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SEPTEMBER 2001 / www.landscapemanagement.net

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State of
the Industry
2001

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a1

Landscape MANAGEMENT

SEPTEMBER 2001 / #9 / VOLUME 40

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Editorial staff

Associate Publisher / Executive Editor	SUE GIBSON / 440/891-2729 / sgibson@advanstar.com
Senior Editor	RON HALL / 440/891-2636 / rhall@advanstar.com
Managing Editor	JASON STAHL / 440/891-2623 / jstahl@advanstar.com
On-Line Content Editor	LYNNE BRAKEMAN / 440/891-2869 / lbrakeman@advanstar.com
Senior Science Editor	KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D. / danneberger1@osu.edu
Group Editor	VERNON HENRY / 440/826-2829
Art Director	LISA LEHMAN / 440/891-2785
Sr. Graphic Designer	JEFFREY LANDIS / 440/891-2702 / jlandis@advanstar.com

Reader advisory panel

DEBBY COLE	Greater Texas Landscapes / Austin, TX
JOHN GACHINA	Gachina Landscape Management / Menlo Park, CA
JERRY GAETA	The Good Earth Inc. / Mt. Pleasant, SC
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DAVID SNODGRASS	Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping, Inc. / Portland, OR
GEORGE VAN HAASTEREN	Dwight-Englewood School / Englewood, NJ

Business staff

Group Publisher	JOHN D. PAYNE / 440/891-2786 / jpayne@advanstar.com
Admin. Coordinator	NICOLE CAPRARA / 440/891-2734 / ncaprara@advanstar.com
Production Manager	JILL HOOD / 218/723-9129 / jhood@advanstar.com
Production Director	ROSY BRADLEY / 218/723-9720 / rbradley@advanstar.com
Circulation Manager	DARRYL ARQUITTE / 218/723-9422 / darquitte@advanstar.com
Green Book Coordinator	MARY MOBLEY / 218/723-9127 / mmobley@advanstar.com
Vice President	TOM CONLON / 440/891-2619 / tconlon@advanstar.com

Advertising staff

Eastern Manager	JOSEPH SOSNOWSKI / 610/687-2356 Fax: 610/687-1419 150 Strafford Ave., Ste. 210 Wayne, PA 19087 jsosnowski@advanstar.com
Cleveland Headquarters	7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130-3369
Western Manager	PATRICK ROBERTS / 440/891-2609 Fax: 440/891-2675 proberts@advanstar.com
Midwest Manager	KEVIN STOLTMAN / 440/891-2772 Fax: 440/891-2675 kstoltman@advanstar.com
Account Executive Display / Directory Sales	MICHAEL HARRIS / 440/891-3118 Fax: 440/826-2865 mharris@advanstar.com
Classified Showcase / Account Executive	LESLIE ZOLA / 440/891-2670; 800/225-4569 x670 lzola@advanstar.com

Marketing services

MARCIE NAGY	Reprints (500 minimum) / 440/891-2744
TAMARA PHILLIPS	Circulation List Rental / 800/225-4569, ext. 773
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events

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

September 2001

18 Fall Field Day & Nursery Tour / Georgetown, SC; 864/592-3868

18 Turfgrass and Landscape Management Field Day / Riverside, CA; 909/787-4430

18-19 Turfgrass and Landscape Field Days / Blacksburg, VA; 540/231-5897

19 Texas Turfgrass & Ornamentals Field Day / Dallas, TX; 972/231-5362

19-20 Can West Show / Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; 604/574-7772

21-25 ASLA Annual Meeting & Expo / Montreal, Canada; www.asla.org

25 ALCA Business Boot Camp and Tech Knowledge / Baltimore, MD; www.alca.org

25-27 Int'l Construction and Utility Equipment Exposition / Louisville, KY; 262/633-4500

October

1 OTF Golf Tournament / Medina, OH; 888/683-3445

1-4 11th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species / Alexandria, VA; 800/868-8776

3 Washington Landscape Trade Show & Field Day / Puyallup, WA; 425/385-3333

6 ALCA Business Boot Camp and Tech Knowledge / Baltimore, MD; www.alca.org

10-11 Western Nursery & Garden Expo / Las Vegas, NV; 800/517-0391

11-14 30th NBSPA Annual Meeting / Clearwater, FL; 703/257-0111

12-13 MTNA Horticultural Trade Show / McMinnville, TN; 931/668-7322

16-17 Canada's Fall Buying Show for the Green Industry / Toronto, Canada; 905/875-1805

19-21 New Jersey Shade Tree Federation's Annual Meeting and Exposition / Cherry Hill, NJ; 732/246-3210

19-21 Grading and Drainage - LARE Review course / Davis, CA; 800/752-0881

21-24 SMA Conference and Trade Show / Fargo, ND; 701/241-1466

22-26 7th Annual Hawaii Mid-Pacific Horticultural Expo / Hilo, HI; 808/953-2088

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

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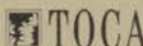
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Circle No. 107 on Reader Inquiry Card

BY SUE GIBSON / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

It's all about me!

If you're passionate about your business or organization, read on.

Your organization may be the perfect operating clone of your own personality, brains and drive. You probably eat, sleep and dream about it. Like many Green Industry professionals, success is your obsession. You are the organization.

So it's easy to say it's "all about me." After all, it's your business, staff and operation that has grown into a functioning, often profitable entity. You take the credit for success and stay awake at night worrying if things go bad. People expect you to navigate through all the storms.

And what's wrong with it being about me anyway, you say? Aren't I the one who bears all the risk, carries my employees' burdens and handles all our customers' fussy details? I'm the one sweating at the bank manager's desk, making the rules and dispensing justice, shouldering the responsibility for failure. Don't I have more to lose than anyone else?

You sure do. That's why you need to stop obsessing about you and start thinking more about THEM. If you've had only five minutes of quality training, you know your customers are both external and internal. If you expect to be successful in 2002, they will be far more important to your success than you.

Our 2001 State of the Industry research shows strong demand for your services through this summer in almost all segments of business (see page a1). But some slow-down is certain to occur as a result of the drop in corporate investment, the evaporation of many consumers' net worth from fallen tech stocks, and the uncertainty that plagues us all.

It's all about them

Whether this economy moves up or down, you still need to serve your employees and customers first. Here's why:

■ Everyone's worried about the economy, including your employees. They need to be reassured, trained, secured, challenged and encouraged to take ownership of responsibilities. Now more than ever is the time to perfect your services and get your best employees on board long-term.

■ Your residential customers worry, too. If times get tougher, you need to remind them of the value you bring to their lives. When budgets tighten up, people's perceptions of value change. Look at events from their perspective and find ways you can become indispensable to them.

■ Your commercial customers need particular attention. How can you help ease their workload or give them more value for the same price? How can you become their partner, rather than just their vendor? If you're a grounds manager, ask how can you do more for less, pare your budget or enhance the appreciation of your services.

You probably already know that success depends on good relationships, in good times and in bad. You are crucial to your organization, but it's only by focusing on *them* that you'll ensure your organization's future.

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

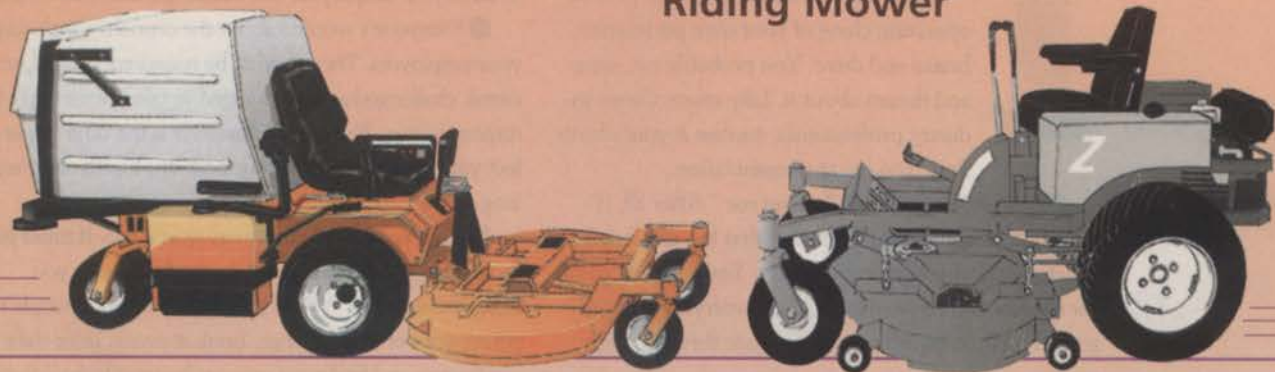


You have more to lose than anyone else. That's why you need to stop obsessing about you and start thinking more about them.

