

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR MARKET STATISTICS

To get a handle on the statistics of the landscape contractor market, WEEDS TREES & TURF randomly surveyed its readership in this profession.

According to John S. Shaw, executive director of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, there are 5,000 to 7,000 bona-fide landscape contracting firms in the United States. The magazine has 4,700 landscape contractors in its circulation. We sent questionnaires to 1,000 of them and 144 were returned. This represents approximately three percent of the market, a statistically significant percentage.

The sample firms' answers indicate slightly more emphasis toward construction as opposed to maintenance. Construction with trees and ornamentals exceeds that with turf. Maintenance, however, is predominantly in the turf area. The percentage of firms doing design is below the percentage of firms doing construction types of landscaping.

Residential work makes up an

average of 65 percent of business for landscape contractors according to the survey. Commercial jobs account for an average of 28 percent. Fifty-three percent of the respondents do an average of 25 percent of their business with general contractors or developers. Only four percent indicated involvement in land reclamation.

Correlating the type of work done with whom it is done for indicates the dominant kind of work done by landscape contractors is residential construction.

The vast majority (87 percent) own their equipment. Nine percent said they lease some of their equipment. Landscape contractors spend an average of \$10,585 for equipment in a year. Projected to the total number of contractors in the circulation, a total expenditure for the industry of \$49,000,000 is derived.

The number of pieces of various types of equipment based upon survey returns indicates the importance of the landscape industry to equip-

ment manufacturers. The most commonly owned types of equipment are pick-up and dump trucks, tractors, rototillers, tractor mowers, manual (trim) mowers, and aerators. A third of the respondents own a backhoe. Approximately one out of five firms own hydromulchers, sod harvesters, and fork lifts. Roughly a tenth own flat-bed trucks, trenchers, bulldozers, and tree spades.

Equipment buying takes place primarily in the months of January through March.

Chemical expenditures averaged

Percentage of landscape contractors performing various services.

design	76%
seed bed preparation	64%
seeding	81%
sodding	78%
hydromulching	21%
ornamental planting	90%
tree planting	84%
turf maintenance	63%
tree pruning	8%
ornamental pruning	3%

Percentage of landscape contractors buying equipment and chemicals by month.

	Equipment	Herbicides	Fertilizer	Insecticide	Fungicide	Soil Amendments	Growth Regulators	Adjuvants	Surfactants
January	13%	6%	6%	4%	5%	3%	9%	8%	7%
February	18%	12%	10%	8%	9%	4%	13%	17%	17%
March	21%	23%	18%	21%	20%	16%	22%	29%	24%
April	9%	14%	14%	18%	16%	18%	13%	17%	17%
May	6%	13%	7%	10%	14%	11%	9%	17%	14%
June	4%	6%	7%	9%	8%	9%	13%	4%	3%
July	6%	5%	4%	9%	8%	7%	4%	0%	3%
August	5%	7%	9%	8%	9%	8%	0%	0%	0%
September	6%	8%	11%	4%	5%	13%	4%	4%	3%
October	3%	4%	7%	4%	3%	7%	4%	0%	0%
November	3%	3%	5%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	7%
December	5%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	4%	0%	3%

Amount of equipment owned by landscape contractors.

\$3,744 per year per firm, with a total market figure of \$17,400,000 based upon 4,700 firms. Most chemical buying takes place in March. However, a significant amount of chemical buying occurs in April, May and September. Chemical buying is not as winter-oriented as is equipment buying.

The median number of full-time landscape staff members was three. The median number of seasonal or part-time workers was six.

The annual gross revenue of contractors responding was \$173,718, with a median figure of \$100,000. Projecting the average to the magazine's qualified circulation in the market provided a total revenue figure of \$800,000,000. Projecting total market revenue using 7,000 firms gave a figure of \$1,216,026,000.

When asked what they charged for various services the following rates were obtained:

sod—average 27¢/sq. ft., median 25¢/sq. ft.

seeding—average \$71/1000 sq. ft., median \$50/1000 sq. ft.

hydromulching — average \$52/1000 sq. ft., median \$40/1000 sq. ft.

Aerating — average \$19.50/1000 sq. ft., median \$11/1000 sq. ft.

Advertising expenditures are greatly centered around Yellow Page advertising. Eighty-four percent of the respondents use the Yellow Pages at an average cost of \$900 per year. More than half advertise in newspapers at an average annual cost of \$1,200 and a median cost of \$300. Direct mail and brochures are used by a fifth or more of the respondents. The average spent for direct mail was \$1,000, with a median of \$500. Brochures cost an average of \$500, with a median of \$200 per year. Other types of advertising used are radio (10 percent spending an average of \$1,200), television (4 percent), and trade journals (7 percent for an average of \$275). Seventeen percent indicated costs of selling in person for an average of \$1,100 and a median of \$500.

The respondents to the survey have a good feeling about the coming year. Nearly three-fourths expect an increase in business this year. Seventy percent reported gains averaging more than 20 percent in 1977.

WTT

Type of Equipment	% who own this type	projected # of pieces owned by 4660 contractors	projected # of pieces owned by 7000 contractors
aerator	41%	2960	4470
backhoe	35%	2320	3500
bulldozer	12%	920	1390
cultivating disks	26%	1800	2720
fork lifts	16%	760	1150
hydromulcher	18%	1120	1690
tractor mowers	59%	5970	9010
manual mowers	75%	25,700	38,800
rototiller	70%	6090	9190
sod harvester	17%	1200	1810
pick-up truck	84%	8770	13,200
dump truck	76%	7490	11,300
flat-bed truck	9%	1040	1570
tree spade	13%	840	1270
trenchers	12%	720	1090
tractors	57%	6130	9250



Think small, ride tall, save... with SOLO

- Sit down on SOLO's new Model 426R Mist Blower. This 12.5-hp self-propelled unit is a great performer for the vegetable, fruit, berry, flower, and ornamental tree grower. In fact, it's the best deal in any moderate-sized row-crop or hillside application.
- The amazingly compact and versatile 426 will save you time and cash when you're applying insecticides, fungicides, or herbicides.
- Provides ideal coverage and saves through high-concentration, low-volume application
- Famous SOLO engine... a powerhouse!
- Economical discharge through 8 nozzles, adjustable in flow rate and direction
- Add TELEBLAST nozzle - up to 50-ft coverage in any direction
- 2 forward speeds (up to 3 mph); 2 reverse
- Choice of standard cleat or ATV tires
- Lightweight; low ground compaction; keeps going in wet soil

Send for free brochure or ask your dealer for SOLO



Model 451/452 PTO Mist Blower; lightweight; 3-pt hitch to 15-hp or over tractor; 53-105-gal. formula tank



TRAC-419 Mist Blower; self-contained module; mountable on truck bed, trailer, jeep, small tractor; 12.5-hp engine; adaptable to any size formula tank or tanker

Also: Manual or motorized backpack units. DEALERSHIPS AVAILABLE IN CERTAIN AREAS

SOLO MOTORS, INC.
Box 5030, Dept. 28
Newport News, VA 23605
In Canada, Box 464
Burlington, Ont. L7R 3Y3

SOLO

Circle 170 on free information card