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Editorial staff

Associate Publisher / Executive Editor	SUE GIBSON / 440/891-2729 / sgibson@advanstar.com
Senior Editor	RON HALL / 440/891-2636 / rhall@advanstar.com
Managing Editor	JASON STAHL / 440/891-2623 / jstahl@advanstar.com
Senior Science Editor	KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D. / danneberger1@osu.edu
Group Editor	VERNON HENRY / 440/826-2829
Art Director	LISA LEHMAN / 440/891-2785
Sr. Graphic Designer	JEFFREY LANDIS / 440/891-2702 / jlandis@advanstar.com

Reader advisory panel

DEBBY COLE	Greater Texas Landscapes / Austin, TX
JOHN GACHINA	Gachina Landscape Management / Menlo Park, CA
JERRY GAETA	The Good Earth Inc. / Mt. Pleasant, SC
JUDSON GRIGGS	Smallwood Design Group / Smallwood Landscape / Naples, FL
BILL HOOPES	Scotts Lawn Service / Marysville, OH
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DAVID SNODGRASS	Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping, Inc. / Portland, OR
GEORGE VAN HAASTEREN	Dwight-Englewood School / Englewood, NJ

Business staff

Group Publisher	JOHN D. PAYNE / 440/891-2786 / jpayne@advanstar.com
Admin. Coordinator	NICOLE CAPRARA / 440/891-2734
Production Manager	KAREN LENZEN / 218/723-9129
Production Director	ROSY BRADLEY / 218/723-9720
Circulation Manager	DARRYL ARQUITTE / 218/723-9422
Green Book Coordinator	MARY MOBLEY / 218/723-9127

Advertising staff

Group Sales Director	TOM GALLIGAN / 262/653-9523 Fax: 262/653-9524 3901 52nd Ave., Kenosha, WI 53144-1830 tgalligan@advanstar.com
Cleveland Headquarters	7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130-3369
Eastern Account Executive	HEATHER M. FOX / 440/891-3168 Fax: 440/891-2675 hfox@advanstar.com
Midwest Account Executive	KEVIN STOLTMAN / 440/891-2772 Fax: 440/891-2675 kstoltman@advanstar.com
Western Account Executive	GRETCHEN WAGNER / 760/837-3734 Fax: 760/837-3785 74563 Pepper Tree Dr., Palm Desert, CA 92260 gwagner@advanstar.com
Account Executive	MICHAEL HARRIS / 440/891-3118 Fax: 440/826-2865 mharris@advanstar.com
Classified Showcase / Account Executive	LESLIE ZOLA / 440/891-2670; 800/225-4569 x670 lzola@advanstar.com
Directory Sales	MATT SIMONI / 440/891-3104

Marketing services

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events

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

January 2001

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

16-17 Connecticut Nurseryman's Association Winter Meeting / Waterbury, CT; 203/445-0110

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

17-19 Idaho Horticulture Show / Boise, ID; 800/462-4769

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

18-20 Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition / Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 800/375-3642

22-24 Central Environmental Nursery Trade Show / Columbus, OH; Sponsored by the Ohio Nursery & Landscape Association; 800/825-5062

22-25 Grow and Mow Expo / College Park, GA; 770/975-4123

22-25 Professional Horticulture Conference of Virginia / Virginia Beach, VA; 757/523-4734; www.phvc.org

23-25 Mid-America Green Industry Convention / Kansas, MO; 816/561-5323

24-25 Maryland Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show / 301/345-4199

25 Northeastern PA Turf School & Trade Show / Wilkes-Barre, PA; 814/863-1368

25-27 Gulf States Hort Expo / Mobile, AL; 202/789-5980 ext. 3010

26 Western Tree Management Symposium / Arcadia, CA; 714/991-1900

29-30 Winter Conference / Lansing, MI; Sponsored by the Michigan Forestry and Park Association; 517/482-5530

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

31-2 Iowa Nursery & Landscape / Association Convention & Trade Show Des Moines, IA; 816/233-1481

February

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

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

1-4 ANLA Management Clinic / Louisville, KY; 202/789-5980, ext. 3010

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Zanesville, OH 43702-3388
888/683-3445



The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute
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Time to raise the bar

Are you as successful as you want to be? If you're not getting the hourly rates you want, the clients you prefer or the good employees you need, you probably need to ask if your organization has a long-term future. Do you have a professional approach to business?

Let's define that first. I see a "professional" organization as one with two main elements:

- A solid business and operating foundation, and
- a desire to improve constantly.

These elements cover just about every piece in the organizational puzzle. But what is a "solid foundation?" Any successful company has:

- products or services that work,
- customers who want them,
- systems producing those products or services profitably and efficiently,
- people who work better together than they do individually,
- healthy (but probably not perfect) finances, sales and marketing and operations, and
- long-term prospects for success.

Whether you're Jack's Lawns with \$80,000 in revenues or General Electric with \$253 billion, these principles apply.

It's pretty obvious if you don't have a solid foundation, but what if you are just doing "OK?" What if you do things "pretty well," but not exceptionally well? Do you have a long-term future?

That depends on how you define a successful future. You might make enough for beer money or become rich beyond your dreams. If you want to be comfortable in retirement or pass the business along to your family, you need more than beer money now.

Are you interested in improving? The editors of *Landscape Management* think that building first-class organizations is a process needing benchmarks as measures of progress. We've assembled a Best Practices panel of experts from the industry to help us develop these measures. Those folks know their stuff and you can benefit from their experience. If you're managing an in-house grounds organization, these benchmarks also apply.

What do they mean? Benchmarks give you a goal to shoot for and compare against. They will help you insure long-term growth,

profitable and efficient operations, cultures that attract and keep good people and systems that deliver top quality services.

That "kaizen" thing

Hand-in-hand with building a strong foundation is the focus on constant improvement. The Japanese call it "kaizen," and it is a culture in which everyone in an organization participates. Once you start looking for improvements, you'll have the resources to take your organization to the next level. But the first step is deciding to get serious about making your organization first-class.

We start our Benchmarks series this month on page 30, with coverage of how to improve your organization's public perception. We'd love to hear your own ideas.

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

If you're not getting the hourly rates you want, the clients you prefer or the good employees you need, you probably need to ask if your organization has a long-term future.



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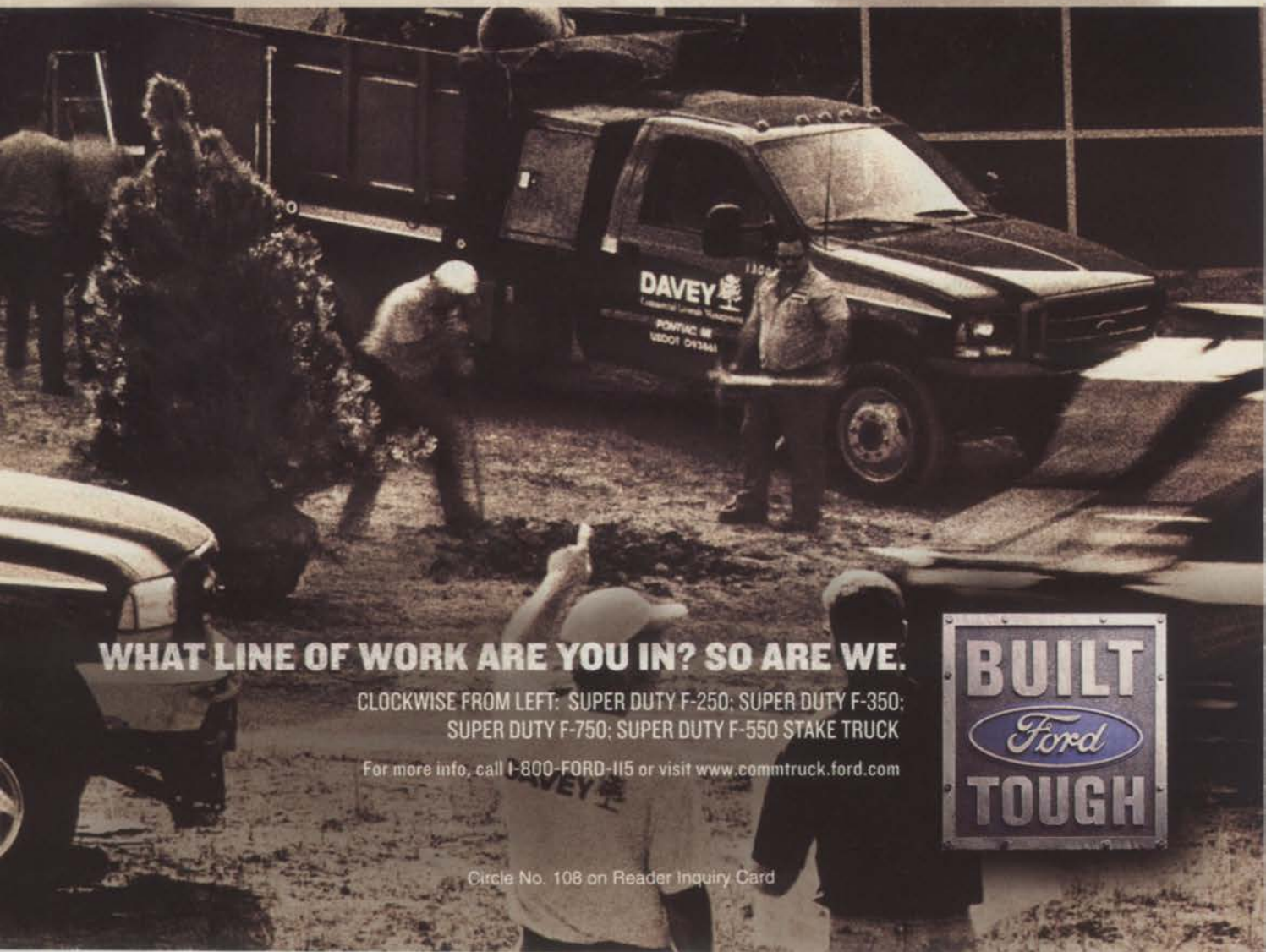


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Raise your prices for 2001

If you're in the lawn fertilization business, it's gut-check time. Screw up your courage and raise your prices this approaching season. If, for competitive reasons, you can't, or if you've already signed up a lot of customers at last season's prices, you may have to revise your 2001 profit forecast... downward.

The cost of caring for your customers' lawns and commercial properties is going to rise this year, maybe significantly. The reason is unexpectedly high energy costs.

The most obvious result of this is the higher price we pay for gasoline and diesel fuel, an extra financial burden for any service delivery business such as ours.

But did you know that high energy costs, particularly skyrocketing natural gas prices, are driving up the cost of producing nitrogen fertilizers, too?

In fact, about 4% of total U.S. gas production is used to produce ammonia, says The Fertilizer Institute, a trade organization based in Washington D.C. The ammonia is processed further to make urea, the prime ingredient in most of our turfgrass fertilizers.

The scope of the problem

The Fertilizer Institute says that it takes 33.5 million BTUs of natural gas to produce one ton of ammonia. In 1999, the U.S. fertilizer industry used 580 trillion BTUs of natural gas to make 17.34 million tons of ammonia. Over 80% of this ammonia went into fertilizer production.

The start of year 2000 saw the price of natural gas at \$2.50 per million BTUs. At that figure, it cost just over \$100 to make a ton of ammonia. This year, when the price of natural gas rose to \$6 per million BTUs, it pushed the cost of production of a ton of ammonia to \$229. The price of natural gas continues climbing and is expected to remain high — at least into summer.

With natural gas so expensive, several U.S. urea producers have closed their doors, and others have curtailed production. They're finding it difficult to compete with foreign producers of urea who are paying much less for energy.

This raises the possibility that some types of turf fertilizer may be in short supply this spring. Variables in this picture include U.S. agriculture's demand for nitrogen fertilizer this spring, and the availability and price of foreign-produced urea.

"We've already seen price increases in urea," says Bill Davis, general manager of Tyler Enterprises of Elwood, a major turf fertilizer supplier headquartered near Chicago. "The biggest shock for me is the amount of the jump."

How high will it go?

How much more will fertilizer cost this year?

"I think everybody is really stumped on this one," adds Richard D. Harrell of NUGRO Technologies, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI. "We do know that the prices are going to go up, but we really don't know by how much."

"I'd hate to put a number on it because nobody really knows," says Bill Hubbell, Vice President of Service Centers for LESCO. "Ac-

tually, the cost has been creeping up all year. It wasn't so noticeable because it (the 2000 season) was a soft-demand year for fertilizer. We had plenty of rain in the North and there was a drought in the South."

Some of you have already taken advantage of "early order" opportunities offered by suppliers. Those of you still needing to buy fertilizer for this spring should check with your supplier about prices and availability.

Even if fertilizer prices rise significantly this spring, there's no reason to panic. Most lawn care companies spend less than 15% of their budgets on fertilizer and pesticides.

You shouldn't absorb these higher costs, though. They're a legitimate reason to raise prices.

Contact Ron at 440/891-2636 or e-mail at rhall@advanstar.com



Those of you still needing to buy fertilizer for this spring should check with your supplier about prices and availability.



"By including full-time employees in the company's financial rewards, we keep 'team members' up to date on our budgetary goals and build a sense of teamwork."

Share your success with employees

My partner, Bruce Stone, and I think it's good business to share our landscape company's success with our employees. One of the ways we do this is through profit sharing.

By including full-time employees in the company's financial rewards, we keep "team members" up to date on our budgetary goals and builds a sense of teamwork.

Since co-founding Yard Smart, Inc., Olmsted Falls, OH, almost 15 years ago, we have guided our company on a course of healthy, manageable growth, offering landscape maintenance, design/build and snow removal. Our company employs 20 to 25 workers during peak season, and we attribute much of our operation's success to them.

Our idea

I got the idea for my company's profit sharing program from an article by Green Industry consultant Charles Vander Kooi. I borrowed many of his suggestions and added a few wrinkles of my own to make the program work for our company.

Our profit sharing program kicks in when (and only when) our gross profit exceeds 40%. Any percentage over this figure is shared 50/50 with the company and eligible employees. Calculations for the program are done every six months.

There are two opportunities each year for employees to receive bonuses. Only full-time employees are eligible for profit sharing, and each employee's share of the

bonus is dependent upon his or her contribution to the company's total success. Each eligible employee is evaluated twice a year by a committee comprised of me, my partner and four other employees. The results are posted for everyone to see.

