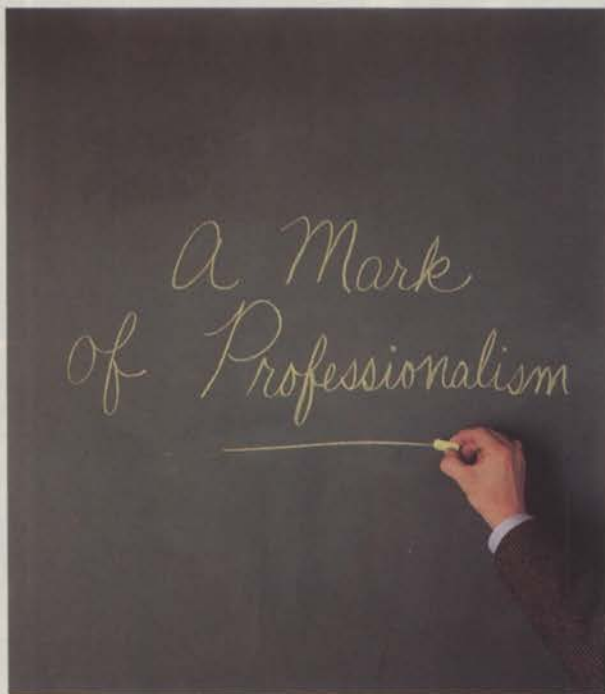


TOWARD  
2000

# EMPLOYEE EDUCATION



It's all here in black and white: if you're training employees, you're taking a step toward being a leader of the '90s; if you're not, you can say a quick good-bye to any aspirations you might have.

by Jerry Roche, editor-in-chief

**F**or some organizations, it's a day in the field with an experienced employee. For others, it's an intensive week-long classroom and practical experience.

But for any green industry outfit worth its salt, training is becoming more than important: it's becoming essential.

If your company or golf course doesn't have a training program in place, it's time. No—it's past time. And if you've already got a basic training program, maybe it's time to refine and expand it.

The Davey Tree Company has two employee training programs by which all others are measured. And for good reason: it first offered intensive programs as early as 1908.



Ward Peterson: trainees stay at Davey

## Intense duty

The Davey Institute of Tree Sciences (DITS) is a four-week program during which valued employees are pulled from the field, transported to Kent, Ohio, housed and fed. For those four weeks, more than 40 employees think tree care for 24 hours a day. Graduates can obtain up to six semester-hours of credit toward a horticulture degree at Kent State University.

"DITS is as complete a program as you'll find anywhere on practical tree care," notes Ward Peterson, Davey's manager of human resources.

The Davey training notebook, four inches thick, could well be titled "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Tree Care...But Were Afraid to Ask."

The DITS program is for foremen who've been with the company at least two years and have been recommended by their superiors.

"We envision ourselves as the best in the industry," says Ken Celmer, Davey's vice president of operations. "There's a percentage of people in DITS who will advance through sales to assistant managers, and managers can go to the production end or the sales end. But we don't run these schools to make salesmen—we need professional foremen."

Davey also runs a one-week DIHS (for horticultural training) that is not as in-depth but provides a wider-based technical education.

Teachers in the area of business management—including customer service—are drawn from Kent State faculty members. Staff to teach electrical hazards comes from Ohio Edison power company. Other DITS and DIHS teachers are members of



**Ken Celmer: need professional foremen**

Davey's technical resources department—Ph.Ds all.

"We hold on to DITS graduates quite well, too," observes Peterson. "They get the feeling that we're really taking care of them."

### Starting out

On the other end of the educational spectrum is Rood Landscaping, a 40-year-old award-winning company that is just now formalizing its employee training programs.

"We don't want to be the largest, we want to be the best," says Roy Rood. "Training should be part of the everyday schedule for a business that wants to be progressive. And we involve everybody in the training process."

Rood, 72, helped at a recent three-day training seminar organized by landscape manager Tom Aeillo. Foremen and laborers were divided into groups and rotated through seven

## DAVEY INSTITUTE OF TREE SCIENCES

### Training Schedule, Week One



|       | MONDAY                  | TUESDAY             | WEDNESDAY           | THURSDAY            | FRIDAY              | SATURDAY      |
|-------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 8 am  | Welcome & introductions | Corporate tours     | Tree insects        | Tree diseases       | Soils               | Tree insects  |
| 9 am  | Davey history           | Tech center tours   | ↓                   | ↓                   | ↓                   | ↓             |
| 10 am | Tree physiology         | Tree physiology     | Tree identification | Soils               | Arbor lab           | Tree diseases |
| 11 am | ↓                       | ↓                   | Tree diseases       | ↓                   | ↓                   | ↓             |
| Noon  | Lunch                   | Lunch               | Lunch               | Lunch               | Lunch               | Lunch         |
| 1 pm  | Tree insects            | Tree diseases       | Open forum          | Tree identification | Tree insects        | Open          |
| 2 pm  | ↓                       | ↓                   | Tree physiology     | Arbor lab           | ↓                   |               |
| 3 pm  | Tree identification     | Tree identification | Arbor lab           | Pesticide awareness | Tree identification |               |
| 4 pm  | Study skills            | Arbor lab           | ↓                   | ↓                   | Program evaluation  |               |
| 5 pm  | Welcome dinner          | Tree diseases       | Open                | Open                | Open                |               |
| 6 pm  | ↓                       | ↓                   |                     |                     |                     |               |



Davey's DITS student/employees receive practical classroom training in rope tying.



