beyond that, her heart for people is incredible. She really leads with her heart.”

**A FAMILY AFFAIR.** Gomez-Trautz says she’s happy to hear that her co-workers appreciate her positive attitude and friendly demeanor. She adds that the company culture at Yardnique makes it easy to connect and care so much about her co-workers.

“In our lives, we spend more time at work, and I really consider my co-workers like family to me,” she says.

Gomez-Trautz, who had her son Maverick in 2021, says the team at Yardnique really rallied behind her through her whole pregnancy and after.

“We always come together and they are here if I ever need anything. When they found out I was pregnant, they threw me a baby shower. And for my son’s first birthday, they planned a little party for him here at the office,” she recalls.

“The culture is very family oriented,” Gomez-Trautz adds. “They allowed me to bring my newborn baby to the office every day because I couldn’t not work. They definitely take care of me.”

Avalos says baby Maverick was such a part of the family atmosphere at Yardnique



that to this day, employees note how much they miss him in the office.

“Our staff was upset when she took the baby to day care,” she jokes. “They said he’s a part of our team now.”

Avalos adds she remembers being in awe of Gomez-Trautz and how she balanced her responsibilities at Yardnique with motherhood.

“When she was pregnant, she was involved in the business practically up until the second she gave birth,” she says. “She was doing the entire company’s payroll the day before she gave birth. That’s how committed she is to the organization.”

Gomez-Trautz admits none of her success would be possible without the people around her.

“It’s hard to find a culture like this one these days,” she says. “We keep a lot of our employees because of the culture.”

**LENDING AN EAR & HAND.** Hines says it’s Gomez-Trautz compassion that really allows her to bond so well with the employees. In fact, there’s another title he’d like to give her in addition to Queen of Everything.

“She’s like the unofficial company psychiatrist, because everyone comes in and tells her what’s going on,” he says. “Whether it’s personal or work related, she has that trusting aura about her. Even if she’s not the right person, she’s someone to talk to.”

Avalos says she’s noticed this too,



and there’s been several times where Gomez-Trautz brings something important to the CEO’s attention, so the company can help a struggling employee.

“She’s aware and so in touch with our

employees,” Avalos says. “She knows what’s going on with them personally. A few times, without getting into too much detail or revealing too much, she’s come up to the CEO and explained what’s going on in someone’s



# “IT’S HARD TO FIND A CULTURE LIKE THIS ONE THESE DAYS. WE KEEP A LOT OF OUR EMPLOYEES BECAUSE OF THE CULTURE.”

— *SAMANTHA GOMEZ-TRAUTZ, PAYROLL INTEGRATION MANAGER*

life and suggested what we should do to help. Whether that’s donating some money, donating items, etc. She’s always identifying need within the company.”

Gomez-Trautz says one of her favorite ways to give back at Yardnique is organizing the company’s annual Angel Tree at Christmas time.

“We do an Angel Tree every year for our employees,” she says. “We like to give back to them and their families... we tell the crew members and crew leaders to sign up, whether they need any help or not. It’s open to everyone.”

Once crew members sign their children up for the Angel Tree those requested items get sent to management and above and the children are sponsored by others in the company.

“We want to make sure no one is left behind,” Gomez-Trautz says. “It’s fun for us girls because we get to go do the shopping for these families, and hand out the gifts at the company Christmas party. It’s really appreciated and again just goes back to that great company culture.”

And while Gomez-Trautz isn’t one to boast, Hines says he knows her kindness is appreciated.

“Her number one attribute is she’s super humble,” he says. “She should be more confident in herself, but she stays very humble and has no ego. She’s never too good to do anything. It’s probably almost to a fault at times, and she should say no sometimes. But I think it speaks a lot to her work ethic and character.”

**A HOPEFUL HORIZON.** Because it’s her attitude that makes Gomez-Trautz such a fundamental part of Yardnique, Hines says he hopes she gets the chance to share her wisdom with others at the company.

“I would love to see her take that kind of mindset and attention to what has to happen to make the branch successful, and replicate that with other people,” he says. “Whether that’s people she takes on as mentees in other offices. I’d love to see her spread that influence.”

Avalos adds that while Gomez-Trautz continues to move up the company, there’s nothing she can’t do.

“When it comes to Sam’s future, I always see her tapping into what she’s most passionate about,” she says. “She is the kind of person that regardless of what position she’s in, she always flourishes. Whatever she sets her mind to, she can definitely accomplish. No one doubts her ability or her ability to lead and oversee.” **L&L**

The author is assistant editor with Lawn & Landscape.



THE  
TOP  
100

FAST FACTS

#50



**HEADQUARTERS**  
BARTLETT, ILL.

**REVENUE**  
\$57,458,000

**EMPLOYEES**  
600

After growing up immersed in horticulture, Amy Bateman has blossomed in this industry and at Sebert Landscape.

Steve Pearce knew Amy Bateman was going to be a success at Sebert over a decade ago.

Pearce, the company's chief operating officer, met Bateman when she was pretty fresh out of college. For her part, Bateman grew up on a farm constantly surrounded by horticulture, so her passion for the industry came naturally.

"She's passionate about the industry. She's passionate about the people that work in it," Pearce says. "That's probably what has struck me so much with her from the very beginning. She's very committed to her clients. She's committed to the employees around her."

That passion for the industry works in Sebert's benefit: The company ranked No. 50 on Lawn & Landscape's Top 100 list with an annual revenue of \$57,458,000. Ironically though, Bateman almost never found her way back into the green industry at all.

"I fought it for a very long time," Bateman says, adding that while growing up on the family farm, her father really pushed agriculture.

Bateman resisted: Where she grew a fondness for a field like architecture, she also grew to dislike corn and soybeans. But after starting out in an architecture program in school, Bateman changed her mind entirely — maybe she didn't hate the outdoors as much as she thought she did.

Almost 15 years later, and things are changing at Sebert, which has developed a seasonal color program, a new account manager onboarding process, and an irrigation division. What has remained

# LEADER IN BLOOM

AMY BATEMAN HAS GONE FROM SALES TO ONE OF  
**SEBERT LANDSCAPE'S**  
TOP MANAGERS. **BY JIMMY MILLER**

PHOTO COURTESY OF SEBERT LANDSCAPING



a constant is Bateman's ability to collaborate, particularly on the seasonal program that she developed.

"That's probably one of the best things about Sebert," Bateman says. "We're all here to make everything that we do better, easier. Sometimes situations are not easy, and they're complicated, but everyone is here to help."

**DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES.** Of course, that's not to suggest that Bateman and the Sebert team relish adversity. Pearce says Bateman initially struggled with managing tough, complicated matters at the company, but as she has grown into new roles, she has also developed a stronger sense of leadership amidst adversity.

"She's not afraid of it," he says. "(I've enjoyed) watching her really take on the challenges of adversity, problem-solving, getting into the get into the hard things that, you know, you don't want to deal with. She doesn't like it (adversity), but she's not afraid of it."

Bateman says one obstacle is dealing with a challenging labor market. She says it's not always about finding the most experienced candidates; sometimes, it's a matter of lining up their company's goals with the passions of each prospect.

For Sebert, Bateman says it's been about finding the people who are most engaged in sustainability and passionate about the environment. This includes finding candidates who are interested in trying different types of mowers or fuels that are more eco-friendly.

"One of the big things is being sustainable and being as disruptive as we are, as an industry, how we can take the initiatives as simple as, you know, recycling or using safer chemicals," Bateman says. "So it's finding individuals that are excited about those opportunities, and really honing in on their skill set and developing them from there."

She adds that a lot of their employees tend to stick around for a while, which means their roles are shifting constantly. Bateman develops that feeling of consistent teamwork despite evolving responsibilities by hosting open table discussions during her weekly branch meetings, asking questions like "how can we be better?" and "what can we do differently?"

"How can we challenge ourselves in maybe think outside of the box and ways that we might not be doing things?" Bateman says.

**BLOSSOMING FLOWER PROGRAM.** One of those big areas for thinking outside the box has been Sebert's revised flower program. Pearce says Bateman cultivated Sebert's flower program and, through her ability to bring together a team, has helped get employee buy-in across the board.

"Sometimes they need a little nudging," Pearce says.

That nudging started when Bateman saw a need for a focused flower program several years ago, when she was just an account manager.

"We were using a lot of material that wasn't appropriate for the right conditions, or larger plants in front of smaller ones," she says. "Because annuals are one of the most expensive things a client can spend their money on, I really wanted to focus on how we could showcase these colorful plants that would make us shine."

Bateman says she worked with managers to teach them about different habits that helped them adopt the program. This training ranged anywhere from having them focus on seasonal trends to watching the pantone colors for inspiration.

"In years prior, we would bulk order the material and then sell it based on our orders," Bateman says. "Now, we work closely with our growers and are preparing for the upcoming season a year in advance — working on availabilities, plant palettes and securing our material ahead of time."

Sebert now builds an order form based on the product they want to sell, which helps them avoid leftover product after purchasing. Bateman says their team also custom grows their container plants in what they call smart pots, which helps them avoid

re-handling the plants multiple times. The crews can load straight from the carts from their growers, which helps clients get their plants sooner.

"Since Sebert as a company has a focus on sustainability, I do try to encourage using perennials mixed in with annual plantings for cost savings, environmental factors and different textures," Bateman says.

**BECOMING THE BOSS.** Through her successful implementation of the flower program, Bateman started rising through the ranks at Sebert. She says that transitioning from an account manager level to a supervisor meant that she had to understand what her employees were dealing with on a day-in, day-out basis.

"I really had to get my hands dirty to find out what they needed, what their daily focus was," Bateman says. "I had to get my hands dirty to earn their trust and respect, let them know that I'm here to do whatever we can to have our team as a whole be successful."

It would've been really easy to be intimidated. Bateman took over the Bartlett branch while the incumbent was still there, and the company's corporate office is located at this branch. But Pearce says she was able to turn a challenging situation into buy-in from her employees.

"Being with a whole new set of people and gaining the respect of that group of people was a huge challenge for her at the beginning, but she showed her ways and put the teamwork side in front of what was going to happen," he says. "The organization that she's built is a strong team through that process of her jumping in."

Pearce says that Bateman is suited to continue to handle all the various evolutions at the business because of these relationships. "Relationships are key, and I think that's always a challenge as we grow and get new employees and have them understand what the standards are of how we built this company," he says.

"Ultimately, this is about Amy's passion. There's just a lot of passion about what she does, and it shows every day." **L&L**

The author is associate editor with Lawn & Landscape.



THE  
TOP  
100

Under John Guth's leadership, the lawn care business at Green Lawn Fertilizing has grown exponentially.

FAST FACTS

#82



**HEADQUARTERS**  
WEST CHESTER, PA

**REVENUE**  
\$37,357,397

**EMPLOYEES**  
270

# LIFT THEM UP

*JOHN GUTH, VICE PRESIDENT OF LAWN AT **GREEN LAWN FERTILIZING**, HAS MADE IT HIS MISSION TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN HIS TEAM AND THAT'S TRANSLATED INTO TREMENDOUS GROWTH. BY KIM LUX*

**G**reen Lawn Fertilizing COO Josh Willey says he's known just how special John Guth, vice president of lawn, is for the last 20 years. In fact, the pair's paths have crossed numerous times at different green industry companies.

"I've worked with John in multiple capacities for 20 years, Willey explains.

Within a year of starting at Green Lawn, Willey says he knew he wanted to bring Guth onto the team in 2018. Now, with both on board, the company reached \$37 million in revenue and landed at No. 82 on this year's Top 100 List.

Guth oversees both the operations and customer service departments for the company's lawn care segment.

"It's my responsibility to create a culture where it is safe to take calculated risks, challenge the norms, ensure data is available to drive our business and to provide my team the ability to be life-long learners," he says.

Throughout his five years with the company, Guth has helped add hundreds of employees and millions of dollars of revenue to Green Lawn Fertilizing's bottom line. In 2018, the lawn care division made \$8.7 million and had 36 technicians. Today, they're doing \$31.5 million and employ 130 techs.

"The first year was all about building a foundation — gaining trust, creating relationships and learning the culture," he recalls. "The second year is when things really began to come together. My branch



leadership teams started to manage their own P&L's, they were gaining confidence in themselves and were starting to make business decisions on their own."

Willey says he believes Guth's success at growing the lawn care business is attributed to his unique leadership style — something that takes some people awhile to recognize.

Willey remembers a few instances where Guth took over a team and early on there was some pushback, as the team didn't really understand his leadership style. Willey says Guth tends to focus more on results and is a straight shooter.

"Within six months though, the dynamic completely shifts. They see who he is and understand where his heart is at, and there's no one who has a more loyal team than John does," Willey says. It's about who he is not what he says or how he says it."

**A DETERMINED DIRECTOR.** Since they started working together two decades ago, Willey says Guth's tenacity and leadership has helped him push projects to the next level.