The ratings game

The committee rates each employee on a scale of 1 to 10 in seven different categories. They are:

Attitude/cooperation: Get along with fellow workers and customers. Willingness to take on tasks. Positive or negative attitude.

Equipment care: Clean, organized, maintained, abusive, neglectful.

Paperwork: Thorough, correct, timely, detailed, complete, clean, legible.

Quality/attention to detail: Lost time, repetition, correcting mistakes, customer satisfaction.

Safety: Personal protection equipment, awareness of surroundings, accidents, follow procedures, increased costs.

Uniform/grooming: Clean, proper clothing, personal protection equipment.

Commitment: Dedication, vision, excellence, obligation, performance and achievement, in charge, trustworthy.

Each evaluator fills out a sheet for each eligible employee with a rating (1 to 10) for each category. The points are totaled at the bottom of each sheet and all seven evaluations' results are added to achieve the total number of bonus points for each eligible employee. The total bonus points for each employee are then divided by the number of evaluators, producing an average rating.

Meanwhile, all the ratings are added together to get the "total company points." This number is then divided into the amount of money allocated for profit sharing to arrive at a dollar amount per point.

For example, assume that our company exceeded its gross profit prediction for one reporting period by \$10,000. This means that eligible full-time employees would share \$5,000 (50%), with the other \$5,000 (50%) going to the company.

For discussion's sake, let's also assume that employee John Doe received 50 points (the average of the six evaluations), his three brothers Jack, Mack and Joe Doe received 40 points each and his cousins Moe and Manny Doe received 35 points.

The total company points in this example would be 240 — John's 50, the brothers' combined total of 120 and the cousins' combined total of 70. Divide the 240 points into \$5,000 to get a value of \$20.83 per point. This number is then multiplied with the average point totals of each employee to determine the amount of profit sharing each will receive. In this example, John Doe would receive \$1,041.50 and the cousins would receive \$729.05 each.

Attendance counts, too

But we take the process one step further. We also figure attendance into the equation — a total of 132 workdays during the reporting period.

In our example, John Doe's profit sharing was \$1,041.50. But John missed five workdays during that period. So we divide the 132 work days into the \$1,041.50 figure to determine a "dollar value per day" — in this example, \$7.89. His profit sharing is then reduced by \$39.45 (5 x \$7.89), and his profit sharing check drops to \$1,002.05 (\$1,041.50 minus \$39.45).

This is the formula that our company has adapted to fit its system, and it has turned

our employees into happier, more productive people.

Bob Smart is co-owner of Yard Smart, a full-

service landscape company located in Olmsted Falls, OH. He can be reached at 440/253-9273.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Toro acquires Goossen

BLOOMINGTON, MN — The Toro Company (NYSE: TTC) announced on Dec. 7, 2000 that it was purchasing Goossen Industries, Inc., which makes sweepers, vacuums, blowers, mulchers, chipper/shredders and bale choppers.

"This purchase will expand Toro's existing product lines for the debris management portion of our landscape and grounds maintenance business," said Kendrick B. Melrose, chairman and chief executive officer of Toro.

Another crucial benefit, he said, is that the Goossen facility of 64,000 sq. ft. in Beatrice, NB, is located adjacent to Toro-owned Exmark Manufacturing and allows Exmark to continue growing and expanding its production. Goossen's 55 employees will join Exmark.

Scotts Company businesses unite

MARYSVILLE, OH — The Scotts Company united its professional businesses in America and Europe as a Global Professional Business Group. The company cited the growth of its international professional business, synergies between product lines and an opportunity to focus marketing efforts on global brands as key factors in their decision. The new group is headquartered in Waardenburg, the Netherlands.

continued on page 24

Texas bans morning commercial equipment use

BY JASON STAHL

HOUSTON, TX — The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) voted on Dec. 6 to ban commercial landscape contractors in the Houston/Galveston, TX area from using gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment in the morning.

The ban will affect five counties in the ozone non-attainment area from April 1 through October 31, beginning April 1, 2005, from 6 a.m. until noon.

Bill Guerry, legal counsel for the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), said that despite the ban, all hope is not lost. "There is a conditional exemption the TNRCC is fleshing out right now that commercial operators can qualify for if they commit to alternative emissions reduction plans," Guerry says. "Presumably, this exemption would be based on commercial operators changing something in their activity that would result in reduced emissions."

Time, Guerry says, is also on the side of commercial operators, given that the ban won't start until 2005. "The TNRCC adopted a lot of rules under an abbreviated time frame, so they are anticipating talk with a lot of industries and figuring out ways to accomplish everyone's goals."

Guerry says he considered it a partial victory that OPEI got homeowners excluded from the ban, and that it had gotten the number of counties included in the ban reduced from eight to five. Still, the ban on commercial operators is a concern because the outcome of the TNRCC's decision is unclear.

"The jury's still out," Guerry says.

GREEN ISSUES



"Texas may realize that the emissions reductions they're getting don't merit this level of effort. The numbers they're using don't reflect the numbers they'll get from clean air federally compliant products."

A good deal?

Overall, Eddy Edmondson, president/CEO of the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association (TNLA), who has been involved with the ban ever since it was first proposed last August, says the deal was as good as could have been expected.

"From the start, we submitted comments and arranged for two personal visits with each commissioner on the TNRCC, and they were very open to our

continued on page 19

[CLIPPINGS]



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continued from page 16
suggestions," Edmondson says.
"The first proposal didn't offer
an alternative option, so that
was our first hill to climb."

And Edmondson believes
that obstacle was overcome
now that an emissions reduc-
tion plan is in the works that
could provide exemptions. "We have until
2002 to come up with the plan, but in our
mind we start working on it now," says
Marilyn Good, communications officer for
TNLA. "The TNRCC assured us that the
industry and other stakeholders would be
involved in developing this plan."

Still some uncertainty

Even though there's the promise of a condi-

"The jury's still out: Texas may realize that the emissions
reductions they're getting don't merit this level of effort.

The numbers they're using don't reflect the numbers
they'll get from clean air federally compliant products."

— Bill Guerry, OPEI legal counsel

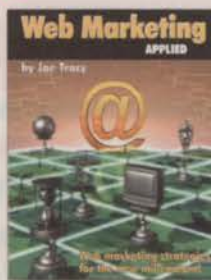
tional exemption, local landscape contractors
can't help but take a negative view of the ban.

"It's going to hurt a lot of people down
here business-wise," says Randy Fuller,
owner of Yardmasters, Inc., Houston, TX.
"Hopefully, they'll be able to work some-
thing out that would enable us to continue
working. If not, we might have to switch to
propane power. Most of the equipment
out there is regulated to California stan-

dards, so I don't know how much stricter
they can get."

"It's going to drastically increase the
price of our services," Fuller added. "We'll
need twice as much equipment and more
employees. And I wonder who's going to
enforce it? The police don't enforce some
laws that are already on the book. I think
the TNRCC is going to be overwhelmed in
that department."

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Circle 125

Learning on the fly

Web course gives busy industry pros education in a snap

BY JASON STAHL

Just think: you could chew gum or thumb your nose at the professor and he or she would never know.

It's doubtful that Web-based courses were conceived for those reasons, but they have changed the face of education. More important, they have made it easier

for Green Industry professionals to expand their knowledge.

Take the University of Maryland's Hort 400 course, a Web-based course on water and nutrient management planning for the nursery and greenhouse industry. The idea came from the Water Quality Act of 1998, which required all nurseries and greenhouses have nutrient management plans. Faculty members from Maryland's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources decided the course should be offered on the Web since profes-

sionals from all over the U.S. would need training.

Ready for action

The course debuted in the fall of 1999, with teams of at least one graduate or undergraduate student, industry professional and Extension educator exchanging ideas and information on an on-line forum led by instructors.

Each team developed a nutrient management plan featuring management strategies designed to reduce high-risk practices that lead to excessive nitrogen and phosphorus runoff.

The program allowed industry professionals to educate

themselves simply by turning on their computers in the comfort of their own homes. Participants met face-to-face every three weeks for more interaction.

Dr. John Lea-Cox, Department of Natural Resource Sciences and Landscape Architecture, feels that web-cameras could eventually replace the face-to-face meeting while still providing a personal touch.

"I think the Web is the future of Extension services," Lea-Cox says. "It's reaching out to people faster, cheaper and better."



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EPA, Syngenta agree to phase out diazinon

BY JASON STAHL

GREENSBORO, NC — The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Syngenta Crop Protection USA have agreed on a four-year phase out of diazinon, an insecticide used to control insects and grubs.

The announcement comes six months after the voluntary cancellation of another insecticide, Dursban, by the EPA and Dow AgroSciences. Both insecticides were under

“So far, the loss of Dursban and diazinon hasn’t hit us ... I think it will have more impact on do-it-yourselfers.”

— Robertson

of diazinon will have less of an effect.

“So far, the loss of Dursban and diazinon hasn’t hit us where it hurts because we haven’t been using them for a long time anyway. I think it will have more of an impact on do-it-yourselfers,” Robertson says. “Still, there’s no question this is all a big concern for us. But I’m more interested in what they will allow in the future and what good products they will allow us to keep. As long as we have new and improved chemistries that are available to us, I think we’ll be okay.”

Bob Andrews, owner of The Greenskeeper, Carmel, IN, echoed Robertson’s concerns and doesn’t believe the EPA’s actions have any less impact simply because Dursban and diazinon were in limited use.

review as a result of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 which toughened pesticide laws.

While the loss of Dursban had greater impact on the Green Industry, many lawn care operators like Jack Robertson of Jack Robertson Lawn Care, Springfield, IL, believe the loss

“If the product that was in the gun sites was something used daily, I’m sure no one would say it was no big deal,” Andrews says. “Farmers and golf course superintendents can

still use this stuff, so I wonder if the EPA is targeting people who they feel won’t fight back. I think we need to a better job of defending our use of these products.”

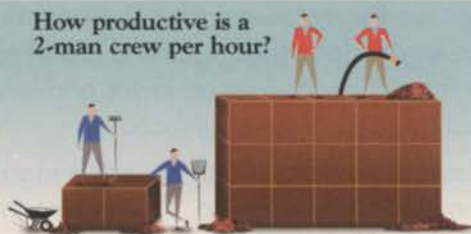


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continued from page 16

EII acquires North Haven Gardens

CALABASAS, CA — Environmental Industries, Inc. (EII) acquired North Haven Gardens, Inc., Dallas, TX, a \$17-million full-service landscape company. North Haven Gardens will operate under EII's landscape and maintenance divisions.

e-Greenbiz.com, Growzone.com merge

BOULDER, CO — e-Greenbiz.com and Growzone.com signed a letter of intent to merge the business-to-business assets of both companies. Under the proposed agreement, eGreenbiz.com will provide the technology solution and customer relationship management for both companies.

MacKissic acquires Johnson Big Wheel

PARKER FORD, PA — MacKissic, Inc. acquired Johnson Big Wheel® Mower, Ridgeland, MS, producer of high wheel mowers. The initial focus will be to continue supply to Johnson Big Wheel current customers before making the high wheel mowers available to MacKissic's existing distributor and dealer base.

Feds finally fund turfgrass scientist at USDA

BELTSVILLE, MD — The USDA will, sometime early in 2001, fund its first full-time turfgrass research scientist since Jack Murray's position was abolished after his retirement in 1988. This is a result of the passage of the FY2001 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. The new position will be located here at the Agricultural Research Center. The new scientist will work on improving genetic stocks of new and promising turfgrass species, as well as provide scientific support to the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP), said Executive Director Kevin N. Morris.

[CLIPPINGS]

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Correction In the November issue of Landscape Management, the article on Person of the Year Terry Kurth referred to atrazine as a fungicide. It is not. Rather, it is a selective herbicide used for broadleaf weed and grass control in corn and sorghum. We regret the error.

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² See owner's manual for information on alterations and warranties. © 2000 General Motors Corporation. All rights reserved.

People & companies

Environmental Care, the landscape maintenance company of Environmental Industries, appointed **Brian Storm** vice president. The company also hired **Mark Frederick** as branch manager for Denver, CO.

Roberts Seed Company appointed **John Zajac** as director of market development.

Weed Man and Turf Management Systems appointed **Michael Kernaghan** chief operating officer.

Smallwood Landscape, Naples, FL, appointed **Jud Griggs** vice president of operations.



Kujawa Enterprises' Chris Kujawa, CCLP, was named one of Milwaukee's "40 Under 40" by the Business Journal of Milwaukee. The distinction honors Milwaukee's young business people. Kujawa Enterprises is located in Cudahy, WI.

Pennington Seed appointed **Stanley Kleczynski** southeastern territory manager for its Professional Turfgrass Group. The company also named **David Merchant** assistant manager of Seed Production and Vegetable Seed Divisions for the Seed Group.



Environmental Industries named **Richard H. Klein** Senior Vice President Corporate Development.



Valley Crest, the landscape construction division of Environmental Industries, hired **Steve Titus** as branch manager for Arizona.

Riggs Industries, (J & J Truck Bodies & Trailers; J & J Truck Equipment), appointed **David Spear** director of education, **Stephanie Mostoller** dir. of safety.



