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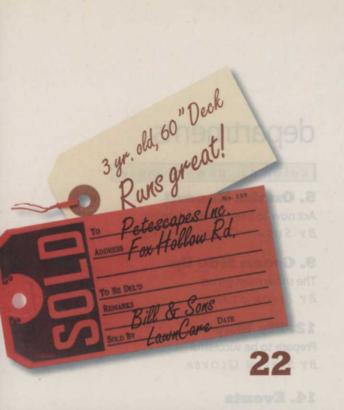
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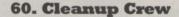
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on the record

BY SUE GIBSON PORTER / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

# **Act now to keep America strong**

ven before the terrorists struck on September 11th, America's economy was taking a troubling turn. Add to that new fears of a disturbed, grieving nation and you have a recipe that can potentially weaken our economy even more. Those fears are your enemy because

they threaten your operations now and in 2002, and they also threaten the strength of our nation's business.

#### **Take action now**

What can you do? First, take time *immediately* to assess your situation. Look at your current and future finances, customer situations, supply line, employees and operations. Where is your business going through the end of 2001 and what are your customers saying about next year?

It's so easy to imagine those customers still ordering services without a second thought, but Americans are now a more thoughtful people and each expenditure will get questioned in these precarious times. Don't be surprised to see maintenance budget reductions, project postponements or service schedule adjustments. Don't be shocked if office buildings have more vacancies, homeowners opt for basic over high-end packages or grounds renovation plans get simplified.

Instead, be prepared. The greatest danger to this industry and to individual organizations is letting fear immobilize you. Remember the Chinese proverb that says, "Customers are treasure, goods are but straw." Now is the time to be proactive, contact every customer and find out what you need to do to cement that relationship and get 2002 business commitments.

You may need to adjust pricing, offer new packages or even add non-landscape services to keep their business. You may need to slash expenses, drop unprofitable ser-

The greatest danger to this industry and to individual organizations is letting fear immobilize you.

vices or increase investments in equipment or customer service training.

The key is to make your organization as strong as possible going into this new economic climate, strengthening those precious customer relationships and contributing as much as possible to keeping this great economy rolling. You can't be complacent any more.

#### We're responding, too

What are we doing at *Landscape Management*? We also believe our nation's strength is her freedoms and her economy and we're dedicating ourselves to helping you make your organizations stronger. Watch each issue and our Web site (www.landscapemanagement.net) for new ideas on how to operate smarter, build customer loyalty, trim costs and develop dependable employees. You can start this month on page 15 and in more detail on our Web site.

We know you're competitive, but this is one time when our industry must pull together, share ideas and proudly proclaim the value of its work. You can help by sending us your questions, ideas and comments. We'll share them in our pages and

on the Web. Each idea you share may help our industry become stronger and by implication, our wonderful American way of doing business.

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# The show must go on

green side up

JASON STAHL / MANAGING EDITOR

here were you when America was attacked on September 11, 2001? Most of you were probably well into starting your busy day, taking care of your commercial and residential accounts. Chances

are that once you found out about the planes crashing into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, you went on to do more important things, like calling loved ones to make sure they were unharmed. Some of you may have even gone home to hug your children. I know I did.

You'll never forget where you were when the news hit, though.

"I was at a meeting when it happened," says Bruce Allentuck, president of Allentuck Landscaping, Gaithersburg, MD. "Our production staff kept working, but half our office staff went home. The next day we received no calls whatsoever, and we didn't call anyone."

"We had crews down to the general area around the Pentagon, so we of course pulled them right back out of there," he adds.

There were some who were even closer to the disaster, literally a couple miles away. Matt Smoot, project director for the The Brickman Group, Alexandria, MD, was on the 13th floor of his office building watching the disaster in New York unfold on television with fellow employees.

"My boss heard a plane and said, 'Oh, that sounds awful loud,'" Smoot says. "I ran to the other side of the building, thinking nothing was going to happen, and that's when I saw the plane. It was barreling toward the ground, and then I saw a fireball."

Smoot then says that a couple of F-16 fighter jets flew over their building, making a "huge noise." Every-

one started making phone calls to find out what happened, some to crews who were out working. The property yard, Smoot said, is only one-quarter of a mile from the Pentagon.

"They had all those streets closed," Smoot says. "We told our crews to stay and wait to see what happened. It turns out we had to leave everything, including equipment and trucks, right where it was."

What happened the next day was probably what happened in landscape, lawn and grounds crews across the country. The crews simply picked up their equipment and proceeded as normal to finish their jobs. It's not surprising, given that people in the Green Industry are some of the hardest working around. It would have been nice to take a week off like the NFL players did, stating "our hearts just wouldn't be in the game," but let's face it, the show must go on, and that means taking care of our customers as well as we can.

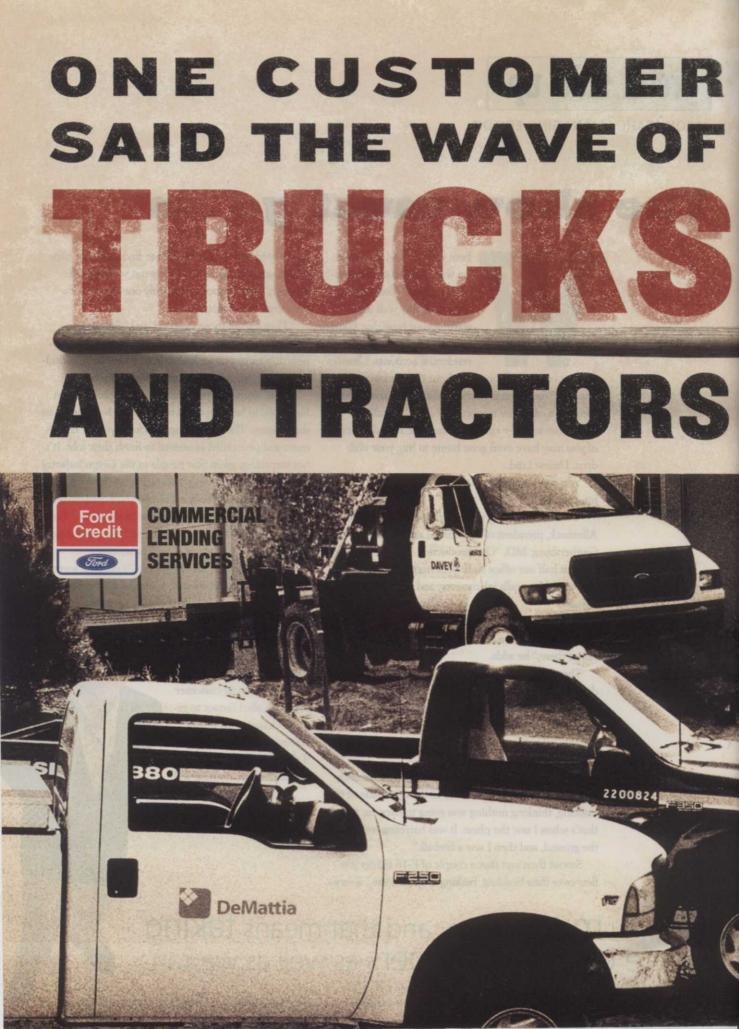
As Smoot says of his employees, "Everyone seemed to be intrinsically motivated, and nobody appeared to be nervous or scared about going to work. Everyone seemed to gain a greater appreciation of our country, and how lucky we are to

A commercial customer recently called Smoot to request changing his flower colors to red, white and blue. If that doesn't make you feel proud to work, nothing will.

work every day."

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# The show must go on, and that means taking care of our customers as well as we can.



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BY STEVEN GLOVER / GUEST COLUMNIST

If you want your company to emerge from the crowd of common competitors, you must be prepared to do things differently.



# **Prepare to be successful**

worked for a very successful and wealthy man from 1978 to 1990, managing a landscape maintenance company he and a few partners owned. I created a successful and profitable operation for them. They only came around the business once each year to evaluate my performance and receive their "payouts."

In 1990, I decided I was crazy. I asked myself, "Why should I work my tail off for the benefit of others?" That's the day I decided I was going to own my own business and put all that money in my own pocket.

I sold that business to the TruGreen companies in 1999 and lived happily ever after. End of story, right? Not quite. The road I traveled from 1990 to 1999 was filled with many twists and turns. I learned many valuable lessons the hard way during that time.

Luckily, I found a few friends who helped me succeed by inspiring me to set myself apart from the crowd of failed companies. I'd like to share what I learned with those of you who also want to be successful and turn your business into something unique.

#### **Five foundations for success**

I believe the following five things are the foundation for success. If you want your company to emerge from the crowd of common competitors, you must be prepared to do things differently.

An emerging company will recognize that:

- ducation is the foundation of professionalism,
- professionalism is the production of excellence,
- professionalism must be evident in all of your business operations and systems,
- being professional has nothing to do with your business's size, and

to become a true professional, you must learn, then teach.

*Education is the foundation of professionalism.* Schooling is important, but so is networking with other successful entrepreneurs. Sharing insights gained from experience is the mark of a true professional.

**Professionalism is the production of excellence.** In our line of work, there are too many individuals who work only to produce an income. The success and future of our industry depends on those who provide quality services and products that are priced fairly and profitably.

**Professionalism must be evident in all your business operations and systems.** Everything you do must reflect the best performance you're capable of. Money doesn't buy professionalism — commitment does.

**Professionalism has nothing to do with the size of your business.** The day you open the door, or the day you decide to stand out from your competitors, is the day you can be a true professional.

To become a true professional, you must learn, then teach. If education is the foundation of professionalism, teaching is the superstructure. As you gain fresh insights, you're obliged as a true professional to share this information with others.

If you want to succeed in any venture, you must commit to being the best. You must train yourself to seek and deliver excellence. As you do this, you prepare yourself to be successful and create the foundation upon which you can build a secure enterprise.

— The author is past president of ALCA and currently serves as president and CEO of Symbiot Business Group, which provides on-line administrative and support services for emerging Green Industry businesses. He can be reached at sglover@symbiotsolutions.com.

