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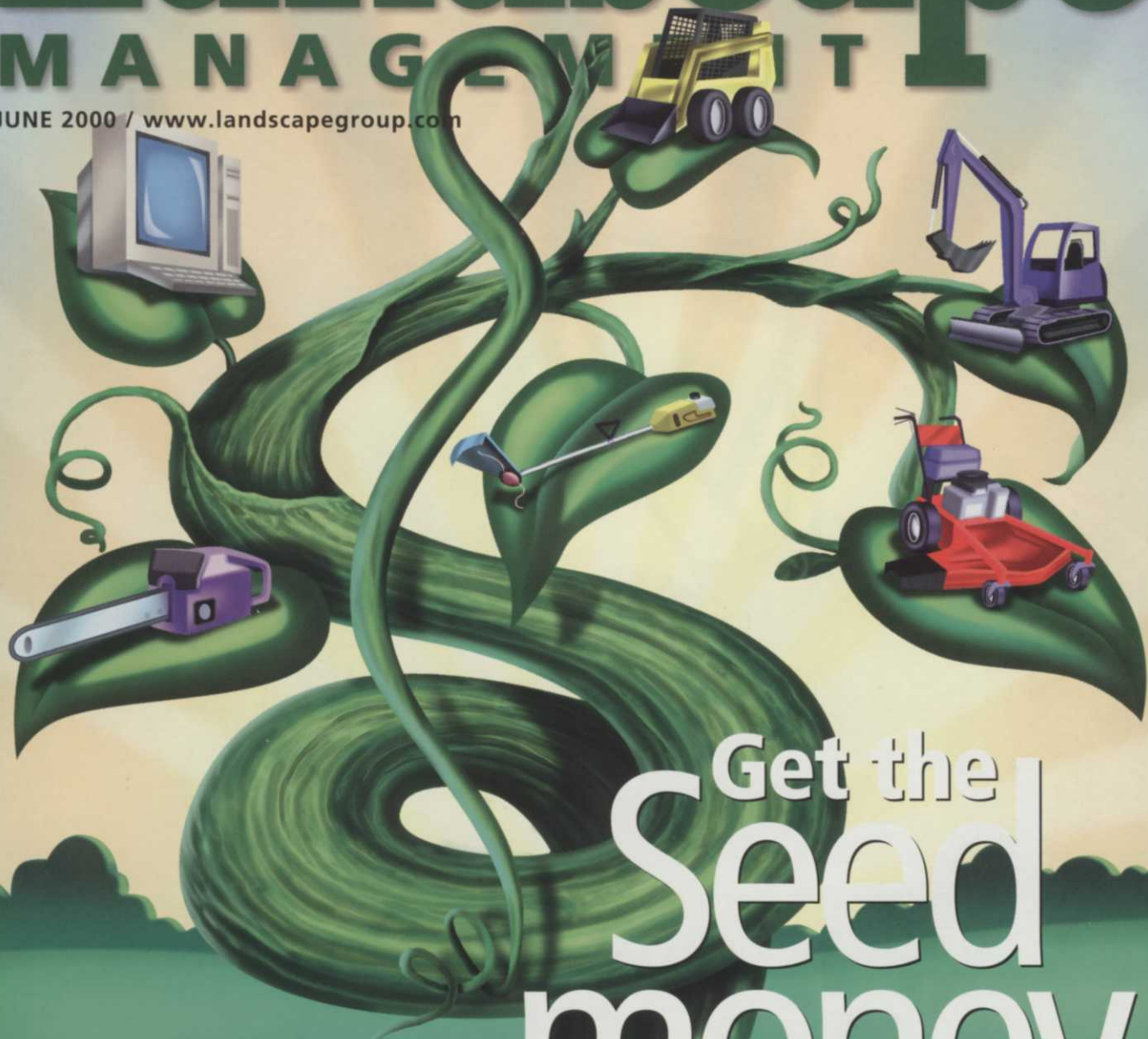
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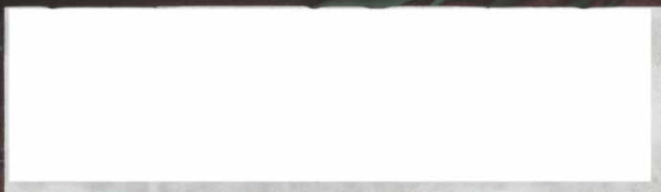
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Landscape MANAGEMENT

JUNE 2000 / #6 / VOLUME 39

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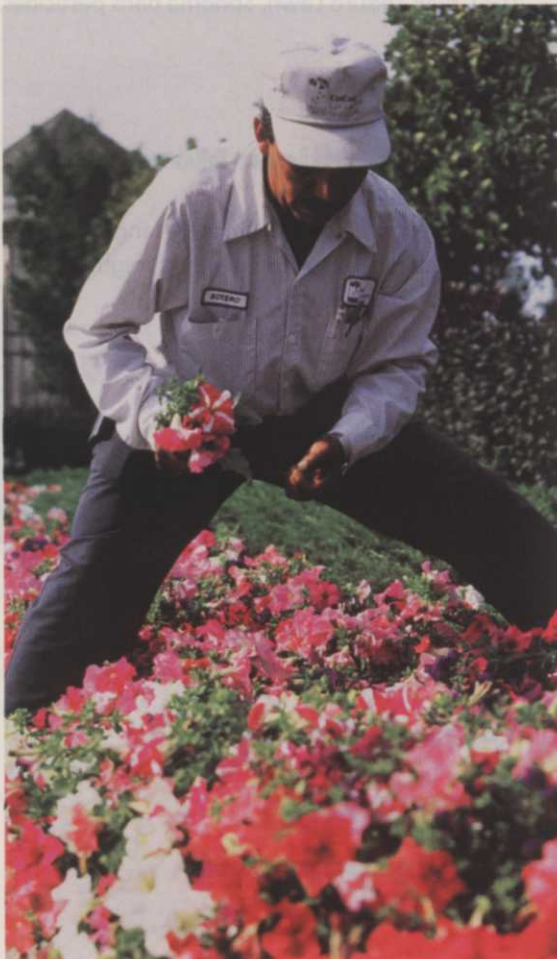
All the equipment your construction/installation business needs

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BY SUE GIBSON / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The power of planning

Remember where you wanted to be by now? Are you there yet, or are you too busy putting out fires to think about plans for July, or 2001 or even 2010?

Harvard Business School once did a study of a graduating class and their progress 20 years later. While most students had goals at graduation, not all achieved them. It helped a lot if they had clear and specific goals at graduation, for there was a dramatically higher chance of achieving them. But what was even more remarkable was that 80% of those who actually wrote down their goals achieved them.

That's probably not so much a testament to being a purposeful, organized person (although that doesn't hurt) as it is an insight into the power of planning, for the act of writing a goal is very complex. It involves thinking it through and defining exactly what you hope to achieve, how you'll measure success and how you plan to get there. Writing formalizes it and makes it more of a commitment.

I was fortunate to sit with several landscape contractors at ALCA's Executive Forum as they discussed their problems dealing with growth, or in some cases, "hypergrowth." As they shared their concerns, some common threads emerged:

- ▶ Growth, like a virulent infection, can take over before you're aware you're in trouble.
- ▶ When you grow too fast, it can throw your whole operation into chaos.
- ▶ You might see hypergrowth on the horizon, but unless you have a solid plan to deal with it, you're going to have problems.
- ▶ If you can plan for growth, you can handle growth.

This group was smart, experienced and savvy (some even had five-year plans). Yet, growth ambushed them.

Planning for change

So what can you do? Don't plan all the time, but it does pay to plan regularly, and to be specific, foresighted and imaginative. A relative told me that the best mothers were those who were the most imaginative, because they imagined the potential problems and dangers that could happen to their children and tried to take steps ahead of time to avoid them. They aren't being overprotective, just anticipatory.

It's the same thing with your operation. You have to anticipate your competitor's tactics, hiring shortages, cash flow problems, good or bad weather, economic downturns and too much growth, too fast. You need a solid, specific plan that will get you from Point A to Point B. And you must take time to revise that plan, develop an emergency Plan B for those unexpected new fires to put out.

Those plans will make you ready to invest in a new service, tackle a long-term problem or move your quality up to a higher level. Those plans will give you the power to change.

Contact Sue at 440/891-2729 or e-mail at sgibson@advanstar.com



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events

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

July

12 Maryland Turfgrass Research Field Day & Open House / Paint Branch Turfgrass Research Facility; John M. Krouse; 301/403-4234

13-15 International Irrigation Expo / Leon Guanajuato, Mexico; (461) 60427,25977,25985

13-16 ANLA Convention and Executive Learning Retreat / Vancouver, BC; 202/789-2900

13-16 ALCA Summer Leadership Meeting / San Diego, CA; 800/395-2522

15-18 Texas Turfgrass Association Conference and Show / Galveston, TX; 409/690-2201

18-21 Turfgrass Producers International Summer Conference and Field Days / Spokane, WA; 800/405-TURF

22-24 International Lawn, Garden and Power Equipment Expo / Louisville, KY; 800/558-8767

24-25 PLCAA Legislative Day On The Hill / Washington, D.C.; 800/458-3466

25-27 Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show / Fort Washington, PA; 800/898-3411

25 Midwest Regional Turf Field Day / West Lafayette, IN; 765/494-8039

30-3 Plant Growth Regulation Society of America meeting / Kailua-Kona, HI; www.griffin.peach-net.edu/pgrsa/

August

3 University of Illinois Turfgrass, Nursery, Landscape, and Trial Garden Field Day / Urbana, IL; 217/333-7847

8-12 APLD Summer Conference / Toronto, Ontario; 630/579-3268

9-10 Penn State Turfgrass Field Days / University Park, PA; 814/863-3475

10 Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association's Summer Field Day / Okemos, MI; 800/879-6652

14-18 Florida Turfgrass Association Annual Conference and Show / Gainesville, FLA; 800/882-6721

15 Cornell Field Day / Ithaca, NY; 607/255-1792

23 Michigan Turfgrass Field Day / Lansing, MI; 517/321-1660

30-2 CIPA Annual Conference / San Jose, CA; 707/462-2276

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Why not raise a sweat?

If you're in the lawn care business, late July can be dull, particularly if this summer gets as dry as last summer.

It's an excellent time to take a few days off to visit Washington, D.C. and participate in PLCAA's Day on the Hill scheduled for July 24 and 25. You can still be a part of it if you contact PLCAA soon so they know how many plates to set for dinner. About 100 lawn care company owners/managers and family members usually attend.

Here are some reasons why you should make the trip, particularly if you've never done it before:

▶ Even though it'll likely be 90° F and the air will be as thick as water, you'll make new friends and contacts as you spend a morning beautifying Arlington National Cemetery. Trust me on this — you will.

▶ You'll gain new insight on legislation that affects the industry and, ultimately, your business.

▶ You'll walk your feet to the nubs on Capitol Hill, hiking through congressional office buildings, meeting aides and, perhaps, talking with your senator or member of congress. But, mostly, you'll walk. You can use the exercise, right?

▶ For even more fun, PLCAA is planning an evening cruise down the Potomac.

We at LM have been to every Day on the Hill, and something new — and usually unexpected — happens at just about every one, like the first one in 1990.

That spring, the General Accounting Office (GAO), the investigative arm of the U.S. Congress, issued a report strongly criticizing some application companies for providing "false or misleading pesticide advertising" concerning the safety of the products they used on clients' lawns. The report prompted several U.S. senators to initiate a subcommittee hearing on the



PLCAA prez Gerald Grossi, left, helped at Arlington in '99.

use of lawn care chemicals — the very day that we and about 50 LCOs gathered in D.C. We hustled to The Hill just in time to give our side of the story.

The following spring, 1991, the same senators drafted a bill restricting the use of lawn and landscape chemicals. It was a bad bill. Again, lawn care supporters testified before Congress (the second PLCAA Day on the Hill) and helped convince the senators to allow the proposed legislation to dry up and blow away.

There have been no lawn care hearings since 1991 and none are planned for this summer.

But you can bet a lot will be going on at PLCAA's 10th annual legislative event in July. Be a part of it.

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Our proposals are eight to nine pages and the order guides our estimators through the sales presentation, which is the same for each estimator. This process keeps our close ratio above 50% and protects our company from changing or altering our promises to all of our clients.

► **Cover sheet.** We begin with a cover sheet that restates what kind of service or proposal the client has asked for. Use the client's exact words in naming the proposal to show you were listening during the walkover.

► **Company profile.** Every proposal begins with a one page company profile that gives you a chance to tell your company's story. You must establish who's going to be responsible for the personalized service the landscape business is known for.

► **References.** We then provide references and information about our company's licenses and insurance. You'll increase your potential for closing the sale when you provide recognizable names or projects similar to the project you're selling.

► **Explanation of services.** Pages four and five include a detailed explanation of our services which helps

to build an awareness of the value of our services.

► **Price sheet.** Page six is the price sheet. Prices are always on one page. We always price the add-on services, even if the client doesn't ask us to. This creates the opportunity for add-on sales in the future with a lot less effort. Move discussions about the price as far back in the proposal as possible because you set up the perception of value this way.

► **Guarantee document.** Page seven is our guarantee document where we state in writing exactly what the customer can expect from our company. The following are two of the thirteen statements located in our guarantees: 1) Our employees will be in uniform while working on your property. 2) Our staff will have the proper training to do the job you hire us to do. Reflect for a moment on services that your company does well, and put it in writing!

► **Company newsletter.** Page eight is our latest company newsletter provided monthly to all of our regular clients. By pointing out the feature articles on irrigation programming, upcoming chores and seasonal specials, our potential clients feel like this gets them on the inside!

Marketing comes in many forms: advertising, public relations, risk reversal, referrals, salesmanship, direct mail, telemarketing and others. You can make minor adjustments to processes and systems that you already have in place and major improvements in your effectiveness.

— This article is from a presentation that Tony Bass delivered in February of 2000 to the Ohio Landscape Association. The author is the owner of Bass Custom Landscapes and Super Lawn Truck of Bonaire, GA.

- He is a speaker and consultant with Vander Kooi & Associates, Littleton, CO.



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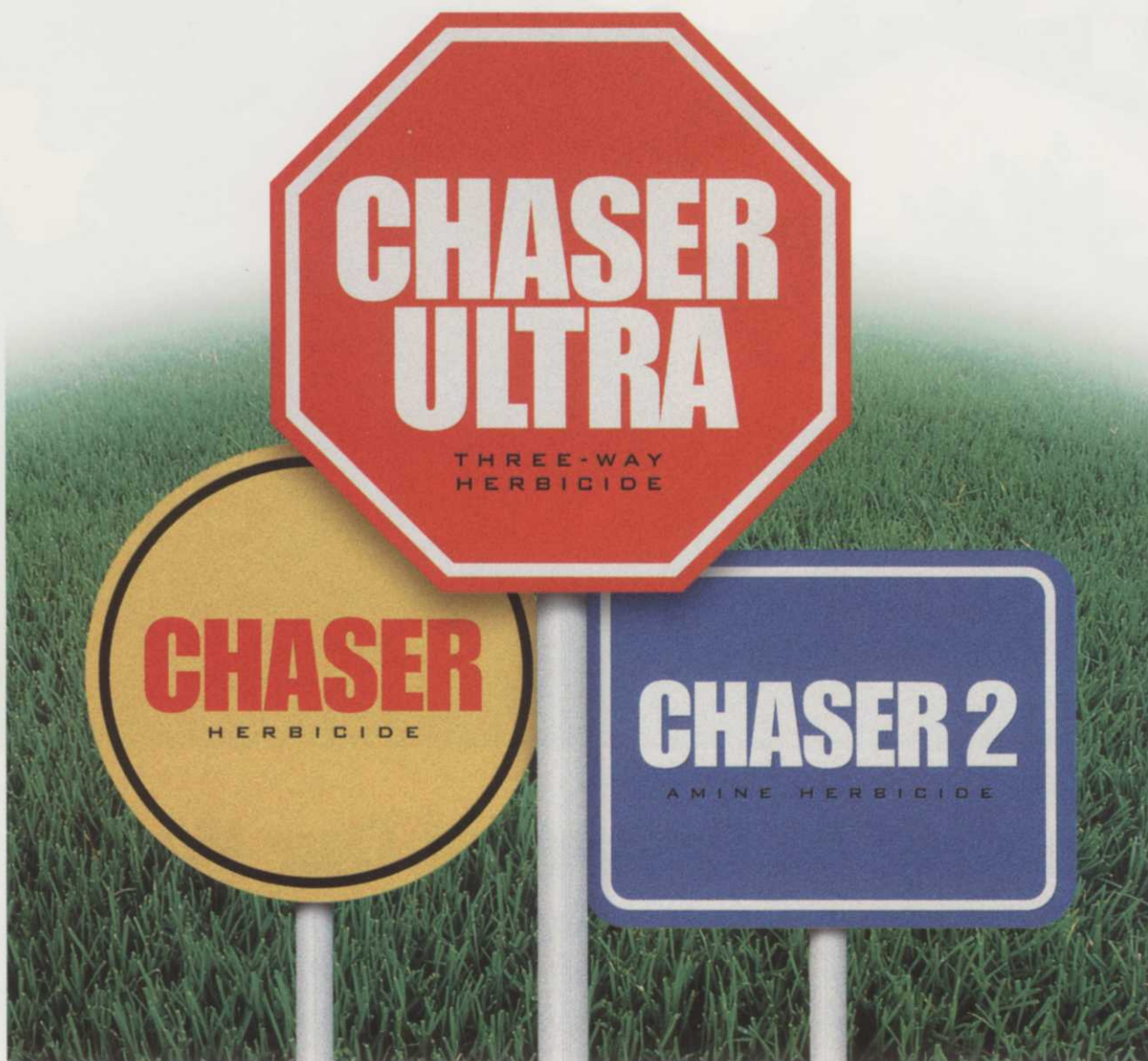
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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Harmony to construct plant

CHESAPEAKE, VA — Harmony Products announced that it plans to construct an organic fertilizer plant in Harrisburg, VA through its subsidiary, Harmony-Shenandoah Valley, LLC.