"John brings a level of consistency and attention to detail to everything he does. That is something we don't have otherwise," Willey says. "That's why he's been such an integral part of my career as well. I'll get something off the ground and to about a B+, he'd say a C, and then he comes in and takes it the rest of the way up to where we need to be executing — an A or A+."

Willey notes Guth is no cheerleader, and it's his tough-love attitude that has transformed so many employees at Green Lawn Fertilizing into high achievers.

"He also is not bashful when it comes to taking issues head on or having tough conversations with folks," Willey says. "He has a unique ability to call things out and level people up while they still stay engaged and understand he has their best interest at heart.

"It's a unique skillset he has in building relationships and just being a trustworthy guy," he adds. "People will take a lot more pressure from John because of his ability to deliver for them and he really levels up team members that way as well."

Guth says his desire to be a firm but fair leader comes from the influences he's had in his own life.

"The impact I've been able to have on developing people is rooted in gratitude for the mentors who have invested in me," Guth says. "A handful of people developed, pushed, challenged me and they changed my life and the lives of my family. I simply care deeply about giving others that same opportunity and am willing to do whatever it takes to see people achieve their full potential in this industry. That includes tough conversations when necessary and showing up for people regardless of the need or circumstance."

**AIMING FOR GREATNESS.** This mentality was essential when the company was launching its quality assurance team three years ago, as Green Lawn was looking to cement itself as an industry leader.

"We were experiencing rapid growth, we needed to hire many new team members, and we had to develop a way to deliver our 5-Star Service continuously. So, we created a quality assurance team. The QA team's sole responsibility was to develop, implement and provide ongoing training to our team members with no ties to a production goal," Guth says. "As the QA team evolved, they then completely redesigned our agronomic programs, created cross-training to other departments within our company, introduced infield audits and created weekly safety and agronomic trainings along with tests."

Willey says Guth's assistance in establishing the QA team has been instrumental in bettering the company across the board.

"John has raised the level of execution on everything we do," he says. "There's not an area of the business that he hasn't touched in terms of just leveling up performance and execution. That includes everything from operations, customer service, sales, marketing and even finance."

**PROSPEROUS PROGRESS.** Since Guth has come onboard, the company has continued to grow exponentially — experiencing about 300% growth over the last five years.

Guth says he attributes this growth solely to the people at Green Lawn Fertilizing.

"When you talk about growth within our company though, it's not just about growing revenue. We have invested heavily in our people," he says. "Our internal leadership development program has produced over 25 leaders in the last three years. We have also created a technician advancement program for technicians that do not want to be future people leaders and are interested in honing their craft as an industry professional. My role has been to help lead these initiatives, to prepare our company for current and future growth."

**"WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT GROWTH WITHIN OUR COMPANY THOUGH, IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT GROWING REVENUE. WE HAVE INVESTED HEAVILY IN OUR PEOPLE."**

— JOHN GUTH, VICE PRESIDENT, LAWN

Willey says he expects Guth to continue pushing the lawn care business to more than the \$100 million mark.

"That's the short-term target," Willey says. "For John, running a \$100 million business unit is a much different endeavor... our goals for John are to take the business to that level and to successfully run a business of that size.

"In a rapid growth environment, which is what we're in, you can only grow in this industry as quickly as you can develop people and have them take on increased responsibility," he adds. "John is integral to the business in that way." **L&L**

The author is assistant editor with Lawn & Landscape.



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Marcus Celiano,  
owner, Golden  
Wolf Landscape &  
Design



# GOLDEN WOLF GRO

A college dropout started his company in 2018 and has grown it to \$2 million in revenue.

By Kim Lux

**A** five-year-old sits at the window completely enthralled with the landscape construction work going on in his backyard. Crews are busy installing a pool, plants, lighting and more.

The boy asks his parents if they will take him outside to watch the work up close and in person. They agree. He quickly makes friends with the foreman, Jose, and gets the chance to sit on some of the machines while Jose moves materials around and installs pavers.

That boy is now 24 years old: His name is Marcus Celiano. His company, Golden Wolf Landscape & Design, based in Long Valley, New Jersey, reached over \$1 million in revenue in under one year.

**BUILDING BLOCKS OF A BUSINESS.** Getting there was no easy feat. Celiano says he's been working on achieving this goal since 2018.

"The summer after my freshman year of college...my mom is a real estate agent and she had a client who wanted the front of their property spruced up a bit," he says. "So, I went out did the work and had my hourly rate at \$15 an hour. I thought I was striking it rich back then.

"I really enjoyed going out to a property that was all messy, and in shambles, and making it look so much better," Celiano adds. "That reminded me of when I was five years old and really enjoyed being out there in this field."

The following summer, Celiano again set out in his Honda Civic with a couple shovels, rakes and a wheelbarrow.

"I went job to job. I knocked on doors, I posted on Facebook, made flyers and then through word of mouth, things just grew," he recalls. "That summer I made \$17,000 and I thought I struck it rich yet again."

Celiano says he started to feel his hard work and dedication was paying off at that point. Feeling like a true entrepreneur, the next summer he brought on a few high school friends to take things up a notch. He called his new endeavor Celiano Landscaping.

"Like what most landscapers do, I took my last name and plopped landscaping on the end," he jokes. "We were a little bit more official, so I sold the Honda Civic and got my first truck. We started doing larger jobs and more installations rather than basic maintenance. That was 2020, and we did \$150,000."



Marcus Celiano as a young boy while his family's backyard was redone.



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**OWTH**



**COMPANY PROFILE**



When Celiano decided to dive into the green industry full-time, he started out as an owner/operator before quickly gaining a trusted group of employees.

At this point, Celiano was a college student studying at Alvernia University majoring in business management. There, he realized he wanted a new career path. “I realized that in a matter of four months, I made what most people make in

a year or even more,” Celiano says. “I began to think about what would happen if I did this full time, and if I bit the bullet and just dropped out of college...I went back to college, but I was so distracted in class. “I was creating budgets or watching

industry leader videos or reading professional growth books. I was so zoned in I couldn’t even focus on school,” he adds. After a difficult discussion with his parents, Celiano made the decision to drop out.

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“Over the course of the winter months, I took out all the money I had made and my investments and sold everything,” Celiano says. “I invested it all in the business. Buying trucks, equipment, apparel, marketing efforts — anything and everything you could think of to get a new business off the ground.

“In March 2021, I had no employees,” he remembers. “Then I was posting Indeed and Facebook ads and was finally able to get three or four employees to start the season with... that year we ended up doing \$1.4 million.”

And in 2022, Golden Wolf raked in just shy of \$2 million. The company is projected to do about \$2.45 million in 2023.

**MARKETING MATTERS.** Celiano says one of the first things he did when transitioning full-time into his business was removing his name from the company. Celiano Landscaping became Golden Wolf Landscape & Design.

“I knew I wanted to change my branding and marketing. So, I did a deep dive into that on how one can differentiate themselves,” Celiano says. “I wanted to detach my name from the business and make it more about the company than just about working for Celiano, I wanted it to be that we’d all be

working together for Golden Wolf. I also wanted to stand out in a very heavily saturated industry.”

For Celiano, investing greatly in marketing has been one way he’s been able to reach such staggering growth. Golden Wolf has hired an outside marketing company to lead all its efforts.

“Marketing has always been something I’m passionate about and I see it as the forefront of bringing sales in. And we know that return sales are the oxygen to the business,” he says. “We do have an outsourced marketing company because I believe in putting professionals into certain roles where they can thrive and do what they do best rather than just myself doing it half right.”

Celiano’s marketing strategies include Google Ads, geofencing, billboards, postcards, flash mailers, social media ads, text and email marketing, yard signs and more.

“All that leads back to the end goal of marketing — to bring leads in,” he says. “Be able to use multiple different strategies and don’t just get stuck on one, because it takes a few touches to get in front of someone, so being on many different platforms can help it look like you are everywhere.”

Celiano adds the little things make an impact on marketing, too.



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Celiano says a strong focus on branding and marketing has contributed to his company’s growth.



**COMPANY PROFILE**

Celiano says Entrepreneurial Operating System helps monitor employee goals.



“Just being able to have our trucks and trailers around town with our big, beautiful logo have made people drawn to that,” he says. “Company apparel also plays a role. I know it might not sound as important but how we present ourselves is a form of marketing as well. We invest into our appearance.”

While it may seem like an unnecessary expense or difficult to relinquish control, Celiano says he has no regrets with hiring an outside company to run point on marketing.

“I was hesitant in transferring all my marketing budget over to this company, but I just had to trust them,” he says. “At the end of the day, everyone only has so much time. Being able to not be afraid to hire someone to handle it is important. Because it’s an investment and a time saver as well. They can do a lot more, more efficiently with your marketing budget than you could because that’s their profession.”

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BRINGING SALES IN.  
AND WE KNOW THAT  
RETURN SALES ARE  
THE OXYGEN TO  
THE BUSINESS.”

Marcus Celiano,  
Golden Wolf Landscape & Design

**SEEK OUT SUCCESS.** Celiano says he also credits a great deal of the company’s growth to having an exceptional industry mentor.

When trying to decide whether to drop out of college, Celiano sought out several well-known landscaping companies in the Reading, Pa., area to seek advice. He instantly connected with one.

“I reached out to four companies and only one person was willing to invite me into their facility — and that was Brad Stephenson at New Castle Lawn & Landscape,” Celiano says. “Brad is an extremely knowledgeable and passionate person and very giving.”

Celiano says when shadowing New Castle, he was eager to learn all he could.

“When I walked in there, I was like a kid in a candy store seeing their fantastic facility and all their employees. It reminded me of when I was staring out the window at five years old in awe of all the machinery,” he

says. “I went out on a couple of jobs with them, and they were nice enough to let me shadow some of their foremen, operations managers and sit in on some meetings. They are an open book and are just looking to help.”

Celiano says Stephenson’s advice over the past few years has been invaluable. He recommends anyone looking to grow in this industry seek out the mentorship of someone wiser and more experienced.

“Having that foresight of someone who’s been in the industry for 20-plus years, and to be able to harness even a little of that and bring it into the current issues I’m facing, has done wonders,” he says. “As a new business owner in this industry, you can never 100 percent predict what’s going to happen. So, with instances that come up...it’s great to bounce ideas off someone rather than being stuck in your own head. It’s been extremely beneficial to me.”

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## COMPANY PROFILE



Celiano sits down with his mentor regularly and knows he's always a phone call away as well. Additionally, he stresses that Stephenson isn't doing anything physically to grow Golden Wolf but it's more about giving advice to the young owner.

In terms of what attributes a good mentor should possess, Celiano says it's simple.

"Someone who is open and honest is key," he says. "The first day I sat with Brad at New Castle, he showed me anything and everything I asked about and let it be a resource to me... and I respect him for that."

While their working relationship is great,

Celiano notes it's not always sunshine and roses between the two.

"He's definitely had to raise his voice at me at times and be 100% honest, but he knew if he wasn't honest with me, that could've led to other things that wouldn't have been the best for me to do," Celiano says. "He wants to keep me on the right path to success and streamline it and not deviate around it."

Celiano says being able to have the difficult conversations and then move past them is also crucial when seeking a mentor.

"There's been instances where I've had

very difficult conversations with Brad and even though they were difficult, they were the right and truthful conversations that needed to be had in that moment," he recalls.

Additionally, Celiano says he never feels obligated to listen to his mentor's advice verbatim.

"There's definitely been instances where I didn't agree with what he said and I ended up doing my own thing," he says. "You don't have to follow their footsteps step for step, but it's someone to bounce ideas off and gain further insight from."

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**REVIEW, REPORT, ADJUST.** Having Stephenson as an ear to bend is great, but it's not the only influence on Golden Wolf's substantial growth the past few years.

Whether it's keeping a keen eye on the numbers or ensuring employees are buying into and Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) system the business has implemented, growth is at the forefront of Celiano's leadership strategy.

"We have adopted the EOS system and that's something that Brad shared with me," Celiano says. "Because I saw their success from adopting that system... the EOS really portrays a vision into the company and gives people a greater meaning and purpose with their job."

With an EOS, everyone is assigned goals. These goals are quantifiable, and they are to achieve them over the next three months.

"Being able to have everyone buy-in and take ownership into their position has been great," Celiano says. "It's developed better

leaders internally. It's grown our people. Instead of just being a pointer, they are leading people and are able to connect on a personal basis which gets people more invested in the business."

Celiano says his staff meets weekly to address any issues, to-dos and important Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) along with checking in on everyone's EOS assignments and goals.

"In assigning those goals, there are responsibilities that come with it, and someone has to take leadership in order to achieve those in a timely manner," he adds.

In addition to the leadership skills improved by through EOS, Celiano attributes the business's success in part to being scrupulous with budgeting and reviewing the financials.

