

Broadleaf weed control is most effective when used in the fall, as late as December first in northern Indiana. Easily-controlled weeds, such as dandelion and buckhorn, respond to lower application rates. On tough weeds, multiple application often can be avoided. Tender growth quickly absorbs the herbicide and actively growing roots distribute it more effectively.

On multi-purpose fields, broadleaf weeds are spot-treated as necessary in the spring. If weeds aren't treated prior to their prime blooming period, frequent mowing may keep them in check until fall treatment.

No. 5: mow—The practice and intramural fields are mowed primarily with a rotary mower because it's faster. If the blades are kept sharp, the rotary mower delivers a smooth, decent cut. There's no time—or need—to pick up clippings unless weather-interrupted mowing produces excessive amounts.

No. 6: irrigate—All Notre Dame fields have automatic irrigation systems. Even on low-budget facilities, irrigation systems pay for themselves with the flexibility they provide in maintenance procedures.

—Dale Getz is athletic facilities manager for the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind. He's an active member of the national Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) and is college/university director for the Midwest Chapter of the STMA.

Market your advantages

■ Competing against the multi-million-dollar advertising budgets of larger companies can be near impossible. But small businesses have two marketing advantages, according to the National Association for the Self-Employed:

1) You can speak directly to your audience in their language. Your advertising can focus on local concerns and answer local needs. Larger companies must focus on mass appeal.

2) Because small businesses concentrate on a specific local or vertical group, they can better focus their advertising and public relations campaigns.

Unlike large corporations, small businesses can hand deliver flyers. Spot advertising in weekly shoppers is inexpensive and very local in scope.

Hosting a special event creates goodwill and promotes your sales. Large companies do special events for name recognition, which does not directly affect sales.

For more information, phone (800) 232-6273.

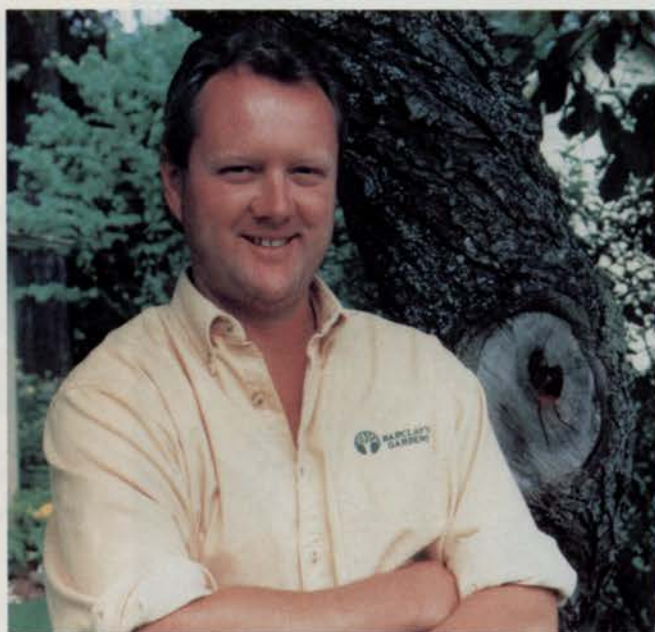
The key to quality: 'a few good people' with varied tasks

■ A quality company must have quality employs, insists Barclay Bullock of Portland, Ore.

"If we pay a higher wage and compensation package, we'll attract people that are more dedicated to the customer," says Bullock. "The customer gets better service

had the work but we just lost efficiency."

The addition of a new construction manager to oversee the company's six crews, however, and an increasing management role for partner Jodi Nordstrom is launching the company to the next level, he believes.



Barclay Bullock building his Portland, Ore., company "one residential customer at a time."

and the landscape company succeeds. That's why we pay a higher wage than the industry average, and we provide benefits like medical, dental and vacation time."

Now, seven years after founding his landscape company, known as Barclay's Gardens Inc., Bullock is even more firmly convinced that solid employees drive exceptional customer service.