Sun Marketing new Swinger rep

EAGAN, MN — Sun Marketing has signed a manufacturer representative agreement with Swinger, a loader division of NMC-Wollard.

Web sites form partnership

BOULDER, CO — e-Greenbiz.com, Inc., an e-commerce Web site serving the business-to-business needs of the Green Industry, has formed a strategic partnership with Horti-copia, Inc. The agreement gives e-Greenbiz.com exclusive rights to Horti-copia's comprehensive plant database.

Wright Mfg. moving to expand

GAITHERSBURG, MD — Wright Manufacturing, Inc., is moving its headquarters to a new building in Frederick, MD, 21 miles north of its present headquarters. Construction on the building, which will more than double the capacity of the company's current facilities, should be complete by October, says Bill Wright, president. More company news at www.Wrightmfg.com.

continued on page 22



Landscape Management, Athletic Turf, Golfdom win 10 TOCA awards

BOSTON, MA — For the fourth straight year, *Landscape Management* took home the most writing and design awards of any magazine at the annual meeting of the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA), held in Boston last month.

In all, *Landscape Management* won five awards, three in writing and two in design. Sister publication *Golfdom* earned four awards, and *Athletic Turf* one.

Landscape Management's executive editor Sue Gibson and senior editor Ron Hall teamed up to win first place for their operations profile article, "Award Winning Landscape Management: Westfield Companies," and their business management article, "Busting Through the Charts." Hall added a merit award for his column, "Rockin' with Sam and Fred at Walnut Creek."

In his role as editor-in-chief of *Athletic Turf*, Hall scored first place for his moving column, "One Tragic Oversight," about two college students who were electrocuted when an aluminum goal post they were moving touched a power line.

"Sometimes we're so busy doing 'what's important' we overlook what's 'very important,'" Hall said about his column. "Making ball fields safe and beautiful is important; watching out for friends and co-workers is more important."

Graphic designer Lisa Bodnar won two more awards for *Landscape Management*, both in cover page design: first place for "LM 100" (Sept. 1999) and merit for "Green Book 2000" (Dec. 1999).

Winners for *Golfdom* included managing editor Larry Aylward (first place, column, "What Will You Do To Bring Back Hacks?"), publisher Pat Jones (merit, editorial/column/opinion piece, "Phliping Off the Whiners"), graphic designer Lisa Bodnar (first place, overall magazine design, "Golf Gets Wired"), and art director Lisa Lehman (first place, two-plus editorial page design, "Butting Heads Over Bio.")

"The editors of *Landscape Management* and our sister publications, *Golfdom* and *Athletic Turf*, are so proud to win these awards again this year," Gibson said. "We really try to focus on quality editorial and graphics with every issue, and we're pleased that this year's judging panel acknowledged our efforts."

TOCA members include editors and designers of many Green Industry publications, public relations and marketing directors for landscape and supplier firms, industry association representatives and advertising agency account supervisors.

[CLIPPINGS]

California city considers banning pesticides

SONOMA, CA — It looks as though the city of Sonoma may follow neighboring Arcata's example as its city council has formed a committee to develop a proposal to end the use of pesticides and herbicides on city property.

Last February, Arcata became the first U.S. city to ban all landscaping chemicals on city property. Another city in the same county, Sebastopol, adopted a ban on pesticides on May 2 and established a voluntary toxics-free zone citywide to urge private property owners to reduce their use of yard chemicals.

Arcata claims it saved money by getting rid of pesticides and herbicides because it no longer had to do the training and record-keeping required by law when chemicals are sprayed.

But Sebastopol guesses it would have to spend \$30,000 on an extra full-time employee to equal the maintenance levels achieved with chemicals.

Over 10 gallons of Roundup and one gallon of the insecticide Sevinol were used last year in Sonoma, including for Sonoma Plaza, a popular tourist attraction where some feel many residents would be angered at the sight of weeds.

Public officials in Sonoma hope that efforts from volunteers to pull weeds in the Plaza and along bike trails would counter the elimination of pesticides and herbicides.

According to RISE issues

consultant Fred Langley, between 12 and 20 cities nationwide have instituted pesticide and herbicide bans. Most are located in California, with some in New York and one city, Carboro, in North Carolina.

Hidden costs of overtime

Those long spring hours of scrambling to handle the work may pay off on your organization's books but leave a hidden toll on your employees, according to a Cornell University study cited in the *Wall Street Journal*. Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations found that "overtime hogs" who work at least 11 and up to 20 hours of overtime each week showed "a much greater incidence of 'severe' work-family conflicts," according to the story. What does this mean exactly? Look for "significantly higher" levels of stress, alcohol use and absenteeism.

People & companies

Van Waters & Rogers appointed Ted Worster to the



newly created position of product/project manager for the company's Professional Products & Services business unit.

Pursell Technologies

named Jeff Higgins director of market development.



The **ANLA** named Geoff Galster director of regulatory affairs.

Dana Corp., Toledo, OH, opened its new Spicer Outdoor Power Equipment Components Division in

Fredericktown, OH.

Karl Schaeff & Co.

opened its U.S. headquarters in February. The company named Gilbert Herr president, Derek Wilcox controller, William Stenberg vice president of product support and Michael Lewis regional sales manager. Schaeff of North America handles sales, service and parts from their new 30,000-sq.-ft. facility.

Jacklin Seed hired Larry Perotti as technical service manager.

Boss Snowplow named Rick Klann sales manager of the Boss construction equipment product line.

Hunter Industries named Dan Reeves district sales manager for Georgia, South Carolina and eastern Tennessee; and John Pons district sales manager for Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and the Florida Panhandle.

AlturnaMats, a major manufacturer of ground



cover mats, appointed Gerald Harry to the position of national sales

manager.

The Musser International Turfgrass Foundation honored North Carolina State University Ph.D.

candidate Matthew Fagerness with its Award of Excellence. The annual

award is presented to an outstanding doctoral student of turfgrass science who has made significant and innovative contributions to turfgrass science research.

Hino Diesel Trucks

named Steve Roswold service manager.

e-Greenbiz.com, an e-commerce Web site serving the business-to-business needs of the Green Industry, has formed a board of advisors comprised of Green Industry experts and leaders.



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continued from page 19

LESCO broke records in '99

ROCKY RIVER, OH — Green industry supplier LESCO, INC. (Nasdaq: LSCO) reported net income for 1999 increased 98% to a record \$11.6 million compared with \$5.9 million in 1998. Net sales for the 12 months increased 10.5% to a record \$460.4 million (\$385.4 million for fertilizers, turf protection products and turfgrass seed; \$75 million in lawn care equipment and parts), compared with net sales of \$416.7 million for the same period last year.

[CLIPPINGS]

TGCL purchases Leisure Lawn

DAYTON, OH — Leisure Lawn, Inc., headquartered here and one of the few remaining sizable independent lawn application companies in the United States, is now a part of Memphis-based TruGreen-ChemLawn. The sale was announced in May. The purchase price was not disclosed.

Leisure Lawn, with 420 employees and 85,000 customers, operates in 11 markets across eight states and recorded sales of about \$22 million in 1999. TG-CL has about 3.5 million customers in over 330 locations nationally. Sales in 1999 were \$880 million. TG-CL is owned by ServiceMaster Co. (NYSE: SVM) with 1999 sales of \$5.7 billion.

The late Ronald D. Baker founded Leisure Lawn in 1970, just a few years after the founding of ChemLawn in nearby Miami County. ChemLawn, which is generally credited with popularizing the concept of chemical lawn care to millions of Americans, was purchased by TruGreen in 1992.

Davey launches training program

KENT, OH - With the goal of emerging as a leader in the commercial grounds maintenance market, The Davey Tree Expert Co. launched an in-house training program for grounds maintenance.

Modeled after the company's flagship educational program DITS (Davey Institute of Tree Sciences), the Davey Institute of Grounds Maintenance (DIGM) featured scientists from the company's research division and managers instructing 32 employees on topics such as lawn care, operating efficiencies and customer service.

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Circle 112

Get ready, feds say it's going to be dry

WASHINGTON, D.C. — It's not too early for lawn/landscape professionals to start developing strategies to help themselves, and their customers, through an extended drought, based on the federal government's spring predictions.

This may include:

- ▶ becoming informed about local water regulations and the people that make them,
- ▶ informing clients about the benefits of irrigation,
- ▶ offering irrigation, including repair and maintenance services,
- ▶ preparing literature for your customers explaining droughts and how you can help them,
- ▶ locking in product (turf seed, starter fertilizer, etc.) for fall renovations.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts that the areas impacted by this year's drought will parallel the drought of 1988, which was the most costly weather disaster in history with \$40 billion in losses. The average annual cost of droughts is over \$6 billion.

During the summer of 1999, large portions of the Mid Atlantic suffered a severe drought, which is expected to widen into the Appalachians and the southeast this season.

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"The news is not good. The drought of 1999 remains with us in the new century and our data indicate drought conditions are going to get worse before they get better."

— U.S. Commerce secretary
William Daley

"The news is not good," said U.S. Commerce Secretary William Daley. "The drought of 1999 remains with us in the new century and our data indicate drought conditions are probably going to get worse before they get better."

Experts continue to blame the La Nina weather pattern for causing this past winter to be the warmest on record in the United States, and the driest spring on record in several southern states.

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Circle 113

Surfin' Turf

Valent adds e-commerce to site

Valent USA Corp. became the first crop protection manufacturer to sell products from its own Web site when the company recently added e-commerce to the site.

Now, Valent can deliver products directly to customers, who can peruse detailed product information and receive selection assistance as well. Customers receive an e-mail

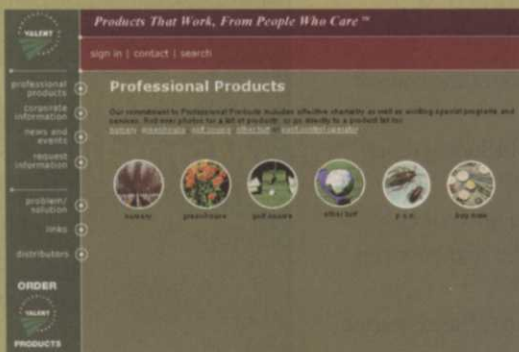
confirming their order has been shipped. It will contain a UPS number to monitor the shipment using a tracking feature on the site's order history page or by clicking on the tracking link in the e-mail.

By logging on to the site at www.valentpro.com, users go directly to the

turf, nursery, greenhouse and pest control markets represented by Valent's Professional Products division. New to the site is a problem/solution module where users can submit a specific pest or weed prob-

lem and query the database for an answer from Valent. And, of course, there are Valent product labels, material safety data sheets (MSDS), news and information pieces, events calendars and literature order requests.

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Affordable Mycorrhiza

Biopesticide companies form trade alliance

The biopesticide industry has formed a coalition called the Biopesticide Industry Alliance (BPIA) to

- ▶ improve the global market perception of biopesticides as effective products, and
- ▶ facilitate the successful registration process of biopesticides.

One of BPIA's primary goals is to develop a strong working relationship with the EPA's Biopesticide and Pollution Prevention Division (BPPD), which regulates products derived from natural materials such as animals, plants, bacteria and certain minerals. As part of the relationship, BPIA would assist BPPD in handing out guidelines, policies and procedures to the industry and other stakeholders. BPIA also hopes that the EPA will use it as a channel for proposing new policies and receiving industry feedback on those policies.



Barenbrug kicked off the new millennium on January 22 with the opening of a new production and warehouse facility near Washington, D.C. The company got a little help with its kickoff from the Washington Redskins' cheerleaders. Barenbrug officials seen in the photo are (left to right): Roeland Kapsenberg, Bert Barenbrug and Keith Martin.

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Guaranteed analysis

Total Nitrogen (N)	3.0%
1.0% Water Soluble Nitrogen	
2.0% Water Insoluble Nitrogen	
Available Phosphorus (P ₂ O ₅)	3.0%
Soluble Potash (K ₂ O)	3.0%
Calcium (Ca)	8.0%
Magnesium (Mg)	0.5%
Iron (Fe)	1.2%

Derived from: Composted Poultry Manure, Ferrous Sulfate and Potassium Sulfate.

Non Plant Food Ingredients: Sea Kelp, Humic, Ende and Ende Mycorrhizal Spores.

MYCORRHIZA SPORE COUNT

Species of Beneficial Fungi	per lb.	per 25 lb. bag
Ps (Glomerella)	30,000,000	750,000,000
Thiospora (Glomerella)	4,000,000	100,000,000
WAM (Glomerella)	1,200	30,000

APPLICATIONS

Verticillium: Apply 4.0 oz. of M-ROOTS™ to holes using standard pattern for drilling (0.8 in dia.)

Flower beds: Mix thoroughly into top 4" of soil (5 lbs./100 sq. ft.)

Bulbs: Add 1 tablespoon to each hole.

Plantings: Apply on top of backfill or top 2" of existing hole as close to the root ball as possible.

Plant or Tree size	Container or soil size	Rate (lb./100 sq. ft.)
Shrub	1 gal.	1 lb.
" "	2 gal.	2 lb.
" "	3 gal.	3 lb.
" "	4 gal.	4 lb.
" "	5 gal.	5 lb.
" "	6 gal.	6 lb.
" "	7 gal.	7 lb.
" "	8 gal.	8 lb.
" "	9 gal.	9 lb.
" "	10 gal.	10 lb.
" "	11 gal.	11 lb.
" "	12 gal.	12 lb.
" "	13 gal.	13 lb.
" "	14 gal.	14 lb.
" "	15 gal.	15 lb.
" "	16 gal.	16 lb.
" "	17 gal.	17 lb.
" "	18 gal.	18 lb.
" "	19 gal.	19 lb.
" "	20 gal.	20 lb.
" "	21 gal.	21 lb.
" "	22 gal.	22 lb.
" "	23 gal.	23 lb.
" "	24 gal.	24 lb.
" "	25 gal.	25 lb.
" "	26 gal.	26 lb.
" "	27 gal.	27 lb.
" "	28 gal.	28 lb.
" "	29 gal.	29 lb.
" "	30 gal.	30 lb.

Planting / seeding into: 10 lbs./1,000 sq. ft. with a rotary spreader or per sq. ft. of soil prep.