"I think being able to develop a budget and accurately represent your man-hour rate is crucial, because that's the only way

any company can be profitable and achieve the numbers we did in Year 1," he says. "Being able to understand the difference between gross profit and net profit and tracking that religiously is also key. Gross profit is great and all, but really, net profit is most important."

Understanding your numbers is the best advice Celiano says he could give any business — whether it's just starting out or has been well-established for years.

"Knowing cost per lead, cost per job and those analytics are very important because with that you can reverse engineer your marketing plan to directly correlate it to production and sales," he says. "Just track all your numbers consistently. That way you can adjust and pivot as needed in a timely manner, rather than waiting until you're so off track (that) you're doubling efforts to get back on track." **L&L**

The author is assistant editor with Lawn & Landscape.



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From plants to various types of mulches and gravels, there's a generous menu of options for various groundcover applications.



# Covering More Ground

Gravels are gaining traction, hardwood mulches are always in demand and the case for live groundcover is appealing to some property owners.

by **Kristen Hampshire**

**V**ibrant flowering shrubs, bunches of blooming perennials and wispy, natural grasses — these are the showstoppers clients tend to dote over when selecting materials for a landscape project. But what lies beneath is just as important.

Groundcovers, mulches and gravels are an integral tier in any balanced landscape design.

“Groundcovers add dimension, another layer of interest in the landscape,” explains Pete Wilkerson, partner in Scapes based in Roswell, Ga. “It creates proportion. You start with the lawn, step up to a low groundcover and then accent plants.”



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## MAINTENANCE

In many ways, you don't think about groundcover unless it's missing. There's a noticeable void like shading in the back-drop of a painting.

Beyond aesthetics, groundcovers like mulch help insulate roots and suppress weeds. "It keeps roots cool in the summer and warm in the winter so plants can stay growing strong," Wilkerson says.

From groundcover plants to various types of mulches and gravels — which are more popular across the board — there's a generous menu of options for various applications. Even so, most professionals offer a somewhat limited selection based on their region (what grows, what doesn't), the "ecosystem" on clients' properties, availability, cost and the purpose for the groundcover.

**MOSTLY MULCH.** In the Cincinnati, Ohio, area where K + R Landscaping operates, mulch is the dominant groundcover choice



Pete Wilkerson with Scapes says stone is growing in popularity, but mulch requests are still most common.

for Ken Schwarz's commercial clients, which mainly include large homeowners' associations. He notices the same preference in the residential market.

"Most of our properties choose black mulch — I do not see a whole lot of (planted) groundcover in our area," he says,

adding that this choice has reigned for the 33 years he has worked in the industry. "We go through about 120 yards of it a week."

Because of the bulk orders K + R makes, Schwarz scores competitive pricing, though there was recently a small uptick in cost — a few dollars per yard. He expects business in general to be busy this season, which means more mulching. "The smallest HOA we maintain has 285 patio homes," he says, noting that mulch is refreshed at least annually. "We put no more than two inches down and sometimes less, mostly for the coloring and how it accents plants."

Aside from mulch, the second most common request is for three-inch river rock, mostly alongside buildings to prevent pest pressure. Some ornamental installations

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## MAINTENANCE

also call for river rock, and a handful have requested higher-end Brassfield Fines, a decorative gravel made from brass-gold colored crushed limestone. "If you get river rock for \$50 a yard, you are looking at \$120 for Brassfield," Schwarz says.

Mulch type varies by region. In Central Florida, clients of Landscape Improvements in Orlando go for mini pine bark, or pine fines if installed with planted groundcover. Vice President Tyler Pontes prefers to purchase mulch in three cubic-foot bags. "Nothing has changed much with pricing, and we steer clear of bulk by-the-yard because it is easier for us to transport on pallets and throw bags in a wheelbarrow," he says.

Pontes is also seeing more interest in gravelscape. "Pea gravel has been more popular, and a blue-gray stone is more sought-after because it's (more) neutral than the Tuscan style with more of a burnt red-orange color," he says. "Because pea

gravel is a softer stone, people like that they can still walk on it barefoot."

They also appreciate its longevity. It doesn't require annual replacement like mulch and there's no maintenance like with planted groundcover. However, it is more costly than hardwood and pine mulches, so placement is a factor. Wilkerson describes a project where a client requested raised garden boxes for growing vegetables.

"The area around it is going to be pea gravel because they were looking ways to simplify and lower the maintenance so they could spend their time gardening," he says.

Stone is growing in popularity, but mulch requests are still most common, Wilkerson says. In the Atlanta market he serves, pine straw, shredded hardwood mulch and mini nuggets for beds are the top sellers. "We will use certain gravel mulches like Chattahoochee pea gravel or an equivalent, and egg rock, which is slightly larger," he says.



Powderpuff Mimosa is increasingly used in Florida landscapes.

**LIVING GROUNDCOVER.** Like any plant, groundcover must be selected based on the sites conditions and requirements — sun exposure, soil content and topography. Is the purpose to control erosion, fill in a large area or add texture to landscape beds?

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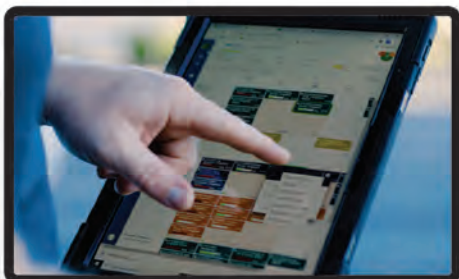
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“Our soils are very clay-laden and heavy, and we have a lot of elevation changes in our area, so given that, we approach groundcover as landscape architects,” Wilkerson says. “And because we warranty our plant materials, we have to be very selective of what we choose based on the conditions we see on the property.”

Occasionally, a client will request a groundcover that Wilkerson doesn't typically use. Often it's a “transplant” who moved from out of town, which is common in Atlanta, and they want a variety they had at their previous home. Wilkerson takes a “guide and advise” approach to suggesting any type of plant. “We will try something different, but we will not offer a warranty,” he says.

Wilkerson generally specifies different varieties of Liriope, dwarf and regular mondo grass, vinca minor and euonymus coloratus.

Liriope requires sun and adequate drainage. “We prepare the soil by breaking it up

a bit, adding amendments and fertilizer, and then it's a hardy plant,” Wilkerson says. “But if it is in an area that holds water or is too damp, we are seeing more fungus issues with this plant.”

The dwarf mondo plant “can appreciate more shade” and does better in areas with less sun exposure. “It can get burned with south or southwest exposure,” Wilkerson says. “And it also does not like wet feet.”

Vinca minor is a candidate for shaded areas, but Wilkerson says this is used sparingly. The purple leaf wintercreeper variety of Euonymus tolerates sun. “We might use that above a retaining wall or around a garden that gets sun. But it tends to look rattier. There are some areas that it is called for that are farther off the back of a patio or property for someone who wants a different look.”

Liriope is also a resilient selection that is specified for Eastern Landscape Contractors, which only focuses on public union projects. Because of this, the clients specify


all materials, and site location is always a consideration.

“In government landscape construction, you get nowhere near ideal conditions,” says Don Fuentes, vice president and owner. “You get wind, pollution and sun exposure alongside highways, so if you are planting a center median with traffic going north and south continuously — especially truck traffic — that's a major factor in plant survivability.”

Usually, liriope is planted near structures, Fuente says. The largest groundcover planting project Eastern Landscape Contractors completed was the ivy in front of the United Nations building in New York City.

The shaded location supports this groundcover. “And also, the color and ‘what can be seen’ through it because of security reasons,” Fuente says.

Pontes is specifying less ivy in Orlando because of fungal issues. Asiatic jasmine has “taken off since the 1990s,” he says,



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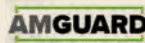
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adding that Blue Daze ‘Blue My Mind’ is also a sought-after choice. “If we are dealing with excess shade, we move toward jasmine because the Blue Daze typically likes more direct sunlight,” he says.

Powderpuff mimosa is increasingly used in Florida landscapes, and Pontes find its built-in defense mechanism cool to watch. “Similar to what you’d see with a Venus fly trap, if you touch the leaves they instantly shrivel up and start photosynthesizing again,” he describes, adding that the attractive pink blooms add interest to landscape beds. “It’s a fast grower and it does well in this region.”

As for fast-growing, this is a factor when selecting groundcover. Pontes buys four-inch plugs of jasmine because he says there is more root ratio in this size vs. the one-gallon or six-inch plant. “It takes off faster, we noticed,” Pontes says.

Blue Daze, Powderpuff mimosa and perennial peanut are purchased in one-gallon

or six-inch sizes and all range from \$2 to \$3 per plant. “Jasmine is creeping up there, too, because of inflation,” Pontes says.

**THE SUPPLY SIDE.** As for cost and availability, Pontes says getting groundcover hasn’t been a problem compared to larger plant stock. “It’s faster-growing so the nurseries don’t have to wait for it to reach a certain size, so it’s easier produced,” he points out.

Supply chain is mostly impacting mulch in the Atlanta market — and not availability, but type and quality. Because of rapid development in his market, Wilkerson says that mulch producers are basically having a tough time keeping up with new construction. “As for shredded hardwood mulch, there is no longer ‘seasoned’ mulch available,” he says. “Many times, it is shredded, dyed brown or black, and out to projects in bulk or bags within several weeks of being produced.”

This results in color leaching, and staining on driveways and walkways. Wilkerson says, “We have seen dramatic increases in plants and mulch during the last few years.” Specifically, pine straw prices have jumped 55- to 60%. “Due to pine straw quality issues, it is available but has increased significantly in price per bale.”

Planted groundcover is much more costly because it involves soil preparation, irrigation, plant material and also mulch to protect plants’ roots as they grow in, Wilkerson explains. It’s a long-term investment, however, and once it fills in, there is no top-dressing like with gravel and hardwood/pine mulches.

Whether live groundcover or mulch, the material is in demand. It touches both the maintenance and landscape install sectors. Plus, as Schwarz says, it’s a common request “because it just looks good.” **L&L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Ohio.

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# Tough Weeds in Warm-Season Lawns

Zac Reicher, Ph.D., Envu

Summer weed control is challenging. Lawns might contain grassy and broadleaf weeds as well as weeds with all four life cycles (perennials, biennials, summer annuals and some winter annuals might be hanging on), and the weeds likely vary widely in their susceptibility to herbicides. Complicating matters, herbicides must move against the weed's natural carbohydrate flow, which moves up from the roots to the leaves and flowers during spring and summer. And when you do apply herbicides, high temperatures and marginal drought stress increase the risk of phytotoxicity while decreasing efficacy.

Since spring and summer are when homeowners usually see weeds, professionals are forced into attempting control in spite of these obstacles. Here are some quick pointers:

- **Maximize turf health** – Dense, healthy turf will limit spread of weeds and maximize tolerance of the turf to applied herbicides.
- **Preventing weeds with preemergence control is always more effective than controlling existing weeds with postemergence control** – Preemergence herbicides (PREs) like Specticle® FLO herbicide

limit germination from seed of most grassy and broadleaf weeds, thereby limiting the number of weeds later in the summer and the need for postemergence herbicides (POSTs).

- **Split applications of PREs are ALWAYS more effective than single applications** – Splitting your total PRE into two or maybe even three applications is far more effective than a single application. This is because applying herbicide in lower doses after the initial application better maintains the effective concentration in the soil over what you'd expect from a single high-rate application early in the spring.
  - **Ensure adequate soil moisture prior to application** – Drought conditions will limit control from POST. For example, research at University of Tennessee reported less than 25% goosegrass control under dry conditions (less than 12% volumetric water content), and greater than 80% goosegrass control occurred when soil remained moist (greater than 20% volumetric water content).
  - **Repeat applications** – Repeat applications will likely be needed on any tuberous or spreading weeds like sedges, doveweed, dollarweed, etc. Plan on repeat applications in four- to six-week intervals.
  - **PRE + POST is effective** – With some of the more difficult-to control weeds, a highly effective PRE like Specticle FLO herbicide paired with a selective POST will enhance herbicide control.
- **Adjuvants** – Follow the label closely and rely on personal experience when it comes to adjuvants. Though adjuvants can help improve control on tough-to-control weeds, they can also increase the risk of turf damage.
  - **Spray tank pH** – Check your spray tank pH prior to adding products and adjust if necessary. The target pH is 6.0-6.5 prior to adding products, and pH's outside of this range could dramatically decrease availability and longevity of the active ingredients, especially by the end of the tank three to seven hours after mixing.
  - **Sedges** – Recent university data show that starting early when sedges are in the two- to three-leaf stage is the most effective for long-term control. Use a nutsedge specialist like Celsius® XTRA herbicide for maximum control, and use the appropriate adjuvants listed on the label.
  - **St. Augustine lawns** – St. Augustine lawns tend to be more sensitive to herbicide damage than other species. Specticle FLO herbicide as a PRE followed by Celsius WG herbicide or Celsius XTRA herbicide for POST control is highly effective while maximizing turf safety.

