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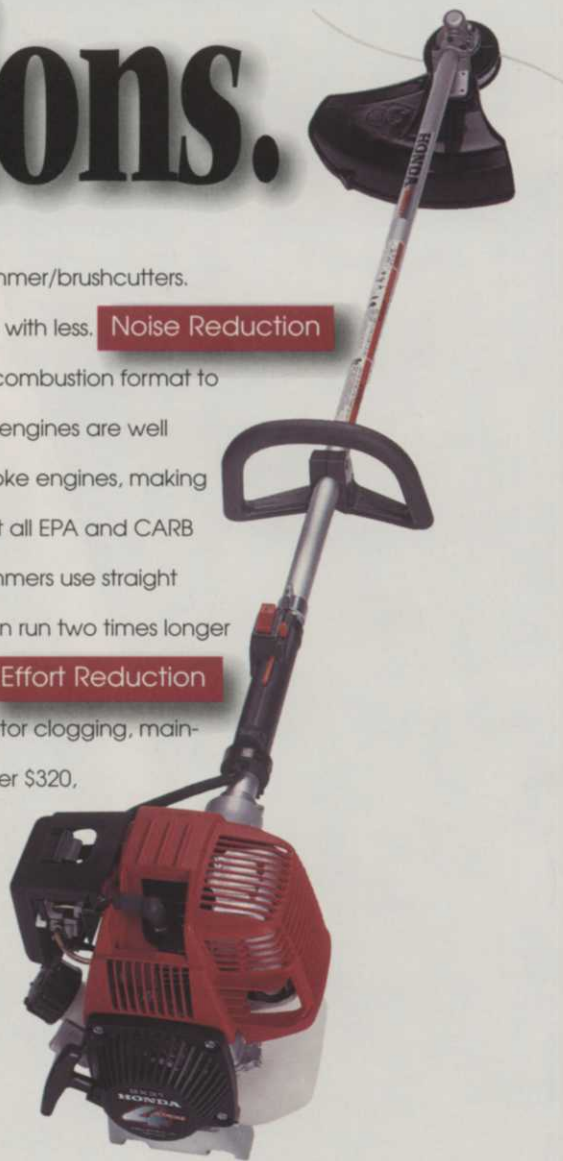
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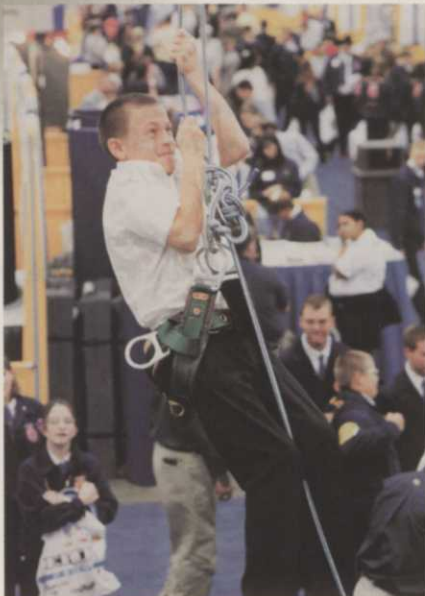
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COVER IMAGE: PAUL TAYLOR OF TONY STONE IMAGES; ADAPTED BY DAN BEEDY

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BY SUE GIBSON / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Be a player in the labor game

“I

his millenium, I'm planning ahead, and I mean it!" I vowed, along with millions of others. How about you? Will this be the year when you make plans instead of promises, or develop written business goals and a program to achieve them? I believe that you can achieve those things if you work for them.

So how will you work at hiring employees this year? I'm sorry to say if you don't have a plan in place right now, you're already out of this year's game. You might get lucky, but the best people will go elsewhere.

"What? I haven't even written our clever new want ads yet!" you shriek. "I'm still developing our internet search strategy. It's not too late — it's only February!"

Sorry, you're wrong. It's too late to start planning because right now, you should be planning for February 2001, 2002 and 2003. In fact, you should be planning all aspects of your business for the next five years, and not just your hiring plan. The "people" is critical to building your organization of the future.

That's one thing I've learned from the experts who contributed to our series on labor, which starts this month. I've also learned it from observing the most successful managers in our industry. They don't recruit, hire or retain people as an afterthought. They plan like hell for it.

Why? Because the numbers are stacked against you. The "available" workforce will shrink even more in upcoming years and you'll have to look for "non-traditional" workers and use new systems to keep them. It's going to be a lot harder in the future.

So here's my recipe for playing today's and tomorrow's labor game successfully:

► **1. Think and act long-term.** Be purposeful and plan years ahead to have the organization, relationships and systems that feed people with potential to

you, and keep them there for the long term.

► **2. Network like crazy.** Reach out to "nontraditional" employees and build creative alliances for hiring and training.

► **3. Be a leader.** Everyone can't be a leader, but you can be the best at something. You can have an organization that grows its people along with its business — and you'll have to.

Too many of you tell me that the key factor keeping you from growing more is lack of good people. If this problem is so critical, you need to work hard — short-term and long-term — to solve it.


Our coverage this month starts on page 48. We'd love to hear your sources for people, your ideas for training and your methods of slowing turnover for future articles. If you have the time, please give me a call at 800/225-4569 x2729, or email me: sgibson@advanstar.com.

Welcome Jason Stahl

It's our pleasure to welcome Jason Stahl as managing editor of *Landscape Management* and our sister publication, *Athletic Turf*. Jason joins us with several years of experience in publications and is already learning plenty about the ins and outs of professional landscape work. He will cover many industry events and has already started developing several features on our industry, like his piece in *Industry Almanac*, page 32. You can reach him at 440/891-2623 or jstahl@advanstar.com.



"It's too late to start planning...you should be planning for February 2001 and 2002..." — SG



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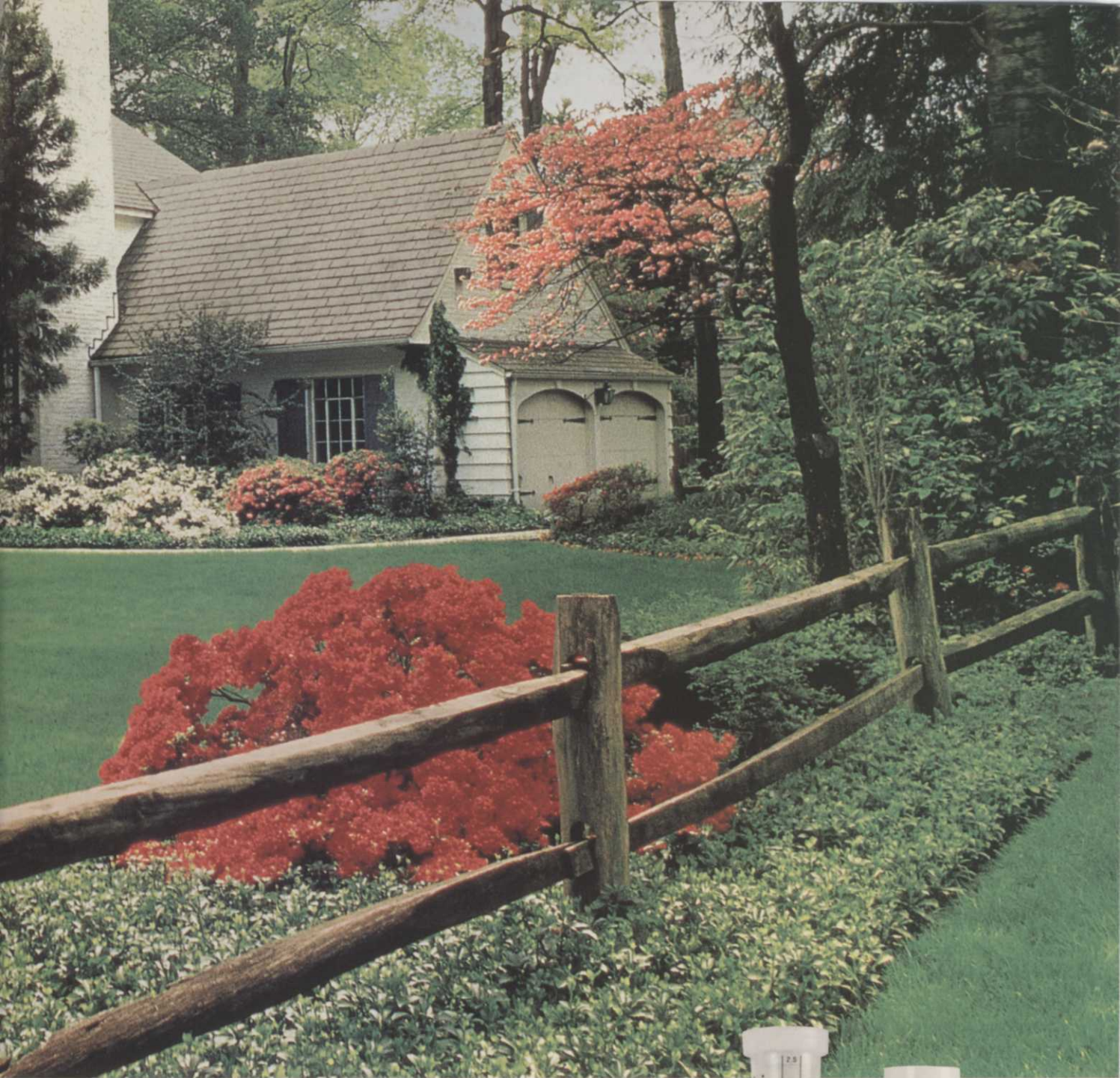
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events

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

February

15-17 Illinois Landscape Contractors Association's Winter Seminar / Lisle, IL; 630/472-2851

16-17 Landscape Industry Show / Long Beach, CA; Sponsored by California Landscape Contractors Association; 916/448-2522

21-23 Michigan Forestry and Park Association Winter Conference / Lansing, MI; 517/482-5530

21-25 Virginia Tech Turfgrass Ecology and Management Short Course / Blacksburg, VA; 540/231-5182

21-25 Cornell Turfgrass Management Short Course / Fishkill, NY; 607/255-1792

22 Train the Trainer Equipment Operation and Safety Program / Orlando, FL; Sponsored by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America; 800/395-2522

22-24 Ohio State University Professional Grounds Maintenance Short Course / Columbus, OH; 614/292-7457

28 New York State Turfgrass Association Southeast Regional Conference / Suffern, NY; 800/873-8873

29 Pesticide Safety / New Brunswick, NJ; Cook College Office of Continuing Professional Education; 732/932/9271

29-March 1 Spring

Training Conference / Golden, CO; Sponsored by the Colorado Association of Lawn Care Professionals; 303/850-7587

29-March 1 Southern Illinois Grounds Maintenance School / Collinsville, IL; 618/236-8600

March

1 The Nassau Suffolk Landscape Gardeners Association Annual Professional Turf & Plant Conference / Huntington, NY; 516/665-2250

1 Concrete Pavers: Creative Applications and Efficient Installation Methods / New Brunswick, NJ; Cook College Office of Continuing Professional Education; 732/932 9271

6-7 MFPA Annual Winter Conference / Lansing, MI; Sponsored by the Michigan Forestry and Park Association; 517/482-5530

6-9 New England Regional Turf Conference & Show / Providence; Sponsored by New England Turf Association; 401/848-0004

9-12 Associated Landscape Contractors of America Student Career Days / Starkville, MS; 800/395-2522; www.alca.org

13 Pruning Landscape Ornamentals For Beneficial Effects / New Brunswick, NJ; Cook College Office of Continuing Professional Education; 732/932-9271

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Washington, DC 20005
202/789-2900



Independent Turf and Ornamental Distributors Association
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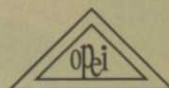
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Fairfax, VA 22031-4513
703/573-3551
www.irrigation.org



National Arborist Association
The Meeting Place Mall,
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603/673-3311
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Ohio Turfgrass Foundation
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The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute
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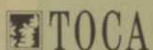
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Standing the test of time

For a family business to survive and prosper from year to year, decade to decade, it must refocus and redirect its efforts as market conditions change.

Just ask William E. Akehurst of Akehurst Landscape Service, Inc., Joppa, MD. He represents the fourth generation of the Akehurst family involved in the green industry. He works elbow-to-elbow with several fifth generation family members. The Akehursts have, in one way or another, participated in the professional landscape industry in Maryland and surrounding areas for more than 130 years.

Today, their offices are located in a tidy ranch-style house on a ridge just east of and overlooking I-95. The location allows company crews quick access to Baltimore's eastern and northern suburbs.

This year, they want to purchase some land to expand their operation headquartered just north of Baltimore. They plan to grow more landscape plant material, too.

In a sense, they are returning to their roots because the family first began growing commercial plant material near Baltimore 133 years ago. It all began when Charles Akehurst and his son, C. Edward, produced flowers such as carnations and violets along with vegetable plants in 1876. Then came rose bushes for the garden trade and, early in the 20th century, the family expanded into cut flowers, including prize-winning carnations and roses.

Succeeding generations modified the business to meet changing market conditions — and the process continues. Today, the company offers a full range of landscape services, both exterior and interior.

William E. Akehurst, the patriarch of the operation, is joined in the business by his three sons, William K., Brian E. and John C. They, along with other family members, work together daily, each re-



The Akehurst team prepares for another 100 years. From the left, William E. Akehurst, John C. Akehurst, Jay F. Tarleton, Brian E. Akehurst and William K. Akehurst.

sponsible for a particular part of the company. Son William K. heads the landscape division, son Brian runs grounds maintenance, son John C. the interiorscape division and nephew Jay F. Tarleton is the company's administrative officer.

While the elder Akehurst acknowledged that each family member has a distinctive style and there are, from time to time, disagreements within the family business, every family member works cooperatively to keep the business competitive and responsive to customer needs — and each is willing to improve and redirect the operation's services to meet an ever-changing marketplace.

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Sound familiar? Actually, the story is not new. Historically, the attitude has been that our industry can't hire good people because we're seasonal and low-paying. We assumed that what we have today is what we would always have: a relatively large number of unskilled, low-salaried workers who presented all kinds of hiring problems — not to mention retention problems. We lived with those problems, and complained about them.

Maybe you live with them today. But at Dwight Hughes Nursery, we don't.

You may have heard of us and our philosophy — we've attracted some industry attention with our success in modernizing operations. Like most other companies in modern times, except in our industry, we have invested time and money in systems that promote success. These include mechanical systems, management systems — and our people.

Find good people

For starters, we do not go looking for just anybody. I used to be on the advisory board of our local community college, which has a two-year program in horticulture, landscape maintenance and design. If we need an

employee, that's where we go first.

We look for a certain kind of person, hopefully having some of the following:

- ▶ a farm background, with an understanding of the agricultural work ethic
- ▶ experience with machinery and equipment
- ▶ physical strength (still needed, even though our systems rely on machinery whenever possible)
- ▶ a love of outdoor sports, especially all-day activities like hunting and fishing, because this can indicate a person well-suited to working in cold, windy, damp, broiling or otherwise unpleasant weather.

We've had wonderful results with this methodology, and I recommend it to you strongly.

Keeping them

After we find someone we like, how do we get them on board? After all, there are a lot of vacant jobs out there today looking to be filled. Our answer to that question is to make the investment and offer our employees a job that is rewarding and satisfying. We put out the effort and the dollars to offer them things like:

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▶ **Field trips:** We take field trips to our growers, major suppliers and equipment manufacturers. We pay our people for their time during these trips, and, as often as possible, tack on some fishing to the end of the day. Once a year, we rent a 'company



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The controls are conveniently positioned. Operator safety features are state-of-the-art. Durable, reliable Kawasaki string trimmers. Take one for a test drive at your nearest Kawasaki Power Products dealer.

Lifetime warranty on ignition module



Rubber-mounted engines lower vibration on motorcycles... and KAWASAKI HEDGE TRIMMERS.

Our sharp 24" double-sided and 30" single-sided models feature powerful, easy-starting Kawasaki engines, rubber-mounted for low vibes. They also use high-speed blades, heat treated with a chamfered tip and tight blade fit, delivering top-notch cutting performance, plus outstanding durability and reliability. As for safety, unlike some competitive trimmers that leave the blade exposed, our trimmers feature an aluminum blade guard for an extra measure of safety. Just what you'd expect on a Power Product from Kawasaki.

Low vibration!

All The Right Power! Every day, more and more professionals demand Kawasaki engines for their new equipment and their repower projects. Kawasaki powerplants are built to work hard, run quiet and last a long time, with all the features professionals look for in quality power.



The Right Power For Lawn Care.

Among the many Kawasaki engines used in the lawn care industry, the FH Series powerplants set a new precedent. They range in size from a 15 HP model designed for small to mid-sized walk-behind mowers to a 23 HP model that's perfect for large walk-behinds and riding equipment.



The Driving Force In Light Industry.

Kawasaki engines power everything from generators to scissor lifts, trenchers to cable pullers, trash pumps to utility vehicles. They are, in fact, "The Driving Force" behind literally hundreds of pieces of equipment used in the construction industry...and with good reason.



The FD Series, for example, has gained a reputation as one of the most serious professional powerplants on the market. They are compact, high-torque engines perfectly matched to meet a wide range of horizontal-shaft and vertical-shaft installations. Kawasaki is a leading manufacturer in the advanced technology of liquid-cooled V-twin in its 16 to 26 HP engines.

Durability, reliability, easy starts, easy maintenance. You get it all when you insist on Kawasaki engines.

Pour In Kawasaki 4-Cycle Oil And Double The Warranty!

When you pour Kawasaki 4-cycle oil into your Kawasaki-powered equipment, not only do you get high quality oil, you get double the engine warranty. You read that right! At Kawasaki, we believe that our 4-cycle oil is so effective in extending engine life, we double the internal engine warranty. Remember, not all oils are created equal. And with twice the warranty, there's no reason to use anything less than Kawasaki oil for Kawasaki 4-cycle engines, generators and pumps.



KAWASAKI TO THE CORE

From street bikes to string trimmers, dirt bikes to backpack blowers, at the core of everything we build is advanced Kawasaki engineering. **Powerful. Reliable. World class.** Kawasaki engines are designed to deliver unmatched durability and performance. Plus features that add an extra measure of convenience and safety.

10 DAY MONEY BACK Guarantee

DAVID MICHELENI
Lead Groundskeeper, Brookfield Zoo
Brookfield, IL

"Our staff is very impressed with them. They are a lot lighter and less fatiguing. They hold up well, and if it can stand up to our seasonal staff that means it must be a good product."



JAY HUSER
Owner
Landscape Construction Services
Anderson, IN

"The weight difference is unbelievable. And when you carry one around all day that's a big advantage. We liked working with the Kawasaki trimmers so much we started selling them too."



FRED DREWRY
Manager, The Davey Tree Expert Company
Pontiac, MI
"Best engine known to man."



CHUCK KISONIS
Vehicle & Equipment Maintenance
Waukegan Park District, Waukegan, IL
"Kawasaki trimmers are so lightweight and better balanced, our guys don't want to use the other stuff."

