

SURVEY

Women's landscaping role grows...slowly

Melissa Merritt's confidence in her groundskeeping abilities is solid. She's doubtful however, employers look at her in the same light.

When Dana Smithlin talks shop at a conference trade show she usually finds herself in the company of men. As a partner in Foothill Grounds, Tucson, AZ, she just doesn't find many other female business owners in the Green Industry.

Their story, if not typical, reflects some of the trends, often contradictory, uncovered by a recent survey by *Lawn Care Industry* magazine. A total of 2,000 questionnaires were mailed to lawn care and landscape companies.

Women are finding career opportunities in the landscape and lawn care industries the poll suggests, but the Green Industry is still male dominated. The acceptance of women workers (or more accurately the level of their involvement) has been steady. Steadily slow.

Of the 277 companies responding to the LCI survey, 168 (61 percent) "feel" landscape companies are hiring

more women. But of the 139 companies that added additional employees the last five years, only 64 (about 26 percent) added women to their payrolls. And only 20 percent of the women in the landscape and lawn care industries work "in the field" as opposed to the office.

"I didn't have any problems getting on a landscape crew in Texas," Merritt tells *WT&T*. But when she returned to her hometown to get a job on a stadium grounds crew, she was turned down flat. "I think they were afraid I couldn't do the heavy work." Instead, she applied for and beat out 62 other applicants for the top grounds job at Penn Valley Community College in Kansas City, MO.

Says Smithlin, "it was hard, really hard. Obviously, I have the support of my husband Peter and my brother Ed (the other equal partners in Foothill Grounds), but for the longest time I guess I was kind of like a silent partner."

Smithlin says clients often tried to bypass her involvement in the company. "They'd say, 'Nope, let me

speak to Peter.' That first couple of years I'd get very angry when this happened."

But with more than 40 employees, Smithlin let it be known she takes an active role in the company's affairs. "Someone has to make the decisions," she says. "Many of the men in this industry don't know how to run their businesses. There are a lot of successful companies—probably more than you realize—that have a woman running the books."

Smithlin, who started in the business with a shovel in her hand, says the impact of females in the industry will grow fastest as managers, landscape architects, or through the nursery ranks; not as laborers or crew supervisors.

The LCI poll suggests many employers shy away from hiring women field workers because of the heavy labor of moving railroad ties or swinging a 16 lb. sledge; a point Merritt isn't ready to concede.

"I can operate trucks and tractors," Merritt responds. "Lots of times I've
continued on page 66



Participants at the Sports Turf Summit include: (center to right), Dr. Fred Grau, Musser International Turfgrass Foundation; John Macik, sports medicine coordinator for the National Football League Players Association; Dr. William Daniel, professor emeritus, Purdue University; Dr. Kent Kurtz, executive secretary, Sports Turf Managers' Association; Allan Shulder, executive director, Professional Grounds Management Society; Tim Bowyer, president Southern Turf Nurseries; Michael Latino, eastern sales manager, Ransomes Equipment Co.; Eliot Roberts, director, The Lawn Institute; and Jack Murray, research agronomist, USDA

TURFGRASS

Sports turf leaders set research committee

The decision to create a Sports Turf Research and Information Committee was unanimous after two days of information sharing by 14 sports turf figures from across the country.

"A great amount of good information on sports turf field management exists," Eliot Roberts of the Musser Foundation told the group. "We need to get it in the right hands." The Musser Foundation is a non-profit turf research foundation.

Dr. Henry Indyk, professor of soils and crops, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NY, urged the group to stress the liability of poor sports fields to schools and parks. "No one seems to take poor fields seriously until some child gets injured," Indyk stated.

"A good sports field has a positive impact on a football, soccer, or baseball team," Tim Bowyer, president of Southern Turf Nurseries, Tifton, GA, said. "We install more than 100 new fields each year and team records improve in nearly every case. We know this, but reaching the right people to
continued on page 16

ASSOCIATIONS

PGMS, ALCA plan joint trade show

Two national associations are pooling their efforts for a trade show in Milwaukee late in 1986.

The Professional Grounds Management Society and the Landscape Management Division of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America will be holding a joint show in conjunction with their annual meetings Nov. 9-13 in the Milwaukee Convention Center. The show is planned for Nov. 11-12. A field day with demonstrations of equipment is set for Nov. 13.

RESEARCH

Growth regulator studied at Temple

A potential new low-cost growth regulator is being studied on tomato plants at Temple University by Dr. George Manaker, chairman of the university's department of horticulture.

"In the case of ornamental plants, we might see shorter production time, more flowers per plant, and earlier

flowering," Manaker says of the new compound which came to the attention of researchers about five years ago.

