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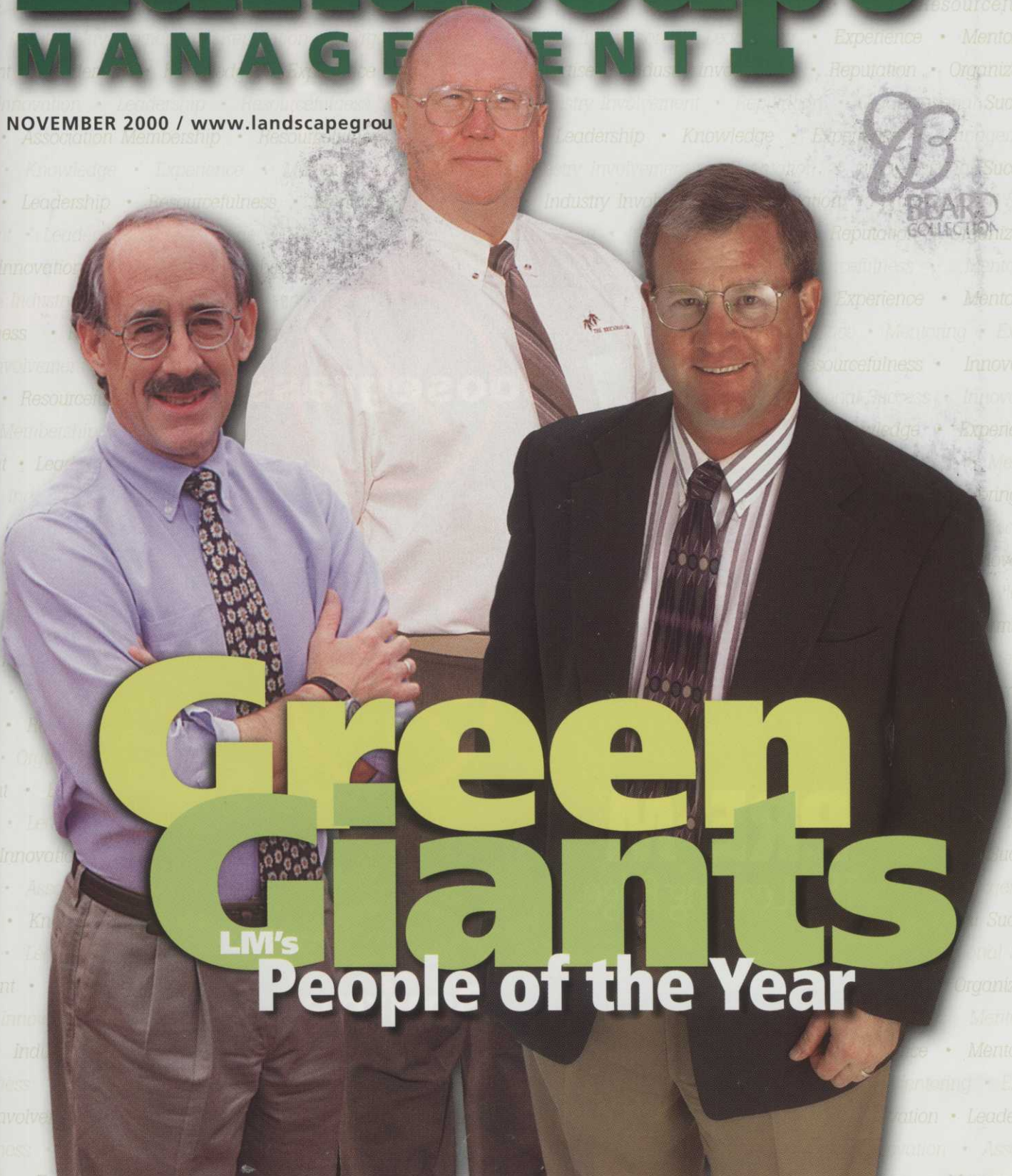
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NOVEMBER 2000 / www.landscapegroup.com



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Landscape MANAGEMENT

NOVEMBER 2000 / #11 / VOLUME 39

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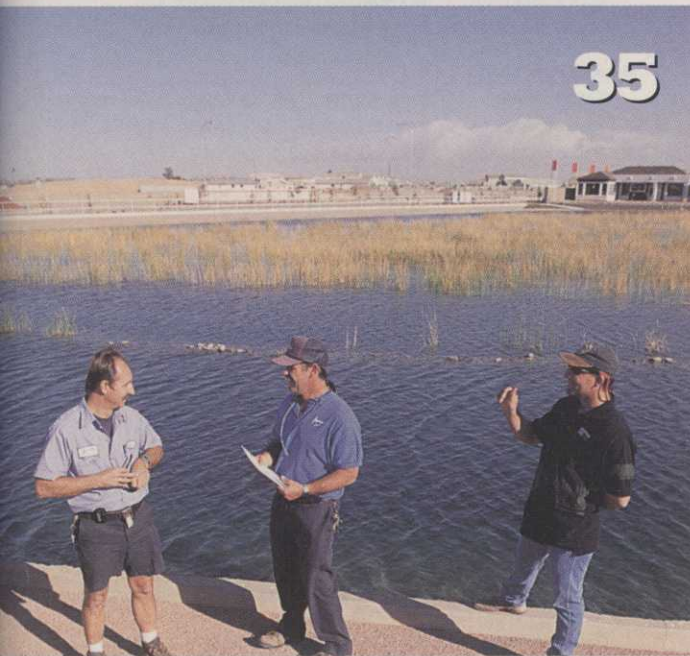
It isn't easy, but you can involve just about everyone in training and employee projects

BY JIM PALUCH

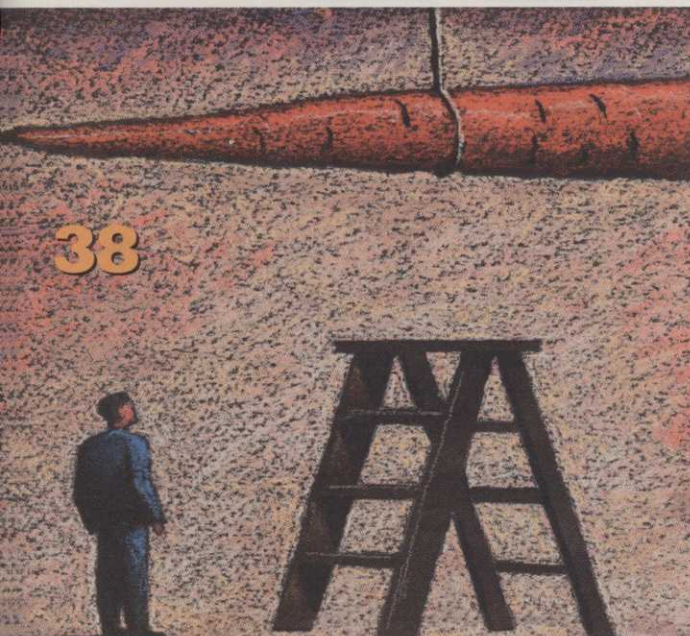
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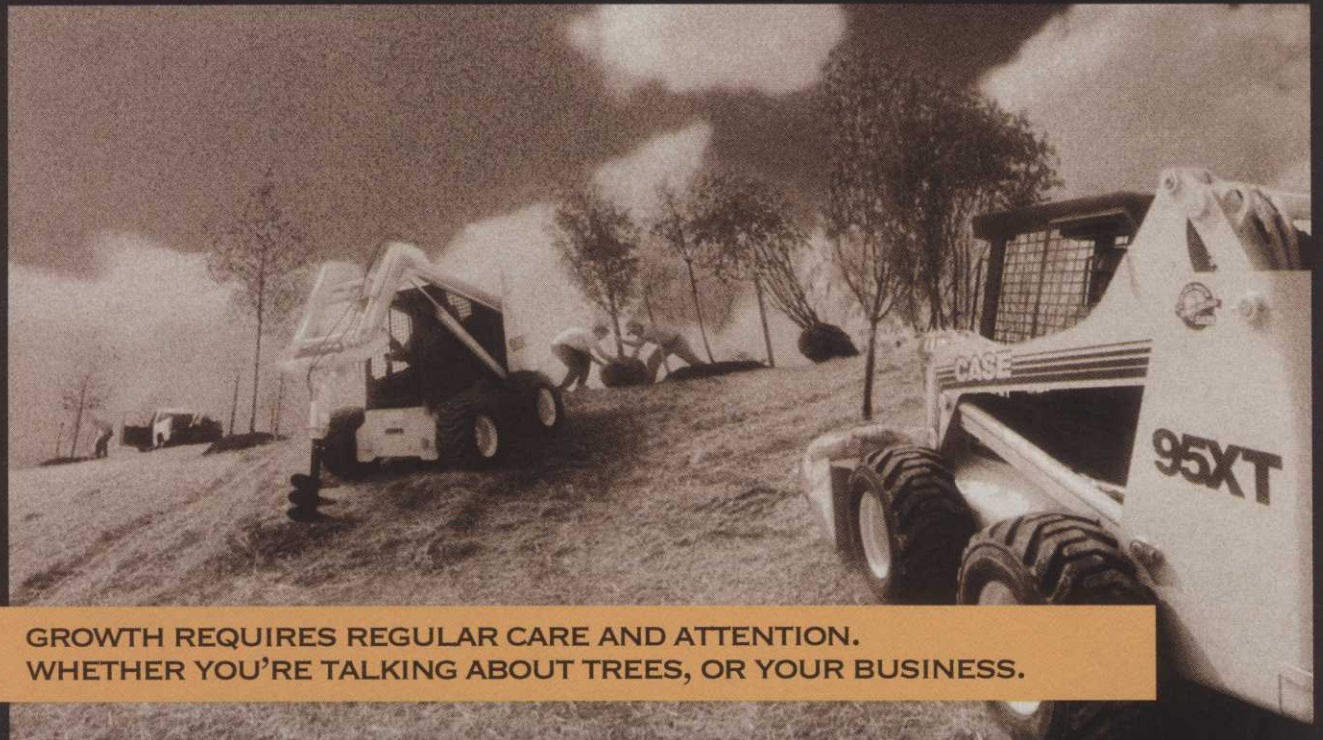
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BY SUE GIBSON / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Kick the habit

Some years back, I finally kicked the habit. It was one of the toughest things I've ever done. For years, I exhaled that last puff of the day and told myself, "I'm quitting tomorrow." But each new day dawned and that ingrained habit of coffee and cigarettes took over. It was easier to put off quitting.

Along the way, I tried every wacky trick: nicotine hoarding filters, going cold turkey, nicotine gum, New Year's Eve resolutions — but I couldn't quit, not until I really wanted to quit more than I wanted to smoke.

So how does this apply to your life as a professional landscape manager? While this is no advertisement for quitting, we all know how addictive nicotine can be, and I think our day-to-day habits are just as addictive and damaging to our operations.

There's a parallel between kicking ingrained habits and doing what you know you should do for yourself or your organization. Trying new things can be uncomfortable, painful and scary. But many of our old habits (like old shoes) should be changed. Here are a few examples:

Ignorance is bliss

Whether we deserve it or not, this industry has a reputation of not being too concerned with formal education in either technical or management topics. Unlike our golf and grower colleagues, this industry is perceived as being pretty easy to enter and frankly, I think too many people think they're experts just because they're in business.

You may not feel up to speed in horticulture or agronomy, basic business management, computing/Internet or human relations. So do something about it. In 2001, why not make formal education in the subject of your choice a personal requirement, then make it a habit? While you're at it, make that a requirement for your employees, too.

Same old, same old

Years ago, we all thought acupuncture was bizarre. Now, our insurance companies often pay for it as a viable treatment and even old-school physicians admit it works. There are new treatments entering the landscape world, just waiting for you to think outside the box. As Doug Brede's article on page 42 explains, some alternative materials may turn out to be just what the plant doctor ordered. Do you use the same products year after year? Maybe it's time to try looking for new solutions.

Business without a roadmap

I owned a business too and I know how easy it is to get wrapped up in the daily, weekly and monthly operations without coming up for air. But are you really going to enter another year of business without a solid, detailed plan for the year? What's your strategy for competing and getting more money for your services? How exactly will you become more profitable in 2001? Make yourself a roadmap and take the time this winter to define these goals clearly. It's one habit you won't regret breaking.

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



There's a parallel between kicking ingrained habits and doing what you know you should do for yourself or your organization.

events

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

November

28-30 North Central Turfgrass Show / St. Charles, IL; Sponsored by the Illinois Turfgrass Federation; 312/201-0101

December

3-6 ASCA Annual Conference / Newport, RI; Sponsored by the American Society of Consulting Arborists; 301/947-0483

4-7 Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Conference and Show / Columbus, OH; 888/683-3445

7-8 MVTA Lawn and Turf Conference and Trade Show / Columbia, MO; Sponsored by the Missouri Valley Turfgrass Association; 573/882-2301

12-14 New Jersey Turfgrass Expo / Atlantic City, NJ; 732/821-7134

13 Turfgrass and Landscape Institute and Trade Show / Buena Park, CA; 800/500-SCTC

January 2001

8-10 Great Lakes Trade Exposition / Lansing, MI; Sponsored by the Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association; 800/879-6652

8-10 Midwest Turf Expo / Indianapolis, IN; 765/494-8039

9-11 Eastern PA Turf Conference & Trade Show /

King of Prussia, PA; 814/863-3475

9-11 Congress 2001: Canada's International Horticultural Trade Show & Conference / Toronto, Canada; 905/875-1805

11 CLCA Leadership Conference / Oakland, CA; 800/448-2522

15-18 Michigan Turfgrass Conference / Lansing, MI; 517/321-1660

17-19 Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show / Chicago, IL; 847/526-2010

18-20 GrowerExpo 2001 / Chicago, IL; 630/208-9080

22-25 Grow and Mow Expo / College Park, GA; 706/632-0100

22-24 Central Environmental Nursery Trade Show / Columbus, OH; 800/825-5062

25 Northeastern PA Turf School & Trade Show / Wilkes-Barre, PA; 814/863-3475

31 Sacramento Landscape and Nursery Expo / Sacramento, CA; 530/458-3189

February 2001

1-4 PLCAA 6th Annual Management Conference / Port Canaveral, FL; 800-458-3466

1-4 ALCA Executive Forum / Tucson, AZ; 703/736-9666

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Washington, DC 20005
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248/476-5457



American Society of Irrigation Consultants
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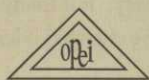
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8260 Willow Oaks Corporate Dr. Suite 120
Fairfax, VA 22031-4513
703/573-3551
www.irrigation.org



National Arborist Association
The Meeting Place Mall,
P.O. Box 1094
Amherst, NH 03031-1094
603/673-3311
www.natlarb.com



Ohio Turfgrass Foundation
1100-H Brandywine Blvd.,
PO Box 3388
Zanesville, OH 43702-3388
888/683-3445



The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute
341 South Patrick St.
Old Town Alexandria, Va. 22314
703/549-7600
opei.mow.org



Professional Grounds Management Society
720 Light Street
Baltimore, MD 21230
410/752-3318



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New Prague, MN 56071
612/758-5811

BY JASON STAHL / MANAGING EDITOR

Slam dunk, landscape style

An employee of Quail Hollow Country Club is eyeing one of the upstairs ballrooms suspiciously as she goes about her daily routine. And, from an outsider's point of view, it's understandable. So far as she can tell, the group inside is composed of adults. Yet the noise coming from the room suggests there's a bunch of crazy kids inside.

But they're not kids. They're all employees or owners of landscape companies, and they're all taking directions from Green Industry consultant Jim Paluch of JP Horizons, Inc., Mentor, OH. First, they're told to howl loudly like wolves. Then, the adrenaline-laced song "Dr. Who" starts playing, and everyone is asked to perform "The Wave." Paluch then asks if everyone can give the person closest to them a high five and a back rub.

These are guys who mow grass? Yes. But this is the Leadership Jam 2000, where landscape foremen and front line supervisors can learn new skills to advance their careers.

Radical ideas?

As Paluch paces around in front of these landscape professionals, he advocates workforce behavior that sadly would seem radical to some: saying to a fellow employee, "I want you to plant these trees because you're the most awesome tree planter," or simply smiling on the job.

"We're so into this, 'I'm the boss and work is serious,' thing," Paluch says. "If I smile, my employees will think I'm making money and ask for a raise. If I frown, they'll think we're not doing well."