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22-26 Hawaii Mid-Pacific Horticultural Expo / Hilo, HI; 808/953-2088; www.hena.org

24-27 Southwest Turfgrass Conference / Ruidoso, NM: 505/275-2576

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**4-6** International Irrigation Show / San Antonio, TX: 703/536-7080: www.irrigation.org

7-9 Desert Green Conference / Las Vegas, NV; 702/454-3057

9-13 Green Industry Expo & Conference (PLCAA, PGMS, ALCA) / Tampa Bay, FL; 800/458-3466

13-15 NYSTA Turf & **Grounds Exposition & Trade** Show / Syracuse, NY; www.nysta.org

13-15 VA Turfgrass and Landscape Conference and Show / Virginia Beach: 540/942-8873; www.thevtc.org

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# industry almanac

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20

now and toning down their goals, and rightfully so.

#### Simplot buys Eco Soil products

SAN DIEGO, CA — Simplot Partners acquired more than 40 products from troubled Eco Soil Systems Inc. with the purchase of Eco Soil's Specialty Products line.

#### Bensumec recalled

KANSAS CITY, MO — PBI/Gordon Corporation has recalled Bensumec 4LF preemergent herbicide from distributors, dealers and end users. One lot of the herbicide was found to be contaminated with small amounts of phenoxy and dicamba herbicides. For more information, call 800/236-5411.

#### Deere to sell Homelite

MOLINE, IL — Deere & Company will sell its Homelite consumer products business and restructure its Construction and Forestry Division to improve financial and operating performance. The company's line of professional handheld and portable power equipment for commercial users will still be available.

#### NTEP spared brunt of tornado's wrath

BELTSVILLE, MD — The tornado that killed two University of Maryland students in nearby College Park, MD, Sept. 24, also caused an estimated \$41 million damage to the government's largest agricultural research facility here. The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program is headquartered at the station, but escaped damage.

# Landscape pros reassess business after attack

BY JASON STAHL & SUSAN G. PORTER

t was only this summer that landscape professionals reported 10% to 30% growth to *Landscape Management* and a continued surge of business that had most of them backlogged.

Last month's attack on America no doubt forced them to reassess their business prospects. The effects of a sagging economy they said would take awhile to reach them might reach them more quickly.

"I find myself being more guarded with spending and projections," says Bruce Allentuck, owner, Allentuck Landscaping, Gaithersburg, MD. "We were considering buying a property but now I'm not going to do it."

Allentuck says his company may not be hired to do as many big projects as before, but insists his customers will not start mowing their own lawns. "And since most people will be canceling their vacations, maybe they'll put that money toward landscaping."

## **Economy news**



"We're still shell shocked," says Bill Hoopes, director of training and development at Scotts Lawn Service, Marysville, OH. "While we've moved from 'exuberance' to 'cautious optimism,' we're still growing strongly." However, he said, "It makes sense to have contingency plans in place."

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#### **STRONG WORDS**

"The work we do and spaces we create are so very versatile. They function in times of joy and in times of sorrow. They allow us to come together in extremely emotional times. They allow us to connect with nature and feel that we are connected to a greater spirit beyond. I feel so very proud of what we do. The examples of our work are serving to help in the recovery and healing process this past week. It is a reaffirmation of how important a role landscape architecture plays in creating a sense of community and in strengthening society." — Len Hopper / ASLA president, quoted from a letter he sent to ASLA members after witnessing in person the attack on the World Trade Center. "When the attack happened, we were in the middle of our budgeting process. Everyone's taking a new look now and toning down their goals, and rightfully so." — Rick Randall, president, RBI Companies



#### continued from page 15

"The economy was already under lots of pressure before the attack, but we thought it was okay because it wasn't affecting our markets," says Rick Randall, president of RBI Companies, Littleton, CO. "But with this disaster we're really taking another look. We're increasing our marketing because we think they'll be less work out there for the same amount of contractors."

Randall adds, "When the attack happened, we were in the middle of our budgeting process. Everyone's taking a new look now and toning down their goals, and rightfully so."

#### **New market pressures**

"All segments of our industry will be affected, but not equally," predicts George Gaumer, vice president of commercial grounds management, The Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, OH. "I expect construction-related segments to be affect the earliest and most noticeably. Second, the more discretionary the service, the earlier it will be affected. These effects will be felt similarly across both commercial and residential markets."

While some locations may feel more effects than others, the general unease in the marketplace has savvy landscape professionals planning new strategies for 2002, and even the end of 2001.

"Our market (DC-area) has not experienced the slowdown other parts of the country have experienced," says Tom Davis, president of Bozzuto Landscape, Laurel, MD. "But we are always looking for new opportunities and just acquired a pressure washing company as an add-on service line. It's two months old and doing very well."

Ed McGuire, president of The Lawn Co., S. Dennis, MA, has seen past downturns in the Green Industry and adds, "History tells me the residential customer base will be stable while the commercial business is less stable."

continued on page 19

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Circle 110

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#### Effect of Fertilizer with Prospect Plus on Creeping Bentgrass Density

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Research and Educational Center - 2000

Treatment	Rate	% Turf Density
Check	- an lay galler.	60.00
Fertilizer (46-0-0)	0.014 lb. N/1000 sq. ft.	72.00
Fertilizer (46-0-0) + Prospect Plus	0.014 lb. N/1000 sq. ft. + 48 oz./acre	77.00

Seeded on August 4, 2000 with G-2 creeping bentgrass at a rate of 2 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. Density measurements were based on % cover taken visually on 10/4 (8 weeks after treatment)

Study Results: "... a significant increase in creeping bentgrass establishment two months after seeding with the application of fertilizer and Prospect Plus compared to the untreated control." A 22% improvement over check and more than a 12% increase over fertilizer alone!

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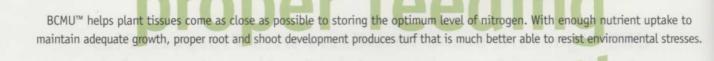


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While it may or may not top the charts in any single characteristic, when you add them all together, no other fertilizer compares to BCMU.<sup>™</sup> Its unique balance of short, intermediate and long methylene urea chains creates a product that is the best of all worlds and an outstanding value.

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technology has a high nitrogen activity index, which means that more nutrients are available when the plant requires them while "banking" some for later use. BCMU™ is found only in UHS Signature Brand Fertilizers and have been tested and used with outstanding results for years. Find out why the best fertilization program should be an easy balancing act for the smart turf manager.

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# industry almanac

# 4 ways to make your operation stronger

"The bad news," says Don Willig, president of Consortium Management Services, Cincinnati, OH, is that things will never be the same as the "good old days." What does this mean right now for Green Industry operations? He says that companies cannot operate as loosely as they have in the past, that prices will get more competitive, that every company will have to be more efficient and that labor costs may increase as a result of both economic pressures and war efforts. There may also be fallout with current immigration programs that will limit available workers.

Willig sees plenty of opportunities right now, though. "The good news is that for the few who prepare for the future, they will reap good benefits for their efforts," he says. "They should follow these four rules:

• evaluate your business and run it by the numbers,

 follow common sense and don't wait to act,

remain active in your communities, especially now,

• stay the course and continue to focus on building business.

"Believe and do not fear!" Willig adds.

— Don Willig can be contacted at 800/483-1668 or www.cmsdlw@home.com. "Since many people may be canceling their vacations, maybe they'll put that money toward landscaping instead." — Bruce Allentuck, owner, Allentuck Landscaping



#### continued from page 16 Run it by the numbers

"Do not take more clients on than you have the ability to develop relationships with," says Troy Hall, owner of Halls Horticulture Design Inc., Charlotte, NC. "We have been anticipating the economic changes for about a year now. We set out to target the specific clients we work with and had to trim the fat in the way of excess labor, vendors, equipment, vehicles, etc."

McGuire also anticipated a slowdown and recommends classic strategy for a downturn: "When the economy is stagnant...the biggest challenges anybody in business has to learn is controlling expenses. We have been in a conservative mode since spring. Going ahead, we will be concentrating on gaining and retaining customers, operating more efficiently and controlling expenses."

For Ed Wandtke, though, previous downturns offer solutions to current problems. This Columbus, OH-based consultant says there are reasons to be positive on future business, as long as you're able to adapt quickly, operate profitably and seek new opportunities. "Leaders plan and execute," he adds, "while employees or weak owners follow."

For more reaction to this fall's economic and national events, and for ideas on how to develop a cautionary business strategy, see www.landscapemanagement.net.

#### www.landscapemanagement.net

WHAT'S NEW ON-LINE

This month at www.LandscapeManagement.net, check out "Surfin' for deals," an exclusive on-line sidebar to this month's feature on "Win big with used gear." You'll find additional live links to all the companies mentioned in the article and tips on which used equipment Web sites offer the most value for your time.

Keep up with the latest news from all around the Green Industry with our weekly on-line-only newsletter, "Week in Review" (WiR). WiR captures the essence of the most important news about business, economic trends, disease/pest reports, new Web sites, upcoming events and recent products. You can even browse or search our archive of previous WiRs. If you want to be sure not to miss an issue, sign up for our free e-mail service, which sends you just the headlines so you can pick and choose the stories that are important to you.

Other things to do online this month:

- Check out the e-GreenBook searchable product directory.
- Send an "Ask the Expert" question to our panel of web advisors.
- · Contact LM's editors to propose a story or sound off on industry issues.



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# Win big with used gear

Tips to save you money and headaches whether you're a buyer or a seller

BY CALLISTA TOMALLO & YOGITA SHARMA

W

hen Joe Loyet, owner of Loyet Landscape, trucks to job sites in St. Louis, he sees a lot of "old friends" on the

trailers of other landscape professionals. The old friends in this case are older commercial mowing units that Loyet traded in for new Ferris walk-behinds and Toro zeroturn riders.