Although interest in the compound reportedly waned because of the expense of its production, scientists discovered that it is also found naturally in plants. For his research at Temple's Ambler Campus, Manaker is using an experimental compound which can be extracted from natural plant sources at much less cost than producing the pure chemical.

Manaker declines to name the compound to protect possible patent rights.

"We are now compiling data to see what the effects have been on growth and other plant development," the Temple researcher says.

INDUSTRY

Praise the Lord, pass the shovel

Landscapers in sunny Southern California chalked up some points on that big board in the sky recently.

Members of the Long Beach/Orange County Chapter of the Cal-

ifornia Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) donated time and material to help a church prepare its sanctuary for Easter.

"They came in here and did the whole thing from the turf to the trees," Dan Moore, pastor of the Living Waters Christian Fellowship in Fountain Valley, tells WEEDS TREES & TURF. "They did an incredible job. For four or five days they had 15 or 20 fellows working on our property. They seemed to be having a ball."

Moore reports the cooperative landscaping effort transformed the two-acre church grounds into a garden. He terms the effort of the landscapers and their suppliers as "a humanitarian gesture."

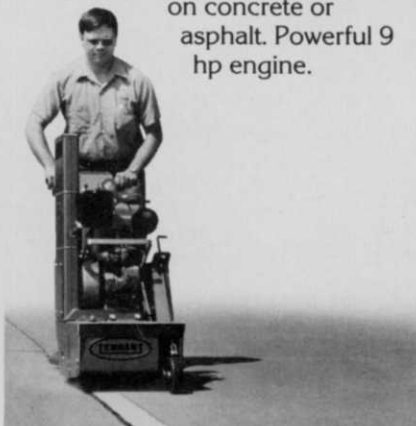
For their part, the CLCA members felt the project was a pretty fair image builder. Or as Gary Walters, president of the local CLCA chapter, says: "We want the community to know that the members of the CLCA are not out to make a quick buck."

Mike Cucchiara of Hydro-Scape Products arranged for the donated materials and time, while Wayne DuBoise of Mission Landscape in Mission Viejo coordinated the actual construction.

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UPDATE

Herbicide defense workshop held

More than 60 people in forestry, lawn care, and agriculture met in Atlanta this spring to learn about defending pesticides on the state and local level. The workshop was sponsored by the National Coalition for a Reasonable 2,4-D Policy and featured Edith Efron, author of the book *The Apocalypstics* on cancer research in the U.S. Efron contends that public opinion about cancer has been shaped through the media by false information about man-made versus naturally occurring carcinogens.

Harold Olinger, assistant chief of administration for the Virginia Division of Forestry, outlined the types of public hearings and told the workshop attendees how to use them to their advantage. "The public hearing can serve many purposes and we need to learn to use it to our advantage," Olinger advised.

Mary Ann Ford, public affairs manager for Union Carbide, told the group public relations programs are necessary to encourage a better two-way understanding.

Labor lawyer Richard Lehr told the group employees must be aware of customer concerns since liability begins with employees.

Ray Russell, public affairs manager for the Dow Chemical Co., Agricultural Products Dept., said pesticide disputes are more common today on the state and local level. Specific products are being challenged rather than pesticides in general said Russell.

Agency, legislature disagree

Members of the Texas House Agriculture Committee believe that state's Department of Agriculture overstepped its bounds when it issued regulations recently requiring farmers to pre-notify neighbors and delay farmworker entry to treated fields. The Department's regulations were harolded by the Environmental Protection Agency as bold measures to protect neighbors and farmworkers from pesticides. The state's pesticide lobby didn't think it was within the Department's authority to set such restrictions.

Minnesota faces fertilizer limits

Local ordinances in Minnesota intended to limit the amount of phosphate reaching lakes may include limitations on fertilizers applied to turf to 0.5 lbs. phosphorus per 1,000 sq. ft. per year. The Minnesota Agricultural Fertilizer Dealers Association is researching legislation in other states regarding fertilizer applications. Both current consumer and professional fertilizers would exceed this amount of phosphorus. Lawn care companies and golf courses would have to limit phosphorus applications to once per year if the ordinances take effect. Persons with experience in similar fertilizer legislation are urged to contact Craig Sallstrom, 1821 University Ave., Room 253, St. Paul, MN 55104.

"I've been in the CLCA for some time now and this isn't the first time we've joined together in a community project," Walters adds.



The California Landscape Contractors Association donated time and material this spring in helping the Living Waters Christian Fellowship in Fountain Valley get its sanctuary ready for Easter. Shown here (l to r): Pastor Dan Moore, Mike Cucchiara, Wayne DuBoise, Dave Patterson, Bob Cavanaugh, and Gary Walters.