Perhaps even more radical is what Leadership Jam speaker Steve Pattie, founder of The Pattie Group in Cleveland, OH, said to do for an employee who has had a fight with his wife. "Let him leave thirty minutes early and give him \$10 to buy flowers for her," he says. "It may

not solve anything, but he'll be happier coming to work."

But Paluch and his industry friends aren't just talking about how to treat employees better and build a better sense of teamwork, they're also talking about going the extra mile for customers. Marty Grunder, owner of Grunder Landscaping Co., Miamisburg, OH, tells landscape professionals to do something they may never have thought of. "If you finish a job a little early, ask your customer if he or she would like his or her car washed," he says. Now that's service.

Progressive thinking

An "old school" businessperson might watch these guys slam dunk on a miniature basketball hoop and say to himself, "This is nonsense. These people need to get back to work." But one gets the feeling that, in these high pressure days of too much work, too little help, this kind of employee gathering is just what the doctor ordered.

Every so often, we need to take a different approach to something, however radical it might be. Now's the time to do it because times are good — we can afford to take chances. Even if you experiment with some new workplace philosophy or way to deal with employees or customers and it fails, the work will still be there.

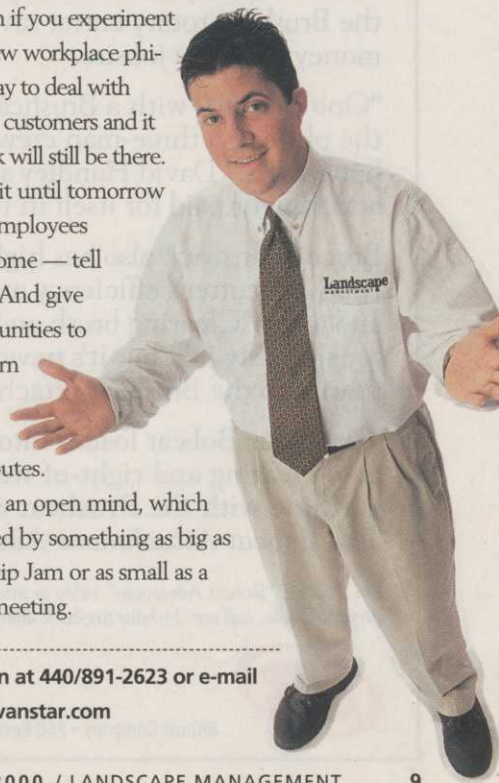
Don't wait until tomorrow to tell your employees they're awesome — tell them today. And give them opportunities to bond and learn more about each other's unique attributes.

This all takes an open mind, which can be created by something as big as the Leadership Jam or as small as a lunchroom meeting.

Contact Jason at 440/891-2623 or e-mail at jstahl@advanstar.com



These guys should be out mowing, not goofing off...or should they?



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Bruce Spanswick also has high praise for the Brushcat cutter's efficiency and cost-effectiveness, and adds, "Clearing brush and undergrowth is a tough, nasty job, but it's never been easier — thanks to the Brushcat attachment!"

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Bobcat

"Make your marketing different, because how can you expect a prospect or client to notice your marketing if you're doing the same things everyone else is doing?"



Marketing is a science

Marketing is a science, and don't let anybody tell you otherwise. Just like other sciences, marketing is confusing and many theories surround it. But there are specific marketing processes successful companies follow, and the process our company, Grunder Landscaping Co., follows has produced tremendous results.

All of our company's marketing must be at least two of the following three things: fun, cheap and/or different. Let me explain.

Have a ball

In many ways, our marketing is fun. Many times, humor makes customers take notice, and your team will like it, too. One Christmas, we dressed an employee as Santa Claus and drove to 50 of our best clients' homes to hand out small gifts and candy for the kids. Many people saw it, and the local paper even put a picture of our Santa on the front page. I had fun, my employees had fun, our clients had fun, and we received tremendous exposure.

Don't spend a lot

According to ALCA's Operating Cost Study, the average landscape professional spends about .8% of sales on marketing. For a \$500,000 firm, that's \$4,000. Most firms have an expensive yellow page ad which eats up most of that \$4,000. Contractors think they cannot afford to do much more than that. The truth is, you probably can afford to do more. Nonetheless, you have to be creative with both your ideas and financing.

In my opinion, a newsletter is the most cost effective marketing endeavor there is. Our newsletter is a simple two-page informational piece, but it represents market-

ing. We mail it four times a year, and, since it has worked so well, we're considering mailing it six times per year. You should be able to produce, print and mail 1,000 newsletters for less than \$1,000 each time. Your newsletter should have the company president's picture on it and testimonials from happy clients. It's also wise to feature your employees in the newsletter so clients and prospects know your company is about more than just you.

Dare to be different

Make your marketing different, because how can you expect a prospect or client to notice your marketing if you're doing things the same things everyone else is doing?

I've found that many landscapers become complacent and overlook several simple, effective and different marketing efforts. I send a handwritten thank you card with a caricature of me on the front holding a pitchfork to every one of my clients. The few companies that send out thank you cards mail those generic pre-printed ones you can buy at the office supply mega store. The fact that you write one will make your clients realize you value their business and you'd appreciate more. Customizing your card and including a handwritten message will make it stand out.

The "fun, cheap and different" marketing strategy has worked well for us for years, and it will work for you — but you have to do it. Now start marketing in fun, cheap and different ways.

Marty Grunder is the founder and president of Grunder Landscaping Co., a national award-winning company in Dayton, OH with annual sales of more than \$2.4 million. He is also founder of The Winner's Circle, a consulting company offering expert help in management, marketing, and motivation. Contact Marty by calling (937) 847-9944 or via the web at www.grunderswinnerscircle.com.

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industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Novartis sells FLINT line

BASEL, SWITZERLAND — Novartis Agribusiness sold its worldwide FLINT business to Bayer Crop Protection, a subsidiary of Bayer AG, for \$760 million.

Acres Group acquires Fenn

NAPERVILLE, IL — The Acres Group, northern Illinois' largest independent landscaping and snow removal company, acquired Bill Fenn Landscaping Company. With the purchase, The Acres Group increases its gross revenues to more than \$23 million a year.

Redexim acquires Pro-Seed Equipment

PITTSBURGH, PA — Redexim BV, headquartered in Zeist, Holland, acquired UK-based Pro-Seed Equipment Ltd., a manufacturer of seeders and core collectors. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Syngenta chooses office locations

GREENSBORO, NC — Syngenta AG picked Greensboro, NC as the home for its North American crop protection division, and Delaware, MD for its U.S. corporate headquarters, the Greensboro News & Record reported. Syngenta, a proposed international agribusiness company, is being formed by the merger of Zeneca Ag Products and Novartis Crop Protection. The merger is awaiting regulatory approval.

Texas equipment ban might be overturned

*OPEI proposes alternatives
to TNRCC, awaits Dec. 6
decision date*

BY JASON STAHL

ALEXANDRIA, VA — Due to recent successful meetings held between the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), OPEI is holding out hope that a proposed ban on morning use of gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment in the Houston/Galveston, TX area might be overturned.

Alternative ideas

"We're one of the few industries who they (members of TNRCC) said have come up with great alternatives, and they've said that they will swap out

problematic proposals if industries come up with alternatives," says Bill Guerry, legal counsel for OPEI. "We've gotten the ball down to the one-yard line. Now, the TNRCC needs to push it over into the end zone."

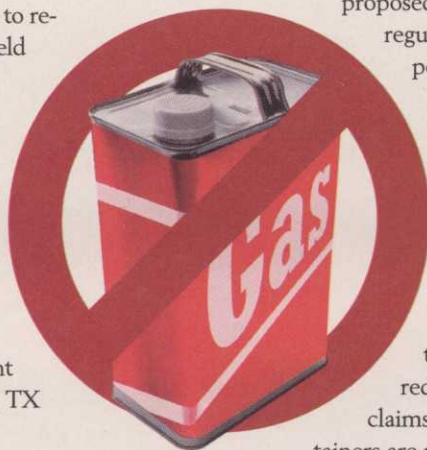
One of the alternatives OPEI has proposed is the adoption of regulations for all new portable non-spill gas cans and spouts, which has already happened in California. "We see this as a no brainer," Guerry says, citing the 20 tons of emissions reductions a day he claims spill proof containers are responsible for.

"There is very little Texas would have to do except adopt this California rule."

Another alternative OPEI has discussed with TNRCC is changing the Texas emissions model for outdoor

continued on page 17

CLIPPINGS



Flower power

Looking for some new flowers to spice up your customer's property? Look no further than all-america-selections.org, the Web site for All-America Selections (AAS) where you can scope out the nine 2001 All-America Selection winners.

These new flower varieties were judged to be superior to varieties currently on the market by AAS, which fosters the development, production and distribution of new and better horticultural and agricultural varieties, species, strains and kinds in and for North America. These babies are sure to grow on you!

Dot coms to swap trees for information

BOULDER, CO — Submit information, get a tree. That's the gist of a new marketing agreement between e-Greenbiz.com and Active.com aimed at helping ActiveParks.org become the Green Industry's first Web resource for park and recreation professionals and their communities.



Through the agreement, e-Greenbiz.com, an e-commerce Web site that serves the business-to-business

needs of the Green Industry, and Active.com, an online registration company, will launch a marketing campaign that encourages park and recreation professionals to submit information about their facilities to the ActiveParks.org database.

e-Greenbiz.com and Active.com will then donate and plant a tree in the city of each eligible park and recreation agency that provides information by the end of 2000.

"From NRPA's perspective, partnering with Active.com and aggregating information on all parks so the public can find out where

to recreate on a daily basis, and to have the incentive to do something hi-tech and high touch to help out the day-to-day management of park systems, is a great thing," says

Kathy Spangler, NRPA's national programs director. "We're seeing a lot more dot coms getting involved at the community level. It's unique that we can build that bridge."

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Speak your mind

Feel like putting your two cents in? The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) has formally sent proposed revisions of the 1998 Lawnmower Standard (ANSI B71.1 – 1998) to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for public review. As part of the process, ANSI requires a public review period for the revisions.

Anyone who wants to review and/or comment on the revisions should contact John F. Liskey, director of statistical and technical services, at 703/549-7600. The comment period for review ends December 18, 2000.

EB
800-285-7227

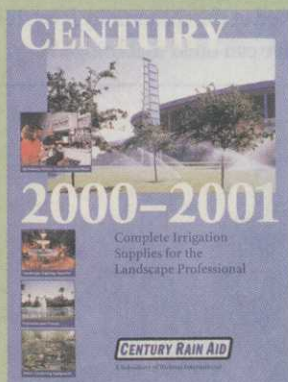
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VIDEOS AND LITERATURE FOR THE GREEN INDUSTRY



Irrigation supplies... from Century Rain Aid can be found in the company's 2000-2001 supplies catalog, available free to landscape professionals. The 150-page catalog includes sprinklers, valves, controllers, low volume irrigation, pipe and fittings, electrical accessories, pumps and fountains, and outdoor lighting and water

gardening components. For a copy, register on Century's Web site at www.rainaid.com or call 800/347-4272.

Bobcat products... are featured in Worksaver, the 2000 Bobcatalog featuring big color photos of loaders, excavators and various attachments. For a free copy contact the Melroe Co. at 701/241-8700.

Tree, turf and ornamental pesticides... are listed in the Tree, Turf & Ornamental Pesticide Guide. Divided into four sections (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and growth regulators), each species is listed in alphabetical order from abelias to zinnias. Registered products are listed with data on control parameters. A new section cross references botanical names and common names. It sells for \$21. Call Thomson Publications at 559/435-2163.

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Circle 109

continued from page 14

power equipment that estimates total emissions. "What TNRCC didn't do was base the model on equipment that can reduce emissions," says Eddy Edmondson, president/CEO of the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association. Guerry agreed, saying there was new equipment on the market today that could reduce emissions that TNRCC didn't consider.

Decision due December

A final determination of OPEI's alternative proposals will be made by the TNRCC on Dec. 6, 2000. If the ban is enacted, it would become effective in the Houston/Galveston area (eight counties in the ozone non-attainment area) from April 1 through October 31, beginning April 1, 2005, from 6 a.m. until noon.

As it stands, the proposed ban would have a detrimental affect on landscape

businesses in the affected area, says Edmondson. "You'd only be able to work half a day, and you wouldn't be able to make it up on the other end," he says. "There's also the issue of starting out the work day during the heat of the day. Right now, a lot of our folks work

in the heat of the day, but they have the morning to get acclimated to it."

"The ban won't keep emissions out of the air, only shift them," Edmondson added. "All it will do is put them out in the afternoon instead of the morning."

— Jason Stahl

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How sweet it is

For the third time, Ariens Company won the Most Valuable Promoter Award for their involvement in publicizing the 2000 International Lawn, Garden and Power Equipment Expo. Ariens, Gravely and Stens planned several events throughout Expo including prize drawings, a press conference, and parts manager and service manager of the year awards. Bill Harley, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Inc., presented the award, along with Warren Sellers and staff of Sellers Expositions.



Paul Cutler
President
Cutler Landscaping, Inc.
Tucson, Arizona

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Circle 112

industry almanac

People & companies

Simplex Turf and Horticulture

named Chris Claypool

senior vice president of marketing in the Jacklin Seed business unit.



The Care of Trees

hired Phil Snyder

to lead its new regional office in Philadelphia, called Alpine the Care of Trees.



ern California its Region of the Year. Miramar was also named the "top performing service branch" in the nation.

Morgan Corp.,

Morgantown, PA, a leading truck van body manufacturer in North



America, named **Kay S. Mueller** director of sales for the southeast region.

ServiScape

has been contracted by **New Lenox Community Park District**, New Lenox, IL to manage all operations and long range planning at The Sanctuary Golf Course.

Riverdale Chemical Co.

promoted **Sean Casey** to national sales manager and **Curtis Clark** to business development and marketing manager.

TruGreen-LandCare

named **Miramar Wholesale Nurseries** of South-

Pickseed West

appointed Tom Burns vice president of international sales and market development.