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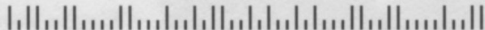
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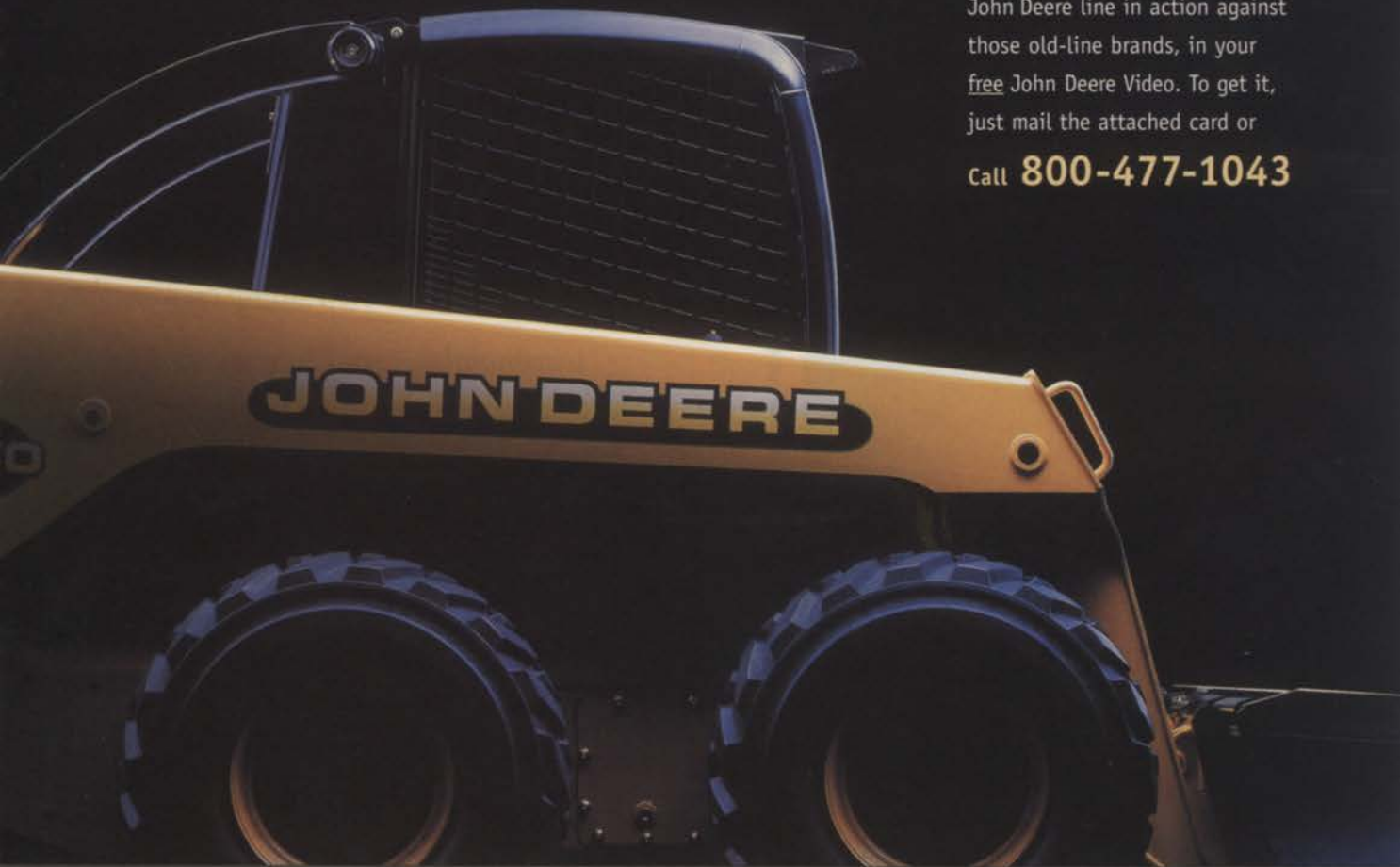
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Uncovering Your b

BY SUSAN GIBSON / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

ILLUSTRATION BY KERRI GIBBS/HANKINS & TEGENBORG LTD. N.Y., NY

Your dream may have started like many others' — a dream of independence, good work, profits and pride. Your dream to manage a landscape operation grew from the idea that you'd make your mark, put your own stamp on something worthwhile — and be rewarded for it.

Has that dream come true or has it been replaced by an organization that is out of control? Are those profits and rewards real or elusive?

Do you even know for sure?

Professionalize your operations



Institutional politics

In-house grounds maintenance budgets depend on a different set of factors — institutional politics and priorities, separate funding requirements and perhaps even public consent to taxes. That doesn't mean our lessons in professionalism don't apply.

The basic foundations of having a smoothly running organization, managing budgets efficiently, building a culture where good employees want to stay and showing your best side to the administration and public are absolutely necessary. You may not have to be as "showy" as a contractor in business, but our standards for appearance and professional presentation will benefit you and your staff as well.

est side

"A lot of (small landscape) firms don't even know if they're profitable or what their profit margin is," said Bob Andrews, president of The Greenskeeper, Carmel, IN, and one of the participants on *Landscape Management's* Best Practices Panel.

"That's why a lot of them come and go!" added Bill Hoopes, director of training and development at Scotts Lawn Service, Marysville, OH.

Pigs don't fly, and your customers won't

pay higher rates just because you want them. You can only charge higher fees, acquire more desirable customers, retain good employees and operate more profitably when you professionalize your organization and search for continuous improvements. Even giant organizations need to keep improving, or they won't remain competitive.

That's why *LM* is developing a series of benchmarks for professional landscape organizations, based on input from our distin-

guished team of Green Industry experts. We asked our Reader Advisors and other professionals for their thoughts on what makes a first-class organization run and how to benchmark it. Our goal (and probably yours) is to build strong organizations with long-term, profitable futures.

continued on page 32



"I believe that most small landscape companies have no idea what their profit margin is."

— Bob Andrews,
President of
The Greenskeeper,
Carmel, IN



"Sadly, too many operators go into business and are undercapitalized,"

— Lou Kobus Jr.,
Owner of
Village Turf, Mount
Vernon, VA.



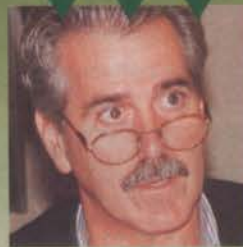
"... too many operators won't do what they need to do to succeed in business."

— Bill Hoopes,
Dir. of training and
development at
Scotts Lawn Service,
Marysville, OH



"I believe successful business people have good common sense."

— Joe Loyet,
President of
Loyet Landscape
Maintenance Inc.,
St. Louis, MO



"The answer to why many new landscape companies struggle is simple, the barriers to entry are practically nonexistent."

— Michael Currin,
President of Greenscape
Inc., Holly Springs, NC,

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The goal is to build a strong organization with a long-term, profitable future.

continued from page 31

We hope you use these benchmarks to plan your own improvements, develop better operations and earn more profits for your efforts. Some of them will generate debate, but we expect this first one to have universal application: *Show your best side.*

The outsider looking in

It's probably too easy to get into this business, which is why so many new and even established companies struggle. In fact, said Michael Currin, president of Greenscape Inc., Holly Springs, NC, "The barriers to entry are practically nonexistent."

While many new operators struggle because they don't understand business; experienced ones pay the price in low-balled fees and competition for employees.

Because a lawn care or landscape contractor's life is so busy, it's hard to find the time to plan, think long-term and look at things objectively. If you could become an outsider, step away from your organization and look back at it with objective eyes, what would you see?

Would your customers see an owner and employees who look and act professional, presentable, knowledgeable and trustworthy? Are your vehicles and equipment clean, polished and in good repair? Are your business cards and literature professional looking? Do your customers have intelligent or haphazard interchanges with your organization? Do you call them back quickly?

How do potential employees see your organization? Is it someplace they want to work? Do your employees look capable and content? Are the facilities and equipment safe and dependable?

Too often, the "dream" slides to the wayside as the demands of running a business overwhelm a contractor, and standards start to slip. Dress codes, repair schedules and hiring standards have a way of getting past too many operators, leaving the public with a negative image of the work you do and the value you provide.

Do you have the discipline?

Standards for pricing slip, too, in the heat of competition. Unless you completely understand your financial picture, it's easy to think you're making money when you're not.

"People who don't operate with a business plan or a budget get into trouble," said Hoopes. "They figure, 'I'm making more than I'm spending, so I'm doing well.'"

"Through their large numbers, these operators 'are' the industry," added Andrews, "and they leave the public with a really strong impression."

"Sadly, too many operators go into business and are undercapitalized, without a plan, without a clue," said Lou Kobus Jr., president of Village Turf Inc., Mount Vernon, VA.

Members of our panel agreed on basic building blocks necessary for a professional operation, plus two elements necessary for

continued on page 34

Professional resources

You don't have to pay a fortune for good business advice. Local chambers of commerce and government-funded programs can get you started in developing the proper financial records and knowledge. State, regional and national business and landscape organizations have specific programs already in place to help you professionalize. Finally, the Internet is crowded with thousands of helpful information and consulting sites.



Let's get down to business.



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Circle No. 118 on Reader Inquiry Card

continued from page 32

success: discipline and common sense.

"It's discipline," said Hoopes. "Too many operators won't do what they need to do to succeed in business."

"It's common sense," added Joe Loyet, president of Loyet Landscape Maintenance Inc., St. Louis, MO. "Successful business people have good common sense."

Business building blocks

It's easy to talk about having first-class organization but not so easy to make it happen year after year.

Our experts said these basics are crucial:

- ▶ Operating budget, with monthly income statements and profit and loss statements, balance sheets at least quarterly and cash flow projections by month.

- ▶ Cost accounting to know what costs what in your operations.

- ▶ A solid estimating system.

- ▶ 5 to 10 year business plan.

- ▶ Line of credit negotiated

before you need it.

What about benefits? The panel included these basics:

- ▶ Health care (including dental insurance).

- ▶ Paid vacation.
- ▶ 401k or other simple pension plan.
- ▶ Holiday pay.
- ▶ Sick days/personal days.
- ▶ Uniform cost sharing.

As for optional extras, our panel would like to see more of these:

- ▶ Profit distributions.
- ▶ Incentive/bonus systems.
- ▶ Disability and life insurance.
- ▶ Overtime options.
- ▶ Additional vacation, sick and personal days beyond the minimums.
- ▶ Educational reimburse-

ment and rewards programs.

- ▶ Rewards for certification.
- ▶ Uniforms provided and cleaned.
- ▶ Logo wear at cost.
- ▶ Cell phones and/or company vehicles for key managers.
- ▶ Travel and attendance to industry events.

Editor's note: LM will continue to provide new benchmarks. We welcome your feedback, suggestions and ideas on professionalism. Contact us at 800/225-4569, fax 440/891-2675 or email: sgibson@advanstar.com.

LM's Benchmarks: Standards for the landscape and lawn care industry

Show your best side

Looking unconventional sends a message of independence that can be taken in a positive and negative way. Your employees may look cool to their friends but what message do your customers get?

Look around the next time you're in a fast-food restaurant. Is the place clean and neat? Are the employees clean and friendly? Does it look like a place where you'd like your food prepared? If not, why are you there?

You probably patronize businesses that look well-run and knowledgeable. Make sure yours does, too.

No excuses

Our panel of experts listed several requirements for how first-class organizations look:

- ▶ Uniforms or logo apparel for all in-field employees (provided or bought at cost).
- ▶ Clean, neat appearance for all employees.
- ▶ Managers/owners look sharp (khakis, shirts with collars, logowear, "manager's" jackets, ties if desired, street shoes).
- ▶ Trucks and equipment washed weekly (minimum).
- ▶ Vehicles and equipment kept in good repair, with a regular schedule for repairs and routine maintenance.

- ▶ Professionally designed or produced company logos/decals on trucks and vehicles.
- ▶ Company letterhead and/or logo on all printed materials.
- ▶ Business cards for all company employees dealing with customers, suppliers, peers, etc.
- ▶ Script and customer handling routine for anyone answering the telephone.

Does this sound unreasonable? We don't think so and neither does our panel. These points require an investment of money, time and energy but they must be a priority. Consider the costs of not doing any of these or of letting these elements slide:

- ▶ Unkempt, unclean employees and managers will most certainly put off customers and will not encourage respect. They'll look elsewhere for a "real" operation.
- ▶ Dirty, rusty or undependable trucks and equipment say this is how this operator will take care of your property.
- ▶ Vehicles without signs or homemade-looking signs make people wonder if you're serious about business.
- ▶ Homemade forms or sloppy handwritten invoices send a similar message. Cheap generic forms are better.
- ▶ Lack of business cards says you're not interested in networking or growing more business.
- ▶ Lack of a customer-handling script says you don't focus on customers or anticipate their needs.

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WATER AUDITS: Programmed savings

**Want to save your commercial and residential customers money?
A water audit might be the first step**

BY ROBERT E. REAVES

With an average annual rainfall of 50 inches, you would never guess the City of Houston would need a water conservation program. Guess again. Groundwater tables have dropped as much as 10 feet in some areas of this sprawling city. Commercial and housing construction continues to grow, increasing the amount of water used for irrigation. Beyond Houston, the entire state of Texas faces an alarming 16.43% water deficit in the next 50 years.

Houston has implemented aggressive conservation efforts, including free irrigation audits for customers with large irrigated landscapes. One licensed Texas irrigator and Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor (CLIA) is David W. Smith, who is reshaping the way property managers look at water management.

He helped develop the Texas Landscape Irrigation Auditing & Management Short Course while he was with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service (TAEX). "After teaching the course to so many people, I realized what a huge issue water management is in Texas.

He left TAEX and started Texas Water Audits, based in Bryan. In January 2000, Smith signed a three-year contract with the City of Houston to conduct water audits for large water customers. One of the first customers Smith contacted was Camden Property Trust, a Texas real estate management and investment firm with 19 properties in the Houston area.



David Smith reads the volume from a catch device to determine sprinkler precipitation rate.

Camden's irrigation challenges

It wasn't difficult to convince Michael Binns, central region landscape manager for Camden, of the value of water audits. While previously managing Camden's Las Vegas landscapes, Binns saw impressive savings from water audits. He also is a CLIA.

"Before we took advantage of the irrigation audits, on-site maintenance staff scheduled irrigation," he says. "It was difficult to program the controller clocks properly to the time of year or site condition."

Things have changed. "Once Smith provided us with the recommended scheduling, accountability for the irrigation scheduling and maintenance was transferred to the landscape maintenance contractor. He is expected to follow the schedules exactly, monitor the landscape

and make adjustments to the scheduling as necessary," he adds.

Current controller equipment has challenged Binns. "Many of our Houston properties still have the old mechanical clocks. It's difficult to get run-time precision with them. If you set a run time of eight minutes, you're likely to get 12 minutes of irrigation," he says.

"The existing mechanical clocks are being replaced with digital clocks. They provide the precision and flexibility we need." Binns hopes to integrate modern controller technology into all Camden properties in Houston.

"One of our Houston properties has a central control irrigation system," Binns adds. "It measures ambient air temperature, wind speed, relative humidity and precipitation. All of these measurements are combined to irrigate according to plant requirements and system efficiency."

Central control is a computer system operating multiple controllers, sensors and other devices from a central location. "The new system was installed in June 1999 in the middle of a drought," he explains. "We had twice the rainfall in 1997 and 1998. Even with half that during 1999, we showed a worthwhile savings in water."