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ENGINES / POWER PRODUCTS

KAWASAKI TO THE CORE



Let's Talk Trash. We're not about to bad-mouth the competition. Let's just say nobody builds harder working TRASH PUMPS, SEMI-TRASH PUMPS AND WATER PUMPS than Kawasaki. We build them the way they should be built, with world-class engineering. You'll find the fuel gauge and all main controls in one location for easy, safe operation. And extra features like pressure-lubed engines and an engine-balance system on some models. You can depend on these rugged 4-cycle Kawasaki engines for all water and trash removal jobs. Kawasaki pumps. They just work harder.

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Day in and day out, around the clock and around the world, Kawasaki GENERATORS are on the job. Delivering reliable power as backup assistance during power outages, and for construction, agriculture and recreation. There are six rugged Kawasaki models to choose from. All are self-excited, double-pole, single-phase generators, featuring Kawasaki engines, the undisputed leader for reliability and durability. A two-stage air cleaner, plus low oil warning/shutdown and automatic idle control on select models, are just a few of the "must-haves" you'll find on their long list of standard features.



Warning: Special precautions must be taken to avoid shock, injury and/or property damage when using a generator as an alternate power source in any building. Always check with the power utility and refer to the operator's manual before attempting any such applications.

Kawasaki

ENGINES/POWER PRODUCTS

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for Your Local Kawasaki Dealer.**

plane' and fly somewhere a little farther away. These trips are educational and fun, and build a sense of company identity.

► **Job rotation:** Like most landscape companies, our people tend to become specialists over time. But we are willing to shake things up. If someone expresses an interest in something new, we really try to figure out a way to let them do that on the job. Employees appreciate this opportunity, which helps foster a sense of team work.

► **Excellent tools and equipment:** Never underestimate the thrill people get when you allow them to work with well thought-out, well-maintained systems and tools. This should be a no-brainer for you. Think about how much you like laptop computers, cell phones and new trucks. What makes you think your employees are any different? A major element of their job satisfaction is having good systems and tools (for example, our trucks have cell phones in them so we can communicate all the time).

► **Great compensation:** Yes, we offer our people a much better compensation package than is typical in our industry. Our hourly scale of \$10 to \$15 per hour is pretty good pay in our part of the country. Full-time employees get time and a half over 40 hours, and since we work 50 to 60 hours a week in season, that overtime really adds up.

All four of our workers have a complete company-paid health care program; a pension plan to which we

contribute 10% of their salary annually; and a profit sharing plan equalling up to 15% of salary. In a good year, the pension and profit sharing plans add 25% to their income. We also offer a lot of small but important perks, like company caps, shirts, and jackets.

Can you afford it?

I can already hear you asking: "Dwight, how can you afford that level of compensation?" The answer is productivity and profitability. By investing in systems — and people — that allow us to do more with less, we generate over \$100,000 a year in revenue per employee. With financial numbers like those, we can afford to provide better compensation packages, better tools and paid field trips. Get the picture?

One more thing: not only is hiring an integral part of our "System for Success," but it has effectively solved the turnover problem. In 22 years, we've had three foremen. The first two went on to start their own businesses, and the third is still with us. Laborers have stayed with us for an average of six years, and some of those who left did so to start companies of their own. (That's always a bittersweet experience after the investment we've made in them, but I'm also proud of their achievements. And since our plate is full, it's not as if they've stolen any business from us.)

In this day and age, we think that a turnover rate of once every six or seven years is nothing short of amazing. Especially since it's part of our overall success!

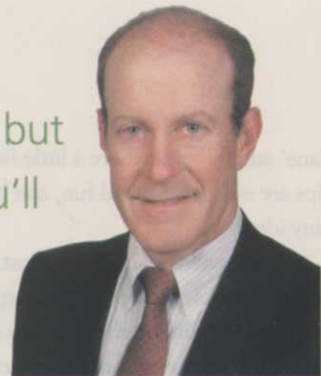
— *The author is president of Dwight Hughes Nursery in Cedar Rapids, IA, which is recognized throughout the industry for innovation. Dwight is a board member of the American Nursery and Landscape Association's Horticultural Research Institute, and has attracted national attention for his work in developing robotic equipment for use in the green industry. His book and videotape, "Systems for Success," detail his methods (Published by Dwight Hughes Systems, Inc., Cedar Rapids, IA, 1996; 319-396-7038; fax 319-396-9139).*

Dwight's labor tips

- Give employees their own personal space
- Take them on field trips
- Give them a variety of tasks
- Give them excellent tools and equipment
- Compensate them greatly

BY BOB BAIRD / GUEST COLUMNIST

Using time-tested principles puts the odds in your favor, but it doesn't make it easy. The biggest problem you'll have is separating the investment wheat from the chaff



It's your money: Get good help

Have you seen those investment flyers promising triple-digit returns if you'll buy some secret guaranteed to bring investment riches? Truth be told, I've bought more of those than I care to remember.

On the other hand, don't try to do all of your investment research by yourself. As usual, prudence is somewhere in between. Just because the next decade will involve gadgets that think and talk back to you, don't think that the principles of investing will change because your accessories will. They won't. Stocks go up because they are from good businesses or represent perceived value, not because of some secret theory.

K.I.S.S.

If you are new to investments, start out with a long-term horizon. We've experienced four exceptional years in a row. The odds do not favor another four years of this, so you should probably lower your expectations a bit. Using time-tested principles puts the odds in your favor, but it doesn't make it easy. The biggest problem you'll have is separating the investment wheat from the chaff. Keep it simple and don't forget your common sense. Unfortunately, that is easier said than done.

Let's start with some basics:

▶ Other than for an IRA or pension plan, before you even think of investing in earnest, pay off your credit card bills. That's a guaranteed return equal to the rate of interest on your card.

▶ Become informed. Use libraries or the Internet (it has so much information it can almost be too much).

▶ A good place to start is the "Motley Fool" (www.fool.com/index.htm). Its "school" will walk you through a simple plan that you can use for the rest of your investing life. The site is funny and informative, and it puts things into proper perspective.

Work your money

Now comes the hard part: deciding on a plan that is best for you and staying with it through the inevitable ups and downs of the market. In principal, it might seem easy. Statistically, however, many investors who try to do their own thing end up needing help.

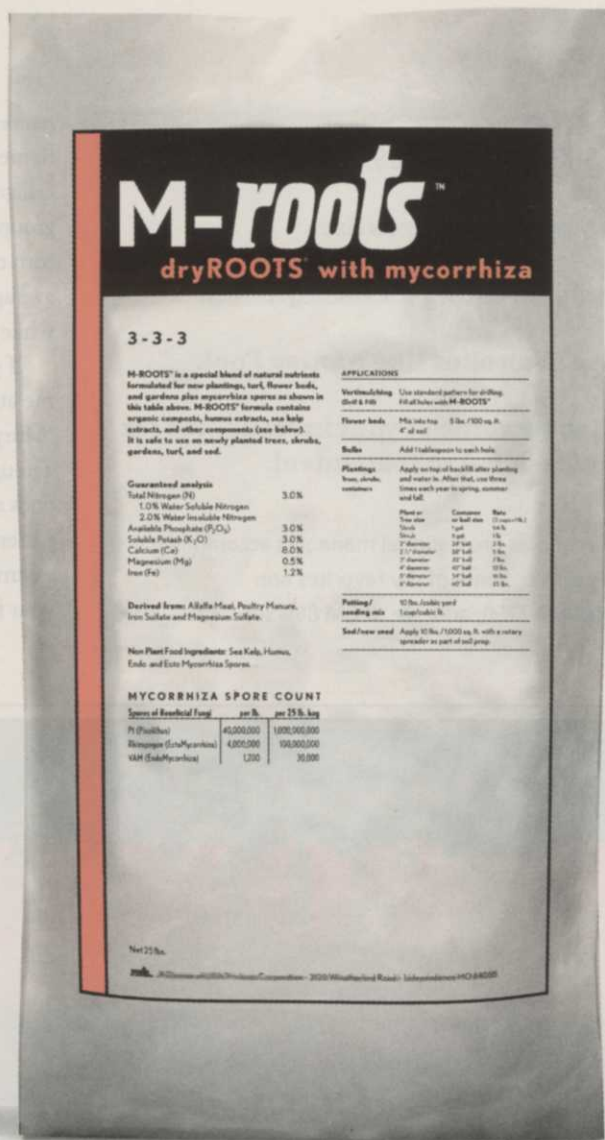
My favorite study was by Morningstar, a well known investment information firm. From 1984 to 1994, a random sampling of mutual funds produced an average return of just under 13%. In 10 years, they were up roughly 300%. Things could be worse. Those investors who tried to move in and out with the market's ups and downs or changed to whatever fund was hot at the moment averaged less than 3%.

If you are new to investing, remember this and hold it close to your heart: Human emotion and reaction work against you. This is why I always recommend you take some portion of your investment money and have it managed professionally. Take it out of your hands.

If it was easy to make consistent 20% returns, everyone would do it. This is why I recommend an active, conservative money manager for someone starting out. Most investors are not suited to last through the harrowing times of a bear market. They exit at the wrong time.

continued on page 26

Affordable Mycorrhiza



MYCORRHIZA: fungi that colonizes plant roots and extends the root system into the surrounding soil, providing the plant with improved nutrient uptake, disease resistance, and superior survival and growth.

AFFORDABLE: least expensive mycorrhiza available today in one package.

M-ROOTS™: the name of the product with twelve species of *affordable mycorrhiza*, creating an inexpensive way to get your valuable plantings over the stress of poor soil, dry weather, and other harsh conditions.



ARTVILLE

Bob's key strategies:

- ▶ **Pay off credit cards first.**
- ▶ **Study investing for background.**
- ▶ **Visit Web sites like Motley Fool.**
- ▶ **Allocate some of your investments for professional management.**

Like so many other things in life, sometimes professional managers accomplish investment growth, sometimes they don't. Some of my favorites are:

- ▶ Schield 800/275-2382; ▶ PSM 800/433-7750; and ▶ KFCM 888/345-5326.

continued from page 24

Some professional managers, however, specialize in staying invested in the hottest groups and then get out of them when they turn cold. The idea is to keep pace with an average growth fund, but have less risk while doing it.

If you want to discuss it, you can e-mail me at rkbaird@home.com. And keep "Murphy's Law" in the back of your mind. Though the market is not out to get you, it does seem that way sometimes. If you are patient and your plan is based on good investment logic, you will put the odds in your favor. Most people don't.

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■ EASY

Walker takes care of the operator with comfortable seating, good visibility, and easy-to-operate, responsive controls providing full productivity and best use of labor.

■ BEAUTIFUL

While "mow and blow" may be an acceptable standard for some mowing jobs, Walker offers beautiful mowing, vacuuming, mulching, and manicuring for discriminating customers. Some of the most beautiful grounds in the world are mowed by Walker.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Becker Underwood acquires Rejex-it

AMES, IA — Becker Underwood Inc., Ames, IA, recently acquired the Rejex-it® Wildlife Management Products division from PMC Specialties. This acquisition comes on the heels of others Becker Underwood has made involving Lan Colorant Products, Sequestrene and Sprint chelated iron products from Novartis, Turf Health Care and NutraSol. Rejex-it products are EPA-registered animal aversion products which modify or deter animal encroachment problems.

Netafim USA and Motorola unite

FRESNO, CA — Netafim USA's open field controls will be brought together with Motorola's advanced wireless irrigation remote technology now that the two companies have formed an alliance.

Netafim USA, the largest and fastest growing business unit of the Netafim International Group, the inventor of advanced micro-irrigation technology, views Motorola's new technology advancements as completing its offering in open field controls, open field fertigation, greenhouse applications and phytomonitoring.

Riverdale, DuPont sign deal

GLENWOOD, IL — Riverdale Chemical Co. signed a letter of intent with the DuPont Company to market formulations of two chemical active ingredients to professional turf managers in the United States.

[CLIPPINGS]

AgriBioTech files for bankruptcy

LAS VEGAS, NV - AgriBioTech Inc. and its operating subsidiaries filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy last month in order to implement an operational restructuring and financial reorganization.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Richard Budd offered six reasons as to why AgriBioTech has suffered significant losses and a lack of current liquidity:

- ▶ Oversupply of seed with a downturn in industry pricing;
- ▶ Difficulties with integrating the operations, culture and accounting systems of 34 companies into single operational units;
- ▶ Delays in bringing seed to market;
- ▶ Reduced revenues;
- ▶ Higher-than-expected expenses;
- ▶ Slow cash collections from a weak agricultural economy.

STOCK PRICE SLUMP

According to a story from *cnetnews.com*, a record trading volume of 6.3 million

shares of AgriBioTech's stock were traded on the basis of some negative comments about the company posted on a Yahoo! message board. After trading at around \$9.25 a share in February 1999, the stock fell to as low as \$1.40 per share in January. Trading was halted at \$2.25 per share on Jan. 24, 2000 by Nasdaq, pending the announcement of the company's intention to file for bankruptcy.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

AgriBioTech intends to conduct business as usual during the restructuring. To ensure that it has the short-term working capital needed to operate, the company is negotiating for debtor-in-possession financing from its current lending group, led by Bank of America N.A. The company intends to pay employee salary, wages and benefits throughout the reorganization process.

New 2, 4-D study refutes original's findings concerning cancer in dogs

SWANSBORO, NC - A study published in 1991 by the Journal of the National Cancer Institute showed an association between cancer in dogs and use of the herbicide 2, 4-D, but a recent re-analysis of that study does not support the conclusions found in that original study.

The new study, conducted by John B. Kaneene, D.V.M., M.P.H., Ph.D.; and RoseAnn Miller, B.S.; of Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, did not find a dose-response relationship between numbers of 2, 4-D applications and canine malignant lymphoma (CML). That finding contradicted the original study findings that owners of dogs with CML were twice as likely to treat their lawns with 2, 4-D four times a year or more than owners of dogs without cancer.

The National Cancer Institute and antipesticide activists cite the original study as a reason why 2, 4-D should be banned, and some veterinarians advise that dog owners not use 2, 4-D. The 2, 4-D Task Force has sought a response to the original study ever since discovering there was no evidence in the toxicology of 2, 4-D that suggested it caused cancer in laboratory animals.

E*Garden launches Web site for Green Industry

RALEIGH, NC - An auction for surplus and rare merchandise and an upcoming wholesale store are just two of the many features of E*Garden (www.egarden.com), a new business-to-business e-commerce Web site focused on the lawn and garden industry.

E*Garden also features news, information and resources for companies in the lawn and garden trade. Longer-term plans call for the Web site to offer a full range of procurement, payment and distribution services for lawn and garden companies.

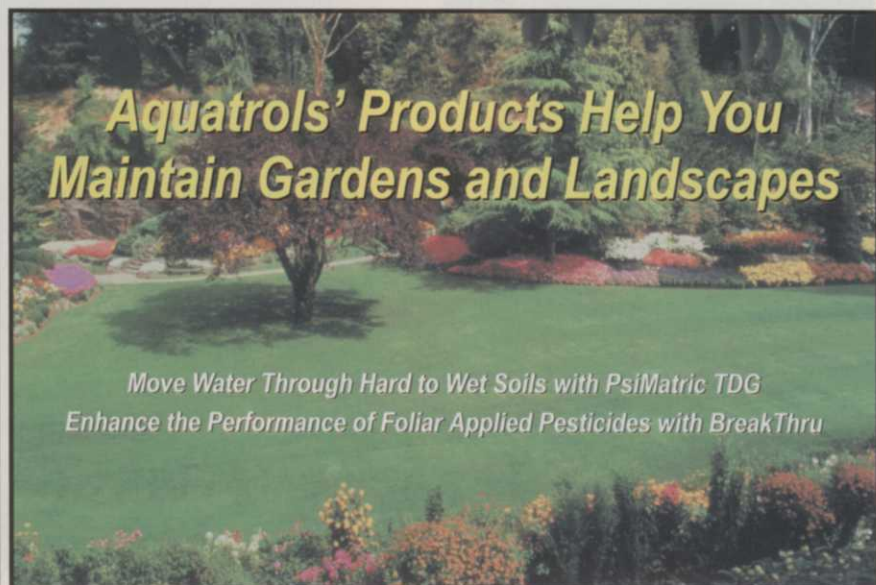
"Through E*Garden, manufacturers and distributors of lawn and garden merchandise can more efficiently and profitably sell their products," says Linda Watson, president of E*Garden, Inc. "Independent retailers and lawn and garden professionals can use E*Garden to buy all of their lawn and garden merchandise from a wide range of suppliers at competitive prices."

The auction allows sellers to post items in the Auction Service, where buyers can place bids on the items and e-mail questions to the seller. Sellers can see the best current bids at any time. When the auction period is over, E*Garden notifies the seller and winning bidder(s) via e-mail and puts them in touch with one another.

E*Garden is working to create financing and shipping partnerships, which will allow the transaction to be done through the site.

"Internet analysts expect business-to-business transactions on the Internet to grow to approximately \$1.3 trillion by 2003 — dwarfing what consumers will

spend online — and E*Garden is positioned to lead the lawn and garden industry's move into e-commerce."



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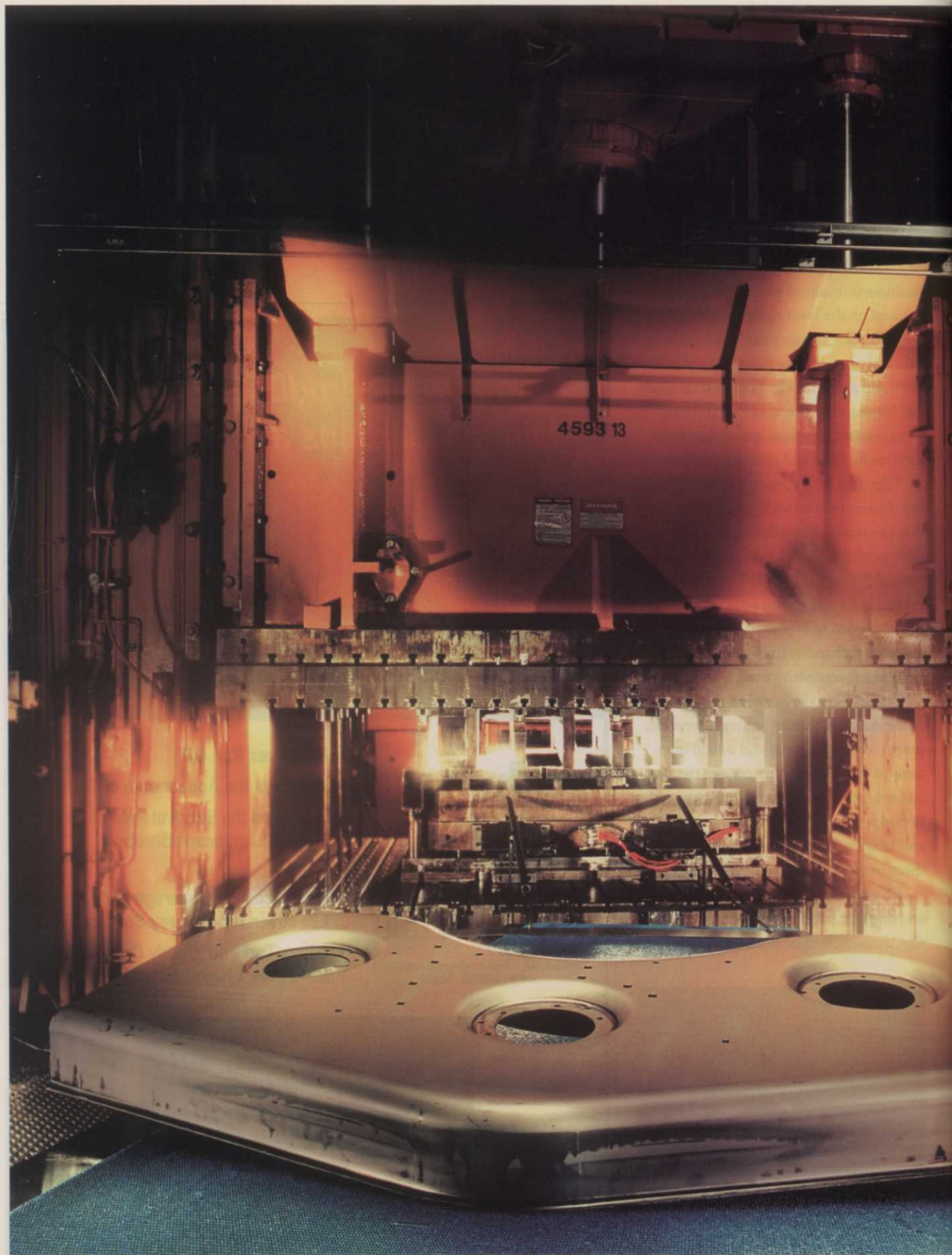
LeafShield
Anti-Transpirant

Circle 112

Will the real number
please stand up...

