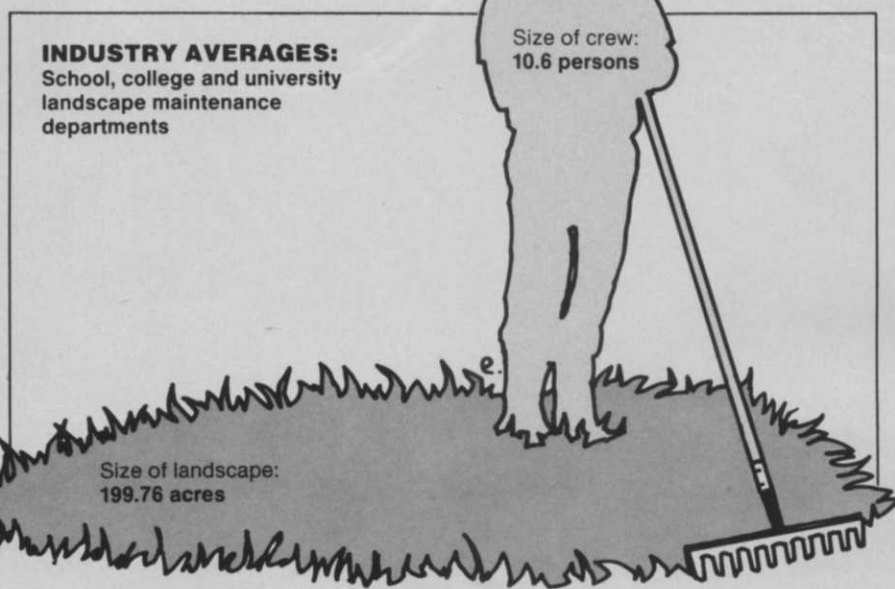


RED TAPE MANIA

Landscape superintendents at the nation's schools, colleges and universities are responsible for a wide range of services. For most, however, the worst part of the job is cutting through miles of governmental 'red tape.'

by Jerry Roche, editor



Imagine trying to create a beautiful landscape with both hands tied behind your back.

In many instances, landscape superintendents of schools, colleges and universities have to contend with this problem on a regular basis. The problem, you see, is filling out a pile of government forms to requisition a couple bucks for a new rake.

And many schools, colleges and universities are government-funded.

Although Gary Parrott of Michigan State University points to the many advantages of working in this sector, he also notes that "there's too much red tape" accompanying government funding. Larry Thompson of the University of Illinois at Chicago adds, "One disadvantage is not being able to hire those who you want for a specific position because of Civil Service rules. Another is having to bid for

equipment, and then hoping you get what you want."

Susan Daniels of the University of Georgia agrees. "As a previous assistant manager of a nursery, I had

'We can all dream. That's what makes this job so challenging and interesting.'

a lot of adjustment coming into a state institution. They are a world apart from the regular business world.

"In the institution, it is considerably harder to reach goals, and very discouraging. But it's not impossible."

Vandals a concern

An exclusive WEEDS TREES & TURF survey conducted earlier this year among landscape superintendents at schools, colleges and universities turned up some more interesting information. For instance:

- 78% of the respondents called vandalism "a concern" of their department;
- accordingly, nearly 45% of the respondents said that they have recently altered trimming/pruning practices in order to provide better campus security;
- most campuses (about 45%) are located in suburban settings;
- the average campus is almost exactly 200 acres;
- although 71% of the landscape managers get institutional discounts on equipment, just barely over half take discounts on chemicals; and
- 87% of the landscape managers buy all their equipment.

Running the gamut

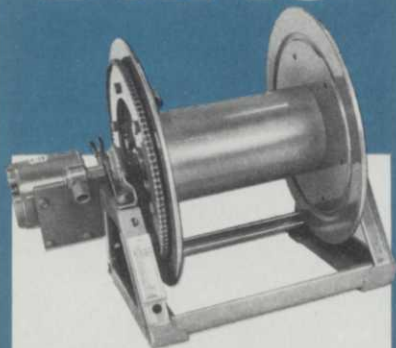
The tasks landscape maintenance departments are asked to perform could well be the most diverse in the entire green industry. It is not unusual to find the same crews that maintain the landscape taking care of streets and roads, signs and holiday decorations. These are the same people who sweep parking lots, remove snow in the winter and handle trash and waste disposal.