Soil/seed seed: Apply 10 lbs./1,000 sq. ft. with a rotary spreader or per sq. ft. of soil prep.

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suggestions to improve performance.

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ILLUSTRATION BY BOB LYNCH

Get the *seed money* you need

Is the lack of money holding you back? These enterprising landscape professionals have found ways to shake the money tree for their pet projects. Their methods may work for you

BY GEORGE WITTERSCHEIN / CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

You don't have to be a start-up to need money. Even savvy landscape professionals must find new money to grow an operation, acquire new products or supplies, smooth the flow of cash or add a service. And some Green Industry operators have learned how to hit the jackpot.

Periodic shots of green

As president of World of Green Inc., Lincoln, NE, Gary Carstens knows that firms in business for 28 years need periodic infusions of financing for new ventures. His company employs up to 35 seasonal employees, providing commercial landscape maintenance services.

Carstens' firm has a revolving line of credit. "Because we have a seasonal business, the cash flow during the winter is minimal but our expenses hit us heavy in spring. The revolving line of credit allows us to buy the chemicals and get some of the payroll covered. We repay it through the end of the year."

It took a lot of work to get his first SBA loan 15 years ago, Carstens recalls. "There was certainly a learning curve. I had to learn that just because a line of credit is there, we don't have to use it. I learned a lot of lessons the hard way."

Today, World of Green has worked the kinks out of its money channels, using financing to buy equipment, using cash flow to finance many of the capital needs and working the line of credit only as needed. "The personal relationship with a banker also helps. You need that relationship," Carstens adds.

Looking for 'angels'

Mike Rogan was in the waste collection and disposal business for 26 years until 1998. Recently, he and his partner, Herb Getz, conceived of an entrepreneurial idea. "We'd like to form a comprehensive landscaping company servicing the Chicago area, and then move into other markets, eventually providing services on a national basis," Rogan explains. "To build a broad platform of services, our company, Sprouts Landscape Inc., would acquire and consolidate existing businesses."

This is a complex undertaking, he says. "We need substantial financial backing to build a large national company and acquire companies." Sprouts has had some success so far in raising the money. Halfway through their

continued on page 32



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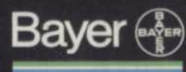
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Get the seed money you need

Boost your budget

Grounds managers have many of the same problems as people in business for themselves, except they must appeal to the organization itself, rather than an outside lender. This can be tough, especially if the grounds already look good.

George Van Haasteren, CGM, is grounds manager for Dwight Englewood School and director of grounds for Paramus Catholic High School, both in Bergen County, N.J.

"In my experience, the biggest problem is that there's just not enough capital or capital renewal for the equipment that you need to get the day-to-day operations completed," Van Haasteren says.

The solution? "What I've tried, and sometimes succeeded with, comes under one word — justification," he notes. "That means acquiring enough business savvy to build a business case. You compare the full-time employees it takes to do a certain task with what a new piece of equipment could do. You compare different types of machines. Or you demonstrate that your old equipment is unsafe, or doesn't meet new environmental or safety codes. Maybe, that leasing with an option to buy will save money."

He continues, "And so you justify the expenditure. Grounds management is changing in that the institutions operate it as if they were a business. You need to take some business courses — that's what I did — and learn from everyone you can. I'm lucky that I had my own business, and a family member who is a CPA. That's someone I can ask for the financial advice.

"Of course, the biggest frustration is you go through all the steps and build a huge case, and then there's a change in administration. You have to work the steps all over again with someone new!"

Sound familiar?

Continued from page 29

two-year business plan, they've been able to raise approximately \$5 million.

"Through introductions, our own networking and existing relationships, we found some private individuals — 'angel' investors," Rogan reports. "We've also approached many venture capitalists and are talking to some interested firms.

"We're on schedule," he adds, "but I am a little disappointed with the results so far in raising money. If we're not successful in raising the initial \$40 million, we will scale down our business plan or look to other more traditional methods of raising capital."

Rogan attributes his difficulties to an investing climate eager for returns typical of high-tech operations (in the 50% to 100% range), plus more caution about investing in consolidations.

A banker becomes landscaper

W. James Ormond, vice president of Barringer and Barringer in Charlotte, NC, has sat on both sides of the desk. The former officer for the nation's sixth largest bank joined the industry in 1995 to found a new landscape maintenance division for Barringer and Barringer. "It (that division) was a whole new direction for us," he says.

Company founder John Barringer also started in the banking industry. Says Ormond: "When we met, we looked at ways to grow his business and decided the most profitable and strategic path would be to expand services while growing the existing design/install business." His banking contacts helped him, and he needed them, because maintenance is more labor-intensive and equipment-intensive than installation.

"Anyone who needs capital should have a solid relationship with their banker," he adds. Rec-



W. James Ormond

ognizing that advice is easier to give than to follow, Ormond offers these tips on nurturing banker relationships:

1. Make your banker part of your professional support team, along with your attorney and accountant. "You need support people in your business who are on your side and who understand your business, so when you go to them for help, you don't have to start from scratch. They should be familiar with your business practices, seasonal trends of cash flow or whatever."

2. Invest the time and effort to maintain that relationship. "My partner used his former bank when he started the business. A lot of turnover happened there and he lost that personal relationship. He faced what many in our industry face — not being known — and the frustrations mounted rapidly.

"We ended up going with my former bank," Ormond says. "I was still tied in closely there and I also work to keep those relationships open. Even when I don't need my banker, I tell him what I'm doing.

"Recently, we knew we were going to need a temporary line of credit for a large installation job. Three months before I needed the money, I called my banker and told him: 'I may not need this money, but I want to let you know what our intentions are.' A week ago, I called and he didn't have to be brought up to speed. He asked, 'How much do you need, and when do you need it?'"

3. Know when and how to switch from start-up mode to long-term relationship.

"Equipment dealers and manufacturers set up these very attractive no-money-down, 90-day same as cash deals that make it an easy industry to get into. In our market there must be 10 pages in the Yellow Pages of one-man outfits. They do have easy access — not to bankers, but to credit.

"What they *don't* have is the knowledge of how to get to that next level. They're just looking at that monthly payment. One

"You can't go to a banker at the outset and say, 'Here I am — finance me.'"

**W. James Ormond,
Barringer & Barringer**

day, they understand that they're still paying for machines that have long since broken down — or are paying \$300 a month for 5 years for a \$6,000 mower. And what do they do? They sell and get out of the business."

"You can't go to a banker at the outset and say, 'Here I am — finance me.' But alternatives might include the Small Business Administration — they have some loan products for the small startup business."

He continues: "Or, you may want to go to a dealer and get a mower on easy terms, or use credit cards. I wrote a refinanced loan for some people who started a business with credit cards. They knew they didn't want to get too far into debt at 22%. Later, they said, 'We have a certain amount of business experience and we'd like to refinance this credit card debt with a bank loan at better rates.' That was an attractive loan for me to write."

4. Visit the bank before you need the money. "Many people wait until the 11th hour to meet their banker. When you're ready to move away from dealer or credit card financing, call your bank before you need a loan. You can tell the banker about your business and mention that you see the need for some credit coming up. When the need does arise, your banker knows your situation."

5. Get counseling on financial matters. "A large part of obtaining credit is the presentation. There are agencies, the SBA being one of them, (others include local

chambers of commerce and economic development offices) with financial counselors to help you to present your case intelligently."

6. Bank locally. "The bank I chose was my former employer — but had I not worked there, I probably would have used

a small community bank. They are eager to lend to this kind of business and the advantage is a better long-term relationship."

— *The author has written about several Green Industry topics from his base in Mendham, NJ*

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"You can't go to a banker at the office and say 'Here I am—finance me!'" —James Omond, Boringer & Boringer

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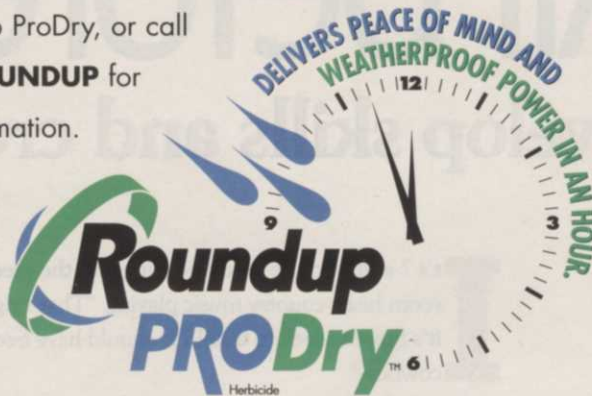
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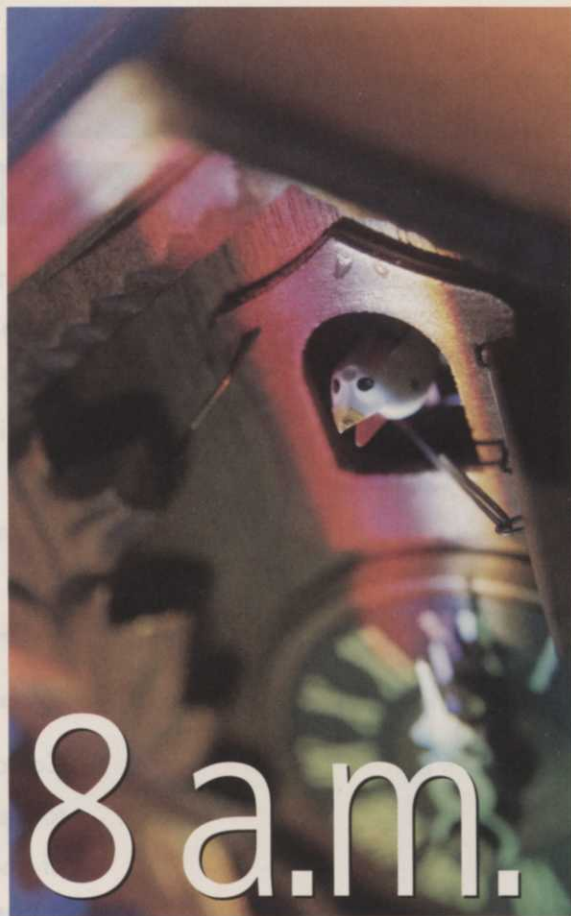
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They say you learn something best when you teach it. Your employees may be the ideal teachers

BY PHIL FOGARTY

All before 8 a.m.

Develop skills and create energy



It's 7 a.m. and the group heading into the meeting room hears country music playing. "That's right, it's Steve's week to train! He should have been a cowboy."

Nods of recognition accompany a few grins. "We didn't even think that he could talk and here he is on his third session. And he's not bad, either."

Steve hits the button on the CD player, stopping the background melody. "Okay, listen up. Bob has the mission statement." Bob's recitation from memory is greeted with groans and sarcastic applause. "Show off!" "Brown noser!" Bob sits down after being handed a new company hat with movie tickets protruding from the brim.

Steve keeps things moving. "Good job, Bob. We're talking about routing today and we need everyone's input. Does anybody have any thoughts on why good routing is so critical?"

Quick and consistent

Another Skills Development Series session is on its way.

The combination of brevity and consistency works a little magic in the participating companies. Thanks to positive peer pressure, everyone gets together each week and they wouldn't dare miss with American Cyanamid's purse at stake (see sidebar).

Standings are faxed around the country after each session so all those competing know what the score is. One training combatant says, "Besides, this thing brings us together each week and everybody's the same for that hour."

Of the 12 Skills Development Series companies participating, all but one have trained every week and documented it with a fax-back form that shares feedback with the SDS group. The 12 routing discussions provided feedback like this:

► "We followed a customer's path from an estimate to a sale, from invoice to service. It helped everyone understand all the parts of the system that affect routing."

► "We learned how to route with a new software program today."

► "We initiated a new procedure today. We'll take recommendations from our employees on better ways to route a customer."

One percent of your time

A company dedicating only 1% of its time each week for training gets other benefits as well. One Skills Developer said, "If we can excite people about learning once a week, they are bound to do some learning on their own above and beyond what we provide."

The *Landscape Management Skills Development Series* is moving its member companies a little closer to being learning organizations each week. Now more than 25% complete, SDS participants will never go back to training "only when they have the time."

Steve feels good about the 35-minute meeting. What great ideas came from this one! He remembers a quote that summed up the session: "Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may not remember. Involve me and I'll understand." **LM**

American Cyanamid's SDS prize package

PARSIPPANY, NJ - American Cyanamid, the sponsor of the first *Landscape Management Skills Development Series*, announced the grand prize package to be awarded to the company who trains for all 52 weeks in the contest. In the case of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine the winner of products that are valued at more than \$1,500.

"The SDS has put a spotlight on regular training for LCOs across the country, and AMCY is excited to sponsor such a unique learning program," said Joe Visaggio, market manager, Turf and Ornamental Products at American Cyanamid. AmCy, makers of the popular lawn care products Amdro Pro, Image, Pendulum and Pendimethelin, also provided products to all companies that enrolled in the program, which started in February. JP Horizons, an Ohio-based consulting firm, designs weekly training session outlines for companies to download from www.jphorizons.com, plus coaching and networking support.

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Circle 118

Property at a glance

Location: Rock Creek Ranch, Greenwood Village, CO

Staff: CoCal Landscape

Category: Public works

Total budget: \$210,000

Year site built: 1992-present

Acres of turf: 144 irrigated, 163 native

Acres of woody ornamentals: Unknown

Acres of display beds: 2

Total paved area: Unknown

Total man-hours/week: 400

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Extensive perennial and wildflower plantings
- ▶ Large scale, communications
- ▶ Ongoing development and construction

Project checklist

(Completed in last two years):

- ▶ Installed pond aeration systems
- ▶ Extensive underground drainage
- ▶ Berm construction to block headlights from residents

On the job

- ▶ 2 full-time staff, 10 seasonal employees, 1 licensed pesticide operator

Rock Creek Ranch

The 1999 Grand Award Winner of the Professional Grounds Management Society for Public Works

Rock Creek Ranch is a 1,200-home community located just outside of Boulder, CO, that has a little bit of everything — parkways, medians, a wastewater treatment plant, parks, ball fields, playgrounds, sculpture, jogging paths, soft trails, native plantings, wetlands and 20 ponds that are pretty to look at but are also used for irrigation. CoCal Landscape, Denver, CO, keeps it beautiful.

Both the size and diversity of this landscape present numerous maintenance challenges but irrigation is the

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



largest. The Front Range of Colorado is arid and the community's plant material, ranging from junipers to Kentucky bluegrass turf, requires strict water management. The irrigation system contains 47 controllers, 2,400 valves and 40,000 sprinkler heads. All of it is managed as part of the community's complex gray-water irrigation system. CoCal Landscape did a good job with that, as it reduced the community's water consumption more than 40%.