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Net jabber mostly for yucks

Screwdriver is probably dead. I haven't seen him in years and nobody mentions his name anymore. I thought of him for the first time in 20 years as I was reading postings on the Yahoo message board for ServiceMaster (NYSE-SVM). ServiceMaster is the parent company of the TruGreen companies, the world's biggest lawn and landscape operations.

I track it and the message boards of several other Green Industry companies for several reasons, not the least being that I'm a part owner of them. My stodgy investments (tiny by most standards) during the tech boom don't look so unexciting to me anymore in light of the financial horsewhippin' Yahoo and Amazon laid out on me.

What's in a name?

Ah, Screwdriver. I got to thinking about him again after trying to figure out the significance of some of the strange nicknames on the message boards, particularly the lively ServiceMaster board.

Characters calling themselves KaginKing, Encore, Bigmouse and (my favorite) Dangermousekaboom maintain a running commentary about the company and, sometimes, about nothing much at all.

Several seem to harbor a grudge against the company, or certain members of its management. They take every shot they can. They engage in arguments on the board with company defenders.

Occasionally, someone posts what appears to be solid information. Insider stuff. Whether it is or not, who knows? Mostly, I go the board for a good chuckle, which brings me back to Screwdriver.

He used to frequent a local hangout. He was a slight man, wrinkled and leathery, and I can still see his sun-creased face bathed in the haze of an unfiltered Lucky

Strike. I never knew much about him, other than that he worked at a local quarry. I also knew he was proud of his new false teeth, which were a topic of lively discussion among the regulars for a week or so.

"They only cost \$150," he told anyone who showed an interest, usually flashing an enormous self-satisfied grin. In fact, he'd eagerly pop the false teeth out of his mouth and exhibit them on the polished bar whenever he was chided by other regulars, guys with nicknames like Sly and Eagle.

Come to think of it, I never knew any of these other characters well either. Not even their real names. But, for a short while, we all had a good time, even Screwdriver.

I know it's a poor substitute for the entertainment my former pals used to provide, but I check the net message boards from time to time to see what people have to say about the doings of several Green Industry companies. I've staked a small part of my financial future on them — the companies, not the people with the funny names.

Contact Ron at 440/891-2636

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Teaching old dogs new tricks

The success of any business lies in the quality of its people. Even with all the technology that's been developed, people are still needed. No computer or device can react with the passion and understanding of a human being, and this will never change.

Your ability to communicate with, teach and lead people will determine the success of your business and your life. It's never too late to learn how to get people to like you and do what you need them to do. With this in mind, I have two clichés I use almost weekly: "Treat people the way you want to be treated," and "little things make a big difference."

Details matter

My clients in The Winner's Circle frequently tell me their crews don't follow instructions. When I hear that, I always wonder if the crews have a clear understanding of the job they're supposed to do. Verbally describing what you want your crew to do at Mrs. Jones' house and drawing a sketch on a napkin from breakfast leads to confusion. Handing your team leader a highly detailed work order, an organized drawing and even some photos of the site eliminates many problems. Salespeople should be forced to put every last detail on their quotes so when a job is sold and a work order is generated, nothing is missed. Many successful companies I have worked with or visited send the team leader out to a job site prior to starting a project so they can see the whole picture and avoid potential difficulties.

Ask yourself, "If I sold my business for big bucks and

went to work for another landscape professional to stay active, what would I expect from the owner?" Chances are you would expect a lot more than you're currently doing in your own company! Treat people the way you want to be treated. Leaders know how to get people to do what they need them to and still be loved.

Little things get big results

So many little things make such a big difference that it's silly not to try them. For example, several times a year Grunder Landscaping cooks burgers and hot dogs on Fridays on our own company grill. It's amazing how much excitement is generated from \$150 worth of food.

On hot days, I'll turn on some music and make milkshakes for everyone. For once, it's me serving my staff, not them serving me, and they get a kick out of that!

Our managers are expected to stop and buy drinks and snacks while out monitoring jobs and help a new hire when he or she is struggling. Everyone is expected to help the last crew unload in the rain. Most of all, we constantly say, "Thank you."

Start treating your team the way you want to be treated and look for little things you can do for them. Soon, your old dogs will be jumping through hoops for you.

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



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Roundup sales boost Monsanto

ST. LOUIS, MO — A record 4% increase in sales of Monsanto Co.'s Roundup herbicide lifted the company's second quarter net income to \$389 million compared to last year's Q2 net income of \$248 million. The company said sales during the first six months of 2001 would have improved by almost 2% compared with first-half 2000 sales, if the effect of foreign currency exchange was excluded. Worldwide sales for Monsanto's agricultural productivity business rose 8% to \$1.57 billion.

BASF implements restructuring

LUDWIGSHAFEN, GERMANY — BASF has completed a reorganization into 38 regional and 10 global business units under its "Fit for the Future" motto. The new structure will allow the company to respond quickly and flexibly to worldwide customer needs, it says.

Chipco's Finale granted state label

MONTVALE, NJ — Finale herbicide, produced by the Chipco Professionals

continued on page 18

Acquisition expands and strengthens Brickman's reach in midwestern markets

BY SUE GIBSON/
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

LANGHORNE, PA — Consolidation among landscape maintenance companies continues with the August 1 purchase of Duke Weeks Landscape Division by The Brickman Group Ltd.

Duke-Weeks, which started as an in-house landscape department for the Duke Realty Corporation, generated nearly \$35 million in revenues from a variety of commercial services offered in several midwest and southern markets.

Brickman's move to buy Duke-Weeks gives it a new presence in several markets,

such as Cincinnati, Minneapolis, Columbus, Greenville and Nashville. It also gives Brickman a stronger presence in several very competitive markets where it is already established, including Cleveland, Dallas, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Raleigh, Atlanta, and Chicago.

Most of the former 300+ Duke-Weeks employees will continue with

Brickman. Mark Flowers, former division president, will now manage Brickman's Atlanta office.

Brickman will now employ approximately 5,100 employees and have proforma revenues for 2001 of more than \$300 million from 88 branches in 25 states.



CLIPPINGS

Yazoo/Kees expands plant

BEATRICE, NE — Yazoo/Kees recently expanded its production plant by 57,000 sq. ft. to bring the total building size to 167,000 sq. ft. As part of the expansion, the company has also added a \$1 million Milbank painting system and robotic welders.

"We continue to plan for the future and believe the future looks bright for Yazoo/Kees and the Husqvarna Turf Care Company," says Anders Berggren, president of Husqvarna Turf Care Company. "We feel very optimistic about this expansion as



Anders Berggren, president of Husqvarna Turf Care (left), is congratulated by Bill Cook III, president of the Gage Co. Economic Development Board, on the plant expansion.

well as the new Yazoo/Kees products that will be unveiled in the near future."

Grass is greener on the other side

BY JASON STAHL/
MANAGING EDITOR

Lured by water bill credits, homeowners out west are ripping out their grass. But irrigation and landscape contractors are hardly complaining.

When the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) began offering homeowners money to rip up their lawns in an effort to conserve water, you could easily imagine irrigation and landscape contractors gasping and grabbing their chests. No turf means no need for landscape maintenance, and certainly no need for irrigation, right?

Wrong, says Joe Fortier, and Fortier should know. He's the founder of Mojave Water Management, an irrigation consulting firm, and a former employee of the SNWA who helped develop and implement many of its conservation programs.

"It's actually providing more work for irrigation and landscape contractors," Fortier says of the "cash for grass" program. "When people want to retrofit, they have to retrofit the landscape and irrigation to drip irrigation for plant materials that are there. And there's usually not a big reduction in lawn maintenance because landscape professionals still come back, clean up the yard and maintain the irrigation system. Sometimes pruning and clean up takes the place of mowing."

For or against?

The program actually creates additional work for Green Industry professionals and credits homeowners up to a maximum of \$1,000 on their water bills. It also makes everyone feel good about doing their part to conserve a valuable resource. But there could be a day when people like Fortier will not support the program.

"If it stays a volunteer program, I'm all for it," Fortier says. "If it becomes mandatory, I'm against it."

Don Crawford, Western Director of Landscape Services for Camden Property Trust and board member of the Water Conservation Coalition, agrees with Fortier: "This program is only smart if it's done at the right place at the right time."