"We do everything," claims Robert Karras Jr. of the University of Wisconsin at River Falls. "Every day is different. My crew is also the labor force to move offices, tables, etc., throughout campus. We also tackle new landscape projects."

Notes another superintendent: "One advantage to this job is that I have access to other departments in the physical plant such as carpentry, painting, welding and electrical. Another is access to students for part-time employees. A disadvantage is that the landscape department usually receives last consideration...but I have noticed an increased respect for the groundskeeper and an increase of support services."

There are other advantages to this type of work. Foremost, most campus managers can take discounts on equipment and chemicals. According to the survey, 71.3% get an average discount of 15.2% on equipment, and 50.3% get an average discount of 14.7% on chemicals. One

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LANDSCAPE PROFILE *continued*

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL/COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY LANDSCAPE MANAGERS

Parking lots	90.3%
Athletic fields	82.4%
Snow removal	78.2%
Central, adjoining campuses	72.7%
Special events	70.9%
Dorm/ fraternity areas	37.0%

Other areas of responsibility mentioned: offices, irrigation systems, nursery/arboretum/ botanical garden maintenance, research facilities, playgrounds, sign maintenance, interior plants, painting, streets and roads, Christmas decorations, hospitals, trash/waste disposal, some residences, sod farms, basic construction, lakes and ponds, wooded areas, ice maintenance in winter

respondent noted discounts of up to 55% on both chemicals and equipment.

Of course, there is a flip side to this argument. Most necessities are put out to bid, and therefore what is actually bought is not always exactly what is needed for the job.

Nearly 45% of the respondents said they have recently altered trimming/pruning practices in order to provide better campus security.

Recognition

Survey results also reveal an interesting trend toward more administrators recognizing the importance of a good-looking landscape.

"Outside appearance has been re-emphasized recently," said one respondent. "However, budget and manpower restrictions leave some requests being denied."

"I find that more emphasis is being placed on the landscape," said another. "What was good enough three years ago isn't today."

"Administrators do place heavy

emphasis on the landscape," added a third manager. "The budget does not always cover all that they want, but they are fairly generous if they can see results."

One administrator responded to the survey. Here is what she wrote: "As in all cases, administrators—myself included—want the best possible landscape for the least cost. If it becomes apparent that I must have additional funding, I believe that I can obtain it with proper justification."

If budget restraints are a concern, the intelligent campus landscape manager will begin growing his own plants, as many already do. Nurseries and greenhouses have been found to be great dollar-savers.

Overall, responses to the WT&T survey were positive. Most school, college and university landscape managers like the campus atmosphere and the thoughtfulness of students and administrators in complimenting their departments.

One final respondent had this interesting observation, rather echoing the thought of many others:

"Perhaps with lottery money coming in this state, we can prepare a replacement budget. I'm almost sure some changes will be made, directing such funding to areas not currently approved.

"Well, we can all dream. That's what makes this job so challenging and interesting." **WT&T**

LANDSCAPE PROFILE

CASE CLOSED

There's no question that award-winning Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland is one of the finest landscaped urban universities in the U.S.

by Heide Aungst, associate editor

Spring is John Michalko's favorite season.

Typically, spring is a time many find inspiration in a robin's song, a bouquet of fresh-cut daffodils or a radiant sunset.

But to Michalko, landscape superintendent at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, spring signals an end to the drudgery of snow removal and the beginning of "real" work.

"To the operators winter might not be boring, but to me it is,"

Michalko says. "I know what has to be done. I see what has to be done. Whenever there isn't snow on the ground, I go out and do it."

Unfortunately, the campus is usually hit with snow five months a year, thanks in part to its proximity to Lake Erie.

Michalko's crews always clear roads and sidewalks for early classes, even on days when the campus closes because city streets aren't clear, or a bitter windchill factor looms.

Snow is always considered when planning any type of landscape design. At CWRU, the design of certain areas includes a place to put plowed snow without damaging plant materials. Sidewalks are a certain width to facilitate plowing.

Since concrete and asphalt don't hold up well under freezing conditions, Michalko started using uni-stone interlocking pavers in 1983.

He also discovered the pavers worked well on tree lawns where excessive salt damage from salting icy roads prohibited solid turf growth.

A different season, a different job

But when spring comes, Michalko buries the winter blues and concentrates on readying athletic fields and beautifying the campus for graduation ceremonies in late May.