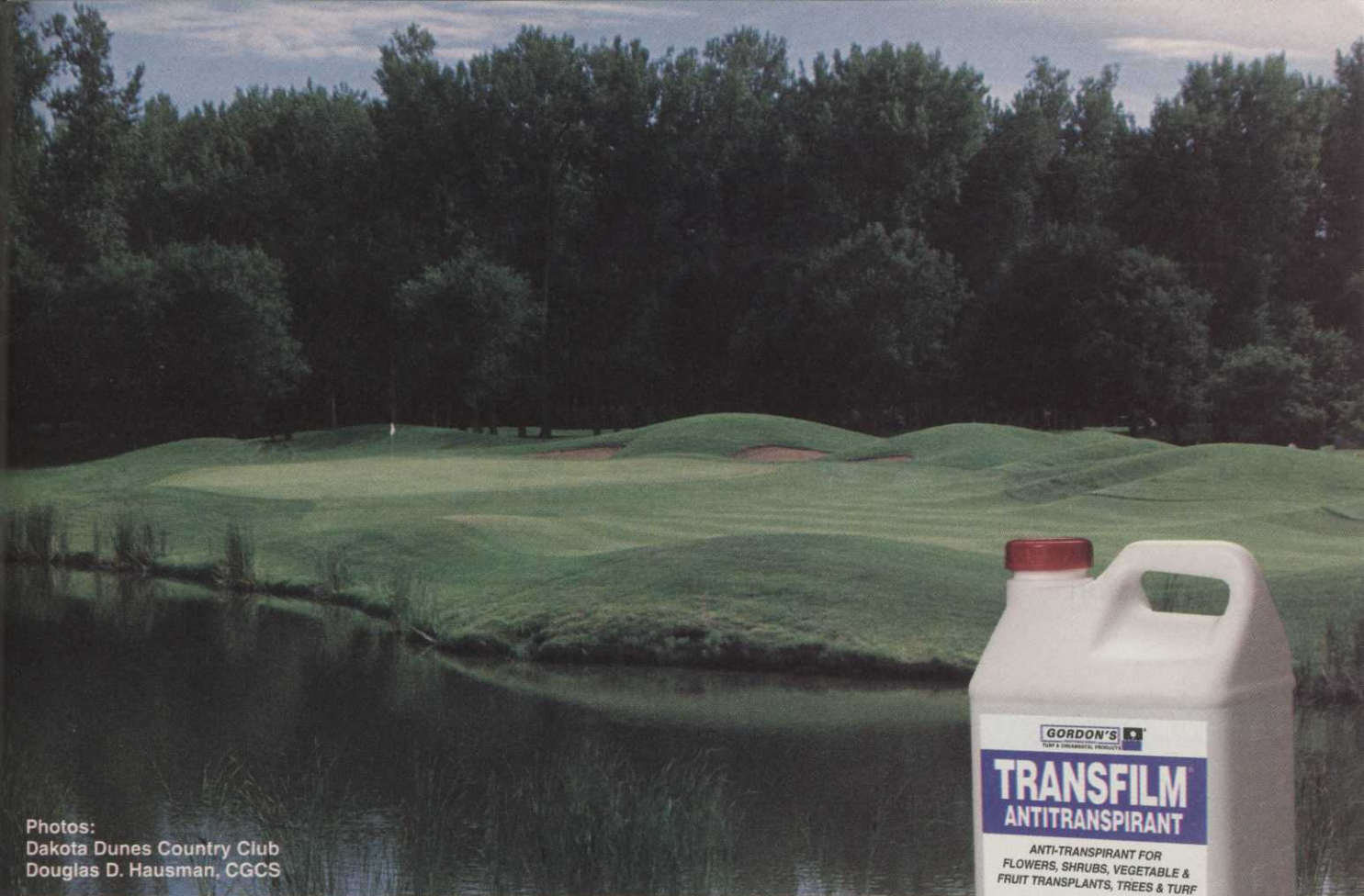
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Buy from service vendor	35%
Buy from manufacturer	34%
Bid process	25%
Buying cooperative	12%
Buy via the Internet	10%
Buying office decides	3%
Buy on Internet auction	1%
Other	1%

SOURCE: LM 2000 READER SURVEY





Photos:
Dakota Dunes Country Club
Douglas D. Hausman, CGCS



Dependable Coverage

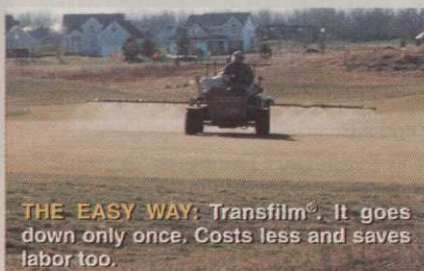
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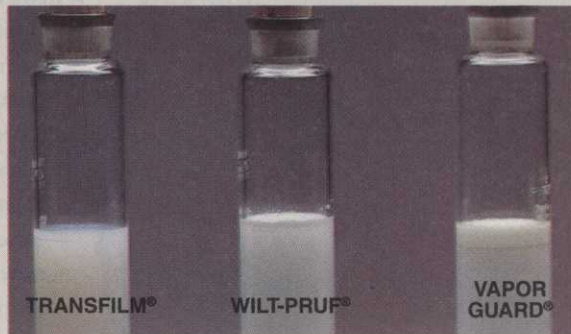


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WINNER: LANDSCAPE CONTRACTING

Bruce Hunt

**Vice President, The Brickman Group, Ltd.,
Langhorne, PA**

BY JASON STAHL

Career highlights

1961

Hired by The Brickman Group

1968

Promoted to general manager

1980

Joins ALCA's Crystal Ball Committee

1980

Establishes design/build office in Philadelphia

1984

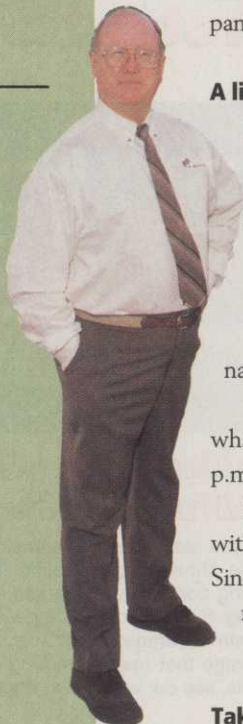
Establishes design/build office in Baltimore

1988

Elected president of ALCA

1994

Honored with ALCA's Landscape Service Award



When Bruce Hunt first arrived on the campus of Michigan State University in 1956, he didn't even realize there was such a thing as a degree in landscape architecture.

"I was more interested in business and design," Hunt says, admitting that his math skills were extremely weak but that design and drafting came easy to him.

His first interview with The Brickman Group, Ltd., happened by chance. His college roommate had scheduled an interview with the company, but had already taken another job and decided to skip it. Hunt and his wife, Cammie, who had just married in their last year of college, were planning to travel to St. Louis to visit friends, so he smelled an opportunity.

"I figured I'd take a short detour to Chicago and take my roommate's place in the interview," Hunt says.

Hunt was interviewed by Dick Brickman, and, in 1961, became one of The Brickman Group's five full-time employees. Little did he know that he would stay with the company for the rest of his career — in fact, he would eventually rise to vice president

A little bit of everything

Hunt was originally hired on as a landscape designer, but since the company was so small, he ended up performing many duties — designing, estimating, production management, supervision, and client contact, to name a few. "I've probably had every job that's ever existed in this company," Hunt says. Within five years, he became general manager, having evolved out of design and into project and people management.

Today, at 62, Hunt says he is as busy as he has ever been, but his focus is much more narrow — primarily on client development and large project sales and management.

Scott Brickman, Dick Brickman's son and president of the company, knows firsthand what kind of worker Hunt is. "He's still gets to the office at 6 a.m. and is here until 7 p.m.," he says.

Scott wasn't even born when Hunt was first interviewed — Hunt's first encounter with him was at the office, when Scott's parents brought him in shortly after he was born. Since then, Hunt has come to know him as a leader and a friend. "It was always Dick's mission to see the company grow and grow. He was a visionary," Hunt says. "Scott has taken on that ability, which is unusual in a third generation business."

Taking an active role

Hunt says Dick Brickman, a lifelong friend and mentor, was always active in Green Indus-

2000
POY
AWARD

try goings-on and encouraged him to participate in industry activities as well. Hunt took what Brickman said to heart — he's been a member of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America's (ALCA) Crystal Ball Committee since 1980, and served as ALCA's president in 1988. At the time, Ron Kujawa, who is currently chairman of the board of KEI Inc. in Cudahy, WI, was president-elect of ALCA under Hunt.

"We went through some difficult times in the association's early days," Kujawa says. "Bruce and I were the two oldest members when ALCA was restructured. We were able to add the resource of institutional and traditional knowledge — sort of like, 'Been there, done that.' Bruce coined the term 'ALCA magic' for what we had."

Hunt joined a national association like ALCA for a reason. "I was a little reluctant to join local associations because there were competitors as members," he says. "With ALCA, I could participate and contribute knowing I wasn't doing so with competitors."

And participate Hunt did. He was rewarded for his service and commitment in 1994 when ALCA bestowed its Landscape Service Award on him.

"He has a true love of the industry, and he's very much interested in education and the youth coming into the industry," says ALCA president Debra Holder, who noted Hunt's year-to-year involvement with the association's Student Career Days. "He has been instrumental as one of the leaders who helped to make ALCA what it is today."

Gary Thornton, an ALCA member and president of Slice Technologies, not only knows Hunt for his industry contributions but his sense of humor as well. One year, Hunt was in charge of the nominating committee, and Thornton was up for nomination to the executive committee. "He sent me a fax that said a whole bunch of people didn't want me nominated," Thornton says. "He followed it up with another fax that said, 'April Fool's!'"

A lifetime with the Brickmans

With 2000 revenues expected to be in the \$230 million range, The Brickman Group has come a long



Bruce Hunt has been with The Brickman Group since the very beginning.

way since Bruce Hunt first walked in the door in 1961. Originally a design/build firm, the company now offers a full range of landscape services. Recently, it established a West Coast presence for the first time with the purchase of two San Diego-based companies.

Asked why he stayed with the same company for so long, Hunt asked why not? "As long as a company fulfills your need for growth and motivation and stimulation," he says. "I've always had all I've wanted with them. I had a couple opportunities to leave or buy a family business, and I decided not to simply because I saw something in Brickman that was different."

As far as choosing the Green Industry to pursue a professional career in, Hunt has no regrets. He admits that it wasn't necessarily a love of nature that motivated him to enter the industry, but his ability to use his design talents. "What also attracted me was the ability to create something and, 20 years later, drive by a project and see something you've done," Hunt says. "Also, the people and competition in this industry are perceived to be a cut above other industries. The work ethic and integrity seem to attract good people."

WINNER: LAWN CARE

Terry Kurth

**Director of Development, Weed Man U.S.A.,
Middleton, WI**

BY SUE GIBSON

While many of his peers also came of age in lawn care's formative years, few have the impact of Terry Kurth.

Kurth developed a taste for turf on a golf course maintenance crew, then followed up by studying for a B.S. degree in Agronomy from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He interned at nearby Nakoma Country Club. "It inspired me," he recalls.

After working for the State of Wisconsin through 1976, he was recruited as a technical representative for Scotts' Pro Turf organization by Bill Hoopes, now director of training and development at Scotts Lawn Care.

Terry Kurth spent many Saturdays inspecting lawns in the early days of his involvement with Barefoot Grass.



Moonlighting for Marvin

At the same time, Marvin Williams' infant firm, Barefoot Grass, was starting up in Marysville, OH. "There was a real chinch bug problem that summer of 1977, and he needed help making all the lawn inspections and sales. I spent my Saturdays doing that and really enjoyed the work," says Kurth.

Kurth and Barefoot struck a deal, and he moved back to his beloved Wisconsin to start one of Barefoot's first franchises, located in Madison.

Thanks to a \$5,000 line of credit for franchise startup money, Kurth and family resettled in Madison.

"I sold 94 out of 99 leads," he recalls of his first lawn care mailing. "Those were the days. I had about 275 accounts the first year and did about \$44,000 in business."

At the start, it was a one-man operation, he remembers. "It was me, myself and I doing the routes. I remember when my wife went into labor with our first child, I was in the hospital room with one hand on the small of her back and the other hand holding a phone on sales calls. That was motivation! She helped me incubate both the family and our business."

Kurth gradually added employees and opened other Barefoot Grass franchises in Appleton and Green Bay, WI, before expanding into the Austin, TX, market in the late 1980s.

Solving the brown grass mystery

At the peak of Kurth's Barefoot operations, he also owned franchises in Peoria, IL and Lexington, KY for a total of \$3 million in sales.

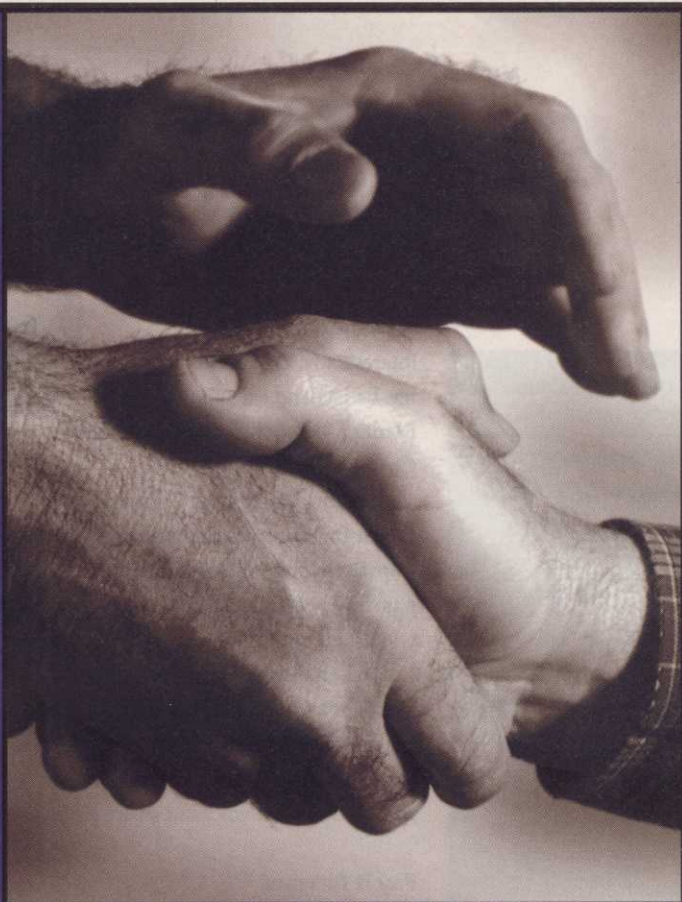
In 1987, that business was jeopardized by a mysterious epidemic of brown grass that plagued his customers' lawns in Madison and Green Bay. Company records pointed to a common denominator: all lawns received a granular fertilizer containing a fungicide. Once atrazine contamination was diagnosed, Kurth called his supplier, who agreed to pay for damage repair for 325 lawns.

During the emergency, Kurth's company educated customers, then enlisted outside landscape firms to repair the lawns. Kurth also sent customers boxes of meats to thank them for understanding.

Industry consolidation eventually came to call in 1997, when Tru-Green-ChemLawn bought Barefoot Grass' operations. Kurth sold his

continued on page 24

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Career highlights

1975

Graduated from University of Wisconsin (B.S. in Agronomy)

1976

Joins Scott's Pro Turf organization

1979

Opens Barefoot Grass franchise in Madison, WI

1985-1992

Expands Barefoot Grass franchises in Midwest and Texas (reaching \$3 million combined sales)

mid-1980s

Becomes active in local and national industry associations

1996-1997

President of PLCAA

1997

TruGreen-Chem-Lawn buys Barefoot; sells Barefoot business

1999

Becomes Weed Man's director of development for U.S. business



continued from page 22

interests to TGCL, and he now has Badgerland Irrigation, a Madison-based firm he co-owns with Curt Winter and Bob Smith.

He also added local Christmas Décor franchises to Badgerland's service mix and is transferring majority ownership to Winter. In the past few years, Kurth managed his interests until he was asked to help Weed Man expand into the U.S.

The challenges are exciting to Kurth as he participates in Weed Man's move: "I compare it to the car rental business. TGCL is like Hertz without a consistent number two, but right now, Weed Man is trying to fill that void and so are several others."

Pay it forward

Although Kurth defines himself as a "typical entrepreneur who gets more fun from growth than from administration," his reputation as an organizational fireball goes back more than 15 years.

Kurth has been actively involved with several organizations, including: the Wisconsin Landscape Federation (where he is currently president elect); Grounds Management Association of Wisconsin (past president); Wisconsin Agri-Business Council (executive board member) and others.

Kurth initially joined PLCAA "for the education and networking," he says, but soon realized that active membership "was my duty, no question about it." He took over as PLCAA president in 1996.

Although he recalls it was a tough year to lead the organization (TGCL bought Barefoot and former executive director Ann McClure departed), Kurth saw it as a personal challenge. "PLCAA has given me opportunities for learning, lobbying and networking. The feeling of being 'family and friends' is huge and through it, I've made a ton of friends. I can never pay back what I've been given but I can pay forward."

It was also a time of uncertainty for PLCAA members and staff. He recalls, "The staff didn't miss a beat, but we were afraid of losing members



due to consolidation. Now, we have Scotts,

Weed Man and other former employees starting their own firms coming into PLCAA. I think there's a definite rebirth within the industry."

Working side by side

"He personifies volunteerism," says Lou Wierichs Jr., president of Pro-X Lawns in Appleton, WI, former PLCAA president and friend of Kurth since the late 1980s. Both men work together on GMAW and Wisconsin Landscape Federation projects, as well as PLCAA projects.

"He has a propensity for making money and is a smart businessman," Wierichs says. "He also shows unselfishness, is honest and is loyal. I trust him — we're close to being like brothers."

Kurth's strong leadership qualities made an impression on Karen Weber, PLCAA's associate vice president/communications director. "He always has the good of the industry at heart and is someone who cares," she says.

