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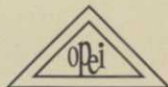
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Everyone thinks Alan Greenspan's job is so hard, but I don't think so. As chairman of the Federal Reserve, he is one of the most powerful people on the planet. Every time his limo glides up to Capitol Hill, the world's financial communities wait with bated breath and listen for his predictions. All he has to do is *mention* adding more money to the nation's money supply or say he's just *considering* a teeny jump in the Fed's interest rates to banks, and world's financial markets react (or overreact) instantly.

I had the pleasure of touring the Federal Reserve's Washington D.C. headquarters last year with my business school class. We sat through a dull lecture on the Fed's operation, then got to the meat of the tour — the Federal Reserve Board's meeting room. This place was cool. It *reeked* of money.

The large, elegant room has an impressive wooden oval table for about 20 people in the center, plus a gallery for spectators and the press. The walls are decorated with framed collections of United States paper money in editions dating back to the early 1900s, showing denominations as rare as \$10,000 bills.

The tour guides' favorite part is when they flip the switch at the door. This activates pop-up monitors in the table, projection screens and cameras from the ceiling and 20-foot-tall window screens that drop to shut out the light. I liked that show, but the part I loved best was the opportunity to sit in Mr. Greenspan's chair. In the economic world, this is like sitting on the emperor's throne. Each of us took a turn sitting in that chair and each hoped to get some monetary wisdom or even dumb luck from the experience.

The chair I sit in now is a lot different, yet my job is somewhat similar to Mr. Greenspan's. I'm

not sure if any of his vision filtered through to me, but we're doing our part to analyze the industry in this month's cover story — the State of the Industry report. Unlike Alan Greenspan, however, we don't have legions of economists to analyze our industry, forecast its ups or downs and make educated recommendations. When he goes to Capitol Hill, he relies on the work and brains of thousands of experts.

Our job at *Landscape Management* is different, because as our industry's largest firms and our competitors have found out, there are very little "hard data" available. This industry is so young that few government offices keep detailed information about it. Some numbers on the industry's size, revenue potential and buying power become established for lack of any others, then are endlessly repeated as "fact."

That isn't good enough for me. I'm no Alan Greenspan but I do see my role as offering you bona fide information, statistically valid data and educated projections that you can rely on. We've started this process at *LM* with our latest report and will be adding more of our own original research in the near future.

Take a look at this year's overview, which starts on page 23. It's based on our own research, as well as other recent industry figures we trust. We've even added a few projections of our own (which, of course, rely partly on Mr. Greenspan's moves).

Now that I think of it, maybe his job is really difficult. If he makes the wrong recommendation, millions will lose money and he is held responsible. That's one tough position! In our industry, success is defined more by how well you do, not how well we project. And so far, you're doing just fine. **LM**

Sitting in Alan Greenspan's chair



Sue Gibson

SUE GIBSON
Executive Editor



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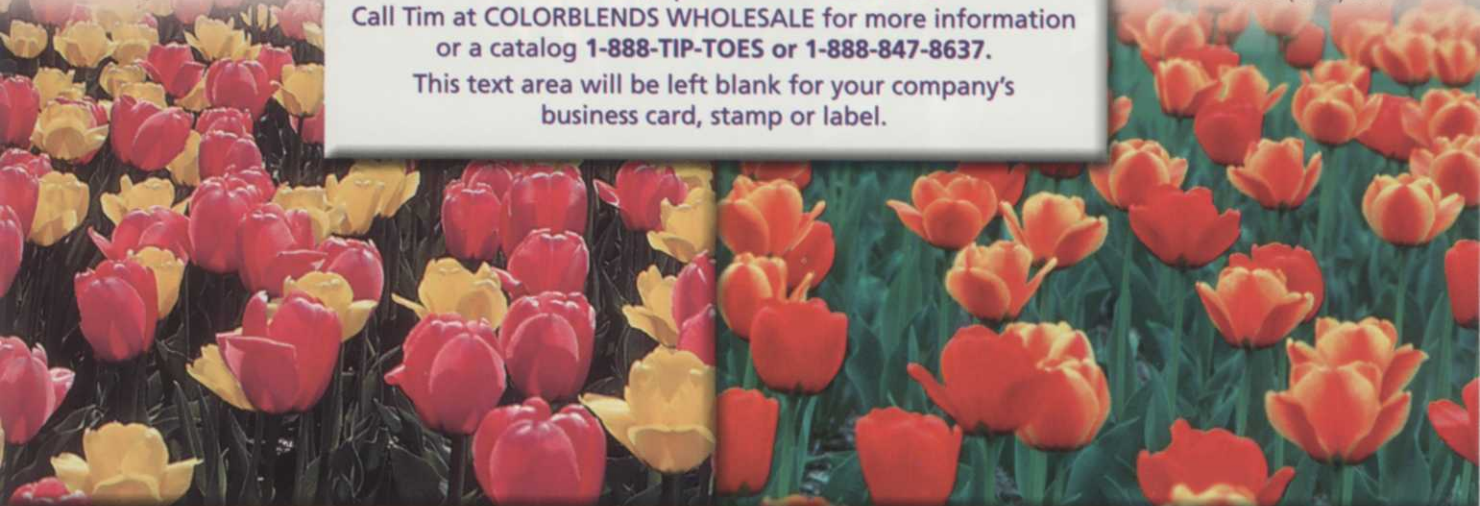
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Apricot Daffodil (Early) 14"



By any name TruGreen LandCare keeps growing

MEMPHIS, TN—For those of you who thought there's been a lull in acquisition activity, think again. TruGreen LandCare, formerly TruGreen Landscape, continues to snap up companies across the United States.

Chief Operating Officer Paul Anderegg, in a telephone news conference to announce the official name of TruGreen LandCare, said that the landscape giant would be closing at least 15 deals by mid-summer. TruGreen, whose parent company is ServiceMaster, jumped into the landscape maintenance/construction market less than two years ago, but already has 145 branch locations, a presence in 60% of major U.S. markets.

"We're looking to acquire business in our existing marketplaces," said Anderegg in the mid-June teleconference.

He added that by the start of the new year the company should be well on its way to establishing a national identity for the landscape company. The beginning of the new year will also see the company penetrate new landscape markets, he said.

Company spokesperson Judith Guido said that the name TruGreen LandCare was chosen after a survey of 600 customers and prospects, and several focus groups involving employees in Los Angeles and Orlando.

"TruGreen obviously has great name recognition both in residential and commercial markets," she said.

The company will be developing a logo, colors, uniforms and other distinctive identifiers within the next 30 to 60 days, Anderegg added.

We asked him to stay

MEMPHIS, TN— Bill Murdy, who emerged as a leading figure in the landscape industry in early 1998 with the formation of LandCare U.S.A., is apparently leaving it.

In response to a question during a teleconference in mid-June, TruGreen LandCare COO Paul Anderegg said that Murdy had decided to leave TruGreen sometime this summer. "He will not be with us long term," Anderegg said.

Murdy became associated with TruGreen, specifically its parent company ServiceMaster, this past November when ServiceMaster purchased LandCare U.S.A. which had been in a feverish race to acquire

landscape companies with TruGreen.

"We certainly did our best to try to talk Bill into assuming a very important role with ServiceMaster," Anderegg said. "Bill did a wonderful job of bringing us all together. ServiceMaster would be a better company with him."



William Murdy, LandCare founder, leaves TruGreen.

[CLIPPINGS]

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(www.webnow.com), which will host and maintain the business websites. The sites will contain no unwanted advertising and will remain free as long as they remain hosted.

Leaf blower legislation questions prohibitions

SACRAMENTO, CA—

The California Golf Course Superintendents Association is supporting a state bill that would require cities and counties to consider the economic impacts of prohibitions on taxpayers, consumers and employment opportunities before adopting any ordinance that prohibited commercial leaf blower use. Those local jurisdictions would also have to make a determination that no alternatives would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons.

Website correction

A recent LM article contained an incorrect web address for Ferris Industries. The correct address is: www.ferrisindustries.com.

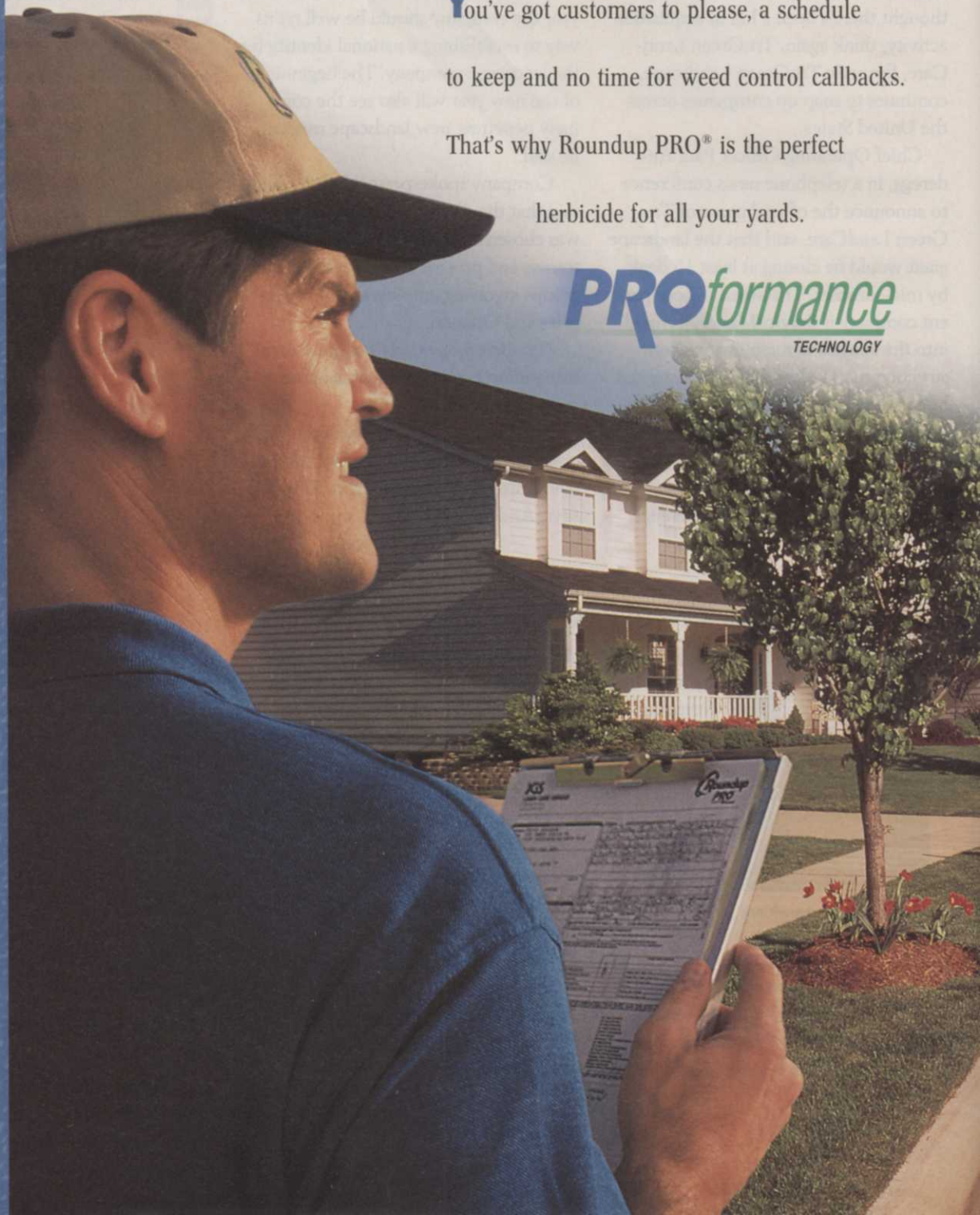
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Keep an eye peeled for giant salvinia

Authorities are urging aquatic gardeners and landscapers who install and maintain ponds and water gardens to be on the alert for *Salvinia molesta*.

Also known as kariba weed, the floating fern is a "Class A" noxious, federally prohibited weed that some nurseries continue to sell as an ornamental.

The weed, a native of Brazil, forms a thick mat which displaces and destroys all native flora. In agricultural settings, it poses a serious threat to irrigation and water management.

"Giant salvinia has the potential to be one of the most damaging nuisance aquatic plants that we might experience



in the U.S.," says Colette Jocano of the U.S. Geological Survey, part of a multi-agency federal task force formed to fight the spread of the aquatic weed.

So far, it has been documented growing in Hawaii, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. It apparently has the potential to survive and spread in all areas where fresh waters remain unfrozen in winter.

"It is very likely to spread to other areas of the country," Jocano warns. "Its potential range extends along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of the U.S. from Texas to Virginia and west to California, and as far north as the San Joaquin River Delta."

If you find giant salvinia in your neighborhood, call this toll-free number, 877/STOPANS.

[CLIPPINGS]

Griffin adds chlorothalonil

VALDOSTA, GA — Griffin L.L.C. and Nation's Ag II LLC have partnered to enter the speciality turf, nursery and ornamental markets

with chlorothalonil, in addition to agricultural and industrial markets. The global business alliance will source, develop, register and market chlorothalonil-based fungicides.

Nufarm acquires Riverdale

ST. JOSEPH, MO — Nufarm, a producer of herbicides and the world's largest phenoxy producer, has purchased Riverdale Chemical Company. Riverdale serves the agricultural, industrial, turf and aquatic markets, with its core business based on phenoxy herbicides. The merger increases Nufarm's interest in phenoxy herbicides; Nufarm purchased the phenoxy business of Rhone-Polenc in 1998, as well as gaining access to glyphosate.

Eco Soil adding products

RANCHO BERNARDO, CA—

Eco Soil Systems Inc., has taken steps to acquire the Agricultural Biological Division, a research group of Agrium, Inc. (NYSE: AGU). The acquisition would expand the number of biological products available to Eco Soil, including biopesticides and Rhizobium inoculants. Eco Soil develops, marks and sells proprietary bio and traditional chemical products.

Deere sues over Gator®

MOLINE, IL—

Deere & Company on June 24 filed a federal lawsuit to stop Howard Price Turf Equipment Inc., Chesterfield, MO, from manufacturing and selling a product that Deere alleges is a copy of its popular Gator utility vehicle. Howard Price declined comment on the action.

New digs for Maryland's turf research

COLLEGE PARK, MD — The University of Maryland's Cherry Hill turf research facility is moving to a new site on 40 acres of land owned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The new turf research site will open this summer.

The Maryland Turfgrass Council provided \$100,000 for the new site, which was needed because the owner of the former research property, the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, decided to sell that property. People with the University and the Maryland Turfgrass Council worked hard to come up with a new site which was finally made possible through a special act of the Maryland legislature.



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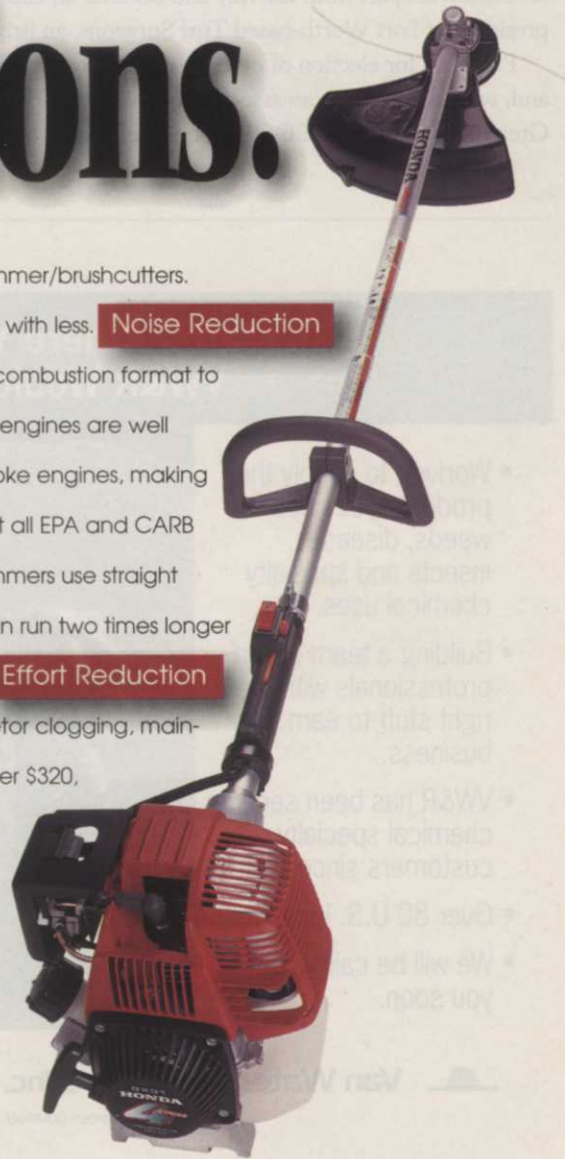
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Irrigation specialists form a new association; it's called ALIRT

FORT WORTH, TX — From his offices here Greg Mitchell is forging the Association of Landscape Irrigation Repair Technicians (ALIRT), a national organization comprised of men and women who repair, maintain and retrofit sprinkler systems.

"We need to work together," says Mitchell, who claims it's about time to do something to reduce the frustration and complaints of consumers suffering with wasteful, inefficient and ineffective irrigation systems.

"How about mandatory 'as built' plans for new installations?" asks Mitchell.

Mitchell envisions an organization in which members are committed to "quality, service and integrity."

"It is through associating ourselves with individuals of this caliber that we can truly set ourselves apart from the fray and become an elite organization," says Mitchell, president of Fort Worth-based Turf Surgeons, an irrigation services company.

Plans call for election of officers, educational conferences, a membership directory and, within two years, an association newsletter. For information on ALIRT, contact Greg Mitchell at 817/496-8653 or e-mail him at turfsurg@flash.net.

— Mike Perrault

[CLIPPINGS]

New Holland buys Case

RACINE, WI — For \$4.3 billion in cash, New Holland will acquire Case Corp. to create a company rivaling Deere and Co., as the world's largest maker of tractors, combines and other agricultural equipment.

New Holland's headquarters will move to Case's home of Racine, WI.

Exmark earns settlement


BEATRICE, NE—

The Exmark Manufacturing Company, a subsidiary of The Toro Company, obtained a favorable settlement of a patent lawsuit against F.D. Kees Co., and Yazoo/Kees Power Equipment. The suit, filed in December 1998, claimed certain features of Kees ZT Max brand of mowers infringed on a patent Exmark holds on its Lazer Z™ brand of lawn mowers.

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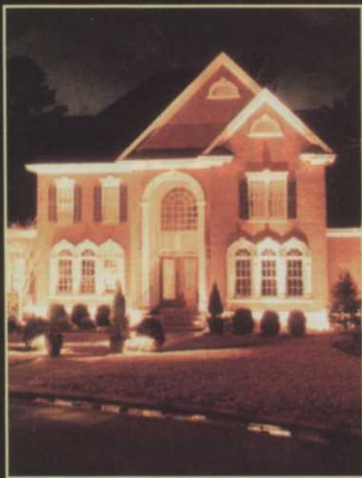
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>HOT TOPICS

Forget the gasoline, filler' up with zinc?

CARLSBAD, CA — Electric mowers and other large maintenance equipment for the landscape industry are increasingly likely thanks to advances in fuel cell technology.

Toro is assessing fuel cell power for greens mowers, and Textron for its Cushman and E-Z-GO utility vehicles. Both are collaborating with San Diego-based Metallic Power, the developer of the fuel cells.

Dr. Jeff Colborn, CEO of Metallic Power, tells *Landscape Management* that his company's zinc/air fuel cells produce several times more energy than comparably sized lead/acid batteries. This means that fuel cell-powered equipment, including mowers, can work longer between recharges. Equally important, says Colborn, the fuel cells can be refueled (recharged) in less than 15 minutes. Equipment powered by traditional bat-

teries usually needs an overnight recharge.

While it's unlikely that fuel cells will replace gasoline- or diesel-powered mowers and other equipment in the foreseeable future, they do offer advantages such as reduced noise and virtually no emissions, which landscapers would find attractive in some situations.

Colborn describes his company's zinc/air technology as a closed loop system. Fresh zinc pellets constitute the fuel. When it reacts with air it creates energy. The resulting by-product is zinc oxide which, when the equipment is attached to an electrically powered "refueling station," is reconverted to zinc, which can be used again, and air.

Colborn says Metallic Power will have prototype greens mowers to demonstrate to Toro, and also utility vehicles for Textron's evaluation late this year.

Lawmakers mull notification in NY

ALBANY, NY — The New York State Senate passed S-2543 in June, a bill requiring that neighbors be advised 48 hours in advance of an application of pesticides to a property. But, whether the bill will actually be enacted into law is uncertain. The bill needs the okay of the NY Assembly, too.

How likely is this? Not very, at least not without substantial compromises. The NY Assembly passed its own notification bill this past February and there appears to be big differences between the supporters of the two bills.

Even so, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver on June 18 called upon the Senate to join the Assembly in immediately establishing a conference committee to reach a consensus on pesticide notification legislation.

Green industry and ag-related groups are fighting provisions of the two bills, which they claim are unneeded and just plain unjust. In May, the New York State Turfgrass Association — and other pesticide-using groups — asked members to let their state legislators know that they opposed the notification proposal.

These and other actions spurred last minute changes to S-2543, including restricting the provisions of the bill to New York City and three NY counties — Suffolk, Westchester and Nassau. If enacted, the bill would allow these areas to establish local laws requiring notification.

With budget talks expected to take up much of the NY Senate's time when it returns in mid-July, it's uncertain how far the notification legislation will get in 1999.

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**Push
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C2150B Low Profile



Push LAWNMOWER

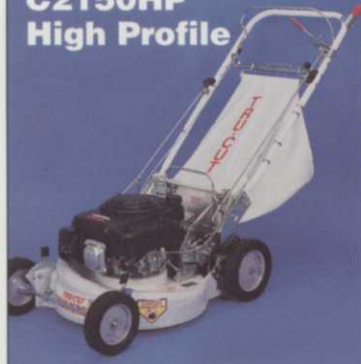
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- ▲ Flywheel Brake System with Zone Start
- ▲ Safety Interlock System on Grass Bag

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- ▲ Replaceable cloth grass catcher. A safety interlock system. No trap door design. It mounts solidly, removes easily and holds more grass than the competition.
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C2150HQ Shown w/opt. steel catcher



C2150HQ



Low Profile Push Models

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▲ Both mowers feature a one piece heavy duty steel handle with all controls in easy reach of the operator. Best operator comfort and control features.