Apartment problems

Smith says some apartment complexes average 50 to 60 irrigation zones and have these problems:

- ▶ Apartment maintenance



A precipitation rate test is performed on an apartment complex as part of a water audit. The results will be used to establish proper irrigation schedules.

staff or landscape contractors with little knowledge of irrigation scheduling or setting irrigation controllers. Irrigation repair knowledge can be limited, too.

- ▶ No rain sensors or rain sensors improperly located.

- ▶ Irrigation hardware problems (broken sprinkler heads, broken pipes, mismatched sprinklers, etc.).

- ▶ Poor system design problems that were inherited.

"Right now, the hardest part is selling the service to commercial businesses," admits Smith. "Since landscape contractors manage the landscape, property owners assume the contractor manages the irrigation system properly. That's a bad assumption. However, I believe more landscape contractors will include water auditing for their customers in years to come."

Big water savings

Can water audits make a difference? "Water savings can be impressive," notes Smith. "From the

audits I've conducted, water savings are at least 30% and often up to 50%. Much of the time, reductions can be achieved simply by resetting the irrigation schedule. Without an audit, there's no way to know the precipitation rate of each zone or how much water you are actually applying."

Smith gives each customer a summary of the irrigation system on a station-by-station basis as part of his audit. This includes:

- ▶ a description of the current

physical condition of the system,

- ▶ a performance summary (i.e., precipitation rate from each zone) based on a catch-can test,
- ▶ recommendations for irrigation scheduling and
- ▶ estimated percent water and cost savings based on following audit recommendations.

Once a property makes his recommended changes, Smith says it is less likely that plant materials will need to be replaced.

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Property at a glance

Company: Camden Property Trust

Headquarters: Houston, TX

Business: Owns and operates 156 properties dispersed throughout the Sunbelt, from California to Florida, as well as Midwestern markets, including 19 properties in Houston

Assets: \$2.5 billion of gross real estate

New developments: Multi-family communities in downtown areas



This flooding was caused by a broken underground pipe. It was detected during the site inspection phase of the irrigation audit.



A precipitation rate test is performed on apartment property. The results are also useful to assess distribution efficiency.

continued from page 37

Damage to sidewalks and foundations from erosion and standing water will decrease, too.

Another benefit is better health and appearance of the landscape. "There are fewer disease and insect problems, as well as more efficient use of fertilizer," Binns adds.

Is there a return on repair costs? Yes. "Smith told us if we spend minimal dollars for parts and labor, we should be able to pay back this amount in lower water bills within two months."

The audit process has taught Binns some valuable lessons. "Most irrigation design problems could be avoided through proper planning," he advises. "Before the first plans are drawn, the irrigation designer needs to work closely with the architects and landscape designer."

He says once you get to the installation level, it's too late. Most apartment complex projects tend

to go with low-bid contractors to keep construction costs low. But Binns believes you can head off problems during the early planning stages by:

- ▶ Placing water mains where they are less visible to vandals.
- ▶ Avoiding irrigating long, narrow strips and other areas that can't be irrigated efficiently.
- ▶ Factoring soil type and depth into the design process.
- ▶ Designing irrigation zones according to the plants' water requirements, hardscape and sun.

With irrigation schedules set, this doesn't mean Camden is home free. An irrigation audit only provides a snapshot of the system at a particular time. Tomorrow, there could be electrical problems or broken parts.

Niche angle for you

Are you interested in providing irrigation audits? With many places around the country in a water supply crunch, the demand for your services is strong. Who are key prospects?

- ▶ Motivated customers looking to save money.
- ▶ Sites with significant water savings potential.
- ▶ Customers with tiered water rates based on water budgets (as in California). Penalties apply to customers who exceed their water budgets based on property size.

— *The author is a frequent contributor to Landscape Management. David W. Smith can be reached at (979) 255-0681. E-mail: tx-audit@myriad.net*

What can irrigation auditing do?

Irrigation auditing is a three-step procedure to improve irrigation system efficiency and reduce landscape water use. The audit ensures that your landscape receives just the right amount of water, when it needs it and in the most efficient manner possible.

Step 1: Site inspection

Irrigation system maintenance is an important part of landscape water efficiency. The first step in irrigation auditing is a site inspection to examine the physical condition and operating characteristics of the system. Problems such as broken or leaking sprinkler heads, breaks in lateral piping and misaligned spray patterns are identified.

Step 2: Performance test

Landscape irrigation systems commonly consist of several sprinkler zones to operate separately. To establish an efficient irrigation program, know how fast each zone applies water (precipitation rate).

A "catch can" test determines actual precipitation rates in each zone. The irrigation controller is programmed to apply specific quantities of water, depending upon the water needs of individual landscape plants.

This test also examines how efficiently water is applied to the landscape. Poor distribution means problems with the system design, excessive or insufficient water pressure or misaligned sprinkler heads.

Step 3: Irrigation scheduling

The final step in irrigation auditing is developing a customized irrigation schedule that considers individual zone precipitation rates, water requirements for different types of plants, soil type, soil depth and climatic conditions. The plan develops seasonal water demands for landscape plants based on historic climate and rainfall records. Zone run times are then adjusted on a month-to-month basis to apply only the amount of water needed.

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Circle No. 123 on Reader Inquiry Card

Mowers can't break down, landscaper says

BY JASON STAHL / MANAGING EDITOR

Greg Kahl just can't deal with mower break-downs. As the owner of a small, family-run landscape company in Verona, WI that averages 250 to 260 stops a week, the breakdown of one mower is crippling. Some of the company's stops are two hours from the nearest dealer.

"We have two to three crews, with two to three people per crew and usually about two mowers per crew," Kahl says. "If one mower breaks down, the other has to do the rest of the work."

Since 1991, Kahl has made mowing the primary service of his business, and his current fleet consists of Ferris, Dixon, Bobcat and Cushman mowers. In 2001, however, he plans to switch to Ferris mowers, mostly because of a favorable test run he had with



Dependable mowers are a necessity in Greg and wife Jan Kahl's business.

the new IS 4000 Z with 72-in. deck and four-wheel independent suspension.

"I ran it for a week," Kahl says. "With the four-wheel suspension, you can keep the speed going. Plus, the cutting ability was very good. Without picking up any more employees, our family will be able to take on 20% more work."

Because Kahl's business is almost 100% mowing and most of his accounts are commercial, he has tested almost every kind of big mower on the market. His route alone runs 2,600 miles a week. His mowers must have quality, speed and dependability. Versatility is a bonus.

"I call my Ferris the 'billy goat' because it can go anywhere," Kahl says. "I see some really steep hills. On one job, all they used to do was hand-mow, but I can use my Ferris there."

He adds: "For quality, it's hard to beat walk-behinds. For me, though, I travel the road and do a lot of big jobs. Next year, I'm going to put a 72-, 61- and 52-in. mower on a trailer and I'll be able to do whatever I want."

BUYING THE BEST COMMERCIAL MOWER.

Investing in a new commercial mower for your business is an important step; and it's a decision that takes some thought. If you're thinking about a zero-turn rider, there are a number of features you should look for:

- The latest technology.** Today's most advanced zero-turns feature independent suspension (either 2 or 4-wheel) for increased comfort, speed, traction, stability and a more consistent cut.
- Rugged deck construction.** Choose a hand-welded deck with overlap-welded corners, a double top deck and reinforced side skirts to make sure it stands up to years of tough, commercial mowing abuse.
- Serviceability.** A simpler design means fewer parts and easier access to the engine compartment and hydraulics for routine maintenance and service. You should also look for 2-year warranties on parts and labor.
- Important features.** A low center of gravity; foot-operated deck lift; 360-degree pivoting, anti-scalp rollers; twin A-section hydro drive belts; and radius-cut, 1/4" thick hardened steel blades... they're all important to your comfort and productivity.

To make your choice of a new mower even easier, be sure to see the new 2001 line of Ferris mid-mount, zero-turn riders at www.ferrisindustries.com. Ferris is the innovation leader in commercial mower design. Don't make a decision to buy a new mower for your business without visiting your nearest Ferris dealer.

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Vitals

Company name: Kahl's Lawn Service

Location: Verona, WI

Founded: 1991

2000 gross revenues: \$250,000-\$300,000

Business mix: 80% commercial, 20% residential

Employees: 6

Services: Mowing, some landscaping

Property at a glance

Location: Post Crest Apartment Homes, Atlanta, GA

Staff: Post Landscape Operations

Category: Apartment complex

Total budget: \$88,560

Year site built: 1995-96

Acres of turf: 2

Acres of woody ornamentals: 7

Acres of display beds: 1

Total paved area: 20

Total man-hours/week: 65

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Providing "top shelf," "organic-only" color program
- ▶ Hand pruning all ornamentals
- ▶ Maintaining one mile long shoreline for on-site lake

Project checklist

- ▶ On-site relocation of *Acer palmatum* "Seiryu"
- ▶ Re-staking of pine trees due to ice storm
- ▶ Landscape restoration due to CATV underground line installation

On the job

- ▶ 5 full-time staff, 2 seasonal employees, 2 licensed pesticide applicators

Post Crest

A 2000 Grand Award Winner of the Professional Grounds Management Society for Apartment Complex

What does an apartment complex administration do to maintain its 100% occupancy rating? Hold monthly grounds inspections, that's what. After all, a nice landscape is one way to keep tenants happy, right?

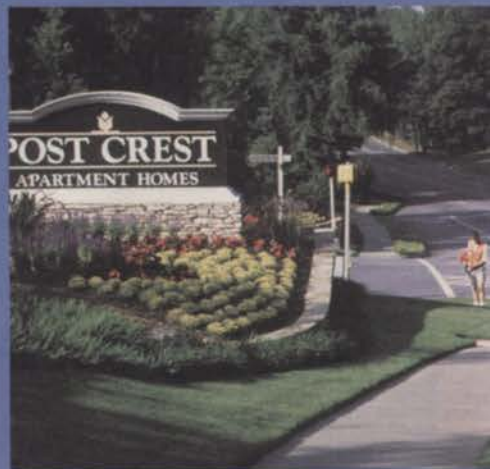
Post Crest Operations, the landscape branch of Post Apartment Homes, thinks so anyway. That's why crew members cut the 1.5 acres of "Meyer" zoysiagrass in straight diagonal lines, alternating the pattern each week to prevent the wheels on the mowers from wearing ruts into the turfgrass.

Every October, the 5,000 sq. ft. of annual beds are planted with pansies which provide constant color through winter. In November, spring flowering bulbs such as tulips and hyacinths are added.

Thanks to the landscape team, Post Crest residents are meeting the daily vegetable requirement in their diets. The complex's Urban Vegetable Garden allows residents to enjoy some of the same therapeutic gardening activities a homeowner might. Residents are provided

with vegetable seeds, plants and herbs by Operations, not to mention lessons in vegetable gardening. This provides for positive interaction between residents and landscape team members, who use the opportunity to promote organic fertilizers and pesticides.

A stick edger and mulching mower keep these narrow ribbons of "Meyer" zoysia neat and trim.



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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 2001 winners will be named at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. For more information on the 2000 Awards, contact PGMS at 120 Cockeysville Road, Suite 104, Hunt Valley, MD; 410/584-9754. Web-site: www.pgms.org

A grounds crew member adjusts a sprinkler head in one of several annual displays seen throughout Post Crest.





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Circle No. 124 on Reader Inquiry Card

HOW I SELECT MOWERS

Three veteran landscape contractors talk about the importance of reliability and productivity in equipment

BY VICKY POULSEN

A MANUFACTURER'S PERSPECTIVE

Making a better mower

Manufacturers talk about the key qualities they consider in their quest for the perfect mower design

When it comes to designing the perfect mower, no one knows more than the manufacturers themselves. They all put comfortable seating, increased productivity, ergonomics, operator safety and quality of cut on the list of things they strive to improve upon with each new design.

"We try to achieve a balance of speed and performance with our walk-behinds," says Jon Vyn, director

of equipment marketing, LESCO, Inc., Rocky River, OH. "However, if the operator is inclined to cut at a speed faster than the machine will tolerate, he'll end up with less than an acceptable cut."

To combat operator fatigue and boost productivity, manufacturers are offering several design features that are either standard or optional equipment on their mowers.

"We offer a stand-up platform and a sit-down sulky seat as an accessory option for our walk-behinds in an effort to reduce operator fatigue," says Ken Taylor, business unit manager for

LARGE CONTRACTOR

Name: John Dingus, Sr.
Title: District manager/landscape division
Company: Davey Tree Expert Co.
Location: Chantilly, VA
2000 revenues: \$315,000,000
Business mix: 70% residential,
 30% commercial
Employees: 135

When you take care of a cemetery, you don't expect a lot of complaints, at least not from the tenants. But there's one cemetery that's under the watchful eye of an entire nation, so slip ups there never go unnoticed.

One big job

"We have a lot of bosses, from members of Congress right up to the President," says John Dingus, Sr., district manager/landscape division of The Davey Tree Expert Co. in Chantilly, VA, which cares for Arlington Cemetery.

Arlington Cemetery is the "grand-daddy" of all maintenance contracts, a tedious job that often requires painstaking mowing and removal processes not typical of other maintenance projects.

"We get more complaints there because you're taking care of someone's final resting place," says Dingus. "We have to strive for perfection because no one wants to see their loved one's headstone all beaten up."

Dingus's crew, which consists of up to 135 workers during peak season, has to mow more than 100 acres a day rain or shine and each year remove 300 loads of leaves and lay about 60,000 yards of sod one grave at a time.

"The leaf removal process is more difficult than the mowing because you can't drive on the graves," says Dingus.

The maintenance itself is a Herculean feat when you consider the thousands of visitors who walk this hallowed ground each year.

In addition to maintenance, Dingus's operation offers everything from design and



Having to maneuver around graves is one of many challenges for John Dingus, Sr. and his crews.

chemical application to snow removal to some of the busiest, historical landmarks in Washington, D.C., including the FDR memorial and the White House. His equipment arsenal consists of several bucket trucks, zero-turn and front-line mowers for greater speed and maneuverability, walk-behinds, a giant vacuum, backhoes, mowing tractors and spring trimmers. His company also owns a

Commercial Lawn & Garden, Husqvarna, Charlotte, NC. "In addition, we offer a deluxe seat that has a lumbar adjustment and an optional foot-assist deck lift accessory which makes curb hopping, deck lifting and/or trailering the unit easier."

