

U SAID IT!

I remember when you could service the heck out of the customer, replace dead plants, take him to a ballgame, send his wife flowers for her birthday and still achieve 10-12 percent net profit. Those were the days.

Then came the '90s. Reputation, quality and service don't mean much more any more.

Tommy Aiello
*Master Gardeners Nursery
Delray Beach, Fla.*

The industry had better wake up and acknowledge the fact that 90% of the population of the U.S. does not play golf, and that golf is perceived as an elitist, non-essential, polluting, resource-wasting despoiler of the environment by a large percentage of non-golfers.

Vice President Al Gore and EPA Director Carol Browner are still lacing up their boots. I fear a heavy footprint will yet be tread upon the golf industry by these two before they leave office.

Mark Jarrell
*Palm Beach National C.C.
Lake Worth, Fla.*

I still love to watch seeds sprout and cuttings root. I wouldn't swap this for the world. I would, however, trade it for a cashier's check with lots of zeroes.

Denise Smith
*GardenSmith
Jefferson, Ga.*

Every ladder has a bottom rung. Shouldn't we as the professionals be more worried about educating [beginners] on the right way? I don't believe the ones who stick it out long enough to get up the ladder will forget those who slighted them on that long, hard climb.

Tammy Clayton
*Clayton Landscaping & Nursery
Detroit, Mich.*

One of the challenges that superintendents in the U.S. face is that they're constantly striving to be the best. I think our courses are the best in the world: you get the fairest lie, year in and year out, on some of the higher maintained courses. America was built on the challenge of people doing better, and there being incentives for doing just that. Superintendents need to look at it from that perspective.

Brad Kocher
*Pinehurst Country Club
Pinehurst, S.C.*

My cardinal rule of marketing: if you spend your time with a client, charge a fee. You don't need to act desperate for money, but charge for every step.

Joel Lerner
*Lerner Environmental Design
Chevy Chase, Md.*

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