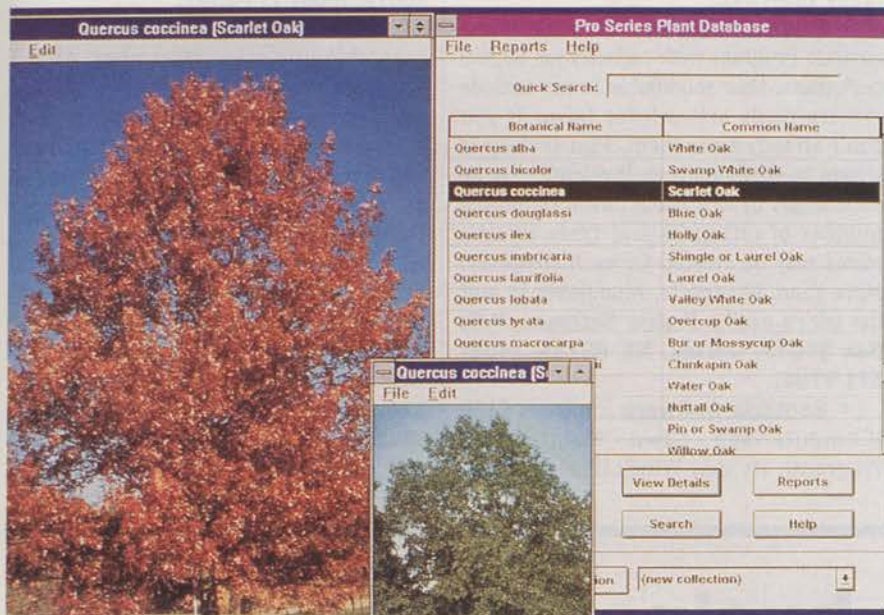


# Computer software to help you stay abreast of the times



Green Thumb Software Pro Plant Database has cultural information to help the landscaper and homeowner envision more than 2,000 plants.

by Ron Hall,  
Senior Editor

■ The newest computer software products directed at lawn and landscape pros are getting easier-to-use, more helpful, and more colorful. The most eye-catching are the graphics programs for landscape or irrigation design. But there are others that deal strictly with lawn/landscape business management.

Here are some of the newest software offerings, updates or news, coming across our desks:

- **Acacia Software**, a company that produces imaginative landscape design items, is gathering subscribers for its *Landscape Computer News*. The Spring 1995 issue had 12 pages, 10 of them filled with good stuff. You don't have to be a computer whiz to appreciate the information. Gerry Kiffe, the editor, describes the *News* "as a forum for ideas promoting the thoughtful use of computers in the landscape trade." Four issues a year cost \$30 plus s/h. **Acacia Software, 2899 Agoura Road, Suite 652, Westlake Village, CA**

91361. (805) 499-9689.

- **Books That Work's 3D Landscape** is low-cost software aimed at the do-it-yourselfer, but some landscape pros start with something like this, get excited about what design software can do, then move on to more powerful and versatile tools. At just \$49.95, the price is right. Also offered: *Garden Encyclopedia* and *3D Deck*. In fact, Books that Work has a nice section of home project software. **Books That Work, Customer Service Dept., P.O. Box 3201, Salinas, CA 93912-9869. (800) 724-8454 ext. 128.**

- **Creative Custom Software's Lawn Manager** program is made up of eight integrated programs: accounts receivable, maintenance billing, job cost tracking, chemical tracking, vehicle maintenance, accounts payable, payroll system and proposals. Recommended for 386/486 computer, 80+MB hard disk, 1 MB RAM and a VGA graphics monitor. One year free telephone support. Program comes "network ready" and can be modified upon request. **Creative Custom Software, 336-C Rockport Road, Port Murray, NJ 07865.**

(908) 689-5878.

- **Design Imaging Group (DIG)** offers a new CD-ROM disc containing more than 1,800 database items including trees, shrubs, and groundcovers from all zones; pools and spas; and a complete catalog of hardscape items including gazebos, arbors, and brick, stone and marble in several different textures and patterns. **DIG, 32107 West Lindero Canyon Road, Suite 108, Westlake Village, CA 91361. (818) 706-8786 (Calif.) or (201) 770-9212 (N.J.).**

- **Green Thumb Software's Pro Series Database** for CD ROM contains cultural information on more than 2,000 plants. Green Thumb says the program is a visualization tool for garden centers, landscape designers, and others who reference print-

*continued on page 10L*

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**COMPUTERS** from page 5L

ed plant materials regularly. It is Microsoft Windows compatible. Product shipments began in April. It can be used stand-alone (IBM-compatible, 386SX minimum computer with Windows 3.1, 4 MB of RAM, CD ROM drive, VGA graphics, mouse recommended). Or it can be integrated with GT's LandDesignerPro and IrrigatorJetPro. **Green Thumb, 75 Manhattan Drive, Suite 100, Boulder, CO 80303. (800) 336-3127.**