A premium full suspension seat with weight adjustment is standard equipment on many commercial mowers today, including those manufactured by New Holland in New Holland, PA. According to Bob Warfel, product marketing manager for New Holland, the company's products feature high, reclining seatbacks with fore and aft adjustment so operators of any size can position themselves comfortably in relation to the foot and hand controls. Flip-up padded armrests are included as standard equipment.

Mike Kadel, marketing manager for Dixon Industries, Inc., Coffeyville, KS, says suspension is a design feature that manufacturers are paying more attention to. "You want operators to stay alert and not be worn out at the end of an eight-hour-plus day," he says. "We focus on a very comfortable seat and suspension system that keeps the operator separate from the movements of the mower."

"Similar to the seating arrangement on big semi-trucks,

our newest product features a big rig suspension fully adjustable seat," he adds.

Full suspension seats with hydraulic dampening and adjustable tension controls are also a must for zero-turn mowers manufactured by the Country Clipper Division of Shivers Mfg. in Corydon, IA.

"Also important is our single-stick, 'point and go' control system which allows the operator to push faster in the direction he wants to go," says Carl Shivers, director of marketing for Country Clipper. "As opposed to twin-steer control, the learning curve for the single-stick is quite short."

With New Holland's four-wheel drive, the operator can choose to select full-time four-wheel drive if conditions demand it.

In most applications, according to Warfel, the operator will choose the automatic mode whereby the system will automatically engage four-wheel traction when it senses slippage, then return to two-wheel drive when traction is regained.

"This takes the guesswork out of the operation, allows

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school bus which hauls employees and a trailer full of spring trimmers to the job site.

Price not everything

Production is Dingus's number-one buying criteria, not price. "You don't want to have a yard full of equipment and have it just sit," says Dingus. "I want to get the most I can for my dollar."

Packaged equipment is a viable buy for contractors wanting equipment that can do multiple tasks. "For example, one commercial mowing manufacturer came out with a trencher equipped with different adapters so you can bore, and it comes already

rigged up on a trailer," says Dingus, whose company usually buys their mowing equipment outright through corporate and local suppliers. "The convenience of having everything you need on that one trailer and the ability to do several things at once is a big plus."

When it comes to equipment purchasing, loyalty is key. "We are loyal to those people who are loyal to us when we need service and parts," says Dingus. "If I have a machine that's breaking down time after time and it's not our fault, I want the manufacturer to stand behind that product and fix it."

With so much equipment, sticking to brand names is essential. "We do our own service and repair work, so we stick with brand names because we cannot afford to inventory 19,000 truck filters," says Dingus.

Safety, of course, is also a consideration. "Our safety department has to clear every piece of equipment and check it out thoroughly before we can buy it," says Dingus. "We also provide a lot of training to our employees before they begin using it in the field."

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for the greatest fuel efficiency and greatly reduces the chance of turf scuffing," says Warfel.

Easy-to-reach controls are also important factors in boosting productivity levels.

"The controls and the handling of controls is important for comfort and minimizing fatigue," says Bob Walker, president of Walker Mowers, Ft. Collins, CO. "The speed control on our zero-turn radius mowers works like a cruise control — our machine sets the forward travel with the operator so the operator has his hands off the control, allowing for more relaxed operation. It also allows people with various degrees of handicaps — where they have limited use of their hands and arms — to operate the machine."

With its walk-behinds, Exmark Manufacturing Co. in Beatrice, NE, has developed a unique control system.

"Unlike the pistol-grip system, innovative topside positioning of the controls with this system keeps the operator's hands further away from obstacles, creating a safety zone that helps to protect hands from injury," says John Cloutier, national marketing manager at Exmark.

Seating position is also a critical consideration when it comes to working on hills and general maneuvering.

"In general, a lot of zero-turn radius mowers can be turned quickly, and it's important for the operator to sit on a pivot point," says Walker. "If your ahead or behind pivot, you'll get jostled side to side."

Vyn says Lesco has modified its operator controls over the last couple of model years to allow for greater operating ease and better balance.

"Engines, drive trains, spindles and wheel castors have

all been upgraded for greater dependability," says Vyn.

Shivvers says other design features that make mowers more productive are built-in hydraulic oil coolers, larger tires, larger wheel stands and larger engine options including more fuel-efficient, fuel-injected engines.

The quality of cut is also a factor in determining a mower's efficiency.

"Our blades provide a 50% increase in the time between sharpening," says Rick Cuddihe, executive vice-president at Great Dane Power Equipment, Inc., a manufacturer of stand-on mowers in Jeffersonville, IN. "This benefit saves our customers time and money."

Noise is another factor that contractors need to consider when purchasing mowing equipment.

"Our commercial mowers feature smooth-running diesel engines with improved lower noise levels," says Warfel. "The engines are isolation-mounted and feature underhood exhaust for quiet, vibration-free operation."

"...while everyone wants to go faster, safety is foremost."
—Cuddihe

Name your price

Oftentimes, a good price doesn't equate to a good product.

"My formula for the best value for a customer is a machine that has the lowest possible cost of ownership and is highly-productive," says Walker. "Low cost isn't necessarily low price on the front end. Sometimes you can pay more and have your actual cost of ownership turn out to be less if it requires less maintenance and less repairs and has higher retail value in the end as a trade-in."

"The astute businessperson will look at real cost of ownership and all the costs that will go into the overall cost of a machine," adds Walker.

MEDIUM CONTRACTOR

Name: Larry Burklund
Title: General manager
Company: World of Green
Location: Lincoln, NE
2000 revenues: Undisclosed
Business mix: 98% commercial,
2% residential
Employees: 50

Like Dingus, Larry Burklund, general manager of World of Green in Lincoln, NE, believes that manufacturer integrity is important. "The true measure of a company is how their service department stands up to its equipment if we need something fixed," he says.

"We only use three suppliers but have had great luck and much success with them," he adds. "Excellent customer service and 24-hour service on equipment are important to us."

Almost all of Burklund's accounts are

commercial maintenance, requiring a dozen or so crews of three to four workers per crew and several chemical operators during his busiest season. In summer, his crews operate trimmers, five walk-behind mowers, 20 push mowers and several out-front mowers, some with bags attached.

"We do a lot of townhomes, which is difficult at times because each is unique and residents think of them as their own private homes," says Burklund.

As far as purchasing equipment goes, Burklund says his company buys equipment outright rather than leases, which is often left as a finance option when buying their trucks.

Although price is important, Burklund said it's not everything. "We look for durability, quality of cut, the speed of equipment, safety features and operator comfort," he says.

World of Green's record speaks for itself as far as safety is concerned. As of the end of November, Burklund says his company has gone 594 days without a loss-



Lots of luck and success has allowed Larry Burklund to deal with only three suppliers.

time incident. He says new employees endure four hours of safety training before they start work, another day of hands-on training as soon as they start and then are under direct supervision for the next couple of weeks after that. He also employs management safety and employee safety personnel who make sure all safety measures are continually being met.

"If you don't put your guys in dangerous situations in the first place, you don't have any problems," says Burklund.

According to Dick Kilgas of Kubota, manufacturer of riders equipped with either out-front or mid-mount deck designs, "products that are designed to be better, stronger and more versatile typically last longer. Therefore, the business can amortize over a longer time so they don't have to purchase equipment as often. This also adds to their bottom line."

W. Dick Tegtmeier, president and CEO of Encore, Beatrice, NE, which manufactures commercial riding mowers, says "in almost all cases, developing lower-end products to meet a lower cost is not synonymous with stronger, longer-lasting products."

"We, as manufacturers, are squeezed to a margin that is almost embarrassing," says Tegtmeier, who has been in the industry for more than 25 years. "A 36-in. walk-behind that cost \$350 then still costs that much today despite increases in labor, material costs and horsepower."

"If contractors want it to be stronger and last longer, it's going to cost more for the end users," adds Tegtmeier.

According to Bill Shea, vice president of sales at Ferris In-

dustries in Munnsville, PA, commercial cutters must understand there are services attached to the price of the product.

"A machine may cost more at a dealer, but how much time will the contractor lose if a part isn't available, which is typical when purchases are made at big box stores?" says Shea.

Peter Whurr, vice president of product management at Textron Golf and Turf Specialty Products in Racine, WI, says it's also important for contractors to understand that a lack of "creature comforts" doesn't equate to lack of quality.

"The real test of a product is the value it presents to the end user at the end of the day," says Whurr.

So is it a matter of what a contractor is willing to give up? Whurr explains. "If you look at ride-on mowers and the zero-turn radius mowers, can you forego an electric lift for a manual one, or one fuel-tank instead of two? It's all a matter of de-features," he says. "We will make a product, whether it's de-featured or higher-end, of the same quality and longevity."

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



Herbicide	Crabgrass	Goosegrass	Foxtail	Poa Annua	Dallis	Spurge	Henbit	Chickweed
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DIMENSION [®]	H	M	H	M	H	M	M	M
TEAM [®]	H	M	M	M	M	M	NR	NR
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BASF

SMALL CONTRACTOR

Name: Kurt Bienmueller
Title: Vice-president, part-owner
Company: Four Square Landscaping Co.
Location: Dallas, TX
2000 revenues: \$1,000,000
Employees: 18
Service mix: 80% commercial,
20% residential

Kurt Bienmueller, vice-president and part-owner of Four Square Landscaping Co. in Dallas, TX, says quality, not price, was the issue when



Kurt Bienmueller, left, with co-worker Brett Chapman, listens closely to what his employees have to say about how his equipment is running.

he began his business five years ago.

"We wanted to get better and larger pieces of equipment to keep crews to a minimum," says Bienmueller, whose accounts are mostly commercial with 65% of services devoted to maintenance and the rest to design. "We bought mowers that

would have a minimum amount of breakdowns and would be easy to repair. Also, their parts had to be easily available, and they had to meet or exceed voluntary safety standards."

"We also looked at the weight of the equipment so it didn't wear people down,

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Show me the money

Financing is a viable sales and inventory management tool for many mowing equipment manufacturers. At Husq-

Mower buying tips from the pros

The next time you're in the market for mowing equipment, consider the following guidelines contributed by John Dingus, Kurt Bienmueller and Larry Burkland:

- Be familiar with the dealer. Make sure it's a product name that you can depend on.
- Check on customer service and whether or not on-time delivery and immediate part availability are options.
- Productivity vs. price: How often do you want to turn your equipment.

over? Consider your cash-flow situation. Can you afford to spend the big bucks up front?

- Safety standards have been met and training materials are readily available.
- User friendly.
- Easy-to-maintain.
- Visit trade shows and read trade journals to find the latest and greatest in mowing equipment and accessories.

varna, for example, they offer "credit card/revolving charge plans, deferred financing plans and leasing options."

"We encourage our dealers to consider return on investment when discussing solutions to end users. A solution, then, may sometimes require a greater investment, but the return will also be greater," says Taylor. "The initial cost of a unit is not the greatest an end user will face. Losses related to a downed unit, productivity, etc. may, in fact, be greater."

According to Gregg Breningmeyer, marketing manager for commercial mowing at John Deere, Triangle Park, NC, they have found that interest rates have not been an important consideration in a customer's buying decisions.

"What is important is cash flow — how much money is needed as a down payment and how much money it's going to cost on a monthly basis," says Breningmeyer.

The value of dealers

In many industries, including the Green Industry, consolidation is an economic fact of life. Consolidation by mower manufacturers is paring down the number of dealers and, therefore, places to get equipment serviced. Manufacturers are responding by either making their dealers stronger, helping them service equipment more profitably or making mowers easier for contractors to fix themselves.

"We're consistently selling our product through the dealer channel only — avoiding the temptation of internet

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"It's also important to belong to ALCA and some of the other landscape organizations out there to see what their members are using and what conclusions they have drawn about a particular piece of equipment."

— Bienmueller

and whether or not it was self-propelled," he adds. "We looked at the deck to see if it floated and how accessible it would be to change a belt or a blade."

Bienmueller says a lot of his equipment purchases are based on what his crew members are telling him. "I'll try out a piece of equipment in the field and get input from my guys. We have a very close relationship with our employees, so we make our decisions as a family."

For mowing, Bienmueller uses walk-be-

hinds for turf and "around-a-pool" areas, riding mowers for open cutting areas and push and hand mowers for up-close work around decorative islands.



Four-Square Landscaping employee Jose Sanchez will give boss Kurt Bienmueller input on how this blower is running once through with the task.

The right equipment has been only one factor in the 35% a year growth rate of Bienmueller's business. Doing a quality job with that equipment, he says, advertises itself. "Dallas is a very competitive marketplace," he says. "Still, word-of-mouth has grown our business tremendously."

"How well you take care of your customers and your employees is what counts, too," he adds.

Communication, Bienmueller says, is key in making sure crew members aren't putting themselves in dangerous situations.

"We're in touch constantly with our employees," Bienmueller says. "I make sure I see them throughout the day."

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Circle No.127

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selling and big box stores," says Walker. "If you don't do that, you will not have a viable service system to take care of your customers."

"Finding reliable dealers who will even service mowers purchased at big box stores is becoming more difficult for landscapers," adds Carol Dilger, marketing services manager at Gravely, an Ariens Company in Brillion, WI that makes riding and walking lawn mowers. "Also, as the number of dealers continues to decline, it becomes even more difficult to find someone who will service the unit."

According to Kadel, manufacturers who go to big box stores are after quick sales numbers with a short term plan. "They end up ignoring the value of the independent dealer and the role he plays in keeping equipment going," says Kadel.

As a manufacturer of walk-behinds, Bill Shea, vice-president of sales at Ferris Industries in Munnsville, NY, says "manufacturers have to partner with those commercial dealers who put the commercial cutter at the highest priority on their customer list."

Taylor adds, "At the same time we must understand the challenges the contractor is facing and make sure we are responding with solutions to address them. For instance, is it the actual price that is driving the contractors to the big boxes or the convenience factor?"

"Some of the ways we work with our dealers are by identifying the buying habits, shopping patterns and what drives key decisions of contractors," he adds.

Ease of servicing goes hand-in-hand with productivity. Not only does an equipment owner want servicing to be fast so he can spend more time mowing, but he also wants servicing to be easy and convenient so it actually gets done.

According to Warfel, the following are specific design features that make self-servic-

"Manufacturers must work with dealers to help them understand that service is a key factor to continued business success. While we are working to build equipment that will require less daily maintenance, dealer training is essential."