Even though commercial properties can earn a water bill credit of up to \$50,000 (and Crawford has taken advantage of that), he won't just rip up turf everywhere.

"I won't take out grass where it doesn't make sense," Crawford says. "If I'm watering a skinny strip of turf and getting more water on the hardscape than the turf, it makes sense to replace the turf. We're doing these things anyway because it's the right thing to do."

The right solution?

Irrigation contractors are benefitting from additional work the program has created, but is it really helping to conserve water? A study done by Arizona State University Professor of Urban Horticulture Chris Martin suggests that it may not be.

"Two things happen: the drip irrigation system is either mismanaged or not managed at all," Martin says. "The homeowner will just set the clock and walk away. Water used in the landscape tends to follow the seasonal course of evapotranspiration — it increases in summer and decreases in winter. With drip, the pattern is unchanged from summer to winter."

"The best way to conserve water is to plant fewer plants," he says. "If you're looking at an absolute savings of water, replacing turf is a good thing. You're reducing canopy cover and water application. But it's not going to magically save water."

'Cash for grass'

It appears as though "cash for grass" programs are catching on around the country. New Mexico, California and Arizona have instituted similar financial incentive plans to save water.

■ The City of Corona, CA, for instance,

It appears as though "cash for grass" programs are catching on around the country. New Mexico, California and Arizona have instituted similar financial incentive plans to save water.

offers free water conservation classes to the public. One class in irrigation design is sponsored by a local irrigation supplier. After homeowners complete all four classes, they can apply for a mini-grant of \$500 to make their yard more water efficient.

■ In Glendale, AZ, homeowners can receive a \$500 rebate for converting 50% or more of their grass to water efficient plantings.

■ In Florida, there's a bill in the state legislature that would allow people in deed-restricted communities to grow something other than water-intensive St. Augustinegrass.

■ The National Wildlife Federation offers an official backyard wildlife habitat seal to those who curtail their lawns in favor of native plants that feed and shelter indigenous wildlife and require less pesticides and water.

continued from page 16

Products group of Aventis Environmental Science, was granted a state label for turf use by the California Department of Pesticide Regulations.

ServiceMaster Q2 income drops 23%

DOWNERS GROVE, IL — ServiceMaster announced a 23% drop in its second quarter (Q2) net income and reduced its earnings outlook for 2001. Q2 2001 earnings per share (EPS) were \$.17 on net income of \$51 million compared to Q2 2000 EPS of \$.21 on net income of \$66 million. "In TruGreen, slower growth in the residential lawn care business and unprofitable contracts in the landscaping construction business continue to put pressure on results," said Jon Ward, president and CEO.

Eco Soil to reorganize

SAN DIEGO, CA — Eco Soil Systems Inc. will reorganize its core business, including actively seeking to sell non-core assets in an effort to pay down debt and improve the company's working capital position. The company has also substantially reduced headcount and implemented salary cuts for senior level management, among other efforts to reduce expenses.

Century Rain Aid opens new offices

MADISON HEIGHTS, MI — Century Rain Aid opened five new branch locations: Springdale, AR; Phoenix and Surprise, AZ; Riverhead, NY; and Warrendale, PA.

[CLIPPINGS]

5 ways to use H2B to your advantage

1. Count to 120 backwards. No, it isn't a sobriety test. Count back 120 days from when you want your work permits to begin and be sure your petition is filed on that date to ensure the earliest chance of getting your approval on time. Unfortunately, the law doesn't allow a petitioner to file more than 120 days out regardless of what the various governmental delays may be in processing.

2. Hurry up and slow down. Be prepared for the process to be slow. You may not have approval as early as you would like. Respond quickly to any requests your agent, attorney or, if doing it yourself, governmental agency may have to complete your petition.

3. Proof of existence. Be ready to provide documentation to substantiate your

seasonal need with financials and payroll records. The national office for the U.S. Department of Labor is taking strides to ensure all regional offices are interpreting petitions the same. Be ready to provide substantial documentation to substantiate your seasonality/seasonal need.

4. Next in line please. Screen your recruits carefully for deportation history. Many times you can only go by their word. Have a list of backup recruits in case your first choices do not pan out.

5. Be kind and unwind. Be patient with your agent/attorney processing on your behalf. The program still works, but delays will still occur.

— Terry Foley, Foley Enterprises,
Austin, TX. He can be reached
at 800/623-7285.

Info Center

VIDEOS AND LITERATURE FOR THE GREEN INDUSTRY

Got turf problems?...Then get the new pocket guide, "Turfgrass Problems: Picture Clues and Management Options," from the Natural Resource, Agriculture and Engineering Service (NRAES). The guide is 214 pages and costs \$24.95 plus shipping and handling/sales tax. Order the book from the NRAES, Cooperative Extension, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853-5701.

Spindle assemblies...for walk-behind and riding mowers abound in Stens' new 2001 catalog. The selection includes replacement spindles for AYP,

Murray and others. Stens also carries MTD 6 point star center hole blades. For more information on spindles and other Stens parts call 800/457-7444.

Training tractor loader backhoe operators...is now easy with VISTA Training's complete instructor kit for training tractor loader backhoe operators. The new "tool kit" contains two videos, an easy-to-follow instructor's packet, and a CD-ROM. For more information call 800/942-2886 or visit www.vista-start-smart.com.

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Lock up seed purchases: higher prices on the horizon

BY RON HALL/
SENIOR EDITOR

SALEM, OR—If you're anticipating a lot of seeding work this fall and next season, consider buying your seed soon.

Unfavorable growing conditions in prime turf growing regions of the United States will cause seed prices to rise but there will be enough seed of almost all species and varieties to meet your needs. As of this writing you could still find perennial ryegrass seed at bargain prices due to a large carryover from the previous year's harvest, but that will change.

"We overdid a good thing," says Mike Baker, general manager at Pennington Seeds' Lebanon, OR, facility. "You have a good thing going and it's awfully hard to know when to slow down, but the market tells you — and it did."

"We're looking at a 15% reduction in

yield in perennial ryegrass," adds Don Herb, president and general manager of Ore Gro Seeds, Inc., Shedd, OR. "When we get into May and June of next spring there could be little carryover of any quality seed at all."

Herb says that a combination of a mild, dry winter and several days of 90°-plus weather this past May as grass plants were pollinating caused the short crop in some production fields in the Willamette Valley.

"It certainly seems like a good bit of the carryover is getting used up for early shipment," adds Pennington's Baker.

Prices of Oregon-grown turf-type tall fescue seed will be stable but will rise because of a shortfall in the K-31 tall fescue crop, most of which is grown in Missouri.

Drought affected the dryland production of common Kentucky bluegrass, too. Instead of the anticipated 130 million-lb.

crop, marketers are looking at a yield of about 105 to 110 million lbs. For this reason, prices on these commons, most of which are used in mixtures, will rise.

"But, the proprietary varieties, which are grown on irrigated ground, are in good supply," says Glenn Jacklin, Idaho/Washington Manager Jacklin Golf. "Inventories should be stable and the quality looks very good this year."

"Adequate" is the prediction for most varieties of bermudagrass seed as well, says Pennington Seed's Russ Nicholson.

The take-home message from this year's turf seed harvest is a simple one: "Take care of all of your needs for spring 2002, and get it locked up because we might see some strengthening in price," says Tom Stanley, Southwest Sales Manager, Turf-Seed, Inc., Hubbard, OR.

People & companies

Environmental Industries



Law

named **Richard Sperber** President and Chief Operating Officer. The company also named **John T. Law, Jr., Ph.D.**, Director of Technical Services for the West Coast, and **Andrew J. Mandell** senior vice president and chief financial officer.

Bozzuto Landscaping Co., Greenbelt, MD, promoted

Bruce Leonard to area manager and **Randy Abshier** to vice president. The company also hired **Tom Hopkins** as area manager.

Dow AgroSciences LLC appointed **Martin Posset** turf and ornamental product communications manager, **Beau Miller** turf and ornamental market research manager, **Dan Loughner** field biologist, **Kerry Avirett** Texas sales representative, **John**

Price Ohio sales rep, and **Ray Miller** Florida sales rep.

Aventis Environmental Science's Chipco Professional Products group named **Joseph Grippi** sales representative for western Michigan and northern Indiana and **Scott Parker** sales representative for southern Indiana, northern Kentucky and central Illinois.

Oregro Seeds hired **Hagen Ledebauer** as outside sales representative for the southwest.