We did everything right in describing the Cushman Turf Truckster in our LM Product Review (September 1999) — except give you the correct phone number to call for more information.

That number is 888/922-TURF. We apologize for the error.



4593 13

7-IRON

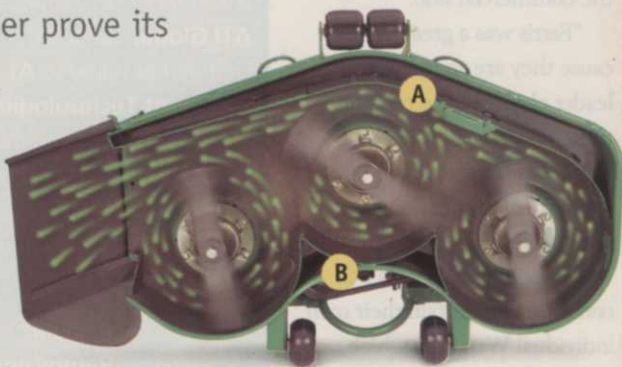
Its inspiration was the passion to build the best. Four years and four million pounds of pressure later, it's finally ready. Introducing the 7-Iron™ mower deck from John Deere. Stamped from a single sheet of incredibly thick 7-gauge (.177 inch) steel, in the industry's largest press, its perfectly smooth and impossibly strong shell (shown to the left) has no welds to break, or irregular



areas to catch clippings. A full-length front baffle **A** eliminates any dead space and brushes grass into an ideal vertical position. An almost unimaginable depth (5.75 inches at maximum **B**) creates a superior vacuum in which to cut. A multi-step electrostatic paint

A diamond isn't the only thing formed by tons of pressure.

process (impressive for the automotive industry, let alone mowing) guards against rust. While features such as a rubber deflector shield and aluminum spindle hubs further prove its engineering excellence. (Rubber is more flexible than steel, and aluminum die casting more precise.) Available in 48-, 54-, and 60-inch widths, and only from your local John Deere dealer, the 7-Iron deck is simply the best



in the world. To see for yourself, call 1-800-537-8233 or visit www.deere.com for a dealer near you.

Circle No. 113 on Reader Inquiry Card

Nothing Runs Like a Deere®



Ferris-Simplicity merger spawns new product line

PORT WASHINGTON, WI — Simplicity Manufacturing Inc. purchased Ferris Industries, Munnsville, NY, only a couple months ago, but already the company has taken advantage of its newly formed association by coming out with a consumer line of commercial mowing equipment.

The new line is called Derby because of the mowers' emphasis on speed. "This line is geared toward busy young professionals who want to cut grass fast with commercial-tough equipment," says Jim Weir, president of Simplicity.

Simplicity, known for its dominance in the consumer mowing sector, acquired Ferris with an eye for expansion to the commercial side.

"Ferris was a great fit because they are an innovative leader clearly ahead of their time," Weir says. "We also think that they will help us strengthen our relationship with dealers."

Simplicity and Ferris will continue to maintain their own individual Web sites which, unlike other sites, are designed to allow people to find the company's dealers. Weir hinted at delving into selling equipment directly from the site, however. "We're going to begin selling a limited amount of equipment on our Web site this spring, but we're going to include the dealer in the process," he says. "We'll sell to

customers but the dealers will set everything up and contact and interact with them."

An addition to Simplicity's plant is currently being built to meet the increased demand for its products, but Ferris will continue to stand by itself, says

Weir. "Ferris is a vast, nimble and innovative company, and we want to keep it that way. The reason we acquired them is because they didn't have the capital to support their growth."

Weir says that Simplicity will eventually incorporate

some of Ferris' technology into its own machines, including the IS® independent suspension system. "Simplicity is known for offering the best cut, and that information will be translated to Ferris for a solid combination."

—Jason Stahl

People & companies

The **Toro Company** named **Dave Armentrout** general manager of its recently acquired distributor, Chicago Turf and Irrigation.

Greenman-Pedersen named **John Spiegel** vice president and director of land development services.

Attachments manufacturer **ATI Global**, Delhi, IA, changed its name to **Attachment Technologies**, Inc. Attachment Technologies is the parent company of Bradco and The Major, providers of construction attachments.



Angela Ramos and Sandra Casserly have joined **Van Waters**

& Rogers' Professional Products & Services business unit as turf and landscape specialists.

Jerry Pauley and Lee Bloomcamp were named

territory sales representatives for **Zeneca Professional Products**. The company also named **Bill McClellan** as its North American technical manager for professional pest control and turf products, **Kathy Cantagallo** as contract technical sales manager and **David Ross** as national accounts manager.

Roeland Kapsenberg was appointed by **Barenbrug USA** as its new president/CEO of Barenbrug North America. **Ron Dodds** was named territory manager for the company's Forage product line.

Tom Taylor has rejoined **Woods Equipment Company** as marketing manager, Agriculture and Turf Business.

Rohm and Haas Company named **Gray C. Wirth** strategic market manager for turf and ornamental products.

David Mutter joined **Environmental Industries of Calabasas**, CA as vice president of sales and marketing. The company promoted **William H. Arman** to corporate vice president of human resources.



Harmony Products promoted **John Moriarity** to vice president of sales and marketing.

Sweepster of Dexter, MI named **Patrick Robertson** vice president of manufacturing.

Sumitomo Chemical, the parent company of Valent USA, purchased the Ag Specialties Business of Abbott Laboratories. The acquisition will provide Sumitomo with naturally occurring biopesticides, plant growth regulators and other products for agriculture, public health and forestry.

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*See Program Guidelines for details.

Circle No. 114 on Reader Inquiry Card

industry almanac

Church leaves TruGreen-LandCare

LOMBARD, IL — Bruce Church, of TruGreen-LandCare (formerly D.R. Church Landscape Co.), announced that he is leaving the company to explore new opportunities.

Church, a founding member of LandCare USA, which was acquired by the TruGreen Division of ServiceMaster in 1998, will hand over his duties as district manager to John Joestgen. Church will remain TruGreen-LandCare as a consultant until March 3.

[CLIPPINGS]

Surfin' Turf

Dressed for success

NEBS.com, a small business management resource <http://www.nebs.com>

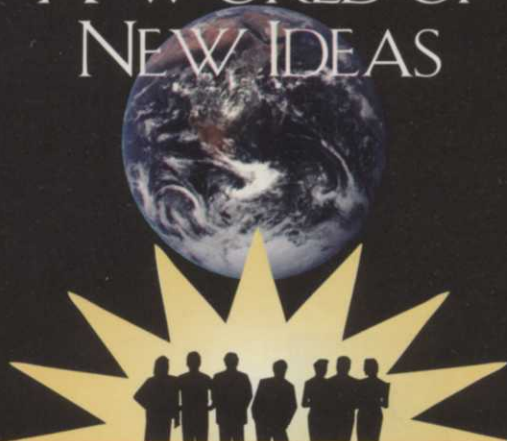
Perhaps you've been thinking that forest green t-shirts and pleated khakis might make your crew the envy of the fashion world. Or maybe you want to make the switch to bright orange t-shirts for your crew's safety.

Whatever your desire, you can get it done at www.nebs.com, a Web site that has recently added Company Colors™ work wear to its online cata-

log that makes customizing and proofing uniform orders as easy as a stroll down a runway.

Anybody who knows how to work a mouse can customize a product by selecting its style, color, logo, embroidery typeface and thread color. Once the design is complete, the screen displays a visual representation of the finished item. Among the clothing items offered are industrial work pants, coveralls, jackets, work coats, sweatshirts, t-shirts and hats.

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Circle 116

It's (not) in the hole!



(L to R) Mike Ochoa, Irritrol Systems' director of sales and marketing; Mark Dailey, top prize winner from San Antonio, TX; and Rick Parod, vice president of The Toro Company.

ORLANDO, FL - Irrigation contractor Mark Dailey found himself doing his best Carl Spackler from *Caddyshack* imitation recently when he out-putted seven other finalists for a chance at becoming a millionaire at Irritrol Systems' \$1 Million Putt Competition. Even though he wasn't able to say, "It's in the hole," on the 35-footer that would have put him in Bill Gates' company, he did walk away with \$15,000.

Dailey's \$1 million putt attempt marked the culmination of a year-long Irritrol promotion that was open to landscape and irrigation contractors nation-

wide. Eight contractors were selected by random drawing to compete in the two-day putting event. In addition to receiving

an all-expenses paid trip to Orlando, the eight finalists took home cash prizes ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000.

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And because Barrier offers both pre and post-emergent control, there is no need to remove previously germinated weed seedlings.

Let Barrier guard *your* landscape. So you can enjoy it.

A source of disappointment...

to the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation was the group's listing in our Green Book 2000 printed in December 1999. It turns out we listed the old address. The correct address for the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation is P.O. Box 3388, 1100-H Brandywine Blvd., Zanesville, OH 43702-3388, telephone: 888/683-3445, fax: 740/452-2552, email: kthompson@offinger.com, contact: Kevin Thompson, managing director. We apologize for the error.

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Choosing 'designer' or 'generic' fertilizers

BY BOB STAIB

The price differences are obvious and they all deliver nitrogen, but there the similarities between fertilizers end. Each type, from basic to 'designer,' has features that may make your applications more effective

The essence of fertilizer is nitrogen, and all types of fertilizers available to the landscape and grounds management industries offer nitrogen. What makes them distinctive is the nitrogen delivery mechanism, their cost and the way they can fit into your turf and landscape operations.

Back to basics

For the purpose of simplification, consider the four major categories of nitrogen fertilizers:

- ▶ soluble nitrogen (ammonium sulfate, urea)
- ▶ coated soluble N (sulfur coated urea, polymer coated urea, polymer coated sulfur coated urea)

▶ natural organic N (activated sewage sludge, digested sewage sludge, fish meal, dried blood meal, composted turkey manure)

▶ reacted (synthetic) organic N (ureaform, methyleneurea, liquid methyleneurea, isobutyli-denediurea)

These products range in price from very expensive to inexpensive; from soluble nitrogen levels of as little as 2% to as much as 46%; and from quick to slow release into the soil, among other characteristics.

Mode of release

By understanding the methods of release, you will know what separates the more engineered, 'high tech' fertilizers from the more basic varieties.

Bacteria known as nitrobacter and nitrosonomas (that occur abundantly in most plant supporting soils) rapidly convert ammoniac nitrogen to the readily available nitrate (NO₃⁺) form that most plants prefer. Nitrate nitrogen moves freely in the soil solution and is subject to leaching and runoff.

When nitrate N accumulates faster than plants can take it up, two things happen:

TABLE 1. MAJOR FERTILIZER PRODUCTS (NITROGEN AVAILABILITY)

Type:	Coated soluble nitrogen	Natural organic nitrogen	Reacted (synthetic) organic nitrogen
Soluble nitrogen			ureaform (38% N)
ammonium sulfate (21% N)	sulfur coated urea (37 to 39% N)	activated sewage sludge (6% N)	methyleneurea (40% N)
urea (46% N)	polymer coated urea (38 to 44% N)	digested sewage sludge (2% N)	liquid methyleneurea (15 to 21% N)
	polymer coated sulfur coated urea (38 to 39% N)	fish meal (10% N)	isobutyli-denediurea (31% N)
		dried blood meal (12% N)	
		composted turkey manure (10% N)	

1. Vegetative growth becomes rapid, lank and lush; and
2. Under irrigation or rainfall, some of the nitrate N moves beyond the root system to go where the water goes. Soluble nitrogen must be used judiciously to minimize this. Also, soluble N sources have a high salt index, giving a greater burn potential when contacting leaf surfaces. For these reasons, the standard industry recommendation for turfgrass has been to apply no more than 1 lb. of soluble N per 1,000 sq. ft. per month of growing season.

What urea does

Urea is the soluble N source most commonly used in our industry. The enzyme (urease) exists universally in soil on plant tissue and organic matter. Urease quickly converts urea to carbon dioxide and ammoniac nitrogen. In higher pH soils, volatile ammonia may be formed with a resultant loss to the atmosphere.

Because urea has a high N content and is generally the cheapest form of nitrogen in cost per pound, it is the most commonly used of the soluble N fertilizers. It is very reactive with chemical aldehydes, and thus is the raw N source for the slow-release synthetic organic fertilizers. The spherical urea prills lend themselves to uniform coatings of molten sulfur and/or semipermeable polymers. Each of these processes prevents the rapid accumulation of nitrate nitrogen described above.

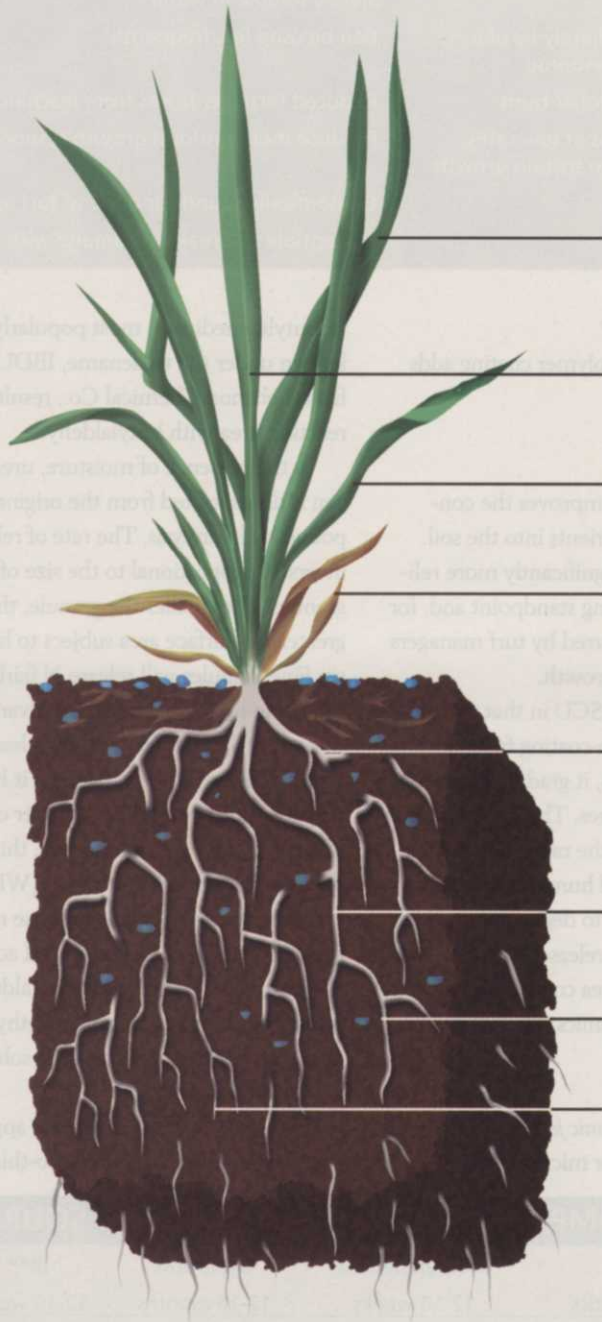
Going natural

Natural organics were the first slow-release N sources. Before fertilizers were commercialized, natural organics were the only source of plant nutrients. Most all the nitrogen is released by soil microbes that use it for food and energy.

The limitations of natural organic fertilizers are their lower N content, the potential for contaminants of toxic metals and, with some, odor. Products commonly used in the green industry, however, are safe to handle and apply with minimal odor problems.

Coated products

Sulfur coated urea (SCU) is the lowest cost slow-release nitrogen product. This was first developed by the Tennessee Valley Authority in the late 1960s. There are now seven commercial manufacturers:



- Potential for fertilizer burn
- Quickness of response
- Efficiency
- Thatch buildup
- Potential for runoff or leaching
- Longevity of response
- Cost
- Salt index

LESCO Inc.; NU-GRO Corp.; Pursell Technologies; The Scotts Co.; Vicksburg Chemical Co.; Agrium Inc.; and Royster-Clark Inc.

Nitrogen is released by diffusion through pinholes and imperfections in the sulfur coating. The thinner the coating, the higher the N content, but the lesser the integrity of the surface. Straight SCU is more fragile than polymer coated materials because it is subject to degradation during handling

continued on page 38

SOURCE: NU-GRO TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

Choosing fertilizers

TABLE 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF NITROGEN

Quick-release sources	Coated slow-release sources	Reacted slow-release sources
Soluble in water	Slowly soluble in water	Controlled solubility in water
Can be used immediately by plants, which show rapid response	Can be used less frequently	Supplies N gradually
High potential for foliar burn	Reduced fertilizer losses from leaching	Little fertilizer losses from leaching
Require applications at low rates, frequent intervals to sustain growth	Produce more uniform growth response	Low salt index, little burning
Leach readily	Economically sound for general turf applications	Performance not affected by coating
	Susceptible to breaking/damage with handling	

continued from page 37

and application. A polymer coating adds durability.

Polymer coatings

Polymer coated urea improves the controlled release of nutrients into the soil. These coatings are significantly more reliable from the handling standpoint and, for this reason, are preferred by turf managers who want uniform growth.

They differ from SCU in that water slowly permeates the coating from outside. As the urea dissolves, it gradually permeates through tiny pores. The thickness of the coating governs the rate of N release.

When it's hot and humid, the coatings are more susceptible to degradation, which may adversely affect release rates. The cost of polymer coated urea compares to that of reacted synthetic organics.

