

[LAWN/LANDSCAPE]

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Not all add-on services make sense

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'Starting over' in lawn/landscape

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Tapping the renovation market

'Spring' now—to avoid falling this fall

The inviting aroma of barbeque and the sounds of down-home country music greeted customers and the curious to Allentuck Nursery & Landscape in Potomoc, Md.

Bruce Allentuck's annual April shindig at his full-service operation just outside Washington, D.C., took on the air of a rain dance, except that the object of everyone's prayers, including Bruce's, was spring's arrival.

Rows of ornamentals in the nursery teased eager gardeners as Allentuck wished for a gradual build-up of warmth, sunshine and showers.

Blessed, blessed news.

Spring did arrive. It was a month late for us in the East, but who was counting?

The new season brings renewed optimism, and not a moment too soon, considering 1996's cold, stumbling start.

Gene D. Pool in northwestern Ohio told us in mid-spring that his Emerald Green Lawn Care production was 7 to 10 days behind schedule. Bob Andrews of The Greenskeeper in Indianapolis said the same. So did Don Tannahill of Tridon Lawn Services near Kansas City.

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Given a favorable stretch of weather in May, lawn/landscape pros always feel they can catch up their production—if they haven't already.

"But please, Mother Nature, don't make it as rough on us this season as last," they're thinking—even if they're not saying it. "At least give us more time at the end of the year."

Winter's bite this past November took a chunk out of the lawn/landscape industry's back pocket—the one holding the wallet.

The work was there, but cold and snow, par-

ticularly in the East, shooed green industry crews off of client properties weeks too early.

Enjoying a string of relatively mild winters, maybe we got complacent. It really didn't matter, though. There was nothing we could do.

"Sometimes you just have to stand there like a jackass in a hail storm and take it," says author/philosopher Robert Fulgham.

Even so, leaving money on the table always hurts.

Service work not completed by season's end means one thing: lost revenue. It can't be recovered. Production done in the few final weeks of any year can, in a very real sense, mean the difference between "making it" or "just making it."

That's why we start service as early as possible each spring, and why we put in such long hours through early summer. **LM**

Questions, comments? Call Ron at (216) 891-2636, fax at (216) 891-2683 or e-mail at 75553.502@compuserve.com.

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