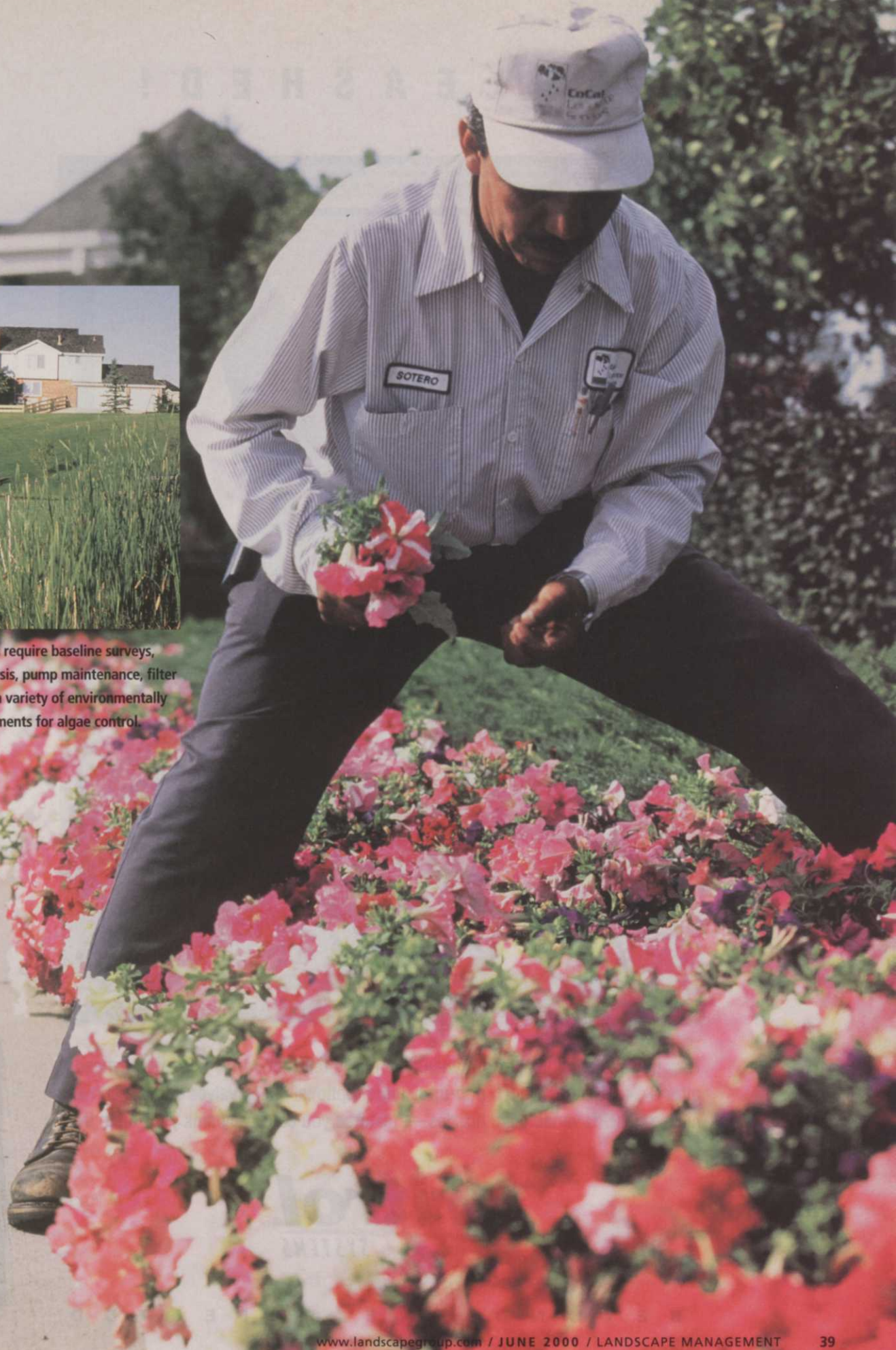
The place isn't called Rock Creek Ranch for nothing. Meticulous trimming around numerous landscape boulders on the property add up to substantial labor time. In all, maintenance personnel edge more than 41 miles of property each month. And, since there are picnic areas, the CoCal crew is always picking up trash and dog feces and cleaning barbecue grills.

Annual color management requires frequent fertilizing, watering, insect and disease control, and deadheading to produce consistent results.

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Handle **hidden** installation **surprises**

Buried drywall, lumber, pipe and carpet. Soil saturated with paint thinner and concrete wash. You're faced with more and more debris. What to do?

BY MIKE PERRAULT

During the 12 years that Denise and Dave Losey have lived in Detroit, they've heard persistent rumors from neighbors that something was buried in their backyard. On Memorial Day 1999, while digging for an in-ground pool, they unearthed a 1953 Chevy.

While most landscape professionals would be surprised by a buried car, many are increasingly faced with an array of debris that makes their jobs difficult. Part of the problem stems from a booming economy in which construction contractors — often under tight deadlines — rush to com-

plete jobs and move on, sometimes failing to pick up after themselves. Or, to avoid trips to the landfill or cut corners, some bury everything from drywall to concrete, pipe and shingles.

"It's definitely a problem, and I'd say it's gotten worse over the years," says Kurt Kluznik, president of Painesville, OH-based Yardmaster Inc. He believes the debris problem is the result of a combination of factors: Contractors are hurried, they're trying to do more with less and, for some, their habits have gotten sloppier.

"And there aren't as many people supervising," Kluznik notes. "It used to be that an excavator came on site and he'd not only be there with a bulldozer to grade



Debris like this is becoming an increasingly common problem at job sites.

the property, but he'd also have a laborer to pick up debris, backfill sidewalks or clean up around the base of the foundation. It's rare to see a laborer nowadays."

To cope with unexpected obstacles,

continued on page 42

What's in this dirt?

Common problems you may find on a site or in the ground include:

- ▶ Buried lumber and tree stumps, which can cause problems as materials decompose and become "a great spot for fungi to thrive," causing turf diseases such as fairy ring, says Jim Baird, Ph.D., turfgrass specialist at Michigan State.

- ▶ Broken glass, cutting blades and electrical wires — a safety problem.

- ▶ Petroleum-based chemicals and everything from epoxy and roofing tar paper to latex- and liquid solvent-based paints and paint thinners. "These might create some volatilization problems," says Frank Rossi, Ph.D., turfgrass specialist at Cornell University. "If it's very concentrated, that's going to severely restrict the root system."

- ▶ Even harsher liquids — tars, sludges, oils and cyanide compounds, for example — can seep into topsoil and subsurface soils and may require heating or washing with solvents to clean the soil, agronomists say.

- ▶ Other objects can severely restrict root systems, while such elements as lime in concrete can significantly alter soil pH levels. "This is not as big an issue with grasses as it might be with more deep-rooted plants — trees and perennials," Rossi says.

- ▶ Items impeding the normal function of grasses, from plastic sheeting that deters drainage to vinyl siding, can prevent plants from taking up water and interfere with proper drainage, adds Pete Landschoot, Penn State associate professor of turfgrass science.

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you need to think ahead, recognize potential problems and solutions, and know when to negotiate for additional charges.

Expect some trouble

Veteran landscape installers expect obstacles. Typically the last contractors onto a site, they've learned to staff up and make up for lost time in the wake of other subcontractors who have fallen behind schedule. They've learned to monitor job sites before sending crews out so they don't waste time and manpower.

"Five or six years ago, we went when the contractor told us to get there," recalls Nathan Dirksen, production coordinator for Portland-based Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping Inc. But now, to control expenses, improve efficiency and turn a profit, the company sends out a crew only when it's sure the site is *really* ready, adds David Snodgrass, company president. "If we're there too soon, a lot of times we're just spinning our wheels," Snodgrass says. "It's a battle, because they (contractors) want you there."

Weather is another obstacle, but one for which landscape installers can prepare. It may take creative thinking to use flotation tires on trenchers or tracked skid-steer loaders in the

mud. Trees can be pre-dug in the spring in anticipation of hot summer projects.

To adjust to the constantly fluctuating schedules of fellow tradesmen, Dirksen holds preconstruction meetings where he juggles schedules. He communicates with crews, notifying them that they'll need to be ready to scarify and put down amendments and compost to overcome heavy clays at a job site.

But what can throw off and unnerve even the most prepared landscape installers are the unexpected obstacles — everything from buried chunks of concrete and asphalt to mounds of crumpled drywall sheets, septic tanks and more.

Where's the property line?

They come in all shapes and sizes, and many aren't even tangible. One of the most common problems that Charlie Bowers, president of Garden Gate Landscaping Inc. in Silver Springs, MD, faces in his area is locating property lines. "Even the surveyors sometimes have trouble finding the corners," Bowers says.

Homeowners unknowingly build fences and walls 2 or 3 feet beyond their rightful property lines, an obstacle that can make obtaining building permits difficult. He also unexpectedly encounters decades-old foundations and stairways in historic areas. "We run into all sorts of items in the ground," concedes Bruce Bachand, vice president of operations for Carol King Landscaping, a residential, commercial and industrial landscaping company in Orlando. "On the commercial side, drywall is a famous one; and concrete wash, where they've emp-



... tied the concrete trucks. You're always going to run into something in the ground."

Bachand's company has a policy to deal with the incidents. "We ask for a change order on anything below the ground that we don't know about, within reason," he says, noting that their contract states his company isn't responsible for anything underground that's not identified on site or engineering plans. "If it's a matter of extra time having to be taken, we usually photograph it."

Carol King employees carry Polaroid cameras in their trucks, snapping photographs of obstacles so construction site supervisors can see problems for themselves. "We tell them we're going to need a little extra money to excavate the area and put in proper fill for planting," Bachand explains.

Likewise, to head off potential problems and disputes, Garden Gate Landscaping sends employees to monitor sites and verify that post-construction cleanup is adequate, Bowers says. Snodgrass has employees write field memos outlining what needs to be done.

Put it in writing

Notifying clients or general contractors that they'll have to pay more because of unexpected obstacles is not always well accepted, the contractors admit. That's why addressing these problems in contracts serves as an excellent vehicle to substantiate work order changes, says Ron Price, senior landscape architect at Greenscape Inc., NC.

A "hidden contingency clause" ensures that Garden Gate Landscaping is protected and can tack on necessary expenses, Bowers agrees. And Yardmaster's "concealed contingency clause" is one of 14 important clauses on the back of its contracts — it outlines when the company can charge extra to deal with hidden or unexpected surprises. Such clauses protect landscape companies, Bachand insists.

"We have run into cases where the fire department came in and installed underground piping for their fire hydrants," Bachand says. "It was an after-the-fact deal, so it wasn't in the plans. If you don't have some protection, a general contractor won't want to pay for those kinds of problems. Sometimes it's as simple as moving an item, or you may have to excavate."

Although it's critical to have such clauses in a contract, it's just as important to be on the lookout for onerous clauses in a client's or general contractor's contract, landscapers warn. Find ambiguous words and have them clarified. If possible, discuss them at a pre-construction conference. Identify representatives with authority to make changes in the field. If you expect cleanup problems, factor more charges in the bid.

Don't be a victim

It may be human nature for construction contractors to eke out maximum profits on a job, but the corners they cut could end up costing you, warns Saeed Assadzandi, a Penn State turfgrass program graduate and certified golf course superintendent at Whistling Straits Golf Course in Sheboygan, WI.

In a 1999 presentation at the Future Turf Managers Seminar sponsored by Textron Turf Care And Specialty Products in Racine, WI, Assadzandi showed slides of golf course grow-in and installation projects gone bad — due to contractors who cut corners on drainage and erosion measures.

Landscape professionals like Assadzandi agree that spotting potential obstacles to installation early helps prevent toe-to-toe battles that can permanently damage relationships with other contractors or clients.

Failure to take the time for a detailed site investigation can kill profits, they add. In



Tools for negotiating

Maybe more important to good on-site relations is keeping lines of communication open between contracting parties and management, particularly when it comes to change orders. Kurt Kluznik of Yardmaster Inc., Painesville, OH, says pre-job walk-throughs with clients often clear up any potential misunderstandings or assumptions, and such discussions can lead to intervention.

Often, ironing out problems comes down to negotiations, landscape professionals say. To be a successful negotiator, don't underestimate your opponent. Good negotiators also say it takes a combination of:

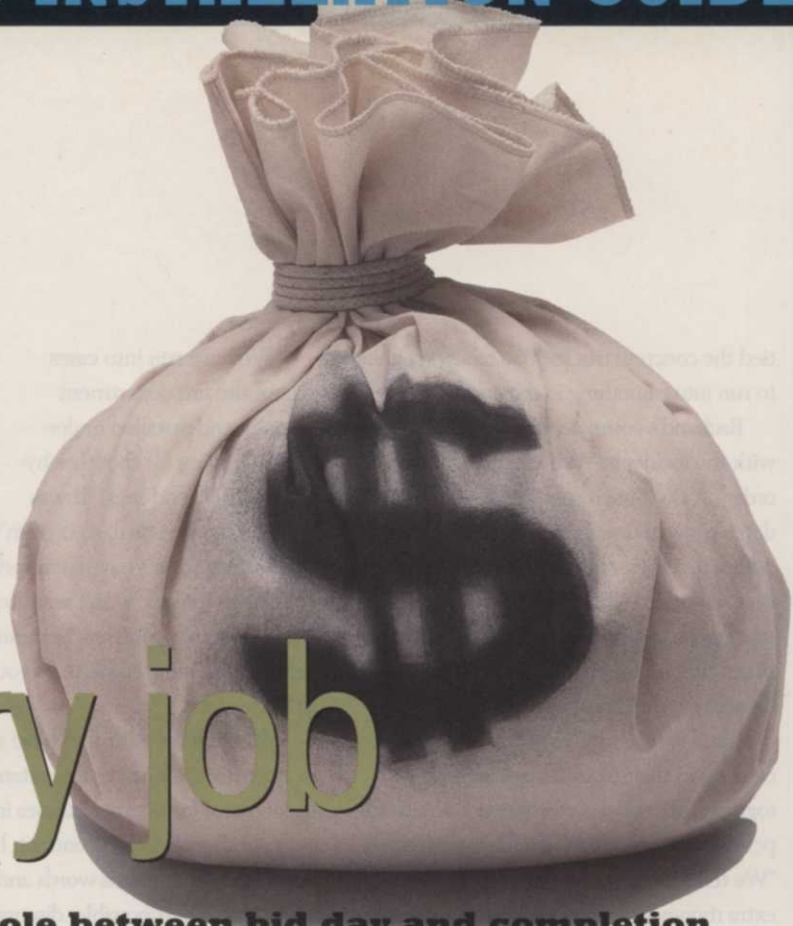
- ▶ planning skills,
- ▶ verbal grace,
- ▶ patience,
- ▶ self-confidence and
- ▶ calm.

... some cases, if you haven't done your homework and negotiated up front, you may be barred from recovery of additional costs associated with differing site conditions.

"Contractors by nature are used to negotiating," Kluznik says. "They're used to disputes. Sometimes we're the ones who are inconveniencing other contractors. If we can trade some things off, work with them, that's the win-win situation."

— *The author is a former associate editor of Landscape Management now living in the Denver, CO area.*

Make money on every job



Profits can fall into a black hole between bid day and completion. These seven steps can help you stay profitable

BY ED, TODD AND AARON WANDTKE

Although making money is why many Green Industry company owners start their own business, are you really making money on all of your work? Let's look at some operations that are working 100+% daily, are paying employees for eight hours or more each day and often don't know how much money their company is making. Let's also focus on several steps that will identify the profitability or lack of profitability of each job, which will lead to higher profits for your firm.

Making money on each job

1. Take a picture of the property

Whether a landscape designer, company owner or maintenance sales person visits a property, take a picture for the file. That will help the salesperson back at his

or her desk identify the work on the picture, avoid confusion and offer a visual image for the crew chief and the salesperson. The photo also helps you or your staff avoid needless trips to a property to start the job and allows a crew to head out to a property confident about what work needs to be done.

2. Define the job

Whether a job is maintenance or installation, define it completely. Do not use terms like "usual," "standard" and "eyeball." Rather, be specific about the tasks to be performed. For instance:

- ▶ Provide a drawing of the property and indicate what work will be performed in each area.
- ▶ Identify one-time and weekly tasks.
- ▶ Specify measurements as much as possible (for instance, the number of inches of mulch, etc.). The more detailed

the instructions, the easier it is to perform the work.

3. Organize the work

Inefficiencies add up quickly when installation, mowing and maintenance crews hit the road. A simple 10-minute delay on a three-man crew amounts to 30 minutes of paid time during which the crew isn't working. Scheduling or sequencing jobs can be a critical factor in lowering non-productive time.

One landscape maintenance firm discovered that its practice of routing a mowing crew across a four-lane street without a signal light caused the crew to increase its daily work time more than 30 minutes. By resequencing the order of the mowing jobs, the company was able to perform one more job during the day and decrease the time the crew was working.

continued on page 46

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continued from p. 44

4. Make logical work sequences

Ask yourself: What is the sequence of tasks needed to be performed on each job? Mowing crews need to have established duties for each crew member, depending on the crew size and experience of the employee. When tasks vary on a property from week to week, as is the case in some areas with mowing and maintenance customers, you may need to give specific instructions as to the extra tasks to be performed on the work order each week.