— Dilger

ing of products easier:

- ▶ The rear hood can be fully raised to provide full access to the engine area.
- ▶ All routine maintenance points can be serviced from the right side of the tractor.
- ▶ Engine oil can be checked without raising the hood. This is especially convenient if the unit is equipped with a grass collector system.
- ▶ A maintenance decal is located under the hood, making it easy to check for routine service intervals.
- ▶ Electrical components are located together to make troubleshooting and servicing quick and easy if a problem should occur.
- ▶ Engine oil filter, transmission filter and fuel filter are all accessible and replaceable.
- ▶ All mower decks can be flipped up for safe, simple, easy servicing and cleaning. No need to disconnect the PTO drive shaft when flipping up the deck and no tools required.

To mulch or not to mulch

Mulching is a hot subject among professional these days. According to Cuddihe, Great Dane is testing new designs so their customers have the best mulching capabilities available.

"We don't believe mulching has been perfected yet, but we think our mulch systems are the best there are," says Cuddihe.

Kilgas says many people have a misconception of mulching. "Yes, it's good for the soil and grass. However, most people want things done right now — they don't want the job to take any longer than it would if they were to use a side discharge mower," Kilgas says. "The only way to improve the mulching system is to provide a secondary chamber where the mulching process takes place."

Cloutier has his own ideas about the perfect mulching system. "It's not just closing off your discharge chute," he says. "It truly is a system of combining flow control baffles with the placement of mulching baffles, mulching blades and discharge cover."

The safety factor

Breningmeyer says watching a contractor disconnect the safety switch in a seat makes him cringe.

"Safety is of paramount importance with us," he says. "It costs more money to test and make sure products meet certain safety requirements which are voluntary, and few of our competitors meet that standard. Maybe they don't think they can compete from a financial standpoint and consider themselves suitproof."

Whurr says manufacturers need to pay more attention to legislation as it relates to noise pollution and alternative fuel systems. "We have to make sure we design our products to meet the various standards of the marketplace today."

"We believe professional landscape contractors are also concerned about safety, and while everyone wants to go faster, safety is foremost," adds Cuddihe.



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MOWERS 2001

Country clippin'

Country Clipper's zero-turn mower Zeton comes with either a joystick or conventional twin stick steering.



Other features include a stand-up deck, suspension seat and 24 x 12 x 12 rear tires and 13-in. front tires. It's available with either a 25-hp Kohler Pro Command or 26-hp Kohler EFI engine. For more information contact Country Clipper Division, Shivers Mfg., Inc. at 800/344-8237 / Circle no. 271

Cut wide and fast

Woods Equipment Co.'s rear discharge Turf Batwing line features three models — 7144RD with

seven spindles and cutting width of 12 ft.; 9180RD with nine spindles and cutting width of 15 ft.; and 9204RD with nine spindles and cutting width of 17 ft. Mowers can cut up to 8.8 acres per hour. For more information, contact Woods Equipment Co. at 815/381-6028 / Circle no. 272

Get a load of this

Walker Manufacturing Co.'s loader bucket attachment works with the



Quick-Change Implement Hitch System on the Walker tractor. It lifts 180 lbs. and 2-1/4-cu. ft. of material with 14-in. ground clearance. For more information, contact Walker at 970/221-5614 / Circle no. 273

Cut everything

Woods Equipment Co.'s new BrushBull line of single spindle cutters are available in cutting widths of 48 to 84 in. The series includes rotary cutters, standard-duty utility cutters, medium-duty machines for mowing brush and heavy-duty cut-



ters. For more information, contact Woods Equipment Co. at 815/381-6028 / Circle no. 275

Deck-orated

LESCO's Viper midmount zero-turn mowers have improved fabricated decks and three new deck widths: 48-, 54- and 60-in. A 19-hp Kawasaki twin-cylinder OHV power plant powers the 48-in. Viper, while a 23-hp engine powers the 54- and 60-in. models.



Each unit comes with an articulating front axle, and the decks are fitted with four adjustable anti-scalping wheels and adjustable anti-scalping rollers on the front and back. Decks adjust to cut from 1.5 in. to 5 in. by a foot pedal. For more information contact LESCO, Inc. at 800/321-5325 / Circle no. 276

Less noise

New Holland's MC Series commercial mowers feature diesel engines that are isolation-mounted and have under-hood exhaust for quiet, vibration-free operation. They also have a large, unobstructed platform with lots of leg



room. A full suspension seat with weight adjustment is standard equipment. The steering column has telescopic adjustment to accommodate operators of all sizes. Cup holder and auxiliary power socket for cell phone are standard. For more information contact New Holland at 888/290-7377 or www.newholland.com/na/ / Circle No. 277

Stable ride

Husqvarna's zero-turn ZTH6125 mowers feature a unibody frame for a low center of gravity and wide wheel stance for stability. Exactly 19 cutting heights fit any application need. The 52- and 61-in. decks offer 1.5- to 6-in. height in 1/4-in. increments. Maximum ground speed is 10 mph and fuel capacity is 11.4 gallons. They feature air-cooled, liquid-cooled and fuel injection engines. An optional foot assist lift mechanism lessens the effort of raising the deck over curbs or changing cutting height options. For more information contact Husqvarna at 704/597-5000 or www.husqvarna.com/ / Circle No. 274



Smooth ride

Great Dane Super Surfer mowers feature a spring loaded platform set forward of the drive wheels to reduce bumps and jars. They also provide comfort and security to the operator during zero turning maneuvers due to the platform's position. They come available in cutting



widths from 36 in. to 61 in. and engine sizes from 15 hp to 23 hp. For more information contact Great Dane Power Equipment, Inc. at 812/218-7100 / Circle no. 278

Brush up

The Swisher 44-in. Trailcutter is designed for clearing brush from overgrown fields, roadsides, fence-lines and trails. It features a 10.5 hp engine, heavy duty swinging blades which can handle brush up to 1-1/2-in. in diameter, universal articulating hitch and single-point height adjustment. For more information contact Swisher, Inc. at 660/747-8183 or www.swisher-inc.com / Circle no. 279

Making the cut

John Deere's 1400 Series front mowers feature gas or diesel liquid-cooled Yanmar engines from



28-hp to 31-hp. A 14.5-gal. fuel tank allows for all-day mowing. The air intake system allows air to enter from the rear and side of the mower for lower sound levels at the operator station and less debris buildup. Available are 60- and 72-in. 7-Iron side-discharge mower decks. A 20-in. turning radius to the trim side leaves only a 28-in. uncut circle of grass. For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.john-deere.com / Circle no. 280

Zip in a Z

Exmark Manufacturing's XP series of Lazer Z riding mowers features 27-hp liquid-cooled diesels or 31-hp liquid-cooled gas models. Each model is available with either a 60-in. UltraCut deck that mows up to six acres per hour or the 72-in. UltraCut deck that mows up to seven acres per hour. Ground speed is 11 mph forward and 7 mph in reverse. For more information contact Exmark Mfg. Co., Inc. at 402/223-6300 or www.exmark.com / Circle No. 281

Nice blades

The Gravely 260Z comes equipped with stay-sharp Tungsten carbide-coated blades, maintenance-free Gravely XL spindles and a two-year limited commercial warranty. It's manufactured with either a Kohler Command OHV 25 hp engine or 25 hp Kawasaki engine. The air-flow deck's cutting chamber expels clippings faster using a 21-in.-wide discharge tunnel. For more information contact the Ariens Co. at 800/678-5443 or www.gravely.com / Circle no. 282

Prowl around

Encore Manufacturing Co.'s Prowler Mid Cut features a front-cut style deck suspension on a mid mount. The full floating deck artic-



ulates, following terrain with front wheels that are independent of the mower so they can stay on the ground. For a level cut at high speeds, there's a PTO shaft which feeds power to the blades and a heavy-gauge welded steel deck with reinforcement channels controlling vibration. The 5-1/2-in. deep deck handles grass better than typical shallow decks. All Prowlers (52-, 61- and 72-in.) have a low maintenance blade spindle assembly for longer bearing life and easier routine maintenance. For more information contact Encore Manufacturing Co., Inc. at 402/228-4425 / Circle no. 283

Tight maneuvering

Textron's Bunton BZT 1000 Series zero-turn mowers are powered by a 25 hp Kohler engine and come equipped with a 42- or 48-in. deck. Side-discharge and collection options are available for both decks. Twin steering levers control independent power to each wheel for tight maneuvering. For more information contact Textron at 262/637-6711 or www.textron.com/ / Circle no. 284

No fixin' a Dixon

Dixon Industries Inc.'s ZTR® 8000 Series commercial mower features a 25-hp Kohler Command or 26.5-hp Briggs & Stratton-Daihatsu



engine; white wheel motors and Hydro-Gear® BDU pumps; 60- or 72-in. cutting widths; "big rig" seat suspension and fully-adjustable seat; speed up to 10 mph; 11-1/2-gal. fuel capacity; and 1-in. front caster wheel. Attachments include broom, grass blower and catcher, snow blade, snow blower and carryall rack. All mount to mower with automatic-type receiver hitch. ROPS available. For more information contact Dixon Industries, Inc. at 800/264-6075 or www.dixon-ztr.com/ / Circle no. 285

Endearing steering

Textron's Bob-Cat ZT 200 Series now includes a 20-hp Yanmar diesel engine. The liquid-cooled ZT 220D provides up to twice the reliability and fuel economy of gas engines. The ZT 200 Series offers a 19- or 23-hp Kawasaki V-Twin engine and a 25-hp Kohler Command engine. The mowers feature lever-type steering that controls independent power to each wheel. The hydrostatic drive enables the machine to reach speeds up to 8 mph. For more information contact Textron at 262/637-6711 or www.textron.com/ / Circle no. 286

Easy does it

Rich Manufacturing, Inc.'s Convertible features easy-access controls and a spring-loaded seat that can be adjusted forward and back. The platform is designed for easy mounting and dismounting. Its mower deck is made of 10-gauge steel, welded not stamped with a curve trimming edge to prevent deck damage. The deck lift system allows for seven different height positions. For more information contact Rich Manufacturing, Inc. at 765/436-2744 / Circle no. 287

Effective, efficient hydroseeding

BY CURT HARLER / CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

These contractors have found the right mix of materials, prices and products to make hydroseeding services profitable



It's summer and business is heating up. So are the chances of your hydroseeder plugging. One problem might be failure to rinse out the hoses. A minute with the rinse tank can save hours of frustration.

"Clogged hoses can be a real mess," says Rob Childs, owner of Outside Unlimited, Meredith, NH. He's found that keeping tabs on the paper material carrying the seed can reduce the likelihood of clogging.

Childs does about 70% commercial hy-

droseeding, including new houses and shopping centers. Most of the residential work is around the upscale homes of the Lakes Region. A two-man hydroseeding crew follows the grounds team onto job sites.

John Goode, who operates Easy Lawn of Ohio Valley, Circleville, OH, recommends using a paper-based mulch, especially on the smaller units. "Paper absorbs all the water it is going to take up in about 10 minutes," he says. "Wood will keep absorbing water for an hour or more."

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"Those home-built trailers are really versatile and mobile when we have to run them in between buildings."

— Wiggins

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continued from page 58

Goode's business is a 50-50 mix of residential and commercial jobs. The latter includes shopping stores and recent work around the Ohio University campus in Athens, OH.

"If you have mostly wood in the blend, you are more prone to clog," he says. He feels it is safe to use wood mulch, paper mulch or a blend in larger units, but the carrier should vary with the application.

Hot weather blues

There are specific reasons material dries out, and it is a major cause of hydroseeder hassles, agrees Tim Fesler, shop foreman at HydroTurf, Inc. (www.hydroturf.net) Mendota, MN. He works on units from all manufacturers. The drying problem is especially tricky in warm weather.

"Then, you've got 500 gallons of solution in your tank and a 20-minute drive between jobs," Fesler says. Even if the agitator is working in the tank, the hose just sits there. "In 90-degree weather, that's all it takes for the hose to get plugged."

Fesler says the tank is usually not a problem as long as the material stays agitated. But there almost always will be residual material in the hose. Rinsing the line after each application can save three or four hours of downtime.

HydroTurf has designed a new inductor system for agitation that works better than mechanical agitation, Fesler says. "If you're pumping 10 gallons to the nozzle, the inductor is pumping 40 gallons." In their 300-gallon unit, there are three inductors; the 1,000-gal. model has eight.

"The result is there are no dead spots," Fesler continues. "I haven't had any plug-up yet."

HydroTurf's units come with two motors. Not only does this allow two workers to pump off one machine, but also the twin system allows emptying a tank if one motor should break down. The 13-hp pumps are made by Briggs & Stratton. "You don't need to go any bigger — the pump won't turn any faster," Fesler says. "Actually," he adds, "the 9-hp one is probably enough. But a 13-hp motor won't lug down with the mulch."



Turfgrass specialist Roch Gaussoin recommends newspaper fiber as carrier material.

The right carrier material

While there has been debate about various kinds of carriers, Roch

"Hydroseeding is more successful in New England than in the mid-Atlantic."

— Childs

Gaussoin, turfgrass specialist at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, says he has seen no difference.

"We tend to recommend newspaper fiber. It is cheap, readily available and decomposes more quickly than the wood-based product," Gaussoin says. Like many others, he has heard the concerns about wood chip-based materials tying up nitrogen.

"The theory is that the excess wood messes up the carbon-to-nitrogen ratio," he explains. However, he downplays the possibility. "Bark and wood-based carriers are not a problem. I personally don't think it is a concern. No research that I've seen points one way or the other."

At Twin Rivers Lawncare & Landscaping, Lexington, SC, owner Harold A. Wiggins, Jr. uses three or four different brands of wood-fiber carrier, depending on the job requirements. Their work is split about 50-50 between commercial and residential all around the state. However, most are upscale homes and developments, not highway work.

"We use some materials with dye built in and some that you can add on your own," Wiggins says.

Because his two Turbo Turf

hydroseeding systems do not have big internal agitators, he feels most comfortable with bagged material that comes loose. "That way you don't have to break it up," he notes.

"I like to use a combination of wood and paper," Childs says. "The wood fiber is good for erosion control, but too much wood can cause a problem. I like to see a 40-60 wood to paper mix." He uses a turf fiber mulch that is combined with a park and athletic seed mix, including bluegrass, fescue and rye. "It's designed so the bluegrass becomes the predominant variety."