Specticle FLO herbicide helps inhibit the roots of many grassy and broadleaf weeds, while POST products like Tribute® Total herbicide or Celsius® WG herbicide damage the above-ground plant parts, resulting in better short-term control and improved long-term control.

Spreading weeds like doveweed are especially difficult to control in the summer since herbicides don't always translocate effectively through the entire plant. Repeat applications and combine a PRE plus a POST for maximum control.



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complete with paver deck space, a raised spa with spillover, a 12- x 13-foot lounge and a 9-foot-wide swim-in grotto that combines both fire and water to create a nice focal point.

The automation is also compatible with "Alexa" so the homeowner can say "Alexa

turn on waterfall" and the waterfall that pours out of the top of the grotto will turn on. This project took four-and-a-half months to complete.

Grading this site was the most challenging part of the project because the back end of the property slopes

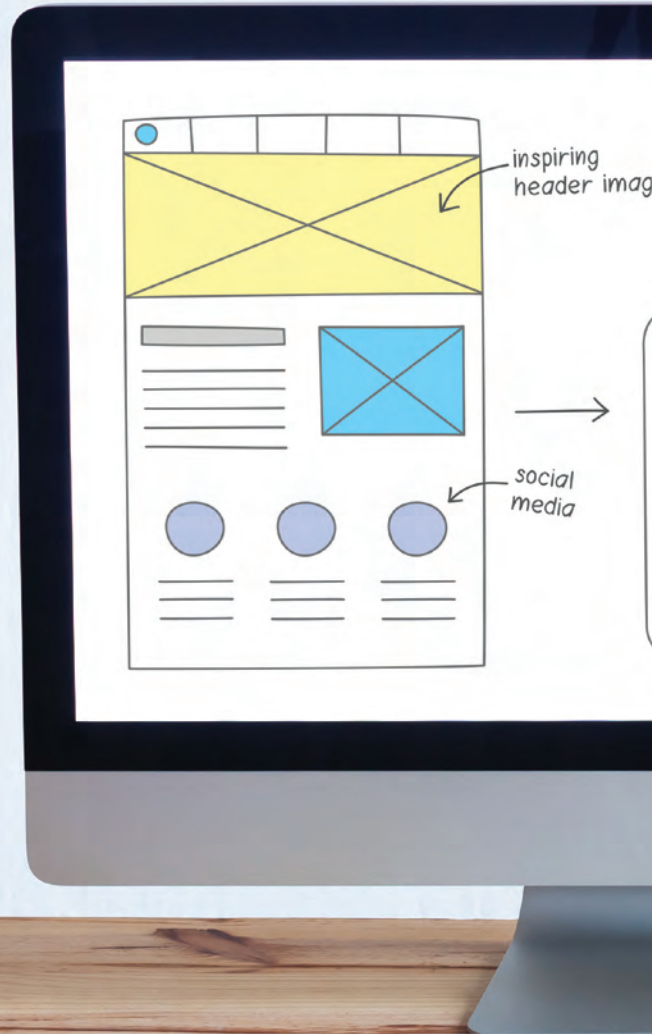




significantly. In order to be able to support the extra weight of the natural stone grotto, the crew had to put an extra-large footing with concrete piers to provide the structural support for the weight so the slope could be graded as needed.

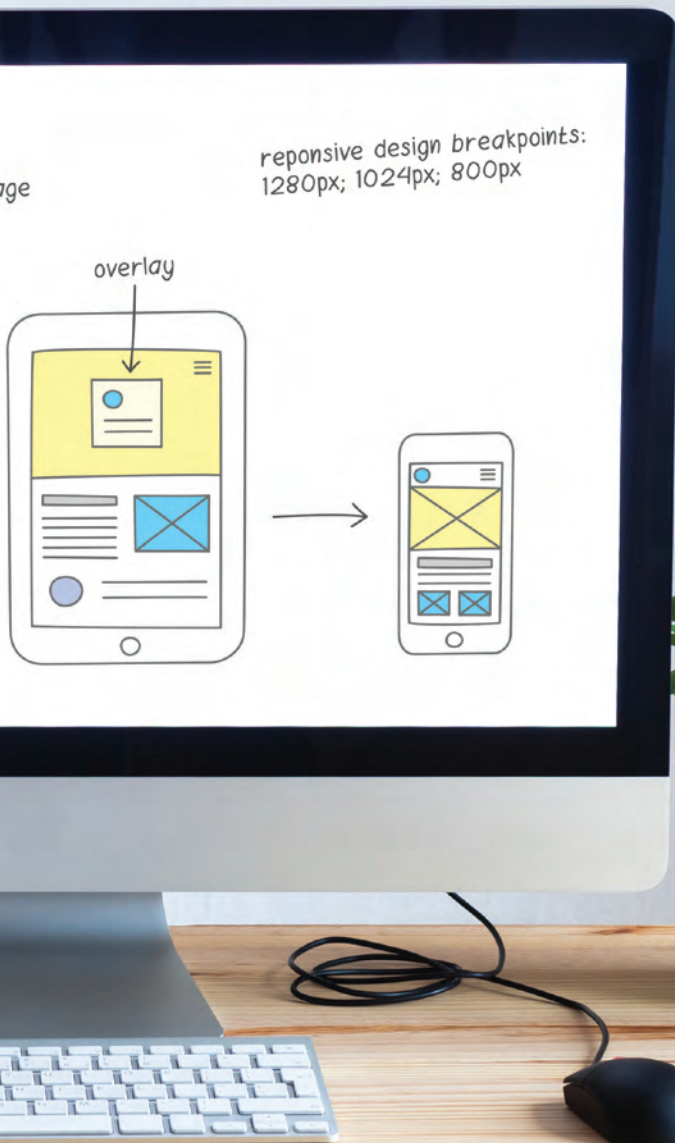


# SECRETS TO A WINNING Webs



# Site

By Gregg Wartgow



Simplicity is key when it comes to designing a website clients will spend time on and find engaging.

**T**he bar has been raised when it comes to website design. Today's consumers expect to find the answer to just about every question they have, yet they don't want to spend endless amounts of time hunting for those answers. Consumers also want to feel a connection to the company they are researching.

Developing a winning website today comes down to one word: engaging.

"For starters, it's really important to establish your brand voice," says Kelly Dowell, owner of Keldo Digital. "You can be playful, or maybe more serious and even scientific. It all depends on how you want to present your brand."

**SIMPLE AND SCANNABLE.** Whether your brand voice is more informal or academic, you always need to be wary of overwhelming the consumer.

"Websites should have an appropriate amount of simplicity," says Chad Diller, vice president of Landscape Leadership. To that point, content should be clear and scannable. The information can be broken up into bite-sized sections with headings, as opposed to large walls of text. "Also look for ways to use icons instead of long sentences," Diller says. For instance, a graphic of a lawn mower or fertilizer spreader with the phrase "get a quote" makes things very clear.







# HIGHLIGHTS FROM AROUND THE INDUSTRY

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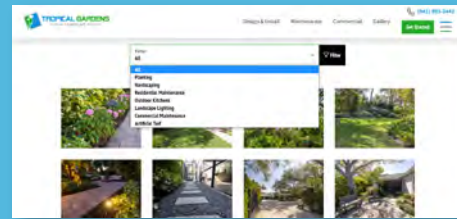
## OCEANVIEW LANDSCAPES



Oceanview Landscapes has found it beneficial to include pricing tiers on its website, even making them accessible through the site's main navigation.

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## TROPICAL GARDENS LANDSCAPE



Tropical Gardens Landscape makes good use of filters to help site visitors narrow in on the specific types of photos they are interested in.

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## YELLOWSTONE LANDSCAPE



Yellowstone Landscape does a good job of creating personalized landing pages by customer type.

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

“Most consumers will scroll a few times, but then are looking for something to click,” Diller adds. This is especially true on mobile devices.

A consumer’s willingness to scroll and read can be influenced by what they are

buying. For instance, a consumer looking for a routine lawn care service might not be willing to spend as much time online as a consumer looking to spend thousands of dollars on an elaborate outdoor living area.

“What we’re finding from our Google Analytics data is that consumers are willing to spend some time reading content,” says Jack Jostes, president and CEO of Ramblin Jackson. “Our approach is long-form content, which goes against





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## TECHNOLOGY



the notion that people have short attention spans. But what we're finding is that people who have a budget are serious and actually crave more detailed information."

Tony Ricketts, co-founder and CEO of Lawnline Marketing, says landscapers should post content that answers the questions your customers are asking. "To drive a lasting ROI in this industry, I've seen quality written blogs, project case studies, service pages and area pages move the needle the most," he says. "This written content becomes supercharged when paired with a relevant video and a solid marketing strategy. Even if you don't do the video aspect, the written content is the most powerful piece that drives new leads and ROI."

And yes, blogs are still cool.

"But nobody is going to scan your blog pages," Ricketts says. "For best results, you have to properly promote and distribute your posts, apply them to paid marketing funnels, and much more."

You should go beyond your work, and your website should give the consumer a glimpse into who you are as a company.

Place a heavy focus on your "About" pages, discuss your vision and mission statements, show your culture and list your people, Ricketts says. "Build a careers section and create a page for each position that you're hiring for," he adds.

**ELIMINATE CLUTTER.** In an effort to create a seamless website experience, Diller says it's important to eliminate website clutter. Page design elements like accordions, a menu of vertically stacked headers that reveal more details when clicked, help do that. It's also important to take a look at navigation bars because too many choices can overwhelm the consumer.

Dowell says a good approach is to think about services that logically fit together. For instance, do you need separate pages for spring cleanup and mulching, or can they be presented together since most customers don't buy one without the other?

Website forms can also be decluttered. Dowell likes to keep them brief, just asking for the basic information like name, address, phone and email, along with a comments box. Then, after the customer submits that information, a thank you page could invite additional information by linking to another form. This can be helpful for design/build prospects.



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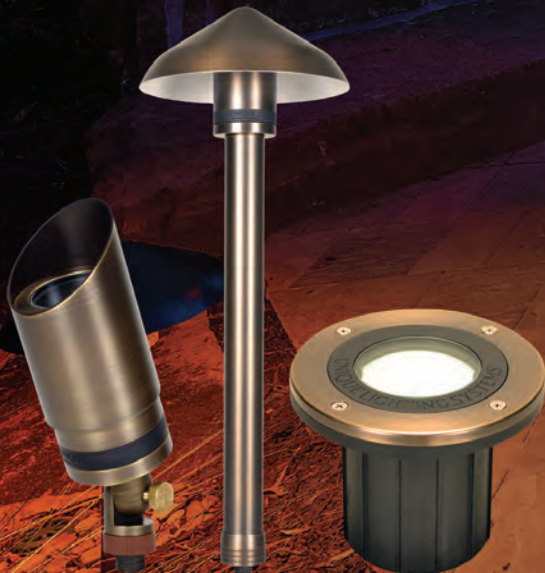
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## TECHNOLOGY

That second, optional form could ask more questions about the customer's style and color preferences, features they are interested in, budget, etc. "Hitting a prospect with this big 50-question survey just to qualify a lead can turn people away," Dowell says.

When organizing site navigation and building things like landing pages and forms, Diller says it's helpful to always think about the customer's journey. The right content at the right time is what helps create a seamless and favorable user experience.

"When a consumer lands on your home page, what are the three or four things they are going to want to do?" Diller asks. At the same time, what do you want them to do? "If you're going to have a link to 'lawn care pricing,' do you want the consumer to jump right there, or would you rather they first jump to a page explaining your services and value? Those are the types of

**"I ALWAYS TELL  
OUR CLIENTS,  
IF YOU INVEST  
SOME MONEY IN A  
COUPLE TWO-DAY  
PHOTO SHOOTS  
EACH YEAR FOR A  
COUPLE OF YEARS,  
YOU'RE GOING TO  
CAPTURE A LOT OF  
GREAT IMAGES."**

— CHAD DILLER,  
VICE PRESIDENT,  
LANDSCAPE LEADERSHIP

things to think about when developing a website today. It isn't an exact science but does require planning."

Speaking of pricing, Jostes says landscape companies shouldn't shy away from talking about it on their websites.

"We like to incorporate a pricing guide, which we refer to as bracketing," Jostes says. "We like to present price ranges. For example, one design/build company we work with presents a Tier 1 bracket of \$10,000 to \$20,000, along with a photo and brief description of what that bracket might entail. Tier 2 is \$20,000 to \$75,000 and Tier 3 is \$75,000 to \$150,000. This way, the landscape company is the consumer's first source of pricing information. This creates a sense of trust, and quickly."