"I know they were ours because of the way we marked them," says Loyet, who generally puts about 3,000 hours of use on his mowers over the course of three seasons before replacing them.

His story is a common one. Large landscape firms generate the used mowers, trucks and other pieces of expensive landscape equipment that feed the equipment needs of smaller landscape professionals and the inexhaustible number of start-ups. Because there are no "lemon laws," it's buyer beware. Even so, there's always action in used landscape gear.



Many dealers offer remanufactured equipment, like this early (pre-1996) Walker 16-hp mower. "If you have a walk-behind belt-drive unit that starts and runs and cuts, it's worth \$600 minimum. If it's a hydro, it's probably worth closer to \$1,000 minimum," says Scott Muehlhauser, Scotts Power Equipment, St. Louis. "A rider is going to be worth \$2,000 to \$3,000 if it cuts and is not falling apart."

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Junk? Not to the small operator or the cash-strapped beginner who can coax a season of production out of a unit.

In spite of obvious pitfalls, here's how both sellers and buyers benefit in the used equipment market.

#### **Sellers have several options**

- They can:
  - sell the units themselves,
  - trade them in or
  - use them creatively.

Rob Estes, owner of Estes-Landers Landscape Design, Atlanta, is considering using them in a satellite operation where appearance isn't so critical and they'll receive less use. Kurt Kluznik, president of Yardmaster, Painesville, OH, regularly turns over his big equipment. He cites two reasons: he doesn't want a huge capital expense all at once and he wants to take advantage of the latest labor-saving technology.

"Getting new equipment is a great way to motivate your crews," he adds, saying that manufacturers have focused on increasing operator comfort and safety as well as boosting productivity.

#### Give me a price

The ways to price and market your equipment are endless, but don't count on referencing a value or depreciation guide. Why?



Kurt Kluznik



Tom Tolkacz

Because there isn't one. Most landscape professionals come up with a list of their own factors to use.

"We take the price of a new piece of equipment and compare it to the replacement cost and what the cost is to us to repair it," says Randy Abshier, vice president of Bozzuto Landscaping, Laurel, MD. "We also take into account years, hours, new parts and labor we have put into the equipment."

For instance, if a new mower has a life expectancy of six years and it costs \$6,000, the price for each year of the mower's life is about \$1,000. From that, take any necessary deductions for repairs, parts and labor to arrive at a reasonable resale price.

As far as marketing your used equipment, Tom Tolkacz, president of Swingle Tree and Landscape Care, Denver, CO, says beware. "We don't want to

sell our equipment to anyone who might gain a competitive advantage over us. That's why we sell outside of our service area."

#### **Buy smart**

Tips to consider before buying used equipment from landscape companies include:

# The dealer perspective

Dealers have no standardized way to price used equipment. While some deduct the depreciation value of a used machine from its original price, others assess its price by comparing it to new machines in the same category. Deductions are often made from this price based on the machine's depreciation, the cost of parts replaced and the labor required to refurbish it.

Tim Watson, president, Graham Lawn Equipment, Douglasville, GA, has his own way of determining a used piece of equipment's price. "We usually take into account a 20% depreciation from its original value and add the cost of refurbishing to that," he says. The final selling price of any used equipment is up to a 60% of its original value.

Muehlhauser at Scotts Power Equipment takes both trade-ins and consignments. "If somebody trades in a used unit, we take about 30% off of retail for the wholesale price, and if we consign it we get 20%. If an owner consigns a piece of used equipment, they make an extra 10%, " he explains.

#### **Buying from dealers**

While it's generally true that an operator knows his machine, there are some guidelines that those buying used equipment from dealers should follow before making the purchase.

The most important aspect of the transaction is the relationship between the customer and the dealer. Therefore, it's important to go to a dealer you can trust.

It's also important to take into account the reputation and quality of the manufacturer, suggests Ray Badger, president, Turbo Tech, Beaver Falls, PA. He also adds that buyers should ask if there's a warranty on parts. Most dealers who sell used equipment do offer a warranty or a service contract with the sale. Watson offers a 90-day guarantee on all used equipment and service and everything else he sells.

Minute details like whether a walk-behind mower has been overused or if Roundup was used in a spray tank are essential to find out about.

Tom Delaney, vice president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA), says it's also necessary that you ask for the service log in order to keep track of the number of replacement parts. It also comes in handy while procuring a user manual from the manufacturer, which is helpful while servicing used equipment.

It's also important to get the equipment checked by a reliable mechanic before taking the plunge.

#### OPERATIONS

Talk to employees who have used the equipment. Often, you can't do this, but if you can, it's highly recommended.

Talk to local dealers who sell similar equipment. "Ask them the hours and years for life expectancy of the equipment," Abshier says.

Ask for specific documentation. "Always ask to see the service record to find out what has been done to the equipment," Tolkacz says. "Also, ask to see the title of the equipment."

Acquire a maintenance/ users manual for the equipment. Get equipment checked by an experienced mechanic.

Since there are many different types of landscape equipment, how do you know which types are worth buying used?

"Hand-held power equipment usually gets worn out after one season and would not be worth buying used," says Bozzuto's Abshier.

Kluznik says hours of use are a better indication of the life left in a bigger piece of machinery than its age. Even so, he's leery about buying anything older than three years old.

#### **Views from the makers**

Manufacturers see the used equipment market as basically a good thing. "If the person buys a used piece first and really likes it, he or she will probably buy a new piece of equipment from the same company," says Bob Walker, Walker Manufacturing, Fort Collins, CO.

Adds Brad Paine, associate marketing manager of Sitework Systems/The Toro Company, Bloomington, MN: "I have no problem recommending the purchase of a used piece of Toro equipment."

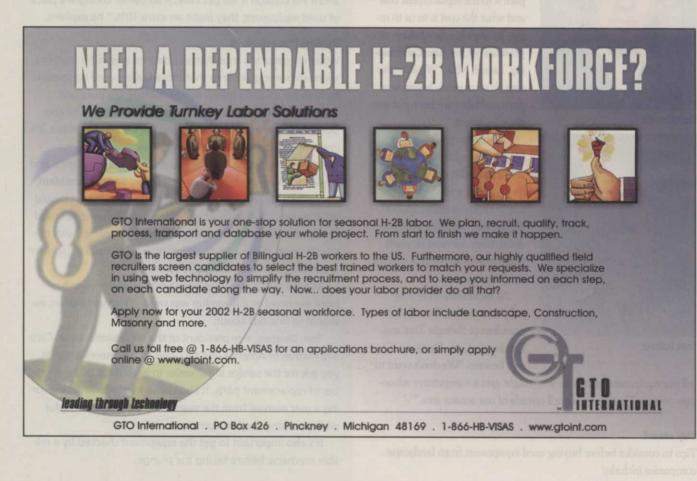
In support of this philosophy, some manufacturers offer



**Bob Walker** 

programs for rebuilding their equipment. "We have a program called ProConditioned where equipment with 1,800 hours or less can be reconditioned per factory specifications and retailed back into the market with a one-year warranty," says Catherine Blackwell, director of client services, Epley Associates/John Deere, Raleigh, NC.

Most manufacturers' used



Circle 131

"Always ask to see the service record to find out what has been done to the equipment. Also, ask to see the title of the equipment."

products are sold through dealers, which is where they believe you should begin your search. "The dealer is best equipped to deal with the issues inherent to the used equipment market," Paine says. "The buyer should go with the product and dealership that is best going to service their business and make them more successful."

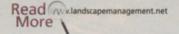
#### How to maintain it?

Tom Delaney, president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, suggests that the best way to maintain used equipment is to go back to the manufacturer and get a user manual because the original is usually lost. Then, follow the proper maintenance schedule procedure while carrying out the regular repairs after a season.

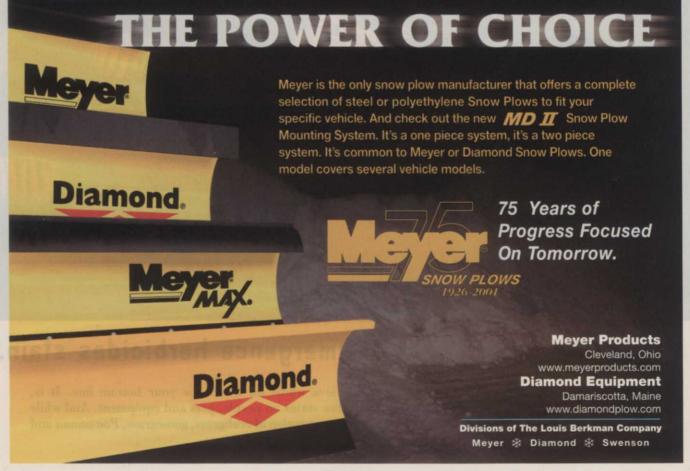
The maintenance for used equipment is usually preventive, says Doug Hague, president, Lawn Classics, Findlay, OH, since one needs to get the maximum out of the machine in order for it to be cost effective. **LM** 



Swingle Tree & Landscape Care purchased this used truck at an auction from a company that went out of business. After buying a second used truck, Swingle was able to use two trucks for the price of one.



Visit our Web site's "This Month's Features" page to learn the advantage to searching for used equipment on the Internet, and also for a list of Web sites where you can buy used equipment.



Circle 114



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Circle No. 115 on Reader Inquiry Card

# 10 steps to success with subcontractors

Experienced landscape pros share their secrets to achieving profitable and pain-free relationships with outside firms

#### BY MIKE PERRAULT

here is no quick and easy way to have successful, profitable relationships with subcontractors. Building such relation-

ships is one of the headaches of the landscape and irrigation business. It's hard but not impossible.

The key is experience. Landscape Management interviewed seven experienced Green Industry professionals about dealing with subcontractors. They offered 10 tips to help you avoid the pitfalls they encountered.