High Profile Models

▲ Eight quick height adjustments from 3/8" to 3 5/8" give the widest mower cutting range in the industry.

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▲ Tru Cut mowers maneuver easier, cut smoother, require less maintenance and last longer than the competition.

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▲ 25" Cut				•	
▲ 27" Cut					•
▲ 5 Blade Reel	•	•	•	•	•
▲ 7 Blade Reel	•	•	•	•	•
▲ 3.5 Horsepower B&S	•				
▲ 3.5 HP B&S or 4.0 HP Honda		•	•		
▲ 5.0 HP B&S or 5.5 HP Honda			•	•	•
▲ 1 Piece Bed Knife Assembly	•				
▲ 2 Piece Bed Knife Assembly		•	•	•	•
▲ Instant Height Adjuster		•	•	•	•
▲ Bronze Bearings in Differential	•	•	•	•	•
▲ All steel Gears in Differential				•	•
▲ Ball Bearings on Rotating Shafts	•	•	•	•	•
▲ Removable Cutter Bar		•	•	•	•
▲ Steel Clutch Plate				•	•
▲ Galvanized Steel Grass Catcher (opt)	•	•	•	•	•
▲ High Impact Plastic Catcher	•	•	•	•	•
▲ Swivel Caster Wheels		•	•	•	•
▲ Wheel Drive System	•	•	•	•	•
▲ Roller Drive System				•	
▲ Maximum Ground speed is approximately 200 ft. per min.*	•	•			
▲ Maximum Ground speed is approximately 250 ft. per min.*			•	•	•

** Engine RPM's control ground speed without changing blade cutting frequency.

* At engine RPM of 2800

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▲ 4.0 h.p. Honda GC		•			
▲ 2.5 h.p. Honda GX				•	
▲ 4.0 h.p. Honda GX					•
▲ 7" Heavy-duty wheels	•				
▲ 8" Commercial wheels		•	•	•	•
▲ Side Trim Features	•	•	•	•	•
▲ 10" Steel Blade	•	•	•	•	•
▲ Heavy-duty all steel welded frame	•	•	•	•	•
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Busting through the charts

By the *Landscape Management Staff*

Industry snapshot
Page 26

**Today's employee
picture**
Page 32

**When will this
bubble burst?**
Page 40



FEW THINGS LOOK



*Some annoyances we can't help you with.
But handling hard-to-control weeds
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It's been eight strong years now for green industry professionals and the trends see it continuing into the indefinite future. That's good news for anyone interested in growing.

Despite the dramatic changes that the landscape industry consolidations will bring to the "high end" side of the business, many features remain the same:

- ▶ Low barriers to entry, resulting in many industry newcomers each year.
- ▶ Growing interest in, and appreciation of, professional landscape services, provided by contractors and in-house staff.
- ▶ Increasing pressure to operate more profitably and efficiently due to healthy competition in most industry sectors.
- ▶ Shortage of labor — especially those employees who will stay with a company for an extended period of time and gradually develop into middle managers.

The great big boom

Our economy is "booming," say the experts, and that's obvious to almost anyone on the professional side of the landscape industry. During past economic booms, the kind of growth that landscape operations have would be called outstanding, but compared to some of the skyrocketing growth of Internet stocks, high-tech companies and industry consolidations, that very healthy growth in landscape seems tame.

Don't let that fool you. Respondents to a recent *Landscape Management* survey reported an average 15.5% growth in 1998, with some segments reaching nearly 24%. Add those figures on to previous years' growth and it's obvious that this is an industry with extremely healthy prospects far into the future.



Robert Kinnucan

"We've had three good years in a row," says Robert Kinnucan, president of the Kinnucan Co., Lake Bluff, IL. "There haven't been too many times I could say that in our 29 years in business."

Kinnucan's firm, which serves the 45-sq. mile North Shore area of Chicago, grew by 22% this past year, thanks, in part, to particularly nice gains in its tree care and plant health care operations.

Kinnucan's experience reflects the most recent Gallup poll conducted on behalf of several green industry organizations which showed a 20% growth in services (landscape/lawn maintenance, installation, design and tree care) for 1998, over 1997 figures.

Our own survey also showed landscape contractors and grounds managers are bullish on their 2000 prospects, with a record 86.3% expecting further growth.

Industry

Who's who out there?

The professional landscape industry, as we see it, covers several business segments: full-service landscape contracting, lawn care contracting, lawn maintenance only and in-house grounds care. Firms that specialize only in golf course management, athletic turf management, tree care, irrigation, landscape design, interiorscape and related services are related but secondary elements of the professional landscape market.

The real debate starts when industry experts try to define the actual number of contracting companies, their revenues and how much they actually spend on equipment and supplies. That's because there is a huge, and largely undocumented, turnover of start-up lawn care and landscape firms each year.

The usual scenario is that each year, many such companies (often one-person firms) become established and a hefty percentage of those will not survive the next five years in

business (some not even surviving the first).

Why are these numbers so hard to find? Most sources for industry information use documented mailing lists, Yellow Pages listings, association lists and state department of development or sales tax license department information. Although some federal government offices are looking at the industry, so far the numbers are not complete. And what about those firms that do not advertise, apply for state licenses or even list themselves as a separate business entity?

The traditional sources of information are fine as long as they keep current with new entries and industry dropouts, but when they do not, the number of contractors on a list continues to build. Estimates range from 70,000 firms to as many as 110,000 firms, with some insiders guessing there may be as many as 130,000+ firms existing at any one time. As for the turnover rate, estimates generally range from 10% to 25% or more.

This special report will provide a snapshot of the industry as it is in 1999, through a look at the general economy and through research reports. Then, we'll report on performance and growth opportunities to come.

This year's report also looks at the typical labor picture, showing how contractors and landscape managers staff their operations, and who they hire. We also look at updated operating cost data, which you can use to compare. Finally, we study some marketplace factors our respondents think are holding them back from even more growth.

Snapshot



As for the key segments of the market, we see revenues and number of participants as shown in the chart above.

Indicators mean business

Even though we appear to have weathered the Asian crisis, an imbalance of international trade and other factors potentially hurting our economy, it continues to chug along, buoyed by a number of factors:

▶ *High consumer confidence* — continues at record levels; let the buying continue.

▶ *Low inflation* — defies the experts and continues to stay down.

▶ *Low interest rates* — money's cheap: let's buy, build, invest, loan more!

▶ *Construction boom* — all that extra money has to go somewhere. Where there's a new building, there's a new opportunity.

▶ *Weak foreign economies*

— keeps ours going strong.

▶ *Leaner, meaner operations* — smarter manufacturing and service businesses mean less susceptibility to cyclical swings.

▶ *More personal income* — especially if we bought Yahoo! last summer. Our investments (and profits) generate more cycles of saving and spending, building more financial strength.

These factors drive our industry's growth, as well as these other factors:

▶ Recently documented studies show the value that landscaping adds to properties.

▶ The growth in services overall and particularly with Baby Boomers and other population and geographical segments.

▶ The higher profile our industry has due to consolidations and Wall Street's new appreciation of it. Millions of dol-

lars continue to pour into this industry as large corporations, venture capitalists and stockholders invest in the future.

All these factors point to continuing growth for professionals who build, manage and renovate landscapes.

1999 under the microscope

This year's State of the Industry report is based on *Landscape Management's* in-house research, as well as additional information from the most recent Gallup poll, federal government projections and other industry sources.

Our two-page written survey was mailed to *Landscape Management* readers in mid-April. We received a response of 18.9% completed questionnaires from subscribers across the United States, which were then tabulated by an independent market research firm, Penn and Associates, Cleveland, OH, according to standard statistical analysis.

Survey respondents totalled 51.3% landscape contractors, 33.3% described themselves as a lawn care service and 13.8% were institutional grounds managers.

Our sample of company revenues was based on four main categories:

1. *Smallest companies* — with sales of less than \$100,000,

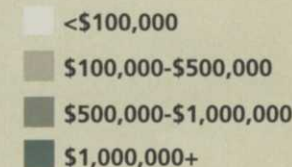
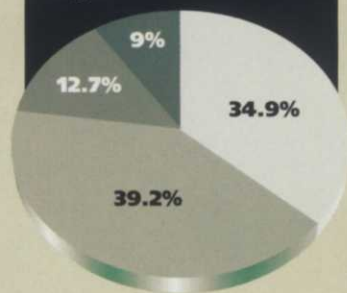
2. *Small companies* — with sales between \$100,000 and \$500,000,

3. *Mid-size companies* — with sales between \$500,000 and \$1 million,

4. *Large firms* — with sales of more than \$1 million.

We also broke out responses by geographical segments,

What were your 1998 gross receipts or grounds management operating budget?



using the U.S. Census Bureau's format: the Northeast, South, Midwest and West.

Grow, grow, grow!

It was one heck of a year again for the professional contracting industry, said our respondents, with 86.3% reporting growth from 1998 to 1999, as shown in the bottom left table on the following page. All large companies reported growth, as did 91.3% of mid-size firms (82.9% of smaller firms and 83.1% of the smallest firms said they grew).



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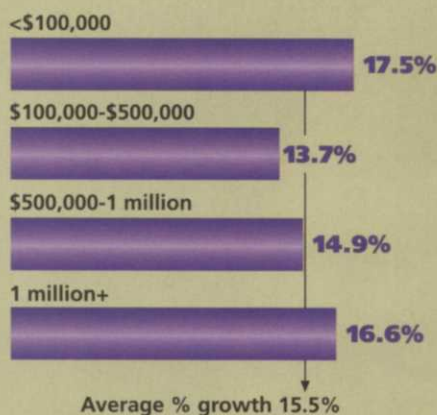
ORNAMENTAL PROTECTION PLAN

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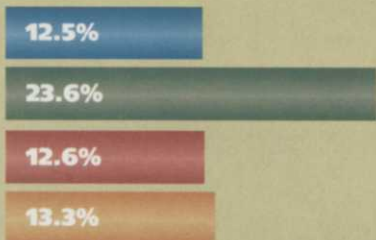
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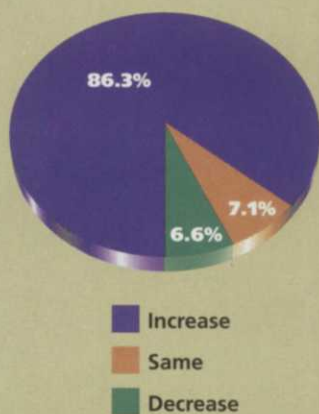
How landscape managers expect to grow in 1999



Regional growth breakdown



Compared to 1998, will your operations increase, stay the same or decrease in 1999?



The overall average percentage industry growth in 1999 is 15.5%. The figure on the left shows that the smallest firms (under \$100,000) reported the highest rate of growth (17.5%).

This growth carried over into Canadian markets, as well.

"If you can't make money in this economy, you can't make money at all," jokes Robert Wilton, Clintar Groundskeeping Services, Toronto. Clintar, a 27-year-old firm, with loca-



Robert Wilton

tions throughout Ontario, Canada, had "very strong growth," says Wilton, adding "Who knows when it (the strong economy) will end?"

We also asked contractors where they got this growth. Residential services equalled growth for 40.3%, followed by commercial work (15.3%), institutional opportunities (6.3%), project developers (4.9%), seniors (2.8%), parks/fields (2.8%) and government (1.4%).

Services that grow

Which service equalled more business growth into 1999? Maintenance won hands down, reported by 16.0% of respondents. Installation followed close by, with 13.9% reporting. Other growth centers included mowing (6.3%), irrigation (3.5%), spray services (2.8%) and landscape design (2.8%).

Respondents also saw some growth from services such as

construction, decks/patios, aeration, Christmas services, fencing installation and nursery.

Contractors see the new service additions, listed in the table below, as major opportunities for growth for 2000 (46% plan no new services).

Other good prospects include additional services in aeration, landscape design, lighting, seeding/sodding, deep root feeding/tree injection, tree service, hauling services, organic/nonchemical fertilization, excavation, snow removal, driveway sealing, recycling and deer control.

Contractors are bullish

Our own interviews with contractors and grounds managers support this trend. Brent Flory of Freedom Lawns in Delphi, IN, reports he sees opportunities for business growth as new housing continues to be built. Specifically, the new properties need both landscape and irrigation work. Flory also noted opportunities in servicing industrial properties.

Some contractors may find

For 1999 or 2000, what new services or customer segments will you add?



it easy to pick up work on a subcontracted basis, especially from in-house grounds managers who have limited capabilities to do specialty projects and work.

Bob Womack, grounds manager at Southwest College in Chula Vista, CA, outsources tree trimming and concrete work. His regular maintenance operations keep employees busy enough, he says. Renovation and installation is still a priority for his staff, especially smaller projects. "We landscape all new remodeling and installations," he notes. "We also do the regular maintenance for the sports fields."

David Walker, grounds manager for the city of Virginia Beach, VA, also outsources some of his grounds management operations, including mowing at some schools, infrastructure repairs, some tree removal and limited irrigation work on specific sites.

Opportunities seem to be popping up in surprising places. Although David Daniell sees some slowing in the Albuquerque/Santa Fe markets, the manager at Heads Up Landscape Contractors in Albuquerque sees future opportunities with the Indian Pueblos of New Mexico.

"They are expanding aggressively, using money from their gambling operations," Daniell reports. "Several resorts, golf courses and casinos are on the drawing board. Also, the city of Albuquerque is proceeding ag-



Brent Flory

gressively to revitalize its downtown area."

Contractors at the large firms are most bullish on growth (50%), planning to add more maintenance, irrigation and hardscape services. Those at the smallest firms also are bullish (48.3%), focusing on irrigation, spraying and installation services. Contractors in small firms also foresee add-on growth (47.2%) through irrigation, spraying, installation, hardscape and aeration services. About 35% of mid-size firms plan to add growth through lighting, growing/nursery, tree care, organic treatments and irrigation services.

An example of this is Kutalic Landscaping & Design, Huntington, WV, which is owned and operated by George and Debbie Kutalic. Their new strategy for growth involved a new niche business. "We started a small nursery to supply our contracting company, which has proven very profitable. It was a way to increase our bottom line without growing the company. We are very happy staying smaller and using high-tech equipment to keep labor (costs) down. We do not sell retail or wholesale from the nursery."

Hot growth areas

The South's robust economy is well reflected in our respondents' answers. The regional figure on the previous page shows a whopping 23.6% growth. Growth was more modest in the other areas.

The South's strong and con-

tinuing pattern of growth is reflected in the comments of contractors like Bobby Byrd, president of Byrd's Lawn & Landscape, Charlotte, NC. "Mecklenburg County (Charlotte area) is growing in all directions and spilling over into the other counties."

Geographically, 57.1% of respondents in the South forecast growth through add-on irrigation, spraying, aeration and design services. The Midwest is next, with 50% reporting additions of spraying, maintenance,

lighting, irrigation and installation services. Add-ons reported by 39.1% in the Northeast include irrigation, hardscape, design and installation. Western contractors reported additional services (29.2%) led by maintenance, irrigation and hardscape.

This kind of growth is typical of the country's hottest private housing markets. As you can see in the latest annual update of new housing starts from the United States Census Bureau, these are not limited to the South.



Top 25 Private Housing Markets - 1998

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Atlanta, GA | 13. Detroit, MI |
| 2. Dallas, TX | 14. Orlando, FL |
| 3. New York, NY | 15. Philadelphia, PA |
| 4. Washington DC/Baltimore, MD | 16. Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, FL |
| 5. Phoenix, AZ | 17. Minneapolis, MN |
| 6. Houston, TX | 18. Charlotte, NC |
| 7. Los Angeles, CA | 19. Portland, OR |
| 8. Chicago, IL | 20. Raleigh/Durham, NC |
| 9. Las Vegas, NV | 21. Tampa/St. Petersburg, FL |
| 10. Denver, CO | 22. Boston, MA |
| 11. Seattle, WA | 23. Austin, TX |
| 12. San Francisco/Oakland, CA | 24. Indianapolis, IN |
| | 25. Sacramento, CA |

Today's Employee

Labor is obviously on the mind of everyone who took our survey, so we asked them how many full- and part-time employees they hire. To get a better un-

derstanding of the labor picture, we also asked them to tell us what their employees are like. And finally, to understand how this affects the bottom line, we asked respondents to tell us how their cost structure operates.

Deborah "Andy" Bechtold, operator of Longhorn Maintenance Inc., Allen, TX, finds herself in the same situation as most contractors — getting the most efficient production possible with available employees, usually 12 at peak season.

"Earlier this year

we bought a \$35,000 machine (Dingo from Toro) that cut out three laborers on many jobs," she says. "We're definitely looking for more productivity from our equipment. Labor is everything in today's market."

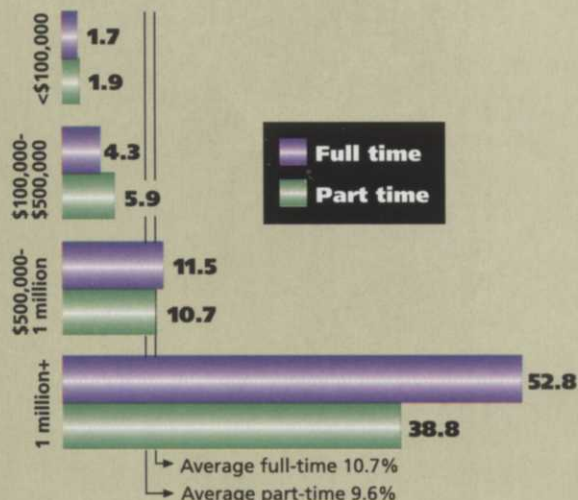
North of the border, in the Toronto marketplace, Robert Wilton, Clintar Groundskeeping Services, agrees that labor availability is an issue, but for his company, at least, the bigger challenge is "people management," specifically increasing the level and quality of all types of training for employees.

And Robert Kinnucan, of the Kinnucan Company, says his greatest need is "hiring skilled personnel to maintain

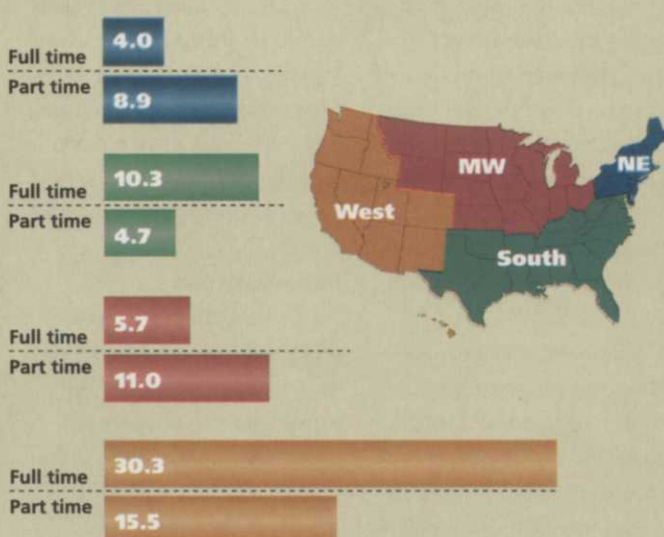


Bechtold and Longhorn team

Who's hiring full-time and part-time employees



Regional hiring



Picture

the quality of our service which is responsible for maintaining our profitable growth."

The people picture

Among those surveyed, the average number of employees is 10.7 full-time and 9.6 part-time (see the figure at the far left). When this is broken down by revenue, the number of full-time employees varies from as few as 1.7 for the smallest businesses (<\$100,000) to 52.8 for the large businesses (> \$1 million). Small companies, ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000, had 4.3 employees and the mid-size (from \$500,000 to \$1 million) had 11.5 full-time employees.

Part-time employee hiring also varies by size: an average of 1.9 for the smallest firms, 5.9 for small firms, 10.7 for mid-size firms and 38.8 for the large firms.

As you can see on a geographical basis, hiring in the West far outweighs that of other sectors. There, contractors hire the largest number of full-time (30.3) and part-time (15.5), followed by the Midwest (5.7 full-time and 11.0 part-time), South (10.3 full-time and 4.7 part-time) and Northeast (4.0 full-time and 8.9 part-time).

It is also apparent that the South and West are less limited by seasons and able to keep on more full-time people. They have twice as many full-time

employees as part-time, while in the Midwest and the Northeast the position is reversed, with twice as many part-time employees to full-time ones.

Faces of diversity

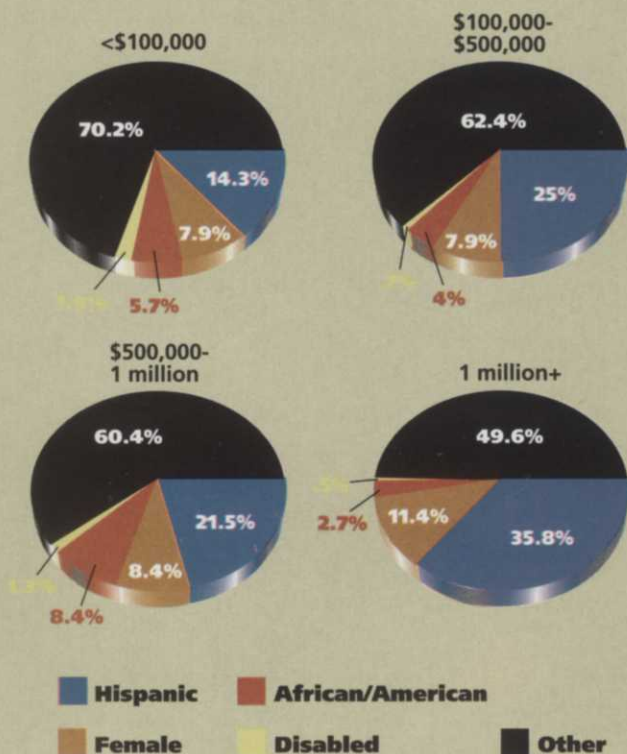
Diversity in companies, (shown at the right) by race, gender or ability is somewhat limited. Regardless of company size or geographic location, women barely contribute more than 10% of the workforce (except in the large firms). But considering how difficult it can be to attract anyone to the business and stick with it, given the demands of the job, that number is not surprising.

As could be expected in a physically demanding business, the numbers of people with disabilities are very small (2% or less, regardless of company size or geographic location). Interestingly, the Midwest region and the smallest companies had the highest involvement.