INDUSTRY

Herbicide Team gets grass registration

Team, a herbicide from Elanco, has received registration for control of crabgrass, goosegrass, and other weed grasses in cool-season turf. It should be available in limited quantities in 1985.

Golf course superintendents will be evaluating claims it provides long-lasting and improved control of late-germinating annual grasses.

ASSOCIATIONS

Georgia golf groups sharing quarters

Headquarters of four separate golf-related organizations in Georgia are going to be located under the same roof. Each association, however, will retain its autonomy.

"This is in no way a merger between any of the associations," says Wendell Couch, president of the Georgia State Golf Association (GSGA).

Joining the GSGA and the South-eastern Region of the U.S. Golf Association in their office in Marietta, GA, are staff members from the Georgia Golf Course Superintendent's Association (GGCSA) and the Georgia Section of the Professional Golfers' Association of America.

A spokesperson at the 2,000-sq-ft office tells WT&T the associations are sharing the "Golf House south offices to better serve the interests of golf in Georgia."

AWARDS

Wisconsin architect honored for project

Judson E. Griggs transformed a section of an industrial park into a scenic setting for videotape commercials. He

received the Environmental Improvement Grand Award from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) for his efforts.

"It's rewarding to be recognized professionally by your peers," says Griggs, a landscape architect with Lied's in Sussex, WI.

"More importantly, I'm happy that we were able to meet the needs of our client." The client in this case was Marx, Inc., a motion picture studio in Glendale, WI.

Keys to beautifying the industrial

park and making it suitable for the filming of outdoor television commercials were the use of mature plants and improvements to the area's drainage, including the addition of a small pond. Griggs' design encompassed electrical work, bridge construction, lighting design, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

Explains Griggs, "with careful placement of mature plants, naturally sculpted earth beams and the construction of several outdoor structures, the industrial park atmosphere was eliminated."



Judson E. Griggs

COMMITTEE from page 8

tell it to has been extremely difficult," Bowyer pointed out.

Dr. William Daniel, professor emeritus, agronomy, from Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, told the group the primary insurer of sports fields in the U.S. increases premiums by 50 percent if a team plays more than half its games on artificial turf. John Macik, sports medicine coordinator for the National Football League, said professional football players favor natural turf over artificial for career longevity and severe injury reasons.

After revealing the large volume of existing support information for sports field construction and maintenance, the group decided to create a Sports Turf Research and Information Committee, under the Musser Foundation umbrella. Dr. Fred V. Grau will serve as information coordinator to help parks, schools, and other sports sponsors improve their fields. Data on the size of the sports field market is also being gathered for the benefit of manufacturers and suppliers interested in the push for better sports turf.

For more information, contact Dr. Fred V. Grau, P.O. Box AA, College Park, MD 20740. (301) 864-0090.

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IN-THE-MIDDLE

by Bruce F. Shank, executive editor

Lebanon stands behind golf distributors

In the April issue of *WT&T*, we reported on Lebanon Chemical Corp.'s creation of a new division to sell to lawn care companies. The reason for the new sales emphasis was prompted by the price sensitivity and highly competitive nature of the lawn care market.

In the same article, we mentioned Randy Rogers, who is in charge of program development for the Country Club and Greenskeeper lines sold by Lebanon. Some golf superintendents took this to mean they could buy direct from Lebanon and the company's distributors were quite upset.

This is not the case. The Lebanon distributor provides an important service and inventory function to the golf superintendent. If superintendents started buying direct from the manufacturer, an important service to the golf industry would be harmed.

Chemical distributors extend too much credit to customers

A recent study of pesticide formulators and distributors by Velsicol Chemical Co. credit manager Karen Miller has raised some concern about current credit policies in the industry.

Miller told the members of the United Pesticide Formulators and Distributors Association during a recent meeting in Phoenix their margins are too thin and, in some cases, their debt too high. "I see small distributors disappearing because they are undercapitalized," Miller said.

Miller showed the group what accounting ratios should be and what a survey of the UPF&DA revealed they really are. Gross margins, which should be 40-50%, are actually 18-24%. Current assets to current debt ratio, which should be 3 to 1, is actually 1.7 to 1 for distributors under \$10 million gross and 1.3 to 1 for those over \$10 million. Net profit, which should be 10-15% of tangible net worth, in this survey is actually an 8% loss for distributors under \$10 million and 9% return for those over \$10 million.

Miller said that in some cases manufacturers have been overselling distributors, putting the distributors in the highly-leveraged positions they are in today. She also strongly urged distributors to institute tougher collection policies saying collection periods are stretching to 75 days from the 30 days they should be.

Lofts also supplies Host chain

In the April column we reported that Adikes stood to benefit from its relationship with Flowertime, recently purchased by General Host. Host is reportedly planning to establish a national chain of garden centers.

