

"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.