'High-tech' options

Reacted synthetic organic fertilizers release N through hydrolysis or microbial activity.

Isobutylidenediurea, most popularly known under the tradename, IBDU®, from Lebanon Chemical Co., results from reacting urea with butylaldehyde.

In the presence of moisture, urea nitrogen is disassociated from the original compound by hydrolysis. The rate of release is inversely proportional to the size of the granule. The smaller the granule, the greater the surface area subject to hydrolysis. Fine granules will release N fairly rapidly in high moisture. The advantage of using IBDU on turf is that the release rate is not temperature sensitive and it has a very low burn potential. Fertilizer control officials classify 90% of the N in this product as water insoluble nitrogen (WIN).

Methyleneurea fertilizers release nitrogen by both hydrolysis and microbial activity. When urea is reacted with formaldehyde under prescribed conditions, methyleneurea polymers of decreasing solubility are produced.

Dry methyleneurea fertilizer is approximately one-third WIN and two-thirds

'sparingly' soluble nitrogen. It contains about 6% free urea. The urea and, to some degree, the shortest chain carbon-nitrogen linked polymers release nitrogen initially by hydrolysis. Then, soil microorganisms (the decomposers) use the remainder for both food (N) and energy (C), gradually releasing plant-available ammoniac nitrogen back to the soil. Granular MU fertilizer releases nitrogen over 12 to 16 weeks.

Liquid methyleneurea fertilizer contains only the soluble MU polymers and more free urea. There is some controlled release, though, of much shorter duration than the granular 40% N material.

Ureaform provides longer lasting carbon and nitrogen for microbial activity. When urea is reacted with formaldehyde, the result is longer chained, less soluble carbon-nitrogen linked polymers.

Because urea is in excess in the reaction, there remains about 4% free urea. The finished product contains approximately one-third sparingly soluble nitro-

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TABLE 3. COMPARISON OF MAJOR NITROGEN SOURCES

Characteristics	Methyleneurea	Ureaform	IB**	SCU	Polymer coated	Urea
Release characteristics	12-16 weeks	12-16 months	12-16 weeks	Varies	Varies	1-4 weeks
Hydrolysis releasable	*		*	*		*
Microbial releasable	*	*				
Not dependent on coating or particle size for release	*	*				*
Nonburning	*	*	*	*☆	*☆	
Low salt	*	*	*	*	*	
Minimal leaching/volatilization	*	*	*	*	*	
Temperature response	*	*			*	

☆ Can cause mottling if coating is broken

** IB is a registered trademark of Lebanon Seaboard Corp.



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All-Around Visibility • All-New Instrumentation • Greater Comfort



EXPERIENCE



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After surveys and interviews with customers worldwide, our revolutionary new cab and instrumentation are now a reality on Bobcat G-Series loader models. Check out these user-friendly features:

All-Around Visibility

G-Series cab design helps give the operator a super view in all directions.



Excellent visibility to the loader's sides, front and rear corners when loading, unloading and turning in tight quarters.



Photos show other than standard factory equipment.

High-output halogen headlamps more than double illumination in your work area.

Easily removable side, and top windows for convenient cleaning.

Comfortable, fully-adjustable suspension seat adapts to the operator's weight and lets you work in comfort all day long.

Rear pivot seat bar provides plenty of room for all sizes of operators. It's a secondary restraint and a comfortable arm rest.

4 directional air vents allow operator to place the air flow where needed.

High-visibility front door includes wiper and washer. Along with top, rear and side windows, it will completely seal the cab for efficient heater vent/AC use.



All-New Instrumentation

All switches are conveniently placed — easy to see, easy to reach. G-Series engineering truly puts control at your fingertips!



Left side instrument panel — standard on all models — includes switches for operating lights, optional bucket positioning, optional high-flow auxiliary hydraulics, dual function auxiliary hydraulics (instant on-off and variable flow), gauges for temperature and fuel level, plus hour meter and glow plug timer.



Right side standard instrument panel contains the key start switch and 14 diagnostic and monitoring indicators that keep track of major loader functions, including fuel level, glow plugs, system voltage, engine oil pressure, engine coolant temperature and hydraulic oil temperature. Catastrophic failure shutdown system available as a factory option.



Optional deluxe instrument package includes keyless start security system, function lockouts, clock and job clock, multi-language display, "help" menu, catastrophic failure shutdown system, virtual bar gauges for key loader functions and engine diagnostic and monitoring. (See inside for more.)



Efficient cab heater allows all-weather operation. Temperature and fan speed controls are at eye level. Air conditioning is also available for some models.

Greater Comfort

In the state-of-the-art G-Series cab, comfort begins with added room for the operator: more head room, leg room, elbow room — even belly room! Now "option up" with a full suspension seat, advanced hand controls, cab and heater with high visibility front door, air conditioning and more.



Rear-pivot seat bar accommodates even larger operators with ease, and doubles as a secondary restraint and convenient armrest.

See inside for a better view.

Room With A View!



Easy-to-remove top window (for cleaning).

Optional cab heater is super-efficient for all-weather operation. Air conditioning is available for some loader models.

Dome light
Optional deluxe instrumentation package. (See operational features, diagnostics and monitoring functions below.)

Real time clock.

Job clock can be reset each time you start.

Password-protected keyless start system.

Large front door with 49% more glass area offers high visibility and allows easy entry and exit.

Auxiliary control switches built right into steering handles.

Rear pivot seat bar accommodates larger operators with ease and doubles as a secondary restraint and a convenient armrest.

Easy-to-remove side windows(for cleaning).

Optional Advanced Hand Controls put precise control in the palm of your hand.

Great view of the tires for working close to walls and foundations.

Optional enclosed cab features a new wiper/washer system.

Photo shows other than standard factory equipment.

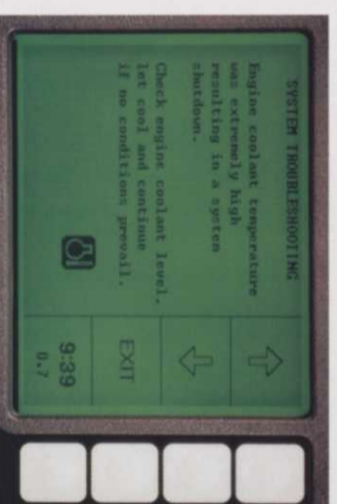
The NEW G-Series state-of-the-art instrumentation provides dozens of operational features, diagnostics and monitoring functions.



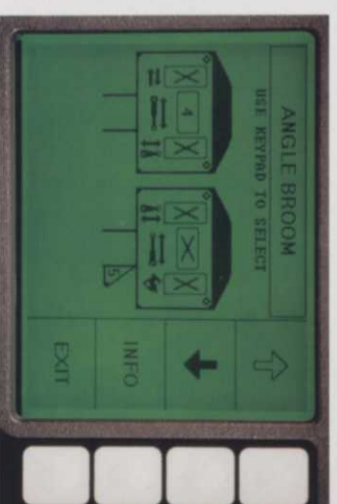
The easy-to-read deluxe display panel shows all system setup, monitoring, troubleshooting and error condition data.



For example, this screen appears if the engine coolant temperature is excessively high. Push the "question mark" icon for further information.



A system troubleshooting screen appears, suggesting ways to solve the problem.



The deluxe panel provides a wealth of loader information. Including a list of attachment information. Follow the on-screen instructions for the listed attachment.



And that's not all!

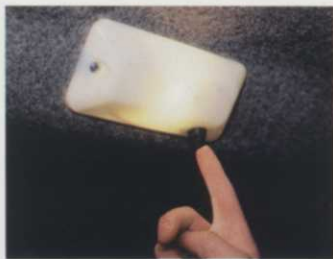
Revolutionary new G-Series design also gives you:

INSTRUMENT AUXILIARY HYDRAULICS

MAXIMUM
FLOW ONLY

VARIABLE
FLOW

- Dual-mode auxiliary hydraulics switch on left side of instrument panel allows operator to choose between instant on-off (ie: shake spoil off an auger) or variable flow (ie: precise grapple control).



- Optional amenities include cab enclosure, dome light and power port for phone.

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Check out these New G-Series loaders:

751 G-Series Skid-Steer Loader



The Bobcat 751 is the ideal machine for working in confined areas. It's not only compact and easy to maneuver, it delivers plenty of power and lift capacity as well.

753 G-Series Skid-Steer Loader



The 753's large tilt cylinder and rollback power mean improved digging and loading capability, and its tight turning radius lets you handle big jobs in small areas.

763 G-Series Skid-Steer Loader



The long-wheelbase 763 loader is a smooth-riding machine with plenty of traction and breakout force for excavating and handling large loads.

773 G-Series Skid-Steer Loader



Low-profile lift arms give super visibility to the sides, front and rear corners of the loader when loading, dumping and turning in tight quarters.

863 G-Series Skid-Steer Loader



More power to dig, lift and push. The 863 handles every task with strength, speed and smoothness.

864 G-Series Compact Track Loader



Rugged rubber tracks deliver the extra traction you need to keep working on rough terrain, soft ground — even in muddy conditions!

873 G-Series Skid-Steer Loader



Lift more. Work faster. Ride smoother. Everything's easier with the Bobcat® 873 Skid-Steer loader!

963 G-Series Skid-Steer Loader



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Choosing fertilizers

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gen. Initially, about one-third of the N is released in the first 4 to 6 weeks of growing season, while the remainder is released over the next 36 to 52 weeks. What is not used in one season carries over and will be available the next. Leaching and runoff of nitrogen is practically nonexistent.

Since microbial activity is temperature dependent, release of N from ureaform will begin when soil temperatures rise above 55° F and slow down when they exceed 90° F. The advantage of using ureaform is that it contributes to increased microbial activity in any soil capable of supporting plant life. It is particularly well suited for direct application in the root zone of turf, trees and plants following core cultivation or by injection of a liquid suspension of powdered UF in the soil.

TABLE 4 U.S. MANUFACTURERS AND PRIMARY DISTRIBUTORS 1998 CONSUMPTION (DOLLARS)

Estimated wholesale of the U.S. CRF market by product type, 1998

Product	% share	\$ Dollars (Millions)
UF fertilizers	43	\$142.2
IBDU*	2	8.3
Sulfur coated & polymer coated	16	52.5
Polymer coated	22	74.4
Other slowly soluble products	5	16.4
Processes natural organic	12	40.6
Total	100	\$334.3

Inhibiting effect

Nitrification inhibitors effect N availability and are known to provide more controlled availability of soluble N to plants (N-Serv[®] by Dow AgroChemicals Inc. is one type that many professionals know). When the inhibitor reduces the population of nitrobacter and nitrosonomas bacteria, the conversion of ammoniac nitrogen to the nitrate form is greatly diminished. Ammoniac N does not move in the soil solution, and therefore will remain in place with only gradual conversion to nitrate.

Know your options

Managing for uniform growth will pay multiple dividends, not the least of which will be a more active root system. Stretching the budget to save on fertilizer is fruitless and wasteful if you have more mowing as a consequence. **LMI**

— The author is a technical consultant for NU-GRO Technologies Inc., Grand Rapids, MI

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The Labor Crunch:

Finding Good People

Finding and hiring people with potential might be Job 1, but it's easier said than done. This series will show you alternatives and ideas from many industry experts

Demographics are against you, and they won't improve anytime soon. The fact is, the United States birthrate has slowed enough to cause a real problem in the workforce. There are not, and will not be enough people to perform the work that economists project to be there in 2001, 2010 and beyond (some say for 30 years).

Add to that the difficulty of day-to-day landscape installation and maintenance work, the lowest unemployment rates in years, the high competition for employees across all industries and the lack of year-round positions in many landscape organizations — it's a recipe for disaster.

Immigrant labor has relieved some of the pressures and new government H2B regulations make it easier to get legal employees (even then, it's not cheap), but the fact remains that immigrant labor is only a partial solution. And most likely, the political pressures for the next few years will keep the United States from allowing huge masses of immigrants in to solve the problem.

As more 'baby boomers' opt for professional landscape services and as the economy continues to roll as predicted, your opportunities will grow. And as more people continue to retire early and job openings grow with the economic boom, your hiring opportunities will continue to shrink. You've got a problem.

Want ads won't do it anymore. Internet searches, industry recruiters and programs that bring professionalism to the industry help, but don't solve the problem. The answer lies in working long-term to find new sources of employees, hiring and keeping them, providing satisfying and challenging career paths and responding to their needs for benefits and possibly alternative systems to get the work done. These could include new work schedules, more company services or investment in additional labor-saving equipment.

Our series on labor solutions starts here and will continue in upcoming issues. This month, we look at the labor picture and give alternatives to traditional recruiting and hiring. We'll follow-up with more ideas on training, building alliances, retention and improving your organization.

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Face up to it — they don't want our jobs! / by BILL HOOPES

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Want employees to find you? Be an ambassador / by PHIL FOGARTY

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One organization has people to spare / by FRANK ANDORKA

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A good mechanic is hard to find by CURT HARLER

72 Irrigation: Looking to fill the 'trenches'

Irrigation's labor shortages are just beginning to develop by BRUCE SHANK



THE LABOR CRUNCH

Rx for winning in the service industry



Does it seem more difficult to find “good” people? Good people are everywhere — they just don’t want to work for us. Here’s how to get your recruiting act together.

BY BILL HOOPES

Every day, experts analyze factors that impact success in our business and we develop business strategies with the same basic resource list. It doesn’t seem all that difficult until we encounter the most critical resource of all—the human resource.

Wanted: Effective people

No service business can realistically expect to reach objectives or maximize results without an effective people strategy. Service is demanded, designed and delivered by people. We see the failed efforts of good people again and again. And we are forced to conclude that, if the people plan flops, the business plan flops.

But are human resource problems that big of a deal? After all, everyone knows at least one manager who has survived some sort of horrific staff problem and gone on to succeed. Some do make it in spite of human resource problems but they never maximize results. In fact, a team cannot execute (or grow) nominally without a trained, effective staff.

So what’s the quick answer? (This is America, the information age — give it to me fast so I can get back to work!)

► Developing a core of effective team players doesn’t happen overnight.

► Staffing must be an ongoing process. It takes time and effort — lots of personal, hands-on effort and a little luck to boot.

► This “people problem” didn’t develop quickly and it won’t be solved quickly.

► In some cases, management’s perspective on what it takes to develop and maintain a long-term, productive staff in the service industry must be rethought.

The struggling manager

I recently spoke with a struggling lawn care manager, working hard to make spring a success and finding that his only real problem was people. The marketing worked, the weather was as predicted and the trucks, equipment and products were ready and waiting.

Then, as the work increased, so did turnover. His response was to run the ad. Sadly, his ad had lots of company in the classified section.

“You must do more,” I advised.

“No time now,” he shot back. “We’re getting behind — gotta put the fires out!”

Can you guess what happened next? He spread the same workload over fewer people and more quit. And so it goes.

Year after year, managers repeat to themselves “I’m all staffed up” and cross their fingers, hoping their worst fears won’t come true. The problem is that they are “staffed up” with the wrong people. Warm bodies, while appearing to be adequate, only do one thing predictably: drain your labor budget!

Like I said, “You have to do more than run the ad.”

Recruiting doesn’t come easy

Let’s talk more about the difficulty of attracting the best people. Woody Hayes, “Bear” Bryant, Vince Lombardi and Jimmy Johnson had no problem attracting football players to their teams. But nobody wants to be on our team...or so it would seem. Recruiting “the right stuff” is tougher.

Still, I’ve observed that for every prize (especially a prize considered worth having), there is a contender in pursuit. In that respect, the game is the same. What has changed is the public’s perception of our industry. For me, that perception is part reality, part fiction. And because a job candidate’s vision of a career in the service industry is cloudy at best, that is precisely where we need to go to work.

Let me restate a fundamental idea: our people problems in the service industry have nothing to do with an absence of “good” or “adequate” people. In fact, there are just as many good people around today as at any time in this country’s labor history — maybe more. But they don’t want our jobs! That is the single most distressing problem we face, but it’s also our greatest opportunity.

In the past few years, why has the 18-to 25-year-old labor segment been “turned off” from our industry? Are you sure it’s as simple as “nobody wants to work anymore?” I’m not sure of that, and I’ve seen enough to know I’m right about this.

Let’s review some of the reasons younger workers do not want our jobs, or why they quit soon after they take those jobs. The key reasons include:

1. Our industry has changed and our jobs have changed with it. I recall the “glory days” of lawn care service:

- four applications per year (not six to eight);
- little or no aeration or seeding;
- few bothersome customer calls;
- not having to sell more and more — very little telemarketing;
- practically anyone could hold a job in our business and do the work at a reasonable pace (in a reasonably pleasant work environment with business enough for all who wanted it).

2. We’ve evolved. Landscape and lawn care firms, once operating in a sim-

Checklist for success

Look at this typical industry manager’s checklist for success:

- Business/personal objectives clarified
- Market niche (need) identified
- Mission statement on paper
- Business plan complete
- Marketing strategy set
- Capital
- Physical plant/equipment
- Vendors/suppliers
- Human resources necessary to execute — Houston, we’ve got a problem!

This planning sequence is typical. Most landscape and lawn care managers can work out a logical plan and have the best intentions, but it all seems to unravel when we get to the people part.

Is there a strategy in the world of Y2K that will help you succeed through people? Yes.

Is it quick, easy and manageable? And will it fit into my already overloaded day? No.

You have two choices: adapt to the realities of the 21st century labor market or continue to suffer frustrating failures.

— Bill Hoopes

pler world, now face more irritating and confusing regulation, some of which relate directly to our ability to be productive through people.

One example comes to mind. In some states, even if you are able to hire effectively, veteran employees are routinely given excessively high daily production goals (creating instant alienation), while the new hire proceeds through what can be weeks of

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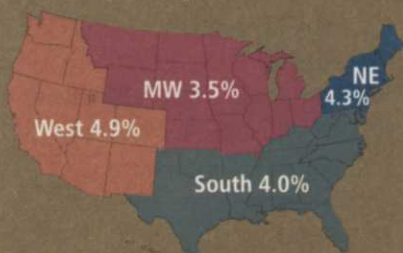
LABOR FACT

1999 U.S. unemployment rate

Seasonally adjusted, in percent

Average: 4.25%

January through November



Editor's note: 4.0% unemployment is the traditional threshold for 'labor shortage.' Bureau of Labor Statistics does not keep unemployment data for the Green Industry; numbers are not broken down by detailed industry.

SOURCE = US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS (BLS)

continued from page 51
 required "training" before qualifying for the certification test. Fail the test and new hires face another month of waiting.

While all of this is going on, your best person quits. "It's just not worth it," he says on his way out the door. So regulations, needed or not, impact our workplace.

3. There is fierce competition at both ends of the competitive spectrum. New business entrants (sometimes former employees) offer extreme personal service at one end. At the other end, large conglomerates deal out lower prices made possible through economies of scale.

The result? Everyone is forced to work harder, offer better service and charge less. We are forced to demand productivity more than we ever have before, while in-

sisting that our employees take time to do a better job.