Those who show up

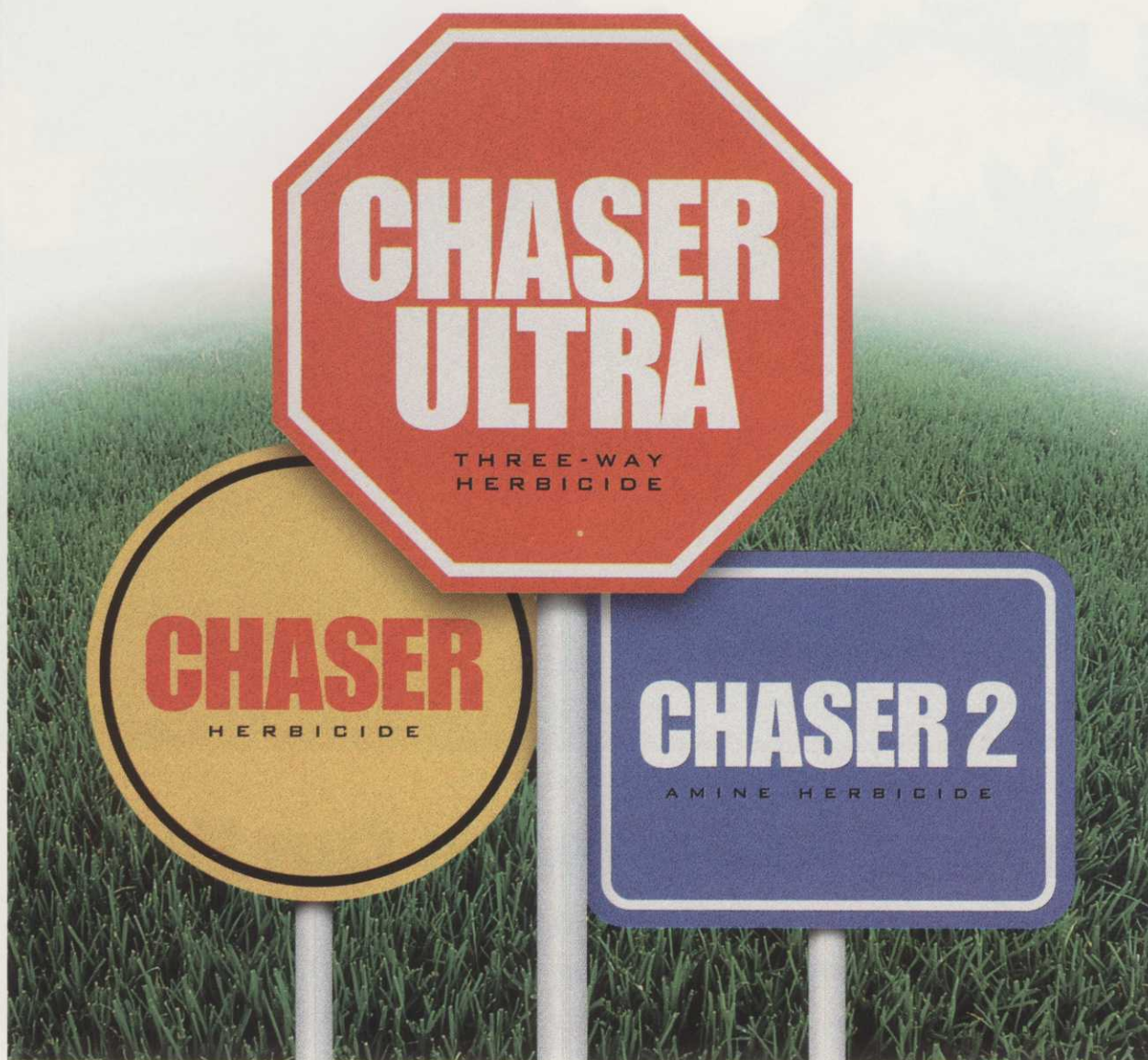
Once Kurth learned about the Ambassador speaking program started by RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), he was hooked.

"I talked to Allen James, RISE president, and got PLCAA involved. We got funding and commitments to speak, then set up a training program," he explains.

Asked if he has trouble saying "no," Kurth admitted he continues to be involved with groups espousing the politics he supports, such as the NFIB's initiatives to limit government intrusion into small business. "Most entrepreneurs are autocratic at first, then they start delegating," he explains. "But I don't want someone who doesn't understand my business making judgments for me."

Despite Kurth's busy work with Weed Man, look for him to continue his involvement with PLCAA and other industry issues. The way he sees it, there isn't any alternative. "This world is run by those who just show up," he says.

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WINNER: GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

Kevin O'Donnell

**Superintendent of Grounds,
Villanova University, Philadelphia, PA**

BY RON HALL

Thirty-nine down and eleven to go. That's how Kevin O'Donnell describes climbing, one of his favorite hobbies. He's a member of the Highpointers, a national club of 1,800 people whose goal is to climb the highest points in each of the 50 states. So far, he's made it to the top of 39 of them — from Florida's Britton Hill at 346 ft. to California's Mt. Whitney which rises over 14,000 ft.

Challenges? They come in all sizes for O'Donnell, Superintendent of Grounds for Villanova University, Philadelphia, PA. But we didn't select him to be our "Person of the Year" in grounds management because of his mountaineering. We're honoring him because of the incredible range of services he offers to a great university. We also felt his willingness to advance the profession of groundskeeping at both the regional and national levels should be recognized.

Life at Villanova

At Villanova, his professional responsibilities include not only maintaining the grounds at the 220-acre campus but also managing the university motor pool, overseeing road maintenance, trash collection/recycling and, within the past several years, roof maintenance.

"The diversity presents some unique challenges," O'Donnell admits.

"Kevin keeps a clear focus even when our environment gets chaotic," adds Chuck Leeds, one of several supervisors who work with Kevin at the university. "We share some responsibilities and we have a very close working relationship. Actually, we have to — three of us share a 20 by 30 ft. office."

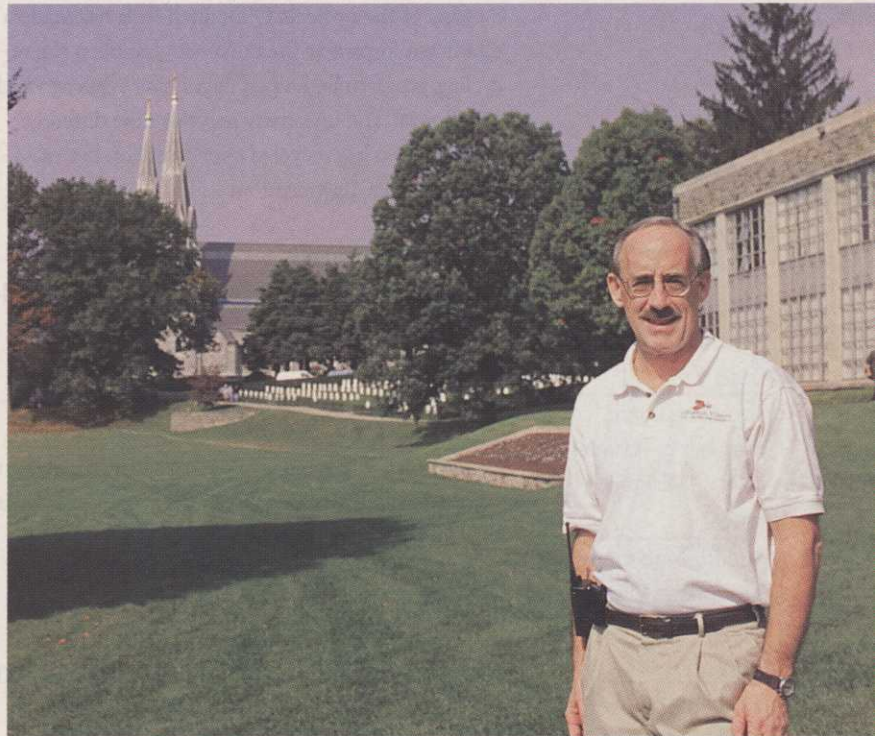
O'Donnell has been involved with many initiatives at Villanova, say university officials. One of them was serving on the Villanova Quality Improvement (VQI) council.

"The council originally had over 30 people on it from all walks of life and from all positions at the university," explains John Kelley, Ph.D., VQI Director. "We had a marvelous mix of faculty, administrators and staff of all kinds." Kelley said that O'Donnell embraced the positive suggestions arising from the VQI council and started self-directed work teams.

"The teams really got fired up and they took the initiative for many fascinating landscape projects," says Kelley.

"More recently, Kevin was a founding member of our environmental team of about 15 fa-

continued on page 28



Kevin O'Donnell on Villanova's arboretum campus.

2000
POY
AWARD

Career highlights

1977

Park Superintendent at Lower Salford Twp., PA

1983

Founding board member of Philadelphia PGMS Branch

1990

Superintendent of grounds at Villanova University

1991

Establishes recycling program at Villanova

1993

Establishes arboretum on Villanova campus

2000

Serves as president of PGMS

2000

Serves as president of GIE board



continued from page 27

cility administrators and staff. The team is looking at all phases of the environment here at Villanova," explains Kelley. "Not just grounds, but it's examining areas such as energy audits, resource conservation and emissions."

One of the projects O'Donnell feels has made a significant impact at the university has been the recycling program he helped begin nine years ago and still directs. The university recycles nine different products and has recycled over 5 million lbs. of products since its inception.

Working his way up

O'Donnell has taken a circuitous career path to Villanova, starting with his grade school days on Long Island, NY, and continuing as an undergraduate studying forestry at Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR.

"My plan was to go into parks management. I envisioned myself working out in the woods, maybe in a natural area," he explains.

In fact, after one year with a private landscape firm, that's what he did. His grounds career began as parks supervisor at Lower Salford Twp., a Philadelphia area community with about 500 acres of primarily rural parkland dotted with historical homes.

After three years at that position, he took a similar post at nearby Upper Dublin Twp. The new job brought more responsibility, including maintaining ball fields, picnics areas and walking/jogging trails. He was the supervisor for the parks maintenance program for 10 years before being selected for the Villanova University position just over 10 years ago.

Dedication to grounds professionals

It was during these years at the community parks that O'Donnell became involved with the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS), starting as a founding board member of its

Philadelphia branch. He served several years as president of this branch and eventually was named to the board of the national PGMS. His route to its presidency started six years ago when he served as Northeast Director of the national PGMS.

During his term as president this past year, O'Donnell set himself several goals including:

- ▶ offering greater opportunities for individual professional growth to all grounds personnel,
- ▶ spreading the word about the PGMS,
- ▶ developing a stronger relationship with PGMS branches, and
- ▶ strengthening the relationship with strategic partners such as the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers (APPA) and the American Public Works Association (APWA).

"He's done a fantastic job of holding us together and bringing our branches and many of our members closer together," says George Van Haasteren, Jr./CGM, in describing the job O'Donnell has done this past year as PGMS president.

"I'm definitely fortunate in having Kevin ahead of me because he's making my job so much easier when I become the president," adds Van Haasteren, the PGMS president for 2001.

It's been O'Donnell's efforts as a grounds professional at Villanova, however, that excite us most about honoring him.

"I have worked with Kevin in a number of capacities for approximately the last 10 years. I have always found him to be very committed to the mission of Villanova," says Helen Lafferty, Ph.D., University Vice President. "He is generous with his time and he does whatever is necessary to enhance the beauty of our university."

"It's always a pleasure to work on projects with Kevin because he approaches them in a can-do manner. One of his greatest accomplishments in my opinion was the naming of the Villanova campus as an arboretum.

"We are not only a better place because of his presence, we are a more beautiful place," Dr. Lafferty concludes.



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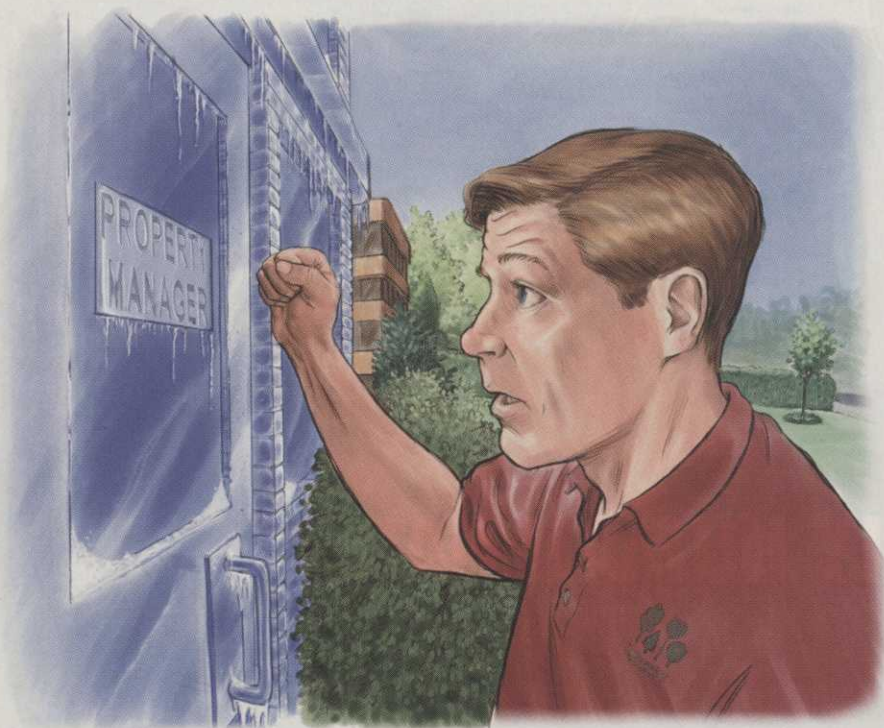
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20 WAYS TO make cold calling work



Most people fear cold calling, but it's a proven way to boost sales. Learn how to make your landscape calls more effective

BY MR. PER

Two words that strike fear into the hearts of even the most experienced sales people are: cold calls. What is it about approaching an unfamiliar door that tightens the stomach and messes with our minds? I was physically pushed through my first "cold" door and ran out before the prospect could say anything.

Before I worked in the landscape industry, I sold coupons door-to-door for comedy clubs and paintball fields. In just under three years, I made more than 50,000 in-person business cold calls. You think your employee turnover is high? Try coupon sales.

Time to meet and greet

Have you ever gone to a meeting, met someone for the first time and ended up talking like friends? If you have, you can cold call. Successful cold calling is meeting someone new, starting a conversation and leaving on friendly terms.

Selling has nothing to do with successful cold calling. When was the last time you made a cold call and walked out with a contract? It's probably been a while, if at all. Successful cold calling in the landscape industry is about gathering information. Rather than cold call, go on "property visits." Stop by, visit the property, gain new information and leave a friendly success.

Here are 20 ideas to make this process work. It's not complicated if you plan ahead.

7 ways to prepare

Preparation is everything. Try these steps first:

- 1.** *Dress for success.* Good options are cotton khaki pants, a golf shirt with a company logo (if available) and casual shoes. Carry a clean shirt in your truck.
- 2.** *Plan your visits the day before.* Emergencies do come up, but remember to block out time to visit the properties the day before. And don't forget to tell the crew.
- 3.** *Focus on seeing people — not writing proposals.* Don't worry about submitting a proposal at first — focus on and engage people. Give them your full concentration and you will end up submitting more proposals.
- 4.** *Work around your current properties.* Start at a property you maintain well and go to the next suitable one. Use that current property in your introduction. "Have you noticed how nice that property down the street looks?" After they answer "yes," add, "I'm glad to hear that because my company does the landscaping. Who here oversees your landscape contractor?" Remember to stay in the neighborhood. You don't make money driving your truck around.
- 5.** *Drop names.* If one of your property managers gives you permission, use his or her name. You could say, "Sue at Pine Ridge Apartments uses us for her landscaping and she suggested I stop in and introduce myself."
- 6.** *Leave the phone in the truck.* If your crew cannot go an hour without calling you, you may need to manage your operations better before growing your business.
- 7.** *Lead from the front.* If you want your foremen to go on property visits, you need to be out front and go on some yourself. I've always found it challenging to inspire someone to visit properties while I'm sitting in the office.

Tough numbers, but it works

According to Mr. Per, cold calling on property visits results in the following approximate numbers. (These are for acquiring commercial landscape maintenance contracts.)

- ▶ It takes 20 to 25 cold property visits to find one highly qualified proposal (meaning they're going to change contractors and will seriously consider a proposal.)
- ▶ It takes four to five proposals to close one sale.
- ▶ It takes 80 to 125 cold property visits to result in one sale.

Make face time work

Face time is the most critical element of your cold call. These ideas have worked for me:

- 8.** *Pick up trash.* When you visit a property, pick up some trash. The office manager will never tell you "no soliciting" or "we're not interested" when you walk in with two handfuls of trash. Treat a potential property as if you already maintain it and you're more likely to get that job.
- 9.** *Walk quickly.* Move from your truck to the door as fast as you can without jogging. This builds your energy and leaves less time to think, and we all know what we think about when approaching a "cold" door. When you pick up trash, do it quickly.
- 10.** *Always stand while waiting.* If you have to wait, always stand to command more respect and attention. The receptionist is more likely to take action on your behalf when he or she realizes you don't expect to wait long enough to sit down.
- 11.** *Get your hands out of your pockets.* Jangling coins or keys is a great way to annoy or distract someone.
- 12.** *Avoid questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no."* The worst question to ask is, "Are you looking for proposals?" Regardless of the answer, you'll gain no relevant information. Ask questions that use "how" in them or lead to other open-ended options. Examples include, "How long has your current contractor worked with you?" or "What's your biggest property maintenance challenge?"

