

# cleanup crew

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**