In many cases, we are failing to do anything more than create turnover. While the few really large companies realize increased productivity through customer route density, the latest equipment and technology, most jobs in our industry have evolved into a succession of endless, pressure-packed days, few Saturdays off and an atmosphere far different than the one some enjoyed 20 years ago. Today, candidates that once gave us a close look now push the reject button and go elsewhere.

With the unprecedented 17-year economic expansion we are enjoying, high school, tech school and four-year graduates now have the largest variety of career options in history. Many candidates we were

continued on page 54

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LABOR FACT

What exactly is H2B?

By now the once obscure acronym 'H2B' is well known in the Green Industry. But what is it exactly? It's a visa classification of the U.S. State Department.

The 'H' is the category of the visa ('T' would be a NAFTA visa, for example); '2' refers to the educational level, in this case 'below college' or unskilled; and the 'B' stands for 'business.' The last is one of two dozen categories — for example, you may also have heard of H2A, in which the 'A' stands for 'agriculture.' The categories are very specific, and the distinctions between them are hair-splitting. But for the Green Industry, H2B is almost always the applicable program.

H2A carries no numeric limits with it, but H2B caps at 66,000 workers yearly. Interestingly, the industry has yet to reach that 66,000 number, despite the labor needs. (*Landscape Management* has heard different quotes for 1999, ranging from 50,000 down to 32,000 workers.) The bureaucratic complexity of the H2B process probably accounts for that.

But if you can get past the red tape, perhaps with the help of a company specializing in H2B, you've got labor that definitely won't be sent back to Mexico if the Immigration and Naturalization Service pays your job site a visit. That's worth something!

— 'Labor Facts' are contributed by George Witterschein



continued from page 52

once able to attract and keep now see a limited opportunity with a lot more work and less leisure time than before. They simply opt out, partly because they can.

Attack the people problem

First, we need to attack the mistakes we made along the way. We can make great strides in improving our human relations status if we can correct four basic mistakes that are at the root of our troubles:

1. Unclear message. I implied that the public's perception of our industry as a career destination has become negative. Changing that perception starts with individual managers and operators.

Sadly, I've observed that too many managers have no clear self image as a person or a manager. Start there. If you are not totally clear about and comfortable with who you are and what your business

stands for, how can you communicate it to a job candidate surveying the opportunities?

If you are one of those who still thinks people work for money alone, think again. Today, more is required to attract and keep people and it begins with a clear, communicable picture of what you are about.

2. Poor recruiting. For many reasons that are partly related to the image problem, we may be ineffective recruiters. That must change.

3. Weak priorities. Too often, we are consumed by putting out fires — failing to correctly prioritize our time and efforts. We can do better and spend our time better.

4. Poor environment. Finally, we don't maintain positive workplace environments for our people, and we must do that if we want to improve our lot.

—The author is director of training and development at Scotts Lawn Service in Marysville, OH.

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Don't ask why,

just do it!

When you become the industry's 'ambassador' in your area, you might discover that good employees will find you

BY PHIL FOGARTY

When I entered the lawn care industry in the early 1980s, the atmosphere was a little on the hostile side. For those of you who remember that era, it won't surprise you that in

my first spring of ownership I was in two different city council chambers for hearings on lawn care. The day after one of the hearings, my company was on the front page of a local daily newspaper (we had the contract for that city's park system) with pictures showing picket signs held by little blond-haired boys: "Please don't make us the guinea pigs!" they pleaded.

At the time, I thought it was a dirty trick to play on the new entrepreneur. I barely knew how to calibrate a spreader and I had people with television cameras asking me for comments. I stammered and swore I would never be that ill-prepared for a chance meeting with the press again.

Those dark days turned out to be a blessing in disguise. I reluctantly became an official representative, or ambassador, of my industry.

The political atmosphere has changed a bit but the advantage I gained by being thought of as the

official representative of my industry in my market has not. Ambassadorship is representation of a group, but it can be so much more.

This ambassador thing is amazing because it does so much good for so many people. It is a true win-win-win situation. Your industry benefits from your efforts — that's good. But let's be a little more self-ish here and also check out what it can do for your company and for you personally:

1. Industry image—Instead of allowing others to define your industry, you are out there promoting your profession. There are countless free opportunities to influence the public opinion. Is that important? Just ask Bill Gates, whose recent position in Gallup polls may have saved his skin (for now). Gates enjoys a 68% approval rating by consumers these days. He knows that presenting a positive image to the consumer will ultimately influence political opinion, which in turn decides much of the business climate in which he operates.

Okay, so political opinion may not be concrete enough for you. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to charge a little more for your expertise and time? Let's face it, John Q. Public doesn't think we are brain surgeons at this point. Our image is improv-

continued on page 58

LABOR FACT

The going rate for landscape

► U.S. average hourly earnings in dollars Nov. 1998 through Nov. 1999

Average: \$13.18 (include preliminary figures for Oct. and Nov.)

Average weekly earnings rose by 3.6%, seasonally adjusted, between November of 1998 and 1999. After adjustment for inflation, average weekly earnings grew by 0.9%. Before adjustment for seasonal change and deflation, average weekly earnings were \$463.68 in November 1999, compared with \$451.10 in 1998.

► 1998 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates

Laborers, landscaping and groundskeeping

Median hourly \$8.24

Median yearly \$17,140

(note: these are median figures; no average available)

continued from page 57

ing as our professionalism rises, but you can speed up the process exponentially by playing an active role and "selling" our trade and its benefits to everyone. Why isn't everybody standing in line to be the ambassador? Don't ask why!

2. Company positioning — So much of selling is trying to differentiate your company, service and product from the competition. "Industry representative" equals "industry expert" in the eyes of the public. You and your company are now pre-sold as the best in your area. What an incredible advantage when the biggest clients in town are looking for the solution to a prob-

How to get started

- *Create a media database* complete with community service leaders and other influential people. Include these people in all formal communications and marketing efforts throughout the year. If you don't have a newsletter, start one this month.

- *Have a five- to 10-minute talk prepared.* There is ambassador training through RISE and PLCAA, as well as videos available to help create a format with which you are comfortable. Become familiar with the issues surrounding our industry so you can be the person others look to as a spokesperson. Don't hesitate to call another ambassador in another market for tips on how to structure your presentation. (PLCAA can help with names.)

- *For good practice and experience* with public speaking in general, become active in your local Toastmasters group.

- *Practice on your staff, family and friends.* Remember, selling is the transfer of enthusiasm from one individual to another.

- *Attend and speak* at every career day you can, especially at elementary and secondary schools.

- *Make yourself available* to radio stations and local print media. A simple letter introducing yourself and letting them know what you could offer in the way of tips for better landscape care or an article on a new way to improve a property may be all that is necessary. Offer to be a speaker at a local garden club or community service organization such as Rotary, Kiwanis or Lions. Leave the technical jargon at the office and talk enthusiastically about the emotional connection people have with your product or service.

- *Consider teaching* at a vocational or technical school in your area. Many community colleges are interested in industry experts as "visiting professors."

- *Take these one step at a time* and be patient with the results. If possible, solicit the advice of a local public relations expert to get you started.

lem or an alternative to business as usual.

And how about the best employees?

Who would they rather work for—a company that pays pretty well or the "industry expert?" (But you probably don't need to hire anybody these days.) What a recruiting tool! Why isn't everybody standing in line to be the ambassador? Don't ask why!

3. Personal growth — "This ambassador stuff sounds like a stretch of the abilities. I didn't sign up for any speeches when I decided to run this company — I just want to sell fertilizer, so leave me alone, will ya?"

In the world of selling, we know that what we are really selling is ourselves — every day, in every situation, all the time. By preparing yourself to sell your industry and your company (to a group or to the media), you move out of your comfort

zone fast. I am still uncomfortable with public speaking but I do not know of a better way to compete with the big guys and their multimillion-dollar marketing budgets. And by the way, the "big" companies also train their managers as ambassadors.

With so many advantages and so much to gain, why don't others assume the role? Don't ask why! Maybe they have convinced themselves that it isn't worth the time or the risk. It doesn't matter.

You now know what an incredible tool being an ambassador is. And someone in your market is going to assume the ambassadorial role. As the wise man said, "If not you, then who and if not now, when?"

—The author owns Crowley's Vegetation Management and serves as a consultant with JP Horizons Inc., Cleveland

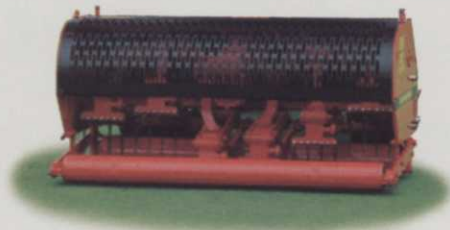
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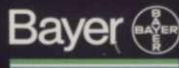
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FFA seeks partners

In a tight labor market, one organization wants to supply the entire green industry with workers

BY FRANK H. ANDORKA JR./CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The Green Industry is scrambling for employees, searching for new labor sources. Have no fear, the FFA is here. Future Farmers of America's membership includes 452,000 students who love to work outdoors. With consolidation putting the pinch on family farms, FFA says these kids are looking for alternatives to keep them working outdoors and offer them job security.

To that end, industry representatives huddled with FFA leaders last October to plan a curriculum for 10,000 high school teachers, promoting green industry careers.

"Most people in the Green Industry don't realize we already have moved the focus beyond the traditional animal husbandry disciplines," says Bernie Staller, COO. "We've already tailored some programs to address issues like urban forestry, biotechnology and landscape architecture. It's not just about animals anymore."

Training the trainers

Roscoe Vaughn, executive director of the National Council on Agricultural Education, says Western Kentucky University will unveil the curriculum on Oct. 31.

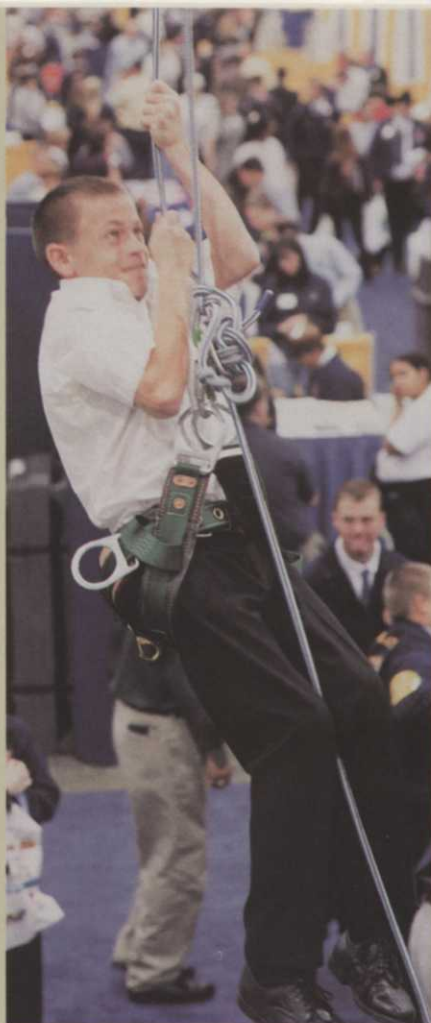
"We've talked about expanding the horizons of FFA for years, but this is the first time we've been able to do it," he says. "This is where FFA is going to grow, and right now our curriculum isn't as strong in the Green Industry as it is in other areas."

He hopes to have the curriculum established at 2,500 to 3,000 schools by 2001. Once the curriculum is complete, the council will bring teachers to Indianapolis to teach it. They will return to the field and educate their peers.

"We're setting up a 'training the trainers' program," Vaughn says. "We believe that will be the quickest way of getting our message out."

If FFA students realize other opportunities exist instead of focusing solely on farming, both the FFA and the Green Industry will benefit, Vaughn says.

"We'd like to offer these students something other than the family farm, and opening up other fields to our students is a way to do this," he adds. "If we can create a sense of excitement among our students, there's no telling where this might go."



Tap into this

How can you tap into this pool?

► Contact your local high school guidance counselors. They will allow you access to students who could be your future work force. They will also help you network with local FFA teachers.

► Sponsor an FFA field day at your business. Bring students to your business and show them what you do. Experience is the quickest way to get these students excited about careers in the green industry.

► Volunteer to speak at a local FFA meeting or teach a class in an area where you need employees. It will relieve the pressure on FFA teachers and offer another point of contact with the students.

► Create an internship. Provide the FFA students with an opportunity to further their education and gain tangible work experience at the same time.

► Provide a scholarship. With a little investment on your part, FFA students will further their education with your help. Your company will be at the top of their minds when graduation comes around.





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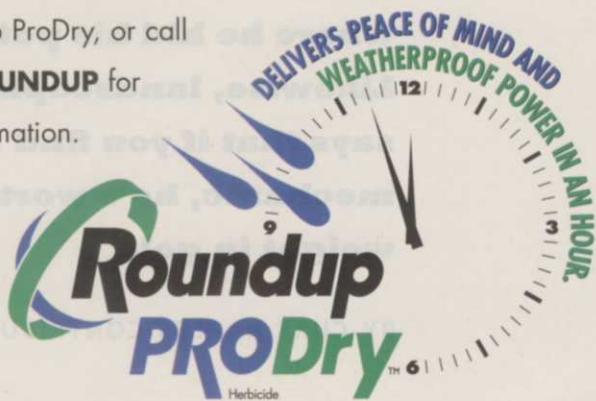
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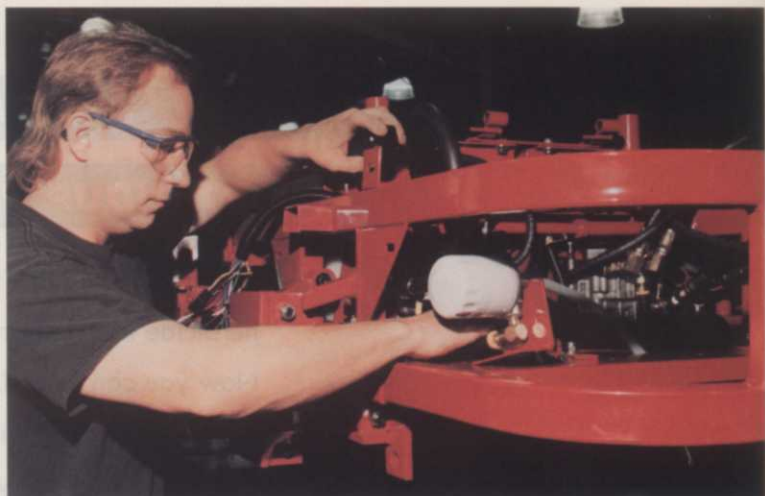


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You can find mechanics worth a pot of gold

Irish legend says if you catch a leprechaun, he'll tell you where he hid his pot of gold. Likewise, landscaping lore says that if you find a good mechanic, he's worth his weight in gold

BY CURT HARLER/CONTRIBUTING EDITOR



It's a bear to find a good mechanic," laments Virgil Russell, executive director of the Equipment and Engine Training Council (EETC), Austin, TX.

Dominic Morales, chairman of the golf/plant sciences department at Delhi College, Delhi, NY, says the biggest demand is on golf courses where equipment must be maintained on the spot and there is a large inventory of equipment with little outsourcing.

"We get 150 job offers for our 25 grads each year," says John Piersol, chairman of the department of golf/landscape/forestry at Lake City Community College in Florida. "There is a bidding war on for a good tech."

Indeed, some shop owners feel they have to have a pot of gold in hand before they go looking for a technician. That, of course, depends on a mix of knowledge and experience.

Jack of all trades?

"In a small shop, the mechanic is a jack-of-all-trades," Morales says. "The larger the shop, the more likely the mechanic will be specialized."

"If you hire a technician, they should be trained in 2-stroke, 4-stroke and diesel en-

gine systems," Russell says. Electronics is another key area. With hydraulics playing an important part in many dealers' products, knowing hydraulics is a valuable extra. For a good mechanic trained in the fundamentals of his trade, there is not much difference in dealing with 2-stroke, 4-stroke or diesels, the instructors maintain.

"Training on diesels is not that big a step from gas engines, but it is becoming more important," Russell continues. "A lot of firms like Scag have small diesels," he notes. It is clear that the ability to read a manual is more important than knowing a particular engine — especially considering that engine sizes and types are likely to change quite a bit in the next decade.

Morales likes to see technicians trained in related areas such as sharpening and grinding. Delhi offers a three-credit course on handling mower blades. Welding ability, too, is important in any shop.

For Piersol's money, the person should be trained both in management skills and mechanical skills. "Some people think all a mechanic needs to do is turn a wrench and fix stuff. But if your shop is a mess, it costs you money."

Piersol lists ability to organize a shop, stock the right spare parts, do preventive maintenance, read engine manuals and perform other management functions as being just as valuable as mechanical ability. The market seems to agree.

"When they start, we tell students that wrench-turners go for \$7.50 or \$8.50 an hour. Students who have good management skills make \$12 to \$16 an hour," Piersol says.

"You are depending on a person who must have multiple skills," Morales adds. Delhi offers both a one-year course for students and a one-week course for professionals, including a turf equipment management course in February. The one-year course is packed: this year there are 18 people in a class which is usually capped at

15 students. "Large, private golf courses need to have a person who is proficient in all aspects of mechanics, including electronics and hydraulics," he says. This applies equally to large landscape and grounds operations.

Valuable certification

Perhaps the most valuable certification is the Outdoor Power Equipment Technician Certification (OPE) offered by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute. OPE certification is the industry's equivalent of the ASA (Automotive Service Association) certification for car mechanics.

In fact, John Kane, executive director of the Engine Service Association (ESA), Exton, PA (www.engineservice.com), says it is not rare for a technician to pass the 4-cycle part of the test and fail to be certified in the diesel area. In any case, certification lasts for only three years.

Specialty accreditation will become more common as companies like Kohler make certification a requirement for working on engines. Some equipment companies offer training as part of a sales package. Remember to figure in the cost of a mechanic who is not available for other tasks on school days (but that cost is still far less than a partly trained worker). Much of the impetus for OPE came from manufacturers concerned that there would be no trained mechanics to do their warranty work. Most major equipment manufacturers have representatives on EETC and ESA.

Watch out for pirates

Right now, too many landscaping firms are simply pirating good workers from shops in the next town. While this merry-go-round is great for the technician's income, it is not the answer to finding a proven worker at a fair wage.

"Demand is driving up their wages," Morales states. He says many of their students come from the automotive business

Where's the real pot of gold?

If your firm is in the market for a good maintenance technician, be prepared to shell out some big dollars.

Even for recent graduates with a good school record, pay is high. "These jobs pay \$25,000 to \$40,000 to start," says John R. Piersol, at Lake City Community College in Florida. "They have the potential to go to \$50,000 or \$70,000."

Other costs, like maintaining a parts inventory and the cost of space for the shop, need to be added to the mechanic's salary and benefits package.

In the past, most certified technicians came from servicing dealers. Today, that group is well salted with golf course workers and a scattering of landscapers, says ESA's Kane.

Golf courses seem more prepared to pay the price than the typical landscape outfit. In fact, the small operator and even the mid-sized company with several crews in the field is probably priced right out of the market when factors like maintaining inventory are added into the equation.