The J. R. Simplot Company's Turf & Horticulture group

named **Steve Franzen** western region director of sales for its fertilizer division. **U.S. Lawns** added its 82nd franchise, U.S. Lawns of Simi Valley, CA.

Miramar Wholesale Nurseries



Smagacz

promoted **Kelley Smagacz** to purchasing manager and appointed **Debbie**

Binczewski controller.

Surfin' Turf



Unique items sold here

Searchoutside.com went live in July, joining many other Web sites that make it easier for buyers and sellers in the Green Industry to conduct business. But searchoutside.com is a little different in that it provides a source for unique landscape ornaments and distinctive garden art that may not be catalogued or inventoried elsewhere. Two of the dot-com's founders, Jon Benson and Cliff Bussey, are landscape architects who were used to spending countless hours searching for original, creative and unique items. The third, Marianne Weinberg-Benson, is an artist who previously shared other artists' frustration in trying to effectively market her creative work. The process for buyers works as such: 1) buyer places a

search for unique item, 2) searchoutside.com finds sellers and product options, 3) sellers return product selections, you choose to hold or buy. For sellers: 1) register in your categories with your items, 2) searchoutside.com presents specific buyer requests, 3) you choose to respond or sell.

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BY GEORGE WITTERSCHEIN/
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Turning beer into champagne is the kind of miracle landscape contractors are frequently asked to perform. Many clients have high expectations but limited budgets. How do you cope?

Two experienced contractors who have been successful with this situation agreed to share their experiences and recommendations on making clients happy.

Get close to the customer

David J. Frank is founder and president of David J. Frank Landscape, Germantown, WI, with branches in Madison and the Fox River Valley. The \$15 million, 300-strong company provides landscape architecture, athletic field care, design/build, commercial services, maintenance and irrigation. It also has an interior landscape department and a nursery.

In booming suburban northwestern New Jersey, Miles Kuperus's Farmside Landscape and Design is a \$2 million full-service landscape company with about 20 employees. Services include maintenance, turf care, plant health care and (mostly residential) design/build.

Kuperus's approach is based on a deeply-held personal philosophy of service. "We are Christians," he says, "and treating people with honesty and integrity is founded off our faith." His strong service mentality plays directly into his thoughts

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continued from page 22
on quality landscaped environments.

"We stay very close to the customer right from the beginning," he says. "We get to know what the customer's dream really is, and we incorporate that into a design plan. From there, we phase the project out. We can then achieve the customer's ultimate goal on designs and installs over a number of years, thus making it possible to spread the expense out over time."

The approach has been successful for Kuperus and his customers. "It has allowed us to achieve a good rate-of-return customer for the ongoing projects," he says. "And each step of the way, it's not like a construction project on which you say 'thank you and goodbye' to the customer. Instead, we're



A landscape project will often get to the stage shown here, and a customer will decide it isn't anything like he or she originally wanted. In these cases, the "beer first, champagne later" approach would have been better.

looking to develop and maintain that reoccurring customer."

Staying close to the customer from the beginning means that when it's time to maintain the landscape, Farmside Landscape is in prime position to provide him or her with proper maintenance.

A similar mentality characterizes Dave Frank's approach to "beer and champagne."

It's all about fun

"I've been doing this for 43 years," Frank says, "and about 15 years ago, it stopped being work and started being fun."

One of the principal pleasures he derives from his profession is guiding a project from the beer stage to the champagne stage.

"For one thing, we find that our customers are much more sophisticated about landscape than they were 15 years ago. They are more knowledgeable, and the landscape they want for their dream home is more com-

plex, more beautiful — and more expensive," says Frank.

"The wish list is twice as long as it used to be. We find that people who talk about a terrace are not thinking about a concrete terrace; they want a terrace done in a paving material that complements the residence. It could be brick, natural stone, exposed aggregate or textured concrete — so instead of something based at \$3.50 or \$4 per square foot, we're in the \$20 to \$22 per square foot range or more. That means that if you have 800 feet of terraces and you're multiplying by \$24 per square foot, rather than \$4 per square foot, you now have a big-ticket item.

"At the same time," Frank continues, "the cost of construction has escalated over the last five years at about twice the rate of inflation or more in some places. We have seen instances where lumber has gone up 30% in a 30- or 60-day time frame. While we used to

think that a \$1 million home was a big deal, now the million dollar home out in the suburbs is an everyday thing."

The simultaneous increase in the cost of building that dream home, coupled with the dramatic growth in home construction costs, creates a squeeze for both the customer and the landscape contractor. How does Frank's company deal with that squeeze?

Get involved early

Like Farmside, they get close to the customer at an early stage. "We believe that the earlier we get involved, the better. We try to introduce ourselves early in the design/build process because it really becomes an educational process. There are two things we can do early on for a prospective client:

"At the mortgage negotiations stage, get them to talk to their banker about the value of home landscaping," says Frank. "We supply customers with data from the real estate industry about the value landscaping adds to a home, and we ask

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Farmside Landscape and Design co-owners Miles and Lisa Kuperus:
"We stay very close to the customer right from the beginning."

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Check with your local UHS representative for more details on our complete line of outstanding fertilizer products

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them to sit down with their banker to discuss allowing for landscaping in the mortgage. This is something more and more people are actually doing. There are several advantages to including the landscaping in the mortgage: first, the client gets the money for the landscaping they want, and second, the interest portion is tax-deductible," he continues.

"To avoid mistakes, we pay close attention to the client's desires and wishes. For example, we consider the ultimate design as a way of avoiding duplicated effort during construction.

"Frequently, one of the first things a builder does at a home site is run a construction driveway in. That's kind of silly because the builder takes out that driveway some months later, leaving us to replant the new residential driveway with whatever the builder ripped out. If we knew the location of the proposed residential driveway and how that would interface with the rest of the development, we could do it all at once, saving money. So we try to work early with the client on issues like these and others that can affect the final cost, including elevation."

Also like Kuperus, Frank believes in the value of phasing. "Nearly all of our clients complete their landscapes in phases, which is why a master plan is so important. The cost of a landscape plan is often the

Keep your installation costs down

Besides general business-philosophical approaches to the "champagne landscape on beer budget" dilemma, there are a number of practical things the landscape contractor can do to hold down costs while delivering excellent work. Cheryl Cone, vice president of sales and marketing at Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping (a 44-year-old, 200-person, \$12-million design/build, maintenance and installation company in Portland, OR), culled the following list of "work smarter" items after meeting with her management staff:

- Design plantings out of inventory or local growers' overstock. You can stretch a budget and get instant bang for the buck because you can often purchase larger plants for the same dollar.
- Plant in the bare root season. You can save the cost of B & B, which can be up to a 20% savings.
- Use larger plants and space them out to avoid overcrowding and attain an immediate effect.
- Focus on creating a few unique features.
- Reduce lawn areas to minimize maintenance costs.
- When applicable, use native plants that have ornamental qualities, i.e. drought tolerance, slow growth.
- Use ground-branching conifers to reduce bed areas. Use less expensive, locally grown plants when selecting conifers.
- Focus developed landscape improvements to most important areas.
- Make focal point planting areas outstanding. Even though the rest of the landscaping can be bland, this focal point gives the client's entire landscape pizzazz and sets the tone.
- Grade to create slopes and reduce the need for walls.
- Do early site planning for residences to save dollars in the end.
- Use drainage swales instead of piping for drainage.
- On larger projects, consider creating master plans and phasing projects. Create a "critical path" for the client that provides a logical order to installation and eliminates the need to redo work.
- Provide client with irrigation, lawn, site preparation and major trees or plant groups. Provide a plan so they can install smaller plants as budget and time allows.
- Use different materials to create interest and texture, i.e. boulders and river rock mulches.

smartest money the client spends as part of the home building project, but for some customers money or budget is nonetheless an issue. Gardening is America's number one hobby, and I don't get my feathers ruffled when someone says, 'Couldn't we do some of

the planting to save money on that?' They might plant the ground covers and perennials." The company's approach has worked for Frank, bringing in such benefits as long-term business relationships. "We've been successful this way. If I do a good job for the client this

year, I will be working with that client next year."

Beer first, champagne later

Frank finds that sometimes it's a good thing to slow the client down and get him or her to adopt a "beer first, champagne later" approach. "For example,

sometimes we see the client who suddenly has a pile of money, and their first impulse is

to build their dream house in one fell swoop from start to finish. While the sophistication

level is high regarding the landscaping features people want for their homes, few people can read blueprints well. So, at the beginning of the project, they cannot clearly picture how the landscape will look after everything is built. After doing hundreds of thousands of dollars of work on a project, we don't want a client to say, 'I had no idea it was going to look like this. It turns out that we wanted something else after all.'

