

Blending talents is his key to success

Lebo Newman, vice president of Redwood Landscaping, Santa Rosa, Calif., has achieved success by using his talents fully. He studied architecture in college, showing an aptitude for perceiving spacial relations. And, since moving to California, he has combined this talent with a love for growing things.

Newman's company, Redwood Landscaping, is the largest landscape contractor in California's Sonoma County, specializing in installation and maintenance work. The firm maintains 250 acres of properties in Sonoma, Marin, Napa and Solano counties, including commercial, industrial, public and multi-residential sites.

The focus was on installation when Newman became a partner with Bill Davidson in Redwood Landscaping in 1973. "We soon noticed the landscapes installed were not maturing as they should have due to the lack of professional landscape care available in our area," Newman recalls. "This prompted us to offer professional landscape maintenance services, too."

Bigger and better

Professionalism is the key to effective landscape management, Newman believes. "We provide far more than just a mowing crew," he says. "Recognizing and solving problems that cause damage over a long period of time requires an understanding of the design intention, irrigation and planting, drainage standards, horticultural techniques and the particular needs of the client."

That's why Redwood Landscaping employs specialists in the fields of turf management, pesticide use and safety, irrigation repair and horticulture. "Each



Lebo Newman, vice president of Redwood Landscaping, Santa Rosa, Calif., believes landscapers should take advantage of industry organizations.

technician completes training sessions in general horticulture techniques as well as the field they choose to specialize in," Newman says.

'It was one of the worst-case scenarios. But because of our previous timely irrigations and deep root feeding management, the grounds were able to survive the stress.'

—Lebo Newman

Safe weed control

For Newman, quality service also means sharing his community's concern for the environment. "Public sensitivity to chemicals is very intense in Marin County and Sonoma County is becoming more aware as well," Newman explains. "I like Turflon herbicide for both broadcast and spot applications because it's an

environmentally responsible, cost-effective material."

"Turflon controls tough weeds. It doesn't require reapplications, either," Newman says. "That reduces the number of callbacks for us."

Newman's commitment to excellence was put the test in 1987 when 3,500 gallons of diesel fuel overflowed from an underground storage tank system onto property owned by Hewlett Packard, one of Redwood Landscaping's clients.

The company's irrigation program had to be shut down or severely restricted for nearly a month while the spill was cleaned up.

The accident occurred just before the California Landscape Contractors Association was scheduled to judge the 75-acre site for the state's prestigious Ben Slade Memorial Award. Newman considered withdrawing from the competition, but finally decided to let the entry stand.

Award-winning job

"It was one of the worst-case scenarios that you never want to find yourself in," he says. "But because of our previous timely irrigations and deep root-feeding management, the grounds were able to survive the stress." And Redwood Landscaping received the award that year.

Redwood Landscaping has earned a cabinet-full of other awards in the CLCA's North Coast region since 1976 and statewide since 1986. The firm also has supplied three presidents and four officers of the CLCA in the past eight years.

Newman himself has been active in CLCA and other industry associations for 13 to 14 years. "One of my business philosophies is: support the industry, get out and work for it, and you'll learn from it," he says. **LM**