In short, it might be cheapest in the long run to leave a case of good beer or a dozen donuts with the dealer's mechanics now and then than it is for a small operator to try to hire a trained technician.

or from the large tractor and agricultural markets. These people have solid, basic skills as mechanics but need to be trained for specialty areas.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) has model programs it has developed to give workers

continued on page 70

When someone suggests you spend more money on a less effective preemergent, it's time to hold on to your wallet.



Herbicide	Crabgrass	Goosegrass	Foxtail	Poa Annua	Oxalis	Spurge	Hemibit	Chickweed
PENDULUM	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	H
BARRICADE ^a	H	M	M	M	MH	M	H	H
DIMENSION ^b	H	M	H	M	H	M	M	M
TEAM ^c	H	M	M	M	M	M	NR	NR
RONSTAR ^d	M	H	NR	M	M	NR	NR	NR
SURFLAN ^e	H	H	H	M	MH	M	H	H
Level of control	Medium		Medium-High		High	Not Registered		

^a™ Novartis ^b™ Rohm and Haas Co. ^c™ Dow AgroSciences ^d™ Rhine-Poulenc

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LABOR FACT

How landscape work compares

Weekly wages (average 1998)

Groundskeepers and gardeners, except farm	\$306
(closest BLS comes to weekly wages of landscaping laborers)	
Brickmasons and stonemasons	\$573
Truck drivers	\$516
Drywall installers	\$493
Printing machine operators	\$495
Carpenters	\$490
Concrete and terrazzo finishers	\$483
Carpet installers	\$476
Roofers	\$441
Bus drivers	\$428
Operators, fabricators and laborers	\$415
Machine operators, assemblers and inspectors	\$406
Painters	\$402
Construction laborers	\$390
Woodworking machine operators	\$379
Sawing machine operators	\$366
Construction helpers	\$335
Janitors and cleaners	\$327
Textile, apparel and furnishings machine operators	\$293
Food preparation and service occupations	\$288
Farm workers	\$281

Editor's note: \$306/week tends to roughly confirm a green industry wage of \$7 an hour for laborers with a small amount of weekly overtime beyond 40 hours, as well as the BLS median hourly wage of \$8.24 for landscaping laborers.

Our thanks to: Mike Wald, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Regional Economist, Atlanta, GA

continued from page 67

necessary mechanical skills. Delhi and Lake City Community College offer a similar program to students. Delhi's program will be three years old in the fall of 2000. At that time, it will be able to do OPE or specialty certification. At Lake City, Piersol wishes he had more students to fill the 15,000-sq.-ft. facility. He says one way to get more and better workers is for landscape industry leaders to get into the high schools and tell students about the high-paying opportunities for workers.

One strategy Piersol suggests is hiring people in high school and then offering them a paid internship as they complete their technical program. He says the auto courses are a good place to look for workers, as well. But, he maintains, the best way to get to the student is to talk to the teachers and guidance people at the high school and to parents whenever possible.

A shop that brings a couple of students in as part of a co-op program will have first pick of the better mechanics upon graduation. "You're handpicking your future," Piersol says.

EETC's Web site, www.eetc.org, is a good place to start reviewing qualifications. Russell also suggests getting involved with a local vo-tech school. Right now, EETC has accredited 14 schools in its program and has 80 more pending. Accredited schools are authorized to teach either at the high school or the adult education level.

Kane says ESA may post a list of certified mechanics by region on its Web site to get trained people and employers together.

Don't give up

Landscape contractors and grounds managers are going to have a tough time getting good mechanics. While an in-house mechanic is an accepted fixture on a golf course, many landscape managers blanch at the thought of shelling out \$50,000 or more a year in salary and benefits. But that

Mechanics' jobs pay \$25,000 to \$40,000 to start, with the potential to go to \$50,000 or \$70,000

is what the mechanics' market demands.

Russell says there is no hard-and-fast economic rule when changing over to in-house service. "If you're using a dealer and getting good service, stay with the dealer," he says. "If service is lousy, then look into going with your own technician." In either case, he says, it is a good idea to make sure the worker is OPE certified.

When figuring the cost of repair service, be sure to include equipment downtime, Piersol reminds. If a contractor keeps an extra mower around just to use when others are in the shop, that's a cost.

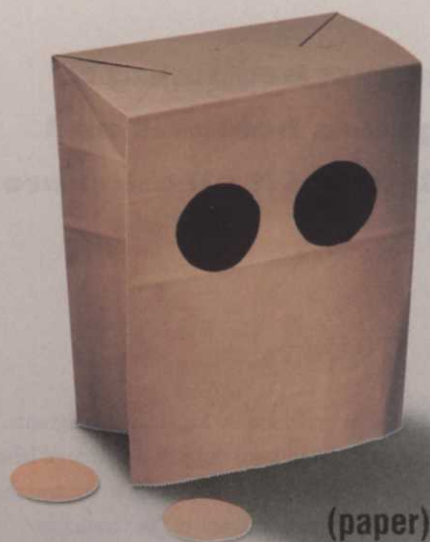
"Don't take this out of context, but a 19-year-old student with an internship has just enough knowledge to be dangerous," says Morales. "I'd prefer to place them as an assistant and let them move up. The perfect job is to put them in a shop where the chief mechanic will retire in 12 months or so."

He notes that leasing equipment — doing preventive maintenance in-house but sending equipment back for major work — is another option.

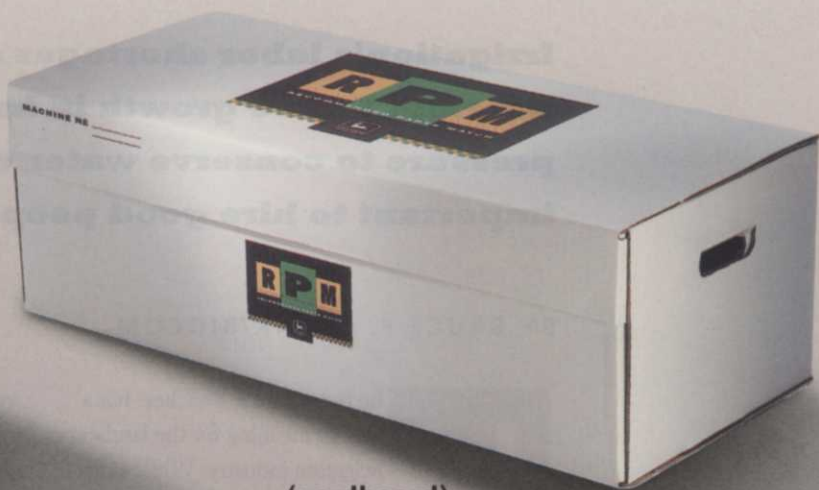
Even if you elect to stick with dealer service, check to be sure the dealer's mechanics are OPE certified. Look for specialty certificates that attest to the technician's completion of factory-sponsored courses. The alternative is to sit out on the lawn after a rainstorm and hope to catch a leprechaun who can lead you to the golden mechanic.

— *The author is a frequent contributor to Landscape Management and is based in Strongsville, OH.*

If you've been shamefully lax about servicing your equipment, there are two ways to save face.



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THE LABOR CRUNCH

Irrigation:

Looking to fill the 'trenches'

Irrigation's labor shortages are just beginning to develop. Future growth in irrigation business and pressure to conserve water will make it all the more important to hire good people

BY BRUCE F. SHANK/BIOCOM

The term "in the trenches" has a special meaning for the landscape irrigation industry. While irrigation seems simple, it is more complex than most occupations. Finding individuals who thrive on hydraulics and specific plant water needs and who aren't repulsed by getting down on their hands and knees in mud is a potential restriction on the growth of the industry.

Business growth, labor shortage

Irrigation contracting is growing at a double-digit pace and employees are needed to meet the demand. Conservation will play a major role in landscape management as population exceeds water supply. The price of water will take a quantum leap very soon, forcing us to choose between no landscape or efficient ones. The irrigation contractor will be the professional resolving the dispute.

The problem is not limited to the South and West. Labor shortages may be worse in the North and Northeast, especially in metropolitan areas where unemployment is low and the cost of living is high. These areas do not have equal access to the

valuable labor provided by Mexican immigrants.

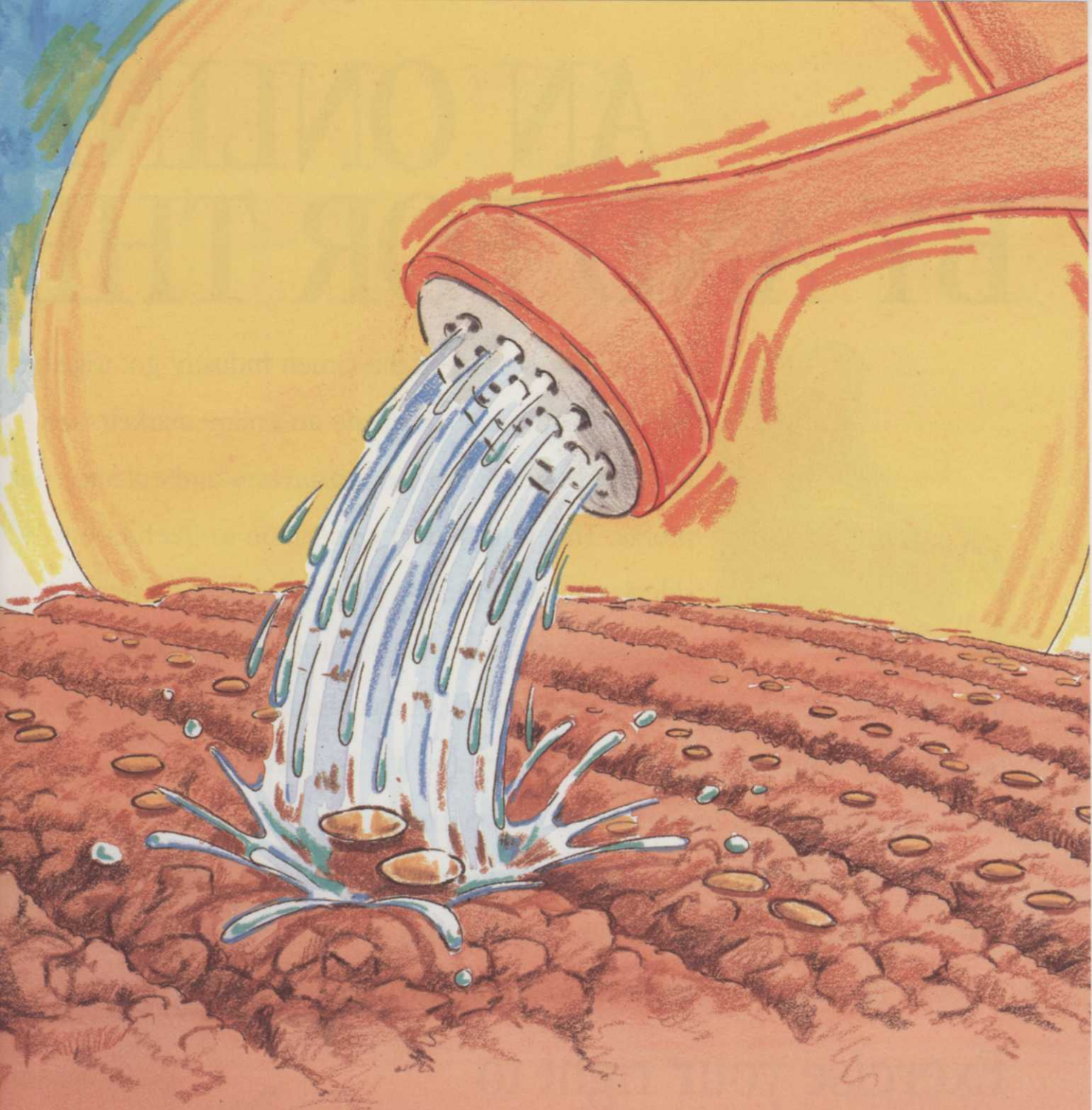
These immigrants are not just a source of labor; they have the potential to rise to foremen and designers and are most tolerant of "the trenches."

The Irrigation Association (IA) has estimated there are approximately 8,000 dedicated irrigation contractors in the U.S., along with nearly 30,000 landscape contractors installing irrigation. These contractors are performing more than \$2 billion dollars in irrigation installation every year. This doesn't include golf courses, highways or parks.

Altogether, they employ roughly 150,000 installers and 40,000 construction foremen. The number of irrigation consultant/designers is approximately 6,000.

Put them altogether and you have 200,000 people depending on the landscape irrigation industry. At a market growth rate approaching 20%, another 40,000 irrigation specialists are needed every year without a loss of current workers.

Irrigation is, at the very minimum, a two-tiered occupation. While irrigation contractors often start out as one-person operations performing smaller residential jobs, they quickly evolve to handle design and installation. As the company enters com-



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mercial installation, a third tier opens up with the construction foreman. Large firms create a fourth category differentiating between experienced installers and laborers.

The critical core of the market is the designer and the construction foreman. Both of these roles require education and experience. However, the bulk of the work is done by the installer and laborer.

The current labor shortage in pure numbers is primarily at the installer level. However, without trained and experienced construction foremen, the market is in gridlock. A construction foreman often serves as the designer on smaller jobs. He is the one who allows the owner or manager to concentrate on marketing.

It's more than an image problem

There is tremendous opportunity in irrigation, but not without solving major personnel problems. Some contractors report that they have a harder time keeping irrigation installers than landscape installers. They do special things for their irrigation crews to keep them on board.

When contractors need to hire irrigation foremen and installers, they often poach other companies' trained employees. One firm with a three-year training program for foremen discovered that competitors were paying double to steal their trained employees! Attempts to draw irrigation specialists through classified ads turn up disenchanted workers or people with no experience. There simply aren't enough trained installers available.

The problem is so severe that The Brickman Group, one of the top companies in the industry, now subcontracts its irrigation installation. Illinois laws view irrigation as plumbing, and public health officials and state legislators in Illinois have linked irrigation to public health, placing licensed (call them union) plumbers in charge of the state's public water supply. Union wages make the labor shortage in ir-



'When the labor source is insufficient, does licensing and certification really help, or does it complicate matters further?'

rigation a virtually unsolvable problem.

DiSanto Co., one of the oldest landscape companies in northern Ohio, is looking outside of its region because local classified ads have stopped producing qualified candidates. Matthew Matisko, a DiSanto landscape architect, says turnover is far worse than landscape installation. Winter layoffs continue to present problems.

Water Works Irrigation, a successful installer of residential irrigation systems in Cape Cod, MA, finds other work during the winter for its loyal crew members.

"The demand for our services is strong because Cape Cod has become a destination for vacationing and retirees," adds Paul Merlesena, owner. "The only thing that keeps me from growing is the lack of qualified help. My guys know how much they

mean to me. They are going with us to the Caribbean on a supplier reward trip because they made it happen!"

Are certification & licensing all wet?

When the labor source is insufficient, does licensing and certification really help, or complicate matters further? In fact, licensing and certification identify the industry's more career-oriented people. They require a commitment to learning and reveal those who are unskilled and only in irrigation for the short term. They provide a rationale to increase wages because they insure value.

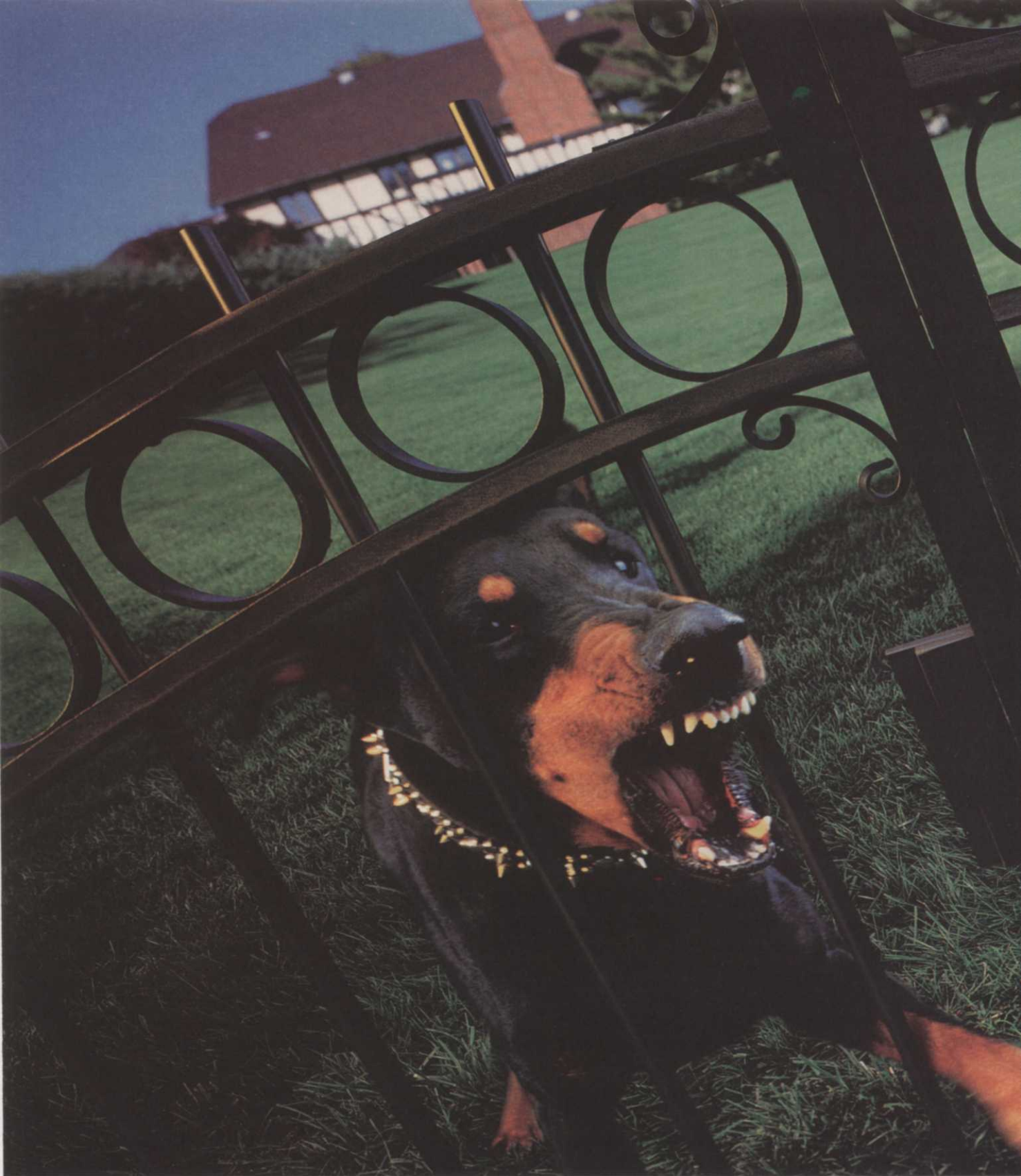
While only a handful of states have licensing programs, any irrigation contractor can use IA programs to groom foremen and designers. IA's 20+ different classes can be presented to groups across the country for training and certification. More than 700 people took advantage of training sessions at the recent IA Show in Orlando.