"We recommend Jet Spray for all seed types," says Fesler. The material is a wood/cellulose/paper mix that meets all specifications for most cities and states. Fesler's company used to recommend mulch pellets. "They are compressed way too tight," he adds. "It's a good material designed for dry spread, not for hydroseeding."

The spray is more of a flake. "It has a good dye in it and you can get it mixed with starter fertilizer," Fesler adds.

Gaussoin says the "stickers" may be the more important concern. "It boils down to the emulsifiers used to get the uniform distribution required for the seed," he says.



Rob Childs moved to New Hampshire to start Outside Unlimited, a \$3- to \$4-million business offering hydroseeding for new residential properties and shopping centers.

Doesn't need straw

At Outside Unlimited, Childs finds that his crew rarely has to use straw mulch. This is different from his experiences farther south. For 25 years, Childs worked in a family business in Annapolis, MD. About four years ago, he moved to New Hampshire to start Outside Unlimited, which now grosses \$3 to \$4 million a year.

"Hydroseeding is more successful in New England than in the mid-Atlantic," he says. "We rarely have to use straw mulch unless we're on a steep slope where erosion is a problem. And, germination rates are much higher."

He credits that to the cooler New England nights. "Also, we can use bluegrass here, not improved fescues. We get a better response with the bluegrass," he says. The firm uses an 1,100-gallon hydroseeding unit from Bowie Industries, Bowie, TX.

Goode says that hydroseed-

ing will be simpler in almost every case. The only time he recommends using straw is for jobs done at the end of the year. "Straw is a better insulator," he notes. "I'd hydroseed and then place some straw over it."

It was a run-in with straw that got Goode into hydroseeding in the first place. He had just finished seeding a new lawn and covering it with straw when a storm came and sent the straw onto nearby properties throughout the neighborhood. It took five men one day to rake the neighborhood; he had to put a mesh net down over the lawn and deal with the neighbors' complaints. He picked up the cost of the cleanup.

"I just got tired of messing with straw," he concludes. "For the amount of money I wasted on that job alone, I could have made a nice down payment on a hydroseeder."

Gaussoin maintains that hy-

continued on page 62

"We tend to recommend newspaper fiber. It is cheap, readily available and decomposes more quickly than the wood-based product."

— Gaussoin



HydroTurf's hydroseeder has a new inductor system for agitation, offering an alternative to mechanical agitation. Various models on the market accommodate large and small seeding jobs.

continued from page 61
 dromulching can also be the difference between success and failure on any sloped or nonirrigated field. "In addition to the seed being wet, that extra bit of moisture can be the difference between success and failure," Gaussoin says.

He adds that the mulch crust helps stabilize sloped fields, preventing erosion where a mesh is not used.

Sizing units

If you are considering a hydroseeder, size the equipment to the workload. A landscaper who is doing one home a day or a couple a week probably can get by with a 300-gal. unit.

"However, I've seen many come back and say they wish they'd gotten a 500-gal. unit," Fesler says.

If you do a lot of restoration work, big lawns, or the equivalent of 5,000 to 10,000 sq. ft. a day, look at 500 gallons or larger. A 750 will probably be suited to such an operation, Fesler says.

Goode's rule of thumb is that anyone doing 10 acres or more should go with a 900-gal. unit. A unit with a 900- to 1,000-gal. capacity will do about 10,000 to 12,000 sq. ft. per tankful.

He figures the cost of hydroseeding — including the materials, cost of labor, gasoline and equipment depreciation — in the area of 1.5 to two cents per sq. ft.

Wiggins is happy with his 500-gal. units. "Most of our jobs are two or three acres," he explains. "We keep a 500-gal. unit busy. If we need to run two

units, we call in another."

Much of the work Wiggins does is between fancy homes and around tight spots. He is proud of the custom-designed and custom-built trailers made in his own shop.

"The trailers were custom made to fit the hydroseeders so the unit does not hang out over the side. Those trailers are really versatile and mobile when we have to run them between buildings," he notes.

A typical seeding mix is centipede mixed with carpetgrass. "The centipede takes a long time to germinate. The carpetgrass provides quick cover and the centipede takes over," Wiggins explains.

They also are one of the few companies to hydroseed zoysia-grass. They use Zenith zoysia-grass and have been successful

pumping it onto landscapes.

Gaussoin says the size of the seed used (such as fescue versus bluegrass) is not a factor in choosing a carrier. "As long as the carrier lends itself to even distribution, it is not an issue," he says.

Battles over the benefits of jet or mechanical agitation continue to rage. Manufacturers of each have a litany of arguments why their process is better than others'.

Goode opted for jet agitation over paddles because he preferred a poly tank over steel and wanted to keep the mechanics and maintenance as simple as possible.

"Both systems work," Goode says. "It depends more on the individual manufacturer and the model of the machine."

"The price is not that much more than standard seeding," Gaussoin says, "but the better chance of success alone justifies the extra cost of hydroseeding."

— The author is a contributing editor of *Landscape Management* and managing editor of *TurfGrass Trends*.

"You've got 500 gallons of solution in your tank and a 20-minute drive between jobs. In 90-degree weather, that's all it takes for the hose to get plugged."

— Fesler

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BY CURT HARLER / CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

While there is great care to avoid system failures when installing sprinkler heads and emitters, Norm Mueller of I.S.A., Inc. finds that not cleaning out irrigation lines is the biggest problem. "It's more an issue with PVC than poly," he says.

Mueller, of Phoenix, AZ, is the Southwest representative for Bowsmith. Bowsmith's emitters are widely used in government and commercial applications. Much of the water in the Southwest is either reclaimed or loaded with calcium. Either the system has to be filtered or it must use emitters which can handle "thick" water.

"We see about 70% of our commercial applications using threaded emitters with PVC pipe," he says. Most of the residential applications are done with smaller emitters on poly.

It's not unusual to see some leakage when a system is first turned up. Mueller says it's not usually a continual problem in systems with barbed emitters. "Pressure from the line will push the barb up against the inside of the tubing wall," he says, which seals the leak. With

threaded systems, the seal is more positive and there should be less leakage.

To minimize damage or vandalism, Mueller likes to see as little of the emitter poking up as possible. "Run the spaghetti right up to the base of the plant and only have two or three inches sticking up," he advises.

Whether the application calls for emitters or sprinkler heads, there are many good choices available from various vendors.

BOWSMITH 800/BOWSMITH

mail@bowsmith.com

The Fan-Jet Microsprinkler from Bowsmith, Exeter, CA, provides high spray trajectories, consistent and larger wetting patterns and low cost in a water-saving, low-flow device. Heads are available in 18 wetting patterns. Color-coded nozzles in seven sizes offer wide customization possibilities. The company also makes nonstop drip emitters with continuous flushing action to get rid of slime and small particles. Emitters are available in 0.6, 1.0 and 2.0 gallon/hour models.

Circle no. 258



◀ Bowsmith's microsprinkler

Irrigation tips

- ▶ **Look for water-saving heads**
- ▶ **Keep sprinkler lines clean**
- ▶ **Reset controllers monthly during summer**
- ▶ **Reset controllers quarterly other times**

FLOPPY SPRINKLER

27/13752-4252

www.floppysprinkler.com

The Floppy Sprinkler, from Floppy Sprinkler Ltd., Nelspruit, South Africa, has a plastic nipple on which a flexible silicone tube is mounted. When water passes through the tube, it snakes to and fro, rotating 360 degrees, forming even droplets. **Circle no. 259**

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Valve. It slips directly onto poly pipe for faster installation, eliminating the need for additional fittings. Depending on the model, PGV flow rates can be

varied from 1 gpm to 120 gpm. All units are pressure-rated to 150 psi, with high-grade construction.

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www.k-rain.com

The Dial-A-Nozzle from K-Rain Manufacturing Corp., Riviera Beach, FL, has four 26-degree standard and four 12-degree low-angle nozzles on the same 5-in. pop-up riser. Flow rates range from 1 gpm to 4 gpm on low-angles, and 1.5 gpm to 6 gpm on standard nozzles. Units have 3/4-in. threaded NPT inlets, arc adjustment from 35-360 degrees, and are pressure rated from 7 to 60 psi.

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that works via radio. Two AA batteries keep time for a year. The 7000 and 7500 Gear Drive Sprinklers from the Peoria, IL firm feature nozzle insertion radius reduction for nozzle installation and diffuser pin adjustment without removing the protective cap.

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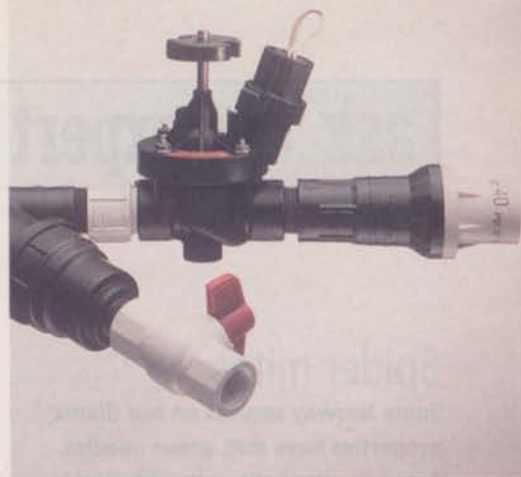
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The latest addition to the Rain Bird Xerigation Control Zones is the XCZ-100 COM. This 1-in. control zone for commercial applications has a PEB valve, RBY-C in-line



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RAINDRIP

800/544-3747

www.raindrip.com

Raindrip, Simi Valley, CA, can convert existing 1/2-in. underground sprinkler systems to low-flow. Screw off the sprinkler head, screw on a swivel elbow to a 1/2-in. sprinkler riser and attach a 1/2-in. poly hose for slow, even watering. Raindrip says the conversion reduces weed growth, evaporation and saves up to 70% on water.

Circle no. 265

SIGNATURE CONTROL SYSTEMS

949/580-3640

www.signaturecontrolsyste.ms.com

The 286/287 commercial rotor from Signature Control Systems, Irvine, CA, offers better performance and is less expensive than the old Thompson 186/187 line. Its plastic rotor provides more water distribution at a higher pop-up to clear taller grasses. Its design eliminates blow-by and has an adjustable arc nozzle — one of five.

Circle no. 266

TRANSITIONAL SYSTEMS MFG.

530/751-2610

www.transitionalsystems.com

When two or more controllers are connected to a master valve or pump circuit, adding a pump relay to each controller solves some problems, but the Isolator from Transitional Systems, Yuba City, CA, protects by locking out all controllers except one. It handles feedback and phasing problems that arise when controllers are on different "legs" of a 240-volt service.

Circle no. 267

ask the expert

BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

Spider mites

Some Norway spruces on our clients' properties have dull, green needles. Some needles have yellowish flecking, discoloration and some browning. In a few cases, we found a small number of spider mites, which we treated with miticides. The results were marginal. Is there a different problem here?

— MI

The yellowish flecking and browning appear to be related to spider mite feeding activity. The treatment you provided should have helped manage the problem. However, spider mite management success depends on several factors, such as choosing the right miticide and applying it at the proper rate and proper timing with thorough coverage.

Another important aspect of mite problem management is rotating miticides. If you use the same miticide over and over again, the mites may become immune to it. You also may be killing off the beneficial predatory mites. This makes the problem worse.

To avoid creating a population of resistant mites, use different miticides at different application periods. Even with rotation, there may still be a problem with resistance. Therefore, review your entire pest management program. Where feasible, reduce the use of multiple pesticides on a given host plant. Consider using a product that is environmentally friendly and ecologically sound with multiple target pest management capabilities.

Also, check for the eriophyid mite, which has four legs and a slightly longer body (unlike the spider mites which have

eight legs and round or oval bodies). Eriophyid mite damage can go unnoticed, and often is mistaken for other biotic or abiotic stresses. Products such as Avid or horticultural oil should help manage the eriophyid mite. Again, remember to rotate the treatments.

Needles damaged by mites won't recover. They will gradually defoliate. However, if the buds aren't dead, the plant may produce new needles. Water, mulch and fertilize the spruces to improve plant health.

Winter weed woes

We take care of several lawns that have winter annual weed problems. We're thinking of using herbicides in the fall to manage these weeds next spring. Will this herbicide application control weeds in spring? When would be the ideal time to apply herbicides? If we offer this in the fall, do we need to reapply in spring?

— MI

Winter annuals are weeds that germinate as temperatures begin to cool, usually in early September in many places in the United States. Little germination will occur during December, January, and February when temperatures are close to or below freezing. Winter annuals appear again during March and April as the temperatures warm up. Winter annuals flower in spring and die when hot, dry weather prevails. Common winter annuals include: speedwell, common chickweed, henbit, bittercress. Often, perennial weeds such as dandelion and buckhorn plantain also

germinate in fall or early spring.

Preemergent herbicides such as Benefin, Benefin + Trifluralin, Prodiamine, Pendimethalin and Oxyzin, Bensulide, Oxadiazon, Dithiopyr and DCPA applied in fall will help manage winter annuals. Fall application can also manage early season control of annual bluegrass in turf as well as certain broadleaf weeds from seeds if the proper herbicide is applied before the weed seed germinates. Applications of preemergent in late August or early summer should control weeds during winter; applications in September through November help control weeds in spring and early summer. Determine more specific dates for germination and active growth in your immediate area to maximize your control.

In addition to a fall application, a spring application of preemergent herbicides may be necessary, depending upon the weed pressure in a specific lawn. If broadleaf weeds are a problem, consider using Isoxaben (Gallery), which can manage winter annual weeds as well as perennial weeds such as dandelion, buckhorn plantain and white clover. Another option is to apply a postemergent such as 2,4-D to take care of existing weeds, and use Gallery for residual preemergent control.

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.



Royal treatment

When it came to defending majestic royal palms from royal palm bugs, the right insecticide saved time and trouble

When royal palm trees started looking like the victims of bad haircuts a few years ago, Rick Wilson sought a solution.

As president of Summer Rain Fertilization Company, Margate, FL, which provides landscape care for commercial and residential customers in three South Florida counties, Wilson knew his customers wouldn't stand for unsightly royal palms. The trees line the streets and boulevards of many affluent communities, and, at 50 to 100 ft. tall, provide great visual appeal.

"We started noticing royal palm trees with brown, frizzled fronds about three years ago," says Wilson. "Though the symptoms looked similar to a manganese deficiency, we wanted to make sure before treating. With the help of our local extension service, we learned that the problem was caused by the royal palm bug, a tiny insect that sucks juices from the new fronds as they unfurl, giving the palm tree a withered, shabby look."