Case held commencement outdoors for the first time in 1985. It was such a success that the administration plans to continue the practice.



Springtime at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland means color in every corner of campus.



An early spring scene on the Case campus.

Michalko won the PGMS Grand Award for athletic fields in 1980 and plans to enter the competition this year. "Our fields are pushed to the maximum," Michalko says. Sometimes 60 intramural games are played on a field in one week.

Case has one intramural field for soccer and football which is marked with colored paints running in different directions. It also has six softball fields. Michalko uses a bluegrass/ryegrass mix on the fields.

The urban campus is at the hub of the University Circle area on Cleveland's cultural east side. Its properties are blended with those of the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Natural History Museum, the Cleveland Clinic, and the Garden Center of Greater Cleveland.

Because of the busy thoroughfares surrounding the campus, Michalko works hard at keeping even minor details, such as flowers around every university sign, in order.

A large volume of pedestrian traffic also makes the daily trek across campus. "Students will always take the shortest distance between two points," Michalko sighs. To prevent extensive turf damage, Michalko has built walkways and frequently uses shrubbery as a natural barrier.

Shrubbery must be maintained below three feet for security purposes.

Trees are trimmed regularly to promote their growth, enhance lighting, and increase visibility, he says.

Michalko says many schools are now planning landscape design in conjunction with security personnel. CWRU has done this during Michalko's eight years.

There are special considerations in working for a private university. For example, during finals week, works crews cannot run any power equipment before 9 a.m. "in case some students who were up all night studying want to sleep in."

Vandalism: a big problem

Perhaps the biggest problem

— Circle No. 114 on Reader Inquiry Card

Michalko must deal with is vandalism, ranging from broken sprinkler systems to spray graffiti.

It's often difficult to know if the vandalism was done as a fraternity prank or on a city kid's dare. "Kids will be kids," Michalko says.

One time the grounds crew set up stakes to tell where to snowplow. But during the night, someone moved the stakes. Needless to say, the crew never tried that again.

An advantage to working for a university, however, are the grants that come in earmarked for particular landscape use.

This spring Michalko and his crew will use funds from "friends of the university" to trim trees and plant new ones.

The money for special projects is used in addition to the regular operating budget, which Michalko wouldn't reveal.

"I tell the front office what I need and they handle the budgeting," Michalko says. "They'll tell me if I go over. One time we had a cutback and I was told to cut budgets, not people. New equipment and supplies went first."

Managing people: a tough job

Michalko uses a full-time, year-

round crew of 15. His philosophy is to pay them well and give them a good benefit package to keep them happy with their job.

The university's benefit package includes free tuition for the employee and his family.

Still, dealing with 15 individuals is the part of the job Michalko finds most difficult.

"They all have their own personalities," Michalko says. "But they take pride in the campus because they see it every day. I'd stack 95 percent of them up against anybody."

Michalko would rather be out working with Mother Nature than dealing with human nature. His plan for the campus includes a color code, which means there is color on the campus at all times.

According to what color they turn in the fall to further enhance the

autumn beauty of the campus.

A sugar maple will turn yellow, orange, and scarlet, while a tulip tree will turn yellow, a crown right pin oak will turn red and a sweet gum will turn orange and scarlet, he says.

Michalko works closely with landscape architects William Behnke Associates Inc. for all design changes.

Since 1977, many new vest-pocket parks, walkways and courtyards have been installed.

This year his major project is to renovate the landscaping around the dorms and fraternities, including adding an irrigation system. "All the major work is done," says Michalko. "There's just some minor tinkering left."

But for Michalko, that tinkering will probably never be finished. "My biggest challenge is trying to satisfy myself," he says. "I try to be a perfectionist. I want everything done just right."

Whether it's award-winning athletic fields, bright autumn colors or fresh spring flowers, Case Western Reserve University will always be in tip-top shape while Michalko is at the helm...even though snowplowing is a little boring. **WT&T**