Selling has nothing to do with successful cold calling.

continued on page 34

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



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TEAM ^c	H	M	M	M	M	M	NR	NR
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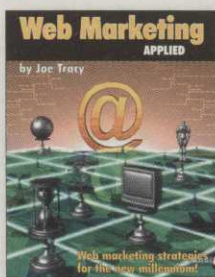
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13. *Be short on practice, long on experience.* Practice only tells you what you're good at practicing. Real life tells you what you need to practice. Get out of your truck and start talking!

14. *Write down the most common questions you hear.* Then, write your best answers to these questions, and read that list daily. Practice doesn't make perfect, but it builds confidence.

15. *Be positive in all you say and do.* Everything you say and do will be associated with you. If you tell someone that his or her current contractor is giving bad service, he or she will associate this negative comment with you. Be professional and concentrate on problem solving or positive ideas.

16. *Offer your business card at the end of the meeting.* If you walk in and offer your business card right away, the receptionist may say, "We have your card. We will call you." Now what do you do? Offer your card when you leave, unless they ask for it earlier.

Follow-up right away

There are several methods for following up, but these have worked well:

17. *Send your thanks — today.* Hire a local creative person (college

students are great at this) to make a good-looking and unique company postcard to send as a follow-up. Write a thank you note for every business card you collect. Your handwriting can't be any worse than mine, so don't skip this step.

18. *Write down all you learned.* You'll have it for later reference.

19. *Schedule your follow-up before leaving the property.* What action are you going to take next — another visit, a mailing?

20. *Get out of your truck.* Truck time doesn't make you any money. Make that call!

I suggest you add 80% to 90% of your new properties from referrals and 10% to 20% from cold calling. Cold calling isn't the answer to everything, but it will give you confidence to use in all areas of your life. I also think you're more likely to close a referral proposal because of your confidence from "cold" visiting.

The author moved on from selling coupons to working with Environmental Care and U.S. Lawns in marketing and sales support. He now serves as a consultant to the Green Industry and can be reached at 407/210-3666.

One of the water treatment cells just six months after planting the bulrushes.



Creating a Desert Wetland

BY DON DALE

It's an odd place to find wetlands, and it's no surprise that man created it. Right now, it looks like any other suburban development lake system, but eventually it will look more natural and help clean up water. The City of Avondale, AZ, built its Wetlands of Avondale right in the middle of the desert and the Crystal Gardens housing development. It's designed to help clean up river water before it goes into the city's water system.

"This was a cotton field, or whatever they were growing at the time," says Tom Georgio, Avondale facility director for the water treatment plant just west of Phoenix.

The wetlands is not a natural area in the traditional sense — it's a series of interconnected water treatment cells interspersed among housing lots, landscaped to provide water purification and an aquatic wildlife habitat.

Water from the Agua Fria River, destined for groundwater recharge basins, must first have nitrates and phosphates removed. The lakes are designed to do that, as well as provide landscaping for the growing subdivision.

"The plants will take out 'x' amount of nutrients, and you have bacteria and microbes that will take out the other nutrients," says senior water treatment operator Martin Nanna.

continued on page 36

Water destined for groundwater recharge basins must first have the nitrates and phosphates removed.

These lakes are designed to do that, as well as provide landscaping for the growing subdivision.

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The system, designed by Integrated Water Technologies of Santa Barbara, CA, uses bulrushes to clean the water. But installing 121,290 plants was a big job because the lined lakes had no planting medium after excavation.

Bottoms of the 21 separate lakes, or cells — which cover 72.2 surface acres and vary in depth from 8 to 15 ft. — were lined with 30-mm PVC liner overlain with a geotextile mesh fabric that protects the liner. Textured concrete lines the sides of the cells, which are curbed to prevent overspill.

Islands in the centers of lakes selected for planting were built up inside rock re-

the sand, 3 ft. apart, and water levels were slowly adjusted upward as the plants germinated and developed shoots. After the plants were up and thriving, the water was leveled off at 18 in. above the islands' sand base.

"We were trying to keep the soil saturated but not drown the plants," says Patrick Murphree, project manager for Western Sod, the contractor hired to install plants grown by a Colorado nursery for this project. Once the plants mature, they will spread by sending out rhizomes and new shoots.

Planting challenges

"You'll probably have better luck if you fluctuate water levels in the spring," Murphree says of encouraging new shoots in established bulrush populations. He notes that the tubers were planted with 15 grams of 23-13-0 slow-release granular fertilizer per plant.

"We dug a hole, dropped the fertilizer in and dropped the tuber in," he says.

The fertilizer was to last six months, after which the nutrients in the lake would supply all of the bulrushes' needs.

The different bulrush species were selected because each grows to a different height, giving the lakes a natural look. But the three-square bulrushes apparently didn't like the water level because they all died.

Some parts of the islands' bulrushes didn't germinate, Georgio says, because tubers were uprooted by wave action caused by high winds. That happened in areas

where water leveled off above the sand. It's better to saturate the sand and not let the water surface at all during the sprouting period, he says.

A system with a purpose

Although the city owns the lakes and 15 ft. of land surrounding them, the subdivision's developer owns the adjacent land and is in charge of its vegetation. The developer planted the turf areas adjacent to the lakes as well as the trees. Turfed surrounds are designed as shallow trenches to catch runoff from streets before it can get into the lakes, preventing toxic petrochemicals from upsetting aquatic life.

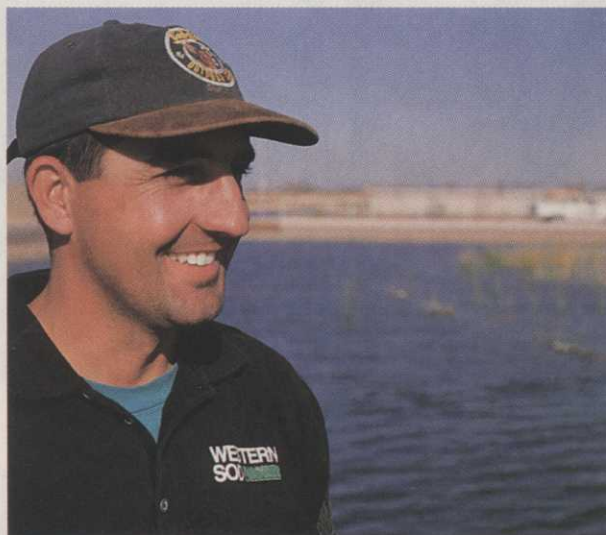
Georgio says that 24-in. pipe connects the cells, which are designed so that all water flows by gravity, eliminating the need for pumps. On a normal day, 4 1/2 million gallons of water flow through the system. The system can handle 13 1/2 million total gallons.

"We can bypass the entire system and go right to the recharge," Georgio says of the facility, where construction started in 1996. The last cell was finished late in 1998.

Plant maintenance is still in the planning stages for the city, Georgio says. "They will be cut once or twice a year," he says, keeping the 8-ft. tall plants attractive. Sections of bulrushes in each lake will be cut alternately for aesthetic purposes, and plant material will be removed.

"It just makes a conducive environment for recharging water," says Nanna.

By the time the water goes through the lakes and seeps through the four sandy recharge basins nearby, it will be potable. At times, the water might even be drinkable after it leaves the treatment cells, but that isn't the purpose of the system. The city will get its drinking water from wells drilled near the recharge basins, complying



Patrick Murphree managed the installation of plants for the Avondale project.

taining walls, and 13 in. of screened sand was laid down on top of the islands to provide a growing medium. "It was material that came out of the basins," Georgio says.

The plants were the giant bulrush (*Scirpus californicus*), the three-square bulrush (*Scirpus americanus*) and the hard stem bulrush (*Scirpus acutis*).

The bulrushes were planted as tubers in

with state groundwater protection laws.

Inlet and outlet pipes in each lake are positioned in the middle of the bulrush areas so that new water will be forced through the plants, providing maximum cleaning potential. All of the cells but one have been planted.

In addition, fish have been stocked in the lakes. There will be some urban fishing allowed, but the fish have other purposes.

"Some are for insect control and some are for algae control," Georgio says. Koy take care of the insects, and tilapia handle the algae.

Tim Thompson, vice president of Inte-

grated Water Technologies and a designer of the project, says this is a unique water treatment system in that it uses bacteria on the bulrushes to clean the pollutants and is located in a residential subdivision.

"That's very new," Thompson says of the system's characteristics.

Two of the bulrushes are native to California and Arizona. They will go partly dormant during the winter and green up in the spring.

"It's a part of assuring our own water



Tom Georgio, facility director for Avondale's water treatment plant.

supply for growth," Georgio says of the water system for the city of 26,000, a number expected to double in five years. The cost of the system was about \$11 million without landscaping, a huge savings over a conventional sewage treatment system.

The result is not an unsightly water treatment facility but an attractive lake system for Avondale that is home to a number of egrets, herons and other birds. **LMI**

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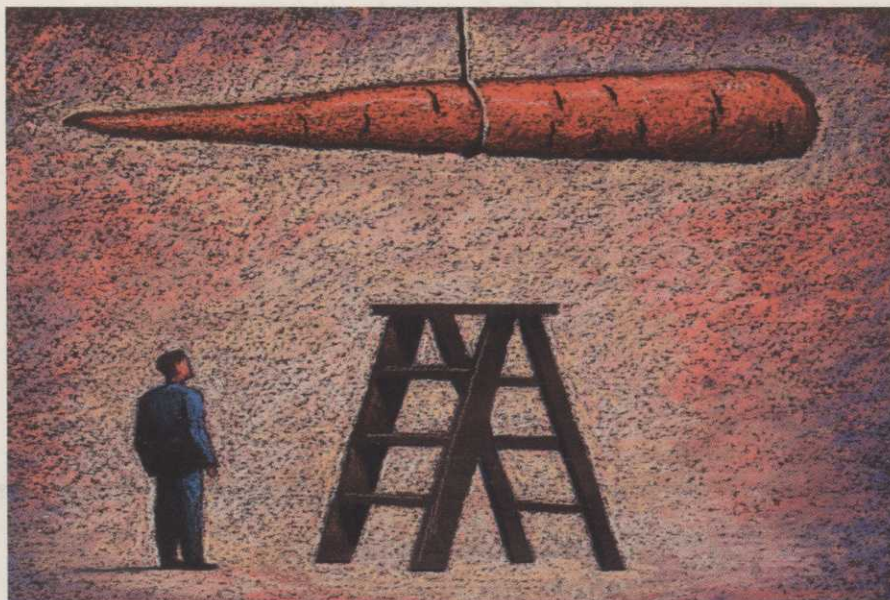


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They don't participate

Some employees are reluctant to participate in training, yet may need it the most. Here are some tips to get them involved



BY JIM PALUCH

I often wonder why someone wouldn't want to participate in a training program. Many companies tell me they only have a few employees who won't participate, yet it's a problem.

Here are some reasons why they may not be "in the loop:"

- ▶ They don't understand the program.
- ▶ They're afraid of being called on and not knowing the answer.
- ▶ They may be lazy and not want to do thinking exercises.
- ▶ They may worry about others improving and passing them by, so they try to hold everyone back.
- ▶ They may have a learning disorder they want to conceal.
- ▶ They've never participated before – this is just another in a long line.
- ▶ They want attention, and get it by being

contrary.

- ▶ Their low opinion of training stems from a low opinion of themselves.
- ▶ They're tired of the same person training, yet won't offer any suggestions themselves.
- ▶ They're unaware of how training can control costs, improve service, reduce accidents and improve morale.
- ▶ They've always sat in the back of the room and don't want to change.

This list could go on, but I believe every non-participant can participate and would have incredible ideas if they had the courage to speak up. It's a fact that those who step to the plate and participate move ahead in life and their careers.

Some non-participants may want to join in but are influenced by others who are negative. I wonder what they think is more important — sitting silently in the back or im-

proving at work and earning their families' appreciation?

Rethink your sessions

There is no magic fix to motivating the unmotivated, but here are a few suggestions that might work:

- ▶ One of the worst things to do is pay too much attention to non-participants. That's what they may want. You might reverse the situation and ask them not to participate and give them a break from training for a few weeks. Tell them you're covering some in-depth stuff with key people who are participating in training and they don't need to be there unless they want to.
- ▶ Hold a session called "idealistic redesign." Tell everyone you'll redesign the meetings next week and brainstorm ideas to make them more effective for everyone. In the process, you may find ideas to improve your sessions and hear why some don't want to participate.
- ▶ Use a film clip (see LM October, page 40) to liven up training.
- ▶ Give non-participants some Silly String. When they hear a good idea, let them set it off.
- ▶ Give a certificate for training or offer motivational prizes.
- ▶ Hold a meeting on "Why I Hate Training." Play funeral music with the lights low. Try to get at least 50 reasons, then pick the top five and ask for ideas on how to fix them.

— The author is president of JP Horizons Inc., and is a well-known trainer and consultant to the Green Industry. He can be reached at: 440/254-8211 or email: jpaluch@jphorizons.com

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Property at a glance

Location: Chene Park, Detroit, MI

Staff: Davey Commercial Grounds Management

Category: Park, recreation area or athletic field

Total budget: \$247,000

Year site built: 1978

Acres of turf: 10.5

Acres of woody ornamentals: 1.3

Acres of display beds: 2.1

Total paved area: 6.5

Total man-hours/week: 180

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Location — Central inner city Detroit
- ▶ Full event schedule
- ▶ Steep slopes over terrain

Project checklist

(Completed in last two years):

- ▶ Re-engineering of water feature
- ▶ Incorporation of perennials
- ▶ New record keeping system

On the job

- ▶ 3 full-time staff, 2 seasonal employees, 1 licensed pesticide applicator

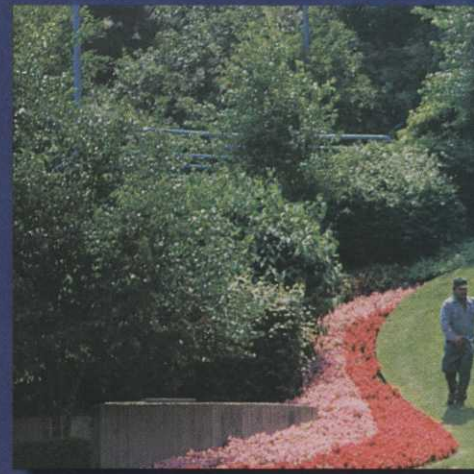
Chene Park

The 1999 Grand Award Winner of the Professional Grounds Management Society for Park, Recreation Area or Athletic Field

Put a park smack dab in the middle of inner city Detroit and what do you get? One big maintenance hassle, that's what. Gang members and the homeless play no small part in creating that nightmare, which includes debris, vandalism and graffiti that are handled daily as top priority.

It's the Davey Commercial Grounds Management crew that makes sure Chene Park keeps its reputation as the crown jewel of Detroit's Riverfront Parks. This includes stripping and resodding the turf surrounding the 5,000-seat amphitheater that attracts lots of traffic as it is used for concerts, graduations and civic affairs. Trampled flowers are replaced daily from a supply of backups grown off-site. Steep slopes make for scenic terrain for visitors, but provide a challenge to mowing crews.

But it isn't all mowing and cleaning up graffiti at Chene Park. For instance, take the water features, which act as storm water management ponds. They weren't engineered properly to maintain consistent levels, so the Davey crews re-



Slopes create mowing challenges but provide vivid displays of the landscape.

engineered the overflow/drainage system to divert excess water into the Detroit River.

