

ments (weed control usually) instead of blanket applications, Green Drop significantly reduced both service delivery and product costs.

"The changes allowed us to get more production out of every truck and still carry about 70 percent less product," says Robinson.

If all Green Drop management's decisions had been as foresighted, Robinson admits he certainly couldn't speak from the perspective he now does.

For instance, the company's Winnipeg operation had "some rocky times" this past season, says John.

"We could blame the economy and other factors, maybe even the environmental factor, but I don't think we should use them as scapegoats."

Instead, he's looking for "hiccups" in his program.

The market's there, he's convinced, and Green Drop will find a way to satisfy it.

"After all, we bought two companies there (Winnipeg)," he says. "We changed the name; there was new management; we changed the program."

Tellingly, the Calgary and Edmonton operations had good seasons.

Says Robinson: "If you really look at the success of a business, really look deeply, it usually comes back to internal changes you make or you don't make."

—Ron Hall

Turfed truck attracts the curious, new customers

Here's a nifty idea that's used to attract possible customers. It's a product of a fertile imagination—not to mention some fertile grass.

■ John Kroll wanted to show prospective customers that his Montane Landscape Company can grow grass just about anywhere.

So he "grew" a truck, a pickup truck covered with Kentucky bluegrass/creeping red fescue sod.



This GMC (Grassy Motor Contraption) pickup truck generates a lot of interest at Montane Garden Center.

"We might have 20 people a day stopping to photograph it, and maybe five of them stop in to the garden center to ask about it. It's good for business," says Cam McTavish, who works in the nearby Montane Garden Center.

Establishing nice lawns is difficult in the company's market area, the Canmore Valley which cuts through the east face of the Canadian Rockies about 30 miles west of Calgary. The soil is silty, basically glacial deposit.

"We wanted something to show how good we are with grass," he explains. "We thought about growing grass on plywood and we had some other ideas, but then we realized we could use this old beater of a truck—it's a GMC I think."

The truck ("Yes, I'm pretty sure it still runs," says McTavish) is parked near the Montane Garden Center on the outskirts of Canmore, Alberta, Canada, population about 6,000.

Montane Landscaping is a full-service landscape firm servicing several small communities just west of Calgary.

How did Montane Landscape get the sod to stick to the truck?

"It's a secret," says McTavish, "but the body of that truck must be perforated with a zillion screw holes."

The truck is watered three times a day to keep it green.

Yea, but, how often is it mowed?

—Ron Hall

Airwaves to carry lawn/landscape tips

John Deere's Bob Tracinski reveals an electronic campaign to rekindle pride in home lawns.

■ An ambitious campaign to reinvigorate pride in home lawns sprouts this spring.

A by-product of the effort—indeed, its goal—will be to promote the Professional

Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA) as a helpful and knowledgeable spokes-organization for lawn care.

The effort is informational and involves five 60-second public service announcements (PSAs) for radio and one for television. Production of the announcements began in September and should begin popping up on radio and television in early spring 1992.

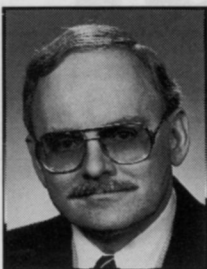
PLCAA directors late this summer endorsed

the program outlined by Bob Tracinski, long-time communications specialist with John Deere & Co. Tracinski spoke in behalf of PLCAA's Public Relations Committee, of which he's a member.

The campaign's message reinforces the idea that lawns are great. "People work very hard to buy and own properties with beautiful lawns," Tracinski said.

John Deere is reportedly financing the initial batch of PSAs, but Tracinski said the PLCAA committee seeks other sponsors to expand the program.

The radio PSAs discuss "Grasscycling,"



Bob Tracinski says radio/TV messages can reach millions.

Deere & Co were extremely well received

proper mowing techniques, mowing safety and landscaping tips. The television PSA deals with "Grasscycling," PLCAA's nationwide program to keep grass clippings from landfills.

Tracinski said similar PSAs generated by John Deere & Co were extremely well received

by radio and television. One produced in cooperation with the National 4-H Council was telecast a total of 4,200 times at 115 different television stations. It dealt with mower safety.

(John Deere benefits by having its equipment shown being used during the narration.)

Along with radio and television, the PLCAA committee also hopes to reach 1,050 newspapers and magazines with printed lawn care information.

"I think this idea of reinforcing pride in home lawns is very powerful," said Tracinski.

Keep watering until freeze

■ Everyone knows how important water is to lawns, but trees and shrubs are sometimes overlooked.

Marianne Riofrio of Ohio State University's Consumer Horticulture Center says trees and shrubs that suffered through extended dry weather this summer should get a good weekly watering, at least until the ground freezes.

Signs of drought stress include:

- early fall color,
- fallen leaves and
- droopy foliage.

"The trees aren't dead," says Riofrio. "Leaves have been on the trees long enough for them to manufacture a good deal of food for the roots."

Even so, trees and shrubs will need all the help they can get before winter.

"A cold, dry winter would further weaken trees and shrubs," she explains. Those also suffering from disease or soil com-

paction could even die. Many trees and shrubs planted this past spring have already died because of the lack of rain.

Because one deep watering can take hours, start with the trees and shrubs most in need, she advises. Evergreens, especially ones with broad leaves, should be next on the list.

Because evergreens lose water from their foliage year-round, Riofrio recommends spraying them in early December (in Ohio) with an anti-desiccant spray. The spray can be reapplied in January or February according to label directions.

"WE SPRAYED 62,000 ROSES WITH WILT-PRUF AND LOST LESS THAN 50!"

—Tony Notaro, owner, Larchwood Construction Co., Holtsville and Rochester, N.Y.

Tony Notaro's landscaping business has grown from zero to one of the 25 largest in the nation in just 32 years.



Tony and daughter Kathy inspect a juniper before planting.

Notaro was landscape contractor for the Levittowns, planting 14,000 homes on Long Island, 5,000 in Delaware and Virginia and 3,000 in Florida. He most recently completed a million dollar landscape renovation of the Flushing Meadow Zoo in New York City.

That landscape includes rare and exotic plants, plus wildflowers and other meadow grasses.

"We transport and plant lots of 12-to-24 inch caliper trees," Notaro said. "The nursery

digs and tags the trees. Our standard procedure is to require the supplier or grower to spray the trees with Wilt-Pruf before we start to dig. We like to hold freshly dug trees in the shade for about 10 days and keep the wrapped ball wet on each tree during the entire period."

Notaro takes pride in his landscaping business. That's just one of the reasons he uses and recommends Wilt-Pruf.

Wilt-Pruf is the proven way to reduce moisture loss and drying out when plants are under stress. Order from your distributor today.

A longtime member of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), Notaro encourages landscapers to join ALCA to stay up-to-date on technical knowledge and exchange information.

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