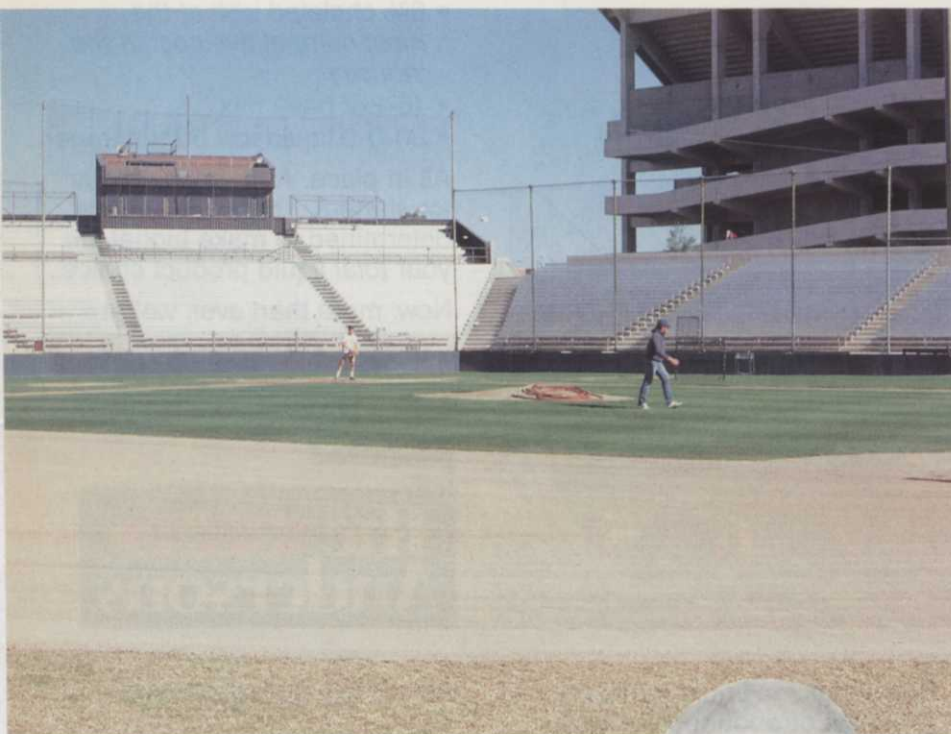
LANDSCAPE PROFILE

ALMOST A NATIVE

University of Arizona grounds supervisor Chuck Raetzman left Chicago 30 years ago for the sun of the desert southwest.

After the first winter, he never wanted to go back.

by Ken Kuhajda, managing editor



This winter shot of the baseball field shows the lush green overseeded infield and dormant outfield.

Chuck Raetzman came from Illinois on a football scholarship and stayed.

Thirty years later, still built like a jock, Chuck Raetzman keeps his hand in sports as the assistant director of operations services in the physical resources division at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Translation? He maintains all grounds including the football and baseball fields at the PAC-10 school where the sun shines 340 days a year.

"Basically I'm responsible for custodial, grounds, and labor. Two years ago I inherited the custodial part," says Raetzman, still trim and youthful at age 48. He carries 195 pounds on his 6-1 frame.

The grey hairs are there. They come with experience. He's 35 without them.

He's in his 18th year at the U of A, a medium-sized school (enrollment 27,000) with a pleasant, self-contained city campus.

He's one of some 800 employees within physical resources and one of five supervisors who report directly to Phil Rector, director of physical resources.

He manages a budget of \$3 million, 80 percent coming from the state and the rest from local departments on campus which pay for maintenance services.



Bob Kneebone, retired turfgrass professor at the University of Arizona (left), has served as Raetzman's advisor for some 18 years. Raetzman, (right), is assistant director of operations services at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

"I like to equate it with a small construction company," says Raetzman.

It's also a huge bureaucracy, he says, and not always easy to get the equipment and materials you need.

You make do. "There's been four different directors since 1968. Each one has reorganized," says Raetzman. "But things are working out well."

The Mac Attack

Maintaining a "for-profit" college can be a tough job.

Take September, 1977 for example. Chuck Raetzman and crew prepare for the regionally-televised home football opener. The field looks great.

Two weeks before the big game, the rock band Fleetwood Mac, then at the top of the rock world, plays a concert at the football stadium.

Big bucks for the university. Big headaches for Raetzman and crew.

Some 76,000 people attend, 56,000 in the stands and the rest on the beautiful bermudagrass turf.

The port-a-potties are located at the south end of the field.

The next day dawns. The morning is carved in Raetzman's memory.

The field, a total disaster, was like concrete from the pounding of 20,000 rock fans. The natural aisle formed in the middle of the field from goal line to goal line was yellow from the constant footsteps of potty-goers.