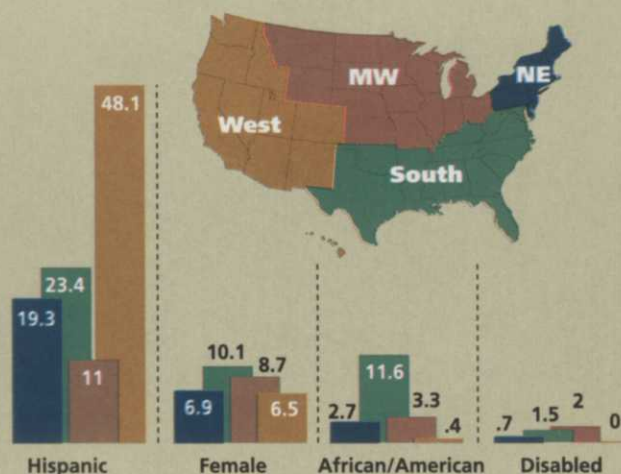
The fact that there are *some* people with disabilities in the workforce indicates that some types of challenges may not interfere with certain jobs. Perhaps future surveys could look into that.

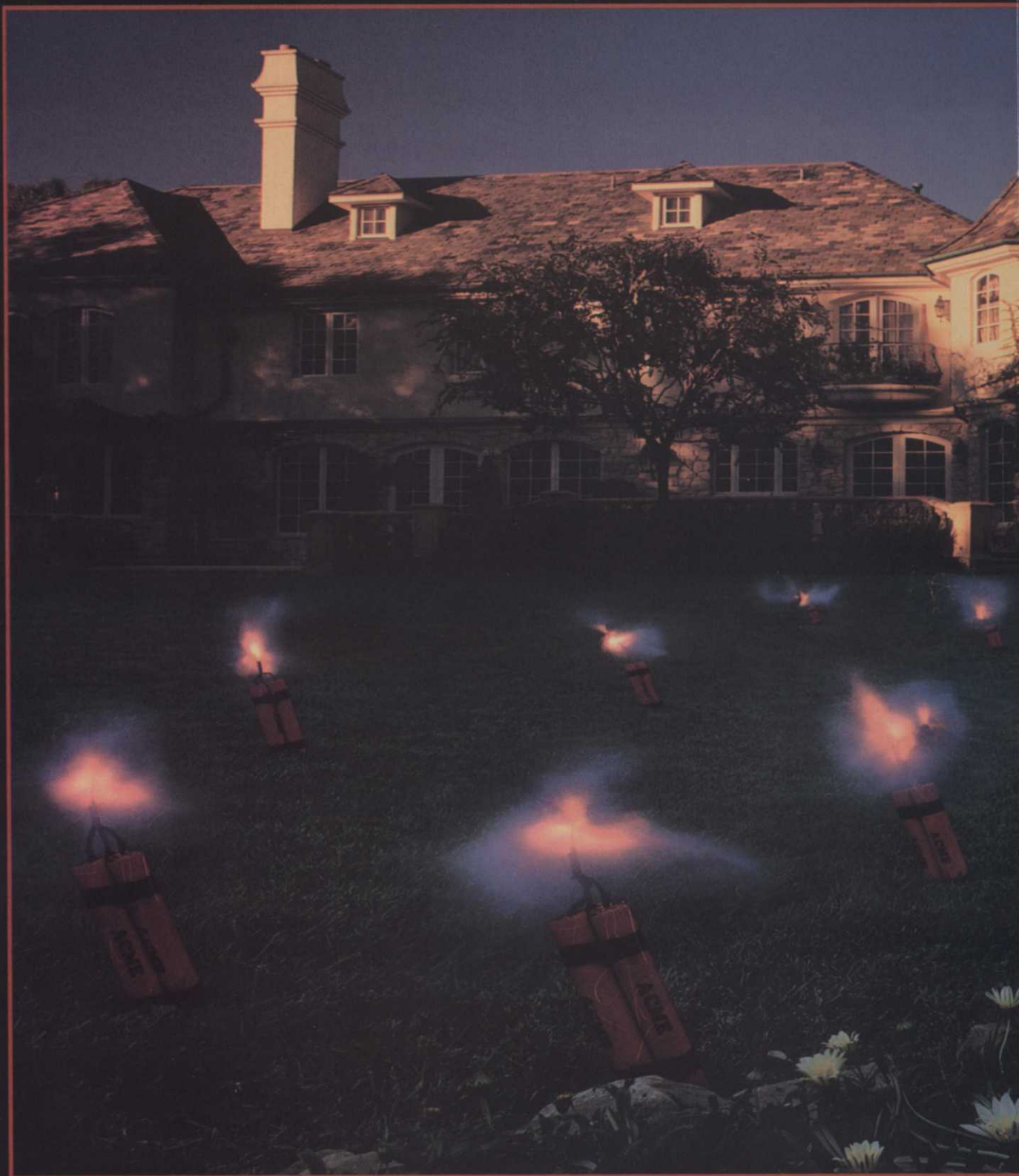
Racial diversity tends to be rather limited in many cases, particularly in regard to African-Americans. The South had the highest percentage, 11.6%, while the rest of the regions didn't break 4%. The mid-size companies reported that 8.4%

Landscape hiring of Hispanic, African-American, Female, Disabled/physically challenged employees



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Perhaps it is because the West and South have more year-round work that those labor costs are a higher percentage of the overall budget.

of their employees were African-American and the smallest companies, 5.7%. But the small and large companies were 4% and 2.7% respectively.

Hispanic employees clearly make the largest contribution to diversity in the green industry. The companies from the West indicated that almost 50% of their employees are Hispanic — a substantial amount. The South, at 23.4%, also had a large number of Hispanic employees. In the Northeast and Midwest, the numbers dropped.

When we look at diversity with respect to company size, the percentages of Hispanic workers were less variable: the smallest companies had 14.3%; closer percentages for small and mid-size at 25% and 21.5%, respectively; and 35.8% for the large companies.

Are your costs in line?

If you're not keeping an eye on industry average operating costs, you're missing an excellent way to measure progress.

▶ On average, labor (including benefits) accounts for 35.9% of the operating budget;

▶ materials and operating supplies account for 22.6%;

▶ equipment purchases and maintenance take up 14% of the typical 1998 budget;

▶ insurance takes 7.1%;

▶ fuel consumes 6.7%;

▶ marketing and advertising averages 2.9%.

High cost of labor

Our respondents said labor costs reached as much as 47.1% of the operating budget for mid-size firms, compared to only 28.6% of costs reported by the smallest firms. Labor costs hovered around 37.5% for

small firms, followed closely by the 36.7% reported by the largest landscape operations.

Perhaps it is because the West and South have more year-round work that those labor costs are a higher percentage of the overall budget. Contractors and grounds managers in the West reported labor totaled 42% of operating costs, while Southern landscape managers said it was 37% of their budgets.

In the Northeast and Midwest, managers reported that labor costs were the same — 33.7% of the budget.

Materials & supplies

While the survey average for material and supply costs was 22.6%, it becomes a more significant piece of the puzzle with larger organizations. In fact, it totaled 28.7% of operating costs






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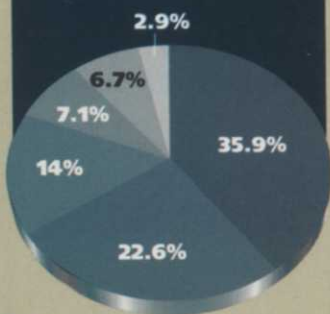
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What percent of your 1998 gross receipts or budget went toward the following operations categories?



- Labor
- Materials & operating supplies
- Equipment purchase
- Insurance
- Fuel
- Marketing/Advertising

for the largest firms; 23% for the smallest operations; 20.7% for small companies; and 20.4% for mid-size businesses.

Geographically, the costs of materials and supplies for respondents varied only slightly, ranging from a low of 20.8% in the Northeast to 24.2% in the South. Midwest landscape managers reported those costs to be 23.9%, while those in the West said they were only 21.2%.

Equipment & maintenance

Survey respondents said that the average costs in this category totalled 14%, but this number varied more widely when broken down by budget size.

Clearly, equipment purchase and maintenance is more burdensome to the smallest operators in our survey, totalling 18.5% of their operating costs, followed by small firms, whose costs were 12.8% of budget.

The bite of equipment purchase and maintenance is much less significant for larger operations: Mid-size firms reported them to be only 9.3% of operating costs, while those over \$1 million said they were a mere 10.2%.

It should be no surprise that equipment purchase and maintenance costs were similar across the country, with a high of 15.7% reported by respondents in the Northeast, 14.8% in the South, 12.9% in the Midwest and 11.2% in the West.

Insuring your operations

From all appearances, companies of various sizes can maintain similar insurance costs through safe operations and judicious shopping for vendors. In our survey, the cost of insurance averaged 7.1%, which is supported in the budget breakdowns:

► Firms less than \$100,000 in budget said insurance totalled 7.3% of costs.

► Small organizations reported costs of 7.1%.

► Mid-size firms said their insurance costs averaged 6.6%.

► Large firms reported average insurance costs of 7%.

There seemed to be more disparity of insurance costs in different areas of the country. Midwest respondents reported a hefty 7.9% cost for insurance, followed closely by Northeast respondents and their 7.5% average.

Landscape managers in the South clearly get a break in this category, reporting costs of only 6.4%, as do those in the West, with an average of only 6.1% of operating costs going to insurance.

Fueling up for growth

Economies of scale show up strongest in this category, as the largest companies clearly have an advantage in keeping their fuel costs to a smaller percent of their operating budgets.

While the overall average for fuel costs was 6.7%, large companies pegged them at only 3.9% of the total budget, and mid-size firms reported those costs to average only 4.6%.

In contrast, the smallest firms said their fuel costs were a higher proportion of spending — at 9.3%. Small companies were closer to the industry average, noting an average of 5.9% for fuel.

Although fuel costs vary wildly for consumers across the country, our survey respondents' costs were closer. Surprisingly, Southern contractors and grounds managers reported the highest average cost of fuel, at 7.4% of their operating budgets.

It may be no surprise that they are followed by managers in the Northeast, with an average cost of 6.8%. The lowest costs for fuel were reported by landscape and lawn care man-

agers in the Midwest (6.4%) and the West (5.8%).

Marketing genius


Landscape managers of both large and small organizations stay pretty much in the same range for these costs, which average 2.9% of the total budget. Those apparently spending the least are the largest organizations, devoting only 1.9% of their budget to marketing or advertising.

This may be because many large organizations focus on commercial business and may use more one-to-one marketing and promotion methods than those advertising to thousands of homeowners.

The biggest spenders are those midsize organizations, who average 3.3% of their budget, followed by the smallest firms, who spend 3.1%. Small organizations reported they spend an average of 2.9% on marketing and advertising programs.

Regionally, there is little difference in spending, with marketing and advertising budgets ranging from a high of 3.4% of total operating budget to as little as 2.4%.



A large-scale agricultural landscape under a warm, golden light. In the foreground, a hand holds a large, curved sickle, ready to cut. The background shows a vast field of crops, with several workers in the distance. The scene is framed by a large tree on the right and a mountain range in the distance.

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The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) reported in January that

two factors to watch as major potential limits on the economy's growth are labor availability and a slight pickup in interest rates. It also anticipates some drop in consumer spending and investment, as well as a slower rate of growth for the stock market.

"The U.S. labor market is unsustainably tight," says the report, which also sees no remedy in sight.

It's going to be a real sellers' market for labor, CBO says, predicting an increase in wages and compensation as employers compete head-on for good workers. This will eventually affect interest rates (along with several other factors).

As for interest rates rising,

the CBO forecasts "increasing upward pressure," which sounds more like a weather report than an economic forecast. Just for good measure, the CBO compares its forecasts to an average of those prepared by 40 to 50 "Blue-chip" private-sector economists.

What's this mean for the next year? LM's take is not to worry too much. Even the somewhat gloomy CBO has

When will this bubble burst?



this to say about the next 10 years (through 2009):

► Gross domestic product will grow an average of 2.3% per year.

► Unemployment rises to only 5.7% after 2001.

► Short and long-term interest rates inch up after 2001 (but not too high or too fast).

In other words, expect a little less borrowing power, a little less ROI from the stock market, a few more price rises and continuing difficulty finding labor.

"Soft landing scenario" is the way CBO forecasts the future. That sounds a lot better than any "hard landing scenario."

What's limiting growth?

We asked respondents to our survey to list the key factors limiting their growth from 1998 to 1999, as well as services they're planning to drop. Here's what they said:

► **Labor availability** was the overwhelming factor limiting their organization's growth, said 43.6% of respondents. This seemed to hit mid-size organizations the worst — 53.6% of small companies (\$100,000-\$500,00) and 53.6% mid-size (\$500,000 to \$1 million) companies said labor availability was their major headache. In contrast, only 22.2% of large firms (>\$1 million) and 36.4% of the smallest firms (<\$100,00) ranked it number one.

Highest geographical need for labor apparently is felt by firms in the Midwest (54.3%), followed by the Northeast (43.2%) and the West (42.1%).

But, putting a lot of bodies on the payroll is not the ultimate goal of any company—being profitable is that goal.

Alan Steiman, owner of Alan Steiman's Landscape Inc.,



Alan Steiman

Northboro, MA, says 10 years ago he employed as many as 40 people during peak season, and his company lost money. Now, with 12 employees, it's profitable. And Steiman is content to keep it from

growing too large.

► **Ability to get good supervisors/foremen** also ranked high overall, with 38.4% reporting this as another limiting factor. Mid-size companies ranked this much higher than other firms — with 58.8% noting its importance. Small firms also had problems here, with 42% ranking it important. Only 38.9% of largest firms and 25% of the smallest firms ranked this a limiting factor.

If you're a supervisor, head to the Northeast, where 46.2% of the firms noted this is a problem, followed by the West (41.2%), South (37.1%) and Midwest (30.3%).

► **Unfair pricing and low-ball/competition** also ranked as important with 25.4% of the respondents. This situation obviously hurts the smallest firms

most, with 33.3% noting a problem, followed by those ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000 (25.5%).

Contractors in the Northeast seem to have the most problem with this type of competition, because 30.2% cited it a problem, followed by 23.3% in the South, 23.1% in the West and 21.9% in the Midwest.

Business inhibitors

Other factors that clearly inhibited some contractors' business from 1998 to 1999 include bad weather (51.6%), labor quality (51.6%), more competitors (31.7%), plant material availability (18.3%) and their own business management skills (18.3%).

It may be lowball competition or property managers' own

pressure to perform at a higher level of profits, but many landscape maintenance budgets remain somewhat tight.

Walfrido Verendia, grounds manager at Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA, sees continuing budget pressure forcing him to try and maintain the landscape with less resources. "Our budget is shrinking and we have to do more with less. This means less color, less manpower and no extras."

Verendia has found some solutions through outsourcing, particularly installation of landscape areas, installation of irrigation equipment, renovation of the soccer fields and renovation of gullies on the property.

Although most contractors we contacted are keenly aware of their competition, they also

Operating problems that can limit your growth



At least she insists

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see plenty of new opportunities developing from their markets and even from their competitors' moves.

David Daniell of Heads Up Landscape Contractors in Albuquerque, explained: "Our main design/build competitor has dominated his segment of the market by extremely successful marketing and aggressive pricing. However, they are beginning to be victims of their own success, providing opportunities for us."

Survey respondents continue to feel the pinch of low-ball competition and "unethical" players. Cathy Clark, Clark Lawn Service, Indianapolis, IN, remarks, "We need more licensing and registry requirements to make the lowballers play on the same field regarding insurance, zoning regulations and tax responsibilities!"

Consolidation drives changes

The effect of consolidation as a factor limiting company growth is not considered very important; in fact 59% considered it to be least important. That isn't to say that there isn't some effect, but most businesses seem confident that they can define a niche or expand on a service.

Dale Amstutz of Northern Lawns, Omaha, NE, sees increased competition as an issue because some of the new smaller businesses are offshoots of consolidated companies.

"People leave and start their own businesses. Some know what they're doing, some don't and some don't know how to

bid," he says. "While four to five applications are standard, some businesses are doing them in seven or eight so that comparisons of cost per treatment looks better, even though the actual cost for the season is similar."

Customer turnover is one of the costs of high competition, says Amstutz. "We lose a certain amount each year — but a lot come back." He reports an annual customer retention rate



Dale Amstutz

of +85%, with an estimated 2% returning after they've tried someone else. Offering tree care to non-lawn customers is one option he's moving into, with good return.

Another new service Amstutz is offering is outdoor structural perimeter pest control. And he's confident — an important characteristic to compete in this business. 'Who does work as good as you do in your market,' we asked? "No one," he stated firmly.

Big isn't better for Scott Carlisle either. He's manager of Valley Landscape & Maintenance, Boise, ID. Referring to

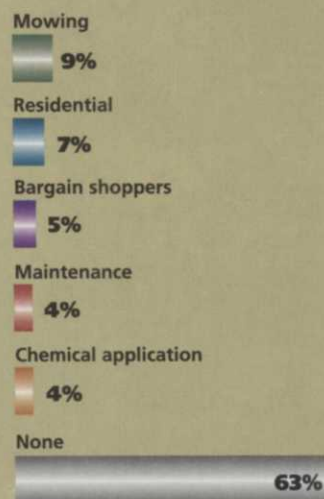
his two larger lawn care and maintenance competitors, he says, "This can be a positive for guys like me. They tend to lose the personal touch."

Many industry professionals feel unaffected by the moves of the giant consolidators, since they are not direct competitors or even service the same segments of the market. But they may feel more competition in the future because of consolidation, predicted Stu Mayer, Sunburst Landscape, Cranberry Township, PA. The consolidations

"affect a small percent of the total market. A large quantity of middle managers are going to be unemployed or self-employed after (the consolidators') systems are integrated. Look at other industries merging like banking. This will be the next result."

The industry's consolidation may involve giant firms, but even Carlisle feels its effects. Before TruGreen-ChemLawn bought PermaGreen (another local lawn care firm), Carlisle relied on them to do his chemical application work. Now, things are different. "We're starting to do chemical applications. We subcontracted all our chemical work to PermaGreen and (at the time) they didn't do mowing. Now, they're mowing."

Services you're planning to drop



Many contractors and grounds managers also feel the effects of supplier consolidation. Verendia explained that supplier consolidation means less service for his grounds management operations. In his case, the supplier also provided field maintenance of irrigation equipment.

Services to drop

While this decision depends more on an individual company's business profile and customer mix, we did see some similarities in services contractors plan to drop for 1999 or 2000 (63.2% plan no drop in services):

► Mowing services will be dropped by 8.8%; primarily by companies ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000 (12%). Respondents from the Midwest

(13.3%) and Northeast (11.1%) seem to find this more frustrating and plan to drop.

► Only 3.7% plan to drop maintenance (highest was companies between \$500,000 and \$1 million with 7.7%).

► Chemical application may be dropped by a small portion of the market also, with 3.7% opting for this.

As for customers, 7.4% of survey respondents plan to drop residential customers from their list, while 5.1% of the contractors will get rid of those pesky bargain shoppers and slow-paying clients.

'What ifs' keep life interesting

Who doesn't wish for a crystal ball, or at least a game plan if things go south? It's not unheard of for dramatic events (economic or otherwise) to turn a market around. But even the experts are not forecasting the possibility of anything dire.

Sure, interest rates may inch up more quickly than expected or foreign events may eventually affect the balance of payments. If the economic boom starts to affect the landscape industry, it won't be without warning. Unemployment claims will jump, construction starts will slow, interest rates will climb and disposable income will get tighter.

As for some quick fallout of the market, that seems unlikely right now. This high-flying cycle is built on unprecedented consumer confidence in their investments and in the system, and that may take quite a while to shake. **LM**

Consumer Confidence Counts

The economy's (and the landscape industry's) growth depends in large part on the confidence that consumers continue to have. Their outlook on investing in stocks, buying and building new homes and their ability to pay for professional landscape services is a key factor to watch. Two studies in particular indicate continuing (but not so strong) growth for professional landscape services.

► The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) predicts that fewer commercial intermediate walk mowers will be sold in model year 2000. The sales of commercial riding mowers should remain constant. The OPEI bases its projections on fewer housing starts and sales of existing single-family homes in the coming months, as well as the University of Michigan's continuing studies of consumer confidence.

Their trends show a reduction in the sales of commercial walk-behind mowers, but a 5% jump in sales of commercial riding mowers this year. Then, trends for housing and mower purchases show a slight slowdown going into the year 2000.

COMMERCIAL MOWER PROJECTED SALES

	Model Year			
	1997	1998	1999	2000
Commercial intermediate walkers	48,300	49,700	48,399	48,300
Commercial riding mowers	52,400	65,100	68,226	68,585

► The annual Gallup survey of American homeowners using professional landscape and lawn care services also projects growth in some areas and declines in others. Maintenance for landscape and lawns in 1998 showed a hefty 32% increase over services in 1997, and total spending for landscape services jumped \$2.2 billion. The big winner in this survey was landscape installation and construction services, which grew an impressive \$2.7 billion alone.

But landscape design services dropped off by \$100 million and tree care lost even more in revenues — \$700 million (leaving the overall total of growth to \$2.2 billion). And while the survey showed an amazing 48% increase in the average amount spent per household, it also showed a significant decline in the number of households using these services. Is this statistically meaningful? It may be too soon to make any assumptions, but the drop in some service areas and loss of customers should definitely be watched.

The survey is sponsored by the American Nursery & Landscape Association, the International Society of Arboriculture, the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, the National Arborist Association and the National Gardening Association.

U.S. HOUSEHOLDS USING PROFESSIONAL LANDSCAPE SERVICES (IN MILLIONS)

	1997	1998	Change
Landscape/lawn maintenance	14.3	13.7	- 600,000
Landscape installation/construction	2.0	2.4	+ 400,000
Landscape design	1.1	1.2	+100,000
Tree care	5.6	4.1	-1,500,000
Total	23.0	21.4	-1,600,000

SOURCE: OPEI

SOURCE: GALLUP SURVEYS



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Get with the program!

Everyone talks a good game about managing teams, but the few that make it happen share information, responsibility and rewards.

By GEORGE WITTERSCHEIN

Teamwork is such an obviously good idea that you may take it for granted. These four companies of different sizes consider teamwork a major article of faith. Here's a look at how they live that philosophy.