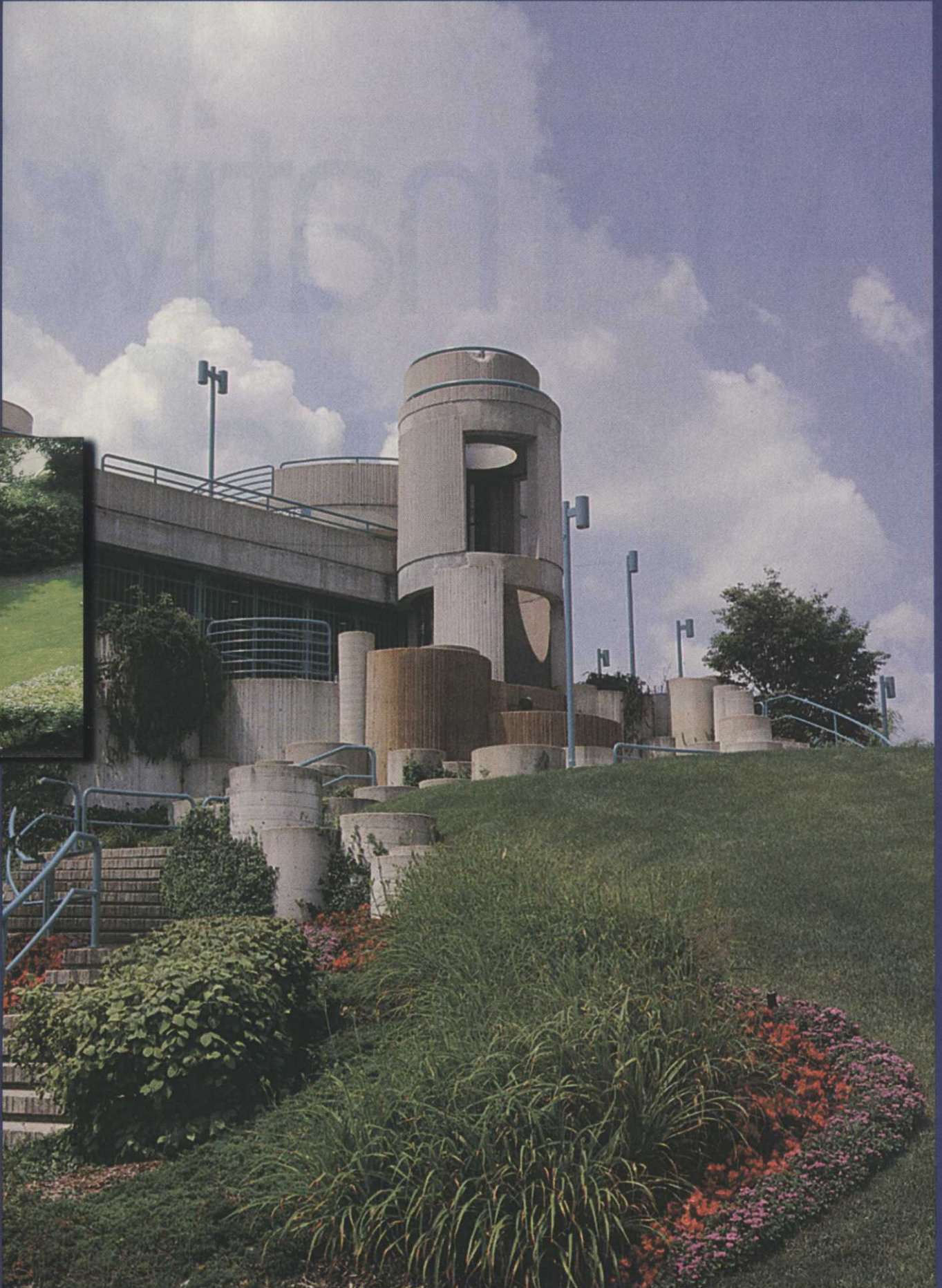
If these weren't challenges enough, the Davey managers must meet the requirements of a detailed monthly reporting system so approval from as many as eight levels of city officials is granted in a timely fashion. Aspirin, anyone?

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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

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Perennials accent the annuals and ornamental plantings in front of a site that used to be a cement plant.



Alternative for turf

Surprising materials such as silica and bacteria may offer new treatment options to solve difficult turfgrass problems

BY DOUG BREDE, PH.D.

For centuries, Chinese herbalists have been treating human ailments using ancient remedies extracted from plants and minerals. Over generations, these practitioners have developed naturalistic cures for diseases ranging from migraines and cancer to tennis elbow. Western medicine initially scoffed at acupuncture and tree branch extracts treating disease. But now modern science is taking a second look and finding some genuine benefits to these methods. Unfortunately for us, the Chinese never used their healing powers on lawns.

Recently, however, a cottage industry of alternative remedies has sprung up virtually overnight to treat many turf maladies.

I'm not talking about snake oil products of the past century — I'm talking about actual alternative cures discovered and refined by some of today's leading turf experts.

Once upon a time, silica was an obscure fertilizer component. Now, due to its curative

medicine

properties on agronomic pests, it's entered the mainstream. Today, a large proportion of U.S. rice and sugarcane crops are sprayed with silica for protection from pests. In the last few years, major agricultural conferences have focused on this mineral's healing power.

Surprising silica

Silica is a by-product of phosphate fertilizer mining. After phosphate is extracted, a water-soluble silica slurry remains. Initially, engineers had a tough time getting rid of it — until agronomists learned that applying it to crops enabled them to fight certain pests, particularly fungal diseases.

Strangely enough, silica is everywhere. Soil and sand are chock-full of silica. But plants can't get it because it's in a fixed form unavailable to them.

"Our soils are high in silica, but it's not soluble silica," explains Dick Schmidt, turf professor emeritus at Virginia Tech. "The plants have no way of taking it up." Soluble silica — applied to the foliage via spraying — is the only way of getting silica into the plant.

Recent work at several



Virginia Tech research associate X. Zhang examines a plant's response to applications of an alternative remedy. Zhang and VT professor Dick Schmidt are searching for treatments that can boost the plant's natural ability to fend off diseases.

northeastern universities has shown that silica can be used to treat a range of common turf diseases (see Table 1). Schmidt concentrated his work on dollar spot disease. Other scientists have found activity of silica against pythium blight, gray leaf spot, brown patch and powdery mildew.

Schmidt advises not to expect miracles from these natural remedies. "It doesn't mean we can throw away our fungicides. Silica will reduce disease

but it seldom eliminates it."

Instead of killing pests, silica makes plants more repellent to them. "These silica products 'influence' — or as I like to say, 'condition' — the plant to ward off disease and prevent senescence. It doesn't kill the pathogen like a fungicide would," he says.

Schmidt wanted to learn how silica and other natural concoctions allow the grass plant to repel adversaries. He discovered that silica bolsters

the natural antioxidant levels in grass. "Foliar applications of silica enhanced super oxide dismutase — an important antioxidant in plants," he reported.

What's an antioxidant? Basically, it's a rust inhibitor. The cell machinery in plants can actually "rust" or oxidize. When it does, the plant becomes less vigorous. Boosting the antioxidant level is like spraying your grass with Rustoleum®.

Other studies have shown that silica can be used during



Bioject system in operation – Applications of mineral, herbal and biological treatments have been effective against this disease, *Sclerotinia dollar spot*. One word of caution though: These natural remedies may boost a plant's resistance to the pest, but they rarely offer the 100% effectiveness of a commercial pesticide.

best when used as a preventive, rather than curative. Apply them *before* the disease occurs, rather than in the midst of an active outbreak. During active disease, you're better off treating with a proven fungicide.

Alternative cures break the link in the so-called "Disease Triangle": Diseases occur when the right environment teams up with the right host and the right pest. "If we can make that host more fit," says Schmidt, "we can help it fend off pests."

Bug versus bug

In recent years, biological pest control has gone from the lab to the playing field, thanks in part to research work by Joe Vargas, professor at Michigan State University's Botany and Plant Pathology department. One day in the lab, Vargas came across a bacteria with incredible powers.

"We get a lot of turf samples in our diagnostic lab, and sometimes when we can't identify something, we isolate the pathogen in a petri dish. In this one sample, we got bacteria that didn't let anything else grow on the petri plate. I thought some day it might make a pretty good biological control," he says.

And sure enough, it worked. "When we put it on (turf) with repeated applications, we got control of dollar spot," says Vargas. Later, he got control of *Microdochium patch*,

(fusarium patch or pink snow mold).

But, it wasn't as simple as spraying it on one time and vaccinating the turf for life. Living organisms have a way of, well, dying.

"That's the big drawback with all of these microbes," he says. "Everybody envisions having the world's greatest microbe for pest control — you simply put it out there and it pushes all the others out of the way and you never have any more disease. Let me tell you, it doesn't work that way."

Vargas soon learned that without repeated applications of his TX-1 super bacteria, there was too little of it around to control the pest. His next project was to determine how many repeated applications were enough to do the job.

First, he teamed up with engineers at Ecosoils Inc., a biotech startup company dealing in biological controls. They found that by infusing the microbe into the irrigation system, the grass could be bathed in a daily disease-controlling brew. Later, they refined their technique, applying the bacteria only during the morning 'syringe' cycle — a short splash of irrigation that coats the plant but doesn't rinse the microbe into the soil.

Unfortunately, efforts to introduce their invention into the non-irrigated segment of the

continued on page 46

These alternative medicines work best when used on a preventive, rather than curative, basis.

turf establishment to hasten growth and slow seedling diseases. Eric Nelson and his Cornell University colleagues found that establishment rate (biomass) could be doubled by silica applications, and *Pythium aphanidermatum* reduced damping-off disease.

Their report concluded: "Applications of soluble silica can hasten establishment, but pythium controls may (still) be necessary." In other words, silica worked. But it did not offer the *picture-perfect control* we've come to expect with commercial fungicide products.

Living with less control

In an industry that's come to expect the perfect lawn, it's logical to ask: Can we tolerate less-than-ultimate pest control?

A good rule-of-thumb is: Alternative medicines work

TABLE 1. ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES FOR YOUR TURF

Though these products don't guarantee the 99% effectiveness we've come to expect from chemical pesticides, they do offer alternative control solutions when pests are not at their max.

PRODUCT

HOW TO APPLY IT / WHAT IT CONTROLS

MINERAL REMEDIES

Silica Soluble forms of silica such as potassium silicate, calcium silicate, or silicate (SiO₂) can be sprayed at a rate of 7 lb. per 1000 ft². Dick Schmidt used Kasil #1 at 20 to 40 fl. oz. per 1000 ft². (information on the product can be found at www.pgcorp.com/Lines/PS.htm.)

Lawrence Datnoff found silica fights gray leaf spot, Marty Petrovic found activity against pythium blight, and Schmidt found it works against dollar spot. In other studies, silica applications reduced brown patch disease by 10 to 20%, and also had activity on powdery mildew.

Sulfur Sulfur is an inexpensive yellow powder available through many horticulture supply houses. It can be sprayed or dusted on the foliage at a rate of 1 to 2 lbs. per 1000 ft² for control of fungal pests.

Roy Goss found that sulfur controls Microdochium patch. Pete Dernoeden found good control of take-all patch. Bruce Clark and Jim Murphy found a 23% to 42% reduction in take-all patch from using ammonium sulfate fertilizer. Sulfur is also used to treat powdery mildew. Goss concocted a sulfur regiment for *poa annua* control in creeping bentgrass turf, though Vargas admits, "it might do the job, but God help the patient."

Manganese Microelements like manganese (not to be confused with magnesium) are usually applied as a spray solution in either the mineral or chelate form.

Charles Peacock and his associates discovered that foliar applications of manganese reduce brown patch disease and even bentgrass summer decline.

Iron Iron chelate is a safer but more expensive alternative to iron sulfate. Both forms are generally applied as a spray because of the small quantities required.

Tara McLeod, agronomist for the New Zealand Turf Institute, discovered that monthly applications of iron sulfate at 1.7 lbs. per 1000 ft² effectively eliminated clover, slender speedwell, dandelion, and daisy from sports turf. Iron applications also control moss and cow grass and can mask the symptoms of fairy ring and yellow tuft.

Nitrogen Fast-release nitrogen fertilizer can be used to grow a turf out of many pest problems. N can be sprayed as a liquid or applied as a dry granular and irrigated to activate. A rate of 1 lb. per 1000 ft² solves many problems; a half rate is recommended for delicate turf areas.

Dollar spot, rust, red thread, pink patch, anthracnose, necrotic ring spot, summer patch, melting out and leaf spot can be reduced by nitrogen applications, according to Vargas. Nitrogen even benefits so-called "high-nitrogen diseases" like pythium and stripe smut, when applied after the disease has run its course, aiding recovery. Nitrogen can similarly help repair damage from insect outbreaks. Daniel Potter and his colleagues found it vital in promoting recovery from grubs. Legume weeds, like clover and black medic, can be reduced or eliminated by periodic nitrogen treatments.

Phosphorus Most phosphate products take far too long to dissolve and activate to aid in pest control. Quickly soluble sources like diammonium phosphate (DAP) can be dissolved and sprayed for faster action and medicinal effects.

Regular phosphate applications reduced crabgrass and dandelion populations to 5% from 26%, according to work by Wayne Huffine. Foliar sprays of soluble phosphate have also been shown to have a mild curative effect on brown patch disease.

Corn gluten This livestock feed product exhibits pre-emergence activity on crabgrass and other annual weeds. It also functions as a slow-release, natural fertilizer, containing 10% N.

Nick Christians discovered the herbicidal side-effects accidentally and has gone on to patent it for turf. Rates of 100 lbs. per 1000 ft² are needed for 95% crabgrass control. Work by Tom Turner has found mixed results of gluten, depending on the year, rate, and weather.

continued on page 46

continued from page 45

HERBAL REMEDIES

Salicylic acid — Salicylic acid is the white dusting you find on the surface of many plants, most notably on the bark of aspen trees. Aspirin is a derivative of salicylic acid. It is a natural protectant in plants that shields against oxidation and stimulates healing.

Xanthomonas — Suspensions of *Xanthomonas* bacteria can be sprayed on the turf on weekly intervals or injected through the sprinkling system for control of *poa annua* (annual bluegrass).

LIVE BIOLOGICAL REMEDIES

Pseudomonas — Michigan State University's TX-1 strain of *Pseudomonas* can be injected via a BioJet appliance into the irrigation system for disease suppression.

Nematodes — Seven different strains of beneficial nematodes are available for control of insect pests. Nematodes are microscopic pinworms, applied alive, that parasitize certain insect pests. However, when sprayed on, most will dry out and die. Granular applications are preferable. (A list of suppliers can be found online at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/IN/IN09600.pdf>)

Schmidt has used salicylic acid to improve fitness against disease and even to enhance frost and cold tolerance. "We buy salicylic acid by the 10-lb. bag and it's cheap," he says. His recent studies have had more success with root applications — rather than foliar.

Japanese researchers, led by S. Imaizumi, found reductions in annual bluegrass populations of up to 75% from certain strains of *Xanthomonas*. Kentucky bluegrass, bentgrass, and zoysia were unharmed. Recent work by Vargas confirmed these findings. He found additional *Poa* control by mixing PGR (plant growth regulator) with the bacterial suspension. Work at the University of Massachusetts found that *Xanthomonas* works better against the annual strain of *Poa annua* than the perennial strain.

Pseudomonas bacteria has shown activity against dollar spot, brown patch, and pythium diseases. It also shows minor activity against anthracnose, leaf spot, take-all patch, bermudagrass decline, necrotic ring spot, summer patch, pink snow mold, and gray leaf spot, according to Vargas. However, under severe disease pressure, fungicides are still required. Graham Davis reported a 27 to 33% reduction in dollar spot severity from TX-1, when tallied across an entire growing season.

Nematodes are effective against grubs, mole crickets, caterpillars, and soil inhabiting larva. Beneficial nemas are particularly "host specific," meaning that a given strain of nematode is picky, preferring certain insect pests over others. Be sure to get the right strain for your intended critter.

continued from page 44
turf market have met with frustration. "If you don't spray at least every other day, it won't work. That's the big secret nobody wants told," he says. Vargas envisions no effective way to apply the microbes through traditional landscape spreaders or sprayers. Only applications through a sophisti-

cated, computer-based irrigation injection system have proven successful.

"As far as I'm concerned, TX-1 is the end of the line," says Vargas. "What needs to be done now is to make better fermenters, injectors or even irrigation systems specifically for applying biological controls."

It's only a matter of time

until systems are perfected and landscape architects and irrigation engineers embrace the radical idea of customizing their installations for the optimum daily coating of biologicals.

"These microbe products are effective. It's now a matter of getting a system to apply them," he adds.