Glass, debris, cigarette butts, and yes, marijuana seeds littered the field. (Says Raetzman, able to smile today: "We had the greatest crop of marijuana growing after that concert.")

Raetzman and crew cried a lot and then did what they could. The turf didn't come back. The field had to be painted the entire season.

Rock concerts, as expected, are not one of Chuck Raetzman's favorite activities.

Nonetheless, he predicts a concert sometime this spring. Today's standard fare of the geo-textile fabric and plywood should prevent a recurrence of the Mac Attack.

"Even with the cover you're still going to get damage. Plus the clean-up. Here, you attract from four states and then they camp out all week," says Raetzman.

He gives thanks he doesn't maintain a public facility like



Chuck Raetzman

'There are still people on campus after 4. They get to talk to our custodial workers. It helps with PR a little bit.'

—Raetzman

Denver's Mile High Stadium, where they depend solely on concerts and special attractions for revenues.

300 employees

Some 60 U of A employees maintain the grounds, including the athletic fields, at the central Tucson campus. Custodial workers total 200 while 24 general laborers, "a support group," maintain the campus.

That's almost 300 workers under Raetzman. They come in waves—two shifts—which Raetzman says makes for better public relations.

Second shift begins at 4 p.m. "There are still people on campus after 4," he says. "They get to talk to our custodial workers. It helps with PR a little bit."

Tucson's semi-arid climate provides plenty of work. The area, at 2,400 ft., gets just 11 inches of rain per year. The growing season lasts 264 days. That's a lot of mowing, trimming, and watering.

A four-man crew handles irrigation, almost a non-stop activity

during the 100 degree heat of the southeast Arizona summer.

There's also a six-man sanitation crew. The boss, Raetzman, oversees the entire operation, calling on his three supervisors: Bill Carter (grounds), Mike Mencinger (labor), and Ron Roberts (custodial).

His personal background is in horticulture. He graduated from the U of A in 1960 with a horticulture degree and worked eight years for a landscape contractor in Tucson before returning to his alma mater.

From the snow to the sun

He came to Arizona from Chicago, where he was an all-city offensive and defensive guard at Amundsen High School (everyone played both ways in the days of leather helmets).

"It was a chance to see another area of the country, to get out of my own," he says. "I had travelled through Tucson before I went to school there and it was so different. The palm trees, the citrus, the weather. It was a chance for me to get out west."

In 1955, Raetzman and another Chicago-area player, also on scholarship at the U of A, packed their belongings and made the trip to the desert.

The scholarship athlete lettered three years at the U of A as an offensive guard and linebacker.

He never had the urge to return to Chicago. "Not after the first winter," he says.

Son Garrett has picked up the pigskin. The 21-year-old red shirt junior is a quarterback on the current Wildcat football team. He's bigger than pop. The 6-2, 200-pound social science major is around three on the depth chart, says dad.

Knowing your kid will be playing on turf you maintain must give you extra incentive to do a good job...

The turf is aerified six times a year, fertilized six to eight times yearly, and top dressed twice, once in December after the season and in May after spring football practice.

And then there's the U of A baseball team. Always among the top colleges, World Series champs twice. Impressive. Their field must be too.

They start their schedule of 50 home games in February. They practice year round though not on the game field.

Raetzman allows the common bermuda in the outfield to go dormant. Only the Tifway bermuda



A well-maintained campus center where there's always activity.

infield and foul areas are overseeded.

Most of campus turf, mainly common bermuda, turns brown in the winter. Overseeding is rare at the U of A. It's a luxury when Raetzman is worried more about getting a crew to a campus hall to fix

a broken pipe.

Preventative maintenance

The snail's pace of the university bureaucracy can get to you. After 18 years, Raetzman deals with it.

He doesn't always get the equipment he needs when he needs

it. Sometimes he doesn't get it at all. "With the operational funds, especially with equipment replacement, we just don't get the replacement money as soon as we would like," he says.

It's made him a better manager and his crew more effective. "We still have mowers that are 8, 10, 12 years old. That's a compliment to the PM (preventative maintenance) guys. PM takes money out of our operation but that's what you have to do."

The department's 17-year-old backhoe was finally replaced this year.

"In the last several years the administration has been a lot more receptive. This year we probably have the most capital equipment money we've had since I've been here," says Raetzman.

It's a sign that Raetzman and his crew are landscaping their way out of anomomy.