"By adopting a phased, 'let's start with the beer and get to the champagne a few years later' approach, we gradually educate the client and start building the expensive stuff when the client is more sure of what

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"We ask our customers to discuss allowing for landscaping in the mortgage with their banker," says David Frank, owner, David J. Frank Landscape.

they want," Frank says.

"Over time, people frequently decide they don't want high maintenance items like water features, for example," he adds. "We put a lot of those in, and unfortunately we take a lot of them out. Both the company and the client are better off if we avoid that scenario." **LMI**

Think Fast.

A man in a white shirt and dark vest is operating a red Ferris vacuum mower. The mower has a large, flexible orange discharge chute that is curved upwards and to the left. The background is dark, making the machine and the operator stand out.

John Orth
Plant Supervisor
Ferris Industries

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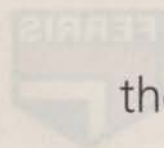
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OPENING THE BOOKS

This landscaping company found that sharing everything with employees was the key to greater success and motivation

BY DON DALE

Since starting their dad-and-sons landscape installation business in 1976, the Bratt family has become a diverse business with its fingers in a lot of landscape-related pies.

But the thing that turned Bratt, Inc., Pleasant Grove, UT, into one of the most dynamic landscape companies in the West was the discovery of a business philosophy and management program that led to employee profit participation, effective in-house communication, incisive company organization and enviable morale.

Show 'em everything

"The divisions all run off this program we incorporated last November," says General Manager Jon Bratt (pronounced Brott). The program is about having an "open book policy" that brings employees into the decision-making process at all levels.

"A team can't know if it's winning or losing unless it can look at the scoreboard," says Perry Bratt, company president and specialist in business development and estimating. Perry and Jon run the company with their father, Ross, the founder and vice president in charge of quality control. The Bratts are equal partners, however, and titles are simply for job clarity and divi-



Ross Bratt, center, and sons Perry, left, and Jon, right, expect their company, Bratt, Inc., Pleasant Grove, UT, to gross over \$13 million in 2001.

sion of responsibilities.

The Bratts derived their philosophy from two of their favorite books, "The Great Game of Business" by Jack Stack, which gave them a model for their business plan, and "First Things First" by popular family advisor and motivator Stephen R. Covey. The system they created involves employees in decision-making and rewards them with a share of the resulting profits. Managers of the company's four divisions are empowered to run those divisions as if each was the owner of his own company, and all employees are shown every detail of the company's operations.

This makes employees feel like partners in the team, and they eagerly take on this new knowledge because they know they can take home a piece of the pie in the company's profit-sharing scheme.

"If we make a 10% profit or more in any given quarter we share 20% of the net profit on a quarterly basis," Jon says. The reward is split up on a sliding scale based on how long an employee has been with the company and how high he has risen in responsibility. Up to six points can be earned for years served, and there are six levels of employment. For example, a division manager with six or more years em-

Ross Bratt started the company 25 years ago as a part-time adjunct to his teaching job. It's now doing \$2.5-million projects.

ployment would earn 12 points on the system, while a new employee would earn two points after one year of service.

Incentives work

The Bratts say the profit-sharing part of the system has resulted in increased productivity and profits because employees recognize that every decision they make, every job they perform, affects the bottom line — and their bonus.

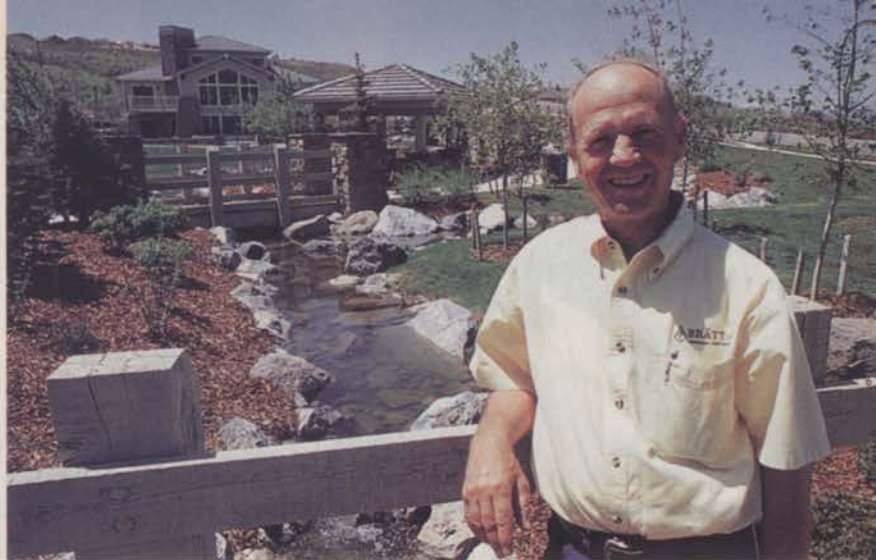
A crew that cuts work time on a job is often treated to pizza delivered to the job site the next day, or free movie tickets or restaurant coupons. Perry gave an example of how this can have a positive effect on a job, and the company's bottom line. One division was erecting a 42,000-sq. ft. rock wall on a large landscaping job last winter. "At first they were putting in 150 square feet a day," Perry says, "but when the division manager pointed out how that wasn't going to make a profit, and offered extra incentives, the pace increased until the wall was going up at 420 feet per day."

"The crew actually came to us," Jon says. "They were challenging the bosses, asking for incentives in return for productivity increases." The end result was not only a solid profit on a \$610,000 job but the ability and confidence to bid those kinds of jobs lower in the future.

Workers know the score

The Bratts say that a laborer who once would have watched a tractor run over a shovel now rushes to save that shovel because his bonus will decrease if the company has to buy a new one. Now nobody in the company wants to re-do a job, because that is a huge drain on profits.

Awareness of incentives has become so acute that an employee who lags behind becomes a pariah on the job to conscientious workmates. "They'll go to the supervisor and say he's not doing his job," Jon says. Also, since employees share in extra profits from all divisions, they'll keep a close eye on other divisions to make sure nobody is dragging down their bonuses.



Intra-company communication is essential for this type of operation, and the Bratts have set up an efficient framework by writing manuals and procedures and holding weekly meetings with employees.

Every week, each division holds a "huddle" of about 20 minutes to hand out financial reports, cover training and safety issues and reinforce the company philosophy. Owners and business managers also hold a weekly meeting over lunch, going over a printed agenda in order to examine current issues and circumvent problems.

Growth in division

Ross Bratt started the company 25 years ago as a part-time adjunct to his teaching job. He brought Jon and Perry in to help, and after they graduated from college, they stayed with the business. The first job they completed earned them about 50 cents per hour. Today, the company grosses about \$9 million and has a 7,000-sq. ft. office.

That kind of growth has happened because of the way the Bratts organized the company. Separating it into four divisions — installation, maintenance, water features and excavation — fit their plan to increase diversity. The Bratts remember, however, the backbone of their business.

"We do a lot of design and build," Perry says, and the architects, softscapers and construction workers in the installation division still do the majority of the company's business. Lately, jobs have been in the \$1.5 million range, with

COMPANY PROFILE

Name: Bratt, Inc.

Owners: Ross, Jon and Perry Bratt

2000 gross revenue: \$9.3 million

Expected 2001 gross revenue: \$13.3 to 14.3 million

Employees: 60 full-time, 125 part-time

Services: Design/build, snow removal, landscape maintenance, water features, landscape installation



Jon Bratt and his team keep taking on bigger and bigger projects.

one being around \$2.6 million.

Bratt, Inc. wants to do as many aspects of a job as possible, and then pick up the maintenance contract. They are now starting a concrete division. "We have a general contractor's license and an engineering license, so we can do nearly everything we want

in the state of Utah," Perry says.

Water features have become a company trademark. The Bratts started installing them 15 years ago, but admit they struggled with them until their knowledge and company size increased.

"We also decided to get some employees who knew

what they were doing," says Perry, who believes water features are a future trend in commercial and residential construction. Half of their water projects are backyard fountain or waterfalls, as well as "theming" with artificial rocks and other manufactured items.

The excavation division grew out of a desire to maintain control of a job right from the beginning, and salvage topsoil and rocks from jobs and use them on other

sites. Topsoil has become a high-cost commodity in the area, and a truckload of large rocks removed from one job can bring in \$600 from a homeowner.