That's because Barclay's Gardens, with about 30 full-time employees, has emerged as a residential landscape leader in Portland, and should approach and, perhaps exceed, \$1.5 million in sales in 1994—70% build/install, 30% maintenance.

"Last year was a tough year," admits Barclay from behind the desk in the tiny frame office building (smaller than most house trailers). "I think growing pains finally hit us. We didn't have the people in place and trained for our growth. We

"We're getting to the point where we do our own brick work, where we do our own water features. We don't do a lot of carpentry yet, but we're starting to do more of it. I think the employees enjoy doing different things," he explains.

"Actually, a landscaper is a plumber. He's an irrigation specialist. He's an electrician because we put in night lighting," continues Bullock. "He's a grader. He needs to know carpentry, stone work, and that's in addition to putting in plants. This is one of

the most technically challenging industries in the United States.

Certainly, there's a market for quality landscaping in Portland, says Barclay. After all, the city's nickname is "The Rose City."

"People take a lot of pride in their landscapes here," says Barclay. "They will pay for quality work. If you can combine that with a reputation for service, and deliver what you say you can, you can write your own ticket."

Barclay began his landscape company on just that premise seven years ago. He also relied on the customer-driven, day-to-day service skills he practiced as a former ChemLawn technician and manager in Portland, Seattle and, finally, Long Beach. In fact, it was his six-month sojourn in Long Beach that chased him from lawn care and into his own enterprise back in Portland.

"I was used to residential service because of ChemLawn. Actually, I love working with homeowners and residential work has provided us with a nice base.

"We do very little commercial," explains Barclay. "And, even though we've built this business pretty quickly, it's built on small but solid building blocks. We're not going to lose one client tomorrow and hurt our business."



Ken Meyer of Barclay's Gardens prepares residential property for a new lawn.



Portland's Waterfront Park gets facelift from one of six Barclay's Garden crews.

But keeping every client satisfied, impossible as it seems, is crucial to Barclay's Gardens which relies on referrals and word of mouth.

"Our marketing is our image—clean trucks, uniformed employees, how we take care of each customer, our response time, our follow up," adds Barclay. "The other strength I think we have is our relationship with landscape architects. Often they ask us to bid their work. They're looking for someone who's competent, who will put in their design as they designed it, and follow up

and take care of their customers."

Barclay finds himself delegating more and more day-to-day chores—"I don't need to decide whether we need a Toro or a Honda mower. The crews can decide that—as he builds relationships through the Oregon Landscape Contractors Association and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America.

"I never forget that this company is the work of a lot of good people's efforts. I might be leading it, but I can never do it by myself."

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irrigation services to offer your clients

by Paul Poszluzny

Help customers conserve water and have attractive lawns and landscapes with irrigation system advice and service.

■ The first challenge for the landscape pro is to convince that customer to get a quali-

ty system initially, a system that will function properly for years.

Residential clients, particularly, will appreciate this. Their appreciation will grow year after year as you help to keep the system operating efficiently and effectively.

Here are five irrigation services to provide to these customers:

1) Timer control adjustment. Ideally, watering should take place between 2 a.m. and 7 p.m. Evaporation is greatest while watering during midday.

Watering in late afternoon or early evening creates conditions that increase

the likelihood of lawn diseases.

2) Sprinkler head adjustment. Dowsing driveways and sidewalks wastes water. Sometimes it's also a safety hazard.

3) Line and sprinkler head repair. Some of the factors leading to line and sprinkler damage—freezes, plows, improper winter maintenance.

4) Rain sensor recalibration. Rain sensors, an excellent idea for all systems, guarantees that the system doesn't duplicate nature's work, nor creates extra expense or problems by overwatering.

5) Winter maintenance. Blow out the system to remove 75 percent of the water and shut down the clock to avoid accidental damage during the winter.

If you follow these procedures year after year, your client's irrigation system should provide many years of reliable service and beautiful grounds.

—Paul Poszluzny is operations administrator for Coronis Landscaping, a Nashua, N.H.-based full service landscaping and landscape design firm.