**MAKE GOOD USE OF VISUALS.** The nice thing is, the landscape industry is very photogenic. The key for a landscape company is making the most of the resources

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they have to capture great imagery — emphasis on the word *great*.

“If you want to post smartphone pictures and videos on social media, that’s just fine,” Dowell says. “But for your website, don’t be afraid to splurge. Hire a professional to take some great photos, and maybe even some drone photography and videos.”

“I always tell our clients, if you invest some money in a couple two-day photo shoots each year for a couple of years, you’re going to capture a lot of great images,” Diller adds. “And most of those images are evergreen, so they can be used over and over. It’s a good investment to hire someone who actually knows what they are doing and can make you look 10 times the company you are.”

Using anything but original photos can be a bad look.

“Companies that use all stock photos on their website make me cringe,” Ricketts says. “It’s so easy to get real photos, so there’s really no excuse.”

Design/build companies should put more of a focus on photos.

“If you do design/build work, create project case studies for each project and publish them in a Projects section,” Ricketts says.

Diller says a landscape company’s marketing dollar can stretch a bit further with photos than videos. But that’s not to say videos shouldn’t play a role in website development. The budget-conscious landscape company just needs to know where to focus.

“I don’t think you need a video on every single page,” Diller says. “But a company branding video is a great idea. A video talking about your ideal customers and properties can also be compelling.”

Dowell adds one word of caution when it comes to videos. “Keep it to shorter snippets of maybe 15-20 seconds. You don’t want huge videos that end up restricting page speed,” Dowell says.

Along those same lines, Dowell says today’s consumers generally don’t like it when sound turns on automatically. So, if you’re going to utilize a video that plays automatically, make sure the default setting is mute.

**MAKE A CONNECTION.** In today’s digital world, consumers expect to see high-quality content that is unique.

“We’re now entering an age where the floor has been elevated because AI (artificial intelligence) will soon be able to generate better content than the novice website marketer,” Diller says. “Landscape companies need engaging headings and copy. They need fresh ways to present information and stand out. You can’t just talk about the usual things like your experience and awards. Connecting with consumers today is more about engaging copy and visuals.”

Making connections is also about changing the level of communication.

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For example, why would a customer want to build the ultimate backyard retreat? Do they want to create moments with friends and family? Show that in the photos on your site. “Rather than just showing the firepit, show two parents and their two kids toasting s’mores. That is engaging content,” Diller says.

Engaging content also needs to be more diverse today. Consumers are looking for multiple forms of content as they do their research, including photo galleries, testimonials and case studies. And again, consumers don’t want to spend endless amounts of time looking for it.

Ricketts says you should stay away from generic, fluffy content.

“If you write about ‘getting your weekends back’ and ‘having the best yard on the block,’ you’re wasting your time” Ricketts says. “Write detailed and informative content. Hire a professional writer if needed.”

Diller says landscape companies should

make good use of search bars and filters on their websites. For example, different content assets could be classified by landscape feature, property type, etc.

“Your website might have 200 amazing photos, but the individual consumer just wants to see the handful that are important to them,” Diller says. “Think about how you’re going to make it easy for that consumer to find those images, testimonials, etc.”

That concept plays into another web development trend that has been coming on for several years. Personalization tailors the online experience to specific things an individual consumer is interested in.

Dowell says many landscape companies are utilizing sales/marketing platforms like HubSpot to help in this regard. But even smaller companies with limited marketing budgets can enhance the personalization of their websites.

A practical technique is to create personalized landing pages where traffic from online ads, social media posts and marketing emails are sent to.

“You can personalize by demographic,” Dowell says. “The page could showcase a smaller house or maybe one of your really large properties, depending on who you’re trying to appeal to. You could also personalize by location. You can do these types of things on a smaller budget.”

The secret to a winning landscape company website does not have to be tied to a monster marketing budget or elaborate marketing software. Those things can help, but they don’t mean much without a willingness to do what it takes to resonate with today’s consumers.

That means spending a lot less time talking about you and more about them, and doing so in a voice that’s unique, engaging and representative of your overall brand. **L&L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Wisconsin.

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Mosquito management faces new challenges in an era of more extreme weather events.

By Kaitlyn O'Donnell

# SOMETHING IN THE *wind*

**W**e are well aware by now of the many ways in which climate change is reshaping the world we live in, but how are we experiencing these changes regionally, firsthand? As an entomologist working for a local government mosquito control organization in the northeast United States, we have the unique ability to closely observe mosquito populations in a specific area over a long period of time and can pick up on trends and changes.

A lot of interesting current research sheds light on the relationship between climate change and mosquitoes. Studies have linked drought and rising temperatures to increased incidence of arthropod-vectored disease and a longer mosquito season. On the other end of the weather spectrum, much work has been done looking at mosquito population dynamics after hurricane flooding.

**A FLOOD OF MOSQUITOES.** With each passing hurricane season, we are reminded how an increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events is becoming the new normal. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the past six years have been above-average hurricane seasons, with 2020 marking the most active and 2021 the third-most active seasons in recorded history. Though New England may not first come to mind when thinking about hurricane fallout in the U.S., the exploding mosquito populations experienced in 2021 after three consecutive storms may change people's minds.

After repeated flooding events throughout the height of summer, the 2021 mosquito season shattered every trap abundance record my district in Massachusetts previously had. I had never before seen so many mosquitoes squeeze themselves into one trap — so ravenous for the carbon dioxide bait that they compressed themselves, over 23,000 of them, into a 40-cubic-inch space (about the size of a sandwich container).

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*Editor's Note:* This article originally appeared under the headline "Mosquito Management in the Era of Extreme Weather" in *Entomology Today*, a project of the Entomological Society of America with the goal of reporting interesting discoveries in the world of insect science and news from various entomological societies. To learn more, visit [www.entomologytoday.org](http://www.entomologytoday.org).



The majority of these collections were made up of floodplain mosquito species, which lay eggs in a dry floodplain area and wait for rain to flood the surrounding wetland with enough water for the eggs to hatch. A few common species increase after these rainfall events, but collections are mostly made up of two in particular: *Aedes vexans* and *Psorophora ferox*.

During the 2021 season, these two species had three peaks in abundance closely following three large rainfall events throughout the summer, starting with the remnants of hurricane Elsa, which hit the Northeast in early July. The mosquitoes *Ps. ferox* and *Ae. vexans* are aggressive human biters and are capable disease vectors; their presence does not go unnoticed. These peaks in relative abundance are corroborated by an increase in resident calls reporting intolerable mosquito conditions around their homes and requests for area-wide mosquito adulticiding. And with the

repeat rainfall events and repeat mosquito emergences, there was never relief.

As mosquito control professionals, using these historical and current mosquito population data along with weather data is an important part of our integrated pest management toolbox. We can predict how much flooding will cause an outbreak of floodplain mosquito species and be proactive about managing populations rather than reactive. We can treat these floodplains for larvae as time, resources and weather allows, hopefully reducing the need to resort to area wide adulticiding.

**DIFFERENT SPECIES MOVE IN.** The historical floodplain abundance data has also highlighted the clear shift in dominant floodplain species during an outbreak. In the past, floodplain outbreaks were dominated by *Ae. vexans*, as *Ps. ferox* had not yet expanded its range this far north. However, in recent years, *Ps. ferox* populations have exploded, especially in response to flooding events, and they appear to be replacing *Ae. vexans* as the dominant floodplain mosquito. Our historical data shows very low collections of *Ps. ferox* overall, gradually increasing each year until it is almost



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## MOSQUITO CONTROL

equal to the *Ae. vexans* population in 2013, which was our last big floodplain outbreak before a period of drought in 2015 to 2016.

Since then, traps are dominated by *Ps. ferox* in floodplain areas, with 2021 being the most productive season by far. Some further mosquito excitement stemmed from the collection of a very nasty and formidable mosquito in 2020 and 2021: *Psorophora ciliata*. Sometimes known as the gallinipper, *Ps. ciliata* is a very large mosquito and packs a painful bite. Its described range covers most of the eastern United States, including the Northeast, excluding Maine. The species is more common farther south, but some districts in the Northeast have collected individuals over the past few years. My district collected our first adult *Ps. ciliata* in 2020, increasing to three individuals in 2021. News outlets reported a large outbreak of this mosquito after a hurricane flooded parts of North Carolina, describing a dire situation where



Extreme weather, especially hurricanes, brings new challenges for mosquito management.

residents were unable to be outside for any period of time without being barraged from the air by these large and aggressive human biters. Though we hope it will not come to that in New England, we do expect to see more of this mosquito in the future.

I am frequently asked to predict the upcoming mosquito season by news outlets, friends and acquaintances, and

residents in our district. This is never easy to do because mosquitoes are so weather dependent in very nuanced ways. Moving forward, after two consecutive years of high rainfall and growing *Ps. ferox* populations, it will be interesting to see what mosquito season brings. **L&L**

Kaitlyn O'Donnell is an entomologist at the Norfolk County Mosquito Control District in Walpole, Mass.

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**For more info:** [kubotausa.com](http://kubotausa.com)



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The added power output allows Kress outdoor power equipment to meet or exceed the same performance as comparable commercial gas-powered machines but with less noise and zero harmful emissions. In addition, Kress CyberPack batteries can be re-charged thousands of times. The extended battery life supports multiple re-charges per day and greatly reduces the cost of replacement battery packs over the life of the equipment. The Kress 8-minute™ CyberSystem is the first and only cordless battery power supply that will allow commercial landscapers to finally replace their expensive gas-powered equipment without sacrificing performance, power or runtime.

The new Kress 8-minute CyberSystem battery platform powers a full line of Kress professional outdoor equipment that includes commercial-grade backpack and handheld blowers, grass trimmers, edgers, chainsaws and hedge trimmers, as well as heavy-duty walk-behind commercial mowers. Each Kress commercial-grade tool is designed and engineered for heavy-duty use with a high-efficiency brushless motor and state-of-the-art features and performance. There are no more excuses to keep operating noisy, high-cost gas equipment or wasting time with cordless battery tools that won't get the job done.



The Kress CyberTank Portable Powerstation means no more pain at the pump - so professional landscapers can finally bid farewell to lugging expensive, smelly, messy gas.



# The Kress Commercial Family of Products

The **Kress 8-Minute CyberSystem CyberTank Portable Powerstation**, with three DC-DC ports, is the new fuel station for operators of Kress Commercial products. The CyberTank provides the energy needed for charging any Kress CyberPack battery to 100% in eight minutes on-the-go with 5kWh capacity and Aircooling technology to optimize battery-charging performance.



The **Kress 60V 35N Commercial Backpack Blower** is the only cordless commercial blower solution for professional use on the market. With 155 mph air speed and 876 CFM, the Kress Commercial Backpack Blower rivals any gas-powered blower – with no need for a partner to help start it up. The ergonomic backpack design is adjustable and air permeable, improving comfort and lowering fatigue. With four different speed settings and a throttle-controlled power level, operators can adjust the blower power to their exact requirements.

The **Kress 60V 25" Commercial Hedge Trimmer** features brushless motor power and high-speed cutting – 3200 CPM – with dual-sided laser-cut blades. Its ergonomic design with low levels of vibration allows for longer periods of operation without the threat of fatigue.



The **Kress 60V 16" Commercial Brushless Chainsaw** is powerful, durable and convenient without the starting concerns of gas-powered chainsaws when used intermittently. Its 82 ft/sec chain speed coupled with .325lp chain provides a cutting efficiency rivaling that of gas.

The **Kress Commercial 16.5" 60V Line Trimmer** with built-in LED "heads-up" display, aluminum gear head and a heavy-duty solid steel driveshaft provides exceptional power – equivalent to the 30cc gas-power range – for trimming lawns or the most difficult overgrown areas.



The **Kress 60V Commercial Lawn Edger** with built-in LED "heads-up" display delivers the power – up to the 30cc gas-power range – and precision for any landscaping need. A contoured blade guard combined with a rubber debris shield and front gunning sight, operators can easily achieve accurate edging even in the roughest conditions.

All Kress Commercial equipment is IPX4 waterproof rated, ensuring use of the tools even during inclement weather. Fueled by the Kress 8-minute CyberSystem,<sup>™</sup> the new Kress Commercial line of products answers the call for any professional landscaper looking to transition from gas to battery.

Lawn and landscape professionals can now experience the power of the full line of Kress Commercial products first-hand at demo events across the US and Canada. Independent deal-

ers interested in learning more about how Kress can benefit their businesses can contact the Kress team directly through the Kress website at [www.kress.com](http://www.kress.com).



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**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.

# THANK YOU COACH

→ **I AM OFTEN ASKED WHAT** was the catalyst that triggered a 30-year-old company to grow from \$1 million to \$10 million in five years. In short, it all started with a cold call from a business coach. It was early 2015 and Jonathan Goldhill was calling on CLCA (California Landscape Contractors Association) members asking around for those looking to grow.

