

## Landcare USA, Brickman still buying

LandCare USA and The Brickman Group continue to acquire commercial landscape companies.

"We're on a path to become the leader in the commercial landscape and tree services business," Bill Murdy, chairman and CEO, told LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT. "We intend substantial more growth."

In August the Houston-based company announced that it had acquired:

**Clean Cut, Inc.**, Austin, TX, founded in 1985 by Dennis Dautel and Rex Gore;

**Landscape West, Inc.**, Anaheim, CA, founded by Barry L. Konier in 1962;

**Horticultural Industries, Inc.**, Sarasota, FL, founded by Donald and Bill Davoli in 1987;

**Gator & Gator Landscape Co.**, Longwood, FL, founded by Scott Annan and Chuck Richardson in 1983;

**Continental Landscape Management, Inc.**, Phoenix, AZ, founded by Aaron Eubank in 1985.

These additions, completed with a combination of stock (81 percent) and cash (19 percent), provide 83 percent maintenance and 17 percent installation services. Several other acquisitions will be announced in September.

"We have closed a couple of other companies, but we have not released those names," Murdy told LM. "They want to have a chance

to have their employees understand the whole thing."

Meanwhile, The Brickman Group Ltd., headquartered in Langhorne, PA, in July purchased **Allen Keesen Landscape, Inc.**, based in Denver.

"We're going to continue moving west," Scott Brickman, president and CEO, told LM. Brickman's goal is also to

be a national service provider.

Earlier this year Brickman acquired KT Enterprises, Chantilly, VA; Kopabianco Landscape, New Haven, CT; BMI, Indianapolis, and Cannon Landscape Services, in Maryland. Founded in 1939 as a landscape business for homeowners by Theodore W. Brickman, Sr., The Brickman

Group now has more than 60 locations, most of them east of the Mississippi.

"We're growing as we always have, primarily through internal growth," Scott Brickman said, adding that his organization is always looking for other companies to embrace "as long as they're good fits." □

## Leaf mulch not bad for turf

**WEST LAFAYETTE, IN** - The easiest way to dispose of leaves is to mulch them into the turf. Though this practice has been recommended for many years, there is little data on the long-term effects of tree leaf mulching into turf. Work at Purdue University and Michigan State University could change that.

"After four years, everything has been positive regarding mulching leaves into the turf," said Zac Reicher at the Midwest Turf Field Day. Reicher, an extension turfgrass specialist, was referring to a long-term study at Purdue focusing on multiple years of annual leaf mulching on turf performance.

Every October since 1994, Purdue investigators have collected maple tree leaves to apply to the turf. These leaves are run through a graden shredder and applied to a perennial ryegrass—about 4000 lbs./A in a single application and immediately mowed with a mulching mower. (A woodlot will drop about 3000 lbs./A/yr of tree litter.)

Since the researchers felt that the high carbon-to-nitrogen ratio in the tree leaves would eventually limit nitrogen in the stand they used three annual nitrogen rates. Beginning spring 1995, N rates used were 0.2 and 4 lbs. N/1000 ft<sup>2</sup>/yr. However, by summer 1996, the ryegrass receiving no additional nitrogen declined dramatically and so the annual N rates were adjusted to 2, 4 and 6 lbs. N/1000/ft<sup>2</sup>/yr.

Data collected includes monthly clipping weights, visual quality and color ratings, and annual evaluations of thatch, soil pH and soil nutrient concentrations.

"There has been no negative effects of mulching these leaves into the turf," said Reicher. "There is no disease effects, no weed pressure effects, no nutrient effects, and no effect on soil pH.

"We're not saying that everybody can mulch the leaves into the turf. But what we do recommend is that any place that you can, consider mulching the leaves." □



Dr. Zachary Reicher, turfgrass extension specialist, says leaf mulch won't harm turfgrass.