Recruit the best

Bratt, Inc. has gone to great lengths to recruit employees who are good at what they do. Dudley Cronin, head of its excavation unit, was recruited from the southeast because of his reputation. Also, Bratt, Inc. merged with two local land-

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Resurrection

scape maintenance companies recently in an effort to gain more experienced employees, as well as equipment and existing contracts.

happy company. **LM**

— The author is a frequent contributor to

Landscape Management based in Hollywood, CA.

Be curious

One aspect of the Bratts' success is their curiosity about other companies' successes and the ability to learn from them. Three years ago, in an effort to upgrade their company, they began calling and visiting other landscapers with good reputations in other parts of the country.

"We were very frustrated that, year-in and year-out, we were only making 3% to 6% net profit," Jon says. So they began talking to vendors, asking which companies were excelling in various aspects of landscaping.

Since then, they have visited companies from California to Maryland, from Oregon to Arizona, shadowing them and inquiring about their inner workings. Those companies were happy to give advice, since the Bratts were outside their markets, and allowed them access to everything from bidding to equipment shops.

"It was a real eye-opener," Ross says, noting that they have implemented many of the ideas they found and still call these companies occasionally to ask for advice. He believes there is no recipe like success, and the company is returning the favor in Utah. Three years ago, it sponsored a seminar, and 42 companies attended talks on estimating and related topics.

"It's very difficult to compete if you don't change," he notes.

But the family still believes that having a core philosophy, one that is compassionate and motivational toward employees, will be what takes them to the next level. And there's nothing like working in a

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.



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Circle 120

Property at a glance

Location: Chicago, IL**Staff:** Resurrection Medical Center
Grounds Department**Category:** Hospital or institution**Total budget:** \$295,500**Year site built:** 1953**Acres of turf:** 9.7**Acres of woody ornamentals:** .63**Acres of display beds:** .52**Total paved area:** 19.5 acres**Total man-hours/week:** 240

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Working with ongoing construction
- ▶ Yearly salt damage
- ▶ Safety of public on grounds

Project checklist

(Completed in last two years):

- ▶ Installation of ornamental bed – front entrance
- ▶ Conversion of ground cover islands to stone
- ▶ Implementation of formal snow removal plan

On the job

- ▶ 6 full-time staff, 0 seasonal employees, 1 licensed pesticide applicator

Resurrection Medical Center

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

Being a hospital, there's no doubt Resurrection Medical Center is one busy place. But its six-person in-house grounds crew is just as busy, maintaining all building entry areas, disposing of refuse, cleaning paved surfaces and even replacing light bulbs in outdoor fixtures.

It's a good thing, then, that care of the Medical Center's 600-plus trees is contracted to an outside company. Landscape maintenance, including fertilization of lawns and beds, spring installation of over 12,000 annuals, and snow removal is all handled by the in-house crew. Hand weeding is necessary because weed spraying is next to impossible around the many ornamental plants.

Special attention is given to the hospital's two large interior courtyards because they're both highly visible. St. Joseph Courtyard is surrounded by the main hospital building and can be viewed from all interior windows, while the Professional Building Courtyard can

be viewed by patients waiting for their doctors. Planter pots filled with bonica roses and ageratum hide inground electrical boxes.

The grounds crew makes sure to meticulously mow the main courtyard because of all the people that visit it.



PGMS
Landscape
MANAGEMENT

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

Patients can view the beautiful landscaping of the courtyard from the office windows in the Professional Building. (Inset) Those participating in monthly barbecues on the cafe patio can also enjoy the sights.



Bring profits in from the cold



BY VICKY POULSEN

▲ PHOTO COURTESY: WALKER MANUFACTURING, INC.

BY VICKY POULSEN / CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**These companies
have learned how
to plan and stay
productive all year
long**

Successful snow and ice operations don't just happen. It takes a tremendous amount of planning, marketing and the right equipment and supplies. If done correctly, snow and ice removal can outdo your other profit centers in gross revenue.

In fact, for operations like the Allin Companies in Erie, PA, gross profits in 2001 are expected to double thanks to increased growth in snow revenues. We asked company president John Allin how his company does it, and here is what he and two other contractors had to say about running a successful snow and ice removal operation:

LARGE CONTRACTOR

Name: Christopher M. Aldarelli

Title: President

Company: Aldo 1 Landscaping & Lawn Service, Inc.

Location: Ocean, NJ

2000 revenue: \$12.1 million

Business mix: 20% lawn maintenance; 20% landscaping, irrigation and paver work; 52% complete site development; 8% snow removal. Provides full services for both residential and commercial clients. Around 80% of snow removal accounts are commercial, with 20% residential.

Employees: 150 (including three full-time mechanics on site)

Company profile: "I began my business in 1988 doing lawn maintenance and landscaping work. Over the years, I expanded

to provide trimming of shrubbery, concrete work, pavers, irrigation, machinery work, complete site development, snow removal as well as continued maintenance and landscaping."

Equipment arsenal: "The machinery and equipment we use for snow removal ranges from snow shovels to backhoes and front-end loaders. We use our pick-up trucks as well as our Tandem trucks."

Purchasing decisions: "We own all our equipment and don't need to rent for snow services. We don't subcontract any of this work because we have all the equipment and labor needed."

Planning/pricing: "We usually begin planning at the beginning of September. We price this service at a per-storm charge. A good storm accumulates at least four inches of snowfall. Any percentage over, we charge them more due to the wear and tear of the equipment and length of time it takes to remove the snow."

Get it in writing: "We provide all our commercial properties with current contracts for the season. Customers also contact our office around this time if they are pricing contractors. A well-written contract is important, especially with snow removal services."

Ice control: "The only product we purchase is the ice melter and/or salt (potassium chloride)."

MEDIUM CONTRACTOR

Name: John Allin

Title: President

Company: Allin Companies

Location: Erie, PA

2000 revenue: \$6.55 million

Business mix: Installation landscape contracts are 70% commercial, 30% residential. Landscape maintenance is 95% commercial. Snow management services are 98% commercial.

Employees: 70-plus people at peak

Company profile: Founded in 1978 as a snow removal business and beginning landscape work in 1982, Allin Companies has grown into a full-service landscape contracting and snow management business. Of its \$6.55 million revenue in 2000, \$4.73 million came from snow/ice management and snow removal services. Allin Companies does residential design/build, general construction (prevailing rate), maintenance and snow removal. The company's revenue is expected to reach \$12.5

million in 2001 due to an increased growth in snow revenues. Usually run two- or three-man crews.

Equipment arsenal: "We actually only own seven plow trucks, two loaders, 100 snow pushers, five salt trucks and six skid steers. We have five sidewalk crews in winter; the rest are subcontractors. This past winter we utilized 4,300 'units' (any equipment used in snow removal) and had over 2,000 sites in 12 states. This season we will run 5,500-plus units on 3,000 sites in 17 states. We have two full-time mechanics in our Erie operation."

Purchasing decisions: "We look for dealer support and backup as well as backup from the manufacturer. With our size, we have relationships with manufacturer and rely on their dealer network to assist our subcontractors in keeping them operable."

Planning/pricing: "We currently have six individuals working 'snow' year round."



We never stop planning. Selling and signing up new business takes place from January to December. Our work is priced 'per push' or 'per season' for the most part. We have only a few customers who demand hourly rate pricing. They are usually "national" accounts with large sites. We shy away from hourly rate structures because they normally generate the lowest margins."

Get it in writing: "The difference between a well-written and structured contract and a poor one can mean the difference between going broke or making a profit. Liability exposure needs to be dealt with closely so that all parties share in the exposure, or so that the contractor is assuming liability exposure for only what they are responsible for maintaining. Some exposure is inevitable. Even with a poor contract, proper record keeping can be key to success. Even with a well structured contract, poor recordkeeping will destroy any good contract document's language."

Ice control: "All ice control products work. However, they must be used as they are designed. Most are used improperly due to ignorance on the contractor's part, and even on the supplier's part at times. Rock salt works everywhere, but only under the right conditions. The alternative deicing products also work everywhere, but also only under the right conditions."

SMALL CONTRACTOR

Name(s): John Wernis & Sam LaGrasso

Title: Owners

Company: United Lawnscape, Inc.