In addition, one of the crew members should be responsible for performing the additional task when it does occur. We frequently see mowing companies having a standard schedule of properties to be done each week with little notice or indication that additional tasks need to be performed on an individual property that week. Power edging, vegetation control, mulch touch up, weeding, fencerow trimming and other tasks are inserted at different weeks. Standardize these tasks for the company on a weekly basis by having someone do the same extra task once a month for all properties on the same week of the month. This may also help reduce the incidences of missed work.

On a recent renovation project we visited, the landscape designer, landscape crew chief and irrigation crew chief were all on site. As the landscape employees worked, the designer was trying to anticipate issues like where to place removed plant material, where to dump new soil and what to do if it rained, as debris would only be removed every other day. At the same time, the irrigation crew chief stood around waiting for the area to be cleared to

place sleeves and downspout new runs, because the old lines were being torn out as part of the renovation work. We saw two or three people waiting to do their work during the hour we were on site. Apparently, the job was being planned as the work progressed. Since this was a job that would run for a projected five days, the designer wasn't concerned that the crew would bring the job in on time. We figured that one job could have been performed with a 45-hour savings from the budget!

5. Have only ONE leader on a job!

Crew chiefs like to be in charge of performing the work on landscape jobs, and often will appear to take control of everything. All your employees need to understand who is the leader of different types of work. While all employees need to be trained and competent, and while decision-making needs to be placed at the lowest level of competency in an organization, have a clear leader on site.

6. Communicate the budget

Providing a crew chief with the hourly budget for a job can help the project come in within the budget limitations. When people know the number of days or hours to work on a property before starting the work, they have time to plan for efficiencies. Crew chiefs manage employees on a job much better once they know the scope of the project and the total budgeted time for the job. Many companies are finding that a great incentive is to pay a crew for part of the budgeted time for a job when they can finish the job under budget.

7. Evaluate the completed job

When a job is completed, it's important to evaluate its profitability. Daily and weekly analysis and monthly highlights can

be revealing. It also helps to have all your employees concerned with the profitability of jobs.

During the quarterly meeting at one contracting firm, the employees and managers got into a fruitful discussion of the profitability of landscape and mowing jobs. It was amazing to hear the ideas the employees came up with to improve job profitability in the future. The mowing crews' ideas were especially insightful, as the suggestions resulted in savings each week.

Solving the information gap

It is time consuming to watch each of your firm's jobs to determine the costs associated with the completion of the work. In this era of improved cost accounting systems, you need to be able to isolate your profitable jobs from the unprofitable ones. But how can you be sure? Two landscapers had similar questions. We devised solutions to their information gaps.

One owner had two crews doing landscape installation work. The average job lasted 1 to 1.5 days. Each week, the owner had to make payroll and regularly needed to borrow from the line of credit. After analyzing his jobs and the costs of the jobs, based on his quotes to the customers, he realized several problems:

► The plant material that was specified and delivered was different.

► Looking closer, he found that the cost estimate sheet for plant material did not reflect what the local supplier had in stock. Consequently, his jobs used higher priced materials on a regular basis. These two situations alone are problematic. He was less profitable from the get-go.

Next, he examined the labor hours for



all of the jobs during the month. He discovered that the time needed to perform the work was longer for the crew when the owner was not present. When he studied this in more detail, he realized he needed to charge a 25% premium for jobs where he wasn't present because of the longer hours needed.

Like others, this owner assumed his job would be profitable when the jobs were bid. And, like others, he found that this profit would not be realized when the jobs were completed.

This is especially true when bids are

placed and jobs are signed one month or more before the start of the work. Likewise, long-term jobs such as mowing and maintenance need to be monitored closely to make sure that the annual hourly budget is what is truly needed to perform all the work involved in a bid.

What's your score?

As you look back on the past year, how faithful have you been in evaluating the profitability of your jobs? Did you review each job's profit or loss? Do you know why you had a profit or a loss?

What did you do with the information? All company owners have great plans and ideas to make each year more profitable than the last, but they seem to get involved with the day-to-day issues. Often, the day-to-day work keeps you from analyzing how and why you're either making money or losing it. If this happened to you in 1999, get some help with job profitability analysis.

— The authors provide Green Industry consulting services for Wandtke & Associates Inc., 614/891-3111.

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Circle 126

Getting it together

Landscape construction and installation contractors explain how to become a lean, mean efficiency machine

BY JASON STAHL /
MANAGING EDITOR

Landscape construction and installation projects can be complicated, but let's face it: you don't have to be a rocket scientist to make sure they go smoothly.

Most contractors would say a project went "smoothly" if it was completed on time, a quality job was done, a profit was made and the customer was pleased.

But that's easier said than done, right? In these booming times, you're busier than a one-armed backhoe operator, and the least bit of inefficiency could send your project tumbling down. You've got to make the most of your time because you've got a tight schedule and there are no laborers to be found anywhere.

There are answers, and they come from the guys with dirt under their fingernails who know that an auger isn't the nickname of a Texas football team.

Integration and the machine

Roger Braswell knows what efficiency (or lack of it) can mean to an operation. Back in the late 1970s, when he founded Southern Tree & Landscape Co., he saw lots of headaches being caused by the landscape and irrigation process being a two-contract operation.

"There were a lot of coordination issues and a lot of responsibility issues on things like plant livability," Braswell recalls. "Each contract pointed to the other."

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, it became standard to have both landscape and irrigation jobs bundled to one landscape contractor, and that contractor would then subcontract the irrigation. Eventually, landscapers went into the irrigation installation business and did all of the work in-house. Still, the productivity was not there.

"First, you needed to grade everything, then rough in your irrigation and set your sprinkler heads, then plant shrubs and mulch the beds, then clean up the landscape, then energize the whole irrigation system," Braswell explained. "The going back and forth was a timing nightmare because one guy was always waiting on the other."

What Braswell decided to do at Southern Tree was integrate the process to improve productivity — equip a crew to do the whole job without having to mobilize and re-mobilize.

A lot of contractors have followed Braswell's lead on integrating the landscape and irrigation process, and

what makes their job easier is the Toro Dingo digging system. He imported this system from Australia in July 1995, and sold the exclusive rights to manufacture the Dingo to Toro in 1997.

The Dingo allows contractors to accomplish tasks faster with fewer workers. Described as a mobile hydraulic power plant, it has over 35 attachments, including augers, buckets, backhoes and tillers. Braswell has recently started a new company called Powerhouse Equipment, Fort Mills, SC, dedicated to dealers who sell the Dingo and its attachments and teaching contractors how to increase their productivity.

Productivity aside, Braswell believes landscape companies have bigger challenges facing them in the future. "It's going to be interesting to see how nimble companies can be at turning from new construction to renovation and understanding how to market that," Braswell says. "Also, companies should be thinking about how to prepare for a downturn in the economy."

Roger Braswell started a new firm.



"The idea is to keep everyone happy. If your customers are happy, you'll get paid and you can move on to the next one."

— Chris Aldarelli, president, Aldarelli Enterprises

Communication equals efficiency

At Aldarelli Enterprises, Ocean, NJ, communication is the name of the game. "Our foremen are out there communicating with homeowners and those in charge of commercial sites all the time," Chris Aldarelli, president, says. "They touch base on a daily basis, step by step, so there's no going back after a job is complete. We're using a vast variety of people who speak to customers to keep everyone on the same wavelength and keep everyone happy. If your customers are happy, you'll get paid and you can move on to the next one."

Communication also occurs within the crews. Aldarelli schedules meetings every day to go over the next day's activities, and most duties are scheduled two to three days in advance. He needs to know what drivers are picking up, whether or not there are orders in for materials and how long it will take to get those materials. Every Thursday, he crunches numbers to make sure the company is doing okay financially. Wasted time, he says, is costly.

"If I lost an hour a day, I would lose \$1,400 a day and \$250,000 in a year," Aldarelli says.

One thing he has done to save time is install fuel tanks on company property, which he says saves about 20 minutes per crew per day. At the end of each day, the crews can gas up all of the vehicles so they are ready to go the next morning.

Extending the workability of sites

Tim Korte, vice president of operations for The DiSanto Companies, Cleveland, OH, says that properly matching equipment with tasks maximizes productivity. He really likes

equipment that can be used in soggy conditions, especially since the ground in Ohio can be wet through May.

"Four-wheel drive tractors, Pettibone forklifts, concrete buggies and soil slingers all are really useful to us because they extend the



Tim Korte says that a landscape firm can improve profits if it can work on wet sites.

workability of a site," Korte says. "Access to a site is what keeps us productive in spring, so any time we can get gravel or top soil to areas that ordinarily wouldn't be workable or do our work with machines that can extend out from sidewalks, we're grateful."

As far as scheduling is concerned, Korte says there's never an empty hole. "We have a job site for the guys to go to no matter what the weather's like. If one site is closed, we can go to another."

Get with the program

Pete Estournes, operations director of Gardenworks, Inc., Healdsburg, CA, has

turned to the Jim Houston Estimating Program as a way of getting organized and becoming more efficient. A business program designed specifically for landscape companies, it shows how to set up a budget overhead recovery system and budget estimating system, breaking it out among different field operations. "If you dig a 100-ft. trench, it says how long it will take and how you can track production rates," Estournes explains.

Gardenworks has also signed on to the Pro Challenge Training Program, which locks the company into a year-long commitment to employee training. "Some of the things we have to come up with are job descriptions to use for performance reviews, criteria and goals for our employees to follow so they can get to the next level, and Spanish-English classes," Estournes says.

As if two programs aren't enough, Estournes and his partner also subscribe to a Project Manager program that allows them to be more proactive in scheduling and gives them timelines to organize and dispatch crews.

Contracting out saves time, too

Terry Culver, director of operations, ILT Vignocchi Landscape Architects & Contractors, Wauconda, IL, has learned enough lessons to know how important it is to have the right equipment for a job.

"So many times in the past we would look at a job and say we could do it because we had the equipment," Culver says. "But afterward we see that if we had had a

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"If things aren't done at the job site, we'll give the general contractor a list of things to be done before we go out there again."

— David Snodgrass, president, Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping

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piece of equipment that was more suited to the job, we could have completed the project in half the time. Now, we contract out those projects."

Culver's current equipment includes a John Deere skid steer ("It's more efficient because it has a greater lift capacity," he says), articulated front end loader ("Fabulous for yardwork and snowplowing") and crawler, and Ford backhoes and tractors.

to make operations even more efficient.

Communication is a big issue, too, which is why Peabody's uses Nextel radio communication. "Supervisors have to report in at midday to the production managers about what they are going to need and what's going on," Peabody says.

Crunching numbers

Like Gardenworks, Realty Landscaping, NJ, manages its projects with an estimating program. "We realized that, in the past, we were telling our guys to just go out there and

find good labor, but one of the company's biggest problems is getting its clients to make commitments to projects quick enough so that plant material can be obtained in a timely manner.

"The owners of our company anticipated the problem of getting plant material, so they bought blocks of it early on," Plechtner says. "Still, it's hard to get things like red maples, and costs are incredibly high."

Preparation is key

David Snodgrass, president of Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping, Portland, OR, is all for preparation. Just ask his employees, who every morning find themselves standing in a circle looking at each other.

"We do stretching exercises," Snodgrass explains. "It brings us together and helps us bond and establish our culture. Even though it may not be efficient to have everybody report to the home office as opposed to the job site first, I think it pays off huge."

Snodgrass also prepares his troops for each project with preconstruction conferences. Whether it be a small project or large project, the salesperson, supervisors, foreman and estimator all gather in the same room to fully understand the project before going on site.

"In the past, we would go to a job site that wasn't ready, or we weren't ready, and we would end up wasting a couple of days," Snodgrass says.

With commercial sites, Snodgrass' staff will ask the general contractor if certain things have been done in preparation for their work. Even if the contractor says yes, his staff will go out and check on it themselves. "If things aren't done, we'll give the general contractor a list of things to be done before we go out there again," Snodgrass says.

Keys to an efficient operation

1. Know the project inside and out before arriving at the site
2. Make sure all materials are ordered and equipment is obtained
3. Make sure the general contractor has prepared the site for you
4. Have workers report directly to site to save time
5. Expect weather problems and prepare accordingly
6. Keep in constant communication with workers, managers and customers

No punching in at this office

Some time back, it became obvious to David Peabody, president, Peabody Landscape Construction, Columbus, OH, what he needed to do to make his employees' work day the most efficient it could be: direct job site reporting.

"We get them straight out to the work site instead of bringing them here to the office first," Peabody says.

The other part of that time-saving maneuver is preparation. Peabody makes sure that all supervisors have their full hours and full job costing reports ready, and that they have in hand what they need to get the job done. Managers are located in different areas to expedite the flow of materials to job sites. He is considering opening up a satellite office on the city's East Side

get the job done without giving them any goals to shoot for," says David Plechtner, regional manager for Realty Landscaping.

Realty's estimating program will tell the company how many labor hours will be spent on any exterior work project conceivable. Then, the job is estimated on a factor system, and finally on a cost/plus basis.

"What we're left with is a list of materials and total amount of man hours needed," Plechtner says. "Our foremen fill out their time sheets, those get loaded into a computer, and we can then track our productivity."

As far as making sure no time is wasted during the work day, Plechtner says that his company will often set up a satellite office on a project site where crew members can report directly every day.

The H2B program has helped Realty

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4600	43HP
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Call Kubota at 888/4KUBOTA or www.kubota.com / circle no. 277

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Ramrod Equipment's mulch bucket comes equipped with a deluxe quick attach system to mount on the Ramrod Taskmaster Series of mini-skid steer loaders. It features a large capacity, 42-in. wide bucket designed to handle mulch, chipbark, loam or snow.

Call 800/667-1581 or www.ramrodequip.com / circle no. 278

Powerful tractors

New Holland has expanded the Boomer™ compact tractor line to include six higher horsepower economy and deluxe models. The operator's station can be accessed from the left or the right, and the In-Sight™ operator's station allows for better operator vision. On economy models, the engine is matched to a synchronized shuttle shift 12x12 transmission.

Call 717/355-1371 or www.newholland.com/na / circle no. 279

▲ Dingo does it all

The Dingo and Dingo TX hydraulic do-it-all machines share nearly 40 attachments that include a trencher, augers, a backhoe, various buckets and a snowthrower. In 1999, two new models rolled off the production line, one gas and one diesel, both with a 4-Paw™ independent four-wheel drive platform.

Call Toro at 800/476-9673 or www.toro.com / circle no. 275

Lots of bite

DPM Inc.'s Nursery Jaws is a hydraulic fork that can grab and move trees, rocks, and now pallets and boxes up to 42 in. with a new pallet fork option called Jaws II.



Call 800/669-4408 or www.nurseryjaws.com / circle no. 276

Dig, dig, dig

Kubota's new K008 Ultra Compact Excavator is small enough to pass through a standard doorframe and powered by a three-cylinder D722 liquid-cooled overhead valve diesel en-

Handles everything

The Allmond Bros.' tractor-loader-backhoe features a 35-hp engine, optional



two-speed hydrostatic four-wheel drive and a weight of 4,570 lbs. Featuring a hydraulic PTO, it can power augers, tampers, breakers, drills and saws.

Call 800/562-1373 or www.allmand.com / circle no. 280

Time-saving edger

Turfco's Edge-R-Rite bed shaper is perfect for cutting out flower beds, cutting in tree rings, edging walkways or even trenching in underground wiring for outdoor lights. A right angle blade for edging and landscape installation work and rotary blade for vertical cuts along patios or driveways are standard.

Call 800/679-8201 or www.turfco.com / circle no. 281

A-seeding we will go...

First Products' Seeda-vator can handle primary seeding and overseeding, and uses a patented swivel hitch which allows the



unit to turn around plant beds and other obstacles without tearing the turf.

Call 800/363-8780 or www.1stproducts.com / circle no. 282

Crawler carrier

The upper structure of Komatsu's new crawler carrier can rotate 360 degrees, allowing forward-facing operations and eliminating the need for u-turns. Hand levers and joysticks are used to control



forward/reverse direction and the rotation of the upper structure. Driven by a 135-hp Komatsu engine, it has an operating capacity of 13,200 lbs., ground clearance of 19 in. and 3 psi ground pressure.

Call 847/837-2447 / circle no. 283

On the edge

Lightweight and compact, the Scag edger features a 10-in. milled-edge blade for deeper edging and longer life.



