

You, the readers, chose some familiar products as your favorites in our 1999 Emerald Awards contest — Lesco, Kubota, Echo — as well as a newcomer, Walker Manufacturing. By REDMOND CAROLIPIO

**T**he 1999 Emerald Awards are the chance for you, the readers, to sound off about the products that you believe are the best in the green industry. You were encouraged to fill out entry forms, noting your favorite products in many categories, which included riding mowers, walk-behind mowers, turf fertilizers and turf insecticide. We then counted the votes and the product with the most votes ended up winning the award.

This year, many LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT readers named perennial favorites in categories such as compact tractors, turf aerators, leaf blowers and line trimmers.

#### **New king of the riding mower hill**

Unlike the past years, a new face emerged in the riding mower lineup. Walker managed to edge out Toro as the favorite among this year's voters.

Bob Walker, owner of Walker Manufacturing Company in Ft. Collins, CO, said he was very excited about winning the award for the first time. One of his more popular models is the MTGHS mower, a 20-hp unit with a 48-in. deck.

"It fits in nicely with the work contractors are doing," he says. "It has a nice balance in terms of size and capacity. The overall job time is favorable."

Dale Beard, owner of Botanica Services Inc. in Hagerstown, MD, says that he likes the "quality of the cut," which is why he selected Walker mowers. "They're also built like a tank."

The walk-behind mower category proved to be favorable for Toro in Bloomington, MN, a perennial winner in this particular category.

Brian Masterson, senior marketing manager for Toro's landscape contractor equipment division, says the reaction to winning the award is "positive," especially when the customers have input on their favorite products. Masterson mentioned some of the features that are unique to a Toro mid-size mower.

"There is the T-Bar single-control system, which offers speed and direction at the same time," he says.

# Your 1999

## Our Readers' Picks

### **RIDING MOWER**

*Walker Manufacturing Co.*



### **WALK-BEHIND MOWER**

*Toro*



### **LINE-TRIMMER**

*Echo SRM2601*

"There's also the operator presence switch, which disengages the blade without killing the engine."

Masterson also mentioned the super-flow system (where the cutting chambers cut and discharge grass separately, enabling each blade to work individually), as well as a floating deck, which pivots on four points and enables the mower to adjust to various types of terrain.

Judy Stoltenberg, landscape designer for Freelance Landscaping in East Moline, IL, says that easy maintenance was the first thing that she noticed about Toro walk-behind mowers, as well as their light weight and durability.

#### Lesco and Echo win big

Lesco, of Rocky River, OH, was no lightweight in this year's awards, receiving most of the readers' votes in four categories: turf fertilizer, pre-emergence herbicide, perennial ryegrass and turfgrass mix or blend.

Ken Sekley, vice president of marketing for Lesco, says that he's not really surprised

at the outcome, given Lesco's rapid growth. "We're pleased that Lesco's presence in the industry continues to grow," he says. "We realize that we're serving professionals, so the quality of our products is a key thing."

Another familiar name heads the leaf blower and line trimmer lists, as Echo managed to take home awards for the fourth consecutive year.

Robin Pendergrast, public relations consultant for Echo, says while Echo is pleased about winning the award, the results do not really surprise them.

"(The results) are indicative of the market dominance we have as a manufacturer," he says. "It's kind of an international phenomenon."

Pendergrast cited the PB-46LN "Quiet 1" blower, which produces a mere 65 decibels when at full throttle. Pendergrast touts it as "the quietest leaf blower ever made."

Budd Perlman, owner of Tex-Scape in Plano, TX, apparently speaks for other vot-

ers when he says that his landscape crew members prefer Echo leaf blowers because of their toughness.

"From a durability and maintenance standpoint, they are far superior to anything else we've used," he says.

Pendergrast also credits the evolution of the SRM-2601 line trimmer for its Emerald Award success this year.

"(The SRM-2601) has a great power-to-weight ratio," he explains. "It also doesn't weigh as much as all of the other competing products, which means longer use for the owners."

#### Chain saws that lead the pack

Stihl in Virginia Beach, VA, cut right through the competition by taking the biggest slice of the votes in the chainsaw category.

Jim Hampton, product manager for Stihl's chainsaws, seemed flattered to learn that Stihl was chosen by *LM's* readers.

"It's an honor to know that the readers recognize Stihl as a quality product with quality features," he says.

# Emerald Award winners



**LEAF BLOWER**  
Echo PB46LN



**PRE-EMERGENCE  
HERBICIDE** ▶

Lesco

**PERENNIAL  
RYEGRASS**

Lesco

**TURFGRASS MIX  
OR BLEND**

Lesco

◀ **TURF FERTILIZER**

Lesco



# 1999 Emerald Awards

Hampton says that one of Stihl's most popular models is the O29 chainsaw, which features a side access chain adjuster, and well as "ease of service."

One of Stihl's newest products, the O18C chainsaw, will feature a quick chain adjuster, or QCA, says Hampton. This will allow users to find the proper chain tension without the use of a tool.

Mike English, owner of Perfect Image Lawn Care in Danville, IA, listed some of the advantages he sees in a Stihl chainsaw.

"They're light, powerful and quiet," he says. "They're also the most comfortable to work with, and they have good resale value."

## Compact tractors for versatility

The compact tractor category remains unchanged from last year, as Torrance, CA-based Kubota managed to win again. Pat Carroll, national advertising and public relations manager for Kubota, says that the company is proud to have won the award.

"Kubota is committed to innovating quality products that are environmentally friendly and built to last," she says.

Tom Jones, budget director of Country-side Lawn and Landscape in Newark, DE,

can attest to the durability of a Kubota tractor.