Location: Shelby Twp., MI

2000 revenue: \$4 million

Business mix: 35 percent residential/65 percent commercial in the lawn division/100 percent commercial in snow division

Employees: 95 people

Company profile: "United Lawncare came into existence in November 1977 when two companies, Excel Lawn and Sam's Lawn Care merged. Currently, the company offers numerous services in landscaping, lawn maintenance and snow removal. Each division is an integral part of the success of our company. Landscaping and lawn maintenance each produce 40% of our revenues, while snow removal accounts for 20%."

Equipment arsenal: They have 31 snow plows in various makes and models, snow throwers, dump truck tailgate salt spreaders and CaC12 spreaders.

Purchasing decisions: "Whether it be plows, trucks or snow blowers, we look for a proven track record — positive performance in the field, durability, versatility, maintenance requirements and specifically with plows, the ease of removal and mounting. When purchasing products, specifically ice melter, we take into consideration contents (percentage breakdown), safeness for vegetation and concrete, effectiveness, price and packaging."

Planning/pricing: "We begin preparing for the snow season around July 4th each year

by submitting bids. In October and November, we evaluate our systems from the previous year, make improvements, develop zones, assign zone managers and start forming crews. Of the services we offer, the only part we subcontract is plowing. We have 30 of our own trucks on the road and about 20 subcontractors with their own trucks and plows. When pricing



John Wernis (left) and Sam LaGrasso, owners of United Lawnscape Inc.

our services, we take into account our operating costs per man hour. We prepare our contracts including a set number of labor hours per season. Any additional services required are billed accordingly as they occur."

Get it in writing: "A well-written contract protects you against unnecessary legal suits, misinterpretations of services to be rendered and costs per service. Also, our contracts, having equal monthly installment payments, provide us with consistent income to cover our overhead expenses during the winter months."

Ice control: "We've had the best results with Professional Ice Melter in our area. It performs well in our climate and is priced affordably."



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What if ... The quality of your work drew the attention of prospective customers? Many commercial operations are built on this kind of success.

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What's 'hot' in snow and ice

Manufacturers want to keep you warm, dry and happy

BY VICKY POULSEN

Manufacturers in the snow and ice arena are pretty resourceful when it comes to designing and developing products that are multi-task oriented, less-fatiguing and can save the contractor time and money in the long run.

They also know that contractors want equipment that is accessory-friendly, so they can switch blades and other attachments in no time at all.

Fortunately for today's contractor, there is a huge array of equipment, attachments and products to choose from.

America West Environmental Supply, Inc.

Jason R. Mallon, Marketing Director
Product: Liquid de-icers

Key points: "ALL CLEAR is a clear liquid made from all natural sources that are non-hazardous that has no odor and indefinite shelf life.

On the horizon: "I believe you will see other points in the non-traditional liquid deicers but also upgrades of the standard material to reach to higher levels of performance."

Ariens Company

Carol Dilger, Corporate Marketing Services Manager
Product: Sno-Thros

Key points: "Cast iron gear case which prolongs the life of the machine, differential lock-out that locks both wheels for traction and dual handle interlocks for hands-free turning."

Hot picks: "The Ariens 1332 and 1336 professional model Sno-Thros are the most popular with landscapers. The 1332 clears paths 32" wide and the 1336 clears 36" wide walkways. The quick-turn chute rotation helps direct blown snow up to 45' away.

Ariens Sno-Thro ►

ASV Inc.

Brad Lemke, Director of New Product Development
Product: RC•30 All Surface Loader

Key points: "We heard more and more people talk about smaller machines that could fit into smaller, urban areas but still had an enormous amount of work potential—all at cost they could afford. Also, the smaller you can get, in terms of machinery, the easier it is to supplement hand labor."

Hot picks: "Our RC•30 is a powerful workhorse that is small enough to get into tight areas and won't damage any turf."

continued on page 44



BY THE STAFF OF

Landscape
MANAGEMENT



State of
the Industry
2001

**BASF
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Embrace the Challenge



Bill Baxter, Business Manager,
Turf, Ornamental & Pest Control
BASF Corporation, Specialty Products Department

Recently there's been much discussion of the challenges facing the professional landscape and lawn care industry. It's true that these hurdles, whether they are competitive, economic or regulatory in nature, can interfere with our best-laid plans. But they can also serve to inspire us all and instigate changes that will greatly benefit the industry in the long run.

The core values that serve as our foundation at BASF lead us to embrace these challenges. We are governed by the philosophy that the world both demands and rewards continuous improvement in the quality of life. The search for new ways to overcome obstacles drives us to develop new solutions that better meet the needs of you, our customers. Those same solutions help you improve the lives of your customers.

With that in mind, I'd like to share with you some of the strategies that the Professional Turf Team is employing to meet the challenges of today and help build a dynamic and profitable future for the turf industry.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT — It's been roughly one year since BASF entered the turf marketplace. But, while our tenure has been relatively short, our commitment to the industry couldn't be stronger. At the same time other companies have been divesting their agricultural portfolios and investing in the development of pharmaceuticals, BASF has divested pharmaceutical holdings to free up capital and re-

sources to commit to the specialty agricultural markets. What does that mean to you? It means BASF is a partner you can depend upon for a long-term, ongoing contribution to the improvement of your industry. We realize that our growth is tied to yours, and we will do everything in our power to ensure our mutual success.

INNOVATION — Innovation is at the heart of everything BASF does. BASF currently holds over 100,000 active patents, and we currently have five new compounds due to hit the specialty markets in the next five years. We're particularly excited that BASF, the global leader in fungicide technology, is set to launch its first fungicide specifically for turf early next year, with two more new fungicides to follow shortly. And that's only the beginning. BASF has spent billions of dollars on research and development over the past few years, including \$1.5 billion in 2000 alone. That's a sizable investment in your future as well as our own.

PEOPLE POWER — The challenge of finding and retaining the very best people is universal. At BASF, we've built a creative and innovative work environment where all 100,000 employees are "key employees." From the researchers developing new compounds to the sales representatives in the field, everyone is part of the team responsible for providing you with the tools you need to grow your business.

ADDING VALUE THROUGH CUSTOMER FOCUS

— The companies that thrive in challenging times all share the ability to truly understand what individual customers need and to provide them with customer-specific solutions. Leadership organizations are both able and willing to change to meet customer needs. So tell us what you need. Then tell us what you want. With BASF you can be sure we'll not only listen when you talk, but we'll respond with the best available solution. Because, to paraphrase our corporate slogan, at BASF we don't make the turf, we make it better.

EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE

— I've talked a lot about challenges and now I'd like to issue one. I'd like to challenge you to join us at BASF in our commitment to the growth — not merely the maintenance — of the landscape and lawn care industry. Take a leadership role in identifying customer needs and then aggressively treat those needs as opportunities to serve your customers. I promise you that is how we at BASF will treat you as customers. If you'll join us in making that commitment, this industry is certain to thrive.

ON THE COVER:

PARK / PHILLIPS PLACE CHARLOTTE, NC.
PHOTO © 1998 STEVE HINDS

Landscape MANAGEMENT

Welcome to the 2001
Landscape Management annual
State of the Industry report

A Year of Competitive Challenges

Landscape Management's State of the Industry survey shows that business is more challenging for all aspects of the professional landscape and lawn care industry. Whether you're an entry-level firm, mid-level operator or large, established company, you've undoubtedly run into tougher competition, higher costs and other challenges making profitability more elusive.

What's ahead for the rest of 2001? Here are some key trends to watch as the economy develops into 2002:

- It's getting harder to compete. New cost pressures are affecting even growing markets, forcing companies to be more competitive. Any slowing market will cause price pressures to develop. Niche strategies, cost management and special customer programs can overcome low-ball tactics.
- Supply chains continue to change. Chemical and equipment manufacturers continue to merge and change, which causes the supply chain to realign often. Your best bet is to find a strong commercial/professional products dealer or supplier for your favorite products and materials.
- Financing and cash flow are 'difficult.' Uncertain times lead customers to watch their spending more carefully and so should you. Manage your costs and receivables wisely to keep your cash flow smooth and financing opportunities open.
- Labor recruiting and retention still rule. Some layoffs in other industries help the industry's labor picture brighten but workers are looking for good organizations, career opportunities, fair wages and other changes for recognition. Does your organization provide enough of these?
- Customers continue to be demanding. Even customers who appreciate your service may want more for less, face time, value-adds or other special treatment. It's part of the times and a wise competitor gives customers what they want (and finds a way to make that profitable too). **LM**

Our report begins on the next page ►

PHOTO COURTESY WAYSIDE LANDSCAPING

Still going

PART ONE:

What a difference a year makes!