• **Lafayette Landscape Designs.** Ric and Rhonda Jones updated their LLDesigns imaging/rendering graphics software with a new paint driver, NeoPaint v3.1B. The IBM-compatible software offers 629 cultivars (in 256 colors) depicted to scale. It can be easily manipulated, using NeoPaint, to produce realistic elevation views. The perennials, annuals, bulbs, trees and shrubs are drawn as flowering and non-flowering to allow the designer to show the client a month-by-month progression of bloom in a plan. Faithfully

drawn landscape graphics. Complete packages, including a full legal copy of NeoPaint and the 629 Zone 5 cultivars, retails for \$350. Demo disk available. Smaller, individual packages for perennials, woody plants and annuals also available. **Lafayette Landscape Designs, 6323 Lafayette Road, Medina, OH 44256. (216) 725-7442.**

• **Prairie Software.** Grounds Maintenance Program with capacity for 99,999 customers. User modifiable forms include camera-ready artwork for forms if you don't already have them. Past history is always available on line. Invoicing may be done singly or in a batch mode. Unlimited number of estimates and types of estimates may be created for each customer. More than 30 reports, modifiable to suit the user's needs. **Prairie Software, P.O. Box 34645, Omaha, NE 68134. (402) 571-9786.**

• **Sensible Software** improves CLIP (Computerized Lawn Maintenance Program). Its new WinCLIP release is a

complete Microsoft Windows compatible program that includes job costing, work projections, estimate management, equipment management and other features. Sensible Software's CLIP has been around since 1988 and has garnered a strong following. **Sensible Software, 2 Professional Drive, Suite 246, Gaithersburg, MD 20879. (800) 774-2547.**

• **TKO Software's** RainCAD 3.0 has been shipping since December. All 1.1 users can upgrade for only \$250, and 2.0 users can upgrade for \$20 to cover printing of a new users manual. Also IRRICALC-Pro and EZ, two Windows programs, are now available. A water cost database allows for price estimating by gallons, cubic feet, or acre feet for each month of the year. Xeri-Calc 1.0 for low-volume irrigation is another recently developed Windows program. **TKI Software, 800 West Sam Houston Parkway South, Suite 220, Houston, TX 77042. (800) 348-3248.**

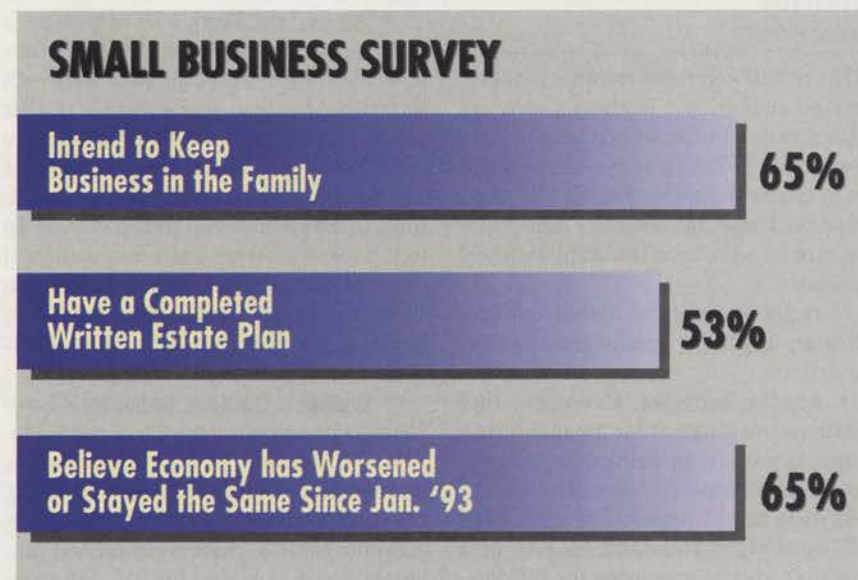
## More family business owners are contemplating selling out

**Economic conditions and new income tax and estate tax laws may be the reason.**

■ Even though it's a time of economic growth, 65 percent of family business owners believe that the national economy has gotten worse or merely state the same since Bill Clinton became President, according to a survey by Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance. Only 32 percent feel it has improved.

Possibly because of this perception—and others—fewer family business owners are passing their ownership to close relatives, the survey notes. Last year, 65 percent said they intended to keep the business in the family, but this year only 57 percent of the 1,002 respondents said the same.

"It could be that people are taking a look at passing their businesses on at the same time they are starting to deal with



changes in the income tax and estate tax laws," says Dr. Bonnie Brown, director of the Institute of Family Business at Baylor University. "That combination may be giving them reason to think that they may be better off to sell."

Fifty-three percent of the survey participants think business conditions have gotten worse for family businesses, while only 11 percent say they have improved.

"There was clear disapproval of the Clinton Administration," says Dr. Craig