Share the news

Chapel Valley Landscape Co. of Woodbine, MD, employs about 250 people and generates revenues of between \$15 million and \$16 million. The family-owned com-

pany provides residential and commercial design/build and maintenance, as well as water management/irrigation and lighting.

Hans Bleinberger, residential manager, describes his company's path to teamwork as a part of an evolutionary process.

"You know that to get anything done, you're going to have to have a lot of people helping you," he says.

Bleinberger is committed to teaming on an exceptionally strong level, starting with communication. "I know that communication is a trite, overused word, but that's what it is — sharing information. We're an open-book company in that we share our financials with our employees at all levels. I take a lot of pride involving the team in developing a sound budget, and then letting *them* come up with a strategy to meet the budget. We keep them up to date on how they're doing and how their strategy is working."

Does this mean if he's thinking about

buying a new chipper, he actually runs that past his team? Yes. "We tell the employees we're looking at a piece of equipment and this is how the purchase would affect our overhead, how it might affect the bottom line. Then we ask, 'What do you think? Do you want to hold tight, or do you want to buy?'" he explains.

The residential division has three teams of about 12 to 15 people each. "I migrate between those teams and tie them together," he says.

Communication methods include:

- ▶ A company newsletter in both English and Spanish
- ▶ E-mail



J. Landon Reeve

cont. on page 50



The F620 Z-Trak™ Zero-Turning-Radius Mower

When trimming, the F620 Z-Trak Mower has the inside track. The left-hand mower blade is canted toward the left drive wheel for a closer cut. And the entire deck itself is offset to the trim side and set back. In short, this advanced mower takes being on the cutting edge quite seriously — unlike most other zero-turning-radius mowers.

Obvious results are a gorgeous trim and pleased customers. (Not so obvious is all the walk-behind and line trimmer touch-up time this close-cutting mower saves you.)

Of course, its geometry isn't the only thing on your side. There's also the ability to power the new (and unique) John Deere 60-inch, 7-gauge, stamped-steel deck; precise controls; industry-best servicing; and excellent hillside stability — to name a few.

Remember, when it comes to zero-turning-radius mowers, it's not how well they turn, but how well they trim. Interested? Visit your local John Deere dealer (call 1-800-537-8233 to find one near you).



The rear of the F620 Mower stays within the cutting arc, so there are no trampled flowers or fences to be mended.

Circle No. 109



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cont. from page 47

► Phones with combination cell phones/radios that act like walky-talkies

► Weekly meetings (foremen, field managers, design, sales, the ranks).

Chapel Valley also provides ample incentives. "We do branch profit-sharing," Bleinberger says. "All the employees are eligible for a fixed sum each quarter. Since we're open book, we're in a position to say, 'If we put a couple of Saturdays in here, it will get us over the hump and we'll make our number.'"

But does the teamwork approach really work? "We can say without a doubt that it does, evidenced by a couple of things. One is just the stability of our team. It has longevity. And when your folks go on to other opportunities, the team has enough strength to withstand it. We've been able to weather the storms of market ups and downs, of competition, fairly well. I think teamwork is our strength. It's what has allowed us to grow and to do so in a controlled manner."

He continues, "Customer satisfaction and perception also benefit. A customer looks out and sees everybody working hard, the foreman and the crew doing their thing, they have a system down, the tarps are coming off the truck, the tools are out ... it clearly looks like teamwork in motion. I think the customer extrapolates that out to the quality of the job they are going to get and the value they paid for."

Interestingly, when *Landscape Management* phoned Chapel Valley for an interview, we discovered a teaming attitude right off the bat. We asked owner-president J. Landon Reeve to speak with us, and he promptly recommended we speak with Bleinberger: "Hans is very passionate about the subject." Informed of the hand-off, Bleinberger responded, "That's Landon. He gives the credit and is very comfortable stepping out of the spotlight for other members of the team."

Make TQM work for your services

Teamwork is both an everyday common-sense idea and a major element in Total Quality Management, today's leading management philosophy worldwide.

TQM is the source of such buzzwords as quality circles, self-managing work groups and participative management. While such language can sound like mere jargon, it can make a huge difference to business success — if you apply it.

Tim Doppel of Atwood LawnCare did. He heard one of the last public lectures of W. Edwards Deming, the legendary founder of TQM, in Detroit half a decade ago. Doppel reports that although TQM leans strongly toward manufacturing, with some effort on his part, he was able to apply the thinking to his service business.

Of course, TQM is nothing new and many related ideas continue to evolve. For example, Doppel says that he picked up much of his teaming philosophy from non-TQM sources, including discussions with green industry colleagues. But if you care to go to the sources, here are some books:

The Total Quality Management Handbook by John L. Hradesky, December 1994. About \$75; 712 pages. McGraw Hill Text; ISBN: 0070305110. This is an exhaustive (and possibly exhausting) text with substantial treatment of leadership and team building.

The Quality Improvement Handbook: Team Guide to Tools and Techniques by Roger C. Swanson, March 1995. About \$50; 267 pages. Saint Lucie Press; ISBN: 188401559X. This book attempts to apply TQM ideas both to manufacturing and service businesses, and also serves as a sourcebook for tools supporting a team-based quality improvement effort.

The Man Who Discovered Quality: How W. Edwards Deming Brought the Quality Revolution to America — The Stories of Ford, Xerox, and GM by Andrea Gabor, Paperback Reprint edition February 1992. About \$14. Penguin USA; ISBN: 0140165282. This is a popular book about the founder of TQM and his thinking.

Share the rewards

The approximately 200 employees at L&L Landscape Services Inc., now a Tru-Green LandCare firm in Sunnyvale, CA, serve industrial and commercial clients in the counties surrounding San Francisco Bay. L&L's net revenues are between \$11 million and \$12 million.

How did partners Steve Glover and Rob Zolezzi get into the teamwork mode? Glover explains, "While teamwork is part of my nature, the actual process of making it happen was spurred on by going to association sessions, hearing the message reinforced and seeing how to build a good team."

Finding the right people is the key, Glover says. "The most important part is finding team members who are complementary to each other and to the vision of

the group. More important than the technical skills of the team members is the ability of those team members to support and contribute to the relationship."

Once L&L has people in place, it uses incentives to reinforce the philosophy. "Once they are a team, we give them a motivation to work well as a team. But we do it in that order. If you take people who are incompatible, it's not going to be very productive no matter how much you incentivize them," he says.

L&L's day-to-day teams include:

► The executive team (comprised of Glover, Zolezzi, the CFO, the vice president of operations and the director of sales — they share incentives with themselves and within their departments)

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► Each department is organized as a team

► The ultimate team: production crews; "If they work well together, they are rewarded, which reinforces a team spirit."

Glover can measure the success of the teaming philosophy at L&L. "Since we put our executive team in place a few years ago, our revenues and profits have increased substantially."

Share the responsibility

Atwood LawnCare is a \$1.25-million company in Sterling Heights, MI. Its 18 employees serve approximately 5,000 single-family residential customers in Detroit's northeast suburbs, says owner/president Tim Doppel. Although his firm is small, it won the 1996 Environmental Improvement Award from the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

"I've always believed in giving my employees as much rope as they can possibly use without hanging themselves," says Doppel.

"Right from the get-go, I tried to involve my people as much as possible in de-

cision making by giving them enough rein to do what I feel they know how to do."

Exactly what does that mean at Atwood? "I make sure that I inform my workers about what is going on with the business side of the company. For example, they know about the replacement plan for vehicles; they



Tim Doppel

know about the needs for office equipment; they know on a percentage basis how we're doing with sales and production," he explains.

This communication takes place informally, he says. "We're small enough I can do a tailgate thing, pull everybody together and say, 'I want you guys to know what's going on with this.' Each February, we actually go off-site to a conference room at a local hotel and spend a day just getting everybody on the same page. We talk about

our corporate philosophy, on how to run the business and how to approach customers. And I share with them how we did last year."

Doppel describes himself as "a very hands-off manager." As a consequence, he tries to hire and retain employees who can handle things themselves. For example, he treats each of his technicians as a kind of independent route manager. They have their own geographic areas and they're responsible for getting the work done and building those areas. "As long as the numbers are

good and going in the direction they're supposed to, I'll stay out of their way," he adds.

Interestingly, Doppel reports that not everybody is comfortable with this style of management. "Everybody's a self-starter when you interview them," he says. "But it becomes obvious very quickly whether or not it's true, and whether they're going to survive under the current system."

Share the burden

OneSource is a national service corporation, headquartered in Atlanta. Ronald Schmoyer serves as president of OneSource Landscape and Golf Services, the company's landscaping division (other divisions offer janitorial, HVAC, energy, pest control and staffing services). His division works from Pennsylvania to Florida, has revenues of \$45.5 million and 1,200 employees at peak season.

"This is not an individual sport," Schmoyer says when asked about teamwork. "In this business, we're only going to win as team players."

But how does he do it? "One of our biggest thrusts in 1999 is to develop a team

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(Twenty awarded per month; see rules for details)

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approach with our sister corporation in the janitorial arena, to do cross-marketing of our customer bases," Schmoyer responds. "For that to work, we have to establish some good teamwork with our counterparts in other parts of the company."

And internally within his division?

"One of the things that has made us so successful is our structure," he continues. "Our district managers are responsible for the operation in a particular area. The structure promotes the entrepreneurial spirit — we really want the district managers to operate as if it's their own business and to develop their own team players."

"We want them to be making most of the decisions, but we also like to be the mentor to help them develop further. If one of them is working on an unusually large project, that's when I'd like them to raise their hand and say, 'We could use some assistance.' That's a team player. And then we'll help them."

Schmoyer's district managers share in the rewards in entrepreneurial fashion. "Over the last four years, we initiated incentive programs and we've been tweaking them as they go along. The district managers receive a fairly sizable bonus on a

Strong teams = retention made easy

One of the best benefits of teaming is in recruiting, hiring and employee retention. All three of our featured landscape companies report good results:

▶ **Steve Glover of L&L Landscape Services Inc.:**

"I think teaming makes it easier to recruit and hire. Our people go out and tell their friends and relatives about us. We don't have a problem at that level. And we have a very low turnover rate. If you were to compare our employee retention with comparable companies, we'd do very well."

▶ **Hans Bleinberger of Chapel Valley Landscape:**

"We find that recruiting and hiring are easier because of teamwork. One of the things we do as a company is recruiting incentives. We let the team know when we need a crewman or a foreman. Somebody will say, 'I've got a friend just getting out of college who's looking for a position.' If we hire the friend and he stays with us for 90 days, the employee who made the recommendation gets a financial reward. We also have really good stability with the team — we don't see much turnover."

▶ **Ron Schmoyer of OneSource:**

"We've never had a problem on a management level. But just like a fast food chain or a resort, we find that labor is a challenge. That's why we instituted some incentives. There's a sign-on bonus for new hourly employees and also a bonus for an employee who brings someone in (if that person stays for three months, the employee can make \$350)."

quarterly basis. We're weighting it 60% on total revenue, 20% on new growth and then 20% what we call 'operating contribution,' which in some organizations would be called net profit."

OneSource teams coordinate through:

▶ Monthly senior management team (vice presidents, controller and human resources person) meetings

▶ Weekly conference calls with all district managers, followed by separate staff meetings with all district-level employees

▶ Semi-annual management meetings

Signs that the teamwork approach is succeeding include:

▶ Annual revenue has grown from about \$23 million to \$45.5 million in five years

▶ OneSource's parent organization in Atlanta is adopting the landscape/golf division's teaming tactics. **LM**

—The author is a freelance writer and frequent contributor based in Mendham, NJ.

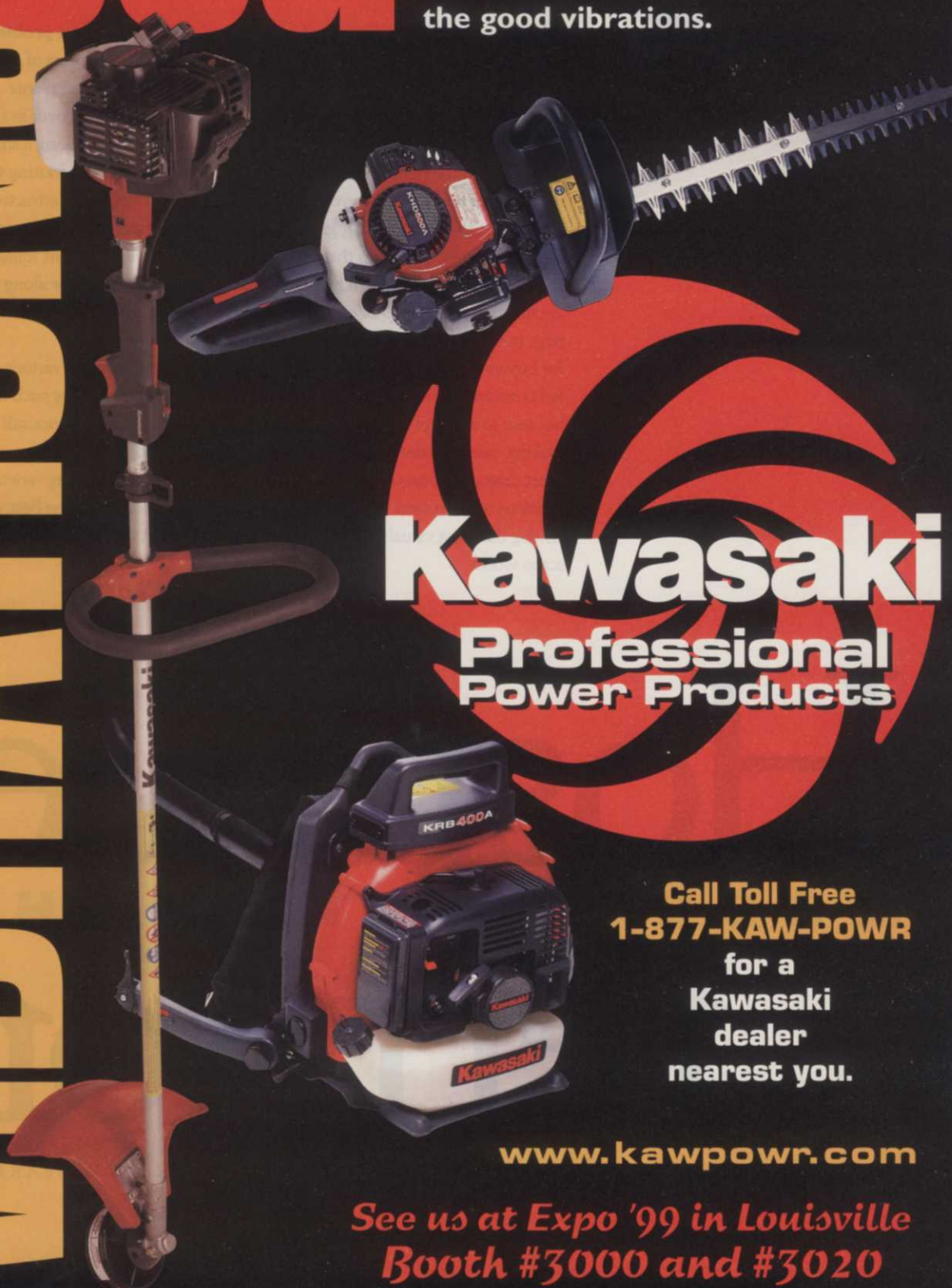


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Hostas are a natural problem-solver in many landscapes and can be a valuable part of a low-maintenance design.

Do you know the best varieties?

Back in the 1600s, a gardening craze took over Europe. Everyone planted tulips — billions of them. Garden history books called it the period of Tulipmania.

We are in the middle (or just the beginning) of a period that may eventually be referred to as the age of hostas, grasses, daylilies and wildflowers. Nurseries that didn't offer any of these plants 10 (even five) years ago are now listing 10 or 15 of each, page after page in their catalogs, with few descriptions for buyers to make good choices. I think this fad is nursery driven, particularly the hostas, because so many of them make such a good looking, saleable container plant in such a short time (two years or less) from cuttings, divisions or from seed. Hosta stands tall among the most valuable genera in the landscape world.

Sun and shade problem-solvers

Through years of use, hostas can be used as:

- ▶ specimen plants
- ▶ ground cover in shade
- ▶ edging along a shady walk
- ▶ bold contrasting texture or color
- ▶ source of attractive bloom in the summer and early fall months

▶ light, bright foliage in a dark spot, around ponds or along stream banks (not in overly moisture retentive soils or standing water)

▶ as one of various architectural shapes (upright arching such as 'Sagae' or 'Krossa Regal' or tight mounds like 'Mount Royal' or 'Golden Tiara').

The following varieties are among what I consider to be the best, categorized by leaf and plant size, type of leaf and color of foliage.

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Hosta-ile

MADE FOR THE SHADE

territory

By ANDREW SPARKS

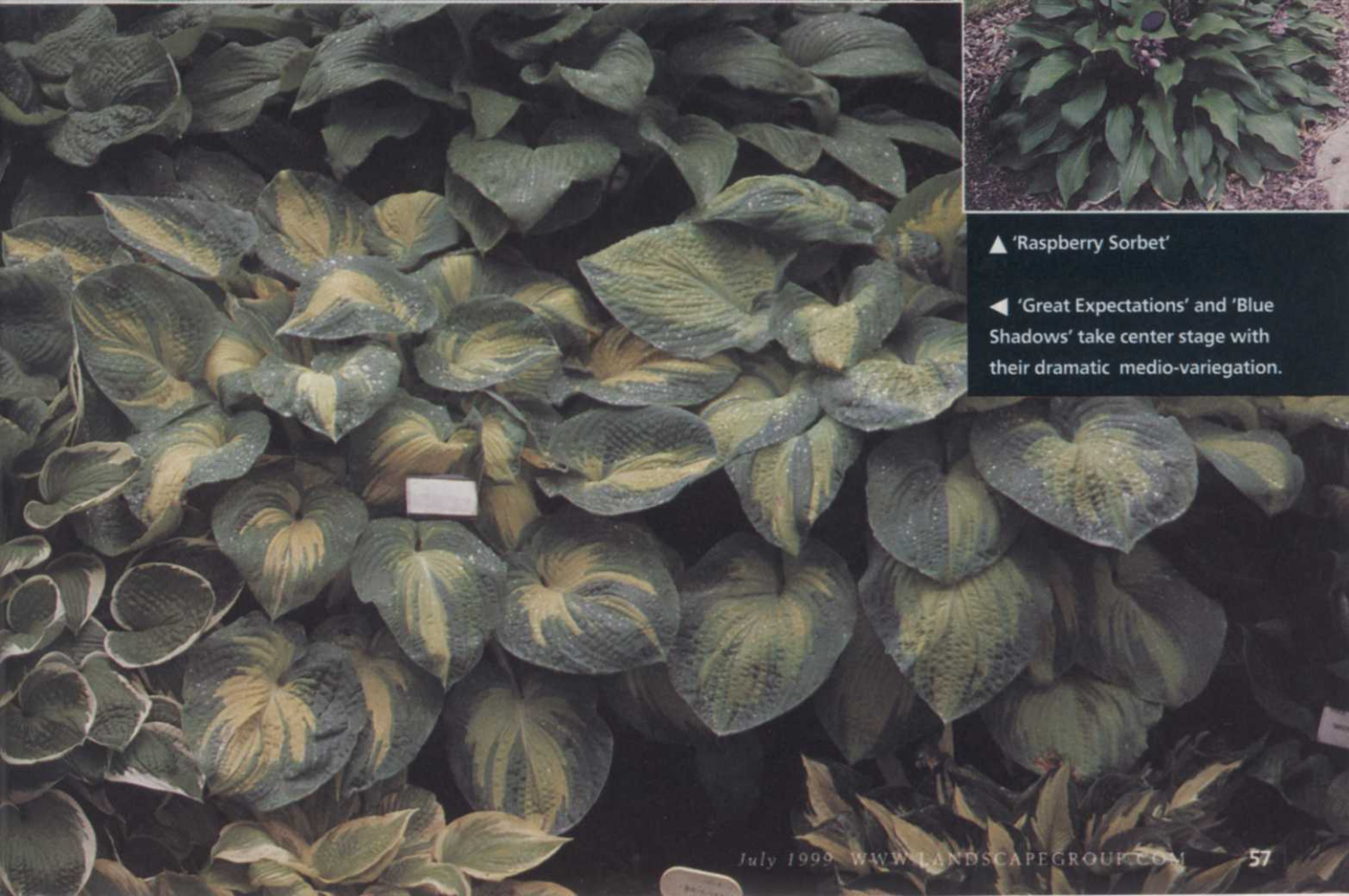


▲ A shaded garden, lush and green, filled with a variety of hostas.



▲ 'Raspberry Sorbet'

◀ 'Great Expectations' and 'Blue Shadows' take center stage with their dramatic medio-variegation.



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SL96 FlipUp Decks leave plenty of trailer space for revenue-producing attachments.



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Dwarf/Miniature — Leaves smaller than 3 in. by 3 in., plants develop into a 15-in. mound or less.

▶ *Hosta venusta* or 'Tiny Tears' — green leaves; less than 1.5-in. violet flowers early in July.

▶ *H. venusta* 'Variegata' — leaves have green margins and white centers.

▶ 'Golden Tiara' — heart-shaped, green leaves with gold to chartreuse margins; long-blooming, deep blue flower to 22-in. height in mid-July.

▶ 'Dorset Blue' — blue, round leaves with heavy slug resistant substance; 12-in. tall, white flowers in early August.

Small — leaves to 6 in., plants grow to 24-in. across.

▶ 'Raspberry Sorbert' — dark green leaves; very neat and uniform; bloom stems reddish, striking with the violet flowers; slug resistant.

▶ 'Ginko Craig' and 'Allan P. McConnell' — leaves have white margins, lanceolate leaves; 'Ginko Craig' is brighter, and has long-blooming flowers in August; 'Allan P. McConnell' is neater.

▶ 'Kabitan' and 'Lemon Lime' — bold, bright, lanceolate, chartreuse leaves; purple flowers to 18 in. in August; Lemon Lime easier to grow, more slug resistant; Kabitan is more dramatic.

▶ 'Gold Edger' — is similar, but with white flowers.

▶ 'Blue Cadet' and 'Blue Danube' — very blue heart-shaped leaves; light lavender flowers in July; slug resistant.

Medium — leaves to 10 in., plants to 36-in. across, 18 to 24-in. tall.

▶ 'Invincible' — shiny, dark green leaf; 3-inch fragrant flowers in August on 33-in. tall stems.