1. Outline the "perfect" project. Jeff Korhan, president of Treemendous Landscape Co., Plainfield, IL, sets up a meeting to define expectations for subcontractors and contractors. He tells subcontractors to forget about budgets and time frames. "I ask them to pretend it's three years later, and everybody is happy with the relationship," says Korhan. "Then I ask them to de-

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scribe what happened in those three years that caused us to have a good personal and professional relationship. If they don't have an answer, they may be saying, 'I don't see myself working with you in three years.'"

2. Walk a managerial tightrope. Micromanaging is a mistake. The last thing subcontractors want is to be told how to conduct their business. Also, micromanaging subcontractors squanders valuable resources, particularly your time.

A hands-off management style can be equally disastrous. Subcontractors need guidance.

"Communication is the biggest issue with subs," says Dave Tollefson, president of Urban Farmer, Inc., a 16-year-old full-service landscaping firm in Englewood, CO. "You pull a group of entrepreneurs together, set the stage right up front and let them know what the expectations are." The goal is to foster a cooperative, not an adversarial, relationship.

3. Exceed customer expectations. How else will your landscape company stand out to



Subcontractors are often chosen for their expertise in a particular task.

clients? When selecting and working with subcontractors, insist that they exceed customer expectations. That is far from easy, says John Chiarella Jr., president of Ultimate Services, Inc., Waterbury, CT. "Some subcontractors will talk the talk but won't walk the walk."

Korhan believes everyone in

the business process has expectations of each other, and those, too, should be exceeded. "In that sense, working with a subcontractor is no different than working with an employee or a client. Be open to problems and opportunities and ask, 'What is our plan to take advantage of those problems and opportunities?'" DODIER SHOW AND USE THE



"I ask subcontractors to pretend it's three years later, and everybody is happy with the relationship. Then I ask them to describe what happened to build this good, professional relationship." — Jeff Korhan, president,

Treemendous Landscape Co.

4. Establish clear objectives and standards. Although contracts are important for outlining the scope of a subcontractor's work, don't rely too heavily on them. Confusing legal terms sometimes scare subcontractors away.

Consider conveying important objectives and standards and soliciting feedback from subcontractors during informal preconstruction or weekly progress meetings, Tollefson suggests. "Have them tell you they're having a hard time working around you in this or that area, for example."

Korhan has someone write down agreed-upon terms during informal meetings, which subcontractors and contractors then initial. One such agreement might be that the subcontractor commits to showing up on time, fulfilling specific work requirements and leaving sites clean.

Also, consider writing business letters that clearly state what work will be done, when and for what price, says Ed Laflamme, former president of Laflamme Services, Bridgeport, CT.

5. Do your homework. Selecting a good subcontractor may seem easy but it's not.

Take the time to evaluate, compare and select good subcontractors. Make decisions based on your company's priorities. Laflamme believes your number one search criteria should be reliability. "He has to do 100% of the job. Some subcontractors will do 95% and leave your client unhappy. Then, you have problems."

Consider also references and reputation, flexible contract terms, resource scope, cultural match, location and additional value-added capability. Word-of-mouth often helps you find subs fulfilling at least some of these criteria. "It's the best advertisement," says Les Lightfoot, president of Lightfoot's Landscape in Vidor, TX.

Tollefson looks for subcontractors who are like his own employees. "We look for the same temperament, ideals, attitudes and values," he says.

Price is important, but the location is sometimes even more crucial, both to the subcontractor and the landscape contractor. The landscape contractor wants the sub to be located within a reasonable distance from the job site, and the sub doesn't want to travel that far, either. The closer the sub to the job site, the better pricing a landscape contractor will get.

Don't forget to check out subcontractors' customer testimonials, contact numbers and resumes. Also, check to make sure they have liability insurance, and ask how their workers are trained.

6. Subcontract for the right reasons. Landscape companies subcontract to reduce and control operating costs, improve company focus, gain access to specialized services, free up internal resources for other projects and share risks. Subcontractors are often chosen for their extensive knowledge or certification involving everything from pesticide applications to large tree work.

"In the beginning, I tried to buy everything and do it all myself," Laflamme says of his efforts 30 years ago. "You quickly realize it's often more efficient to have a subcontractor handle some of the work."

Subcontracting makes sense from a risk-sharing standpoint, too, says Chiarella. "In-house, you have to pay for insurers, taxes and workers' comp," he says. "If you screw up, you have to pay. If a sub screws up, he's responsible or he doesn't get paid."



"Insisting that subcontractors exceed customer expectations is far from easy." — John Chiarella, Jr., president, Ultimate Services

Korhan primarily subcontracts irrigation and complex masonry work. "You may have the resources for a project in-house, but if those resources are committed elsewhere, you might sub out other things," he says. "If it's a large sod installation, you might sub that out because you want your crews working on the higher margin detail work that's going to reflect most heavily on the finished project."

7. Treat subcontractors as insiders. Some landscape company managers say they're surprised that many of their peers view subcontracting merely as an easy way to simplify their lives. Although they readily team up with subcontractors to satisfy clients, they continue to treat them as outsiders.

Laflamme took an opposite approach by inviting subcontractors to parties. He invited contractors and clients, too, creating bonds and cementing relationships. More landscape contractors say they're beginning to view relationships with subcontractors differently. They now it's about establishing networks and relationships among the most clever, best subcontractors in their fields. They share information with and learn



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Circle 116

from ambitious subcontractors, and use them to keep pace with change, to innovate, and to pursue efficiencies.

8. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. Rockecharlie prefers subcontractors who promptly respond to job requests, send professional proposals in a timely fashion and attend meetings. "That gives your firm the necessary turnaround time to submit bids for the total bid package," he says.

Likewise, pay your subcontractors in a timely manner. "Subcontractors who get nickeled-and-dimed don't like working for those contractors and they do a lousy job," says Chiarella. "It's to no one's advantage." A smarter approach is to reward for performance.

Don't let control issues or egos get in the way of establishing good reciprocal relationships. Avoid adversarial relationships when determining who will choose the specific pesticides to apply, for example. Also, improve communications with subcontractors. One of the quickest ways to end a relationship with a good subcontractor is to tell them a job is ready when it isn't — that hurts their bottom line.

9. Timing and scheduling are critical. The art of subcontracting is the timing and scheduling, landscape managers say. It can also be subcontracting's toughest aspect. It's not uncommon to underestimate the time necessary to complete a job or fail to take into consideration outside factors. Communicate before, during and after a job. Try to get a commitment from subcontractors that your firm is among their top priorities.

Chiarella points out what he considers to be an ideal relationship. "I was on a job site in Westport, CT, where I saw a problem and called one of my tree expert friends," he says. "I talked to him on a Thursday, he was there on a Thursday afternoon, and he was injecting the trees on Friday."

Laflamme says he views scheduling will



"In the beginning, I tried to buy everything and do it all myself. You quickly realize it's more efficient to hire a subcontractor." — Ed Laflamme, who built Laflamme Services into a leader



"Word-of-mouth is often the best way to find a good subcontractor." — Les Lightfoot, president, Lightfoot's Landscape

make or break relationships with subcontractors. "If he says he's going to be there a certain day, he's got to be there," Laflamme says. "He's got to be good about communicating that. If it looks like he might run a couple of days long, he's got to let us know."

10. The all-important contract. Contracts should promote efficient cooperation to accomplish the objectives of both parties, not entrap the unwary, landscape contractors say.

They should prevent the "That's not MY job" arguments that inevitably crop up on job sites. "As long as we're living by what I call the 'golden rules of the spec,' it helps us all," Tollefson says.

Watch for carelessly worded language and ambiguities in contracts. Understand clauses that give companies the right to withhold a specified percentage of progress payments as a way to ensure the work will be completed. Watch for clauses that allow for avoidance of (or compensation for) interference, specify insurance requirements and address damages incurred by either party. Does the contract address submittals, changes, site inspections, notices, claims and disputes? Does contract language adequately deal with payments, performance time, scheduling and waivers?

Contract examples to consider include the Standard Form of Agreement Between Contractor and Subcontractor (Document A401, American Institute of Architects) and the Associated General Contractor of America Standard Subcontract Agreement. LM

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# IM PRESENTS award-winning landscape management

#### Property at a glance

Location: Boise, ID Staff: St. Luke's Regional Medical Center grounds department **Category:** Hospital or Institution Total budget: \$118,000 Year site built: 1906 Acres of turf: 4 Acres of woody ornamentals: 3.5 Acres of display beds: 8,000 sq. ft. Total paved area: 2 million sq. ft. Total man-hours/week: 280

#### Maintenance challenges

▶ Old site/new growth

- Project spread out over large area
- Constant construction

#### Project checklist

(Completed in last two years):

- Hazard tree program
- ► Five-year pruning program
- New color program

#### On the job

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

# St. Luke's Regional **Medical** Center

A 2000 Honor Award Winner of the **Professional Grounds Management Society** for Hospital or Institution

t. Luke's Regional Medical Center, Boise, ID, has grown from a single Victorian-style

ft. of buildings, covering 27.5 acres and 18 city blocks. Its grounds department has grown right along with it, and now cares for 800 trees and 4,000 shrubs on campus, including a 150-ft. giant sequoia unique to Boise's high desert environ-

The last two years have been particularly challenging to members of St. Luke's grounds department. They have jects by reviewing landscape designs and recommending changes as needed, proaddition to staff or reduction of other responsibilities.