Roy Rood (second from left) was a faculty member in Rood Landscaping's new program.



Tom Aiello (left) and Dan Russell helped formulate Rood Landscaping's new training program.



## ROOD LANDSCAPE CO., Inc. TRAINING MANUAL

### Contents

Introduction  
Guidelines  
Definitions

1. Personnel management
2. Plant identification
3. Plan reading
4. Planting procedures
5. Equipment operation
  - skid-steer loaders
  - chain saws
  - sod cutters
  - rototillers

6. Root pruning & transplanting
7. Pruning
8. Staking
9. Edging board installation
10. Grading, mulching, sod installation
11. Irrigation
12. Record-keeping

training stations.

"We paid \$15,000 to \$20,000 to train all of our guys," notes maintenance manager Dan Russell. "We want this industry to know we're professional from day one—no matter how much time it takes. I think it'll nip a lot of problems in the bud."

This spring, foremen took a hands-on test, for which they had to grade out at 70 percent or better on a series of 12 landscape problems. When they pass all 12 problems they become a "certified foreman" with an accompanying pay raise. A similar program for technicians will begin in 1992.

"We started training in the landscape division at Christmas," notes Aiello. "People just don't want you around between Christmas and New Year's, so it's non-productive time anyway."

A training manual was developed with assistance from all sales and supervisory, and Roy Rood himself. "While we maintained a watchful eye over our production for quality control, we were aware that our sudden growth caused inconsistencies among the various crews," says Aiello.

### Writing the manual

One-third of the training manual tells how to operate and maintain various pieces of equipment. Information was derived directly from owner's manuals provided by manufacturers. Planting and irrigation procedures were written by staff members. Other materials came from training manuals provided by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) and the Florida Nursery Grower's Association (FNGA). There are also plans to purchase training videos for use with the company's television moni-



tor and video cassette player.

"It was a slow process compiling the material—more than a full year," Aiello says. "We made a list of all the tasks our crews perform on a daily basis and broke them into chapters."

The training program at Rood will continue to grow. As this issue went to press, a conference room was being adapted to video training sessions.

Aiello says that 1,000 unbillable employee hours were lost during the Christmas-time training period. "But it's worth it," he further notes. "What's the dollar value of an accident?" **LM**

## TRAINING RESOURCES

Green industry trade associations are wonderful resources for finding training materials. Most have them for sale to members and non-members alike (though non-members generally pay higher prices).

Here is a list of some industry organizations which have training materials available:

**Associated Landscape Contractors of America:** Safety and training videos and publications. Brochure available. For more information, phone (703) 241-4004 or write ALCA, 405 N. Washington St., Falls Church, VA 22046.

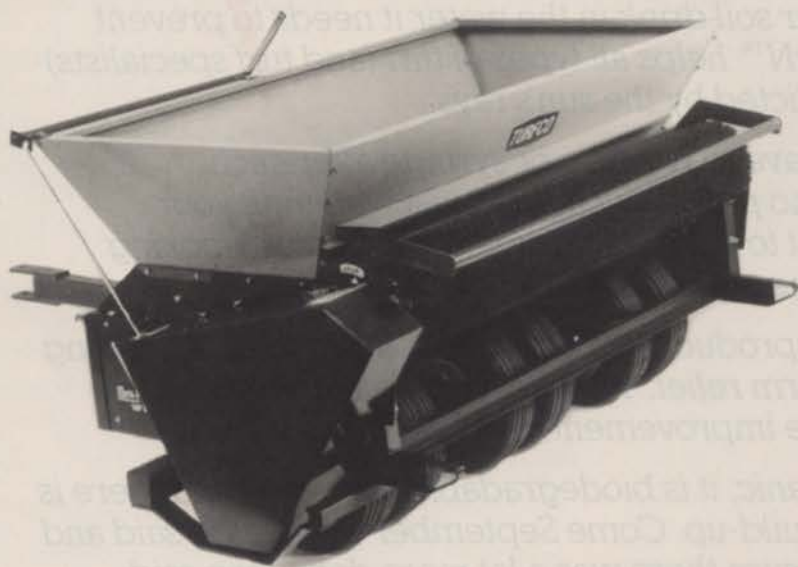
**Golf Course Superintendents Association of America:** Reference materials and extensive audio-visual library on wide variety of topics. Brochure available. Phone (800)

472-7878 or write GCSAA, 1617 St. Andrews Dr., Lawrence, KS 66047.

**National Arborist Association:** Newsletter, videos, correspondence courses on electrical hazards, OSHA standards, more. Brochure (specify "Training by the Numbers") available. Phone (800) 733-2622 or write NAA, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031.

**Professional Lawn Care Association of America:** Technical and safety audio and video cassettes. Detailed order form available. Write PLCAA, 1000 Johnson Ferry Rd. NE, Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112 or phone (404) 977-5222.

—Jerry Roche □



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