

# How "green" is your software?

## Industry-specific software helps you capture profits and win clients

BY LYNNE BRAKEMAN /  
ON-LINE CONTENT EDITOR

Of all your important tools, among the most important (and the most bewildering) is computer software. Whether it's business management or design/estimating/presentation software, the choices are many and the investment is considerable.

When it comes to software, it's especially hard to determine when it's finally

time to make the leap from off-the-shelf solutions (like Intuit Corp.'s QuickBooks or Microsoft's Excel) to industry-specific products.

If you think you've arrived at that jumping off spot, *Landscape Management* has compiled a list of 25 Green Industry-specific products which begins on page 37. Go to [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net) for an expanded listing including product descriptions and live Web links.

Several Green Industry software vendors share their insights on recent trends in business computing and explain why their customers believe the investment has paid off in measurable growth of productivity and profitability.

David Tucker, president  
Sensible Software Inc. (CLIP Software)  
[www.clip.com](http://www.clip.com)

"When we were still a lawn maintenance company, we already knew we had to control our job costing data so we could capitalize on our best properties," says Dave Tucker, explaining how Sensible Software got its start at the dawn of personal computing back in 1988.

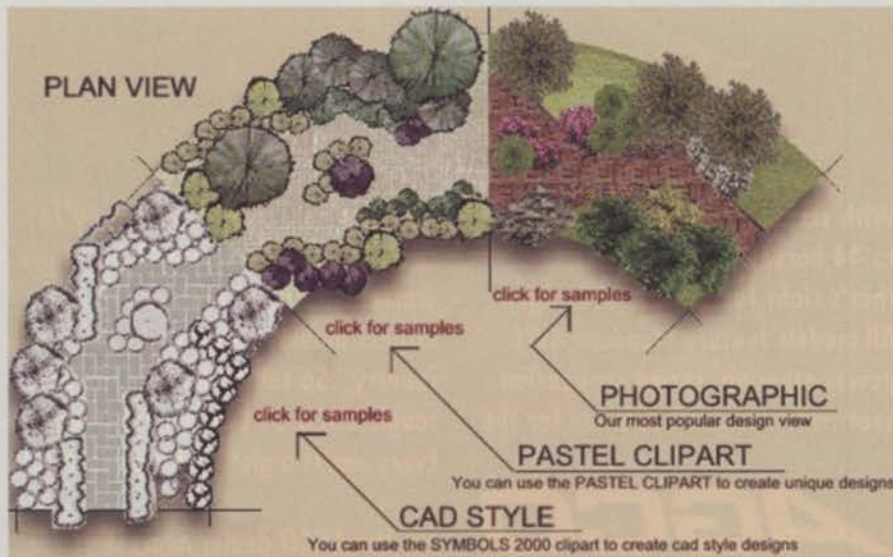
Tucker says he's frequently asked why a company should switch from off-the-shelf software to an industry-specific solution like CLIP.

"The answer to that is the same as for somebody who says 'I'm happy mowing lawns with my little MTD I bought at Home Depot,'" Tucker says. "Yes, maybe you are, and maybe you can continue to be in business for the short term with that tool. But, if you're going to be professional and maximize your profit — if you're going to be in control of your company — you need to get the right tool for the job."

Tucker says some companies he's seen are using thrown-together systems as nothing more than electronic Post-It pads. He says the real key to profitability is tracking and maximizing. Some new landscape CAD programs can generate estimates and create proposal presentation documents from a single project plan.



Dave Tucker



mizing labor efficiency.

According to Tucker, hand-held computers (also called personal digital assistants or PDAs) for on-the-job data collection is an irreversible trend. Data saved in the PDA is downloaded to the main office computer. Some vendors already offer routing and mapping applications that can be uploaded to a crew's PDA at the start of the day, eliminating printed route schedules. CLIP communicates with English or Spanish-language PDAs.

"Another trend is moving data on the Internet," Tucker says. "We now have an option that allows customers to go to a Web site and check their bills and schedules. We're working on extending this to on-line communication with suppliers."

Paul Jackson, president

Alocet Software (Lawn Monkey)  
[www.lawnmonkey.com](http://www.lawnmonkey.com)

"I think, by 2005, you will see a lot more Web-based applications," says Paul Jackson.

This model is a lot like leasing equipment. The user pays by the month or by usage for an application that is hosted on a vendor's Web site.

Jackson has also noticed his clients struggling with the problem of having multiple

PHOTO COURTESY ALOCET SOFTWARE



Specialized software can help you compare and analyze crew efficiency and job profitability.

shops and off-site locations.

