

## [TIMELINE]

# 1981:

National Park Service suspends use of herbicide 2,4-D in its 325 parks and recreation areas. Purdue's Dr.

Bill Daniel (shown) leads athletic

turf professionals through organizational meeting of Sports Turf Managers Association.

Wisconsin Turfgrass Association forms.



Oscar T. Jacobsen dies, co-founder of Jacobsen Manufacturing Co. in Racine, WI, in 1920. Also credited with developing the first power greens mower in 1924.

# 1983:

Turf-Seed, Inc. and Pure Seed Testing, Inc. host their first "Field Day" in Oregon's Willamette Valley, home of turfgrass seed production. Event sets a precedent for other seed companies to emulate.

# 1988:

Diazinon banned from use on golf courses and sod farms. Golf course management industry worth an estimated \$3.54 billion.

# More variety in tree care

*Tree care is evolving into a multi-faceted industry with increased opportunities in both the commercial and residential markets.*

**A**s times change, businesses change. The tree care business is no exception. From the 1960s when brush chippers were a luxury to the 1990s where an emphasis on technical know-how has leveled the playing field, tree care has evolved into a multi-faceted industry.

### Gradual growth

In the 1960s, residential tree care was a relatively easy sell for the upscale market. Most companies could maintain a solid base of regular customers and benefited greatly from high retention rates. Regular pruning, spraying, fertilizing and removal provided enough work for the burgeoning market. And the growing popularity of moving large trees to a landscape for immediate effect—as opposed to planting saplings—kept crews occupied during the off season.

Growth was gradual. Over the years, demographic changes have increased residential tree care opportunities. By adding services like landscape development and lawn care, many tree care companies have taken advantage of the growing number of families with two working parents, more disposable income and a desire for a better looking landscape.

**In the '60s, dry tree food was the product of choice.**

### Commercial market expands

This desire for a more appealing landscape also has af-

fected the commercial market. In the 1960s, tree care companies mostly limited commercial work to basic services. Over time, as commercial properties recognized the importance of a well-maintained



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landscape for attracting business and high quality employees, many tree care companies have widened their service offerings to earn a position in this lucrative market.

By adding mowing, floral and shrub maintenance, snow plowing and other services, tree care companies have more to offer a market that is consolidating.

Technology has gradually improved to make tree care more efficient. Power saws, once weighing 100 pounds and requiring two workers, have lightened to 15 pounds. Reduced noise levels make them safer, and increased reliability adds practicality.

Brush chippers have become a necessity. Cranes make large tree moving and tree removal much more efficient.

**New fertilizer technology**

In the 1960s, crew members fertilized trees with dry tree food. They drilled holes in the ground and poured in the material. Progressive advancements in research and development have improved fertilization techniques and today, subsurface liquid injection is a common practice for tree fertilization. Improved materials make plants much less susceptible to leaching, providing longer lasting benefits.

While only a select few tree care companies offered a structured technical training program in the 1960s, time has evened the platform. Technical know-how and work quality have steadily improved across the board since the '60s to the point where competition once hardly a factor, has increased dramatically.

**Safety always vital**

Safe work practices, always an important part of the business, have evolved from a common sense approach to a sophisticated format. Departments dedicated to safety, instructional videos, weekly meetings and improved gear have helped improve employee well-being. The industry remains dedicated to an accident-free

workplace, both for employee well-being as well as cost-of-claims control.

As the industry moves forward, training and development and increased investment are key elements for growth.

Customers desire and respect high quality service and reliability. Companies with knowledgeable employees and superior customer relations can differentiate themselves from competitors.

—The Davey Tree Expert Company

**Davey: service for the century**

Jack Joy recently retired as chairman of the board of The Davey Tree Expert Company. Joy began his career in the tree care industry in 1946 as a field employee for the company.

In a 1969 interview with *Weeds, Trees & Turf*, Joy, then vp in charge of sales, noted that "practically, every man working in the field has gone through our school, or else works directly under a man who has."

He described "a Davey man" as being a consulting arborist first and salesman second. This focus on technical expertise has served the company well.

The Davey Tree Expert Company, Kent, Ohio, (incorporated by John Davey in 1909) approaches 2000 committed to providing the most scientifically based, safest and practical tree care services possible. For the past several decades Davey has also provided extensive lawn/landscape services (along with commercial and residential tree services) in selected markets nationwide.

**1990:**

April is first national "Lawn Care Month." *Lawn Care Industry* magazine survey finds industry serves 10 million. PLCAA "Grasscycling" campaign picks up on Dr. Bill Knoop's 10-year old "Don't Bag It" program for recycling lawn waste. ServiceMaster joins with Waste Management, Inc. Ann McClure named PLCAA executive director. Turfgrass expert Dr. Fred Grau dies in December at age 88. ServiceMaster buys Waste Management's TruGreen.



**1991:**

PLCAA representatives appear before a Senate panel investigating pesticide notification regulations. Allen James named executive director of RISE, a new organization. U.S. Supreme Court rules that local governments can enact pesticide laws in case *Mortior vs. Town of Casey, WI.*

**1992:**

ServiceMaster acquires ChemLawn and merges it with TruGreen.