"They're very reliable," he says. "We have one that we've used for 15 years that still runs as well as the day we got it."

## Favorite trucks and aerators

Pick-up trucks from Ford in Bloomfield, MI, picked up another award from landscape readers, and added to the collection.

John Zabel, president of Greenworks, Inc., Conway, AR., says that his Ford allows him more room to operate. "I've got a lot of stuff back there," he says. "The club cab doors open on both sides, which makes it more accessible."

Landscape managers again named the Ryan turf aerator from Textron in Racine, WI, as their favorite product, snagging an award once again this year. According to Peter Whurr, vice president of Textron turf care and specialty products, the results speak for themselves.

"It just goes to show you that the product the people have been voting for does the job," he says. "It shows that we listen to the customer."

Whurr also noted the longevity of a Ryan turf aerator as one of its advantages.

"The machine will just keep going and going," he says.

Marty LeBeau, a technician for Spring-Green Lawn and Tree Care in Bradley, IL., likes the way the Ryan aerator is designed.

"It's unique because the wheel is in the front and the aerator is in the back," he says. "It uses the weight of the whole machine to put more pressure in the ground. There's also a lever there to lift up the back wheels, so it's more maneuverable."

## Chemicals, PGRs & bluegrass

Moving from hard equipment to chemicals, Bayer's Merit insecticide came out on top in the turf insecticide category.

Neal Cleveland, turf and ornamental manager for Bayer in Kansas City, MO, sees the victory for the six-year-old insecticide as a confirmation of the landscape professionals' trust.

"I think that by choosing Merit for this honor two years in a row, our customers are communicating that they still trust its long-residual, broad-spectrum control," he says.

LeBeau says that Merit's long-lasting nature can eliminate some worries. "Since it's longer lasting, you don't have to worry

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## Our Readers' Picks

### CHAIN SAW

Stihl



### COMPACT TRACTOR

Kubota B2710HSD



### PICK-UP TRUCK ▲

Ford 1999 F-150

### TURF AERATOR

Ryan

### TURF INSECTICIDE

Merit (by Bayer)

### POST-EMERGENCE

Round-Up (by Monsanto)

# 1999 Emerald Awards

## Branch manager wins \$500 big ones

Congratulations to Daniel Wood, branch manager of the Orlando, FL, office of TruGreen-ChemLawn. He won the drawing for \$500 in our 1999 Emerald Awards contest where lawn/landscape/grounds professionals tell us about their favorite green industry products.

Wood, who started in the landscape business 17 years ago, submitted his entry while he was a grounds manager for Sea World in Orlando, and it took us a while to track him down to let him know of his good fortune. Upon receiving word that he'd won the dough, Wood remarked that he's known from his first days in the green industry that the landscape business was for him.

Wood's TG-CL branch numbers 120 employees, and he says one of his biggest challenges is showing the Orlando market that TG-CL does considerable work for commercial clients. "When people see the TruGreen name, they sometimes think that we're just residential," said Wood.

Our second place winner, Marc Clement, is the owner of Clement Landscaping, Georges Mills, NH. Marc has been in the landscaping business three years. His doubled in size last year, he pointed out. "I don't want to grow too big, too fast. I don't want to lose touch with my customers," he said. Clement Landscaping is about 70% maintenance/30% design, Marc added. He receives \$300 from LM.

Our third winner (\$200) is Marty LeBeau, Bourbonnais, IL, a lawn technician with the big lawn care company, Spring Green. Marty has been involved with landscaping for six years.

Look for LM's 2000 Emerald Awards contest entry forms in future issues of the magazine. Fill them out and tell us which products you like so that you can be in the running for some cool cash, compliments of *Landscape Management*.



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about the timing of your spray or precision," he says.

**Round-Up**, by Monsanto Co., St. Louis, MO, won in the post-emergence herbicide category.

"The great thing about Round-Up is that you can spray it all over ivy, and the ivy won't be affected," says Rich Buchanan, area manager of Contra Costa Landscape in Martinez, Ca.

The readers named **Daconil** as the turf fungicide of choice. Tony Rademaker, turf marketing manager for Zeneca Professional Products in Wilmington, DE, says that Daconil has been a leading product in the turf industry for more than 30 years.

"It has a broad spectrum, meaning that it handles many diseases," he says. "There also hasn't been a documented resistance to it in 30 years of service, and it is a very versatile and economical product."

**Primo** from Novartis in Greensboro, NC, dominated the plant growth regulator category.

The Kentucky Bluegrass category of seed was won by **Midnight** of Turf-Seed, Inc. in Hubbard, OR.

Tom Stanley, marketing manager for Turf-Seed, says that Midnight has been at the top since its arrival in the early 1980s. Midnight also has some unique features that set it apart from other bluegrass products.

"It has a very dark, green color," he says. "It's darker than anything else out there. It also ranked at the top in both the high and low maintenance NTEP trials, and it's a low-growing, dense variety, lending itself to sod production, golf fairways, home lawns and athletic turf."

"In the early years, the supply could not meet the demand," he continues. "But today, we have a lot of both blue-tag certified and gold-tag sod quality."

**Rebel II** from AgriBioTech/Lofts Seed Inc., Winston-Salem, NC, finished in first place in the turf-type tall fescue category.

LM

## Our Readers' Picks

### TURF FUNGICIDE

*Daconil (by Zeneca)*

### PLANT GROWTH REGULATOR

*Primo (by Novartis)*

### TURF TYPE TALL FESCUE

*Rebel II (ABT/Lofts)*

### KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS ►

*Midnight (Turf-Seed)*

DELALIO SOD FARMS