As a spry 26-year-old getting ready to take over the family business, my answer was, "hell yeah!" As Jonathan went through the sales process and proposed his services, my parents were very hesitant about letting some stranger into the inner workings of the company. Once they saw the price, they really pushed back.

I knew the company had to grow to support mine and my parents' salaries along with the rest of the family, and a business coach seemed like a shortcut to getting where we wanted to be. After much back and forth, we took the leap by hiring our first business coach. The rest is history.

If you are struggling with growth or seeking more work/life balance, or if you want to increase profits or just need someone besides your partner at home to strategize with, a coach might be a great solution.

## What does a coach do?

Coaches provide a unique perspective into your business that you cannot see. They help develop structure and systems for growth. They can also be a person to confide in and vent to, as it can be lonely at the top. At the end of the day, a coach should improve your quality of life, improve the financial performance of the company and help identify and achieve your goals.

## What to look for in a coach?

Find someone who will push you and that you click with. If you do not personally align with the coach or there is a lack of respect, the program will see little results. Having someone that knows the industry can be a plus, but I have also had success with coaches outside of landscaping, so that is not a deal breaker for me. Similarly to hiring an employee, you should check references and specifically look for results that you want to achieve being accomplished in those references.

## How much should a coach cost?

Look at a coaching program as an investment. If the coach charges you \$5,000 per month and helps you create a new pricing model that generates \$50,000 in additional income without increasing your costs, it's an easy decision. If the coach charges you \$1,000 per month but you do not get along, or you continuously find yourself defensive in meetings and you're not implementing any new ideas, then it may be a huge waste of money. Don't look at coaching fees as hourly rates. One coach asked me: If you could unwind three bad decisions you made, how much more money would you have in the bank right now?

## When should I hire a coach?

Tomorrow would be good, today would be better. This is just my opinion, but I am 100% a believer in having a coach for you and your business. I do not see any football teams asking their quarterback to also be the head coach, so why should you?

## How can I be a good student?

Allow yourself to be coachable. I realized very quickly that if I approach a coaching call defensive and closed minded, I am wasting money and all of our time. If a coach starts pointing out issues and your reaction is to defend or make excuses, you will never achieve the success you are meant to find. You must be open, humble, vulnerable, honest and genuine. If you show up ready to learn with an open mind, you will be amazed at what you can accomplish.

## I am in a peer group, is that good enough?

It depends on your goals and needs. If you already have a successful business and you're looking to maintain or slightly grow, peer groups work great. If you are just getting going and strapped for cash, peer groups work great. If you are picking up momentum and have goals for rapid growth, a one-to-one coach might be the best investment. I am in two peer groups and have multiple one-to-one coaches. They all serve a different purpose and I have various goals I am working on at once. It really boils down to your specific intentions and targets.

You will only get out of a coaching program what you put into it. There is no magic formula for success and hiring a coach does not guarantee any results; you must still put the work and dedication into the business. If you have not looked into coaching before, maybe now is a good time to check it out. Good luck everyone and go raise the bar! **L&L**





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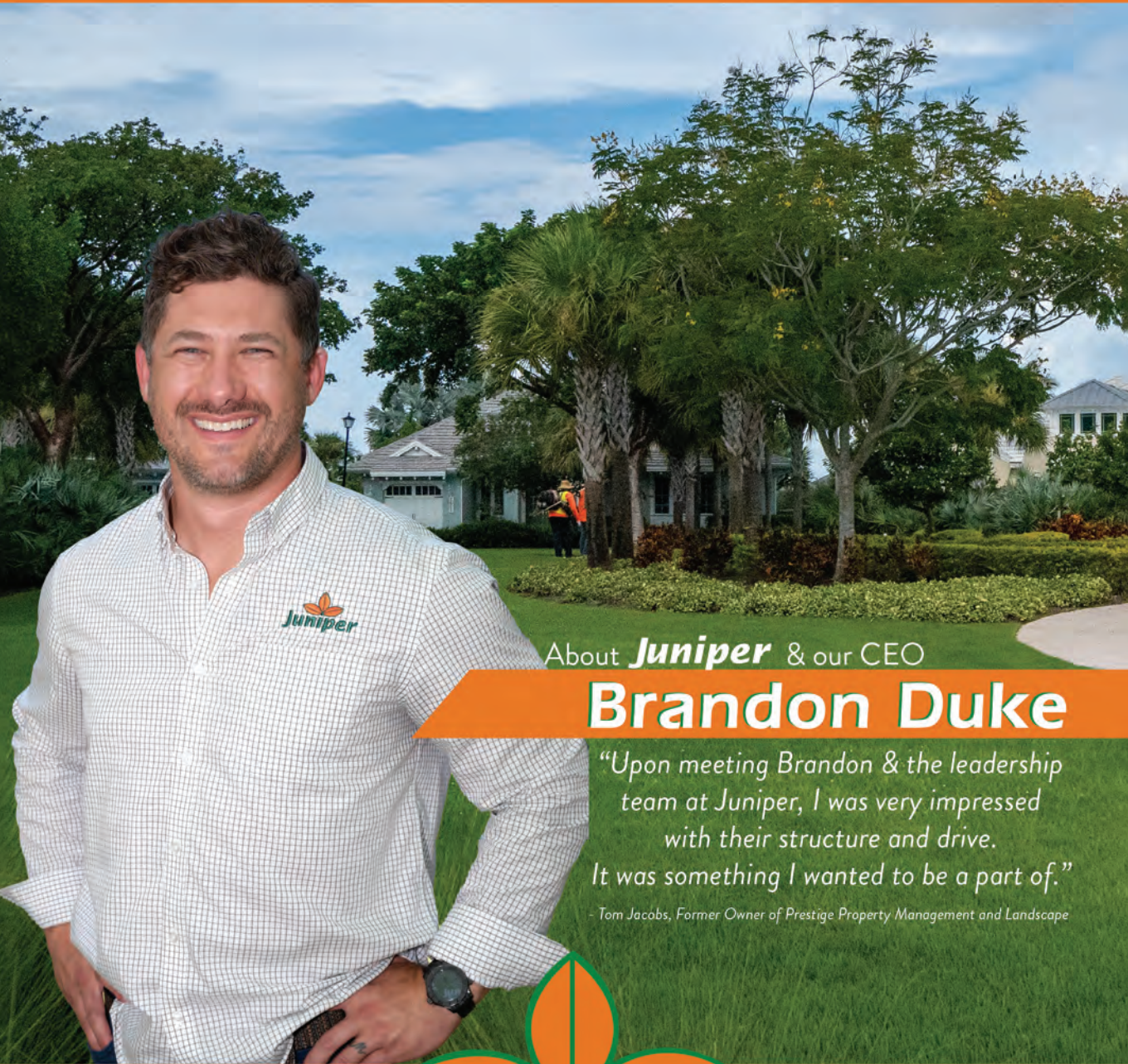
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About **Juniper** & our CEO

## Brandon Duke

*“Upon meeting Brandon & the leadership team at Juniper, I was very impressed with their structure and drive. It was something I wanted to be a part of.”*

*- Tom Jacobs, Former Owner of Prestige Property Management and Landscape*



# Juniper

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*“Juniper is first-class organization focused on customer satisfaction.”*

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### **Maintain**

Our design team offers full-service landscape architecture. Starting at the land planning stage, Juniper ensures that all permitting, budgeting, & due diligence is accomplished before a design plan is generated. If you are in the planning stages of a project, rely on us to get it started on the right foot.

Juniper was built on landscape construction. We specialize in projects concerning landscape, irrigation, drainage, lighting, sod, and horticulture growth. We have the experience, resources, & manpower to produce a beautiful landscape on budget.

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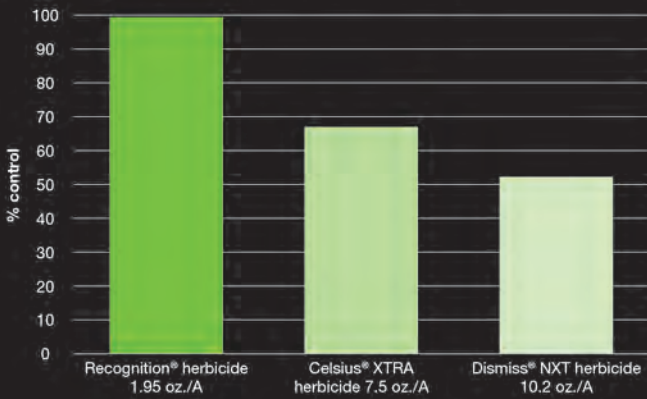
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Flip to see performance data



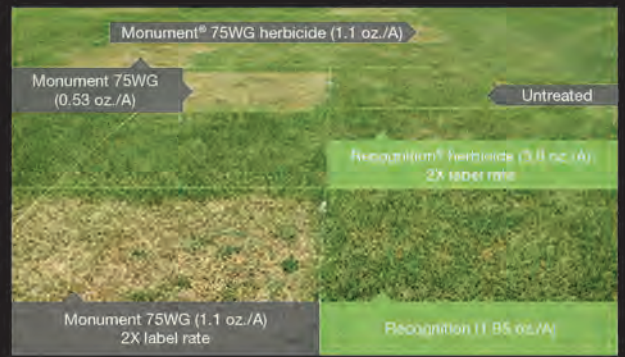


## Yellow nutsedge and globe sedge control in Scotts ProVista St. Augustinegrass



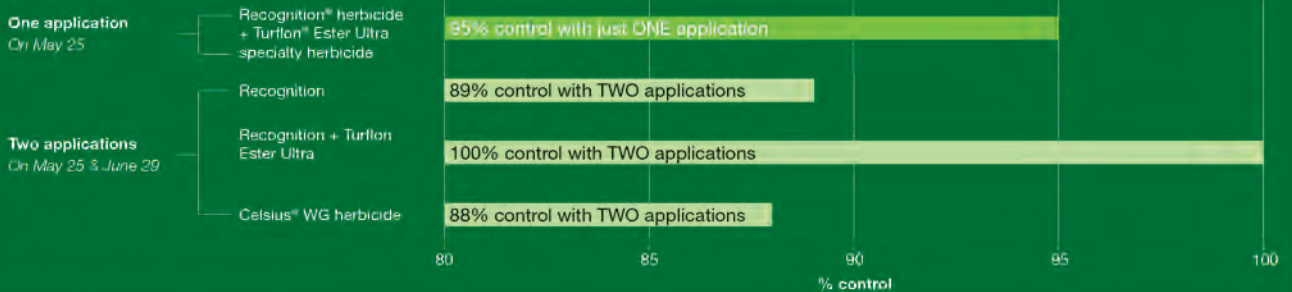
Source: Dr. Pawel Petelewicz, University of Florida, 2021. Treatments applied to Scotts® ProVista™ St. Augustinegrass on July 1 and Aug. 13, 2021. Recognition and Celsius® XTRA herbicides mixed with INDUCE® non-ionic surfactant at 0.25% v/v. Data collected on Sept. 24, 2021.

## Recognition plant safety to Floratam St. Augustinegrass



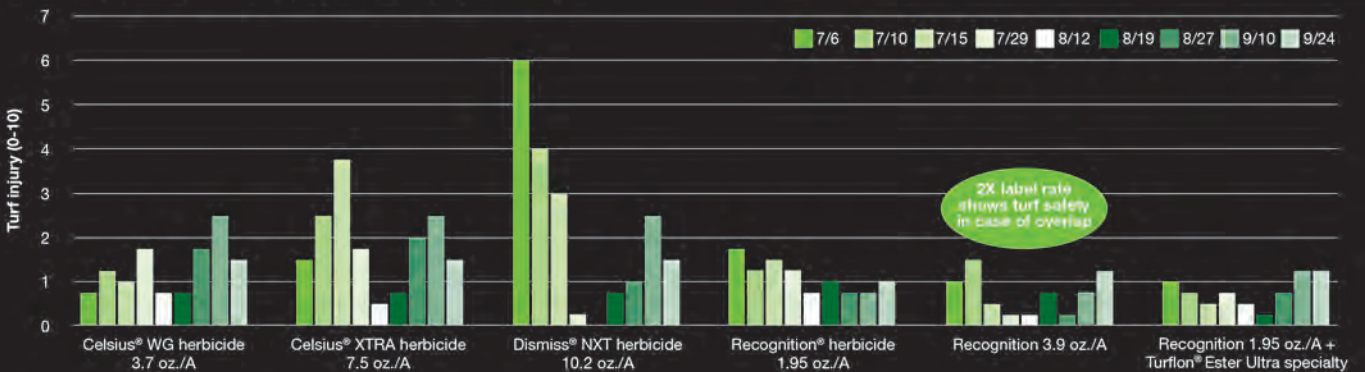
Source: Naples, Florida, 2018. Treatments applied on June 6 and July 8, 2018. Photos taken on July 23, 2018. Monument® 75WG herbicide applied at the label rate of 0.53 oz./A; Recognition applied at the label rate of 1.95 oz./A; Monument 75WG applied at twice the label rate of 1.1 oz./A; Recognition applied at twice the label rate of 3.9 oz./A.

