

Dealer service counts with

Emerald Award winners

Quality, price and dealer assistance mean much to these LM readers who entered our annual drawing.

by JAMIE PETERS

The winners of Landscape Management's third annual Emerald Awards contest are hard-working professionals who insist on testing equipment before they buy and want good quality at a fair price.

George Woodhull, owner of Woodhull Landscaping, Riverhead, NY, claims the top prize of \$500 in LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT's Emerald Awards sweepstakes.

Woodhull "jumped right into it," when he entered the industry to Woodhull Landscaping nearly 20 years ago.

When purchasing his equipment, Woodhull says dealership proximity is a prime factor in the rural area where he works.

"I try to keep everything close and deal with my hometown dealers," says Woodhull.

Woodhull, tests everything on the job to insure that it meets his standards.

Lesco and Bobcat products are Woodhull's top choice because the name promises quality and reasonable prices, he says. He has six Bobcats and just bought a 52-inch Lesco mower. The Bobcat maneuverability and Kawasaki engines are reasons why he likes that brand.

"I'm tempted to go to a ZTR," says Woodhull. "They're good at catching clippings and other debris. I'm looking at a

Walker. From what I hear, that's pretty much the way to go. I have few properties that are big enough to warrant that."

The \$200 second prize winner, Bruce Williams, is well-known golf course superintendent who two years ago moved from Chicago's Bob O' Link to the Los Angeles Country Club. He too relies on trusting relationships with local dealerships when buying top products.

"While manufacturers are important in what they do, the local distributor can make a huge difference in the selection of your purchases," he says.

Williams, who has worked at LACC for nearly two years after 21 years as golf course superintendent at Bob O'Link Golf Club near Chicago, is meticulous in testing products.

"In almost all cases, we request a demonstrator," he says. "And we try to put the demonstrator through a number of different conditions. For example, a mower—mowing under wet conditions; mowing under dry conditions."

Toro riding mowers and a recently purchased GMC pick-up truck support Williams' belief that equipment effectiveness takes precedence over efficiency.

"We're not always trying to do things the quickest way—we're trying to do things the most effective way," he says.

Third-place winner of \$200 Chris DeWitt operates Signature Lawn & Landscaping, Inc., in Easley, SC.

DeWitt, who was in computer processing before he started his landscaping busi-



Woodhull: wants dealers close.

Manufacturers tell why products are winners

LM spoke with representatives from some of the companies....

"John Deere has long stood for quality and quality manufacturing," says

Mike Johanning, product manager for John Deere compact utility tractors, "and our customers know that if they buy a John Deere compact utility tractor, or any other John Deere product for that matter, they're going to have the best product on the market.

"Our new 4000 series CUTs are a prime example of how this works. Due to customer feedback, we revamped our 55 and 70 utility tractor, and the response has been phenomenal."

"For years **Echo** has delivered the top-selling, commercial gas-powered blowers for professional results," reports the Echo company. Echo blowers are easy to start and easy to use and deliver the power and dependability needed to meet today's landscaping challenges. The revolutionary PB-46LN Quiet 1 operates at a low noise level with outstanding performance and emits only 65 dBa.

"Echo trimmers feature a vibration-reduction system, ergonomic controls and a quick start engine to enhance worker productivity. The SB Series trimmers feature a split-boom, which allows the trimmer to be easily converted into other products."

Neal Cleveland, Bayer Corporation's turf and ornamental market manager, says Merit has done what it was meant to do, which makes it a favorite among Emerald Award contestants.

"Now that we're in the fifth year of having product available to market-place," Cleveland says, "Merit has shown itself to be a proven performer in turf-grass and ornamental insect control.

"Merit's positioning as a broad spectrum grub control product, with a wide

EMERALD AWARDS, 1998

The following standings represent percent of total contest entrants who told us the winning product was their favorite.

RIDING MOWERS

Toro: 23.2%
John Deere: 12.6%
Walker: 10%

WALK-BEHIND MOWERS

Toro: 25%
Scag: 9%
Deere: 7%

TURF FERTILIZER

Lesco: 19%
Scotts: 18%
Par-Ex: 6%

PREEMERGENT HERBICIDE

Surflan: 13.2%
Barricade: 12%
Dimension: 10%

POSTEMERGENT HERBICIDE

Roundup: 21%
Trimec: 17%
Lesco 3-Way: 7%

TURF INSECTICIDE

Merit: 20%
Dursban: 15%
Daconil: 13%

PLANT GROWTH REGULATOR

Primo: 19.4%
Embark: 6%
Scott's: 2%

COMPACT TRACTOR

Kubota: 20.3%
Ford New Holland: 12%
Briggs/Stratton: 1%

TURF AERATOR

Ryan: 37%
Deere: 4%
Lesco: 3%

PICK UP TRUCK

Ford: 35%
Chevy: 27%
Dodge: 11%

LEAF BLOWER

Echo: 30.5%
Stihl: 25%
Lesco: 6.5%

LINE TRIMMER

Echo: 44%
Stihl: 16%
Shindaiwa: 15%

CHAIN SAW

Stihl: 81%
Husqvarna: 10%
Echo: 9.5%

KY BLUEGRASS

Baron/Midnight: 4.5%
Scotts: 3.5%

PERENNIAL RYEGRASS

Palmer: 5.4%
Manhattan II: 4.5%
Ph.D. 2.3%

TALL FESCUE

Rebel II: 5.5%
Lesco: 2.8%
Bonanza II: 2.2%

TURFGRASS MIX OR BLEND

Lesco: 11.6%
Scotts: 4.5%

ness nearly four years ago, considers speed, reliability and reputation as important factors when purchasing equipment.

A John Deere 425 riding mower is Signature L&L's most efficient piece of equipment, DeWitt says.

"The productivity is not necessarily the width of the cut, it's the speed of the mower," he says.

window of application, one which will satisfy customers, minimize callbacks and eliminate [insect control] worries, makes it a product of choice," says Cleveland. "It's an easy decision to keep with it."

Merit is used to control all white grubs and surface feeders, including cutworms, mole crickets, billbugs, hyperiodes weevil, and a number of ornamental pests, including hemlock woolly adelgid, leaf miners, lace bugs, beetles and scale. Cleveland tells LM that birch borers may be added to the label.

The Toro Co. placed high in the cate-

After a bad experience with a faulty piece of equipment, DeWitt now carefully tests products before purchase.

"When we first started out... we got burned with a piece of equipment that turned out to be a real dog, so now we'll insist on a day or two of trial." **LM**

gory of riding mowers, garnering 42% of the votes. The company's line of Greensmaster riding mowers are "designed to exceed the high demands of today's greens care," reports the company. The mowers are designed to provide the highest in quality of cut, and enhance operator capabilities for the best performance. The Groundsmaster line handles extreme cutting conditions with unmatched productivity, reports Toro.

The Groundsmaster 580-D is a stalwart that cuts a 16-foot swath.

TM