He's excited about that. "I like the thought of being involved in the future of this university," he says. **WT&T**

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The Palm Court on the University of Miami campus.

TROPICAL ARBORETUM

The University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla., boasts a landscape cornerstone of 25 palm tree varieties. And the landscape has just begun to be taken seriously.

by Heide Aungst, associate editor

The University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla., could be described as a tropical paradise. But just a few years ago it was a wasteland.

No one paid much attention to the school's landscape. Lethal yellow wiped out most of the coconut palm trees, and landscape design seemed almost nonexistent.

Then, in 1982, Edward Foote was named university president. "The president came here with a dream, and that dream is being carried out," says Clarence Lefler, director of the physical plant. Lefler was in his position only a few months before Foote took over the campus.

Foote's dream was to make the university into a tropical arboretum. With more than 25 varieties of palms on campus, many donated fully-grown from the estate of a wealthy widow, his dream is coming true. Campus landscaping is so important to Foote that he even requires the crew to cut the hedge outside his office in an A-frame, which allows light to get to the under branches.

"President Foote's philosophy is to create a setting so the kids know they are in south Florida," says Alan Weber, director of grounds/landscaping for ARA Environmental Services. "He feels

it's conducive to learning."

The university has contracted with ARA since 1978 for grounds maintenance, custodial, and moving services, explains Boyce Level, ARA resident manager. Level has worked for ARA for about three years.

Though not employed by the university, Weber and Level work directly with Lefler on planning and maintenance.

87 foster children

They affectionately call Lefler "Dad," an appropriate title for a man who, along with his wife Lois, have raised five children of their own, adopted one, and have been foster parents to 87 others. Lefler projects the same deep sense of caring with "his" campus, as he does with his children.

"Our goal was to first do a bunch of little spots on campus to get the overall feeling of improvement," Lefler explains. He negotiated four groundskeepers to do small projects taking less than a week, such as planting a hedge.

One of these projects was to plant ferns under the ficus trees, known

continued on page 40



A well-landscaped plot on the south Florida campus.

for their extensive root systems. Ficus trees cannot be planted near buildings since the roots can easily break through the concrete.

Several ficus trees grow on the banks of the university's lake, since the roots protect the bank from erosion.

The 6.3 acre lake, located at the back of the campus, is equipped with its own alligator and barracudas.

Although the crew cleans the man-made lake regularly, no chemicals are used to upset the ecological balance of the saltwater intrusion in the lake.

"We haven't transformed the lake into a swimming pool," Weber says. Many of the plants on the banks are left wild to maintain the natural look. Steps carved out of coral stone are located on one side of the lake. Weber says no one could afford to buy similar steps today.

It is hard to decide whether the lake or an area known as "Palm Court" is the most beautiful part of the campus.

Palm Court was developed two years ago. Royal palm trees surround a cascading jet 7,000-gallon fountain. Concrete blocks are arranged in a checkerboard pattern between the trees where students can sit and study. A brick paved pathway leads up to and encircles the fountain.

That pathway causes Weber a few headaches. Since everything grows so rapidly in southern Florida, weeds and grass pop—up quickly—occasionally between the bricks. Crewmen spray the bricks but are careful to avoid killing neighboring turf.

St. Augustine turf is used on the approximately 250-acre campus, of which 150 acres are intensively maintained. "St. Augustine grows horizontally. It takes the heat, covers rapidly and doesn't need to be highly maintained," Weber says.

Regular pruning

When Weber started working on the university about a year ago, he discovered most of the grass under the trees had turned brown from lack of light.

The trees are now pruned regularly to allow the light to get to the turf. Also, removing the lower branches makes the campus safer for the many blind students.

Weber tries to achieve a balance with planting shade trees so students can get relief from the heat and pruning trees back.

The pH levels are so high in south Florida soils that plants need extra nutrients to grow. Fertilizers alone don't provide enough nutrients, so crews regularly spray through the leaves.

Weber also puts a weather shield, most frequently on the palms, which is a thin coating used to maintain moisture in the leaf and prevent windburn and sunscald.

The university's irrigation system stretches nearly 100 acres. Watering is crucial because of the quick drainage of the sandy soil.

Weber often uses a polymer under the root system of a newly-planted tree since it can expand and hold 30 times its size in water. Overwatering, however, can cause an outbreak of dollar weed, the campus' biggest enemy next to fireants which also invade regularly.

