

# HOT TOPICS

## Green Industry Expo '92: most comprehensive ever

**Controversial keynoter,  
outdoor demonstrations,  
three separate educational  
programs...GIE has it all.**

**MARIETTA, Ga.**—The Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis is the site of this year's gala Green Industry Expo, Nov. 15-19. Indianapolis, a day's drive (or less) for more than half of the nation's population, provides the setting for the largest trade show in the lawn/landscape industry.

This year's show will offer five extra hours of exhibiting, including a first-ever "sneak preview" of exhibits for two hours on Nov. 16.

Another first for the show is the keynote address, being delivered by the colorful—and sometimes volatile—men's head basketball coach at Indiana University, Bobby Knight.

The popular Outdoor Demonstration Area will again feature the newest landscape maintenance equipment on display.

The show is sponsored by the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA), Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) and Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS). Each will have its own attendant slate of educational sessions.

The PLCAA's 13th annual conference, titled "Race with the Best," will contain several tracks: technology, business, risk communication, legislative and re-certification.

"This conference will offer something for everyone involved in lawn care," says Mike Shaw, conference education chair.

### ELSEWHERE

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**The Indiana Convention Center (Hoosier Dome in foreground) is site of the largest trade show in the lawn and landscape industry.**

*(Photo courtesy Indiana Convention and Visitors Association)*

"The sessions cover the entire range of issues important to lawn care professionals.

PLCAA attendees who are information gluttons can participate in the "Head Start" roundtables, where LCOs will informally discuss business and technical challenges. A prospective member reception, which includes a contest for a free trip for two to the 1993 conference, is also slated.

Kevin Kehoe is featured speaker at ALCA's Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Conference. During two sessions, he will show attendees how to use Total Quality Management concepts to boost their bottom lines.

More than 15 total ALCA sessions and events are scheduled, focusing on developing new profit centers, maintaining profits

in a competitive market, making sales presentations, building team spirit, and more.

For the first time ever, the PGMS will hold its own separate educational sessions. Topics to be covered include: middle management training, color in commercial landscapes and doing more with less. Other events are an optional Winner's Circle breakfast, an awards banquet and reception, and optional pre-conference and spouse's tours.

For more information on the Green Industry Expo trade show, phone (404) 973-2019. For a free brochure on the PLCAA meeting, call (404) 977-5222. For info on ALCA's program, call (703) 620-6363. To register for PGMS's sessions, call (410) 667-1833.



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## Pacific Northwest drought catches industry by surprise

**SEATTLE, Wash.**—One of the most severe droughts in Pacific Northwest history is drying up the green industry.

Suffering the most are firms directly involved in new lawn and/or landscape installations, sod farms and nurseries—particularly those serving the greater Seattle market.

“There’s no question we’re being treated unfairly. We’re being targeted because we’re so visible,” says Mike Bushmaker of The Highridge Corp., a landscape contractor here.

Green industry businesses absorbed the first broadside in April and May (the height of landscape selling season) when Seattle and surrounding communities urged homeowners not to install (or have installed) new lawns or landscapes. Nurseries; landscape designers, contractors and installers; sod growers; hydroseeders—all saw business fall or not materialize.

In spite of a week of unusually wet weather in early July, the drought dug in as the summer progressed. This past winter there was precious little snow to refill Cascade Mountain streams which recharge reservoirs.

No one can predict when the drought will ease. Even when it does, this summer’s shortage points out the inadequacy of a water delivery system that hasn’t had a substantial enlargement since 1968.

**You’re under arrest!**—Seattle and the 28 suburbs served by the Seattle Water Department (1.2 million people) moved first to drastically reduce outdoor water use, including passing lawn watering bans monitored by *water police*. Those found watering their lawns face fines of \$100 to \$500.

Shrubs and flowers can still be watered with hoses with shutoff nozzles, or with irrigation systems if they’re separate from turfed areas.

“In the long run these types of restrictions never work,” says Bushmaker, who also chairs the newly formed Washington Coalition for Sensible Water Management (WCSWM). At least 10 allied green industry groups lend support to WCSWM.

(WCSWM says there are more than 3,000 landscaping, nursery and related businesses, employing about 25,000 workers in and around Seattle.)

Although WCSWM representatives met with city officials and pleaded the environmental implications of the watering ban and its economic harm to green industry businesses, water officials wouldn’t compromise.

**Drought a wake-up call**—Rod Bailey, Evergreen Services Corp., says periodic rainfall so far this summer has been enough to keep most Seattle-area lawns alive, and maintenance/mowing firms working although at a reduced schedule.

Even so, the outdoor watering restrictions are causing landscape firms to alter their services. “We’re standing on our heads doing manual watering of trees and shrubs,” he says.

“Many plants have become turf-water dependent. They started into wilt as soon as the lawn’s turf turned brown.”

Bailey says the drought is a wake-up call to green industry professionals in the Pacific Northwest. It’s telling them that they need a stronger public education effort, and have to be a part of the water-use decision-making process.

Seattle’s water woes won’t be solved until its system is upgraded, he explains. The burgeoning King County area has outgrown its water supply system, and the green industry is paying the price.

—Ron Hall