Community colleges are waking up to the need. The first IA student chapter was formed in November by the students of Lake City Community College in Lake City, FL. Cuyamaca College in San Diego recently opened a \$5 million water conservation garden to complement its landscape irrigation efforts.

Does this tell you there is a respect for irrigation knowledge?

The growth of irrigation will be huge. The population will go in one direction only and water consumption will go with it. Water rationing, whether by price or quantity, is just around the corner for much of the world. Irrigation must be part of the solution, not the problem. But that can only happen if we have knowledgeable professionals in the trenches. **LMI**

— The author owns BioCOM horticultural communications company in Palmdale, CA. For more information on irrigation and training programs, contact the IA at (703) 573-3551 or www.irrigation.org.



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Property at a glance

Location: Leisure World, Silver Spring, MD

Staff: The Brickman Group, Ltd.

Category: Condominium, Apartment Complex or Planned Community

Total budget: Not provided

Year site built: 1966

Acres of turf: 160

**Acres of woody
ornamentals:** 8

Acres of display beds: 1

Total paved area: 50 acres

Total man-hours/week: Not provided

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Entire site snow removal
- ▶ Care of all native and ornamental trees
- ▶ 24-hour responsibility on site

Project checklist

(Completed in last two years):

- ▶ Design and installation of Cascade sunken garden
- ▶ Design and installation of wildlife nature garden

On the job

- ▶ 7 full-time staff, 15 to 20 seasonal employees, 1 licensed pesticide operator

Leisure World

The 1999 Grand Award Winner of the Professional Grounds Management Society for Planned Community

Visitors to Leisure World of Maryland know they aren't in Kansas any more when they're greeted by a steel cage replica of the Earth tilted on its axis at the entranceway. But the empty steel ball pales in comparison to the 800 acres of landscape heaven inside this community of more than 8,000 senior citizens.

One of the original, planned senior citizen towns developed on the East Coast in the mid-1960s, its 22 separate communities provide a challenge to the on-site contractor, The Brickman Group, Ltd. Project director Brad Johns and his crew have to respect the tastes and priorities of each member of the Board of Directors regarding horticultural practices and indi-

vidualized landscape installations.

The grounds maintenance crew handles turf management, four flower rotations, shrubbery and tree care, and 24-hour responsibility for snow removal and emergency tree removal. In addition to more than 20 crew members and three graduate horticulturists, the community has a contract administrator who acts as a liaison between the property owners and contractor.

After determining schedules for more than 150 acres of turf mowing, months of leaf removal, composting of a densely wooded site and snow removal for more than 55 miles of streets, curbs and walkways, this is one tired crew.

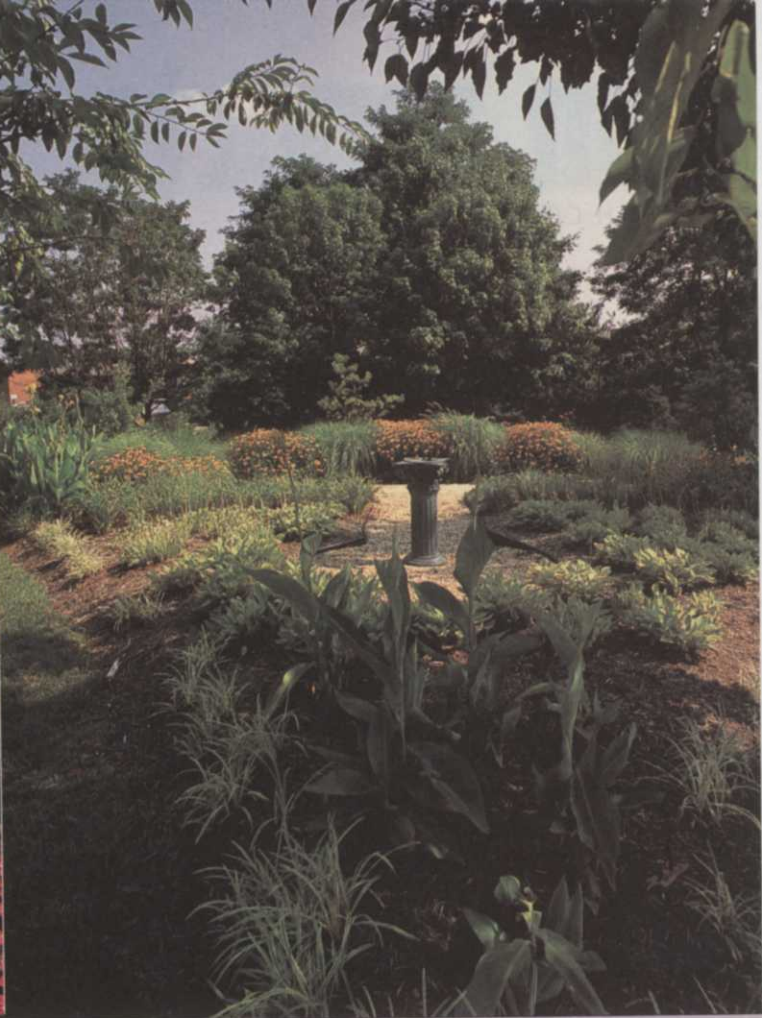
▶ (top left) High rise portions of the community vie for recognition for the showiest seasonal color.

▶ (top right) A newly installed nature garden offers an attraction to butterflies and any visiting grandchildren.

▶ The famous globe at Leisure World marks the main highway entrance to the community and is expected to be dramatic in its floral arrangement.

Editors' note: *Landscape Management* is the exclusive sponsor of the Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards for outstanding management of residential, commercial and institutional landscapes. The 2000 winners will be named at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. For more information on the 2000 Awards, contact PGMS at 120 Cockeysville Road, Suite 104, Hunt Valley, MD; 410/584-9754. Web-site: www.pgms.org

Landscape MANAGEMENT **PGMS**



Blazing a Trail

These trailers leave tow-behinds in the stone age

BY CURT HARLER/CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The days of trailers as nothing more than extended pick-up beds are behind us.

Today's landscape operations demand more of trailers than just a solid bed. Security — both for workers and for equipment — are key buying criteria.

As landscaping becomes a hotter specialty market, more companies are designing trailers with custom features for landscapers.

These features range from special holders for edgers or mowers to nifty lock-down systems that assure that the equipment will still be behind the truck when your crew gets out of the back yard.

Many trailers offer special leveling mechanisms. These mechanisms make the trailers safer to use while allowing easier access onto and off the trailer for heavy equipment like riding mowers.

Check out the products below. There is sure to be something to add to your spring budget.

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Haul up to 5,000-lbs. of trenchers, lifts, compactors, lawn mowers and more in the new Workforce Escalate equipment trailer from Bil-

Jax, Archbold, OH. Designed for safe, simple operation, the trailer's entire bed lowers to the ground, eliminating the need to tilt it. Ramp grade is only six degrees, allowing equipment with low ground clearance to be driven onto the trailer easily. Unit features tie-downs, heavy-duty powder coat finish and a low center of gravity for easy towing.

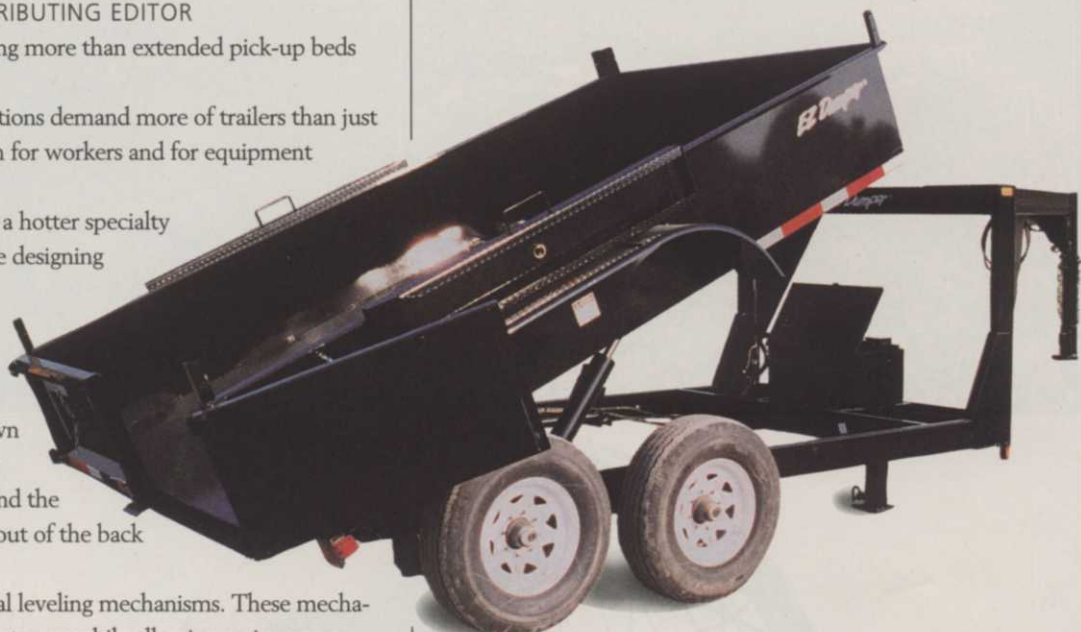
Circle #264

CURB-KING

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www.curb-king.com

Haul 4- to 20-ton loads in



Workforce Escalate equipment trailer

QUICK TIPS

- ▶ **Low-rise trailers are great for loading but not so hot where ground clearance is required.**
- ▶ **Look for easy tie-down locations.**
- ▶ **Check hitches for both strength and compatibility.**
- ▶ **Have new employees practice backing up in an open lot before sending them out on the road.**
- ▶ **Check for leveling features — level trailers are safer.**

this specially designed trailer from the Curb-King division of Tool Engineering & Manufacturing, Brigham City, UT. Heavy duty fenders double as walkways, and cut-away ends on the trailer provide easy loading into wheelbarrows without spillage.

Circle #265

DEANDE
609/771-0001

The 3500-L from Deande, Trenton, NJ comes in two models with a 12-ft. or 14-ft. bed. Unit is equipped with pressure-treated floor, tie off loops and rides on a Dexter 3500-lb., 4-in. drop axle. Also available is the SS7500, a 4-



The 3500-L from Deande

ton skid steer trailer with a 12-ft. bed, swing-down ramps, and 14-gauge diamond plate fenders. Includes drop-down stabilizer jacks.

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JOHN DEERE
919/850-0123
www.deere.com

John Deere 22 Utility Trailer is compatible with the Gator utility vehicle, the 1800 utility vehicle or any larger model lawn and garden tractor. From Deere Commercial Equipment, Raleigh, NC, it features low profile and turf tires for easy travel on any kind of turf.

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The low-profile 6812LP dump trailer from E-Z Dumper, Waynesboro, PA has full hydraulics, 10-gauge reinforced floor and two-way tailgate giving access to the 9990 GVW bed. Adjustable cou-

pler gives a level ride on any truck.

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LIFETIME PRODUCTS
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The elevating platform trailer from Lift-A-Load, Kewanee, IL raises from the ground to 52 in. high



Elevating platform trailer

while staying level. It will stop at any height for quick, convenient material transfer to trucks, ramps or ground level. Drop the trailer down to pass through low garage doors. Unit comes in either straight tongue or gooseneck hitch and in load capacities of 4,000-15,000 lbs.

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The 400-series trailer packages from Power Trac, Tazewell, VA come with customized brackets to hold attachments like planter drill heads and post hole diggers. Each comes with a 4-WD Power Trac with a 22-hp Robin or 25-hp Kohler Command engine. Packages have two toolboxes, 2-ton bottle jack, extra safety strap, filter and drain hose. Built-in safety stands at the rear of the machine keep trailer level. Exactly 30 attachments are available. **Circle #272**

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Stake and platform bodies from Reading Body Works, Reading, PA fit most size trucks and are made of durable, pressure-treated Southern Pine or steel. Body

lengths range from 8 to 24 ft.

Circle #274

SMITHCO 610/993-8181

The new Double Mow-n-Go PGM Trailer from Smithco, Wayne, PA carries two mowers loaded front-

to-rear and is customized to carry all major brands. Its automatic lockdown, latching-bar system holds the mowers firmly.

Circle #275

WELLS CARGO 800/348-7553

www.wellscargo.com

The LS series landscaping trailer from Wells Cargo, Elkhart, IN is enclosed with standard features like exterior grade plywood sidewall liner, pressure treated plywood flooring and frame cross-members on 16-in. centers. Rear ramp door has a spring assist with a side entry door. **Circle #276**



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BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

Dying holly plants

What would cause twig dieback and blackish leaves on holly plants? The black discoloration is also found on twigs.

Some branches have small, raised bumps — probably related to some fungus.

What are these and how do we manage?

— MARYLAND

Twig dieback and discoloration on hollies may be caused by several fungi, such as *Phytophthora* sp., canker-causing fungi like *Phomopsis* sp., or *Gloeosporium* sp.

If the dieback is caused by *Phytophthora* sp., you should not see any fruiting bodies of the fungus on branches. The “raised bumps” are most likely the fruiting bodies of a canker-causing fungi.

Based on the description you have provided, the problem is probably related to *Phomopsis* sp. It is also possible that a given plant may be infected by several different opportunistic fungal pathogens.

For positive diagnosis, send plant tissue samples to a diagnostic clinic. Then, based on findings, provide corrective treatments as needed.

Prune and discard affected plant parts during dry periods. Disinfect pruning tools between cuts to minimize disease spread. Provide proper watering, mulching, fertilizing and pest management as needed to help improve plant health.

Dutch elm disease

I have four trees with Dutch elm disease (DED). What should I do? Can you help?

— ILLINOIS

The first step in disease management is proper diagnosis of the problem. If you suspect DED, look for characteristic field symptoms such as flagging in the crown and discoloration in the xylem. For further confirmation, send representative samples to private or state diagnostic laboratories. Based on the observations and recommendations, further action is needed.

Once the disease is confirmed as DED, the severity of the disease as evidenced by dieback and flagging symptoms in the crown needs to be determined. If it is less than 5% crown dieback, there is a good chance to prevent disease spread by proper sanitation and possible therapeutic fungicide treatments. Sanitation includes scouting and selective removal of diseased branches 10 ft. below the discoloration in the xylem. In some situations, this may require the removal of large branches. This sanitation and removal of infected tissue works well, provided the disease starts within the crown by bark beetle feeding in the branch crotch areas. However, if the disease is transmitted and spread by root graft between a diseased tree and a healthy tree, the removal of infected branches may not be effective because the fungus is systemic, moving upward inside the plant xylem tissue.

Another option is to inject trees having 5% or less crown symptoms with Arbotect or Alamo fungicides. These fungicides can provide two- to three-year protection if done correctly. Reports also indicate that if systemic fungicides are in the plants, the treatment for bark beetles using insecticides may not be needed.

The healthy trees within 40 ft. of diseased trees should be protected from root

graft transmission of pathogens by trenching to disrupt root grafts. In the past, Vapam fumigant treatment was used to disrupt root grafts, but it is no longer available for that purpose.

Valuable susceptible elms should be monitored periodically for the presence of DED. If the trees display more than 20% crown symptoms, it is difficult to protect them from DED. Ideally, the trees should be removed promptly to minimize disease spread to healthy trees. DED can be best managed by the proactive preventive approach. This includes periodic inspection of elms for flagging symptoms, prompt removal of infected plant parts, and, where feasible, fungicide treatments on a preventive basis once every three years. If the disease is detected, provide trenching as needed to prevent root grafts. Read and follow label specifications for best results.

Finding tree grates

Could you recommend a manufacturer of cast iron tree grates? A job requires them and I'm at a loss for a supplier.

— CALIFORNIA

Contact the following companies who reportedly make cast iron tree grates:

- Neenah Foundry, 800/423-8116
- M.H. Powell, 323/887-0037
- East Jordan Iron Works, 800/692-3549.



Manager of Research and Technical Development for the Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO: "Ask the Expert" Landscape Management; 7500 Old Oak Blvd.; Cleveland, OH 44130, or email: sgibson@advanstar.com. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear.

'Fantastic' display

The grounds at Missouri's Fantastic Caverns have to be immaculate.

Otherwise, over 130,000 people visiting yearly would take the maintenance crew to task

Fantastic Caverns

Property size: 400 acres, 30 acres maintained as "front lawn" and five acres of lush fescue and bluegrass at entranceway; thick stands of trees and split rail fences require precise mowing

Equipment: International 2400 series tractor with 6-ft. Bush Hog flail mower, Grasshopper 720K, with 60-in. deck and grass catcher

Man-hours saved using Grasshopper: 28 hrs. per week

Rarely do grounds maintenance crew members get to say that 130,000 people see their work every year. But most grounds crews don't have ancient caverns running underneath their green space.

Doug Campbell, maintenance supervisor at Fantastic Caverns, does. The caverns lie beneath the rolling Ozark hills just north of Springfield, MO. Thousands come each year to ride the jeep-drawn trams on a one-mile, 50-min. tour of the caverns.

"The visitors base their feelings about the Caverns on their first impression," says Kirk Hansen, public relations director. "And that first impression is the condition of our grounds. They have to be immaculate."

While there are several miles of known passageways through the caverns, only about a mile is accessible by tram.

"That is a large part of what makes Fantastic Caverns so unique," Hansen says. "There are many beautiful caves in the United States, many of them right here in Missouri, but we are the only cave system in North America that is large enough to allow a riding tour. Not only is the riding tour less detrimental to the delicate balance of the cave ecosystem, but it also makes Fantastic Caverns accessible to people in wheelchairs and families with small children who aren't up to a lot of walking, lots of steps and steep climbs."

Maintenance supervisor Campbell says that a Grasshopper 720K mower has saved his crew time and helped them meet their lawn-cutting goals. "We used to mow liter-

ally 40 hours a week. We had one person who mowed the grass eight hours a day, every day, to keep the property looking the way it needs to. The Grasshopper mower lets us cut the whole property in a day and a half. That leaves a lot more time for equipment maintenance, remodeling and servicing the jeeps and trailers."

"Part of the look we are trying to achieve is a clean one," he adds. In the fall, he attaches the Quik-D-Tatch Vac® collection system to the mower to collect all the leaves.

As public relations director Hansen says, the aim of the grounds crew is to make Fantastic Caverns a vacation place. "That is why we are so meticulous in our groundskeeping. We want to make Fantas-

"Visitors base their feelings about the Caverns on their first impression. And that first impression is the condition of our grounds." - Kirk Hansen, public relations director of Fantastic Caverns

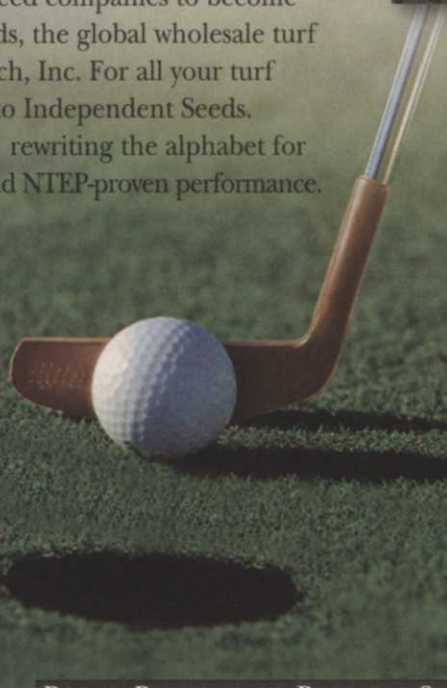
tic Caverns the kind of place that we would want to visit on vacation. And being so close to Branson, we have to keep up with the professionalism and image that the attractions down there project. If we want people to make us part of their Missouri vacation, then we have to look as good as we possibly can. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression."