Harbaugh takes his job seriously. "When



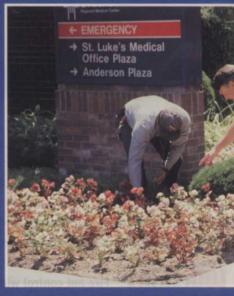
Editors' note: Landscape Management is the exclusive sponsor of the Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards for outstanding management of residential, commercial and institutional landscapes. The 2001 winners will be named at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. For more information on the 2001 Awards, contact PGMS at:

720 Light St. • Baltimore, MD 21230 • Phone: 410/223-2861. Web site: www.pgms.org

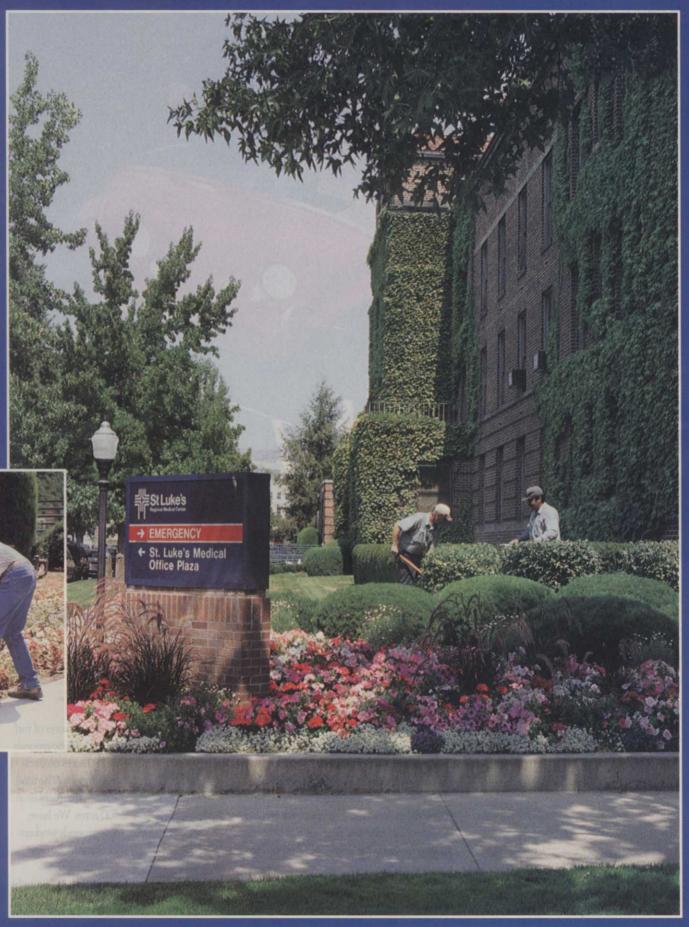
pus for medical services, their first opinion of the quality of care they will receive comes from the appearance of our

patients and visitors arrive on our cam-

Workers deadhead annuals near one of the hospital's directional signs.

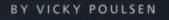


The sandstone and brick and ivy covered walls of one of the oldest buildings of St. Luke's are surrounded by immaculately trimmed bushes.



#### TOOLS OF THE TRADE: UTILITY VEHICLES

(Un



These grounds professionals discuss why utility vehicles have become an absolute necessity



mall enough to get into tight spaces but tough enough to do the job of their big truck counterparts, today's utility vehicles have greater power, payload and traction abilities that give landscape professionals more flexi-

bility in their day-to-day operations.

An increasing number of landscape professionals are finding that utility vehicles have become an absolute necessity, especially in areas like university campuses where parking is a problem. We talked to university grounds managers and others to find out just how useful these utility vehicles are, and here is what they had to say: A PHOTO COURTESY: THE TORO COMPANY

#### **MEDIUM PROPERTY**

Name: Greg Burriss Title: Grounds manager Company: Furman University Location: Greenville, SC 2000 budget: \$1 million Company profile: "We have 80 acres of turf



on the athletic grounds and 80 acres on campus grounds. The total acreage we maintain is 400 acres. We have nine grounds workers for the athletic areas, 12 with campus grounds and two on the Many grounds operations have Club Car's Carryall, which is adaptable to light and heavy work.

nine-acre president's estate. We perform total grounds maintenance care and landscape implementation.

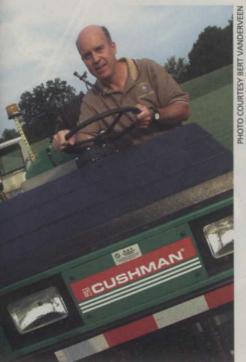
Equipment arsenal: "We have 10 half-ton Chevy trucks, a one-ton Ford dump truck, two five-ton Ford dumptrucks, seven golf cars, one Cushman sprayer, one kromer painter, one 4x4 Club car, and three John Deere Gators.

Purchasing decisions: "We buy new except for the golf cars."

Dream vehicle: "A three-quarter ton 4x4 with turf tires, heavy duty dumpbed, winch and weather band radio — and 40 miles to the gallon!"

#### SMALL PROPERTY

Name: Chris Fay Title: Grounds manager Company: University of North Carolina at Greensboro Location: Greensboro, NC 2000 budget: \$873,400





Company profile: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro is located on a 197acre campus in the Piedmont Triad Region with 3.1 million gross sq. ft. of building space. The grounds department performs services such as maintenance of the golf course and soccer stadium, moving, commencement decoration and set-up, placement and collection of extra trash receptacles for outdoor events, preparation of athletic fields for major events, coordination of utility excavations and special landscape design, excavation and installation. The grounds division also houses the Solid Waste Management Division. One supervisor, three full-time and seven parttime laborers care for the athletic fields.

Equipment arsenal: "Ten pickups (Dodge/Ford half-ton), three two-ton dump trucks and two Cushman trucksters (gas) with spray tanks. We also use a John Deere Gator (gas) to haul and dump clay and mulch to sand fields/golf course and a John Deere (gas) infield Groomer. We drag baseball and softball infields and groom sand traps with a Tenant litter vacuum unit (gas). We have three used golf-type Club cars (electric) and one used six-passenger Club car (electric) to give tours of campus grounds and transport seasonal workers across campus."

Purchasing decisions: "We buy new units based on a bid process because we're a state institution. We've had good luck with used units from golf courses, too."

#### LARGE PROPERTY

Name: Michael Lynch Title: Account manager Company: Environmental Management Services, Inc. Location: Columbus, OH 2000 revenue: \$10.8 million Business mix: Mostly commercial Company profile: Mark Wehinger started Environmental Management Services, Inc. in 1992 as a commercial landscaping company. Installation services were added to compliment maintenance contracts. "Since that time, we have grown into a full-service landscape contracting company that performs such services as design build, installation, irrigation, seasonal color, bird aversion and snow removal. We have 160 employees, and our business mix now consists of 70% commercial maintenance and 30% installation."

Equipment arsenal: "The utility vehicle we get the most use out of is the Exmark Lazer converted turf tractor, a zero-turn tractor with a dry fertilizer hopper added to the front and liquid tanks added to the back with both hand wand and boom spray applicators."

Purchasing decisions: "We have three of these Exmark vehicles in our fleet. Two were purchased new in 1998 and one in 1999. We plan to purchase another next year."

Dream vehicle: "These machines take care of our needs, but we're going to have a large boom added to our next purchase."

Chris Fay drives one of his Cushman trucksters.



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The conventional wisdom on grub control is shifting from a curative to a preventive approach. Fortunately, MACH 2<sup>®</sup> Turf Insecticide offers effective preventive grub control with a powerful curative component as well.

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### IT'S ALL YOU NEED TO PREVENT OR CURE.

75 P 17 1

PRESIDENTIAL GREEN CHEMISTRY CHALLENGE WINNER

# Muscle up

Manufacturers of utility vehicles keep making them stronger, more versatile and more efficient

Vehicles with more horsepower and greater payload capacity are what contractors are looking for, and manufacturers are responding by putting more muscle in their products. We asked several manufacturers what the driving force was in their design of these products, and here's what they had to say:

#### ASV, INC., GRAND RAPIDS, MI 218/327-3434

Brad Lemke, director of new product development Utility vehicle: RC30 all -surface loader

Key trends: "We'd been building larger rubber-track vehicles for a number of years, then ASV RC30 heardmore people talk about smaller machines. In response, we developed the RC30." Best features: "Our rubber-track technology allows our machines to go anywhere."

On the horizon: "I think there will be multiple models of rubber-track machines to choose from, and more choices in size and horsepower."

#### JOHN DEERE, TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. 800/537-8233

Collis R. Jones, product marketing manager, vehicle group Utility vehicles: Gators Key trends: "Landscape professionals need a versatile vehicle that will allow them to efficiently haul and tow needed supplies." Best features: "John Deere Gators are popular because of the engine options and varying payload capacities."

Finance/purchasing decisions: "Most landscape professionals own their units, but for large jobs and immediate needs, Gators have become a popular item with rental companies.

#### THE TORO COMPANY, BLOOMINGTON, MN 612/888-8801

Jody Hinkle, marketing communications manager Utility vehicle: Toro Twister, Toro Workman 2100 and 1100 mid-duty vehicles Key trends: "Utility vehicles are becoming more popular within

the landscape marketplace. The new breed of vehicles have greater power, payload and traction abilities."

Best features: "Toro utility vehicles offer the highest horsepower and payload available, and the Toro Active In-Frame suspension and traction system allows for the vehicles to easily and comfortably get to a work site." Finance/purchasing decisions: "Vehicles are typically owned. Landscape professionals will primarily shop their local dealers. Larger, national landscape companies are more likely to have a distributor relationship." **On the horizon:** "More vehicles in this class will offer more power. which means more advancements in attachments."

#### **OTHER MANUFACTURERS:**

Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA 949/770-0400

Broyhill 800/228-1003

Club Car 800/258-2227

Kent Mfg. of Venice, Inc. 800/330-5368

Mitsubishi Fuso Truck of America, Inc. 877/202-9650

MTD Products, Inc. 330/225-2600

Read Wy.landscapemanagement.net

Visit our Web site to read about what other manufacturers have to say about trends in the utility vehicle market.