▶ 'Mount Royal' — similar to 'Invincible,' but with lighter green foliage and a tolerance of full sun; like 'Ginko Craig' mature plant has hundreds of flower stems.

▶ 'Blue Dimples,' 'Blue Wedgewood,' 'Halcyon' — white flowers; blue, heavy substance, slug-resistant foliage; 'Wedgewood' is larger; 'Halcyon' is smoother leafed; 'Dimples' is smallest.

▶ 'Gold Standard' — leaves golden with a narrow, bright dark green, irregular margin; can sun scald; pale lavender 18-in. flower stems.

▶ 'Patriot' — perhaps the best of the white margined Hostas; 1997 Hosta of the Year; very dramatic with lavender flowers; 'Francee' has narrower white margins.

▶ 'So Sweet' — white margined Hosta without as heavy a substance as 'Patriot'; very fragrant nearly white flowers; 3/4 sun.

Large — leaves to 18-in. long and 15-in. across, foliage clumps to 7 ft. across and larger.

▶ *H. plantaginea* 'Aphrodite' — average green leaves; double flowered, very fragrant on top of 30-in. tall stems in late August into September.

▶ 'Blue Angel' and *H. sieboldiana* 'Elegans' — very blue leaves; 'Angel' leaves pointed looking; 'Elegans' leaves broader and more tropical looking; flowers on 'Angel' to 44 in., blooming in mid-June into July; 'Elegans' reach 22 to 30 in. and are not impressive (I would cut them off).

▶ *H. fluctuans* 'Variegata' 'Sagae' — my favorite hosta; blue-green leaves with wide, creamy yellow margins that become more cream colored into the season; heavy slug resistant substance without heavy corrugation; upright vase shape makes it a unique specimen; 4-in. lavender flowers; 2000 Hosta of the Year.

▶ 'Krossa Regal' — bluish-gray foliage becoming gray-green in late summer; unique vase shape like 'Sagae'; lavender flowers on 5-ft. tall stems in August.

▶ 'Great Expectations' — irregular blue-green leaf with light yellow-cream center; perhaps the best of the large-leaved hostas with lighter color in the center; the brightness and the streakiness of the center make this an eye catcher; 30-in. flower stems do not enhance the look of the plant; slug resistant.

They take time, like good wine

Hostas, like most other perennials, change and improve with age. These descriptions are for mature plants, but if what you buy doesn't match the description, don't be alarmed. It usually takes two years for leaf size to develop and five years for plant size. Margins will also increase over time. If it is vastly different, ask your supplier.

If the flowers are not of particular benefit to the appearance or design value of the plant, cut them off before opening. They will drop petals onto the leaves and may stick there, diminishing the foliage value significantly. Flowers are unimportant to 'Dorset Blue,' 'Blue Cadet,' 'Blue Danube,' 'Patriot,' 'Gold Standard,' *H. sieboldiana* 'Elegans' and 'Great Expectations.'

Other hostas should have their bloom stems removed following bloom fade and their leaves washed off. But watch out with the water — too hard a spray or too frequent watering can dilute the waxy gray and blueness of the foliage.

Getting fast growth

In my experience, the quickest to reach their design size are 'Ginko Craig,' 'Lemon Lime,' 'Mount Royal,' 'Blue Angel,' 'Sagae' and 'So Sweet.' The slowest are 'Dorset Blue,' 'Kabitan' and 'Aphrodite.'

For rapid development of a hosta, dig a hole four times as wide and 1.5 times the depth of its container or root spread, backfill with a mix of 1/3 peat moss or leaf humus, 1/3 topsoil and 1/3 excavated soil from the hole. Set the plant at the height of the existing grade and mulch with 1 in. of shredded hardwood bark. Plant should be sited in 50% shade as full sun or shade are usually not conducive to hosta development or appearance.

Until the next time, hosta la vista, baby!

The author is president of the landscape architecture firm, Andrew L. Sparks and Associates Inc., Garfield Heights, OH.



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Tree specialist to the stars



For Salinas Landscaping and Tree Preservation, success comes from the pursuit of excellence and new challenges.

By DON DALE

Carlos Salinas' landscaping business in Los Angeles specializes in tree care. Anything you want done with a tree, his crews can do it for you. They are that versatile and skilled.

He does it so well he is in demand in the upscale suburbs on the west side, where some of his clients are stars and some of the houses he tends are as big as city halls. Yet the aspects of the business that Salinas loves are the aspects that challenge him personally and offer major potential for the company in the future.

A case in point, and a big development for Salinas Landscaping and Tree Preservation, is the addition last year of a tree nursery. It's modest in size

now — about 1,500 trees — but gives him a chance to not only reduce costs, but also introduce a retail potential.

"When we do installations we'll put in our own trees," Salinas says. "There's a lot of money in trees."

But this is only the latest news from a company that has specialized in trees for the 20 years it has been in operation. Carlos' father, Antonio Salinas, started it after working for other companies for years, and Carlos kept the focus when he started running the company about five years ago (his father now is semi-retired).

The company installs trees, moves trees, trims and maintains trees. Salinas estimates that maintenance is 30% of his business, with about 30% new installations and 40% one-time tree-trimming jobs.

"We have a tree-trimming crew, which we sometimes break in two," says Salinas, who employs 15 people on a full-time basis. "We have four

Antonio Salinas II waters nursery trees until drip irrigation can be installed.

climbers on a regular basis and we have a guy on installation who can be a climber."

His normal tree crew for a large residential tree job — many of his jobs in Bel Air and Brentwood are large houses and large jobs — is six men. At any one time, he might actually have three crews doing trees, especially if he has small, two-man jobs waiting.

"We do mowing," he says. "We do landscape touch-up." But he tries to keep his other landscape maintenance work to a minimum in order to do justice to the huge demand for tree work. The company has also done large jobs, for example trimming trees at UCLA, but he focuses on residential work for clients such as Goldie Hawn and Pat Boone.

But that focus may change somewhat as the trees that the company planted early last year mature. Salinas hopes to grow the tree farm into a lucrative ancillary business.

"We're just putting a variety of trees in there now," he says, pointing out that they are planted in boxes on the Malibu property of a client who grows wine grapes and citrus there. Salinas' father and the owner, George Rosenthal, decided to go partners on the venture.

"He supplies the land, we supply the labor," Salinas says. The landowner and Salinas each invest half of the cost of purchasing small trees and the 24-inch boxes they are planted in. Rosenthal supplies water, and Salinas will do the moving and transplanting when the trees are sold.

The tree farm takes up only about an acre now, and has plenty of room to expand. The incentive is entirely economic.

Trees have become so expensive that in the past Salinas has been paying up to \$200 for a 24-inch boxed tree — and possibly \$1,000 for a 48-inch box. Specialty trees are even more expensive. Palms are sold for about \$150 per foot in this area.

Of course, he passes that expense along, but a typical nursery makes a lot of profit that he would like to get. He bought his first trees for \$15, and added \$10 for each box with soil. By the time he sells them a year or so later, Salinas estimates that he will have about \$35 invested in them, which adds up to a \$165 profit if sold in the 24-inch box (half of that profit going to his company).

But he will certainly "box-up" some trees, re-

potting them into ever larger boxes for buyers who want a more mature tree. That should increase the profit margin.

Salinas says he is also providing a good recycling location for the tons of tree refuse he chips every year. He not only gets good potting and ground mulch, but he saves \$30 per ton in landfill fees that he would pay every time he sends a truck to the dump.

"The hardest part is to know which trees to grow," Salinas says. His experience and preliminary research led him to sycamore, oak, pepper, white birch and Chinese elm, which are well adapted and common to the California coast.

"We'll probably have them a year, a year and a half, to get the roots established," he says of the bare-root trees he bought. Some species will obviously take longer. "I'm not sure how long we'll have the oak."

One of the advantages that Salinas had is the company has been around long enough to have some surplus capital. That, plus having a partner go halves, gave him a big boost over someone who would have to borrow the investment money.

There is still more to do, obviously. He is accumulating the pipe required to put the trees on drip irrigation, for example.

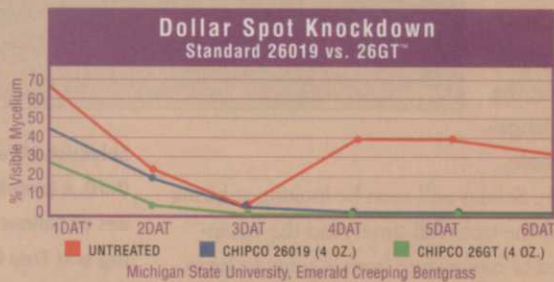
In addition, Salinas will soon be looking at hiring a man to tend the trees full time. And the equipment required to move large trees is going to be ex-

continued on page 66



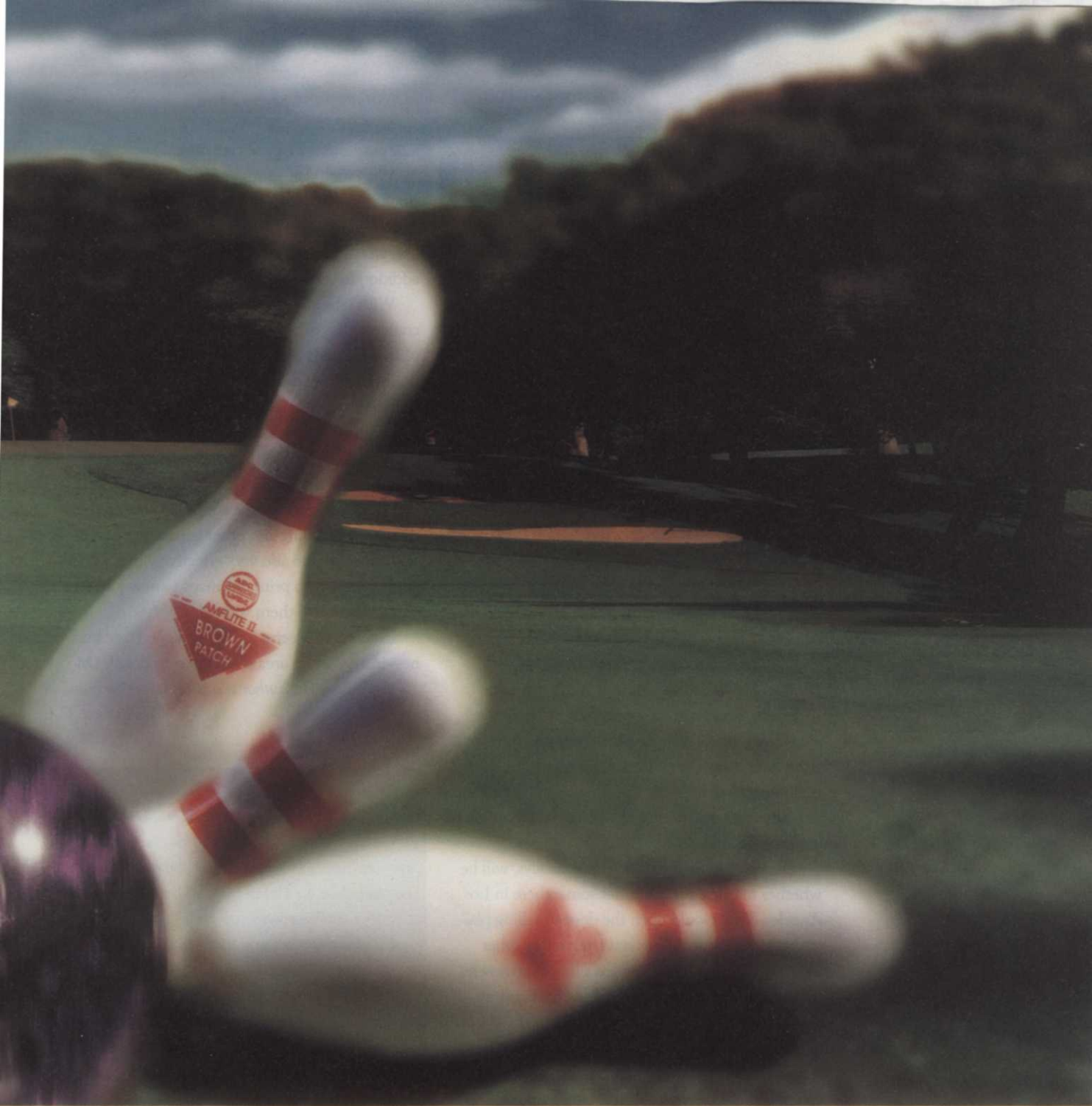
Salvador Miramontes (left), a long-time employee of Salinas Landscaping and Tree Preservation, with Carlos Salinas.

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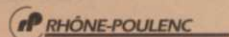
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Circle No. 118 on Reader Inquiry Card



Carlos Salinas, on the left, talks over the job with employees Pedro Cabezas and Adalberto Nieves at an upscale residence in Bel Air.

continued from page 63

pensive. He'll need a crane and another truck.

But he figures he can make money on all the steps along the way. Instead of renting a crane for large installations, he'll furnish his own. The same philosophy will apply to the delivery, the box and, of course, the tree itself. He will also sell to other landscape contractors.

The obvious next decision, Salinas says, will be whether to open a retail outlet somewhere in Los Angeles. That would open the door to selling plastic-potted trees in various sizes, as well as other landscaping supplies. There are a lot of unknowns. Salinas, despite taking some college horticulture classes, is not experienced at growing trees.

For a landscape company to specialize in trees in this day and age is expensive. Salinas has invested in two wood chippers, the largest taking up to 12-inch diameter trunks, and a smaller unit.

"It's hard to get the big chipper in, at some residences," he says. In addition to his six pickups, Salinas has two dump trucks for hauling trash. He also has a stump grinder.

But he says it's not the equipment that makes a good tree company, it's the workers. First, it takes more manpower to trim trees than to mow lawns. Salinas Landscaping has a very stable work force, with two workers being with the company since it started. His newest worker has been with him two years. Maybe that's because he pays well — \$15 to

\$20 per hour for a good tree man.

With such dangerous work at hand, and the possibility of damaging property, another cost that Salinas incurs is liability insurance. He carries \$2 million worth just to be on the safe side, and that is in addition to worker's compensation.

With jobs all over the west side, Salinas says his company has to be light on its feet. He accomplishes that in a couple of ways. First, the crews are fluid. The three or four men who make up the installation crew, for example, will be switched to maintenance if needed. And their irrigation man can also climb trees.

One way that Salinas assists in this flexibility is by being proficient with a computer. He not only does his scheduling and other company business on the computer, he also very effectively uses a street guide program to print out maps to new jobs so a worker can carry them with him.

In short, the secret to having a good tree business in an upscale area is attention to detail. **LM**

—The author is a freelance writer based in Hollywood, CA.

Deep-root feeding

Salinas recently added deep-root fertilizer as a service. The SDI 50-gallon unit cost him \$6,000, but he has picked up a lot of business because of it.

"It's a sprayer/root feeder," he says. "We do more of the root feeding than spraying."

Using water soluble fertilizers, usually a 20-20-20 formulation, Salinas charges \$150 per hour/per bag of fertilizer used. On an average home he will use one or two bags, but on larger homes he might earn up to \$600 with the machine.

"It aerates, loosens up the soil and fertilizes," he says, and the unit is very portable.

Salinas says the feeder is designed to be mounted on a truck or small trailer, but his is not permanently mounted. Since it can be lifted by two men when the tank is empty, they simply keep it in the yard and put it in a truck when needed elsewhere.

He has spread the word to his clients that he has the machine, and his workers keep an eye out for trees that seem nutrient-deficient. "It is a good business," Salinas says happily.

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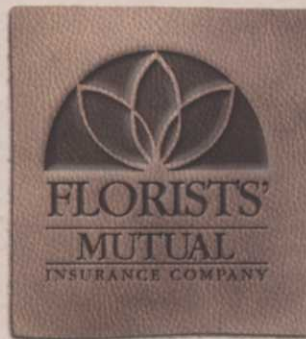
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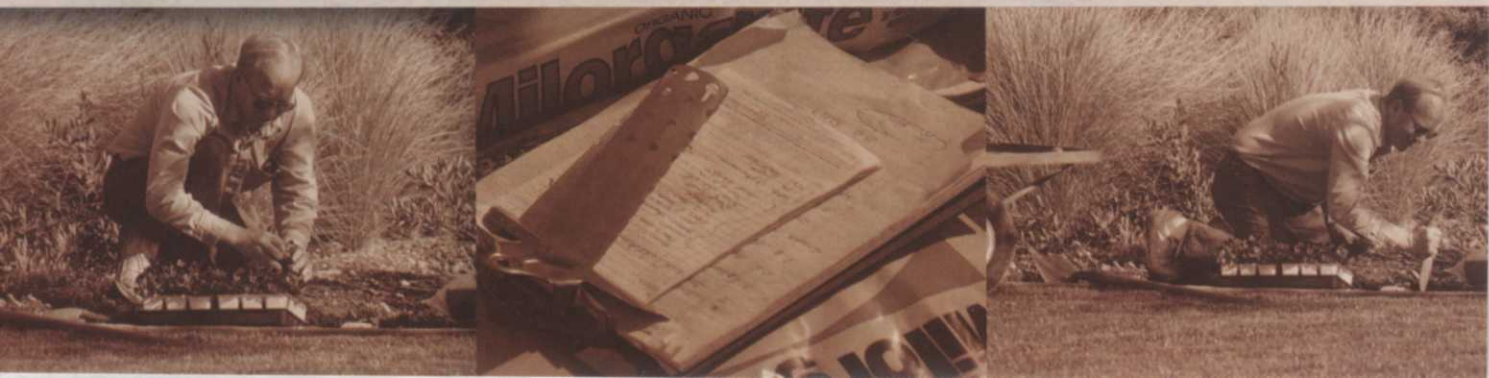
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Make sure you schedule for maintenance

Scheduled preventive maintenance is the best way to prevent unscheduled breakdowns and costly stops in your production.

By MARK NEIDICH

What's that saying about an ounce of prevention beating a pound of cure? A little early expenditure of time and money, through scheduled maintenance, can save your operation from far greater expense later. Scheduled preventive maintenance (PM) is the best way I know to prevent unscheduled breakdowns.

PM is a series of regular inspections and equipment adjustments to catch problems early, before they have a chance to develop into major costly repairs. The preventive maintenance inspection program is one aspect of scheduled maintenance; other key parts are operator inspections and planned component replacement.

An effective preventive maintenance inspection is a systematic servicing and inspection of trucks and equipment at a predetermined interval, based on time, mileage or hours. The interval varies with the type of equipment and its use.

It's the system that counts

The primary objective of a PM program is to maximize truck and equipment availability. Remember, PM is a scheduled operation and it produces scheduled repairs so you have maximum use of your mechanics and minimum downtime of your equipment. A good PM program will also minimize unscheduled repairs and unexpected breakdowns.

Diagnosis and correction are vital to any PM program, so necessary repairs should be scheduled by time and planned accordingly. Obviously, it is more cost effective to execute a "planned" repair in the shop than to fix a breakdown in the field.

The preferred method of servicing is usually by the mechanic according to a routine schedule. I break out PM into three general schedules, ac-

ording to mileage, time between service and the maintenance performed.

The operators themselves are key to a good inspection system, and inspections should be done routinely by them. Mechanics, too, should make inspections periodically. The inspection should include the following preventive maintenance checks:

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

PMI Vehicle

Inspection:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accident kit | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engine oil level |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gauge | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Running lights |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Automatic transmission | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguishers |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Headlights | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tire pressure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brake | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First aid kit |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydraulic oil level | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Truck inspection |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dashboard light | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Four-way flashers |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Radiator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Turn signals |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two-way radio |

PMI Trailer

Inspection:

- Ball coupler
- Equipment tie-down
- Running lights
- Safety chains
- Turn signals

PMI Equipment

Inspection:

- Engine oil level
- Lubrication
- Radiator
- Tire pressure
- Transmission/hydraulic oil level

Routines that work

When it is time for servicing, make sure your mechanic is performing this according to a routine schedule. The maintenance plan should be broken out into categories, according to mileage or time.

Make sure that all defects are noted and scheduled for repair during the servicing and inspection process. Notify the production department or team so they can adjust the workload. You can't rush these things — the fleet mechanic(s) should be given the time to properly complete repairs.

A good PM program consists of several department levels. Responsibility starts with the operator, who is the cornerstone of an effective program, and then progresses up through the chain of command:

- ▶ Operator
- ▶ Crew leader
- ▶ Mechanic
- ▶ Fleet manager
- ▶ Account manager/operations manager
- ▶ Vice president operations/president/owner.

Smart maintenance management

Applying this information to the green industry can be a challenge. Someone has to implement the program and monitor its progress. Paper is important to the program because it provides structure and accountability. But the types of paper forms you use and how and when they are monitored determine the success of your system. Don't forget that operation and training are as important to the success of the program as the system itself.

It takes a certain amount of time to perform a service. Knowing this, and multiplying it by the number of pieces of equipment, will help you determine the time schedule (when the equipment will be serviced) and how much labor will be needed.

Spare equipment also plays a role in the program. Ideally, a fleet should have 115% of truck and equipment needs. Spare equipment will keep your workers going, even while maintaining your routine maintenance schedule.

Flexible scheduling of maintenance and repairs may be needed to allow you to reduce the time that your trucks and equipment will be out of service. For example, during normal work hours (7 a.m. to 5 p.m.) trucks and equipment could be out producing revenue. This means service time is either before 7 a.m. or after 5 p.m. You can see how production affects the fleet's service hours.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE BASED ON MILEAGE OR TIME

Trucks

Based on manufacturer's recommendation:

3,500 to 5,000 miles/ 3 to 6 months
200 to 400 hours/ 1 year

- Lubrication
- Minor repairs
- Oil change
- Tire pressure

MAJOR SERVICE/WINTER

Based on manufacturer's recommendation:

15,000 to 30,000 miles/ 1 to 2 years
1,200 to 2,400 hours

- Belts
- Brakes
- Cooling system
(Check radiator hoses)
- Exhaust
- Suspension
- Fuel filter
- Testing battery/charging system
- Tires
- Tune up

Equipment

Based on manufacturer's recommendation:

25, 50, 100, 200 hours
1 to 3 months, 6 months to 1 year

- Lubrication
- Minor repairs
- Oil change
- Tire pressure

MAJOR SERVICE/SPRING

Based on manufacturer's recommendation:

250, 500, 750, 1000 hours
3, 6, 9 months, 1 year

- Air-cooled engines
- Belts
- Cooling fins
- Decks: Belts, pulleys, stress cracks
- Drive systems
- Frame: Stress cracks, bearings, bushing
- Hydros: hoses, fluid leaks
- Water cooled engine: radiator/hoses

The fleet department should be working on trucks and equipment ahead of their seasonal production needs. This gives ample time to perform the work and not delay production.