— The author, research director for Jacklin Seed/Simplot Turf & Horticulture in Post Falls, ID, recently authored the book, "Turfgrass Maintenance Reduction Handbook — Sports, Lawns and Golf," which is at the presses. Order a copy by visiting (www.sleepingbearpress.com or 734 475-8787). He can be reached at dbrede@jacklin.com

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Circle No. 121 on Reader Inquiry Card

BY JAY LEMKE

Though onlookers were amazed at the job, it was a commonplace one for Diane Lease, owner of Lease Landscaping, Grand Rapids, MN. Her small crew was using a “crawler” to develop a beachfront for a homeowner whose house was perched above a lake up a 2:1 slope covered with trees, rocks and undergrowth.

“People are amazed at what we do, and sometimes they just stand around and watch,” Lease says.

With growth that has doubled every year for the past eight years, plus the technology she uses, it’s no wonder people enjoy watching her crews work.

Part of that enjoyment comes from Lease’s philosophy on how she has grown her business from an extremely small outfit to the largest in a city of 10,000.

“We stress more equipment, and a small, family-like crew of extremely talented employees,” explains Lease.

Man-machine mix

According to Lease, it’s important for every landscape professional to determine the proper mix of machinery and hand labor. In other words, if a machine can replace a number of laborers on a job site, those workers can move to another job, which increases profits and productivity.

“We have five full-time employees, but have two excavators, two dozers, one skid steer, three all-purpose crawlers and one all-surface loader,” she said. “With that equipment, plus our seasonal help, we do the work of landscapers with many more employees.”

Lease credits much of her company’s success to equipment from ASV, Inc., a Caterpillar affiliate. She owns three Posi-



Mark Lease uses a compact, all-purpose crawler to clear a 2:1 slope in building a beachfront.

What labor crunch?

Minnesota landscape pro Diane Lease counts on machines to cut tough work down to size — not her employees

Tracks, but it’s the newest addition, the compact RC•30, that most excites her.

This recently introduced model is small — less than 4 ft. wide and 6 ft. tall — so it occupies about the same space as a laborer. It uses a rubber tracked undercarriage that gives it the traction and power to be as productive as larger machinery, or a crew of laborers. And the 3,000-lb. machine applies a mere 2.5 psi of pressure to the ground.

"We couldn't get along without it," said Lease. "The amount of labor we save by having it is incredible. We used to send three laborers to a site and now we just send one with the machine."

To build the beachfront, Lease Landscaping used a Posi-Track to haul dirt to the bottom of the hill, where the RC•30 was waiting for landscape duty.

"Few other machines could even go down that hill," Lease said.

Landscapers use the RC•30 when they need to work in tight

areas without harming turf.

"Homeowners do not want you to damage their lawns when you're working on their property," said Lease. "If you damage the turf, not only does it cost more to resod, they're left with having to nurse the new sod for months before it's as good as the old."

In addition to owning lawn-friendly equipment, Lease Landscaping offers customers more than a typical landscaper.

"I think we're the only one in town that can do everything

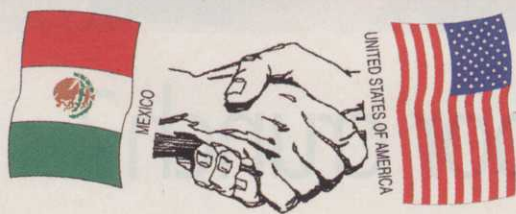


Diane Lease, owner of Lease Landscaping, relies on just a few trusted employees, but brings a lot of equipment firepower to every big job.

from start to finish on a new home site," said Lease. "From clearing lots to digging base-

ments to putting in septic systems to manicured landscapes, we do it all."

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"I treat my employees like they're my kids. We're a family and we trust each other,"

— Diane Lease

Though Lease Landscaping today owns a nice lineup of equipment, it wasn't always that way. Eight years ago, Lease had just left her job as a nurse, and her husband was a sheriff's deputy for Itasca County.

"We got started part-time in landscaping because my husband loved machinery," said Lease.

But work at the sheriff's office was busy, and Diane soon took over the business. It quickly became a full-time passion.

"It was a big learning experience," Lease said. "We started

small, with just a skid steer and a little dump truck, spreading dirt and planting flowers. Fortunately, I hired great employees who brought their knowledge of the industry with them."

The ability to work quickly and efficiently helped her institute a policy she believes all landscape professionals should follow.

"We always start a job and then finish it; we don't jump from job to job to job, leaving the customer unsure of when we'll be back," she explained.

In addition, Lease said, her

business continues to excel because she has loyal employees.

Built on trust

"I treat my employees like they're my kids. We're a family and we trust each other," she said.

"It's important to have the ability to go and be with your family when you need to; we don't have a time schedule. If employees have a baseball game to go to with their children, they leave early, with no questions asked."

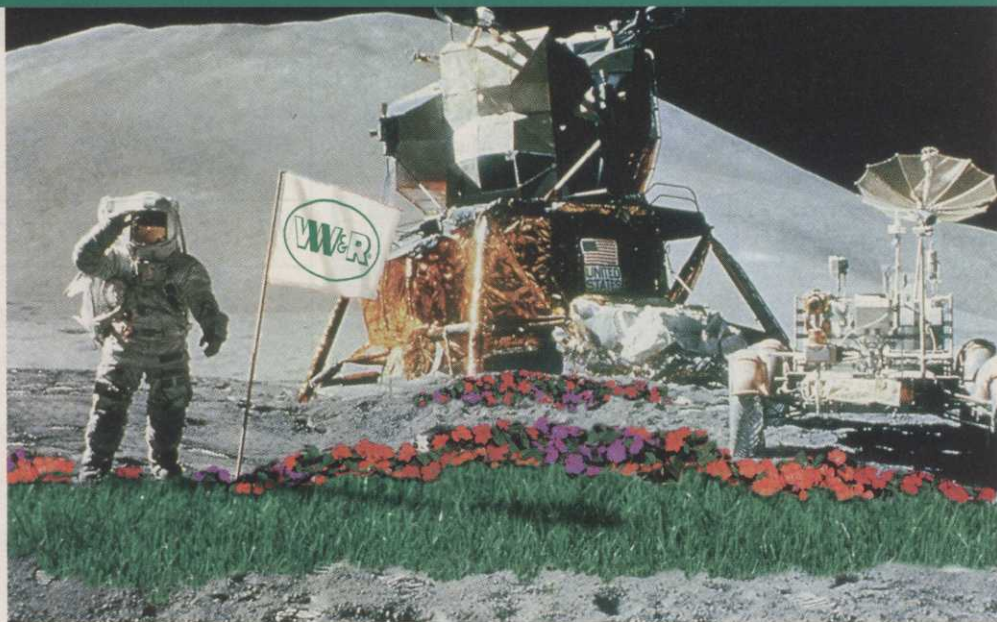
Though Lease said she could continue to grow her business, it may have reached the perfect size.

"I think we might be big enough," she said. "If we get much bigger, I'm worried we could lose some of our personal touch. I think we've reached the right size with the right equipment where we can continue to be great on every job."

— The author is an account executive with Carmichael Lynch Spong, Minneapolis, MN, and can be reached at 612/375-8529.

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Circle 122

The tractor factor

BY CURT HARLER / CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

When Cherokee Plantation head greenskeeper Chris Johnson goes shopping for a tractor, his first priority is matching the unit to the kinds of jobs it will do.

"Will you use it for the PTO, as a forklift, because you need a front bucket?" he asks. "Do you need 4-wheel drive? What kind of tires?" One constant, however, is a diesel engine.

Cherokee Plantation, Yemassee, SC, is a new Donald Steele-designed golf course started in August 1998. Growth occurred the following June, and play began in September 1999.

"I look at the jobs that require a tractor and then try to find as universal a tractor as I can," Johnson says. Currently, they have one large 45-hp tractor and two smaller units in the 30- to 33-hp range that are used daily to pull mowers and perform other typical jobs. He draws a distinction between jobs for tractors and those for carts, tractors being able to do heavy-duty work like hauling dirt or moving sod.

He is particular about tires. Since one tractor was purchased when the course was

under construction, it has off-road tires. But those will be replaced with turf tires to minimize the impact of sharp turns.

Cherokee Plantation uses New Holland equipment. Johnson likes 4-wheel drive and New Holland's Super-Steer feature which allows a zero-radius turn...just as long as the operator is careful not to tear the turf.

AMATEX, INC.

888/988-4453

The Hurlimann 435 Prince with loader is powered by a 35-hp 4-cylinder engine. It comes with 12 forward/12 reverse shuttle-shift transmission and standard 4WD. Marketed in



North America by Amatex, Milwaukee, WI, it is part of a full line of tractors in the 25- to 190-hp range. Also available in the Prince series are the 35-hp 435 and the 45-hp 445. All have 540/1000 rpm PTOs.



7360SS Cub Cadet

What to look for when buying

- ▶ Match tractor size/configuration to the jobs you need it to do
- ▶ Consider four-wheel drive, zero-turn, PTO requirements
- ▶ Tractors are used best to handle heavy-duty work
- ▶ Make sure tires are suited to the types of landscape work you'll do

Im reports

The Eicher 364 from Belarus ▶

BELARUS
414/355-2000

The Eicher 364 is a 39-hp utility tractor with dual-stage clutch to provide live PTO, power steering, a fuel-efficient engine, differential lock and ROPS. Manufactured in India and marketed from Milwaukee, WI, by Belarus Machinery, it has an air-cooled diesel engine, 3-pt. hitch with draft/position control and a lift capacity of 2,213 lbs. Unit has disk brakes.



JOHN DEERE
800/537-8233

www.deere.com

The John Deere 790 compact utility tractor is designed for people on tight budgets. It can handle a variety of projects like

mowing, loader/backhoe, post hole digging or snow removal. It has 30 gross engine hp and 25-hp PTO. It comes in either a 2WD or 4WD version, with power steering and dual-stage dry clutch standard on the 4WD.

Both have a selectable system for rear and mid PTOs, which can be used alone or simultaneously. Sliding gear transmission has eight forward and two reverse speeds.



include three transmission choices. The 4610 is the newest of the series. Pick a fully synchronized main and shuttle transmission for economy and reliability; glide shift transmission gives clutchless shift on-the-go operation; and the Feather-Step hydrostatic transmission reduces amount of foot pressure needed to depress pedals and cuts shock when making sudden stops or direction changes. All units are powered by the Kubota E-TVSC diesel.

MTD PRODUCTS
330/225-2600

www.cubcadet.com

The 7360SS Cub Cadet compact tractor from MTD, Cleveland, OH, is the top of the 7000 line. It features a 36-hp, 4-cylinder, liquid cooled diesel engine; fully-synchronized shuttle shift with two speed ranges, differential lock and 4WD; hydraulically actuated PTO clutch; and hydrostatic power steering. Adjustable high-back seat, back-lit dash panel, and 3-position tilt steering wheel assure operator comfort. Optional back hoe, loader and rear mower are available.

Continued on page 54

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Im reports

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NEW HOLLAND

717/355-1121

www.newholland.com

Three new models — the 18.5-hp TC18, 21-hp TC21 and the deluxe 21-hp TC21D — mean there now are nine models in the Boomer line from New Holland, New Holland, PA. Units range from 18.5 to 33 hp. The TC18 has a two-range gearbox, while the TC21 has three range — better for operators who tend to run long hours in a single



gear. For infinitely variable speed without clutch or shift lever, a hydrostatic transmission is available. Units have a 540-rpm rear PTO and a live 2000-rpm mid-PTO on models with hydrostatic transmission.

SNAPPER

888/SNAPPER

www.snapper.com

The Turf Cruiser from Snapper, McDonough, GA, gives landscapers the choice between gas or diesel engines — a 23-hp OHV liquid-cooled 3-cylinder Kubota or a 21-hp liquid cooled diesel Kubota. Both have electric ignition. Single-lever joystick controls two Eaton hydrostatic transmissions with integrated gear reduction. Chevron-style drive tires provide maximum traction and stability. Attachments are simple with Qwik-O-Nect system.

TORO CO.

800/525-0059

www.toro.com

The Z Master Z350 series from Toro, Bloomington, MN, is based on a tractor powered by either a 20-hp or 25-hp Kohler Command Pro air-cooled engine with electronic key ignition. From there, its Quick-Mount hitch system converts it into a mower with decks from 44 inches to 98 inches; a dozer with 54-in. blade; a two-stage 36-in. snowthrower; a debris blower; or a 47-in. rotary broom. A simple connection allows implements to slide onto the hitch and easily lock in place.

YAZOO/KEES

800/723-9496

www.yazookees.com

The Power King 1600 Series from Yazoo/Kees, Jackson, MS, are shaft-driven, heavy-duty garden tractors. Both are powered by a 22-hp Kohler Command V-twin engine with hydrostatic transmission. The UT622HV includes foot-control tranny, front hydraulic ports and a front PTO to drive snow blower, broom or mower deck. Both have 1-year commercial warranty.

LONG AGRIBUSINESS

252/823-4151

www.longagri.com

The LandTrac 280 and 360 from Long Agribusiness, Tarboro, NC, are both powered by Mitsubishi Indirect Injection diesel engines and have electro-hydraulic PTO clutch operated by a switch on the dash. The 280 is a 28-hp, 91.5-cubic inch unit with 27-hp PTO; the 360 has 36 hp, 107.3 cubes, and develops 33 PTO hp. Both transmissions have 12 forward and six reverses, and a fully synchronized four-speed main gear shift

ask the expert

BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

Mysterious oak blight

What is the blight disease on oak trees in northern California caused by and how do you manage it?

— CA/OH

I've heard about a serious problem concerning oaks in California, but no one knows much about it yet. It's referred to as "sudden oak death syndrome," and it has killed thousands of central California coastal oak trees over the past five years. A University of California scientist reported that the causal agent is a fungus called *Phytophthora* sp., closely related to the one that caused the Irish Potato Famine.

Reportedly, this fungus attacks the bark of tan oak, black oak and coast live oak. Researchers at UC-Davis feel the fungus is a threat to healthy oak trees from Santa Barbara to southern Oregon. Over the last five years, it has killed trees from Big Sur to Napa, Sonoma and Solana Counties. Santa Cruz and Marin have also been hit hard.

This fungus is a water mold that produces microscopic, two-tailed swimming spores called zoospores. These spores can migrate in water but its mode of spread is not understood yet. It's reportedly related to the modern death of *Portox ford* cedar trees in northern California and southern Oregon, eucalyptus forests in Australia and oak forests in Mexico, Spain and Portugal.

Researchers from the University of California at Berkeley say the first sign of this fungal attack is seeping or bleeding cankers. The disease dissolves the bark and enters the wood. Later, bark beetles bore into the tree, sometimes killing it within a month.

Researchers and extension specialists are asking the public to help reduce the spread

of the disease by not using infected trees from the problem area for firewood. Instead, they should contact the cooperative extension office so the infected plants can be properly disposed. People are also being asked to clean vehicle tires and shoes that have come in contact with the area.

Drought or beetle damage?

We experienced severe drought conditions in 1999 and saw many dead or dying plants as a result of the drought or, in some cases, bark beetles. How can you figure out whether damage has been caused by bark beetles or drought?

— NY

Most problems caused by boring insects occur during the year of a drought and the following year. During these periods, monitor the drought sensitive or already affected plants. Look for sawdust or sap.

All bark beetles are in the Scolytidae family. True bark or engraver beetles feed between bark and hardwood (cambium region), and ambrosia or timber beetles bore into the heartwood. The latter feed on fungi which grow in the galleries created by ambrosia beetles.

Adult true bark beetles tend to attack stressed trees. Smaller elm bark beetles and native elm bark beetles can transmit Dutch elm disease. Other beetles can attack weakened trees and may degrade timber value.

Adult bark beetles are about 2- to 8-mm long, reddish-brown to black, and shiny. The head of most species is bent downward. They make tiny holes in the bark to enter and make galleries. Sawdust or sap flow on the trunk or branch is a good indication of

beetle infestation. Drought-affected plants have early fall coloration, discolored leaves, and wilting, and turn green to yellow to brown and defoliate prematurely. Depending upon the extent of drought, plants produce dieback and, in some cases, die.

Female beetles make galleries in the cambium layer and lay eggs. Larvae hatch and chew outward at right angles to the parent gallery.

Reports show that during drought stress years, plants such as pine, spruce, elm, basswood, ash, redbud, serviceberry, dogwood, cherry, purple sandcherry, crabapple, hickory, willow, arborvitae, and *chamaecyparis* are susceptible to bark beetle attack. Affected plants show wilting and severe foliar discoloration. There are small holes (1 to 8 mm) in branches or the stem's bark. Galleries appear under the bark with small "C"-shaped legless larvae with tan heads. Stressed trees show these symptoms sooner than healthier plants.