It has no moveable parts near the drive head, no springs to break, and no sliding booms or tilt quadrant to wear out. The industrial/commercial 3.5-hp Briggs engine powers this baby up nicely.

Call 920/387-0100 / circle no. 284

Entry-level backhoe

JCB has come out with a backhoe loader (214Se Series 4) to meet the needs of 14-ft. class, entry level customers. It has 4-



wheel drive, 4-wheel steer, four equal-size tires, 86 net hp JCB diesel turbo engine and SynchroShuttle transmission.

Call 888/742-5522 or www.jcbna.com / circle no. 285

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▲ A real swinger

The 4-wheel drive Swinger 3000 is a versatile, utility size articulated tool carrier/loader. A 25 gpm auxiliary hydraulic circuit and 80-hp John Deere Powertech diesel are standard, and a universal tool carrier plate accepts most skid steer attachments. An oscillating rear axle provides frame stability.

Call 715/835-3151 or www.nmc-wolard.com / circle no. 286

Spreading 'n spraying'

C & S Turf Care Equipment's SS8030 Turf Tracker spreads and sprays one acre in 11 minutes. It features a zero turning radius, 3-speed, 150-lb. capacity hopper, and 12-ft. breakaway spray boom.

Call 800/872-7050 / circle no. 287

Double trailer

J & J Truck Bodies and Trailers' new double dump trailer can carry a gross vehicle weight of 158,000 lbs. It has two lightweight aluminum bodies with hydraulic systems that allow drivers to easily discharge loads of construction materials, gravel, asphalt, sludge and sand.

Call 814/443-2671 or www.jjbodies.com / circle no. 288

John Deere tractors

John Deere has several tractor models to choose from: 5105/5205 (Powertech® diesel engine, SyncReverser™ transmission, independent PTO, optional four-wheel drive, 22.4-gal. fuel tank), 4700 (48-



hp Yanmar diesel engine, PowrReverser™ transmission, four-wheel drive, independent PTO, lateral float rear hitch arms, planetary final drives), 790 (30-hp diesel engine, sliding gear transmission, optional four-wheel drive, optional selectable PTO), and 990 (40-hp Yanmar diesel engine, standard collar shift transmission, optional four-wheel drive, planetary final drive).

Contact the John Deere Inquiry Department, P.O. Box 12217, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 / circle no. 289

Tough skid steers

Case Corp.'s eight 1800 Series and XT Series skid steers offer horsepowers of 30 to 85, rated operating loads of 885 to 3,150

lbs. and operating weights of 3,107 to 8,800 lbs. All XT Series models have ergonomically designed excavator-style controls, push-button parking brake, superior operator sight lines and a suspension seat with lumbar support.

Call 414/636-6011 or www.casecorp.com / circle no. 290

Reinforcement

Versa-Lok Retaining Wall Systems now has the Versa-Grid™ for soil reinforcement for



segmental retaining walls. It provides additional soil reinforcement necessary for structural wall stability.

Call 800/770-4225 or www.versalok.com / circle no. 291

Rollin' sod

Ricard's big roll installer handles a variety of big roll applications. There are two varieties: 3-pt. hitch mounted and skid steer loader quick attach. They come in 24-, 30-, 42- and 48-in. widths. The operator does everything from the seat. Hydraulic cylinders open and close the tapered cones that grab the rolls by the plastic tubing.

Call 218/281-2120 / circle no. 292

Borderscapes

Borderscapes has three useful products for the landscape constructor and installer. Borderpathr holds pavers to create flowing curves or straight borders. Wallpins inter-

locking retaining wall units are designed to achieve consistent alignment. Brickholdr is a versatile brick/paver edge restraint system that combines fast and easy installation with the latest in technology.

Call 800/282-4226 or www.border-scapes.com / circle no. 293

This plow is the boss

The Boss Skid Steer Power-V Plow offers year-round use, from snowplowing in winter to pushing dirt in summer. It



adapts to V, scoop, and straight positions, plus it has a natural side-to-side tilt which can be converted to a hydraulic power tilt by adding an optional hydraulic cylinder. It mounts on all skid steers with a universal tool carrier.

Call 800/286-4155 or www.bossplow.com / circle no. 294

Mulch like crazy

Goosen Industries' LawnMaker hydro mulching machine provides a one-step efficient method for seeding, mulching and fertilizing. It features a full length mechanical rotor shaft for thorough mixing of ingredients. Material is disbursed with a slurry pump which minimizes clogging and allows course materials to be easily distributed.

Call 800/228-6542 / circle no. 295

Layin' line

The Line-Ward L-2 line layer is perfect for the installation of underground sprinkler lines with a simple blade change. It features rubber tracks for traction and blade drive system that minimizes lawn disturbance. At

26-in. wide, it can reach tight spots.

Call 800/816-9621 or www.lineward.com / circle no. 296

High horsepower

Caterpillar's new 228 and 248 skid steer



loaders feature high hydraulic horsepower to handle tools such as cold planers and stump grinders. The 228's and 248's operating capacities are 1,500 lbs. and 2,000 lbs., respectively. Each model has a Cat 3034 direct-injection, 4-cyl. diesel engine. Other features include pilot-operated joystick controls, more than 30 types of Cat work tools, and hydrostatic transmission that optimizes the hydraulic/rimpull match for greater productivity.

Contact Caterpillar Inc., P.O. Box 10097, Peoria, IL 61612-0097 / circle no. 297

The Extractor

The Extractor™ is a mechanized fork lever that can extract entire established tree and shrub root systems for transplanting. The manufacturer of the Extractor says it has lower overhead cost than the "ball and burlap" method, leaves root systems intact for higher survival rate, and is versatile enough to be able to remove stumps, light rocks, con-

crete and asphalt. With the Extractor, there is little or no need for hand labor, and speed and efficiency enhance plant survival and eliminate human error.

Call 800/950-6186 / circle no. 298

Claw at composting

Brown Bear Corp.'s attachments fit skid steer loaders, farm tractors from 35 to 150 hp, articulated and crawler loaders and dozers. They're perfect for composting grass and leaves (yard waste), chipped wood waste or manures into odor-free, dry organic fertilizer and humus.

Call 515/322-4220 or www.brownbearcorp.com / circle no. 299

Optimal Tree Spade

Billed by Bennett & Bennett Enterprises as "the world's most compact and technically advanced tree spade," the Optimal Tree Spade is 30 to 50% more compact than other tree spades. It comes in sizes ranging from 16-in. to 120-in. in diameter.

Call 865/436-2008 or www.optimal-treespades.com / circle no. 300

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Do-it-all power unit

Mertz, Inc.'s TrackMaster can do most everything a skid steer can do but also



squeeze into hard-to-reach places. Its width can be reduced to 30 in., and ground pressure is dispersed evenly to minimize lawn damage.

Call 800/654-6433 or www.mertzok.com / circle no. 301

So much at stake

Arborlock Staking Systems introduces Arborstakes and ArborAnchors to its professional tree staking line, products that suit any tree up to 5 in. in caliper. Both use the tree-friendly Arbor-Tie strap combined with tensioning buckles and ground-gripping anchors for both hard and soft soils.

Call 305/378-6153 or www.arborlock.com / circle no. 302

Soil blender/mixer

The Royer model 466 soil shredder is ideal for large scale topsoil blending and mixing applications. The shredder belt churns and aerates soil while incorporating a combination of peat, compost, sand or loam. All unwanted debris fill is automatically separated from the mix and removed.

Call 717/866-2357 or www.royerind.com / circle no. 303

Precise seeding

The Greenseeder from Redexim Charter-

house can plant all seed types from rye to bent. Using interchangeable gears, the machine can be set to give a precise seed dosage. All seeds are buried at a pre-set depth for maximum germination rates. In addition, the Greenseeder plants at a close and uniform spacing of 1.5 in., at speeds of up to 6 mph. For maximum flexibility, it can be mounted on a three-point linkage or trailed behind any prime mover; no PTO is required. An optional two-wheel hydraulic lift transport frame allows the Greenseeder to be converted to a "Tow-N-Seed" for pull-behind use.

Call 800/597-5664 / circle no. 304

A cut above

Classen Mfg.'s Model SC-18 self-propelled 18-in. sod cutter is powered by either a 5.5- or 8.0-hp Honda OHV engine and will



cut sod up to 2 1/2-in. deep. It can easily change from an 18-in. cutting unit to a 20-in. or 12-in. cut with optional conversion kits. Other features include drive wheels with a knobby tread design to eliminate dirt build up and ensure better traction and a twist grip throttle which goes to idle and stops machine movement when released.

Call 402/371-2294 / circle no. 305

Compact skid steer

Finn Corporation's Eagle 250 compact skid steer has a lifting capacity of 650 lbs. and a maximum operating height of 97.5 in. It features full hydraulic power to all functions simultaneously. The unit is self-leveling, and a quick-change feature al-

lows for quick attachment changes. Dual fuel tanks allow a full day's work without refueling.

Call 800/543-7166 or www.finncorp.com / circle no. 306

DownUnder loader

The Kanga mini skid steer loader is a compact, multi-purpose machine capable of laying turf, trenching for drainage, planting trees, digging/leveling/transporting soil, fencing post holes, laying irrigation systems, horizontal boring and snow plowing.

Call 918/459-2137 or www.kangaloader.com / circle no. 307

Awesome add-ons

Ammbusher's new LOBO post-guard rail puller is built to fit any skid steer, has 17,000 lbs. of breakout pull force, can be operated by one person, and pulls wood or steel posts in seconds. Also for skid steers, Ammbusher's rotary cutter mulches tall grass and brush and cuts material up to 3 in. in diameter.

Call 800/432-5955 or www.amm-busher.com / circle no. 308

Mini-loaders


Coyote articulated loaders are powered by water-cooled diesel engines from 22- to 50-hp and can access almost any area. Its Z-bar linkage offers leverage for high breakout force and faster lifting speed. A hydraulic locking system secures attachments without the driver having to get out of his seat.

Call 330/650-5101 or www.coyoteloaders.com / circle no. 309



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FERTIGATION

Move to the next level

When a condominium's property languished, the managers turned to fertigation. It might be just the solution you need

BY ROBERT E. REAVES

We're all creatures of habit, but when faced with a declining landscape and traditional management methods that aren't working, it's time to look at new solutions. In the case of the Tuscany Hills Homeowners' Association in Lake Elsinore, CA, fertigation plus regular diagnostic evaluation solved the problem.

Tuscany Hills features poor soil quality (in many cases pure rock) along with steep slopes, some 3:1, which made it difficult for the landscape management company to apply granular fertilizer. In addition, sodium from the irrigation water accumulated in the soil because there was no way for the water to leach. As the landscape continued to decline, some blamed poor soil conditions while others blamed the landscape architect and the landscape contractor.

Analysis first, prescription next

"I got a call to come out and look at the situation," says Bill Nolde, technical director for Fertigation Choice, a fertigation project management company located in San Diego. "After a full battery of soil, tissue and water analyses, I came to the conclusion that the problem was a plant nutrient deficiency because of poor soil chemistry. Because the site was so difficult, a whole new



landscape management strategy had to be applied. I recommended using fertigation systems to apply needed products."

At Nolde's suggestion, the homeowners association purchased 23 water-driven fertigation units, selected because the irrigation controllers were far away from the backflow preventers. Each unit was positioned close to the backflow preventers.

With the fertigation system in use after several months, the results have been excellent. "We applied a chelated phosphorus product on Indian hawthorn and New Zealand tea tree this year. The blooms have been phenomenal. The groundcover has begun to recover and we are not seeing any disease," Nolde said. Response from the homeowners association continues to be positive. "There's even a desire from homeowners to install fertigation systems at individual residences," he reports.

Because of the fertigation systems, Tuscany Hills is expected to decrease its water use 30% to 50%, depending on the month. "Most homeowners associations want to be good water stewards; however, their primary motivation is to save money on water bills," observes Nolde. He says



As a result of fertigation, Tuscany Hills changed from a bare wasteland (inset) to a thriving green property (above).

fertigation delivers higher plant quality and decreases irrigation time, as well as the labor necessary to apply fertilizer and soil conditioning products.

The program accomplished four things at Tuscany Hills:

- ▶ Soil conditioning (removal of salts),
- ▶ water conditioning/buffering,
- ▶ application of fertilizer nutrients, and
- ▶ water conservation.

Homeowner association market

Nolde says homeowners associations are a great place to increase the use of fertigation in landscapes. "Attractive common areas effect property values – which is very important to the members. This common area at Tuscany Hills will ultimately expand from 80 to 240 acres. It's been gratifying to convince people who aren't landscape professionals about the benefits of fertigation."

Unlike the agricultural and golf course markets, fertigation is relatively new to the

landscape industry. "I have given many talks to landscape groups," Nolde says. "Unless landscape architects specify fertigation, landscape contractors probably won't consider it in the near future. Because they are under such tremendous competition for business, fertigation and diagnostic evaluations are usually thrown out of the picture."

Unfortunately, few in the landscape market use water testing. "Over time, landscape management companies will pick up contracts from other companies who have lost the account. This is a critical time to go in and do a water analysis, along with tissue and soil tests."

Fertigation is most effective when combined with diagnostic evaluations. "Guessing is a 50/50 proposition. Fertigation with diagnostic evaluation takes landscape management to a science. You apply what is

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"Fertigation combined with diagnostic evaluation takes landscape management to a science." – Bill Nolde

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missing through the fertigation system." For example, if magnesium was the only missing ingredient, magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts) could be applied through the system.

Nolde is a convert to fertigation from his 16 years as a golf course superintendent. When he arrived at Canyon Country Club in Palm Springs, CA, he found a fertigation system out of commission. "We rebuilt the pump and got the system going again. Because of the sandy soil at the course, we had very low cation exchange capacity. I bought some soil conditioning products and began adding humus through the irrigation system. We grew the most beautiful bermudagrass I have ever seen. It took me a while to develop confidence in fertigation. Now, I'm sold on it."

Get off the 'gypsum bandwagon'

He believes it is time to approach landscape management from a new perspective. "Most owners of landscape management companies are very sharp. However, it takes longer to convince field personnel since they have first-hand dealings with all the competition in the marketplace. The landscape market is very aggressive, with a financial critical mass. It's very easy to give up on things like soil tests. Right now, 90% of all landscape management is grooming. Very little attention is given to plant fertility."

As an agronomist, Nolde says poor soil chemistry is the major culprit in landscape decline. "I see so many folks who lose their jobs because of soil chemistry, something over which they have no control. Soil salinity is a problem at many landscapes."

He says gypsum is not the answer to salinity. "Some of the liquid materials we have used through fertigation systems have displaced sodium cation exchange sites within a few weeks. We can document this through soil tests."

Many researchers are reluctant to explore materials that can be a solution to soil salinity, he believes. "They're still on the 'gypsum bandwagon.' Not only does it take up to two years for the exchangeable calcium to be released in gypsum; the amount of exchangeable calcium in gypsum is very low compared to soluble forms of calcium." But before selecting a calcium product, be sure to ask your supplier how much exchangeable calcium is in it. Work with chemical distributors that support this technology with products suitable for fertigation systems.

Soluble forms of calcium are terrific alternatives to gypsum, all of which can be used with fertigation systems. "I recommend calcium chloride, calcium polysulfide, calcium thiosulfate or calcium nitrate – big improvements over gypsum. For example, everybody raves about the color of

overseeded ryegrass where calcium nitrate is used."

Soil conditioning is the most important component of growing good plants, according to Nolde. "And I believe a liquid-based delivery system is the best way to accomplish this. If you can apply materials that condition the soil, plant roots will penetrate easier. You can also buffer sodium and bicarbonates in water through fertigation systems."

Costs in time and money

Nolde says the maintenance/management time of fertigation systems is minimal. "At Tuscan Hills, we use 30-gallon tanks. Each of these fertigation units operates from zero to 40 gpm. We rotate soil conditioning and plant fertility materials frequently. Depending on the season and needs of plants, we can adjust from 500 gallons of water/1 gallon of product to 40 gallons of water/1 gallon of product." However, he says product rates and choices are not a guessing game. "Everything we apply through the fertigation system is based on the results of diagnostics."