Mark Neidich is fleet manager at Groundmasters, Cincinnati, OH, where he is responsible for 45 trucks and 400 pieces of equipment, including tractors, turf spraying equipment, commercial mowers, small power equipment, snow plows, salt spreaders, trailers and landscape renovation equipment.

Fertigation:

Precise control, surprising solutions

Think fertigation's just for golf courses? Think again. It may be the cost-effective alternative a property needs.

By ROBERT E. REAVES

Depending on whom you ask, there are four major reasons why the landscape trade has not rushed to use fertigation:

- ▶ high comfort level with granular fertilizers;
- ▶ higher cost of fertigation equipment;
- ▶ lack of education or misinformation about fertigation; and
- ▶ unwillingness to move toward alternative management practices.

But contractors are always looking for ways to increase revenue and at the same time improve the quality of the customer's landscape. Managers of commercial landscapes and sport complexes need ways to maximize the efficiency of their crews.

Surprisingly for some, fertigation — the application of fertilizer through drip and sprinkler irrigation systems — could be the answer. Not only does fertigation deliver labor and fertilizer savings, it also can mean a healthier landscape and environment through micro-doses of nutrients.

In the commercial landscape trade, myths about fertigation have slowed its

use, which is unfortunate. Did you know that the golf course market represents approximately 15% or less of the turf market revenues in the United States? That means sports fields and landscapes comprise ample opportunities for the savvy landscape professional or distributor.

Sports fields a good target

"Next to golf courses, the largest growth in fertigation will be the municipal and sports field markets," predicts Danny Kruse, irrigation design department manager for Storr Tractor in Somerville, NJ. He says growing suburban communities are running out of space and must use the ball fields they already have.

"Most of these parks and ball fields have major compaction and drainage problems," Kruse says. "I know of one ball field nearby that is used by more than 3,000 kids in a weekend. That's a lot of footprints. They need a fertigation system badly."

Landscape irrigation contractors have plenty of opportunity, too. "An irrigation contractor makes money two ways — when he installs and when he repairs an irrigation system," observes Michael Chaplinsky, owner of Turf Feeding Systems Inc. in Houston, TX. "Every contractor is looking for secondary income. We encourage contractors to go back to their existing customers and sell injection equipment as an aftermarket add-on."

"We are aggressively moving into the commercial landscape market. For example, we have eight units at Mandalay Bay Casino in Las Vegas, which cover all their

grounds and interiorscapes," adds Chaplinsky. "We micro-dose the turfgrass, which allows us to adjust the fertilizer rates up or down." He pointed out that for a landscape management firm or property manager, this results in fewer clippings and less irrigation.

"My biggest hurdle is getting people to use fertigation correctly and not abandoning the product," says Daryl Green, district manager for Pacific Technical Services, Laguna Hills, CA. "The contractor must take a responsibility with fertigation. It is probably the most ideal way to fertilize in drip systems and on slopes, where granular fertilizers wash away."

Remedy for harsh conditions

Steve Trotter, Midwest Turf, Fort Worth, TX, provides nutrition advisory services for golf courses. "Landscape will follow the golf course market and use more fertigation systems," he predicts.

Trotter says nutrient injection is especially beneficial under tough soil and harsh environmental conditions. "Because you are spoon-feeding the turfgrass, you don't have the purge cycle seen with granulars. Fertigation can be the solution if there are mineral deposit problems with the soils or a deficiency in plant tissue. A soil-applied product can't correct these problems."

Research confirms Trotter's comments about the purge cycle of conventional granular fertilizers. G.H. Snyder, B.J. Augustin and J.L. Cisar — three turfgrass researchers at the University of Florida — presented a paper 10 years ago titled, "Fertigation for Stabilizing Turfgrass Nitrogen



Turf Feeding Systems Inc. Model 500 Valve Box System.

Nutrition." They compared treatments of conventional dry granular ammonium nitrate with ammonium nitrate applied through a fertigation system. They found that nitrogen fertigation stabilized turfgrass nutrition during the last weeks of the bi-monthly fertilization cycles, with lower leaching levels.

What does this mean for the facility manager? Because fertigation gives microdoses of nutrients, you won't see the huge flush of succulent growth on plants and turfgrass found with granular fertilizers. Water requirements decrease, along with fewer grass clippings. "We conducted a test for the city of Santa Fe, NM, on several of their parks and found that water reduction went as high as 48% with nutrient injection systems. In the West, water conservation is the biggest issue today," notes Chaplinsky.

Tim Schumacher, president of Bio Green Injector Systems, Las Vegas, NV, says fertigation offers contractors an important advantage with new landscape installations. "New plantings will look much better with the injector systems during the six-month to one-year warranty program on plant material. The chances of a call-

back are much less." He says many contractors lose plants because of high alkaline soil conditions in the Las Vegas area.

"Because an injector system can be used to buffer soil pH, plant losses and callbacks will decrease."

Equipment for any program

Fertigation equipment costs for agricultural and golf course systems can get expensive, but it's a different story for the landscape and sports field markets. Prices are all over the map and continue to decrease. Units with proportional injection are the most popular:

► Turf Feeding Systems' unit for as little as \$1,000 (Model 500 valve box-ground mount system) is specifically designed for ground mounting at office building complexes, parks, sport fields or large estates. It uses a commercial 15 x 21-

in. lockable valve box, which contains a 15-gallon poly tank.

► Green Tech, a firm in Laguna Hills, CA, sells InjectaFLO™ fertilizer injection systems through two different divisions, Enhanced Technical Services (Dublin, CA) and Pacific Technical Services. "The InjectaFLO system includes a flow sensor that installs in the irrigation main line, conveying variable water flow rate data to an electronic batch control unit," says David Gibson, CEO of Green Tech. "Pulse signals are then relayed to a metering pump that dispenses the correct amount of product for the acreage and flow rate."

"A fertigation unit can cost around \$8,000 for sports field applications," notes Kruse. "Cost is the biggest objection I hear with fertigation. However, if the customer lets me take a look at his budget, I can show how a fertigation system actually

saves money over a five-year period."

Kruse likes a unit from Agri-Inject called Inject-Pro™, a five-foot high unit with a tank built right on the unit. It's easy to use — "almost a no-brainer for the customer" — and includes a polyethylene base, a pump, mixer at the bottom of the tank, injector



Agri-Inject's Inject-Pro

probe and a flow meter. Kruse says it is easy to drop on site and plugs into 110 power sources. It's also available in 12-volt DC model and automatically adjusts pump output to water flow changes for consistent application.

What about residential fertigation systems? "A homeowner should expect to pay around \$2,000 for a professional quality



Fertigation units are used to micro-dose nutrients to the 5.5 acres of turf and roses at the San Jose Municipal Rose garden.

unit. They don't need the 'bells and whistles' of a commercial unit, but should look for a quality unit with flow metering," advises Kruse. Will this market be a significant factor? He says no, believing that most homeowners will shy away from fertigation, with the exception of the high-end homeowner with technical interests.

Others, however, think homeowner interest will rise. Bio-Green Injector's systems for commercial and residential use range from \$49.95 for a half-gallon injector system up to \$330 for a 10-gallon system that will treat up to two acres. "We serve more than 2,000 customers, including Rio Hotel and Casino, Texas Station and the Las Vegas Strip," says Schumacher.

How to get off probation

As head gardener at the 5.5-acre Municipal Rose Garden in San Jose, CA, Mary Heidler has her hands full. "Over the years, the garden shifted from an overhead watering system to a new system with flat popup spray heads and three InjectaFlo fertigation systems to control and monitor nutrient levels," says Heidler. "The turf and rose beds are all on separate heads. The only granular fertilizer we use is a single February application of a systemic product."

Heidler says each of fertigation units costs about \$8,000. But the results have been worth it. "This is an All-American Rose Test Center. When I arrived three

years ago, we were placed on probationary status by the organization. After a year with our new irrigation and fertigation system, we were taken off probation because of the improved health of the plants."

But the system is not perfect, she cautions. "The one problem I see is our inability to use different fertilizers for the roses and the turf. However, we believe fertigation is promoting soil microbial activity — breaking up the top portion of our heavy clay soil." To keep the program going, liquid fertilizer is delivered for two 55-gallon tanks. "Locate a reliable fertilizer distributor before you go with a fertigation system," she notes.

"We believe fertigation is a good idea, especially at high-end properties," adds Mike Schmitt, a manager of WaterWise Systems in Calabassas, CA, the water management division of Environmental Care Inc. "Fertigation offers more effective cost and use of time than granular fertilizer, given that irrigation systems are not that efficient." Schmitt believes fertigation will become

even more popular in the commercial landscape trade, particularly in low-volume irrigation systems.

However, he cautions it is essential to examine the distribution uniformity (DU) before considering a fertigation system.

"Otherwise, you are wasting fertilizer just like water." He recommends an irrigation system should have a minimum of 70% DU.

Kruse will not encourage customers to purchase a fertigation system unless they are willing to undergo water, soil and tissue testing. He says customers like New York City's Central Park have seen the benefits of fertigation when combined with testing.

"If you can satisfy customer needs and also take care of the turf, it's

an economic home run. A compact-sized fertigation unit that features ease of installation and use will overcome most objections facilities managers might have with a fertigation system," Kruse adds. **LM**

—Robert Reaves, who lives in Austin, TX, is with Irricom, a public relations/communications firm.

"The contractor must take a responsibility with fertigation. It is probably the most ideal way to fertilize in drip systems and on slopes, where granular fertilizers wash away."

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Keys to satisfying (and keeping) clients

Top lawn and landscape pros share what they've learned about putting smiles on customers' faces.

By ROBERT E. REAVES

Customer retention equals survival in the landscape business. Increasingly, it seems you have to provide legendary customer service to retain and grow your customer base. But once you catch the customer satisfaction fever, you'll soon realize it's contagious!

"I think customer satisfaction starts in the way we present and perform our service. If your delivery is good, it takes away the variables that promote dissatisfaction," says David Harris, president of Liqui-Green Lawn and Tree Care, Bloomington, IL. His company provides fertilization and pest control for a customer base that is 90% residential and 10% commercial.

We're always ready

"We're on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week," says Howard Freilich, CEO of Blondie's Treehouse Inc., Larchmont, NY. His company is the eighth largest interior landscape management company in the country — with more than 800 clients in the New York City and tri-state area.

"The customer satisfaction philosophy

is the foundation of our company and extends from our employees to our customers," says Wayne Conrad, who built Clean-Cut in Austin, TX, which is now a part of TruGreen LandCare.

Pam Stark, vice president, client relations of Environmental Care Inc., Calabasas, CA, says ECI has a passion for customer satisfaction. "We reinforce the



Environmental Care Inc.'s Pam Stark

importance of customer satisfaction through an ongoing customer survey program, face-to-face client interviews and in-house training programs." ECI has five divisions, including exterior landscape management, interiorscape, water management, golf course management and tree care. They have service centers throughout the United States.

importance of customer satisfaction through an ongoing customer survey program, face-to-face client interviews and in-house training programs." ECI has five divisions, including exterior landscape management,

"We're in a service industry that must deliver excellent customer service," says Richard Akerman, whose Northwest Landscape Industries, Tigard, OR, was an industry leader when it was purchased by TruGreen in 1998. "A company can deliver the absolute best quality landscapes, but if you don't maintain exceptional customer satisfaction, you'll probably lose the business." With three branches in the Portland area, his business is 65% landscape management and 35% landscape installation.

Be quick on the draw

One important way to keep customers satisfied is to respond to service calls quickly.

"If nothing else, leave the customer a note and let them know you have an action plan. Your response time is very important because it lets the customer know you value their business," explains Harris.

Written communication can be an effective tool. "After a contract is signed, we always send a letter thanking the customer for their business," adds Matt Stano, owner of Stano Landscaping, Milwaukee, WI. The company's services include residential





that you value them as a customer," he remarks. His commitment to customer satisfaction even extends to customers who have canceled contracts. "One example is to have focus lunches with people who have actually fired us. Several months later, many of these customers come back to us."

Check and recheck

Job site inspections are an essential part of customer satisfaction at every company we interviewed. Liqui-Green has an inspection program called GoldCare, with one to three inspection of a customer's lawns per year. "We look for any problems and make recommendations for a customer's future needs," Harris explains.

Clean-Cut has an impressive three-step inspection program for its commercial customers. Wayne Conrad visited accounts in his territory every Monday. He walked the properties and visited with the property manager about special needs or problems. The second visit of the week was by the Clean-Cut crew leader, who checked in with the property manager when the crew arrived at the site. At the end of the week, each property was inspected by the director of operations to ensure the work was done to the customer's satisfaction.

Survey and find out

Used correctly, surveys can be an excellent way to evaluate customer satisfaction and strengthen relationships with customers. When ECI begins a contract with a

new customer, they survey the client about 60 days after the contract begins. Existing customers receive a written survey once per year. Survey results are tabulated by service center, region and division — providing an excellent snapshot of customer satisfaction levels.

"Complaints from customers are seen as an opportunity at ECI," comments Stark. After a service center receives a complaint, the service center manager contacts the customer to resolve the problem. Several weeks later, Stark contacts the customer to make sure the service center responded to their complaint. "We actually encourage complaints. When we take action and exceed customer expectations, it makes the bond even stronger between ECI and the client." Stark says this ECI philosophy is called "service recovery."

Harris believes surveys can be valuable when used under certain guidelines. "A company should use surveys strictly as surveys — not vehicles for up-selling a customer. In many cases, companies take surveys to the extreme and constantly use them for up-selling," he says. That can irritate clients.

Your customer satisfaction program? Build it on getting back to customers quickly, listening to them and delivering what they want—when they want it.

Robert Reaves is with Irricom, a communication and PR firm located in Austin, TX.

and commercial landscape design, construction and management, as well as a snow and ice control operation. "When a major snowfall comes, we do mass faxing to update our customers on snow plow service to let them know we are coming back. We remind them if they have any special needs to give us a call, allowing us to stay one step ahead of the customer."

Stano believes that aesthetics are important to customers — little things like placing tarps over piles of topsoil or sweeping the sidewalk. Some landscape construction projects can leave the customer very upset. "There is a tendency in the landscape construction business is to start a job, leave and come back later. We try to get as much done as possible at a construction site. This leaves the customer with the feeling that the project is progressing well."

Let customers tell you

Meanwhile in Oregon, Akerman knows nondefensive listening is an integral part of customer satisfaction. "It is essential to ask the customer what they like or don't like about your service. This sends a message

Suggested reading on customer satisfaction

Barlow, Janelle and Claus Møller. *A Complaint is a Gift*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1996.

Gerson, Dr. Richard. *Great Customer Service for Your Small Business and Beyond Customer Service*. Contact PLCAA at 800/458-3466 or www.plcaa.org.

Gross, T. Scott. *Positively Outrageous Service*. Warner Books, 1991.

Heskett, James L. *Service Breakthroughs: Changing the Rules of the Game*. The Free Press, 1990.

Karr, Ron and Blohowiak, Don. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Great Customer Service*. Alpha Books, 1997.

Kessler, Shiela. *Measuring and Managing Customer Satisfaction*. ASQC Quality Press, 1996.

Leland, Karen and Keith Bailey. *Customer Service for*

Dummies. IDG Books Worldwide, Inc., 1994.

Salant, Priscilla and Don A. Dillman. *How to Conduct Your Own Survey*. John Wiley & Sons, 1994.

Spector, Robert and Patrick D. McCarthy. *The Nordstrom Way*. John Wiley & Sons, 1995.

Whiteley, Richard C. *The Customer Driven Company*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1972.

Willingham, Ron. *Hey, I'm the Customer*. Prentice-Hall, 1972.

Award-winning landscape management



▲ A view to the north through the Rotunda Garden, where brilliant golden tulip 'Monte Carlo,' contrasting with 'Coral Burst' crabapples and lush green turf, welcomes agents and guests.

◀ Employees share annual/perennial maintenance duties, rotating responsibilities biweekly. Weeding and pinching *Coleus* 'Molta Lava,' *Impatiens* 'Dazzler Star Mix' and *Alyssum* 'Carpet of Snow' maintain the colorful appeal.

Westfield Companies

The 1998 Grand Award Winner of the Professional Grounds Management Society for the Industrial or Office Park category.

This insurance company, which started in the back of a general store, now resides on a property of 600 acres with two 18-hole golf courses, a clubhouse complex and the home office. The home office complex is comprised of one large colonial brick building, entertainment center, print shop, inn, training annex and almost 20 rental properties. The landscaping staff takes care of both the home office and the clubhouse complexes.

Professionalism and excellence are essential with such a high profile/high use property. Minimizing impact on guests and golfers is a priority. All turf, paved surfaces, shrubs, trees, furniture, statues and most mechanical exterior features are managed by the in-house staff. The areas around the first tees on both golf courses are the in-house staff's responsibility as well.



The back of the Entertainment Center borders on the South Golf Course holes, three greens and four tees. Timing of maintenance of this area is critical, minimizing disturbance to guests and golfers.

Editor's note: Landscape Management is the exclusive sponsor of the Green Star Professional Achievement Awards for outstanding management of residential, commercial and institutional landscapes. For more information on the 1999 Awards, contact PGMS at 120 Cockeysville Road, Suite 104, Hunt Valley, MD; 410/584-9754.

LANDSCAPE
management

PGMS

Property at a glance:

Location: Westfield Center, Ohio

Staff: In-house

Category: Industrial or Office Park

Year site built: 1948-1994

Total acres maintained: 600

Acres of turf: 40

**Acres of woody
ornamentals:** 6

Acres of display beds: 1

Total man-hours/week: 40

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ preservation of birch allee with drip irrigation and improved soil composition
- ▶ year-round cultural practices to maintain premium-looking turf without irrigation
- ▶ annual color impact in spite of 30% budget cut

Project checklist

(Completed in last two years):

- ▶ new print shop landscape installation
- ▶ work order system with weekly task calendar
- ▶ issue department policy manual increasing training of staff

On the job

- ▶ 4 full-time staff, 5 seasonal, 3 licensed pesticide applicators

Problem with spruce

On one client's property, there are three Colorado blue spruce trees in the back and two in the front of the house. The three in the back yard are showing some problems. During the first week of May we treated all of the trees with carbaryl for spruce gall. The problems consist of browning of new growth and rusty color of 2- to 3-year-old needles. Any idea what the problem might be? What can be done now to help the trees?

— TORONTO, CANADA

Based on your description and the sequence of events, the problem is most likely related to phytotoxicity (plant injury) resulting from spraying carbaryl (Sevin). Several factors related to pesticide applications can cause phytotoxicity:

1. Improper mixing of pesticides (high rate).
2. Using a combination of incompatible products.
3. Treating at high pressure — thus blasting.
4. Treating on sunny days — if the mixture sits in the hose for a period of time, it can get very hot. When the hot mixture comes in contact with the plants it causes injury. Often the plants that were treated first may show more injury, with later treated plants showing less injury as the treatment continues. It is important to re-circulate the mixture back into the tank to avoid the mix from becoming too hot.

In your situation, perhaps the trees in the back yard were treated first, while the mix was

hot. After treating those trees, you moved to the front yard, which would not be affected because the cool mix from the tank has moved through the hose and therefore, is not hot.

5. Dry soil — make sure soil moisture is adequate when treating in the future.

6. Plants under stress. Review your treatment program and evaluate treatment techniques to avoid problems in the future.

Wait to see how the plant recovers, then check the terminal buds. If they are green the plant should produce normal, new growth. However, if the buds are brown or black they are dead.

One other possibility for discoloration may be winter drying and/or mite feeding damage. Check for these possibilities.

Since the plants are stressed consider treating with a miticide to manage the potential mite problem. Providing the proper amount of water, fertilizer, mulch and pest management will improve plant vigor.

If it quacks

We have a serious problem with quackgrass growing in our flower beds, on areas of our house foundation and a little bit in our lawn. Is there a selective herbicide that will kill the quackgrass? What can be done to manage this?

— ILLINOIS

Quackgrass is a very aggressive perennial weed, with extensive underground rhizomes. It can spread rapidly in open

areas, as well as other landscaped areas.

Once established, quackgrass can be difficult to manage. There is no selective herbicide for management. Very early in the developmental stage it can be selectively, mechanically dug. However, it is important to remove all underground rhizomes. If they are not removed, they can sprout and present a problem in the future.

Another option is a non-selective herbicide, such as Roundup, Finale or Scythe. These herbicides will kill a wide variety of vegetation in the treated area. While using these herbicides, make sure that the treatment doesn't get on non-targeted plant areas. Also, product effectiveness depends on several factors such as concentration of treatment mix, actively growing quackgrass and proper coverage. The treated area may require reseeding.

Fire ants go to school

Is there anything we can use to manage fire ants in school grounds?

— TEXAS

Amdro Pro from American Cyanamid can be used to manage fire ants in several locations including school grounds. This has been recently added to the label along with other sites such as airports, roadsides and cemeteries.

Make sure that your pesticide applicator license will allow you to treat in these areas.

LM



BALAKRISHNA RAO
*Manager of Research and
 Technical Development
 for the Davey Tree Expert
 Company, Kent, Ohio*

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO:

"Ask the Expert"
 Landscape Management
 7500 Old Oak Blvd.
 Cleveland, OH 44130
 or contact Nancy Stairs
 nstairs@advanstar.com
 440/891-2623

Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.

THE ULTIMATE WHEELBARROW



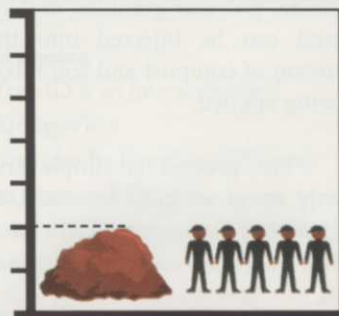
Spreading mulch and compost by hand is a costly, labor intensive process. It limits production and puts workers at risk for injuries. The Express Blower will turn an inefficient process into a profit center and blow your competition away!

The Express Blower can be operated by one person, with remote control, in any weather, on any terrain. Spread mulch, compost, soil mixes, playground chips or any number of other organic materials for landscaping, lawn restoration, erosion control and much more.