#### TOOLS OF THE TRADE

State collectrics' and one

#### **Haul anything**

Club Car utility vehicles' durable, lightweight aluminum construction makes them tough enough to maneuver through rugged industrial sites without damaging turf. They feature a 351cc, 11-hp key-start gasoline engine and can haul up to 1,200 lbs. total vehicle load. Maximum speed is 18 mph. Also has a cargo box. For more information contact Club Car at 800/258-2227 or www.clubcar.com/ circle #270

# vehicles

#### Light it up

E-Z-GO Textron's Workhorse LX line features the truck-like cowl from the Workhorse ST 350 and provides the same differential scuff guards, tubular front bumpers, bed liners, horns and fuel gauges or charge meters. For more information contact E-Z-GO at 706/798-4311 / circle #271

#### Twistin' away

Toro's 11-hp Workman 1100 and 16-hp Workman 2100 feature Active In-Frame suspension and flotation tires for high payload capacity. For more information contact Toro at 612/888-8801 or <u>www.toro.com</u> / circle #272

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No one should have to live with poor water quality. Being the industry leader for over 50 years, Otterbine offers a variety of surface spray and



sub-surface aeration systems that effectively circulate water and transfer oxygen. And with independent testing conducted by the University of Minnesota, you can rest assured that Otterbine systems will surpass all industry standards and your expectations. The result? Beautiful, healthy waterways on the surface, as well as below where it counts!



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Circle 120



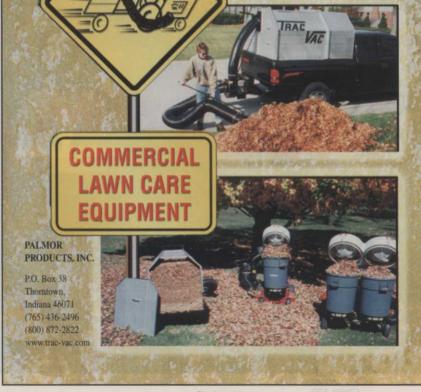
Polaris Industries' utility task vehicle

#### **Crew-sing**

Beginning in 2002, Mitsubishi Fuso Truck of America, Inc. will offer a Crew Cab for its FE-SP

# Trac Vac Makes a Vacuum for all your needs

Palmor Products Inc. is proud to be celebrating 26 years in manufacturing the Trac Vac Lawn Vacuum. Starting with the models 560 and 450 for garden tractors in 1975; the line has expanded to over 15 configurations ranging from 3.5 to 11 horsepower and from 8 cubic feet to 50 cubic feet capacities. Latest models include the 652 steerable vacuum for the mid mount zero rider, the 662 for compact tractors and the 2116 truck loader.



Circle 121

with automatic transmission. The seven-seater truck features a 175-hp engine, 165.4-in. wheelbase and 14,500-lbs. GVWR. For more info contact Mitsubishi Fuso at 877/202-9650 / circle #273

#### Like a pro

Polaris Industries' Professional Series Workmobiles include the All-Surface Loader, Utility Task Vehicle, ATV Pro and others . The UTV is available in 2x4, 4x4 and 6x6 models. For more information contact Polaris at 763/542-0500 / circle #274

#### **Tread carefully**

Kawasaki's Mule 3020 utility vehicle features smooth-tread 20-in. tires and can carry 803 lbs. and tow 1,200 lbs. For more information contact Kawasaki at 949/770-0400 / circle #275

#### No stopping here

The John Deere ProGator utility vehicle is available in 23.5-hp diesel and 26-hp gas versions. The vehicles have a five-speed, fully synchronized transmission that lets the operator keep going without stopping to change gears. For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 / circle #276

#### On track

All Season Vehicles' RC30 is a driveable, all-surface loader that fits in the back of a pickup and features rubber-tracked technology. For more information contact ASV at 800/346-5954 / circle #277

#### **Use force**

Broyhill Company's TerraForce has a 2,400-lb. payload capacity, cab forward design, standard power steering and mid-engine placement for balance and service access. For more info contact Broyhill Company at 800/228-1003 / circle #278

#### Out of the box

Aluminum utility boxes from Kent Mfg. of Venice, Inc., offer the chance to have a utility vehicle with the features of a factory direct model but at a fraction of the cost. For more information contact Kent at 800/330-5368 / circle #279

42 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT / OCTOBER 2001 / www.landscapemanagement.net

# **Green Space**

**Brian Vinchesi President, Irrigation Consulting, Inc.,** Pepperell, MA, and president of ASIC

#### BY JASON STAHL

#### What is ASIC (Association of Irrigation Consultants)?

ASIC was started in 1970 in California. It's a group of independent irrigation consultants, "independent" meaning their product selection is unbiased. They work for the benefit of the client. Most irrigation consultants are looking out for the client's best interests and selecting the best products for the application.

#### What exactly does an irrigation consultant do?

An irrigation designer does design, but irrigation consultants do project coordination. They look at the water supply, the electrical supply, the pump system, and where irrigation interfaces with everything else.

#### Do former irrigation contractors make better irrigation consultants?

It certainly doesn't hurt to have the perspective of an irrigation contractor. We're required to have a certain amount of experience and/or education - you can't just have one or the other. It helps to have some horticultural or landscape or other Green Industry experience. Some members are engineers, others are agronomists. Some have two years of college, others have four, some have none

#### Who are your typical clients?

We have consultants who handle only golf courses, and some that only handle commercial/residential clients such as landscape architects, developers or cities working on parks or recreation complexes.

#### What is an irrigation consultant's ultimate goal?

To bring a project in on budget and have it operate the way it was intended.

#### How much does water conservation play into your business decisions?

Water conservation is always an issue. Irrigation consultants provide the most efficient system based on the equipment available. The East is far worse when it comes to conservation issues - authorities there have no respect for irrigation and create laws that are hurtful to

### Vitals

- Projected growth for 2001:

the irrigation industry. The West respects irrigation and acknowledges a need for it.

#### Are there a lot of irrigation consultants out there?

No, but the market for them is growing. In the East, you can get irrigation con-

sulting for free but it won't be independent.

#### What's the biggest project you've worked on?

The "Big Dig" in Boston. There are several different projects on the irrigation side, mostly drip irrigation. It's frustrating because it's one big project divided into all kinds of little projects.

#### Why should someone hire an irrigation consultant?

They're going to give a client the best irrigation system that will conserve water, last long, reduce owner maintenance, and pay for itself more quickly. And it will cost less in the long-term.

# **BE AN URBAN TREE TROUBLESHOOTER**

What is an irrigation consultant's ultimate goal



There could be several reasons why grass isn't growing under a tree, but knowing what they are and how to address them will please your customer.

Solve your clients' tree/landscape problems by understanding how they interact

#### BY LEONARD PHILLIPS

eing able to identify and diagnose common treerelated problems on clients' properties will help you to retain these customers. It will also provide you with oppor-

tunities to offer additional services.

Here are some of the most common questions that customers ask about their trees, and answers to help you diagnose and solve their problems. **Question** – *Why is the grass dying under the tree?* 

Answer – The answer isn't always clear. Is the grass always in the tree's shade or just for a couple of hours a day? If it's always in shade, remove the lower branches and/or thin the canopy to allow more sunlight to reach the grass. If shade is present for four hours or less each day, it's probably not the problem. Chances are that the grass is a general-mix turf, and four hours of shade isn't a hindrance to most grass cultivars. If the grass is a sun-loving variety, several hours of shade would be a problem.

Look at the tree's roots. If they are shallow, determine if the tree is a variety that's suited for the site. Examine the quality and structure of the soil.

If the tree isn't suited for the site, recommend replacing it with a more desirable species. If the customer isn't happy with this, cover the roots with a couple inches of sandy loam and re-seed the area with a shade tolerant seed mix.

Conditions caused by poor or compacted soil can be improved by deep-tine aeration followed by a topdressing of sharp sand. After topdressing, add a couple inches of sandy loam and re-seed with a shade tolerant grass mix. Your goal is to loosen the soil and add loose topsoil to improve drainage and oxygen penetration to the tree roots. Bedrock issues require a massive amount of money and professional expertise.

continued on page 46



#### **URBAN TOLERANT TREES**

#### **BOTANICAL NAME**

- Abies concolor
- Acer campestre
- Acer x freemanii
- Acer griseum

Acer nigrum`greencolumn'

- Acer rubrum 'franksred'
- Acer saccharum
- Acer tataricum
- Acer truncatum x platanoides `warrenred'
- Amelanchier x grandiflora `autumn brilliance'
- Betula utilis var. jacquemontii
- Betula nigra 'heritage'
- Carpinus betulus `fastigata'
- Cercidiphyllum japonicum
- Cladrastis lutea
- Cornus hybrid
- Cornus kousa 'Milky Way'
- Corylus colurna
- Eucommia ulmoides
- Ginkgo biloba 'PNI 2720'
- Gleditsia triacanthos inermis
- Halesia tetraptera
- Kalopanax pictus
- Koelreuteria paniculata
- Lagerstroemia indica
- Maackia amurensis
- Magnolia hybrid
- Magnolia virginiana
- Malus species
- Metasequoia glyptostroboides
- Nyssa sylvatica
- Ostrya virginiana
- Oxydendrum arboreum
- Parrotia persica
- Phellodendron amurense `macho'
- Pinus parviflora
- Platanus x acerifolia `columbia'
- Prunus subhirtella `rosy cloud'
- Pseudotsuga menziesii
- Pyrus calleryana
- Pyrus calleryana var. fauriei
- Quercus bicolor
- Quercus rubra
- Sophora japonica 'PNI 5625'
- Syringa reticulata `ivory silk'
- Taxodium distichum `mickelson'
- Tilia tomentosa
- Ulmus americana `princeton'
- Zelkova serrata `village green'

#### VARIETY

'Evelyn' Autumn blaze/celebration

Greencolumn Red sunset Fairview, legacy, green mountain

Pacific sunset Autumn brilliance Whitebarked Himalayan Heritage Pyramidal

Aurora, celestial, stellar Pink constellation, Ruth Ellen, star dust Milky Way

Princeton sentry Moraine, shademaster, skyline

Apalachee, biloxi, Byers white, centennial spirit

Adams, centurion, golden raindrops, prairifire, sugar tyme

#### Macho

Columbia Rosy cloud

Capital, Cleveland select, Edgewood, redspire

Regent Ivory silk Shawnee brave Green mountain, sterling Princeton Village green

#### **COMMON NAME**

- White fir Queen Elizabeth hedge maple Freeman maple Paperbark maple Black maple Black maple Sugar maple Sugar maple Shantung maple Shantung maple Serviceberry Birch River birch European hornbeam Katsura tree Yellowwood
- Stellar series Kousa dogwood Turkish hazelnut Hardy rubber tree Ginkgo Honeylocust Carolina silverbell Castor-aralia Goldenrain tree

Crape myrtle Amur maackia Galaxy magnolia Sweetbay magnolia

Crabapple Dawn redwood Black tupelo American hop hornbeam Sourwood Persian parrotia Amur corktree Japanese white pine London planetree Cherry Douglas fir

Callery pear Pea pear Swamp white oak Northern red oak Scholar tree Tree lilac Bald cypress Silver linden American elm Zelkova



#### continued from page 44

The best solution to the shallow root problem may be to replace the struggling grass with mulch. If your customer doesn't like this approach, recommend a ground cover. Select the best plant for the site and make no guarantee of survival. It will take several years for a ground cover such as vinca minor or pachysandra to establish itself while competing with vigorous tree roots.