## Tank mixing allows for just one application for dollarweed control



Source: Dr. Scott McElroy, Auburn University, 2018. Treatments applied to Palmetto St. Augustinegrass on May 25 and June 29, 2018. Recognition applied at 1.95 oz./A; Turflon® Ester Ultra specialty herbicide applied at 16 fl. oz./A; and Celsius® WG herbicide applied at 3.7 oz./A. Data collected on Aug. 3, 2018.

## Turf injury to Scotts ProVista St. Augustinegrass



Source: Dr. Pawel Petelewicz, University of Florida, 2021. Treatments applied on July 1 and Aug. 13, 2021. Trial includes overlapping rates.



Performance assessments are based upon results or analysis of public information, field observations and/or internal Syngenta evaluations. Trials reflect treatment rates commonly recommended in the marketplace.

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Syngenta supports a FIFRA Section 2(ee) recommendation for tank mixing Recognition and Fusilade® II herbicide to remove bermudagrass from zoysiagrass. Syngenta also supports a FIFRA Section 2(ee) recommendation for tank mixing Recognition and Triclopyr to control weeds. Please see the Section 2(ee) recommendation to confirm that the recommendation is applicable in your state. The Section 2(ee) recommendation for tank mixtures with Recognition must be in the possession of the user at the time of application.

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# THE TOP 100

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## ABOUT THIS LIST

The Lawn & Landscape Top 100 list is based on 2022 revenue from landscape profit centers. Information is reported by each company listed, and supplemental data is sourced from reporting by Lawn & Landscape staff.

### ABBREVIATIONS

**%MT:** Maintenance  
**%CLC/F:** Chemical Lawn Care/Fertilization  
**%LD/B/I:** Landscape Design/Build/Install  
**%II/MT:** Irrigation Installation/Maintenance  
**%CR:** Commercial Revenue  
**%RR:** Residential Revenue  
**N/A:** No Answer/Unknown

\* Indicates not on last year.



2023 RANK	COMPANY	2022 RANK	2022 REVENUE	HEADQUARTERS	EMPLOYEES	% CHANGE FROM 2021	% CHANGE EXPECTED FOR 2023	%MT	%CLC/F	%LD/B/I	%II/MT	%CR	%RR
1	BrightView Holdings	1	\$2,774,600,000	Blue Bell, Pa.	21,000	9	N/A	66	0	25	0	100	0
2	The Davey Tree Expert Co.	3	\$1,511,091,000	Kent, Ohio	11,115	9	11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	TruGreen	2	\$1,511,000,000	Memphis, Tenn.	14,187	1	N/A	0	90	0	0	14	86
4	Yellowstone Landscape	4	\$559,000,000	Bunnell, Fla.	6,000	21	10	78	0	10	0	100	0
5	Bartlett Tree Experts	5	\$457,000,000	Stamford, Conn.	2,700	10	10	0	0	0	0	30	64
6	Heartland	6	\$454,000,000	Kansas City, Mo.	3,700	12	30	73	0	8	0	100	0
7	SavATree	7	\$338,000,000	Bedford Hills, N.Y.	2,560	2	8	0	12	0	1	28	72
8	Sperber Landscape Companies	8	\$331,000,000	Westlake Village, Calif.	3,155	18	12	82	0	12	0	100	0
9	Gothic Landscape	10	\$323,000,000	Valencia, Calif.	2,100	25	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	95	5
10	Weed Man / Mosquito Hero / TurfBot	9	\$308,233,117	Orono, Ontario	N/A	19	12	0	97	0	0	5	95
11	Moriant Enterprises	21	\$286,615,000	Lake Bluff, Ill.	2,400	174	35	25	3	57	2	14	86
12	Outwrx Group	11	\$279,609,888	Westbury, N.Y.	3,417	8	23	19	5	3	1	70	7
13	LandCare	13	\$275,000,000	San Diego, Calif.	3,900	12	15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	0
14	Ruppert Landscape	12	\$273,000,000	Laytonville, Md.	2,020	10	10	56	0	44	0	100	0
15	Divisions Maintenance Group	19	\$245,663,629	Newport, Ky.	933	16	20	53	0	0	3	100	0
16	U.S. Lawns	14	\$205,380,000	Orlando, Fla.	2,400	N/A	N/A	68	0	0	0	100	0
17	Lawn Doctor	15	\$204,700,000	Holmdel, N.J.	1,500	11	10	0	90	0	0	5	95
18	Park West Cos.	16	\$190,775,000	Trabuco Canyon, Calif.	1,534	9	17	48	0	44	0	100	0
19	Juniper	17	\$170,000,000	Fort Myers, Fla.	2,100	23	18	54	10	20	14	100	0
20	United Land Services	24	\$153,100,000	Jacksonville, Fla.	850	73	35	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	98	2
21	Clean Scapes	27	\$115,031,600	Austin, Texas	1,130	35	12	43	1	37	16	100	0
22	The Grounds Guys	23	\$114,000,000	Waco, Texas	1,500	23	9	54	0	34	0	48	52
23	Rotolo Consultants	28	\$102,000,000	Slidell, La.	1,100	19	23	50	5	35	10	100	0
24	Naturalawn of America	22	\$101,711,708	Frederick, Md.	644	12	5	0	99	0	0	3	97
25	Yardnique	40	\$97,000,000	Morrisville, N.C.	1,150	41	23	93	0	7	0	100	0
26	Turf Masters Brands	*	\$93,824,930	Roswell, Ga.	825	17	65	0	94	0	0	4	96
27	Clinter Commercial Outdoor Services	25	\$93,200,000	Markham, Ontario	750	7	6	37	0	5	0	95	5
28	The Greenery	30	\$92,000,000	Hilton Head Is., S.C.	1,025	18	10	80	0	18	2	94	5
29	Massey Services	26	\$91,939,190	Orlando, Fla.	2,675	11	15	0	21	1	4	14	86
30	Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.	29	\$90,500,000	Plainfield, Ill.	695	9	7	0	97	0	2	5	95
31	Case Facilities Management Solutions	*	\$87,601,400	North Attleboro, Mass.	620	22	14	9	0	6	0	100	0
32	Mainscape	31	\$82,200,000	Fishers, Ind.	831	11	5	68	5	8	9	100	0
33	Schill Grounds Management	82	\$82,000,000	North Ridgeville, Ohio	1,100	18	50	52	0	20	0	100	0
34	LMC Landscape Partners	*	\$79,752,669	Plano, Texas	750	18	8	51	2	40	4	90	10
35	Choate USA	44	\$79,710,976	Carrilton, Texas	363	48	10	1	0	55	40	54	46
36	Landscape Workshop	38	\$75,393,249	Vestavia Hills, Ala.	950	66	28	85	0	14	0	96	4
37	Garden Design	34	\$74,193,000	Farmers Branch, Texas	85	16	0	6	0	94	0	22	74
38	DJ's Landscape Management	41	\$71,370,000	Grand Rapids, Mich.	875	25	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	0
39	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	33	\$71,000,000	Portland, Maine	650	7	12	0	0	0	0	100	0
40	Ryan Lawn and Tree	37	\$70,647,844	Merriam, Kan.	498	26	13	2	38	15	14	10	90
41	Elite Team Offices	77(t)	\$70,600,000	Clovis, Calif.	625	108	20	29	0	18	52	96	4
42	American Landscape	53	\$65,780,000	Canoga Park, Calif.	330	31	18	30	3	30	30	65	35
43	Denison Landscaping	49	\$65,000,000	Ft. Washington, Md.	510	10	12	8	1	70	5	75	10
44	EMI	51	\$64,745,000	Plain City, Ohio	496	22	5	29	3	47	2	95	5
45	Senske Service	47	\$62,183,200	Kennewick, Wash.	715	19	43	5	64	1	2	12	88
46	Russell Landscape Group	52	\$62,000,000	Sugar Hill, Ga.	625	24	14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	0
47	Chenmark	36	\$58,463,693	Portland, Maine	625	-1	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
48(t)	Beary Landscaping	42	\$58,000,000	Lockport, Ill.	375	10	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	80	20
48(t)	Greenscape Land Design	66	\$58,000,000	Raynham, Mass.	325	58	8	30	0	40	0	100	0
50	Sebert Landscape	39	\$57,458,000	Barlett, Ill.	600	10	8	40	10	20	5	95	5
51	Maldonado Nursery	58	\$57,400,000	San Antonio, Texas	490	33	15	33	0	67	0	94	6
52	Blond Landscaping Co.	59	\$55,581,859	Apex, N.C.	625	28	15	88	0	8	3	98	2
53	Pacific Landscaping & Irrigation	61	\$55,500,000	Jupiter, Fla.	600	37	5	37	2	43	18	98	2
54	Impact Landscape Management	67	\$54,537,000	Hillsboro, Ore.	520	48	10	45	3	30	4	100	0
55	SunWorks Landscape Partners	*	\$53,281,000	Carrilton, Texas	700	3	25	42	0	33	9	100	0
56	SiteWorks	55	\$53,132,334	Chandler, Az.	261	15	10	14	1	79	3	100	0
57	Kline Bros.	45	\$53,000,000	Ship Bottom, N.J.	225	0	10	0	0	80	20	20	80
58	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	57	\$51,000,000	Woodbine, Md.	425	12	5	60	0	29	3	90	10
59	EarthTones	50	\$50,888,988	Midlothian, Texas	259	1	0	15	6	79	0	84	16
60	Teufel Landscape	46	\$48,300,000	Hillsboro, Ore.	325	-9	25	27	0	70	1	100	0
61	Xquisite Landscaping	60	\$47,796,300	Stoughton, Mass.	265	12	12	14	2	74	6	100	0
62	Diamond Landscaping	*	\$47,100,000	Sylmar, Calif.	250	5	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	90
63	AAA Landscape	56	\$47,050,000	Phoenix, Az.	600	4	7	47	4	41	2	99	1
64	McHale Landscape Design	71(t)	\$45,600,000	Upper Meriboro, Md.	340	28	10	44	0	56	0	0	100
65	Complete Landscaping Service	48	\$45,487,234	Bowie, Md.	260	4	7	41	5	32	4	100	0
66	Environmental Designs	80	\$44,132,000	Henderson, Col.	370	39	10	36	1	29	11	74	26
67	Southern Botanical	69	\$43,751,484	Dallas, Texas	390	21	8	20	6	47	16	66	34
68	Christy Webber & Company	62	\$42,500,000	Chicago, Ill.	300	6	0	42	0	30	0	60	20
69	Dennis Seven Dees Landscaping and Garden Centers	63	\$42,102,210	Portland, Ore.	325	6	3	32	0	41	0	36	40
70	Caretaker Landscape and Tree Management	*	\$42,043,216	Gilbert, Az.	340	10	8	0	28	59	7	100	0
71	Perfect Cuts of Austin	89	\$42,024,292	Austin, Texas	114	36	0	28	1	48	24	100	0
72	Landscape Design Concepts	73	\$41,575,921	Norwood, N.J.	181	15	3	50	0	5	5	100	0
73(t)	Fairwood Brands	*	\$41,500,000	Columbus, Ohio	229	18	16	23	0	77	0	5	95
73(t)	Schumacher Companies	74	\$41,500,000	West Bridgewater, Mass.	250	18	5	37	0	0	0	29	66
75	Harvest Landscape Enterprises	65	\$40,312,000	Anaheim, Calif.	475	10	15	64	1	12	12	100	0
76	Green Garden Group	*	\$40,000,000	Western Springs, Ill.	310	5	10	31	0	56	0	40	60
77	Prescription Landscape	*	\$39,874,898	St. Paul, Minn.	158	25	0	14	3	5	6	98	2
78	Southview Design	93	\$39,579,305	St Paul, Minn.	260	33	13	27	0	56	0	45	55
79	Superscapes	76	\$39,000,000	Carrilton, Texas	300	11	15	29	0	66	5	90	10
80	Gachina Landscape Management	68	\$38,513,947	Merlo Park, Calif.	365	7	9	54	3	27	9	98	2
81	Designscapes Colorado	83	\$38,000,000	Centennial, Col.	315	19	5	18	0	78	0	55	45
82	Green Lawn Fertilizing	90	\$37,357,397	West Chester, Pa.	270	25	17	0	70	0	0	6	94
83	Unlimited Landscaping & Turf Management	92	\$36,514,384	Suwanee, Ga.	239	22	15	10	49	41	0	42	58
84	The Bruce Company of Wisconsin	70	\$36,320,148	Middleton, Wis.	375	1	3	20	0	67	4	70	30
85	Stay Green	64	\$36,000,000	Santa Clarita, Calif.	426	-4	11	90	0	0	0	100	0
86(t)	Earthworks	87	\$35,100,000	Lillian, Texas	420	12	8	40	0	40	15	100	0
86(t)	Meadows Farms	85	\$35,100,000	Chantilly, Va.	600	0	0	4	1	39	0	3	97
88	Merchant's Landscape Services	86	\$35,000,000	Santa Ana, Calif.	420	9	6	85	5	0	10	100	0
89	Chalet	77(t)	\$34,469,170	Wilmette, Ill.	325	-2	0	17	4	39	0	5	95
90(t)	Gibbs Landscape Co.	84	\$34,000,000	Smyrna, Ga.	305	4	0	70	0	30	0	50	50
90(t)	Gras Lawn	*	\$34,000,000	Lakewood, N.J.	240	50	40	10	20	5	100	0	0
92	Naturescape	81	\$33,866,995	Muskego, Wis.	334	1	3	10	80	0	0	5	95
93	Conserva Irrigation	*	\$32,742,586	Glen Allen, Va.	350	52	38	0	0	0	100	9	90
94(t)	DLC Resources	94	\$32,000,000	Phoenix, Az.	385	11	5	78	0	15	0	100	0
94(t)	Frank and Grossman Landscape Contractors	96	\$32,000,000	Hayward, Calif.	299	13	8	35	0	10	40	35	65
96	Heaven and Earth Landscaping	*	\$31,604,127	Indian Trail, N.C.	310	26	20	50	0	50	0	100	0
97	ExperiGreen Lawn Care	*	\$31,500,000	Mishawaka, Ind.	279	13	10	0	93	0	0	4	97
98	Level Green Landscape	97	\$31,435,000	Upper Meriboro, Md.	315	15	-10	45	0	29	2	100	0
99	Lifescape Colorado	100	\$31,410,497	Denver, Col.	182	21	11	24	1	68	5	10	90
100	Andre Landscape Service	*	\$29,300,000	Azusa, Calif.	357	12	15	84	0	0	0	100	0