With our ALL NEW Injection System, the Express Blower can inject seed, fertilizer or other additives WHILE BLOWING! Install a lawn with soil mix and seed, or blend weed inhibitors with mulch. You can even topdress and overseed turf with only one application.

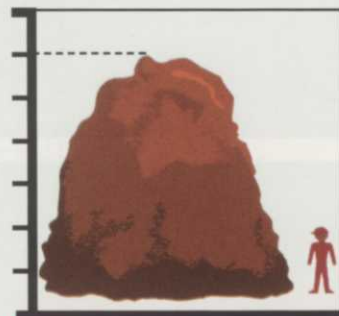
Get a jump on your competition. Call today and find out how you can expand your possibilities with an Express Blower!

Visit our web site at
www.expressblower.com
A division of Rexius Forest By-Products, Inc., Eugene, Oregon



Cubic Yards Per Hour

A typical 5-person crew can spread 8 cubic yards per hour.



Cubic Yards Per Hour

The Express Blower, using only one person, can blow 30 to 100 cubic yards per hour.

EB
Express Blower

800-285-7227



IS YOUR BUSINESS BLOW'IN-A-LAWN?

INDUSTRY LEADERS SEE PROFIT RISE WITH NEW SEEDING METHODS

Y ou're doing what!?

That's the response from most landscape contractors when they first hear about the all-new seed injection technique for lawn installation. Not only is it surprising that soil mix for lawns can actually be blown into place, but now seed can also be injected and blended with it to create the ideal method of lawn installation.

Rexius Express Blowers of Eugene, OR, has developed the "Supplemental Injection System" that mounts onto their Express Blower Trucks. These powerful systems can literally blow topsoil mixes right into place instead of the current practice of dumping and wheelbarrowing with large crews of workers. Simply put, any granular material such as fertilizer, gypsum, pre-emergent herbicide, polymer granules, and yes, even seed can be injected into the blow stream of compost and soil mixes while being applied.

The process is simple and takes only about an hour to install a typical 2500 sq. ft. lawn. With an Express Blower, you would arrive at a job site

that has been prepared either by leveling or tilling the subsoil, and then the final 1 to 3 inch layer of topsoil mix would be blown into place with the seed completely blended throughout the mix. When the seed is blended this way, your germination rate increases greatly because the seed is warmer, stays moist and won't be disturbed by watering. With this beneficial environment for seed, germination can be expected in as little as 5 days! The contractor who normally performs 4 separate processes of placing soil, seeding, fertilizing and then raking the seed in, can combine all these methods into one complete process with an Express Blower in only one hour.

One other method of seeding, that is gaining much attention, is in the area of sports turf topdressing. Core aeration and compost topdress in sports playing fields for restoration of compacted soils is an ideal application for the Express Blower. The blower system is capable of blowing a fine, even layer of compost over the turf without driving conventional equipment on the play area. The process usually takes 2 to 4 hours and with the Express Blower injection system, the field can be overseeded at the same time. The cost savings to the customer and the potential profits to an Express Blower owner make this niche market an incredible opportunity for the future.



Companies all over the country are expanding their business and realizing the profitability of an Express Blower. They have tapped into several new markets and now spread mulch, compost, topsoil blends, playground chips, and even animal bedding for the livestock and poultry industries. They have also expanded into new areas of business such as turf topdressing and erosion control for highway departments and municipalities. If you are looking for an edge on your competition or a new business venture that will bring a high rate of return, the Express Blower is the key to expanding your possibilities.

For more information about the Express Blower log on at expressblower.com or call toll free 800-285-7227


Express Blower

A Division of Rexius Forest By-Products, Inc.
750 Chambers St., Eugene, Oregon 97402

Finding tree information on the Internet is pretty easy. But, finding the information you want is harder. I know there are lots more sites out there, but here are just a couple of my favorites.

You can usually get a couple of ideas or opinions from these pages.

▶ Arboriculture Trees and Timber, www.arborists.com/WORLD/USA/home.html, has many links including Arborists Forum and Discussion

▶ The International Society of Arboriculture, www.ag.uiuc.edu/~isa, has discussion pages

▶ The Davey Tree Expert Company, www.davey.com will take questions to be answered by its technical advisors

Good info

Many Extension sites are very good, including Nebraska and Minnesota.

▶ St. Paul Field Office, <http://willow.ncfes.umn.edu/ucfpubs/ucfpubs.htm>

▶ Community Forestry Georgia Extension, www.forestry.uga.edu/subjects/community.html

Labs

▶ Diagnostic Labs, <http://plants.okstate.edu/plantdoctor/labs.htm>, lists

the labs for states and provinces plus any links

Links

▶ Treelink: The Community Forestry Resource, www.treelink.org

▶ Arboriculture-ForestryNet Links, <http://forestry.about.com/msubarbor.htm?pid=2820&cob=home>

Diseases and fungi

▶ Common Tree Diseases of BC, from the Canadian Forest Service, www.pfc.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/health/td_web/Diagnose/SignHost/fbspores.htm

▶ plant disease facts, from Penn State, www.cas.psu.edu/docs/CASDEPT/PLANT/ext/fact.html

▶ disease management recommendations for trees and shrubs, www.mes.umn.edu/Documents/D/G/DG6659.html, from Minnesota Extension

▶ OSU and Virginia Tech Species, Pests and Diseases, www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/hcs/TMI/TR2/pmTOC.html, lets you search in various ways

Tree hazards

▶ "Diseases That Create Hazards," Penn State

▶ The St. Paul site links to the hazard tree webpage, including "How To Recognize Hazardous Defects In Trees."

▶ Natural Path's website has some very good information on communities and risk of hazard, I recommend it, www.naturalpath.com/forum.htm

Pruning

▶ Plant Amnesty has an interesting take on bad pruning practices, www.plantamnesty.org

▶ "How to Prune Trees," St. Paul

▶ "Trees and Shrubs, Problems and Care," from Colorado Extension, has some good information www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/TRA/PLANTS/tree.html#treepruning

Tree species info and photos

▶ ISU Forestry Tree ID is an interactive key, www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/tree

▶ species images can also be found on OSU and Virginia Tech Species, Pests and Diseases

▶ this site promotes a CD, but you can find lots of information on Ornamental Plants Plus, www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modop/masterop.html

Other interesting info

▶ "Tolerance to Construction Damage" and "Identification by Wood Characteristics," from Georgia Extension

▶ "Trees and Ice Storms," <http://spectre.ag.uiuc.edu/~vista/abstracts/aicestorm.html>

▶ "Vegetation Management Guidelines," www.inhs.uiuc.edu/edu/VMG/VMG.html

▶ "Salt Tolerance and Plants," Colorado, www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/TRA/PLANTS/stable.html

Agree/Disagree? Comments/Questions?

Column Suggestions? Let Nancy Stairs know at 440/891-2623. Fax: 440/891-2675.

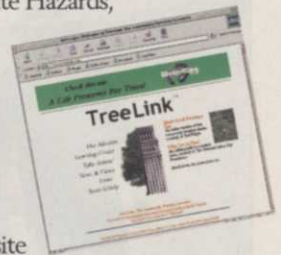
E-Mail: nstairs@advanstar.com

Prune the web down to size



Nancy Stairs

NANCY STAIRS
Technical Editor





A Posi-Track crawler conquered the landfill's 3-to-1 slope and saved more than 1,000 hours of handwork as it laid big-roll sod over a towering Florida landfill.

ture's Keepers. "There were about five of us offering up ideas, but no real solutions came out of it. Even our idea wasn't the greatest."

Hey, it's an idea

Nature's Keeper's original proposal: A bulldozer would climb the slope carrying pallets of sod to a team of workers, who then would painstakingly pull the seams together.

And, even then, the rain might very well ruin all that hard work. And so the county continued to search for an answer, as did Nature's Keepers.

Finally, the solution came when Nature's Keeper bought an HD4500 Posi-Track all-purpose crawler built by ASV Inc. of Grand Rapids, MN. A relatively new category of work machine, the all-purpose crawler, with its rubber tracks and light footprint (3.0 psi), seemed to be just what the St. Lucie County landfill needed.

In addition to a variety of landscaping tasks, Nature's Keepers was having success with its new machine laying out big rolls of sod — as a result, they were achieving amazing results and saving a remarkable amount of time.

Much faster than hand work

By using a sod-rolling attachment fitted to the front of the machine through a quick-attach system, the company was working several times faster than by hand, said Feketa. The attachment grabbed the sod by extending rotating cones into both ends of the tube at the center of the roll. With the roll in front of the driver, the sod could then easily be laid directly along the seam. Moreover, as the machine rolled over the sod, it actually pressed the seams together and helped the sod stay in place — with no damage done.

But could the crawler work on such a steep slope? "There is not a wheeled machine made that would go on that 3-to-1 slope," said Feketa.

The St. Lucie County landfill, situated along I-95, near Fort Pierce, FL, had a problem. When it covered its 100-ft. high, 100,000-sq.-ft. mound of trash with a couple of feet of soil, nothing seemed to keep Florida's torrential rains from washing the dirt away.

"We tried just about everything, but had little luck," said Leo Cordeiro, solid waste manager for St. Lucie County. Even sodding the 3-to-1 slope with squared sections didn't work.

"We'd get a two-hour rain and the sod would wash right down that slope," said Cordeiro.

Covering the dirt with rolls of netting and then seeding the hill wasn't the answer, either. Again, rain simply took away the dirt, netting and seeds.

Finally, Nature's Keepers Landscaping of Fort Pierce entered the picture. Eventually, they developed a solution for which everyone was searching. But at first, the 31-man operation was as stumped as everybody.

"We went to a bid meeting a couple of years ago," said Stewart Feketa, vice president of Na-

Crawler tames sod job from hell

By JAY LEMKE

If the all-purpose crawler could, Feketa knew rolling the sod would make the job not only faster and easier, but better.

Big rolls the answer

"Big rolls were certainly preferable to pallets," said Feketa. "On a 400-sq.-ft. pallet, there would have been 560 joints to join, yet with two 200-sq.-ft. rolls, there were four joints with a biodegradable mat under it to help hold the sod to the ground. On a hill where the sod doesn't want to be there anyway, that's significant."

It took only a quick demonstration of the machine easily climbing the loose soil on the slope to convince the county to give Nature's Keepers a shot.

Feketa had two men on the hill and one in a forklift. He handled the all-purpose crawler himself. With a big roll of sod attached to the front of the rubber-tracked machine, Feketa laid the sod as he angled his way up the slope. When the sod ran out, he returned to the base of the mound, where the forklift would feed him another roll. Meanwhile, the men on the side of the hill pulled the seams together. The job was completed in a day and a half.

"The Posi-Track glided up and down the hill all day long, and there was no raking to clear up its tracks because it left none thanks to the low ground pressure; we had a great day," Feketa said. "It would have taken eight men working five 10-hour days, at best, with any other method."

Rolled sod the only way

"It was an impressive operation, the way the machine ran up those slopes and in the amount of time it took," said Cordeiro. "The rolled sod is clearly the way to go. It stays on the hill and stops the water from uncovering the trash. We'll be doing all of our sodding with big rolls from now on."

According to Feketa, the Posi-Track seems to be ideally suited to laying out big rolls of sod.

"You can certainly attempt to lay big rolls of sod with a wheeled machine, but it's not as stable and it's difficult to go in a straight line to keep the seams tight," Feketa said.

"I think that's why some landscapers don't use big rolls, because they tried

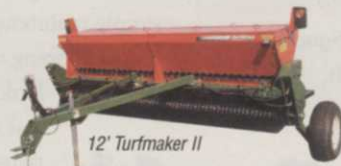
using a machine that's not suited to the task." **LM**

About 25% of Nature's Keepers' business is now sodding with big rolls.

—The author is with Carmichael Lynch Spong, Minneapolis, MN.



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Now you can get the productivity of a Turfmaker II in a compact machine. Proudly announcing the Turfmaker Junior — the latest in our line of high-capacity seeders that prepare the perfect seedbed to give you uniform germination.

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Genie Industries TMZ is based on a patented Z configuration. It has a working height of 40 ft. with a 19 ft. outreach.

GET A RISE OUT OF YOUR EQUIPMENT

By CURT HARLER/ Contributing Editor

Equipment owners and fleet managers in the tree-care industry are looking for products that reach high into the sky yet have simple designs. And, they want products that require low maintenance to keep costs down.

Larry Petrasek, the fleet manager for The Davey Tree Expert Company in Kent, OH, uses products by Aerial Lift Inc., Altec and Hydra-Tech Inc. to meet all of these needs.

He says utility contracts are requiring more and more height all the time.

"The height requirement seems to be creeping up," Petrasek said. "Fifty-five-footers are now more common."

Over-center capability is also important to Petrasek, who said the ability to maneuver without moving a truck a lot makes operators more efficient.

Bucket and aerial lift manufacturers are responding to the need for height and flexibility. But there is more to lifts than height.

How long does it take to access key components to perform simple maintenance tasks like lubricating fittings, changing filters or topping off fluids. Ease of adjustment often is overlooked. Can it be done handily in the field? Are special tools or blocks required? Is it a one-person or a two-person job?

Look at the gauges provided. Extras, like hour gauges and oil pressure gauges, do add cost, but they can pay back their expense if they avoid just a single maintenance problem. If you opt for a unit with gauges, be sure that they are readily visible from the driver's seat.



MTI Insulated Products Inc. says its MTI 55 tree trimmer has up to 60 ft. of working height. Rectangular booms give it strength.

Aerial Lift Inc.
800/446-LIFT
www.aeriallift.com

Aerial Lift makes the Mini-Foot, Rear Mount product with working heights from 38 to 75 ft. The vehicle is compact and can maneuver in tight spaces. The upper boom is made of molded fiberglass reinforced plastic for dielectric quality when used near energized power lines. The product is available with saddle boxes, tool and rope boxes and more.

Circle No. 250

Altec Industries Inc.
800/958-2555
www.altec.com

Altec's LRV52/LRV55 Overcenter Aerial Device has a working height up to 60 ft. and a working side reach to 42 ft. The product has a lifetime upper boom drive system and low operational costs. Key features include a walking link and cylinder, upper boom drive and lifetime components.

Circle No. 251

AmeriQuip
800/824-9776
www.mobiletool.com

The trailer-mounted Eagle lift provides 360° continuous rotation and proportional hydraulic controls



AmeriQuip's Eagle lift

at the bucket and the base. The full line includes the T40. All units are cost-effective to purchase, license, insure and maintain. Each is backed by a nationwide network of staff service technicians.

Circle No. 252

CATERPILLAR
www.CAT.com

A new access platform for Cat Telehandler models allows the operator to control all boom functions from the platform. This eliminates the need for someone else in the cab. It can be used with outrigger-equipped TH63, TH83 and TH103 models and is well suited to tree trimming work. Two speed controls let the operator precisely position or maneuver the platform. It has a 550

lb. lift capability, measures 4x3 ft. and is 4 ft. high.

Circle No. 253

Genie Industries
800/536-1837
www.genielift.com

Genie's new TMZ 34/19 is a trailer-mounted lift that is towed behind a truck. Based on the patented Z-configuration introduced by Genie, the product has a working height of 40 ft. with 19 ft. outreach. The boom incorporates a 4.5 ft. jib for increased range of movement and easy positioning.

Circle No. 254

Lift-All
219/747-0526

Lift-All by Hydra-Tech Inc. makes the LAOC unit, which is an over-center machine that allows 270° of articulation. The product is available with working heights up to 58 or 60 ft. with a reverse mount. Maximum horizontal reach is 46.25 ft. over-center. With the LAOC-55 model, an operator can fully extend the boom to 46.25 ft. in one direction

and use the overcenter feature to reach 41.5 ft. in the opposite direction. The bucket capacity is 350 lbs.

Circle No. 255

MTI Insulated Products, Inc.
219/747-1631
www.mobiletool.com

The MTI S5 tree trimmer aerial device has up to 60 ft. of working height and 46 ft. of side reach. The product has lower boom articulation to 138° and upper boom travel to 210° allowing the operator to position easily in difficult areas. The MTI S5 features side-by-side rectangular booms for strength, an easy-to-operate one-handle platform control and boom actuation without chains or cables for low maintenance.

Circle No. 256

Polecat Industries Inc.
800/876-5322

The Polecat PC266 is a self-propelled, lightweight, highway speed towable lift. It has a single, proportional joystick that provides drive/steer and raise/lower functions in one controller. An ergonomic



Polecat Industries Inc.

platform control station minimizes fatigue, maximizes productivity and makes the operator training easy. Most of the product's components are "off the shelf." The PC266 runs all day on less than seven gallons of gas. It can be towed from site to site by a pickup truck, maximizing productivity and reducing job costs.

Circle No. 257

SNORKEL
816/364-0317
www.snorkelusa.com

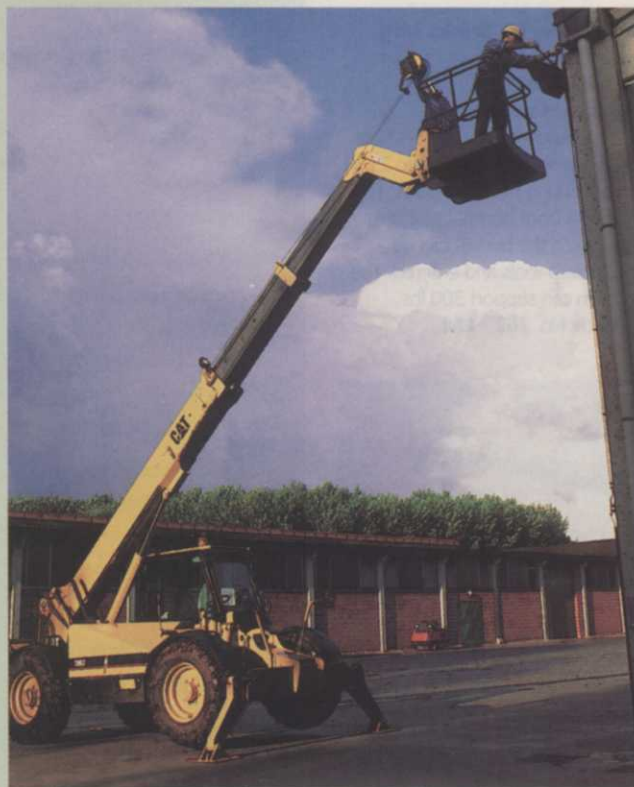
Articulating riser boom allows for up-and-over work on the ATB 60 from Snorkel. One of six families of lift available, the 60's telescoping main boom gives extra horizontal and vertical reach and the 6-ft. articulating jib boom gives added horizontal reach. Main boom reaches 43 ft. for a total work height of 66 ft. Comes in 2-wheel or 4-wheel drive models.

Circle No. 258

SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT
800/722-6543
www.specialtylift.com

The Leguan Plus is a flexible aerial work platform with 36-ft. working height, 17-ft. reach and 298-lbs. platform capacity with telescoping boom extended, 474 lbs. retracted. Made by Specialty Equipment, it is powered by a 13-hp Honda engine with optional LPG or electric power. It has zero-degree turning radius for easy maneuvering and its 34-in. width allows easy moving through gates. It weighs just over a ton, so it is easy to transport.

Circle No. 259



Access platform for Caterpillar Telehandler simplifies operation.

Terex-Telect Corp.
605/882-4000

The Hi-Ranger XT-5 Series for tree trimming has a working height up to 60 ft. and horizontal reach up to 44.9 ft. Standard equipment in-



Terex-Telect Corp. Hi-Ranger has horizontal reach of 44.9 ft.

cludes 24 x 24 x 40 in. one-person side mount platform, a safety belt with attached lanyard and individual lever, full pressure platform controls.
Circle No. 260

Versalift by Time Manufacturing Company
254/399-2100
www.versalift.com

Versalift's new VO-350/355-MH1 is an overcenter aerial device with material handling capabilities. It has a working height up to 60 ft. and horizontal reach up to 46 ft. 11 in. The product has a platform capacity



Versalift by Time Manufacturing Company has articulation of 210°.

up to 400 lbs. The upper boom has articulation of 210° and the lower boom has 100°.
Circle No. 261

Van Ladder by Brinks Mfg. Co. Inc.
888/887-5847
www.vanladder.com

Van Ladder's new 2921-T1 has a telescoping side reach up to 21 ft. and a working height of 35 ft. The unit has a front bumper platform from which the bucket can be loaded with tools and entered. The platform can support 300 lbs.
Circle No. 262 LM



Van Ladder by Brinks Mfg. Co. Inc.'s platform supports 300 lbs.

Events

JULY

19-20 PLCAA Legislative Day on the Hill & Arlington Renewal and Remembrance Project

Holiday Inn Capitol, Washington, DC; 800/458-3466; www.plcaa.org

21-23 Turfgrass Producers International Summer Convention & Field Days

East Lansing Holiday Inn, MI; 847/705-9898; www.turfgrassod.org

23-25 Masters in Management for the Landscape Industry Seminar

Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport; ALCA, 800/395-2522; www.alca.org

24-26 International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo

Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville; 502/562-1962; <http://EXPO.mow.org>

24-28 American Nursery & Landscape Convention

Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel, Philadelphia, PA; 202/789-2000; www.anla.com

25-31 Perennial Plant Symposium & Trade Show

Lansing Convention Center, MI; 614/771-8431; www.perennial-plant.org

27 Midwest Regional Turf Field Day

West Lafayette, IN; 765/494-8039; www.purdue.edu

27-29 Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show

Fort Washington Expo Center, Fort Washington, PA; 717/238-1673; www.pantshow.com

29 Iowa Turfgrass Field Day

ISU Horticulture Research Station, Ames, IA; 800/605-0420

AUGUST

1-4 International Society of Arboriculture Conference

Stamford, CT; 217/355-9411; www.ag.uiuc.edu/~isa

2 Nebraska Turfgrass Field Day & Equipment Show

Agricultural Research and Development Center, Mead, NE; 402/472-8619

6-8 TAN-MISSLARK Nursery, Garden, Landscape Supply Show

Dallas Convention Center, Houston; Texas Assn. of Nurserymen, 800/880-0343; www.growzone.com

9-12 Florida Turfgrass Association Conference & Show

University of Florida, Gainesville, FL; 800/822-6721

18 Michigan Turfgrass Field Day

Hancock Turfgrass Research Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing; 517/321-1660

18 Univ. of Rhode Island Turfgrass Field Day

Kingston Campus, RI; 401/874-2481

20 ALCA Environmental Improvement Awards deadline (Exterior)

ALCA, 800/395-2522; www.alca.org

26 Turf & Landscape Research Field Day

U.C. Bay Area Research and Extension Center, Santa Clara, CA; 510/639-1271 LM



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ADVANSTAR'S LANDSCAPE GROUP PRESENTS

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Think about it, now in-depth industry profiles, case studies and expert reporting are just a click of the mouse away. Whether you're at the office or at home on your desktop, you now have instant access to even more of the leading-edge information you get in every issue of *Landscape Management*, *Golfdom*, *Athletic Turf* and *Turfgrass Trends*.