For more information about Fantastic Caverns contact Kirk Hansen at 417-833-2010. **LJM**

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Saturn II
Mardi Gras
Cathedral II
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Leaderboard Blend

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Shenandoah II
Scorpion
Jaguar 3
Southern Choice
Falcon II
Coyote
Renegade
Gazelle
Scoreboard Blend

Bentgrass

Imperial
Century

Fine Fescue

Treasure Chewings
K2 Chewings
Nordic hard
Revival Creeping Red
Vista Creeping Red

Other

Zenith Zoysia
SUPRANOVA Supina
bluegrass
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Shangri-La
Bermudagrass
Sanctuary Native
grass blend
Bloomcoat Wildflowers

Global turf and forage wholesale unit



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Circle No. 161 on Reader Inquiry Card

products

TECH CENTER

Tough backhoe loaders

Komatsu introduces two new backhoe loaders that feature the company's Avance excavator technology with the HydraMind system. These features allow the machine to react almost instantly to a specific operator control, providing greater smoothness and controllability. The WB140-2 is 16,600 lbs. and 86 hp with a maximum digging depth of 14 ft., 6 in. The WB150-2 is 17,394 lbs. and 98 hp with a maximum digging depth of 15 ft., 6 in. Other features include a closed center load sensing system, load independent flow dividers, two working modes and speed-up.

For more information contact Komatsu at 847/970-5891 / circle no. 250

Elbow room

The Gehl 35 Series skid loaders feature spacious cabs with three different control options. User convenience and efficiency are emphasized by the loaders' excellent accessibility, powerful hydraulics and All-Tach mounting system that provides for various attachments. SAE operating capacities of the four models range from 1,425 to 2,650 lbs.

For more information contact Gehl at 262/334-9461 / circle no. 251

Spread the word

Gandy's two sizes of broadcast spreaders in push and tractor-tow models have 50- and 100-lb. capacity hoppers supported by an epoxy-coated carriage with pneumatic tires. All of the models have molded nylon and stainless steel metering components and an enclosed gearbox. The broadcast metering system has flow direction closures on the hopper bottom to reduce flow to right or left.

For more information contact Gandy at 800/443-2476 or www.gandy.net or circle no. 252

Uplifting experience

Mertz says that its new Hinowa Tracklift™ is being hailed as the smallest, least expensive all-

Touch screen system controls

J and J Truck Bodies and Trailers has integrated Action Trakker™ software into its DynaControl® Central Hydraulics System.™ Available in J and J's line of snow and ice control equipment, the Action Trakker lets the driver control all auxiliary functions from within the cab. The Action Trakker also collects operational and incident data for communication and tracking purposes as well for the reduction of liability.

For more information contact J and J at 814/443-1691, ext. 355 or www.JJbodies.com / circle no. 253



terrain/self-propelled mobile aerial lift in the world. With its retractable track system, the Tracklift can compress to a width of 30.7 in., enabling it to pass through doorways. Weighing in at 3,197 lbs., it's 34 ft. tall and can lift as



much as 440 lbs. at 1.3 ft. per second. Its aerial platform measures 51x28x43 in.

For more information contact Mertz at 580/763-0085 or www.mertzok.com / circle no. 254

Si, software

Now they're speaking your language - Simple Solutions, that is. The company has added Transparent Language's TranscendRT to its operations software package, Service-Ware. Translation? A manager can type instructions in English and, with a click of a button, translate those instructions into Spanish or Portuguese. Simple Solutions says that TranscendRT is not only accurate but can customize libraries to allow customers to save terminology specific to their industry.

For more information contact Simple Solutions

at 877/546-9594 or www.simpleSS.com / circle no. 255

Customized blade length

Fiskars' six in. Sliding Blade Pruning Saw™ has an adjustable blade which slides into the handle, allowing the blade length to be customized to the branch or angle being worked with. The sliding feature allows for compact and safe storage while the curved shape of the handle keeps the user's wrist in the right position.

For more information contact Fiskars at 800/500-4849 or www.fiskars.com / circle no. 256

Ergonomically designed chain saw

Solo's new top handle chain saw features a new ergonomic design with greater balance, easier starting and more stable operation during acceleration. Powered by a 2.2-cu. in. displacement engine, it features an antivibration system and easy-to-start primer system. It weighs less than 8 lbs., delivers a full 2.0 in horsepower and is equipped with a safety chain brake.



For more information contact Solo at 757/245-4228 / circle no.

257

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Cut Whiskers

Cut Circles

Cut Rectangles

Cut Time

But Never Cut Corners

Bob-Cat® ZT Mowers...For Those Who Refuse To Settle For Second Best.

Looking for a zero-turn mower that's a cut above the rest? Put the meanest mower on the market to work for you. The Bob-Cat® ZT Series features the most versatile and dependable mowers ever built. The compact ZT 100 Series offers collection and side-discharge options. Or, for bigger jobs, step up to the high capacity ZT 200 Series. Any way you cut it, the ZT Series gives you everything you want at an affordable price.

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TURF CARE AND SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

*Some restrictions apply to warranties. See your dealer for details.
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Circle No. 164 on Reader Inquiry Card



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3-2-1

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When it's time to make the trade to a superior line of equipment, score some points with your crew with the all-new Bunton mowers. Completely re-engineered with enhanced operator controls, our latest lineup will make instant fans out of the most demanding users.

All five of our all-star performers are backed by a 3-year, no-crack deck, 2-year, no-fail spindle and 1-year power unit warranty. Our exclusive 3-2-1 Warranty ensures a long and productive career from any new Bunton you choose.

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Landscape MANAGEMENT

February 2000

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Save TIME and fax it:
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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 Grounds-care (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 <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?

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

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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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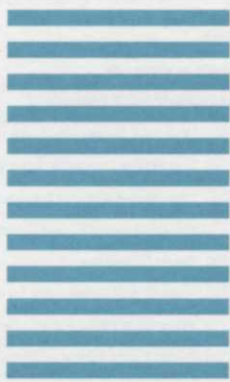


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**Landscape
MANAGEMENT
February 2000**

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Signature: _____ Date: _____

Fill in ovals as shown: ●

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- 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

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- 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
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- 18 335 Hospitals/Health Care Institutions
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- 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? Yes 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? A Yes B No

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

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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

products

Tends to turf

Dakota's new Turf Tender topdresser/spreader is designed to pull behind any utility vehicle or tractor. The standard machine is designed to operate with a vehicle that has a minimum hydraulic flow of 3.5 gpm. An optional 8 hp Honda motor with electric start powers the hydraulic system. Its hopper is built to hold more than .75 cu. yd. of materials and designed to fit loader buckets up to six ft. wide to reduce spilling and waste. The machine can spread any typical material used in landscapes.



For more information contact Dakota at 218/773-1946 or www.dakotapeat.com / circle no. 258

Versatile wheel loader

Caterpillar's new wheel loader features a VersaLink Loader Linkage with a one-piece, fabricated box-section design. The standard model's linkage features a hydraulic quick coupler for fast work tool changes, while a high lift VersaLink option adds 20-in. of dump height. Other features include a pilot-controlled loader hydraulic system with a low-effort joystick control and a turbocharged, six-cylinder, 114-hp diesel engine. Optional remote forward/neutral/reverse switch fits machines equipped with the joystick control.



For more information contact Caterpillar Inc., P.O. box 10097, Peoria, IL 61612-0097 / circle no. 259

Maintenance-free grate

Fibergrate Composite Structures' Aqua Grate™ is made of pultruded fiberglass reinforced plastic and designed with a fine grit-top surface for slip resistance. For use in recreational and industrial marine applications, it is resistant to corrosion and UV. The 1/4-in. space between Aqua Grate's bearing bars was designed to further reduce slips, and the grating's 1 1/2-in. wide flange provides ensures comfort to pedestrian traffic.

For more information contact Fibergrate at 972/250-1633 or www.fibergrate.com / circle no. 260

Chase those deer away

R.J. Advantage has added ReJex-iT® to its line of benign wildlife control products, a repellent that keeps deer from grazing on flowers, decorative and ornamental plants, shrubs, conifers and deciduous trees. The company claims ReJex-iT, a taste and odor deterrent, can be effective for up to two weeks and won't change the color, texture or appearance of plants.

For more information contact R.J. Advantage at 800/423-2473 / circle no. 261

Mulch-n-More

Spyker Spreaders says that its Mulch-N-More can spread PennMulch™ in one pass without bridging or clogging. And, in the push, pull or electric models, a removable spinner blade and optional calibration tray ensures accuracy for maximum cost efficiency.

For more information contact Spyker at 888/877-9537 / circle no. 262

Hungry for weeds

Weed Tiger's trimmer lines eliminate the need to "tap and go" with a trimmer, the company says, because the line begins and remains at a

fixed length and doesn't need winding. Drill a hole near the existing grommet hole, insert the Weed Tiger from the outside and restart. The bright yellow color increases visibility.

For more information contact Weed Tiger at 804/636-9333 or circle no. 263

Tall grass mower

Bachtold Bros.' 7001 weed and brush cutter has an optional 30-in. cutting head powered by an 8-hp engine that was made to deal with grass up to 6 in. tall. Nickel-plated, 20-in. wheels and a 9-to-1 chain reduction drive with positive traction assists the mower through tough terrain. It comes with a standard Briggs & Stratton 8-hp engine.

Contact Bachtold Bros. Inc. at 217/784-5161; www.bachtoldbros.com or circle no. 264

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Landscape MANAGEMENT

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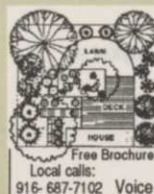
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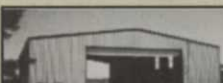
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SUPERVISORS. Looking for self-motivated, communicative individual to oversee large accounts. Our corporate client base requires experienced personnel with the following credentials. A BA degree in horticulture, 5 years supervisory experience and a current NJ pesticide license. You must be able to coordinate the administration of owner's contract job specifications.

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Katy Kelly - Human Resource Manager
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Central Park
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Current Positions Available:

- Chemical Division Manager
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IMMEDIATE POSITIONS AVAILABLE - Fast paced firm servicing North Florida and its surrounding areas has openings for maintenance foreman, irrigation foreman, landscape foreman and pesticide applicators. Year round employment, excellent salary and benefits package. We provide an innovative team environment that promotes **TREMENDOUS GROWTH POTENTIAL.** For immediate consideration call 850-877-7056. 5/00

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IS THERE A POND GUY IN YOU?

**I love turtles, fish, and frogs!
So much so that when my hobby
outgrew my parents house I dug up
the backyard to build a water garden.**

**The ultimate fish tank I thought would be
a thousand-gallon pond where my critters
could live just like they would in nature.
That simple concrete pond built in 1982
became my passion and sparked what
would ultimately be a lifelong odyssey.**

In 1991, my hobby became my profession with the launch of Aquascape Designs a residential and commercial water feature design/build firm.

Aquascape Designs still builds ponds, waterfalls, and streams so others too can enjoy the beauty of nature where they live and work. In fact building water features is the backbone of our business and acts as a continuous R & D department. Our focus however has expanded from just building water features though. Today we have a company wide mission of "Changing the Way the World Builds Ponds." Far too many contractors experience frustrations constructing water features. Green water, leaks, over complicated filters and confusing pumps and plumbing have plagued water feature design and construction for years.

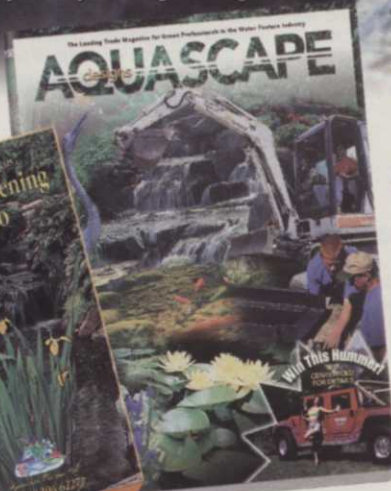
It doesn't have to be that way! Water features can and should be the most profitable part of any landscape installation. In order to be successful with water features though we've found you need to keep it simple, work with nature instead of against her and follow a step-by-step plan. By following this approach we've been able to grow Aquascape Designs into the country's largest water garden builder.

Now it's your turn. If you're interested, curious, or even skeptical on how water features can improve your bottom line sign up for our free information. With the video and or magazine you'll learn about what other contractors across the country are doing to have success with water features and their business in general. You'll see the tricks of the trade and get ideas on how to incorporate water features into your business. Best of all its all FREE! I never would have dreamed a hobby would become my profession. Maybe water features could become a profitable part of your business too!

**Call us, fax us, or write to us
to see how you too can prosper with
water features; the fastest growing
trend in the green industry today!**

Greg Wittstock
Founder & President of Aquascape Designs, Inc.

The Aquascape Designs Magazine



THE Water Gardening Video

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THIS AND THAT

Grasses for the masses

It's official: According to an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, the Chinese are replacing hard-packed soil in their public parks with grass. Proof? Try four million lbs. of seed imported from the United States in 1999, up from 150,000 lbs. four years ago. Nixing dirt, grass proponents say, will cut down on pollution, especially in cities like Beijing where auto fumes, coal soot and dirt from construction sites choke the air. But those who are in line with the Communist notions of cleanliness say that grass breeds insects. Others, particularly martial artists who practice at the parks, say the grass is a layer between them and the earth and prohibits them from tapping into the earth's qi, or vital energy. It remains to be seen whether the Chinese can have their grass and cut it, too.

Thanks, Harvard!

Did you know that landscapers have Harvard University to thank for instilling professionalism in their field? That's right, it was over 100 years ago that Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. inaugurated the first professional degree program in landscape architecture at Harvard. To mark the occasion, the university is presenting a wide array of lectures, exhibitions and conferences in 2000 that will trace the history of the program and the way it shaped a profession just emerging at the turn of the century. And you thought weed-whacking wasn't heady stuff.



Rain forest on wheels

Employees and guests of Rain Bird came together right before New Year's Day to complete the company's lush, colorful Rose Bowl Parade float on the theme, "Rain Forest Rendezvous." Gretchen Wagner, our western sales manager, enjoyed the opportunity to help build the float, which she recalls was "an amazing experience." Rain Bird's floats have won prizes three years running. This year, it won the President's Award.



Rocky delivers knockout punch to trees

MIAMI, FL—Sylvester Stallone agreed to replant 173 trees at least 20 feet tall and restore a rare native hardwood hammock, comprised of over 1,000 smaller trees and brush, on property he previously owned here. The price tag for the landscape material could approach \$500,000.

Stallone — "Rocky" to millions of moviegoers — had the trees and brush removed from the property surrounding his former waterfront mansion sometime early in 1999. Trouble was, the property sits in the middle of an environmental preservation district.

"Mr. Stallone had no knowledge that the trees had been taken down. Someone on his staff removed the trees on his own," Sly's attorney Neal S. Litman, told the *Miami Herald*.

Coming next month in LM:

The Labor Crunch II: Keeping Good People

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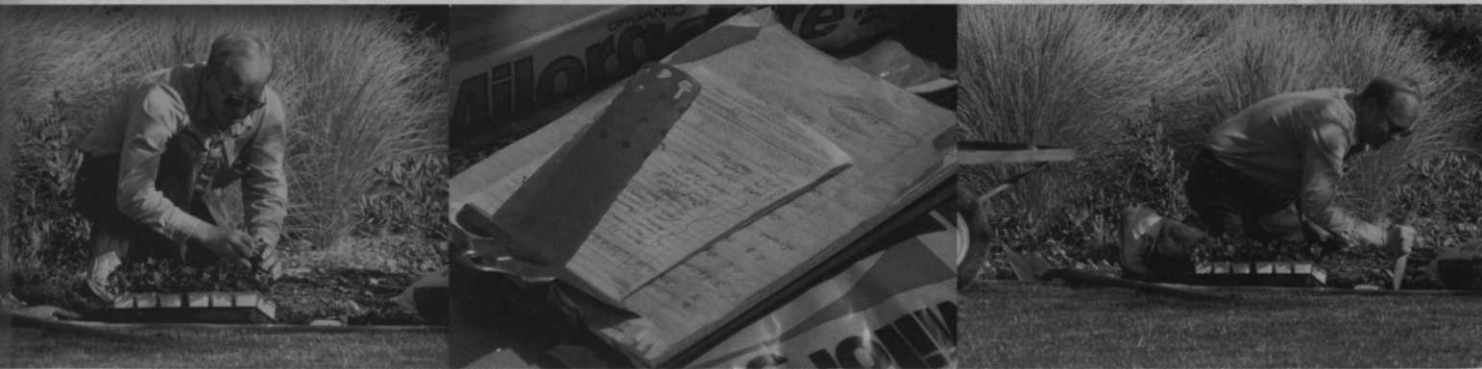
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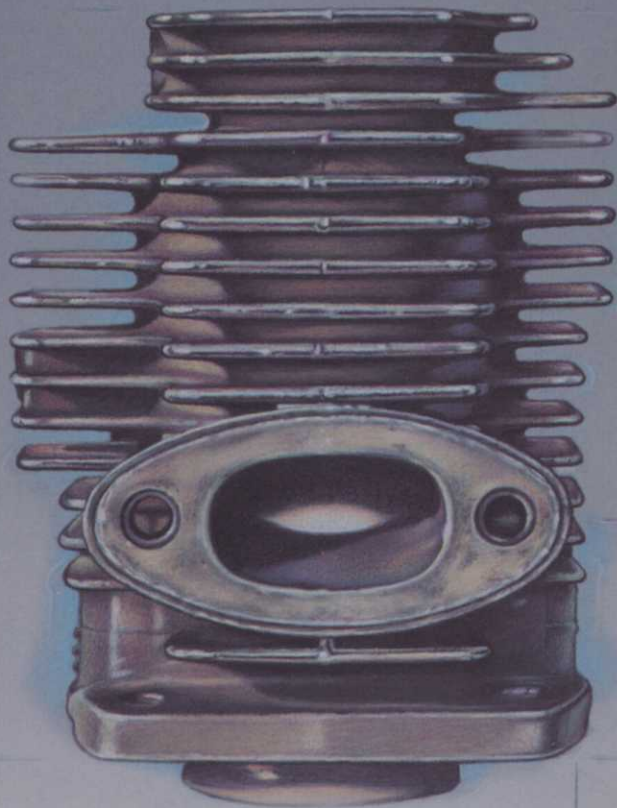


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