# TOP 100 NEWS & NOTES

The Top 100 companies were active in 2022, especially in the mergers and acquisitions space. Here's a round-up of some of the news they made last year.

## DECEMBER

### Investment firm acquires majority stake in Ruppert Landscape

Knox Lane, an investment firm focused on partnering with businesses in the services and consumer sectors, has acquired a majority stake in Ruppert Landscape. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Since its founding in 2004, the company has grown to serve over 3,500 customers throughout the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeastern U.S., employing more than 1,800 professionals across 30 branch locations.

The partnership with Knox Lane will support the Ruppert team's long-term vision to continue growing the company's footprint within current and adjacent markets, both organically and through strategic acquisitions. Ruppert founder and CEO, Craig Ruppert, and the current management team will retain a significant investment in the business and continue to lead the company.

"We are incredibly proud of our team and the successful business we have established together over the past two decades," said Craig Ruppert and Phil Key in a joint statement. Key is the president of Ruppert Landscape. "Knox Lane's investment is a testament to the strength of our company, outstanding culture, and exceptional employees. We look forward to leveraging Knox Lane's extensive operational expertise and experience building and scaling high-quality businesses as we continue our focus on our team, customers and innovation across all facets of the company."

## NOVEMBER

### Bland Landscaping Company acquires The Byrd's Group

Bland Landscaping Company, a North Carolina provider of commercial landscaping management services, has acquired The Byrd's Group of Charlotte, N.C.

The Byrd's Group, founded in 1980 by Bobby W. Byrd, provides landscape maintenance, enhancement, and irrigation services.

introduced media – including Lawn & Landscape – to its newly built third wing on its corporate campus in Kent, Ohio.

The company completed this newest building to the tune of 38,400 square feet and two stories. Though employees are now starting to migrate into the new facility, the process began back in 2018, when a company-wide needs assessment found Davey Tree employees valued collaborative work stations and access to more natural lighting.

Despite starting construction in April 2020 – at the height of COVID-19 – Director of Property Molly Senter said it was never a huge concern whether or not the building would be completed. And yes, some employees will continue to work more hybrid schedules, which they largely adopted during the pandemic.

But the third wing was designed with employee feedback in mind. That's why the cubicles are built closer to a wall of windows. It's why the kitchen/cafe is wide open and includes a wall lined with live ferns and other plants. And it's why the third wing comes with an on-campus fitness center that employees will be able to access at non-work hours. The center features free weights, treadmills and Pelotons, among other equipment, plus a locker room area.

As Bland Landscaping continues to grow and expand our regional platform, The Byrd's Group provides a key branch location on the eastern edge of the fast-growing metropolitan Charlotte market," said Kurt Bland, Bland Landscaping's president and CEO. "This 9-acre facility gives us ample room for growth and puts us one step closer to building out the multi-prong model we are working towards to efficiently serve the Greater Charlotte area."

Bland Landscaping, based in Apex, is one of North Carolina's full-service providers of landscape design, installation, enhancement and maintenance services. Its customers include offices, hospitals, universities, municipalities, and homeowner associations statewide, including the Triangle, Triad, Charlotte and Coastal regions.

Second generation owners Bland and his brother, Matt Bland, CFO and COO, continue to lead the company.

## OCTOBER

### Senske Services acquires Colorado company

Senske Services acquired Green Mountain Lawn & Tree Care based in Commerce City, Colorado.

Senske is a family-owned provider of premier lawn, tree, and pest control services throughout the Western United States.

Founded in 1985 by Wade Grove, Green Mountain has provided lawn and tree care for nearly four decades.

This is the seventh acquisition completed by Senske Services in 2022, contributing to three years of record-breaking growth for the company. Senske plans to dramatically increase M&A activity by targeting an expanding national footprint.

"Our expansion and growth strategy focuses on acquiring companies

with similar service lines and quality employees that can join our team," said Senske's Chief Operating Officer Tim Ehrhart. "We look forward to providing superior service to customers for nearly 70 years. We look forward to carrying on their legacy of total customer satisfaction for years to come."

## SEPTEMBER

### Mariani Landscape announces record growth, numerous acquisitions

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

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.

## JULY

### Massey Services acquires Peninsular Pest Control

Massey Services, a company in the pest management industry, has acquired Peninsular Pest Control Service.

Peninsular Pest Control, also known as the "Crittter Gitter," is headquartered

in Jacksonville, Florida. The company provides residential and commercial pest control, termite and landscape services to 30,000 customers throughout Northeast Florida.

"We are pleased to welcome the Peninsular team members and customers to the Massey Services organization," said Tony Massey, president & CEO of Massey Services. "Peninsular Pest Control is a second generation, family-owned organization that has been providing superior service to customers for nearly 70 years. We look forward to carrying on their legacy of total customer satisfaction for years to come."

Massey Services was founded in 1985 in Orlando, Florida. The organization now has 177 locations company wide.

## APRIL

### Weed Man, Turfbot name new COOs

Weed Man has named Mike Richard, the company's former national marketing director, chief operating officer.

Over the last 15 years, Richard has helped franchisees grow in their marketing pursuits through the National Sales Analysis Program, which includes weekly conference calls, regular macro sales summaries and franchise system benchmarks.

Prior to his role at head office, Richard has seen the brand through a variety of positions from lawn care technician, sales manager to eventually shareholder and general manager. He also ran a large multi-unit operation in Canada for nearly 10 years.

"Mike's grown alongside Weed Man, and has always given his all to franchisees and the people within the company," said Jennifer Lemcke, CEO of Weed Man. "Due to his tenure, experience and high-level performance, it's evident that he is the perfect fit for the COO role."

In addition to Richard's promotion, Erica Knapp, Weed Man's digital & communications director, has been named the COO of TurfBot, a robotic mowing concept and sub-brand of Weed Man. Knapp has over 10 years of communications and digital marketing experience.

Weed Man has also restructured its digital marketing and communications department, promoting Tawnya Pappin to digital marketing and events manager and Crystal Shane to digital marketing strategist. The company will continue to add additional team members to accommodate the accelerated growth.

## MARCH

### Bartlett Tree Experts expands with California, Maine acquisitions

Bartlett Tree Experts recently acquired two companies – S.P. McClenahan Company (Portola Valley, California) and Savage Forest Enterprise (Mount Desert Island, Maine).

The largest ever in Bartlett's 114-year history, the acquisition of 111-year-old S.P. McClenahan meant one fourth-generation company acquired another.

S.P. McClenahan Co. and its 55 employees are now a division of Bartlett Tree Experts, which provides more than 188 services to its customers from 151 operations in 39 U.S. states, Canada, Ireland, and Great Britain.

John Henry McClenahan, who previously served as CEO of the company his great grandfather founded, will run Bartlett's new Portola Valley office as local manager. His younger brother, Josh McClenahan, joins Bartlett as a Loss Control Manager, administering and supporting compliance with all insurance and loss control programs, analyzing risks and developing strategies to reduce losses throughout the corporation.

Savage Forest Enterprise has been operating in the Mount Desert Island area for 23 years. Meghan EG Savage, the owner of Savage Forest Enterprise, Inc. said Bartlett was the right fit to acquire their family-owned tree and shrub care business because of similarities between the two companies, including Bartlett's focus on scientific tree care.

With this acquisition, Bartlett's new office on Mount Desert Island joins the company's Portland office as the second in Maine.

# THE TOP 100

## COMMEMORATIVE POSTER

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**Sperber names new CEO**  
Sperber Landscape Companies, a commercial landscape maintenance company named Jeff Berg as CEO.

Richard Sperber, who has been acting as the company's interim CEO and is the founder, will continue his active leadership of the company in the role of executive chairman.

Berg joins Sperber after 18 years as a core leader and partner at the global consulting firm McKinsey & Company.

### Senske Services acquires portion of Rentokil's lawn care division

Senske Services acquired a portion of Rentokil's lawn care operations in Washington and Utah.

Senske is a family-owned provider of lawn, tree, and pest control services throughout the Western United States. Rentokil is a pest control provider. It ranked No. 3 on Pest Control Technology's Top 100 list in 2021.

"We've worked with Senske for many years, and it was an easy decision to align part of our lawn care operations with their team," said John Myers, president and CEO of Rentokil North America. "The Senske name is well-known for their lawn care services and expertise in the field, which was a great fit for our business."

"Our expansion and growth strategy focuses on acquiring companies with similar service lines and quality employees that can join our team," said Senske's Chief Operating Officer, Tim Ehrhart. "We look forward to providing fantastic service to our new customers."

## FEBRUARY

### BrightView acquires Intermountain Plantings and NatureScape

BrightView Holdings has acquired Intermountain Plantings, a commercial landscaping company headquartered in Salt Lake City. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Intermountain Plantings specializes in both landscape development and maintenance.

The company has operated since 1994. More than 340 team members work out of branches in suburban Salt Lake City and Boise, Idaho. The company employs landscape experts with industry-specific certifications and training, including certified irrigation contractors, ISA-certified arborists, and licensed pest management workers.

BrightView also acquired NatureScape, a landscape maintenance and development company headquartered in Phoenix. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

NatureScape is a full-service commercial landscape company serving clients across the Valley of the Sun. The company has 110 team members, including experts in grounds maintenance, irrigation management, landscape installation and arbor care.

### Schill Grounds Management acquires Enviroscapes

Schill Grounds Management, a commercial landscaping and snow and ice removal service provider, has acquired Enviroscapes, a family-owned landscaping business serving customers in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Based in Louisville, Ohio, Enviroscapes serves hundreds of commercial customers through its landscape maintenance, snow and ice removal services. It also offers design and installation services, as well as public utility clearing and mowing. Enviroscapes's team of 200 employees will join Schill's team of 400 professionals.

Enviroscapes is the largest acquisition in Schill's nearly 30-year history and the company's fifth acquisition in the last 18 months as Schill continues its thoughtful and purposeful expansion throughout the Midwest. The transaction advances Schill's ambitions of providing its customers with seamless, high-quality services across the entire state of Ohio and in select parts of Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Following the transaction, Enviroscapes Founder and CEO Todd Pugh will have an ownership stake in the combined company and will serve as the company's market president in Akron/Canton. Schill will continue to operate under the Enviroscapes brand in the Akron/Canton and western Pennsylvania markets.

Brad Terrell started A Cut Above Landscape Management in 1989 with a strong focus on large commercial maintenance work.

"Landscape Workshop has an established presence in central Georgia, Montgomery and Auburn, and we are excited to grow into the Columbus community," said JT Price, CEO of Landscape Workshop.

Landscape Workshop is a full-service grounds management company that has been providing professional service and expert maintenance for outdoor commercial spaces since 1984. Landscape Workshop serves 12 Southeastern markets in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky and the Florida panhandle.