So log on, plug in and don't forget to bookmark www.landscapegroup.com.

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Century Rain Aid opened new branches in Florida: Bunnell, Cape Coral, Mangonia Park, Palmetto and St. Augustine. In addition, new branches opened in: Huntsville, AL; Macon, GA; Noblesville, IN; Swansea and Woburn, MA; Clarkson, MI; Manchester, NH; Mooresville and Wilmington, NC; Bedford Heights, Columbus and Dayton, OH; and Greenville, SC.

Hunter Industries introduced the Hunter Preferred Contractor Program to help irrigation professionals gain the tools, office equipment and development funds needed to expand their business. For the next three years, professionals will earn points from Hunter pur-

chases which can be redeemed. www.HunterIndustries.com

Myra Potts joined **Medalist America** as turf specialist for the southeast U.S. Alan Mark is turf specialist for OH, IN, MI, western PA, WV and KY.

Howard Fertilizer Inc. is the sole distributor of Par Ex IBDU in Florida which is licensed by **Lebanon Seaboard Corp.**

National Seed Company, a division of Jacklin Seed, appointed Dan Biddick sales representative for WI and MN.

Pennington Seed Inc. appointed Roger Tucker western division turfgrass manager for

its Professional Turfgrass Group.

Profile Products LLC promoted Sam Stimmel to national sales manager and named Mark Fields, CGCS, Gulf regional sales manager. Larry Lennert is midwest regional sales manager and Paul Salmon, CGCS, is southeast regional sales manager.

Dr. Jeffrey Higgins is the director of marketing for **Pursell**



Dr. Jeffrey Higgins



Andrew Semple

Technologies Inc. Andrew Semple is regional sales manager for the northern U.S. and Canada.

Mike Tentis was named product manager for the Professional Products Division of **Simpleturf & Horticulture**. Tentis is responsible for sales of Jacklin and Medalist America grass seed products in the western U.S. and western Canada, as well as the new proprietary Best brand of grass seed.

Mark Sargent joined **Spec-trum** as director of sales and technical services for professional products.

EPA approved three **Valent** products for use in Colorado: Orthene® Turf, Tree and Ornamental, Spray 97, Distance® Insect Growth Regulator and Orthene® PCO Pellets. In NY, Pinpoint® 15 Granular Insecticide has been approved by the state for use as a broadcast treatment. www.valent.com

Buddy Camors has been named business director of **Zeneca Professional Products**, taking over the pest control, turf and ornamental business from Kee-llan Pullium. www.zenecaprofprod.com



Buddy Camors

Info center

VIDEOS AND LITERATURE FOR THE GREEN INDUSTRY

COMICS AND IRRIGATION ... combine in the new quarterly newsletter from Irritrol, "The Amazing Irritrol-Man." The irreverent, colorful approach is an interesting take on product information. If you'd like to see Irritrol-Man and Rex, his faithful companion (a Scottie, complete with tartan cape) you can call Mike Ochoa, marketing manager, at 909/785-3623.



SOIL INFORMATION ... is available from the world's leading soil-testing laboratories, MDS Harris. On their website, www.mdsharris.com, a new section called Agri-Knowledge currently has 19 technical articles on nitrogen (4), phosphorus (3), potassium (3), soil pH (5), as well as zinc and manganese.

UPDATED PGMS GUIDES ... Grounds Estimating Guide, Grounds Maintenance Management Guidelines and Grounds Management Forms & Job Descriptions Guide have been fully updated simultaneously. Presented together in a 0.5-in. binder, the guidelines are available at a savings of \$15 for the set, for the remainder of 1999. Contact PGMS, 410/584-9754, fax 410/584-9756, www.PGMS.org



It's One Tough Bluegrass.



RAMBO BLUEGRASS Other bluegrass varieties looked like sissies in comparison as **Rambo** outranked top challengers in demanding transition-zone tests. While others whimpered and withered, **Rambo** withstood brown patch, leaf spot and melting out, and was virtually unscathed by necrotic ring spot. As you might expect, **Rambo** was also among the densest. Thick with fine leaf texture, it stood strong even when mowed down to 1/2 inch. If grass knew fear, **Rambo** wouldn't. For extreme confidence, put **Rambo** in your turf today.

Circle No. 128 on Reader Inquiry Card

5300 West Riverbend Avenue • Post Falls, Idaho 83854-9499
Phone: 1-800-688-SEED • Fax: 208-773-4846 • www.jacklin.com
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JACKLIN
S E E D
Simplot Turf and Horticulture



Award Rules



High Tolerance At Short Cuts

No matter how you gauge performance, **Award** measures up. It handles disease pressure better than other Kentucky bluegrass varieties in its class, even when cut as short as 1/2 inch.* And trial after trial proves that **Award** maintains its intense dark green color under varying management regimes. **Award** has earned its status as an elite variety by raising performance standards to a whole new level. But, isn't that what you would expect from  Jacklin's Five Steps Above™ Program?

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*NTEP data available upon request.

Circle No. 129 on Reader Inquiry Card

LANDSCAPE
management

July 1999

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NAME (please print) _____
 TITLE _____
 FIRM _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE (____) _____ FAX (____) _____
 INTERNET/E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

I would like to receive (continue receiving) LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT free each month: Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Fill in ovals as shown: ●

1. My primary business at this location is: (fill in ONE only)

CONTRACTORS/SERVICE COMPANIES

- 02 255 Landscape Contractors (Installation and maintenance)
- 03 260 Lawn Care Service Companies
- 04 265 Custom Chemical Applicators
- 05 270 Tree Service Companies/Arborists
- 06 275 Landscape Architects
- 07 280 Land Reclamation and Erosion Control
- 08 285 Irrigation Contractors
- Other Contractors/Service Companies (please specify) _____

INSTITUTIONAL FACILITIES

- 09 290 Sports Complexes
- 10 295 Parks
- 11 300 Right-of-Way Maintenance for Highways, Railroads or Utilities
- 12 305 Schools, Colleges, Universities
- 13 310 Industrial or Office Parks/Plants
- 14 315 Shopping Centers, Plazas or Malls
- 15 320 Private/Public Estates or Museums
- 16 325 Condominiums/Apartments/Housing Developments/Hotels/Resorts
- 17 330 Cemeteries/Memorial Gardens
- 18 335 Hospitals/Health Care Institutions
- 19 340 Military Installations or Prisons
- 20 345 Airports
- 21 350 Multiple Government/Municipal Facilities
- Other Groundscare (please specify) _____

SUPPLIERS AND CONSULTANTS

- 22 355 Extension Agents/Consultants for Horticulture
- 23 360 Sod Growers, Turf Seed Growers & Nurseries
- 24 365 Dealers, Distributors, Formulators & Brokers
- 25 370 Manufacturers
- Other (please specify) _____

2. Which of the following best describes your title? (fill in ONE only)

- 26 10 **Executive/Administrator** - President, Owner, Partner, Director, General Manager, Chairman of the Board, Purchasing Agent, Director of Physical Plant
- 27 20 **Manager/Superintendent** - Arborist, Architect, Landscape/Grounds Manager, Superintendent, Foreman, Supervisor
- 28 30 **Government Official** - Government Commissioner, Agent, Other Government Official
- 29 40 **Specialist** - Forester, Consultant, Agronomist, Pilot, Instructor, Researcher, Horticulturist, Certified Specialist
- 30 50 **Other Titled and Non-Titled Personnel** (please specify) _____

3. SERVICES PERFORMED (fill in ALL that apply)

- 40 A Mowing
- 41 B Turf Insect Control
- 42 C Tree Care
- 43 D Turf Aeration
- 44 E Irrigation Services
- 45 F Turf Fertilization
- 46 G Turf Disease Control
- 47 H Ornamental Care
- 48 I Landscape Design
- 49 J Turf Weed Control
- 50 K Paving, Deck & Patio Installation
- 51 L Pond/Lake Care
- 52 M Landscape Installation
- 53 N Snow Removal
- 54 O Other (please specify) _____

4a. Do you specify, purchase or influence the selection of landscape products?

- 75 Yes 76 No

4b. If yes, check which products you buy or specify: (fill in ALL that apply)

- 55 1 Aerators
- 56 2 Blowers
- 57 3 Chain Saws
- 58 4 Chipper-Shredders
- 59 5 De-icers
- 60 6 Fertilizers
- 61 7 Fungicides
- 62 8 Herbicides
- 63 9 Insecticides
- 64 10 Line Trimmers
- 65 11 Mowers
- 66 12 Snow Removal Equipment
- 67 13 Sprayers
- 68 14 Spreaders
- 69 15 Sweepers
- 70 16 Tractors
- 71 17 Truck Trailers/Attachments
- 72 18 Trucks
- 73 19 Turfseed
- 74 20 Utility Vehicles

5. Do you have Internet Access? 77 A Yes 78 B No

5a. If so, how often do you use it?

- 79 A Daily 80 B Weekly 81 C Monthly 82 D Occasionally

101	113	125	137	149	161	173	185	197	209	221	233	245	257	269	281	293	305
102	114	126	138	150	162	174	186	198	210	222	234	246	258	270	282	294	306
103	115	127	139	151	163	175	187	199	211	223	235	247	259	271	283	295	307
104	116	128	140	152	164	176	188	200	212	224	236	248	260	272	284	296	308
105	117	129	141	153	165	177	189	201	213	225	237	249	261	273	285	297	309
106	118	130	142	154	166	178	190	202	214	226	238	250	262	274	286	298	310
107	119	131	143	155	167	179	191	203	215	227	239	251	263	275	287	299	311
108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240	252	264	276	288	300	312
109	121	133	145	157	169	181	193	205	217	229	241	253	265	277	289	301	313
110	122	134	146	158	170	182	194	206	218	230	242	254	266	278	290	302	314
111	123	135	147	159	171	183	195	207	219	231	243	255	267	279	291	303	315
112	124	136	148	160	172	184	196	208	220	232	244	256	268	280	292	304	316



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Signature: _____ Date: _____

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- 30 50 **Other Titled and Non-Titled Personnel** (please specify) _____

3. SERVICES PERFORMED (fill in ALL that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 40 <input type="radio"/> A Mowing | 45 <input type="radio"/> F Turf Fertilization | 50 <input type="radio"/> K Paving, Deck & Patio Installation |
| 41 <input type="radio"/> B Turf Insect Control | 46 <input type="radio"/> G Turf Disease Control | 51 <input type="radio"/> L Pond/Lake Care |
| 42 <input type="radio"/> C Tree Care | 47 <input type="radio"/> H Ornamental Care | 52 <input type="radio"/> M Landscape Installation |
| 43 <input type="radio"/> D Turf Aeration | 48 <input type="radio"/> I Landscape Design | 53 <input type="radio"/> N Snow Removal |
| 44 <input type="radio"/> E Irrigation Services | 49 <input type="radio"/> J Turf Weed Control | 54 <input type="radio"/> O Other (please specify) _____ |

4a. Do you specify, purchase or influence the selection of landscape products?

- 75 Yes 76 No

4b. If yes, check which products you buy or specify: (fill in ALL that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 55 <input type="radio"/> 1 Aerators | 62 <input type="radio"/> 8 Herbicides | 69 <input type="radio"/> 15 Sweepers |
| 56 <input type="radio"/> 2 Blowers | 63 <input type="radio"/> 9 Insecticides | 70 <input type="radio"/> 16 Tractors |
| 57 <input type="radio"/> 3 Chain Saws | 64 <input type="radio"/> 10 Line Trimmers | 71 <input type="radio"/> 17 Truck Trailers/Attachments |
| 58 <input type="radio"/> 4 Chipper-Shredders | 65 <input type="radio"/> 11 Mowers | 72 <input type="radio"/> 18 Trucks |
| 59 <input type="radio"/> 5 De-icers | 66 <input type="radio"/> 12 Snow Removal Equipment | 73 <input type="radio"/> 19 Turfseed |
| 60 <input type="radio"/> 6 Fertilizers | 67 <input type="radio"/> 13 Sprayers | 74 <input type="radio"/> 20 Utility Vehicles |
| 61 <input type="radio"/> 7 Fungicides | 68 <input type="radio"/> 14 Spreaders | |

5. Do you have Internet Access? 77 A Yes 78 B No

5a. If so, how often do you use it?

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101	113	125	137	149	161	173	185	197	209	221	233	245	257	269	281	293	305
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107	119	131	143	155	167	179	191	203	215	227	239	251	263	275	287	299	311
108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240	252	264	276	288	300	312
109	121	133	145	157	169	181	193	205	217	229	241	253	265	277	289	301	313
110	122	134	146	158	170	182	194	206	218	230	242	254	266	278	290	302	314
111	123	135	147	159	171	183	195	207	219	231	243	255	267	279	291	303	315
112	124	136	148	160	172	184	196	208	220	232	244	256	268	280	292	304	316



Dripline irrigation from Rain Bird

Landscape Dripline pressure-compensating, inline emitter tubing is from Rain Bird's Xerigation® line. The design of the tubing offers more consistent flow and improved clog-resistance while allowing the tubing to operate under higher pressures.

For more information call 626/963-9311, www.rainbird.com or

Circle No. 263



Soy engine oil?

A two-cycle, air-cooled engine oil, EnviroLogic 440® is actually made from soybeans. From Terresolve Technologies, Eastlake, OH, this oil will not kill grass or leave a long-term sheen on water if it seeps into the environment. The product meets the performance requirements for ISO GD, the world's toughest standard for this type of lubricant.

For more information call 800/727-3876 or

Circle No. 264



Three-in-one Mantis

The BSV (blower-shredder-vacuum) has a 21.2-cc, gas-powered engine and wind speeds up to 125 mph. With a debris collection bag (which holds up to 2 bushels) and feeder tube, the BSV converts to a handheld vacuum-shredder, reducing leaves and small debris to a 12:1 ratio. Additional features include a see-through fuel tank, cruise control and shoulder strap.

For more information call 877/LWONDER or

Circle No. 265



Stake palms fast

Arborlock Staking Systems has a simplified palm-staking kit for rapid one-person installation. The notched wood blocks have protective polyethylene padding already installed and the vinyl cable-ties are mounted through the wood so the entire unit can be installed in seconds. The notches grip 2x4 ground supports (without beveling) and the cable ties expand with tree growth and are easy to remove.

For more information call 305/378-6153,

www.arborlock.com or

Circle No. 266

Spread straw mulch fast

The B40 Straw Blower from Finn Corporation combines compact size and portability with spreading power. The B40 chops and blows 2 to 3 bales of straw per minute, creating consistently even mulch coverage. It is powered by a 20-hp Kohler engine, has a 17-in. diameter blower with six blades



and generates a discharge velocity of 160 mph.

Finn also has equipment for other blower needs, mulches, hydroseeding, etc. For more information call 800/543-7166, www.fincorp.com or

Circle No. 267

Keep in touch

The Motorola Radius SP21™ portable radio helps employees and supervisors keep in touch over a large coverage area.

The variety of features includes: versatile channel spacing, private line capability, easy audio programming, voice operated transmission, convenient charging adapter, all in a lightweight, compact design.



For more information call 888/567-7347, www.motorola.com or

Circle No. 268

Modern backpack blower

The Kawasaki KRB400A is designed to minimize noise, weight and vibration and features a 3.2-hp engine with a maximum air volume of 380 cfm and maximum air velocity of 180 mph. A plastic engine shroud, fan and fan casing



reduce weight and lower noise, as does a muffler with glass wool lining and a large volume air cleaner. Easy to start and use, the backpack blower weighs 19 lbs.

For more information call 616/954-3019 or

Circle No. 269

Rapid sod laying

The Bobcat Sod Layer attachment for the Bobcat 751-873 skid-steer loaders is designed to unroll 24 to 48 in.



wide sod rolls. The Sod Layer speeds sod laying 2 to 3 times over that of hand labor but is less expensive than a dedicated sod-laying machine. The attachment has a cutting blade, auxiliary hydraulic controls and relief valves.

For more information call 701/241-8740, www.bobcat.com or

Circle No. 270

TRIMS 2000 Grounds Management Software®

TRIMS Software International has released its most advanced grounds management software system, TRIMS 2000. Filled with innovative new features to simplify turf, golf course and operations management, TRIMS 2000 is GPS/GIS compatible with a special Incident Log to track when and where chemical applications, grounds work and vandalism occur, so you can view patterns or identify problem areas. It also has a Custom Report Writer and can export TRIMS files to Excel, Success and Microsoft Word for spreadsheets, reports, graphs and labels.

For more information call 800/608-7467 or

Circle No. 271

Powerful wind blast

The Jacobsen B-40 PLUS blower is a high-capacity blower that mounts to any 25-hp, 540-rpm tractor with a 3-point pto linkage. Features include a 36-in., 12-blade carbon fan, all-steel direction chute and a Kevlar®-reinforced belt-drive to the fan.

For more information call Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products at 888/922-TURF or

Circle No. 272



Control algae in fountains

Physan 20, from Maril Products, Tustin, CA, has been used by commercial growers to control algae on greenhouse walkways, glass, evaporative coolers and on other surfaces.



Now it is available to control algae and odor in ornamental fountains and water displays. It also controls algae on walkways, bricks, stone, statuary and other hardscape surfaces.

Physan 20 can also be sprayed on lawns and turf to help control fairy ring, dollar spot and rust. It is easy to mix and is biodegradable. For more information call 800/546-7711, www.physan.com or

Circle No. 273

Physan 20 can also be sprayed on lawns and turf to help control fairy ring, dollar spot and rust. It is easy to mix and is biodegradable. For more information call 800/546-7711, www.physan.com or

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Turfmaker® 425

This unit, from James Lincoln Corp., can mix and apply 150 lbs. of wood mulch or 250 lbs. of paper mulch in one tank load, covering 2,000 to 15,000 sq. ft., depending on the thickness applied. It mixes with mechanical agitation, pumps with a positive-displacement pump and fills itself with water from an auxiliary water tank, never leaving the site.

The Turfmaker is small enough to mount on a flatbed truck along with an auxiliary water tank or will fit into the back of a pickup. It is also available mounted on a trailer with a 5,000-lb. axle, electric brakes and heavy duty tires. The unit can be removed from the trailer if desired.

For more information call 800/551-2304, www.TurfMaker.com or

Circle No. 276



Improved Perfect Mix™

Tanaka Power Equipment has a new, cleaner burning formulation of its Perfect Mix 2-stroke engine oil. The new formulation burns more completely, reducing carbon build-up and exhaust emissions. In addition, new synthetic performance enhancers help clean up engine components to ensure maximum performance and long engine life. Perfect Mix is ideal for virtually all 2-stroke engine powered products.

For more information call 253/395-3900, www.tanakapowerequipment.com or

Circle No. 274

Low cost pipe and cable locator

The Arrow™ Utility Safety Tool from Metrotech is a highly sensitive, rugged and cost-effective tool designed to help avoid damage to buried pipes and cable before and during excavation. Easy to use, the Arrow detects extremely low currents and can be used as either a stand-alone passive receiver or in conjunction with an Active frequency transmitter. In addition, the unit has a frequency modulated audio tone (sound increases in volume and peaks directly over the target line) and is weatherproof.

For more information call 408/734-1400, www.metrotech.com or

Circle No. 275



Penn State's reputation for excellence in Turfgrass Management is now available to you—anytime, anywhere. With on-line World Campus™ courses, you get

Flexible

scheduling with no need to travel to class.

Sign up now for Fall '99. Visit the Web for course schedule and application information, or call 1-800-252-3592 (in the United States) or 1-814-865-5403 (international calls).

www.worldcampus.psu.edu

PENNSTATE
World Campus

Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its workforce. U.Ed.OCE99-2004eah/ch

Circle 140



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INVESTMENT

FINANCIAL
INDEPENDENCE

INTRODUCING THE ALL NEW PV-II
THE SWEEPERS ALTERNATIVE

AA-TACHTM
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Grab Bag

A further sign of society's decline?

A Brooklyn, NY, neighborhood is being plagued by thieves. Plant thieves. And not your run of the mill, "strike at night" thieves. No, these are your "people on their way to work and pulling plants up by the roots" thieves.

Sound bizarre? The residents of the neighborhood think so too. This award-winning block has seen the loss of dusty millers, impatiens and salvia. Not very costly plants.

And the thieves? Well-dressed men and woman who apparently do not know where their local plant nursery is and are then forced into a life of crime in order to stock their gardens.

According to Katherine E. Finkelstein, from *The New York Times*, residents have chased people down the street (picture a man dressed like and accountant dashing down the street holding an uprooted plant, scattering soil behind him) and accosted them in the act (a woman holding a clear plastic bag full of stolen plants). Over a dozen people have been caught red-handed by the beleaguered residents.

Well, 2000 is nearly here; so it's probably another sign of the end of the world. Has anyone checked those Nos-tradamus prophecies lately? There must be something about plant thievery in there.



Want to walk on art? Marty Kermeen, of Artistic Pavers in Plano, IL, can make it happen. Precise cutting created this replica of an 800-year-old French maze in Naperville, IL. The cuts and matches are so precise that the work almost appears to be painted on, but is much more lasting than paint. Geometry, mathematics, concentration and control are all needed to make these works of art. See more examples at www.artpaver.com/mk.htm

Been there, done that

Turf pest problems can vary from year to year, depending on circumstances like weather and cultural practices. LCOs surveyed in some regions of the U.S. ran into these control problems during the 1998 season:

	Northeast	Midwest	Southeast	Texas
pest	%	%	%	%
white grubs	88	97	23	62
chinch bugs	43	32	77	60
sod webworms	29	34	30	2
fire ants	-	-	27	42
mole crickets	-	1	39	-
caterpillars/worms	2	2	16	18
billbugs	7	6	2	-
beetles (various)	2	2	6	5
cutworms	3	4	-	-
all others	16	21	22	20

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