Weber says he goes through equipment faster than northern schools because it's used year round. He uses his lift trucks most extensively and keeps at least five chainsaws on hand because of the amount of pruning.

The baseball field, home to the high-powered Hurricanes, has synthetic turf, which suffers from mildew.

The crew maintains two soccer fields and two football fields of bermudagrass. The four fields are all practice fields only and, therefore, don't require special maintenance.

Weber would rather put his time into designing areas on the campus. Although the university often contracts out for landscape design, Weber prides himself on the areas of campus he has designed.

Before coming to the university he worked at Miami's Baptist Hospital. There, he won the American Association of Nurserymen's national award for institutional design. He will receive his award in Washington, D.C. this month.

One area he has designed is the student union. He says he's most proud of this since so many people walk through the area each day.

Weber put in planters with ferns, crown thorns, and solitaire palms to brighten up the union. With the combination of Weber's design changes and Lefler's designated three-man crew for short term projects, the campus is indeed resembling paradise.

The hurricane factor

But when paradise is located in southern Florida, your crew has to be prepared for hurricanes. Hurricane season runs from June to November.

"Ahead of hurricane season we do a massive trimming program," Weber says. "We take coconuts off the palm trees and pick up all the loose stuff."

Level says the university has a set procedure the grounds crew follows during a hurricane threat. "We have a red team and a blue team," Level explains. "One is on call while the other goes home and gets ready to clean up after."

Lefler says the last hurricane to directly hit the Miami area was in 1965. Still, he charts the paths of all recent hurricanes along the Atlantic coast.

Another problem is Haitian and Cuban employees. Most are not trained in groundskeeping, and often the language barrier makes it difficult for Weber to communicate.

He has learned a bit of Spanish to open communication lines. That's not uncommon for a landscape director who holds degrees in history, hotel and restaurant management, and horticulture.

The crew seems to enjoy working

at the only major U.S. university in the subtropical zone. (Texas, Arizona and California are subject to freezes lasting consecutive days.)

Weber says sometimes it's hard to motivate the crew in the steaming summer heat and he gives them more frequent breaks to cope with high temperatures and high humidity.

Some crew members pick their own coconuts from the campus palm trees, freeze them, and drink the ice cold juice for relief.

The most recent project is re-landscaping the panhellenic building. Lefler says such special projects usually cost an estimated \$3,000 to \$25,000. He describes his general maintenance budget as "just over \$500,000."

The University of Miami is home to about 15,000 students, many of whom come from out of state for the warm weather and beach not even 10 miles from campus.

The traffic through the campus can damage plant materials. It has become second nature to Weber and Level to tear down signs stapled to

tree trunks as they walk by.

Both have such easy going personalities that they quickly overlook the damage done when students sit on plants or tear leaves off shrubs. "That's OK. They should enjoy the atmosphere," says Weber. "You can't worry that everyone's going to step on your plant...As long as they don't bang it up too much."

To campus visitors and even returning alumni the campus doesn't look "banged up" at all.

"In the last year we've had very positive reports," Lefler says. "The exciting thing is when someone who graduated six or seven years ago returns. The change is so dramatic."

The radical changes are past now. Small planting projects, the addition of even more varieties of palms, and design modifications in conjunction with several building renovations are planned in the future.

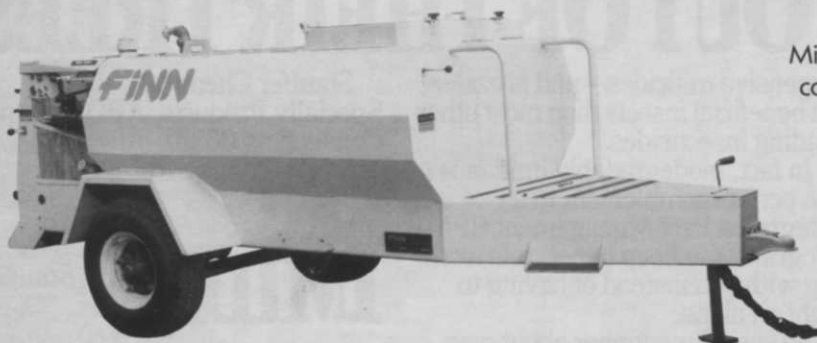
Although the university's new look was first envisioned by only one man, everyone on campus now shares in the pride of maintaining it. The University of Miami is a tropical paradise. **WT&T**

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