Consider buying ground covers in nursery pots and planting them pot and all in between the tree roots to delay tree root competition with the ground cover and speed up the ground cover establishment period.

**Question** – What causes some sidewalks, streets or driveways to crack and lift up?



Circle 123

Moving a walk further away from a tree's root flare is one way to reduce cracking and lifting.

Answer – Shallow roots are again the problem because they try to penetrate the soil beneath the pavement. The impervious surface prevents groundwater from evaporating, so it accumulates under the pavement. The tree roots seek the water and grow in the narrow band of moisture just under the pavement.

Remove and replace the trees with deep-rooted trees, or plant the trees further from the pavement.

Replace the sidewalk, street or driveway with a higher surface.

Relocate the pavement further away from the tree's root flare.

Add a bituminous ramp over the raised pavement to eliminate any tripping hazard.

Improve soil conditions to encourage roots to grow deeper.

Use physical root barriers or herbicidetreated fabric after careful root pruning to prevent the roots from growing under the pavement. Make sure that removing any root over two inches in diameter will not affect tree stability and increase your personal liability. This approach is best done with a new planting so the barrier does not harm the tree's structure.

**Question** – *The tree is dropping branches. How can it be stopped?* 

Answer – Assess the tree's condition. If it's in good health, check for animals in the tree. If you see stubs, broken branches and deadwood, consider pruning.

Check the tree's vigor for the past five years by measuring the distances between the terminal bud scars on a branch. If there is a steady decrease in the distance, the tree is in decline. Check the soil for insects or disease problems, and obvious problems around the trunk or on the leaves.

Has there been construction around the tree in recent years? Is there evidence of root damage? If the tree is old, recommend that a

new tree be planted nearby so that when the old tree dies, the new one is established and the loss will be less severe.

Don't rule out environmental damage such as air pollution, road salt damage or drought stress, even from several years ago.

Ron Despres, municipal arborist for Wellesley, MA, is often called to a residence where a sugar maple is showing signs of decline. He tells the resident that the sugar maples were planted 40 to 80 years ago when the air was cleaner, and since the trees can't



Adding a bituminous ramp over pavement raised by roots will reduce tripping.

get up and move to New Hampshire or Vermont where the air is still clean, they're dying.

#### Too many crowns?

Despres recommends replacing the trees with urban tolerant ones, such as the Green Mountain sugar maple. This variety's waxy leaves allow rain to wash pollution away and prevent the tree from being poisoned.

While at your customer's yard, look at the tree's crown. Does the tree have two tops? Homeowners rarely notice this and hardly ever perceive it as a problem. Removing one of the co-dominant leaders will allow the tree to do better, and the customer will be relieved that the tree was saved and a potential hazard eliminated.

If you can see a problem and can't figure out the solution, bring in a professional, certified arborist. Once you notice the problem and bring it to your customer's attention, you must be sure the tree is safe and you're not liable if anything happens to it. LM — Leonard Phillips is a landscape architect who served as Park & Tree Superintendent in Wellesley, MA, for 20 years. He can be reached at lenphillips@yahoo.com.



Circle 124

# Im reports

# **Creating a friendlier pond**

#### BY CURT HARLER / CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Landscape architects and designers are trained to deal with hardscapes like bridges and decks; they're good with livescapes like trees and bedding plants. But few have extensive backgrounds in waterscapes, one of the hottest trends in today's landscape market.

Properly designed water features are living biosystems. Landscapers' goal should be to create a bio-friendly pond, and the latest products aim to make that easy.

Perhaps the biggest mistake designers make is not making a pond big enough. Gary Wittstock, president of Pond Supplies of America, Yorkville, IL, says a pond should be at least 8 ft. by 10 ft., and deep enough to support fish and plants.

"We tell people to design a big pond, to use a skimmer and to establish a natural ecosystem with plants and fish," he says. Koi, a Japanese carp, fits well in such designs.

Proper pumping is another key. "Give clients an efficient pump," Wittstock says. "It's vital that they run the pump both day and night, since nighttime is when the plants are growing." He advises putting the pump in a skimmer that will biologically filter and clean the water before it goes through the pump. "This protects the pump, too," he says.

One final tip is to avoid tinkering with the filter. "Taking the biological filter apart too often is like transplanting a tree every week. It destroys its efficiency," Wittstock says.

A Otterbine Barebo's Phoenix aerating fountain

#### AEROMIX SYSTEMS 800/879-3677

#### www.aeromix.com

Aeromix's AquaTornado II surface aspirating aerator features a larger-diameter stationary draft tube with unrestricted air intake and a propeller that's nearly four times larger than the competition. Units come in 2-hp single-phase as well as 2- and 3-hp 3-phase. **Circle #258** 

#### AQUAMASTER FOUNTAINS & AERATORS 800/693-3144

#### www.aquamasterfountains.com

Floating surface aerators from Aquamaster Fountains, Kiel, WI, are capable of creating a random boil or bubble effect on the water's surface. This low profile aerator is easily installed and works efficiently with any depth. Units are available from 1 to 5 hp. **Circle #259** 

### Pond design tips

Make pond big enough

Establish natural ecosystem with plants and fish

- Use an efficient pump
- Avoid tinkering with filter

Horizon Golf's rock walls for water features

# Im-reports

#### AQUASCAPE DESIGNS 800/306-6227

www.aquascapedesigns.com One item number gets you everything you need to build a pond except for the rocks and water. The 11x11 mini pond kit from Aquascape Designs, Batavia, IL, is a complete kit for building an 11x11-ft. pond two ft. deep. It includes the Aquascape pump and a 15x15-ft. liner. Kit sizes range from the 4x6-ft. package through the 11x16-ft. size with 15x20-ft. liner.

Circle #260

#### HORIZON GOLF 800/545-9210

#### www.horizongolf.net

Whether it's heavy duty pond liners or rock walls for water features, Horizon Golf, Evansville, IN, has many offerings. Company provides PVC liners that come in thicknesses ranging from 20 to 30 mils. Their rockwork is based on pumped concrete features which form outcroppings, shorelines or waterfalls. Circle #261

CLEAR WATER

#### 800/756-7946 clrwater1@aol.com

New From ClearWater Enviro Technologies is the ScaleBlaster,



which eliminates formation of limescale deposits in sprinkler systems, irrigation lines and other pipes without need of water softening equipment, salts, chemicals or maintenance. Circle #262

#### LANDSCAPE DESIGNS, INC. 800/306-6227

www.aquascapedesigns.com For the wholesale market only, the catalog from Aquascape Designs, Batavia, IL, features a complete line of kits designed for contractors who build larger ponds. Also available are several models of skimmers, which eliminate routine maintenance by removing debris before it fouls pumps or sinks to the pool's bottom. Circle #263

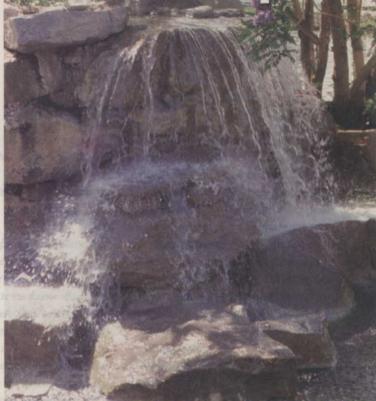
#### NDS PRO 800/726-1994 www.ndspro.net

A complete line of Catch Basins from NDS Pro, Lindsay, CA, is available through most major wholesale landscape, plumbing and building material outlets. They come in sizes from a six-in. round basin which fits three- and 4-in. corrugated and sewer and drain pipe. In addition, there are 9, 12, 18 and 24-in. versions. **Circle #264** 

#### OASE 805/383-1888

#### www.oasepumps.com

Strata-vator aerating pumps from OASE, Camarillo, CA, feature up to nine easily interchangeable display patterns. Motor sizes range from 0.5- to 2-hp models in the Midi line and 5- to 15-hp in the Maxi line. Circle #265



#### OTTERBINE BAREBO, INC. 800/237-8837

#### www.otterbine.com

A full line of aerating fountains from Otterbine Barebo, Emmaus, PA, includes the Sunburst, with spray heights from 4 to 11 ft. 1 to 5 hp. The Gemini provides 5- to 15-ft. sprays at the same horsepower, moving 555 to 1,125 gal. per minute. For geyser fountain effect, check out the Rocket, spraying 11 to 25 ft. powered by 1- to 5-hp motors. The Nova thrusts water 95 ft. into the air. Catalog available from vendor. **Circle #266** 

#### POND SUPPLIES OF AMERICA 888/742-5772

Complete catalog of liners, water, fish and plant care items is available from Pond Supplies of America, Yorkville, IL. Aimed at dealers and installers, it includes sales and building tips and most of the materials needed to build a waterscape. **Circle #267** 

#### POND SWEEP MFG. 630/553-3088

#### www.pondsweep.com

Three fiberglass skimmers and a Purifalls biofilter are the latest additions to the pond care line from PondSweep Manufacturing, Yorkville, IL. New skimmers are for ponds of 500 to 40,000 gal. **Circle #268** 

#### TURF DRAINAGE OF AMERICA 800/999-2794



The Turf Drain Siphon System from Turf Drainage of America, Marrero, LA, moves water a long dis-

tance with little elevation change. No special connectors are needed. PermaBasin collects seepage water as well as surface water. **Circle #269**  ask the expert

BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

### Oversight?

In your July 2001 column you overlooked two applications of microinjection technology for insect management. Gypsy moth infestations have been controlled using microinjection of systemic insecticides for many years in the northeastern United States. Microinjected insecticides can be particularly effective in controlling gypsy moth infestations on tall shade trees and in dense plantings. In these cases, effective spray coverage is difficult to obtain in urban conditions. The systemic insecticide imidacloprid (Merit) is available in a microinjection formulation known as Imicide. Research trials in California have shown that Imicide can remain effective in the control of red gum lerpsyllid for 15 months. In their research trials, USDA scientists found similar long-term activity of microiniected Imicide formulations on the Asian longhorned beetle.