As far as money is concerned, the installed cost of a water-driven system is around \$1,500 per unit, while an electric system will run around \$2,500 per unit. He expects costs to come down as fertigation becomes more common.

"Landscape managers have tried everything else. If they will look at fertigation systems strictly as a device to get the job done, their usage will grow."

— Robert E. Reeves is a turf specialist with Turf Industries, a subsidiary of Van Waters & Rogers Inc., located in Austin, TX. E-mail: Robert.Reeves@vwr-inc.com.

Bill Nolde, director of technical systems at Fertigation Choice, can be reached at 619-585-9909. E-mail: fertigate@aol.com.

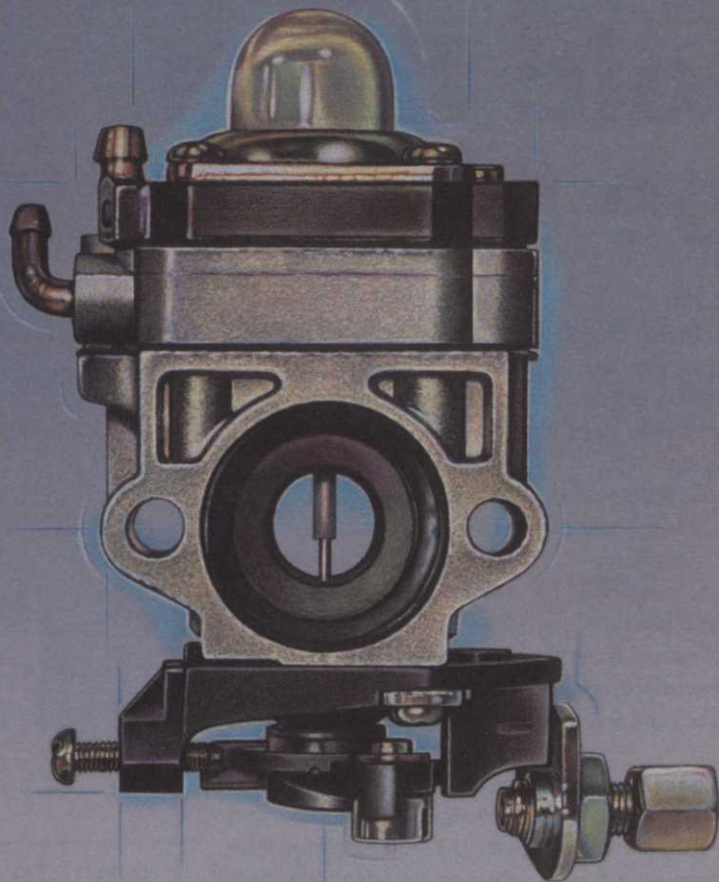
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- ▶ the joining surfaces are cut square, cleaned and softened,
- ▶ sufficient cement is applied,
- ▶ assembly is done while the joining surfaces are still wet, and
- ▶ the joint is left to cure before it is moved.

Among the most common reasons for failure Christy sees are application of solvent cement to only the surface, or insufficient application to both surfaces; drying of solvent prior to assembly, or using a partly gelled or stringy cement which can't bite into the pipe or fitting; failure to prepare the cementing surfaces, or using the wrong solvent cement; excessive gap between pipes, not properly bottoming the pipe or failure to cut the pipe square; or climatic conditions.

Excessive humidity coupled with low temperature creates water while excessive heat

causes the fusion solvent to evaporate too quickly. Either can ruin a job.

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www.agrifimusa.com

A complete catalog of sprinkler parts is available from Agrifim, Fresno, CA. Included is the Micro-Flo adjustable micro-sprinkler, rated at flows from zero to 25 gal. per hour. This adjustable micro-sprinkler comes with shut-off (10-32 NPT inlet). In addition, the company sells a complete line of Ever-Flo mini-dripperline and a range of tubing and pipe for every irrigation application.

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Be sure all lines and valves are marked correctly. A complete line of marking and identification products is available from T. Christy Enterprises, Orange, CA. Specializing in markers for recycled/reclaimed water, the company offers a complete catalog of valve box plates, adhesive labels, marking tape, warning tags, poly sleeving and paint products for use on any irrigation project.

Circle #261



Rain Bird's sensing and transmitting components

what to avoid

- ▶ **Application of solvent cement to only the surface**
- ▶ **Insufficient application to both surfaces**
- ▶ **Drying of solvent prior to assembly**
- ▶ **Using a partly gelled or stringy cement which can't bite into the pipe or fitting**
- ▶ **Failure to prepare the cementing surfaces**
- ▶ **Using the wrong solvent cement**
- ▶ **Excessive gap between pipes**
- ▶ **Drying of solvent prior to assembly**



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No longer is it necessary to broadcast spray chemicals that are only needed in specific areas. A new pumping system from GNC Industries, Pocahontas, AR allows the lawn technician to apply the chemicals only when needed, which reduces spray time and chemical usage but still allows the broadcast spraying of the fertilizer on one passing of the lawn. It consolidates two units into one. The system allows green crews to broadcast spray and spot spray using only one unit. The new unit consists of one hose, reel, spray gun and one engine. By combining a split piston pump and a new spot spraying option, it is possible to spray two chemicals simultaneously without mixing them together.

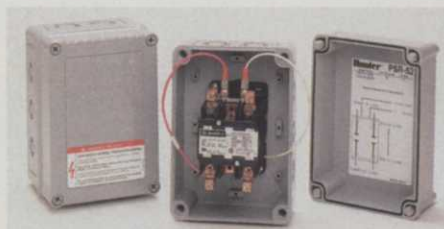
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800/733-2823

www.hunterindustries.com

A pump relay device from Hunter Industries, San Marcos, CA ensures timely and consistent irrigation pump operation on all resi-



Hunter Industries' pump relay devices

dential and commercial landscapes. The Hunter PSR is available in three models. A compact 7x5x4 in., it is designed to activate on-site booster pumps and can help pull water directly from a creek or pond. Compatible with all 24-VAC controllers, it offers a range of contractor conveniences including flying leads that allow for 24-volt connections and a series of "knockouts" on the cabinet to simplify wiring and mounting.

Circle #264

KIFCO, INC.

309/543-4425

www.kifco.com

The Series-B Water Reels from Kifco, Havana, IL are designed with turf in mind. The B140P will irrigate a football field with a single pass down the centerline.

There are a dozen other models, with longer tubes and machines for larger areas. They feature automatic shutdown for the water motor, stabilizer feet to anchor the machine during operation, pressure gauge, hose guide and disengagement lever for drive and anti roll-back pawl. Flow rates range from 4-100 gpm with pressures from 35 to 119 psi.

Circle #265

MULTI-FITTINGS

800/523-3539

The Cycle Tough 4000 line from MultiFittings Corp., Port Huron, MI can handle the typical pressure surges encountered every day by golf course irrigation systems. The

4000 line of PVC pressure fittings for IPS pipe is engineered to meet long-term pressures of 200 psi. They are molded from 1.5 to 8 in. and fabricated from 10 to 24 in. Reinforcing ribs provide added strength in the body of molded fittings by reducing surge-pressure effects.

Circle #266

NELSON IRRIGATION

509/525-7660

www.nelson@nelsonirr.com

The R5 Rotator micro sprinkler from Nelson Irrigation, Walla Walla, WA emits a water stream from the nozzle and directs it onto an offset channel on the rotor plate. This creates reactionary drive force. A viscous silicone fluid in the rotor motor controls rotation speed, giving superb uniformity and distance of throw. Models range from the 10 to 23 gph R5 through the .61 to 1.25 gpm R10 Turbo and the big 1.64 to 5.4 gpm R2000VF.

Circle #267

POINT SOURCE IRRIGATION

559/498-6800

The wear-resistant, clog-resistant design of the Dan 2001 PC spinner head from PSI, Fresno, CA makes it perfect for tough applications. This pressure compensating, pop-up micro-spinner allows a regulated flow from 18 to 60 psi. The diaphragm is made of chemical and wear-resistant EPDM. The

pressure compensating design reduces abrasion and wear on the nozzle and spinner. Also check out the firm's Dan Revolver, an economical alternative to impact sprinklers.

Circle #268

RAIN BIRD

800/247-3782

The Rain Bird Flow Meter line of 11 sensing and transmitting components makes it practical to incorporate flow metering into new or existing systems. The firm's turf division is located in Azusa, CA and sells tee-type sensors available in 1-in. brass and 1.5-, 2- and 3-in. plastic models. Color coded irrigation-type wire leads and clearly marked flow direction ease installation. Models operate up to 400 psi and temperatures to 221° F. All provide accuracy to 1%. Signal-alone models can be used with all central control systems. Stand-alone models provide an LCD display which shows actual and total flow.

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for flows from 30 to 250 gpm at 130 psi. The Gator Pumping Systems blend with the environment as low-profile units concealed in weather-resistant, snap-hinged, lockable steel enclosures. Units react to flow pressure requirements. Digital flow display and backflow prevention devices available.

Circle #269

RAINMAN 800/433-6745

Several irrigation controller enclosures are available from Rain Man, Anaheim, CA. The stainless steel model is made of 14-gauge 304 stainless and has waterproof silicon gaskets. Despite its low price, it has a 6-year warranty. A cold-rolled steel version offers a 3-year warranty. Both units come in a variety

of widths and depths, and stand either 36 or 40 in. tall. The finishes on these boxes are as good or better than those found on a typical car, the manufacturer says.

Circle #270

TORO 909/688-9221 www.toro.com

The Flo-Pro line of valves from Toro, Bloomington, MN features no-leak performance and a three-



Toro's Flo-Pro line

year warranty. It delivers between 0.25 gpm water for drip irrigation

up to 30 gpm for full irrigation of residential landscapes. Available in 1-in. electric in-line and 1-in. angle models, it includes the optional QuickLink solenoid that provides watertight connection with the controller, 1-in. and 0.75-in. anti-vacuum breaker models, and a variety of connection options.

Circle #271

TRANSITIONAL SYSTEMS MFGR.

530/751-2610

The Doubler valve control module allows more valves to be installed using existing control wires and controller. When pressure drops, another valve may be added next to an existing valve to serve one or two sprinklers. Priced at \$139 from Transitional Systems, Yuba

City, CA, the Doubler is the answer to any drop in supply volume or pressure. It requires an 8-amp circuit and operates on 24 VAC.

Circle #272

WATTS ACV 713/943-0688

Whether it's float control, solenoid control or pump control valves, Watts Automatic Control Valves, Houston, TX has an efficient model. The main valve, globe or angle pattern is diaphragm actuated, hydraulically operated. It consists of only four major components: body and cover plus interior seat and diaphragm/stem assembly, which is the only moving part in the main valve. Irrigation valves come sized from 1.25 to 6 in.

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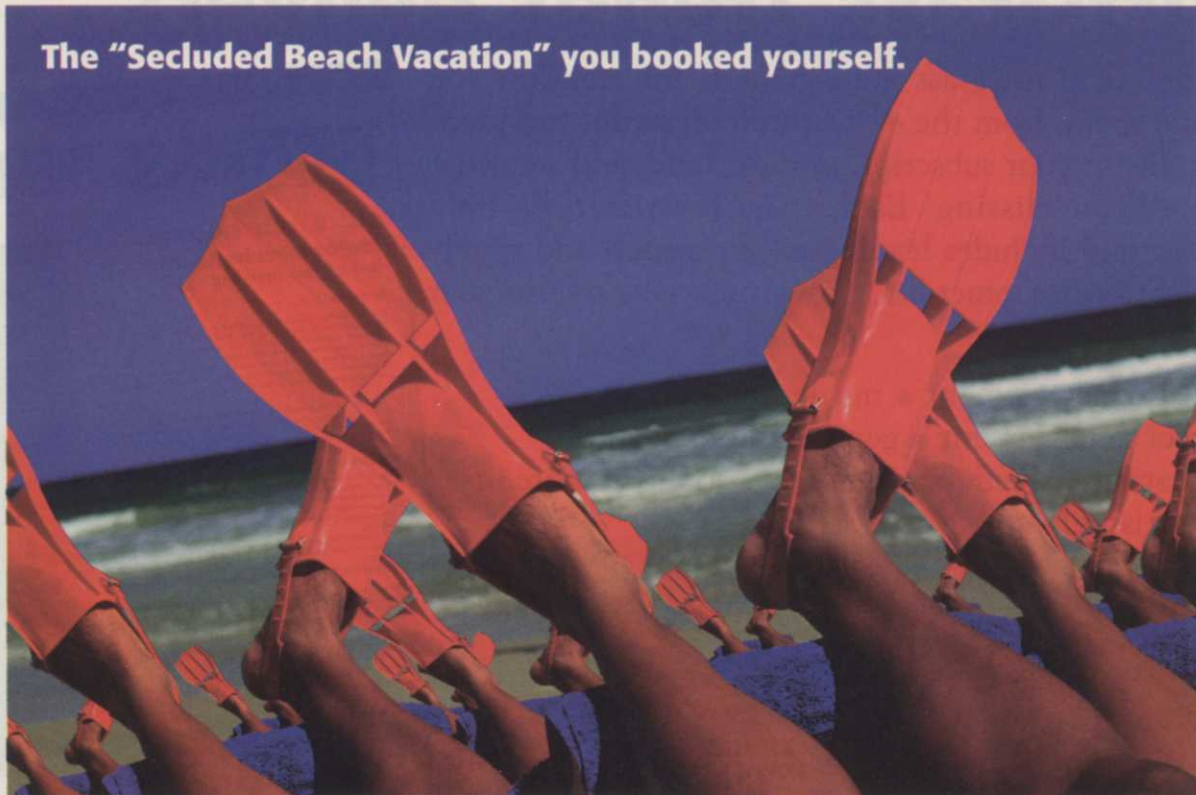
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BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

Gypsy moth infestation

We are seeing an increase in the number of gypsy moth infestations in our area in recent years. How do you distinguish these gypsy moths from other similar caterpillars who cause defoliation through this feeding?

— OHIO

The gypsy moth problem has been increasing in recent years in northeastern Ohio. The eastern strain is mostly found in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada. The gypsy moths overwinter in beige colored egg masses covered with short hairs. The eggs in this strain hatch in late April through May in Ohio. The other strain, called Asian, is found in western Canada and has been reportedly eradicated.

The young larvae hatch in spring and the small larvae feed by day, but as they go through five moltings and get larger, they begin feeding at night and moving to sheltered places during the daytime. This is when the burlap wrapping around trunks might be useful. However, some larvae may walk on top of burlap and escape. Trapping under burlap wrapping and discarding may eliminate a few larvae, but the larvae can move from one tree to another by producing silken threads and ballooning, spreading from tree to tree.

Fully grown larvae can be 60 mm in length, hairy, and have two rows of spots down their backs. The first five pairs are blue and the next six pairs are red. The maturing larvae feed singly and aggressively at night, and their droppings come down like raindrops.

By July, larvae mature and seek areas such as bark, lower sides of branches, bark

crevices, picnic tables, and house walls to pupate. Pupation lasts about 14 days and adult moths, light brown with black markings on the wings, emerge to mate. Females are larger than males. In the European strain, the females lay beige colored eggs (300-1,000) near their pupal case and don't fly. With the Asian strain, females can fly after mating and spread the egg masses.

Extensive larval feeding during May and June can cause premature defoliation. Oaks, poplars and maples can be defoliated by summer and prompted to produce new leaves using the stored energy. Yearly infestation can make the trees more susceptible to other problems. Oaks affected by gypsy moths can often become susceptible to borer and oak wilt diseases.

If practiced properly, burlap wrapping to collect and discard large larvae can be effective in managing gypsy moths. Another method is to remove the egg masses as much as possible. When the larvae are small, a bacterial insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a biological control agent, can be used. As they get larger, use products such as Sevin, Conserve, or Talstar.

One moth larvae that looks like the gypsy moth is the Eastern tent caterpillar. Unlike the gypsy moth, the latter produces egg masses on branch terminals. The newly hatched young caterpillars move to branch crotch areas, build webs and hide inside during the daytime. At night, they come out and feed. The larvae do not have colored dots like gypsy moths.