A harrowing task

The next dilemma became how to treat the pest. Because the insect lives in the crown of the palm, Wilson had to rent high lifts to carry workers with spray equipment to the tops of the trees. They sprayed the crown, returned to the ground, moved the equipment and repeated the process on the next tree.

"Not only did this procedure take a tremendous amount of time, it also turned into a safety issue," Wilson says. "In certain cases, I had to block off a lane of Interstate 75 so we could move the device from tree to tree, treating each one. I was never comfortable with my guys dangling 60 feet over a busy highway."

In addition, Wilson knew the insecticide he used would only provide control for 90 to 120 days, at which point he would have to retreat. The royal palm bug starts causing problems in late spring but can reinfest trees at any point during the year.

"I can tell when it's May by looking at the royal palm trees," says Wilson. "Discoloration of the center frond is the first sign of royal palm bug activity."

An easier way

When Merit® insecticide by Bayer Corporation received registration for control of royal palm bug, Wilson tried it immediately. He had successfully used the product for control of scales, aphids and other pests. He soon realized the advantages it had in controlling royal palm bugs.

"First, it can be applied to the root zone



A Summer Rain employee applies insecticide to the root base of a royal palm tree.

as a soil drench so we don't have to rent high lifts," Wilson says, referring to the product's systemic properties which allow it to be taken up by the root and translocated through the tree to the crown. "Second, it provides excellent, long-term control of the royal palm bug, which means we don't have to make so many repeat treatments, and we don't have the safety issues or the hassles of the extra equipment."

Summer Rain crews apply Merit at 0.5 to 1.0 oz. per five gallons of water per tree where the insects live. Wilson's team makes

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preventive treatments any time between October and February so the material has time to work its way through the tree by spring, when the insect is most active.

Total care program

Based on his experiences with royal palm bug and other tree problems, Wilson stresses a total tree care program. "We don't take contracts unless the whole package is included," he says. "If a tree isn't fed properly, it will be much more susceptible to insects and stress. We advocate a minimum of four applications a year with proper palm fertilizer and micronutrients."

As his business grows, Wilson accepts new properties with existing problems, such as royal palm bug infestations. Recently, he took on an exclusive housing development where the royal palms were visibly harmed. His crews applied Merit and initiated fertility treatments. Wilson told the client to have patience because a complete turnaround could take up to a year. But it didn't take quite that long.

"We did a drive-through about 60 days later and could already see improvement," he noted. "The outside fronds still show injury, but the center frond is healthier and greener. The bad crewcut is no longer there, and my client has hope!"

A royal pain

Royal palm bugs were menacing majestic royal palm trees on affluent South Florida properties managed by Rick Wilson and his company, Summer Rain.

His dilemma:

- ▶ Royal palms range from 55 to 100 feet tall
- ▶ Royal palm bugs feed on the crown at the top of the trees
- ▶ High lifts were needed so crew members could spray trees individually
- ▶ Retreatment was necessary within 90 to 120 days

His solution:

- ▶ Merit insecticide to control royal palm bugs up to one year because it requires no special equipment, and can be applied as a soil drench and can be used as a preventive fall treatment before bugs strike in spring

Key client:

- ▶ City of Weston, developed on muckland soil
- ▶ Encompasses 575 acres and 800 royal palm trees
- ▶ Royal palm bugs infested trees, causing brown, frizzled fronds
- ▶ Wilson turned around royal palm bug problem using treatments and proper fertilization

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

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 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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 20 D Turf Aeration 25 I Landscape Design 30 N Snow Removal
 21 E Irrigation Services 26 J Turf Weed Control 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 39 8 Herbicides 46 15 Sweepers
 33 2 Blowers 40 9 Insecticides 47 16 Tractors
 34 3 Chain Saws 41 10 Line Trimmers 48 17 Truck Trailers/Attachments
 35 4 Chipper-Shredders 42 11 Mowers 49 18 Trucks
 36 5 De-icers 43 12 Snow Removal Equipment 50 19 Turfseed
 37 6 Fertilizers 44 13 Sprayers 51 20 Utility Vehicles
 38 7 Fungicides 45 14 Spreaders

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

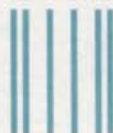
5A. If so, how often do you use it?

- 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
112	124	136	148	160	172	184	196	208	220	232	244	256	268	280	292	304	316

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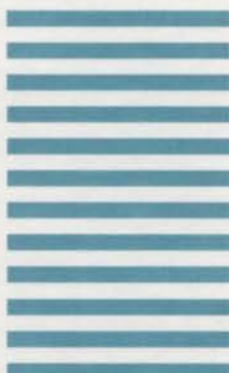


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**Landscape
MANAGEMENT**

January 2001

This card is void after March 15, 2001

I would like to receive (continue receiving)

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Yes no

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

CONTRACTORS/SERVICE COMPANIES

- 02 255 Landscape Contractors (Installation & Maintenance)
- 03 260 Lawn Care Service Companies & Custom Chemical Applicators (ground & air)
- 04 285 Irrigation Contractors & Consultants
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- 05 290 Sports Complexes
- 06 295 Parks
- 07 305 Schools, Colleges & Universities
- Other Grounds Care Facilities (specify) _____

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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) _____

NAME (please print) _____

TITLE _____

FIRM _____

ADDRESS* _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

*Is this your home address? Yes No

PHONE (____) _____ FAX (____) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

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
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107	119	131	143	155	167	179	191	203	215	227	239	251	263	275	287	299	311
108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240	252	264	276	288	300	312
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product focus

TECH CENTER

Making the grade



▲ By itself, or pulled behind a tillage tool, Brillion Iron Works says its Optimizer Pulverizer creates the optimum seedbed surface—firm and texturized without air pockets. With an average operating weight of 200 lbs. per ft. of width and open wheel design, it has enough weight to break clods and texturize the seedbed without overpacking the soil. It's available in 3-pt. hitch models in working widths from 10 to 20 ft., and pull-type models from 10 to 46 ft. Drawbar length telescopes from 13 ft., 11 in. to 19 ft., 1 in. on 28- and 46-ft. models. For more information contact Brillion at 800/409-9749 or circle no. 268



▲ The new Harley Power Box Rake for front-deck mowers can handle turf renovation and overseeding, dethatching existing turf or removing old or worn turf for reseeding. It operates driving forward, can windrow and grade to the right or left and can trap and remove unwanted debris with box endplates. It's available in 4- and 5-ft. models and comes with an adapter kit to fit most 22-hp front-deck mowers. For more information contact Glenmac, Inc. at 800/437-9779 or www.glenmac.com or circle no. 269

▶ ATI Corp.'s Model 55725 pre-seeder tiller attachment for skid steer loaders with 13- to 18-gpm auxiliary hydraulic flow turns a rough grade into a finished seedbed. The 72-in.-wide rotor tills, levels and rakes in one operation, and it can be used while driving in forward or reverse. The rotor teeth are mounted in a helical pattern for smooth operation and uniform seedbed depth. Working depth and rotor angle can be adjusted from the seat. The rotor can be hydraulically angled left, right or straight. For more information contact ATI at 717/354-8721 or circle no. 270



Little hydroseeder

FINN Corp.'s T-30 HydroSeeder® has a 300-gallon capacity and hydroseeds 1/10th of an acre in eight minutes. The smallest unit in the HydroSeeder line, it's designed for landscape contractors who want to add hydroseeding to their services, and is sized for smaller hydroseeding projects such as residences and office and apartment complexes. It has a discharge distance of 70 ft. from a hose as long as 150 ft.

For more information call 800/543-7166 or visit www.finncorp.com / circle no. 250



to customize fields and modify prices.

For more information call 330/665-9080 or visit www.visualimpactimaging.com / circle no. 254

Off-roading

Steiner's UT669G gas utility vehicle features 4-wheel, 14-gauge unitized steel body and tube frame, steel cargo box, rear wheel hydraulic brakes, hand-operated parking brake, automotive-style steering wheel, horn, dual halogen headlights, dual stop/taillights, reverse sounder, skid plate, fiberglass front cowl, in-dash storage area, black bucket seats, floor mat and bed lift assist. Options include cage, rear hitch, spare tire and tool box. Towing capacity is 1,200 lbs. Engine is V-twin, 480 cc, 4-cycle, 2-cyl., air cooled. An electric model is available through special order.

For more information contact Steiner at 330/828-0200 / circle no. 255

Better spreader

Garber Seeder Company's new 3-pt. hitch spreader spreads seed or fertilizer into places such as square corners and dead-end spots, makes short turns without cramping the hitch, converts to a pull-type spreader, carries 180 to 360 lbs. or more and calibrates easily so that even small amounts of seed or fertilizer can be spread.

For more information contact Garber at 800/613-4860 or www.garberseeder.com / circle no. 256

Quiet blowing

Billy Goat Industries' Quiet Blow series blower features an exhaust design that condenses and controls hurricane-force airflow into a tight pattern. An ergonomically designed lever allows the operator to control the direction of the airflow right from the handle. Billy Goat says its blower weighs 25 lbs. less than competitive units, and offers the lowest noise level of any wheeled blower on the market.

For more information contact Billy Goat Industries at 816/524-9666 or www.billygoat.com / circle no. 257

Design with ease

VectorWorks Landmark design software offers drafting and modeling with site and landscape tools to create, analyze and present site and landscape designs. Features include schematic design, 3D visualization, planting design and management, irrigation layout and advanced site model suite (includes DTM).

For more information call 888/646-4223 or visit www.vectorworkslandmark.net / circle no. 251

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For more information call 877/835-7841 or visit www.cubcommercial.com / circle no. 252

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WSRI seeks an individual with 10+ years of experience to handle project management & estimating. Requires a minimum of 5 years experience in a recognized construction company. Position involves supervision of multiple projects and intense scheduling of materials, manpower and machinery. Ideal candidate will have exp. in revegetation, erosion control, urban park construction, civil/earthwork. Degree preferred in civil engineering, construction management, landscape architecture or equivalent. Computer literacy a must.

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- **Upper level positions** require previous construction estimating experience up to \$5M single project. Must be computer literate and have experience with CADD & estimating software. Degree in related field preferred.
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WSRI

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IRRIGATION TECHNICIANS- Reputable contractor in Chicago area seeks career-minded individuals for service technician positions. Must have 5-10 years experience. Good communication skills. Good driving records. Work independently with little supervision. Excellent pay with benefits. Year-round employment. **Send resume to: Personnel, CENTRAL LAWN SPRINKLERS, INC., 239 King Street, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007. Fax: 847-364-9774, email: centralirrigation@msn.com** 3/01

READY FOR A CHANGE? Come join one of the Largest Vegetation Management Companies in the United States. **DeANGELO BROTHERS, INC.** is experiencing tremendous growth in all of our divisions and has immediate openings for the following positions: **•FOREMEN:** Qualified candidates must have proven leadership, communications and interpersonal skills. Industry related background preferred, but willing to train the right individuals. **•TECHNICIANS:** Candidates must be responsible, reasonable persons willing to work on weed and brush control crews. Positions involve driving trucks and operating spray and/or trimming equipment. **•TREE TRIMMERS/BUCKET OPERATORS:** We are seeking tree trimmers with railroad and/or utility line clearance experience. Climbing and bucket operations experience is preferred. **•HI-RAIL OPERATORS:** Qualified candidates must have CDL & drivers license with Tank & Hazmat endorsement, be willing to travel away from home for extended periods of time and possess good mechanical abilities. We offer a good starting salary, benefits, training, advancement and a drug free work place. Must enjoy moderate travel and overnight stays. A valid drivers license is required. For a career opportunity and confidential consideration, contact our 24 hour, 7 day a week **Employment Hotline at Phone: 800-355-5266** or send resume to: **DeAngelo Brothers, Inc., Attn: H.R. Dept., 100 North Conahan Drive, Hazelton, PA 18201. Fax: 570-459-0321 EOE/APP/M-F** 4/01

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SALES MANAGEMENT POSITION- Well-established Massachusetts landscaping company seeking 10-year+ veteran to develop and implement sales estimating team. Person must have a positive attitude and be a team builder. Position involves sales, job costing, estimating and training. Ideal candidate must have experience in high-end residential, construction hard-scape techniques, drainage, sales management, civil/earthwork, landscape degree or equivalent. Computer literacy a must. **Send salary requirements and resume to LM Box 529 or e-mail: landscape@adelphia.net** 2/01

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cleanup crew

THIS AND THAT

A cut above the rest?

Holy lawnmowers, Grassman! The Associated Press recently reported in *The Plain Dealer* that Wolf-Garten, a European manufacturer of gardening equipment, has developed a lawnmower for consumer use that slices grass by laser, cutting it so finely that the pieces can remain on the ground as fertilizer. Called the Zero, Wolf-Garten claims the two-seat open vehicle is powerful enough to be registered for road use — and, hold on to your wallet, would cost \$30,000! As to whether or not the new technology will be applied to commercial mowers remains to be seen — the company will only put the mower in production if it draws enough dealer interest.



Yep, those are all people

This may look like a colorful clump of dots, but it's actually the faces of all 1,750 Walker Mfg. Co. "family members" who attended the Walker Mowers Family Reunion Aug. 11-12 in Fort Collins, CO. Everyone who had ever bought a Walker mower was invited to the reunion to watch the company's 50,000th mower roll off the assembly line. Reunion goers were also treated to factory tours, polka music, a mower race and a show featuring talented pigs Bacon and Porkchop.



Need a new shirt?

Ever see a *Landscape Management* staffer at an industry show, notice his or her sharp-looking shirt with the magazine's name embroidered on the front and say to yourself, "Now, I've got to get one of those!" Well, here's your chance to become

Tell us a story and this shirt could be all yours.

the envy of the fashion world and win a navy blue golf shirt with "Landscape Management" on the front, just like the one Managing Editor Jason Stahl has on (photo at left). All you've got to do is tell us (in 200 words or less) about the craziest thing that ever happened to you or your crew during the work day. We'll pick the best story, and you'll get some style. You might see it in print if you win. Entries due by Feb. 15, 2001. Send your submissions via e-mail to jstahl@advanstar.com or snail mail to Landscape Management, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Middleburg Heights, OH 44130. Who ever said we wouldn't give you the shirts off our back?

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