

# AS I SEE IT...

# LM

## Fore-warned is fore-armed in the spring



March has been "in like a lion and out like a lamb," and April showers now promise to "bring May flowers"—as the old sayings go.

But for landscape managers in the northern sections of the country, this month also usually brings some pretty intense migraines. April, traditionally, is either the launching pad for a successful year, or the month that gums up production schedules for the rest of the summer.

You've had all winter to get your ducks in a row, to organize your books, to make those extra off-season calls to clients, to find good seasonal help, to spit-polish the machinery. But this is the month Mother Nature blows the whistle, for better or for worse. (And, for some strange reason lately, it seems for the worse.)

"Spring concerns haven't changed over the years," observes John Buechner of Lawn Doctor, Matawan, N.J.

Thus, April is the month the groundwork is laid for employee burnout, customer complaints and equipment breakdown. And nothing can be done about it. Or can it?

"If you have a plan, it makes things easier," notes Buechner, who has been through enough springs to know the drill by heart. "Anticipation is the key. In the off-season, you should examine all the problems of the previous year, evaluate them and have a plan to deal with them this year. And you should also have a Plan B or C to fall back on."

For instance, Buechner told Lawn Doctor franchisees a couple of months ago, history has shown 14 scheduled application days are lost each spring to weather. If the astute landscaper or lawn care operator can back up his schedule a little extra, some of those days can automatically be reclaimed.

"This is not earth-shattering information," Buechner admits. "You can take any business and apply the same principles."

The point is that—as another old saying goes—"fore-warned is fore-armed." And landscape managers should need no fore-warning other than last year's experiences and a little advance planning to fore-arm them.

Jerry Roche, executive editor

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