Thanks for reminding me about microinjection technology. When I suggest some treatments, I normally mention the use of products "such as" and don't endorse any particular product. In my opinion, microinjection technology is a useful way to manage specific plant disorders. It offers an alternative to conventional spraying where spraying is not desirable, permitted or feasible for various regulatory or operational reasons. Reports from arborists indicate that because of the need for wounding during injection, some prefer to use the system only when they have no other means of managing plant disorders or when specific bids call for injection treatments.

#### Getting rid of goosegrass

How can we get rid of goosegrass in our customers' lawns? Will Dimension herbicide do a good job? Our goal is to control crabgrass as well as goosegrass.

-- IL

Dimension should help manage crabgrass and goosegrass when applied prior to germination. In addition, it will help manage crabgrass when the weeds are at the 2-3 leaf development stage. As they begin to produce tillers, mix with post-emergent herbicides such as MSMA or Acclaim, or use post-emergent herbicides such as Drive or Acclaim. Some of the post-emergent herbicides may discolor desirable turfgrass, so make sure the soil has sufficient moisture while treating to minimize phytotoxicity. Don't worry if discoloration occurs — it's usually temporary and, with the onset of good moisture and turfgrass growth, will disappear.

#### Grub attack

-MA

White grubs such as Japanese beetles, northern masked chafers and possibly May/June beetles are causing problems on our clients' properties. In the past, we've used insecticides such as Oftenol and Dylox to control grubs. Now, we're thinking of using Mach 2. When can we use Mach 2 to get the best control? How critical is watering after treating? Also, can you offer advice on how to prevent animals from feeding on lawns?

— MI

White grubs such as Japanese beetles (*Popillia japonica*), northern masked chafers (*Cyclocephella borealis*) and May/June beetles

(*Phyllophaga spp.*) are all included under the Mach 2 label.

According to the label, Mach 2 may be used either as a preventive treatment or as an early curative treatment. It suggests using only one application at 2.2 fl. oz./1,000 sq. ft. An application of Mach 2 should be made prior to egg hatch or when larvae (grubs) are small. In your area, that time period should be mid-July through early August. Monitor pest activity to discover your area's best treatment time. Also, it's important to identify grubs and their life cycle — one year or two to three years. To do this, examine their raster patterm (i.e. the arrangement of small hairs in the last body segments) by turning them over and examining the last body segment.

Mach 2 doesn't depend on water to be activated. If you want to improve efficacy, however, you should water to move the product through the thatch layer. If drought conditions exist, consider watering to obtain good results. Avoid mowing until the product is washed off leaf blades, or irrigate enough to wash the material on to the target pests. Grubs feed at the soil and root interphase beneath the thatch layer, so that's where the product needs to reach.

Preventing grubs would help prevent lawn damage from animals to some extent. However, some of these animals feed on other food sources such as earthworms. The best way to manage large animals like raccoons or skunks is to trap and remove them from the property. Consult

your local cooperative extension service or animal control department for proper removal of trapped animals.

Manager of Research and Technical Development for the Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO: "Ask the Expert" Landscape Management; 7500 Old Oak Blvd.; Cleveland, OH 44130, or email: sgibson@advanstar.com. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear.

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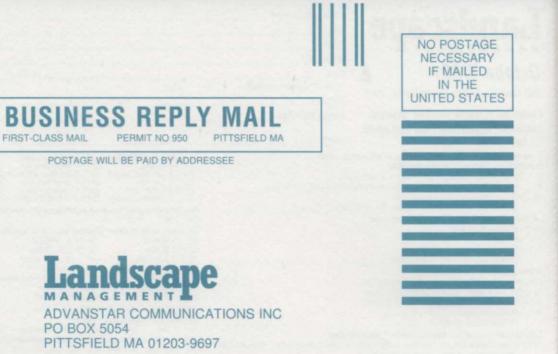
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#### Brush up

Maruyama's BC2600 brushcutter features electronic ignition and a Walbro carburetor for easy starts at idle. It weighs only 12.7 lbs., and accepts a wide variety of optional cutting heads. The company claims its AE 260 25.4cc engine is both lightweight and powerful. Other features include chrome impregnated cylinders, chrome-moly crankshafts, and a quick remove engine cover. For more information contact Maruyama at 425/885-0811 or visit www.maruyamaus.com / circle no. 250

#### **First string**

Husqvarna's string trimmers feature E-tech technology, designed to reduce emissions, and the LowVib anti-vibration system. Other features include ergonomic handles, Titanium Force trimmer line and several optional cutting heads.

For more information contact Husqvarna at 800/487-5962 or visit <u>www.husqvarna.com</u> / circle no. 251

#### Wheel deal

Bachtold Bros.' new line of walk-behind string trimmers feature an offset head for easy access to hard-to-reach places. No tools or disassembly of cutting head is required to change the cutting cord. Additional features include 20-in. Tuff wheels and 1-1/2-in. thick aluminum cutting head. It comes standard with a 5-hp Briggs & Stratton Quantum engine. Options include a 6-hp Briggs & Stratton Intek or 5-hp Honda engine.

For more information contact Bachtold Bros. at 217/784-5161 or visit <u>www.bachtoldbros.com</u> / circle no. 252



Nice blades The Grasshopper Company's 48- and 60-in. dozer blades move dirt, sand, gravel and snow, and dislodge ice from sidewalks and drives. They can operate straight ahead or 25 degrees left or right. Control lever permits pre-set height adjustment, while quick response foot control allows intermittent height adjustment. New 60-in. PowerBlade uses a self-contained hydraulic system for lift and variable left-to-right angling. For more information contact Grasshopper at 620/345-8621 or visit www.grasshoppermower.com / circle no. 254

#### No edginess here

Robin Products' BE221 edger features a 21.7cc displacement engine, diaphragm carburetor, 17 oz. fuel tank, 57" flex shaft, two-toothed cutting blade and loop handle. It weighs only 12.6 lbs. For more information contact Carswell Imports at 800/929-1948 or www.carswelldist.com / circle no. 255

#### Fit and trim

Kawasaki Motors Corp. claims its string trimmers are one to three lbs. lighter than competitive trimmers with similar engine displacement. What also differentiates Kawasaki trimmers from others is the 2-cycle engine, which the company claims has more than enough power to get the job done, plus long run times on a single tank of gas.

#### The straight and narrow

Caterpillar trenchers are designed to cut narrow, straight trenches in many soil types with the skid steer loader traveling in reverse with the boom angled down between 45 and 65 degrees from the horizontal position. The model T9 trencher operates to a maximum depth of 48 in. and maximum width of 10 in. The model T15 trencher operates to a maximum depth of 60 in. and maximum width of 12 in.

For more information contact Caterpillar at 309/675-1000 or visit <u>www.cat.com</u> / circle no. 253

For more information contact Kawasaki at 949/460-5688 or visit <u>www.kawasaki.com</u> / circle no. 256

#### A walk in the park

Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products' new Bob-Cat midsize walk-behind mowers feature gear or hydrostatic drive, twin lever tracking control and cutting height adjustments without tools, and a top-mounted cutter spindle that protects against unexpected impacts. Hydrostatic models feature 15-, 17- or 21-hp Kawasaki V-Twin engines. Gear-drive models feature 15- or 17-hp Kawasaki V-Twin or 12-hp Briggs & Stratton I/C single cylinder. Both models offer 36-, 48-, 53and 61-in. decks.

For more information visit <u>www.textronturf.com</u> / circle no. 257





- · Edge or trim at any angle from horizontal to vertical with one quick adjustment.
- Can be adapted to virtually any mower deck.
- · Easily folds out of the way for transportation, and will not extend the deck width!
- · Mount is spring loaded to swing away from obstacles for added safety
- Increase productivity for all zero turn mowers.



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Circle No. 125



WALKER MID-MOUNT BUYERS GUIDE

application while understanding their real-life mowing needs. Guidelines such as; working on hills and slopes, precision handling, high-quality mowing, grass collection, trimming capability and five other "real world" mowing applications that a customer should consider before buying any commercial riding mower.



Circle No. 126

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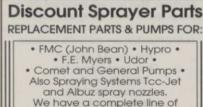
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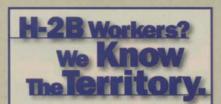
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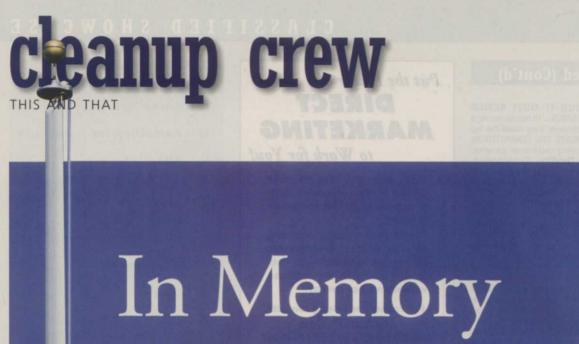
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