"What's coming is the ability to e-mail the schedule to a crew's PDA so they don't have to connect at the main office," Jackson says.

John Decell, president

Software Republic LLP  
[www.softwarerepublic.com](http://www.softwarerepublic.com)

Software Republic started out making software for irrigation designers. Decell says contractors who handle both irrigation and landscape design kept asking for a landscape program, so the company created two programs: EcoCAD for design and job costing and Photoscapes for customer presentations.

"The most important thing for our clients is ease of use," says Decell.

Although three-dimensional (3D)

landscape design packages are beginning to become affordable, Decell says his company made a decision to stick with a two-dimensional solution to keep the learning curve short.

"That's also why we went with a separate imaging program for visual presentations," Decell says. "We focus on what is going to be easiest to learn — that's what our customers say is important to them."

### Green Industry software products

Following is a list of 25 vendors that sell green industry-specific software applications.

### BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Adkad | 800/586-4683

[www.adkad.com](http://www.adkad.com)

■ GroundsKeeper Pro 2000

Alocet Software | 877/529-6659

[www.lawnmonkey.com](http://www.lawnmonkey.com)

■ LawnMonkey 2001 PRO

Compuscapes | 800/350-3534

[www.compuscapes.com](http://www.compuscapes.com)

■ Compuscapes

DK Enterprises | 370/722-1950

[dkenet.com/winlawn.html](http://dkenet.com/winlawn.html)

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Include Software Corp. | 800/475-0311

[www.include.com](http://www.include.com)

■ Asset Integrated Business Management System

Intac International Inc. | 800/724-7899

[www.wintac.net](http://www.wintac.net)

■ Wintac Pro

Performance Software Technologies | 800/624-8244

[www.gopst.com](http://www.gopst.com)

■ Route Rite Legend

Practical Solutions | 614/436-9066

[www.theservicesolution.com](http://www.theservicesolution.com)

■ The Service Solution

Rapp Industries Inc. | 800/999-1159

[www.rappind.com](http://www.rappind.com)

■ Landscape Business Management System

Real Green Systems

800/422-7478

[www.realgreen.com](http://www.realgreen.com)

■ Lawn Assistant III

Sensible Software, Inc.

800/635-8485

[www.clip.com](http://www.clip.com)

■ CLIP and QuickCLIP

Slice Technologies

800/543-7249

[www.sliceplus.com](http://www.sliceplus.com)

■ SlicePlus

Tree Management Systems 812/876-7664

[www.turftree.com](http://www.turftree.com)

■ TurfGold

UDS, Green Industry

Software | 800/626-7247

[www.activeapplications.com](http://www.activeapplications.com)

■ Active Applications

Vanguard Computer

Systems |

888/590-1696

[www.camelotsoftware.com](http://www.camelotsoftware.com)

■ Camelot Software



Real Green Systems Lawn Assistant III



Sensible Software's CLIP PDAs come in both English and Spanish versions.

## DESIGN

3D Nature LLC | 330/665-9080

[www.3dnature.com](http://www.3dnature.com)

■ Visual Nature Studio

Innovative Thinking Software | 250/357-2550

[www.taoherbfarm.com](http://www.taoherbfarm.com)

■ GrowIt Gold

North American Green | 800/772-2040

[www.nagreen.com](http://www.nagreen.com)

■ Erosion Control Materials Design Software

## DESIGN & ESTIMATING

Design Imaging Group Inc. | 800/776-0103

[www.designimaginggroup.com](http://www.designimaginggroup.com)

■ Design Ware Landscape

Eagle Point Software | 800/678-6565

[www.landcadd.com](http://www.landcadd.com)

■ LandCADD

Software Republic LLP | 281/463-8804

[www.softwarepublic.com](http://www.softwarepublic.com)

■ EcoCAD 4.0

Vista Professional Outdoor Lighting | 800/766-8478

[www.vistapro.com](http://www.vistapro.com)

■ Vista Night Vision

Visual Impact Imaging | 330/665-9080

[www.visualimpactimaging.com](http://www.visualimpactimaging.com)

■ EarthScapes

## DESIGN & PRESENTATION

GardenSoft | 805/499-9689

[www.plantmaster.com](http://www.plantmaster.com)

■ GardenWorks/PlantMaster Presentation Suite

Horticopia Inc. | 800/560-6186

[www.horticopia.com](http://www.horticopia.com)

■ Horticopia Professional

LSI Software Inc | 905/947-0516

[www.lsisoft.com](http://www.lsisoft.com)

■ Landscape Illustrator 2001

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