Jon Loft, chairman and president of Lofts Seed Inc., pointed out Adikes is not the only company supplying seed to Host. His company has also been supplying seed to Flowertime and Frank's Nursery, another Host garden center chain, for 17 years.

PEOPLE

Names in the news

James Taylor, head of Taylor Tree Surgery, Walden, NY, takes the reins as president of the New York State Pesticide Users Council (NYSPUC). He was elected during the first annual meeting of the NYSPUC in Albany. About 65 industry people attended.

Others elected at the meeting of the year-old group include: Vice President **Dr. James Dewey**, Secretary **Robert J. Mungari**, and Treasurer **Fredrick Boyd**.

The National Landscape Association (NLA) recently tabbed **Robert Siebenthaler**, Dayton, OH, as president. **Denny R. Church**, Lombard, IL, is the new vice president; **William K. Doerler**, Lawrenceville, NY, secretary-treasurer.

This spring also saw **George Koziarz** returning to the post of president of the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association—his second term. He will be aided by Executive Vice President **John Hendricksen**, Vice President **Ken Gallt**, Treasurer **Jim Bussey**, Secretary **Bill Davids**, and Sargeant-at-Arms **Pete Grathoff**.

Gary D. Myers, president of The Fertilizer Institute, announces the appointment of **Pamela W. Lucas** as assistant vice president. Lucas joined the Institute in November 1982.

Longtime landscape industry spokesman **Karl Korstad** was surprised with an honorary membership for life in the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) this past winter. Korstad, ALCA publication chairman, and his wife, Frances, have been in the landscape business for 35 years.

Paul E. Niewoehner is the national



Paul Niewoehner



Bob Hefta

sales manager for Union Carbide Specialty Products, a newly formed marketing group of Union Carbide Agricultural Products Company, Inc. Niewoehner is a 15-year veteran of the Carbide sales force. Replacing Niewoehner as regional sales rep in the Midwest is **Bob Hefta**. Also affected by the realignment is **Tony Gambino**, who will serve Union Car-

continued on page 66

had to lift 80 lb. bags of seed or fertilizer. When we were planting trees I had to move 250 lb. root balls. And I did it."

The poll uncovered more than a few companies that agree with Merritt, companies that look favorably on women laborers, foremen, and technicians. Several claim females are more conscientious than men in their work habits (not tardy or absent as often), perform finish work well, and take better care of tools and equipment.

Even so, three out of four women newly incorporated into the landscape and lawn care industries (73 percent to be exact) end up in the office. Employers are more apt to hire a woman to keep the books, for her secretarial skills, or in a clerical or receptionist capacity.

Another area where women might have an advantage is in sales, the poll suggests. "In a corporate setting, they can get in the door when a man can't," one respondent notes. Another points out that women are a natural for selling lawn services "because 54 percent of decisions to buy lawn services are

made by women."

Approximately one third (27 percent) of the companies polled by LCI claim to "actively seek women applicants to fill specific jobs" within their companies. And 41 percent believe women can "outperform men" in certain jobs.

The survey hints the reason why more women haven't made significant inroads into the landscape and lawn care industries is that there is a shortage of qualified women seeking positions.

"I think the number of women will increase," one company executive notes. "I would not hesitate to hire a qualified female, but rarely does one apply." Another says, "for five years I've advertised for male or female help. And not one female has answered."

Says Smithlin, "There's no question I'm being more recognized as a part of this industry. Most women probably don't think they can handle it because it is so male dominated."

It could be that Merritt and Smithlin, and others like them ("survivors," one respondent describes them) are a step ahead in these basically male industries.

bide in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, **Phil Smith**, in the Southeast and Florida, and **Gordon Vosti**, in the West and Pacific Northwest.

Four Star Agricultural Services, Bluffton, IN, appointed **James A. Halloran** national sales manager for Penet-Turf, a landscaping soil treatment. Halloran comes to Four Star from turf distributor Arthur Clesen, Inc.

Daniel C. Alexander has been named advertising and promotion specialist for Arcadian Corp., a Par-



Daniel Alexander



Dr. Phil Robinson

sippy, NJ-based fertilizer manufacturer.

Dr. Phil Robinson is handling the introduction of Acclaim, a post-emergence grass herbicide. He has been named project leader while **Roger D. Boatman** takes over as manager of market research at American Hoechst, Somerville, NJ.



Roger Boatman



ALCA Field Day

Alan Hazel, assistant educational director for Briggs & Stratton, lectures to students at the 9th Annual Associated Landscape Contractors of America Student Field Day in March. The students were treated to 21 events and had the opportunity to interview with 66 industry representatives.

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