

The 'Weeder' brought industry builders back to life



Ron Hall
RON HALL
 Managing Editor

“We have talked to some operators who, far from expanding, are contracting the size and scope of their businesses, and others who seem on the verge of giving up.

“Their reasons are usually the same regardless of their field: stiff competition and a shortage of trained labor. The squeeze is on and most informed prognosticators say it will get worse before it gets better.”

The above comments aren't mine.

They belong to the late James Nelson. He wrote them in 1966 during his stint as editor of WEEDS, TREES & TURF which, of course, eventually became LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT.

Nelson's editorial comments still ring true to many of us. Competition has hardly decreased in the intervening 31 years. The shortage of trained labor may, in fact, be worse today than it was then.

In 1970 Gene Ingelsbe was WT&T's editor. In an editorial he predicted more attacks on chemicals and increased legislation surrounding their use. In the 27 years since then, nobody in the lawn/landscape industry has suggested otherwise, although criticism aimed at pesticide-users has quieted the past several years.

I came across these observations while skipping through about 100 back issues of WEEDS, TREES & TURF. I was a bit surprised to learn how many of yesterday's challenges remain with us today. Who can say if they'll be with us 35 years from today.

The back issues of WT&T (some of us affectionately referred to the magazine as “The Weeder”) made fascinating reading partly because of my involvement with it and its successor LM—13 years, with a break in the middle of that stretch.

[LANDSCAPE/GROUNDS]

- PAGE 2 L ▶
Quality: the client makes the call
- PAGE 12 L ▶
We reported on birth of lawn care
- PAGE 15 L ▶
PGMS knows its mission
- PAGE 16 L ▶
PLCAA met a growing need
- PAGE 19 L ▶
ALCA changed with industry
- PAGE 22 L ▶
STMA still gaining yardage

As I began reading the back issues of WT&T, I spent more and more time lingering over the photographs of the people that helped build today's lawn/landscape industry. It brought yesterday's industry leaders back to life. Their ideas. Their plans. Their dreams.

Some I have met and I know. Many, many others I had never met. Each offered something to the industry. Amazingly, most contributed for no personal gain whatsoever. They shared their experiences and knowledge on the pages of WT&T to friends and competitors alike.

Thirty five years from now, when LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT (in whatever name or form it takes then) celebrates 70 years in the green industry, some of you may still be in the industry. Most of you likely won't. Hopefully somebody will take the time to remember you and your contributions.