Black vine weevil damage

Quite often we find adult black vine weevil feeding damage as well as scale

problem on ground cover type euonymus. How do we manage this?

— MICHIGAN

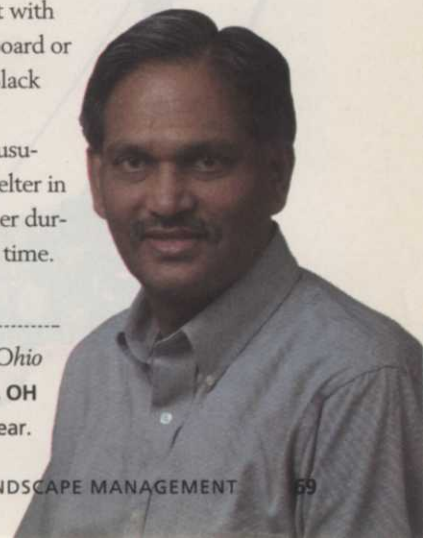
For managing euonymus scale, apply horticultural oil as a dormant spray in late fall or early spring. Oil can also be used as a foliar treatment throughout the entire growing season. However, mid-June, early July, and again in early November would be the peak application periods for using other contact insecticides such as Talstar.

For managing black vine weevil adults, apply pesticides such as Orthene, Talstar or Dursban on foliage. Treat the foliage at 3- to 4-week intervals from early May through August. Keep monitoring for any new feeding activity. You may not find the adults out during the day because they feed at night. If you find new feeding activity (notching on leaves), treat again. Continue treating at 3- to 4-week intervals until no living adults are found.

To monitor for black vine weevil activity, check the plants at night after 9 p.m. Place white paper or a cloth under the plant and shake the leaves and branches. If the adults are present, they will fall on the white paper or cloth. Another easy option is to collect the adults in traps. Simply bury a container at the soil line and cover it with some cardboard or plywood. Black vine weevil adults will usually take shelter in the container during the day time.

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.

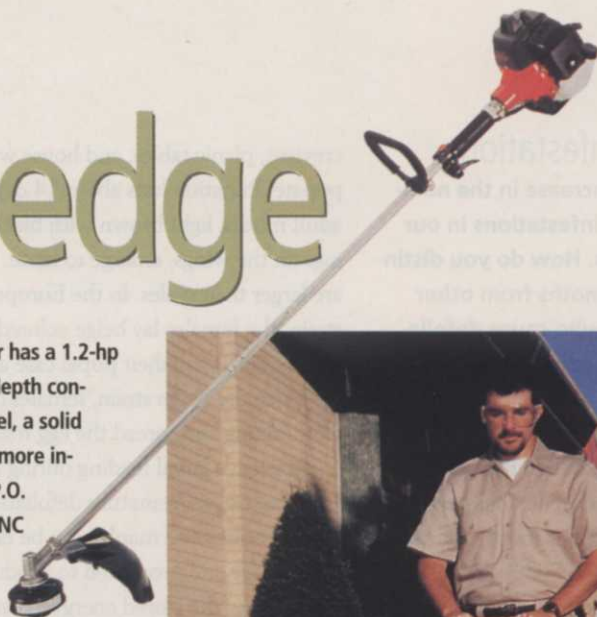


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2. Which of the following best describes your title? (fill in ONE only)

- 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 |
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| 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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**Landscape
MANAGEMENT**
June 2000

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NAME (please print) _____
 TITLE _____
 FIRM _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE (____) _____ FAX (____) _____
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I would like to receive (continue receiving) LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT free each month: Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Save TIME and fax it:
4 1 3 - 6 3 7 - 4 3 4 3

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

4a. Do you specify, purchase or influence the selection of landscape products?
75 Yes 76 No

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

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

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

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

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

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

products

TECH CENTER

Extra stable walk-behind

Gravelly's Pro 200 walk-behind features dual idler/dual belt systems which prevent free-wheeling down hills and offers positive traction even in dew. The wide wheel spacing provides extra stability on rough terrain. Available with either a 14-hp Kawasaki engine or an 18-hp Robin engine, the mower has addi-



tional features such as the option to mulch, bag or side discharge, heavy-duty frame, oversized caster wheels and larger discharge tunnel.

For more information contact Ariens Co. at 800/678-5443 or www.gravelly.com / circle no. 250

Treats all grasses

Newly registered by the EPA, ZeroTol broad spectrum algaecide/fungicide provides non-residual disease control and treatment for all varieties of turfgrass. Using an oxidation reaction, ZeroTol kills algae, fungus, bacteria and virus on contact. It can be used in environmental areas, including wetlands where residual runoff is a concern.

For more information contact BioSafe Systems at 888/273-3088 / circle no. 251

Nix weeds around trees

The 36-in., die-cut Tyvar TreeCircle prevents weed growth without the use of herbicides. The fabric is a strong and durable spun-bonded polypropylene that is porous enough to allow water, air and nutrients through to permit healthy soil conditions but bonded tightly enough to resist penetration from weed roots.

For more information contact Reemay, Inc. at 800/321-6271 or www.remay.com / circle no. 252

All-in-one fertigation

Flowtronex PSI has come out with the Nutrifeed injection system that allows lawn care pros to

spoon-feed the turf, giving it a little food at a time instead of a lot of food at longer intervals. The system is available with up to three head injection units. All Nutrifeed models can be installed on Flowtronex pumping systems and fully integrated with the system's controls.

For more information contact Flowtronex at 800/786-7480 / circle no. 253

Pumped up soil

Profile Products' professional soil conditioners are made of a 100% natural blend of kiln-fired porous ceramic chips and help turn overly saturated or rock hard soils into a loose growing medium where water, nutrients and oxygen are in balance. Unlike other soil amendments, the company says, Profile works almost instantly, only needs to be applied once, and won't break down over time.

For more information contact Profile at 800/207-6457 or www.profileproducts.com / circle no. 254

Better bark

Michigan Peat's Baccto Bark 2000 planting mix is designed for use with longer term crops, including poinsettias, chrysanthemums, perennials, stock plants, vinca, hanging baskets and other low moisture crops. The Bark 2000's physical properties, which include highly buffered Sphagnum peat, plus perlite, southern pine bark, a wetting agent and the company's own nutritional package, allow for frequent irrigation and faster dry down.

For more information contact Michigan Peat 800/324-7328 / circle no. 255

All-natural fish fertilizer

Bio-Oregon's BioGro and BioGan are ideal fertilizers for establishing fertile soils and growing healthy plants because they are all natural fish fertilizers that release nutrients slowly and evenly as they decompose through soil microbial activity. Also, organic matter in both fertilizers enhances the population of beneficial soil microorganisms. BioGro is a dry and pelletized, available in several formulations for various applications — 10-4-2, 9-3-5 and 7-7-2. BioGan is a liquid fertilizer available in 4-3-2, 3-2-2 and

12-2-1 formulations.

For more information contact Bio-Oregon at 800/962-2001 or www.bio-oregon.com / circle no. 256

All of the essentials

Essential is a biostimulant/soil amendment from Growth Products made of humic acid, cellulose fiber, kelp extract, mono/disaccharides, lignin, and natural cytokinins. The company claims that the product rejuvenates soil structure, stimulates root and plant growth and provides a necessary food source for beneficial microbial activity.

For more information contact Growth Products at www.growthproducts.com / circle no. 257

Collision avoidance

The new SuperSight collision avoidance system allows the driver of a vehicle to view objects that are behind him and out of sight from the



vehicle's rear view mirror. A camera is mounted on the back of the vehicle and sends images to a monitor positioned in the cab. The models include either a standard black and white monitor or a deluxe color LCD monitor.

Contact Superior Signals at 800/447-3693 / circle no. 258

Inoculate your soil

Bio-Organics, Inc., an Oregon manufacturer of mycorrhizal inoculants, introduces three new formulations: a seven-species endomycorrhizal product, an Endo Root Dip for bare root transplants and cuttings, and a landscape inoculant containing multiple types of Endo and Ecto spores.

For more information contact Bio-Organics at 888/332-7676 or www.bio-organics.com / circle no. 259

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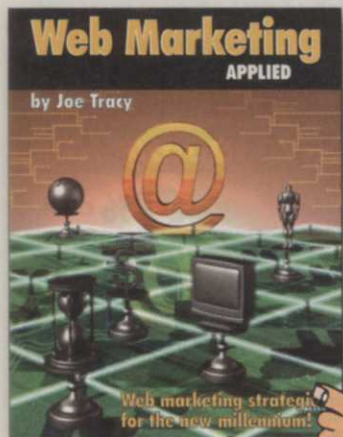
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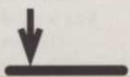
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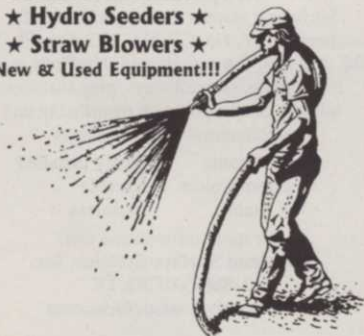


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Landscape Lighting Market Manager: Century Rain Aid, the nation's leading distributor of landscape irrigation and low voltage lighting supplies, is recruiting a Lighting Market Development Manager. Successful candidate will direct sales and marketing efforts in addition to educational seminars and buying programs. Candidate will oversee new market development and support existing accounts; liaison with specifiers and contractors; and develop internal and external training materials and merchandising displays. College graduate preferred with sales presentation experience and knowledge of landscape lighting. PC skills in Microsoft Word, Access, Excel a plus. Position is based in Southeast Michigan and will require travel throughout U.S. Please send resume and salary requirements via e-mail to: Brand@rainaid.com Pre-employment drug screening is required. Century Rain Aid is an Equal Opportunity Employer. 6/00

Help Wanted (Cont'd)

Join Century Rain Aid, America's leading irrigation and landscape lighting distributor, as we continue to grow. Century is now accepting applications for branch management and sales positions. Irrigation experience and college education are preferred. Century offers industry competitive wages and a complete benefits program, including medical, dental, vision and 401K matching. **Please send your resume and salary requirements to: Century Rain Aid, 31691 Dequindre Rd., Madison Heights, MI 48071 Attn: Wayne Miller.** Pre-employment drug screening required. Century is an Equal Opportunity Employer. 6/00

READY FOR A CHANGE? Come join one of the Largest Vegetation Management Companies in the United States. **DeANGELO BROTHERS, INC.** is experiencing tremendous growth in all of our divisions and has immediate openings for the following positions: **•FOREMEN:** Qualified candidates must have proven leadership, communications and interpersonal skills. Industry related background preferred, but willing to train the right individuals. **•TECHNICIANS:** Candidates must be responsible, reasonable persons willing to work on weed and brush control crews. Positions involve driving trucks and operating spray and/or trimming equipment. **•TREE TRIMMERS/BUCKET OPERATORS:** We are seeking tree trimmers with railroad and/or utility line clearance experience. Climbing and bucket operations experience is preferred. **•HI-RAIL OPERATORS:** Qualified candidates must have CDL & drivers license with Tank & Hazmat endorsement, be willing to travel away from home for extended periods of time and possess good mechanical abilities. We offer a good starting salary, benefits, training, advancement and a drug free work place. Must enjoy moderate travel and overnight stays. A valid drivers license is required. For a career opportunity and confidential consideration, contact our 24 hour, 7 day a week **Employment Hotline at 800-355-8944** or send resume to: **DeAngelo Brothers, Inc., Attn: H.R. Dept., 100 North Conahan Drive, Hazelton, PA 18201. Fax: 570-459-5500 EOE/APP/M-F** 4/01

FLORAPERSONNEL, INC. In our second decade of performing confidential key employee searches for the landscape/horticulture industry and allied trades worldwide. Retained basis only. Candidate contact welcome, confidential, and always free. 1740 Lake Markham Road, Sanford, FL 32771. **PHONE (407)320-8177. FAX (407)320-8083. Email: Hortsearch@aol.com. Website: http://www.florapersonnel.com** 12/00

James Martin Associates, Inc. is a rapidly expanding 22 year-old landscape firm located in Northern Illinois. We specialize in commercial and residential landscape maintenance and are seeking several team-oriented people with experience ranging from 1-7 years in maintenance project management. The successful candidate must possess skills in project and client management, contract negotiations, client prospecting and estimating. Also must have solid understanding of the grounds management industry. We offer excellent salary, benefits, profit sharing and 401K. For immediate consideration please call or send resume with salary history to: **James Martin Associates, Inc., Attn: Chris Keenan, 59 East U.S. Highway 45, Vernon Hills, IL 60061. Fax: 847-634-8298 Phone: 847-634-1660 E-mail: MARTINASSOC@ATT.NET** 6/00

GROUNDS MANAGER: Location: The Taft School, Watertown, Connecticut. **Duties:** This position will be directly responsible for supervising the coordination of work activities that include sports turf management, landscape maintenance and construction, vehicle maintenance, snow removal and turf grass management. Other management duties would include scheduling and assigning work, closely monitoring employee performance, maintaining annual budgets, ensuring safety awareness and applying technical aspects of horticulture. This position will also be responsible for establishing long-range goals and objectives, interacting with customers and vendors along with communicating policies/procedures. **Qualifications:** Minimum qualifications, 7 years work experience in landscape/golf/grounds maintenance with a minimum of 3 years supervising experience. A minimum of an Associate's Degree in horticulture or a related field is required. Please send cover letter and resume to Eric Norman, Business Office, 110 Woodbury Road, Watertown, CT 06795. 7/00

Extension Instructor in Turfgrass Science. University of Connecticut (non-tenure track, 80% teaching and 20% extension). Develop and teach turfgrass courses and provide extension support for CT turf industry. Requires M.S. degree and 5 or more years experience (preferably golf course management). Application screening starts July 1, 2000. For a detailed job description contact **Dr. Karl Guillard 860-486-6309. Fax 860-486-0682. E-mail karl.guillard@uconn.edu** 6/00

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cleanup crew

THIS AND THAT

A **bright** future for Michigan's nurseries and greenhouses

A recent report, *Trends in Michigan Agriculture*, by the Sparks Companies Inc., said:

Nursery and greenhouse products were the fastest growing sector in production agriculture for both Michigan and the United States over the last three decades with cash receipts increasing 244.9% nationally, and Michigan receipts growing 302.5%. In the 1990s, Michigan's cash receipts outpaced U.S. receipts, increasing 44.5% versus 20.3%, respectively. Michigan is ideally situated (climatically and geographically) to grow greenhouse and nursery products. Given the prospects for continued growth in the U.S. economy and related resiliency in the housing market, Michigan's greenhouse and nursery industry should experience strong positive growth.

Dallas landscape company establishes memorial fund

DALLAS, TX — To honor the memory of a 45-year employee named Thomas "Tommy" B. Masterson, Lambert's Landscape Company, Dallas, TX donated \$50,000 to establish the Lambert-Masterson Memorial Fund to benefit horticulture students at Richland Community College.

In addition to the establishing of the memorial fund, Masterson's favorite red oak tree (*Quercus shumardii*), which measures 14 caliper inches, stands 40-ft. tall and weighs 15 tons, was transplanted to Richland's campus.

Up until his death in 1999, Masterson, Lambert's executive vice president and director of operations, helped the company achieve a local, regional and national reputation for excellence in landscape quality and craftsmanship.



10 THINGS LCO's should know about warranties and contracts

1. A contract should be in writing.
2. Clearly spell out the terms of the contract.
3. The terms must be clear and definite to be enforced; ambiguity will be enforced against the maker of the contract.
4. Duties of the LCO.
5. Duties of the customer.
6. Transferability of contract.
7. Termination of the contract.
8. Alternative dispute resolution.
9. Chemical sensitivity.
10. Exclusions.

(SOURCE: WEISBURGER GREEN INSURANCE)

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They said it

"To be outside and not cooped up in an office building. I also enjoy working with plants, and I think the growth process is fascinating."

— Robin Isley, a senior with a major in General Horticulture, North Carolina State University, on why she is seeking a professional career in the Green Industry. She was spotted at ALCA's annual Student Career Days last March in Starkville, MS.

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