The best way to manage a bark beetle attack is to keep plants healthy with proper cultural practices. This includes mulching, watering, fertilizing and pest management. Periodically, scout for bark beetles in drought-stressed trees. Infested trees should be promptly removed, and remaining healthy trees should be protected through insecticide treatment options. An insecticide application should help manage the problem. Depending upon the kind of bark beetle, the number and timing of treatments may vary.



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.

products

TECH CENTER



More cutting power

Echo's CS-3400 chain saw is a top-handle unit with a 33.4 cc, double-ring piston engine and plenty of horsepower and torque. Equipped with a standard 14-in. bar, it's also easy to handle at only 7.6 lbs.

For more information contact Echo at 847/540-8400 or www.echo-usa.com or circle no. 250.

Productive collection

A new commercial vacuum from BlueBird International makes mid-mount zero-turn radius (ZTR) mowers more productive as operators can use a dump from seat mechanism. The V190Z's 90-gal. capacity container has a sight window to allow the operator to view the level of debris. A 7-in. inlet with deflector reduces clogging. Its custom hitch, custom boot and front weights are compatible with most ZTR mowers.

For more information contact BlueBird at 303/288-5880 or www.bluebirdintl.com or circle no. 251.

Overseed with ease

Turfco's new lawn overseeder covers a 20-in. swath and allows an experienced operator to overseed up to 30,000 sq. ft. an hour. Its 1.5-in. blade spacing works with all types of grass seed, and its micro-screw depth adjustment permits accurate

setting of cutter blades from 1.5 in. above ground to 1.5 in. deep. Powered by a 5.5-hp Honda engine, the overseeder also has 10-in. pneumatic tires for easy operation over rough terrain. Its low center of gravity makes it operable on sidehill surfaces, too.

For more information contact Turfco at 800/679-8201 or www.turfco.com or circle no. 252.

Generating power

John Deere's G5500KE generator features an 11-hp electric start engine with recoil backup,



spin-on oil filters and full pressure lubrication. A fuel capacity of 8 gallons means that users can rely on up to 13.5 hours run time at half load. The sound level at full load is 72 dba at 50 feet. The Kawasaki-powered OHV engine delivers 5,000 watts and has automatic idle control.

For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.deere.com or circle no. 253.

Rockin' water features

Castart's Ventana Granite rock and water features consist of several building block components that can be mixed and matched to create variations of designs and sizes for rock water-



falls or other retaining wall projects. Most features can be installed in less than a day.

For more information contact Castart at 800/871-8838 or www.castartinc.com or circle no. 254.

Swift snow removal

Hiniker Company's new C-Plow combines conventional plowing and backdrag plowing systems. It's operated as a conventional plow in the forward plowing mode, with the normal hydraulic angling and spring-trip moldboard functions. For backdragging, the upper 3/4 of the moldboard is hydraulically folded over, creating a rear facing backdrag blade. A second cutting edge fastened to the top of the moldboard becomes the contact point with the ground surface. The C-Plow is 8 ft. wide and fits most domestic 3/4- and 1-ton 4WD trucks.

For more information contact Hiniker at 507/871-8838 or www.hiniker.com or circle no. 255.

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November 2000

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- Other Contractors/Service Companies (please specify) _____

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- 05 290 Sports Complexes
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- 08 355 Extension Agents/Consultants for Horticulture
- 09 360 Sod Growers, Turf Seed Growers & Nurseries
- 10 365 Dealers, Distributors, Formulators & Brokers
- 11 370 Manufacturers
- Other (please specify) _____

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

- 12 10 **Executive/Administrator** - President, Owner, Partner, Director, General Manager, Chairman of the Board, Purchasing Agent, Director of Physical Plant
- 13 20 **Manager/Superintendent** - Arborist, Architect, Landscape/Grounds Manager, Superintendent, Foreman, Supervisor
- 14 30 **Government Official** - Government Commissioner, Agent, Other Government Official
- 15 40 **Specialist** - Forester, Consultant, Agronomist, Pilot, Instructor, Researcher, Horticulturist, Certified Specialist
- 16 50 **Other Titled and Non-Titled Personnel** (please specify) _____

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 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 *Is this your home address? Yes No
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 Signature: _____ Date: _____

3. SERVICES PERFORMED (fill in ALL that apply)

- 17 A Mowing
- 18 B Turf Insect Control
- 19 C Tree Care
- 20 D Turf Aeration
- 21 E Irrigation Services
- 22 F Turf Fertilization
- 23 G Turf Disease Control
- 24 H Ornamental Care
- 25 I Landscape Design
- 26 J Turf Weed Control
- 27 K Paving, Deck & Patio Installation
- 28 L Pond/Lake Care
- 29 M Landscape Installation
- 30 N Snow Removal
- 31 O Other (please specify) _____

4a. Do you specify, purchase or influence the selection of landscape products?
 58 Yes 59 No

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

- 32 1 Aerators
- 33 2 Blowers
- 34 3 Chain Saws
- 35 4 Chipper-Shredders
- 36 5 De-icers
- 37 6 Fertilizers
- 38 7 Fungicides
- 39 8 Herbicides
- 40 9 Insecticides
- 41 10 Line Trimmers
- 42 11 Mowers
- 43 12 Snow Removal Equipment
- 44 13 Sprayers
- 45 14 Spreaders
- 46 15 Sweepers
- 47 16 Tractors
- 48 17 Truck Trailers/Attachments
- 49 18 Trucks
- 50 19 Turfseed
- 51 20 Utility Vehicles

5. Do you have Internet access? 52 A Yes 53 B No

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

- 54 A Daily
- 55 B Weekly
- 56 C Monthly
- 57 D Occasionally

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

New Holland's new 140-hp DC150 and 180-hp DC180 dozers are smooth running and easy to operate. The engine is matched to a torque converter and powershift transmission featuring automatic kick-down and automatic shifting to speed the loading and return cycles. The automatic transmission also speeds production



cycles by automatically shifting from forward to 2nd reverse when reverse is selected. Fingertip steering and transmission controls require little operator effort. Wide-opening service panels, diagnostic test-port panel and other features reduce maintenance time.

For more information contact New Holland at www.newholland.com or circle no. 256.

Suspension options

Ferris Industries' new line of mid-mount Z's, the 1000 Z (48- or 52-in.), the IS 3000 Z (61-in.) and the IS 4000 Z (61- or 72-in.), come with two suspension options: four-wheel independent suspension on the IS 4000 Z,

and two-wheel independent suspension on the IS 3000 Z. The front wheels on the IS 4000 Z move independently due to two suspension arms attached to each wheel, which results in increased comfort, speed, stability and mower life.

For more information contact Ferris at 800/933-6175 or www.ferrisindustries.com or circle no. 257.



Chip and rip

Vermeer's TG525 tub grinder is powered by a 525-hp CAT 3406E electronic fuel-injected engine and equipped with a triple-disc, non-pilot bearing 18-in. clutch. Standard features include a 27-ft. loader offering a choice of grapples with openings up to 84-in., a 370-degree rotating cab and 3,000 lbs. of working payload. An optional knife screen can grind materials like palm fronds, stumps and wet leaves. Carbide-tipped HammerTooth teeth rip apart heavy logs, snag lightweight material and reduce bridging.

For more information contact Vermeer at 888/837-6337 or circle no. 258.

Residential controller

With preset options for quick and simple programming of common watering schedules, Rain Bird's new Ec controller includes a schedule specifically for the establishment of new residential lawns. Available in 4-, 6- and 9-station models, the controller installs quickly and provides programmability under battery power, allowing setup months prior to AC hookup on job site. Other features include a test program, global water budget for seasonal adjustments, repeating day cycles, full-year calendar, battery-powered 24-hour backup and default program in case a power outage outlasts memory protection.

For more information call 626/963-9311 or circle no. 260.



Vroom vroom

Tecumseh Products' twin-cylinder engine, Enduro VT, is 42 cu. in. and available in 18, 20 and 22 hp. It features a 90-degree V-twin design with a fully pressurized lubrication system including a spin-on oil filter. Adjustment free dual carburetors assure smooth running. An optimized air intake system and high efficiency fan produce low operating temperatures for reduced engine wear. Harmful contaminants are kept out by a foam pre-filter and a paper element with 500 sq. in. of usable filter surface area.

For more information contact Tecumseh at 414/377-2700 or circle no. 259.



Fine trimmin'

With a pivoting head, Ariens' 6-hp string trimmer can get at places that a walk-behind mower can't. A trimmer with a 5-hp Tecumseh Centura engine is also available. Both trimmers come standard with .155 diameter trimmer line.

For more information contact Ariens at 800/678-5443 or www.ariens.com or circle no. 261.

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- A valid driver's license is required, CDL license a plus (tree care and construction a necessity).
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Excellent Career Opportunities: FloraLandscape, Inc. is a 22-year-old full service green industry company located in Northwest Ohio. This area of the country offers excellent cost of living benefits along with great school systems for children. Toledo, Ohio is home to many sportsmen who love hunting, fishing, and water sports for large or small lake preferences. Toledo itself offers plenty of cultural or family activities, but you are also only a few hours' drive from Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago or Ann Arbor. Toledo, Ohio is simply a great place to achieve career goals and raise your family. **Current Positions Available: Landscape Design Manager-** Exciting position involving the selling and production of landscape design services. Includes involvement in project management for design/build jobs. Ten years of landscape design experience is required. Green industry bachelors degree is required (ASLA preferred). Green industry CAD experience is required along with proven sales abilities. Position salary is 40 to 50K, commensurate with experience. Health and dental benefits available along with 401(k) and profit sharing. Unlimited growth potential. **Irrigation Salesman-** Great position for self-motivated irrigation professional. This position's focus is selling of irrigation installation and service to residential and commercial customers. Ten years of irrigation sales experience is required. Irrigation CAD experience is highly desired along with proven sales abilities. Position salary is 30 to 40K, commensurate with experience. Health and dental benefits available along with 401(k) and profit sharing. Unlimited growth potential. Please forward resume and salary history to the address or fax number listed: **FloraLandscape, Inc., 130 Elmdale Road, Toledo, Ohio, 43607, Phone 419-536-7640, Fax 419-536-6270, www.FloraLandscape.com** 11/00

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CORPORATE FLEET DIRECTOR: GOTHIC LANDSCAPE, one of the nation's leading landscape construction and maintenance companies, is recruiting a Director to manage our vehicles and construction equipment. Successful candidate will oversee and direct vehicle purchasing, maintenance, and manage branch operations in California, Nevada and Arizona from our Valencia, California office. Some travel required. Send or fax resume with salary requirements to: **Human Resources, Gothic Landscape, 27502 Avenue Scott, Valencia, CA 91355, Fax 661-257-7749.** 11/00

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Want to move up? We are hiring for two estimator positions in our Irwindale, California office. The successful candidate must have at least 3 years experience bidding landscape installation work and possess a valid California driver's license with a clean record. Some prior computer experience is also necessary. Additional beneficial qualifications include: Microsoft Word and Excel knowledge, possess a CLT certification, maintenance estimating, large commercial and public works estimating. The position is demanding and requires a self-motivated person who knows how to manage their time. Combined with the competitive base salary, benefits include (with restrictions) Health plan, 401(k), company car and a very generous sales bonus plan. Interested applicants contact Larry Rudd at Mariposa Horticultural Enterprises, Inc. at 626-960-0196 or sales@mariposahorticultural.com 11/00

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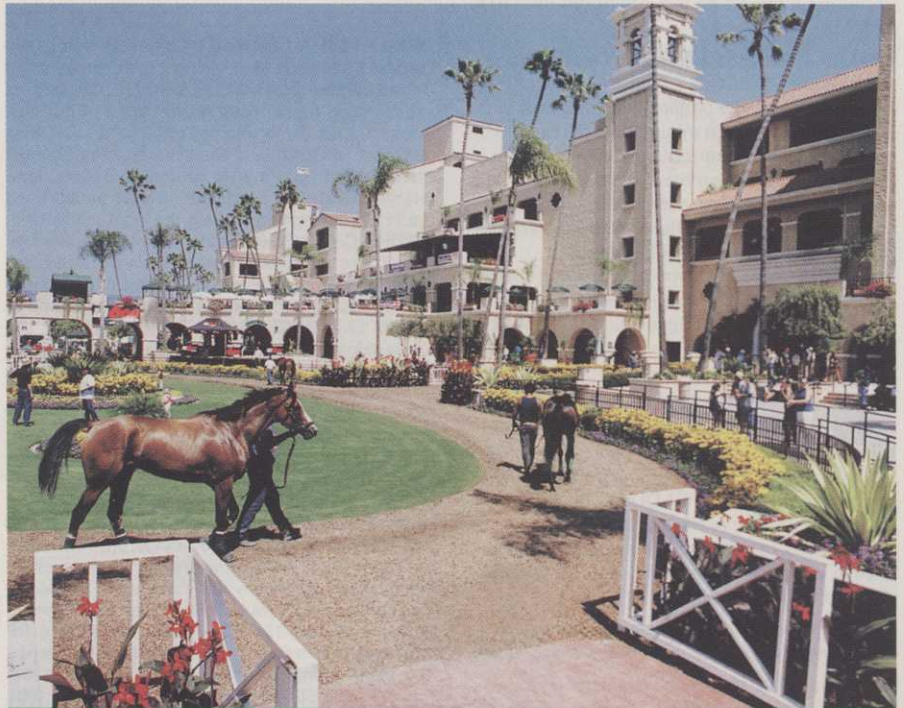
Child's play

Talk about taking on a project that makes you feel good. Valley Crest, a division of Environmental Industries, Inc., knows what it's like after recently completing construction of "Shane's Inspiration: A Boundless Playground," a play environment designed to accom-

modate physically-challenged children. The 2-acre playground, located in Griffith Park on land provided by the City of Los

Children of all abilities can romp on this playground.

Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, is unique in that it's specifically designed for children of all abilities to play side by side. Valley Crest was general contractor for ramps, railings, paving concrete curbs and walkways, entry arch, stage and basketball court, landscape planting, gardens, irrigation and erosion control, as well as the installation of resilient play surfacing, masonry planter walls and seating. Said Catherine Curry-Williams, founder of Shane's Inspiration, a nonprofit organization that promotes and constructs boundless playgrounds in memory of her son, Shane, "It was as if they (Valley Crest workers) were landscaping their own backyard."



No horsing around here

When the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club of Del Mar, CA, called on Dave and Sue Ericson to beautify its grounds for this year's racing season, it was off to the races for their company, Stay Green, which provides landscaping and maintenance services to residential, commercial and industrial properties in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Bernadino and Ventura counties.

Around 21 Stay Green employees and 12 members of the Thoroughbred Club hoofed it around the main ticket area, the paddocks, throughout the grandstands and in various public areas, planting marigolds, black-eyed Susans, blue scaevola and African tulip trees under the direction of the Ericsons.

Down the stretch, the Stay Green crew performed like champs, putting in over 4,700 man-hours. The quality of their work prompted Del Mar president and general manager Joe Harper to say, "The club's grounds have never looked better."

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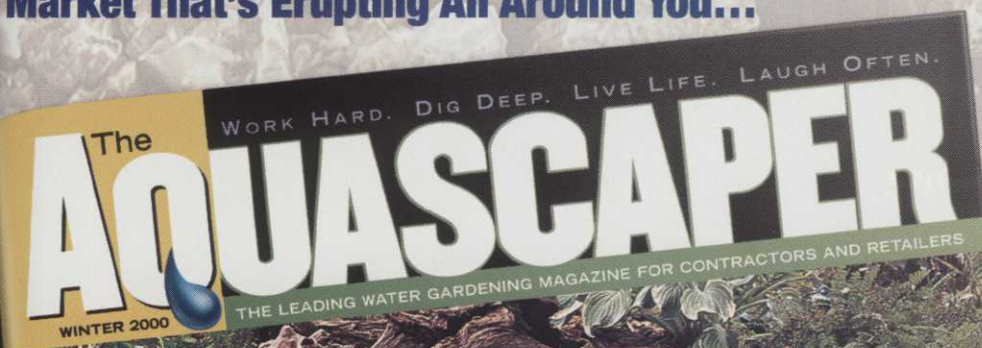
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