BY LANDSCAPE
MANAGEMENT'S STAFF

Last summer, the Federal Reserve Board hoped its six interest rate hikes would cool a too-hot economy. It worked. We've had a dramatic reversal in the economy, and now the Fed keeps dropping rates to spur it along. The good news is that the landscape industry keeps going strong.

What do we know for sure about the economy? Thousands of businesses took a financial beating in the market (many Internet start-ups vanishing forever), and millions of investors saw their portfolios shrink almost overnight. The fallout continues to affect the economy in several ways:

- Rate of the economic growth immediately fell from over 5% in 2000 to a sickly .7% this spring — the weakest growth in eight years.
- Large corporations lost much of their

strong

value in the market's tumble, and immediately made layoffs, trimmed inventories and postponed major investments (including construction). Construction's outlook is questionable.

■ The Federal Reserve's rate cuts spur mortgage business. Many investors exit the market and invest in real estate.

■ Although 2001 is the first year since 1945 that Americans' net worth drops, consumer spending continues strong, consumer confidence swings up and down, home sales and prices escalate through the summer.

■ Service industries, previously the "golden child" of the U.S. economy, show a slight weakening for the first time since World War II. Service business owners (including Green Industry players) discover labor costs a little more, fuel and energy prices

Landscape services grew at a healthy pace in our survey, ranging from 18% growth for irrigation services to a 47% increase in chemical service growth.

bite into profits and problems with payables begin to surface.

■ It's still pretty easy being green, say many landscape professionals. While economists describe the economic outlook as "cloudy" and "sluggish," the same cannot be said for our industry. In fact, the opposite is true:

■ Growth of customers, revenues and profits expanded strongly.

■ Most landscape maintenance and chemical lawn care services continue to look strong and profitable.

■ Landscape services grew at a healthy pace in our survey, rang-

ing from 18% growth for irrigation services to a 47% increase in chemical service growth.

■ Landscape installation and other services tied to residential or commercial construction are more "iffy," depending on the market, but still strong, with an average 23% growth in that segment.

■ Layoffs have improved the recruiting picture in many markets, but labor is still a challenge.

■ Economic weakness seems to have settled in some markets, and not at all in others. **LM**

PART TWO:

Challenge: Handling Growth

It's been a banner year for professional landscape management. We interviewed hundreds of landscape managers to see how their year has progressed and how they view next year's business (see note below). Here's what they said:

■ Business was up for 76.6% and 72.4% said they expected revenues to increase, an average rise of 18%.

■ Prices, too, will go up an average of 8% for 66.3% of respondents.

■ At least 64.4% of respondents reported they have more backlog or customers this year than in 2000.

■ Chemical services grew 47%, maintenance business grew 30%, tree care services grew 28%, design/installation and specialty services grew 23% and irrigation services grew 18%.

■ While landscape design/installation grew fastest last year, only 33%

Continued next page ▶

Note: The statistics in this report were derived from a proprietary Landscape Management mail and telephone reader survey, as well as other industry data reported by associations and organizations. This survey was mailed to a random sample of readers in June and also given by telephone to a random selection of readers and industry firms in July. Both surveys, which generated a 29.5% response rate, was tabulated according to standard statistical analysis by Penn and Associates, an independent market research firm in Cleveland, OH.

The survey represented 72% landscape contractors (providing landscape design/build and/or maintenance), 27% lawn care service companies, 9% grounds care, 5% custom chemical applicators and 5% irrigation contractors (some contractors perform more than one service). They represent a sampling from many markets across the country.

*The makeup of this year's study may be somewhat different from last year's group, reflected in slightly adjusted results.

This group represents a wide range of revenues:

Annual revenue	% of respondents
Entry-level < \$250,000	30.1%
Mid-level \$250,000 - \$1M	36.7%
Established \$1 M or more	33.1%

Current customer mix of this group is 57% residential, 38% commercial, 4% government and 1% other. These organizations have existed for an average of 18 years.

reported it grew fastest this year; 45% said their maintenance services grew faster.

■ Respondents (64%) said it was harder to recruit employees this year than in 2000, despite pockets of layoffs.

■ Fuel and energy price spikes have hurt. Fuel costs took a hefty 9% chunk of our respondents' typical annual operating budget, compared a fraction of the 4.2% "other" costs last year.

These are not the statistics of an industry anywhere near a recession. But, the stats also tell us that some indicators may foretell upcoming changes:

■ A full 62.5% said it was harder to compete this year than in 2000, and 64.8% agreed it was harder to be profitable in 2001.



Randy Newhard

■ Profit margins for some services have slipped. Scarcity and cost of plants,

higher labor and fuel costs and competition may have helped to squeeze margins.

■ Financing and cash flow are worse in 2001 for 58.6% of respondents.

■ Another 59.4% reported their customers are getting more picky.

■ Top challenges continue to focus on five issues: labor availability (60%), managing growth (48.4%), developing supervisors and foremen (47.7%), low-ball competition (45.8%) and financing or cash flow (45.2%).

Handling the demand

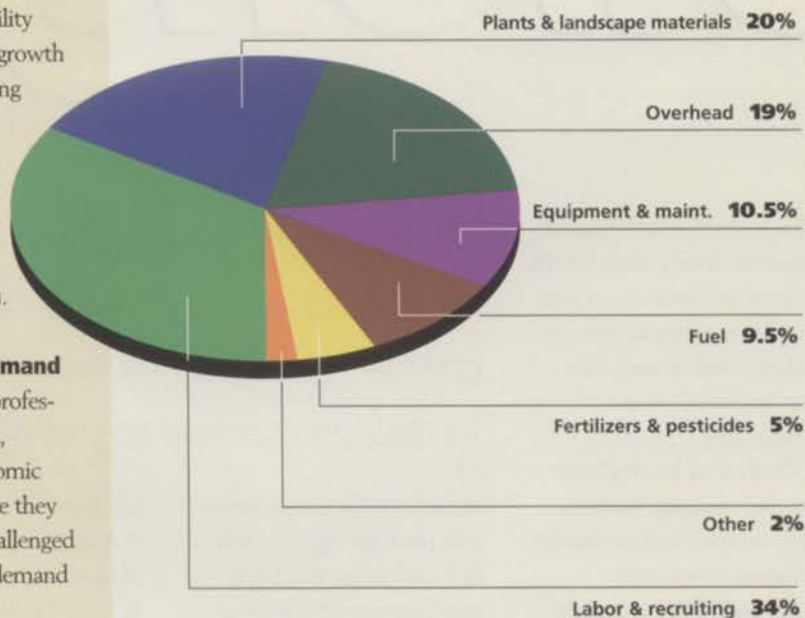
Many landscape professionals have asked, "What's the economic problem?" because they continue to be challenged with very strong demand for their services.

J. Landon Reeve, president of Chapel Valley Landscape, MD, sums it up: "This year will be good for our landscape business and our commercial market is strong. We are getting a positive amount of business now."

"The newspapers make it seem like a severe depression, but in Arizona, the market is clicking along," notes Richard Underwood, vice president/gen-

Operation Budget (as a percent of expenses)

Industry average as derived from typical 2001 operating budget



eral manager of AAA Landscape, Tucson, AZ.

"Design/build and maintenance are both great and interest rates are low, so people are doing projects," he adds. "They are also using the money they would have invested in the stock market and putting it into real estate instead."

Data from the National Association of Realtors show that home prices are not only climbing during a "sluggish" economy, but actually accelerating. The median price of existing homes rose 6.4% last spring. Clearly, many Americans prefer to reinvest in real estate, which implies

more investment in landscape.

Even in smaller markets, most landscape professionals report a banner year. "Demand is higher, (employee) retention is normal, new sales are up and there's some consolidation," notes Jack Robertson, president of Robertson Lawn Care, Springfield, IL.

"High end and specialty work continues in high demand," reports Larry Iorri, president of Down to Earth Inc., Wilmington, DE

"Our industry is doing well here," says Randy Newhard, owner and president of New Way Landscape & Tree Services,

Average hourly rates

See total breakdown at www.landscapigroup.net:

Installation / Build **\$ 39.52**

Mowing **\$ 36.96**



Regulation to watch: Ozone alert, ergonomics breather

San Diego. "There's a lot of housing being built, plus new commercial and industrial buildings. California, especially San Diego, is the last one into a recession and the last one out."

Servicing the demand remains a challenge. "Our top challenge is managing growth," comments David Brown, general manager of LAND Expressions, Mead, WA. "We've opened up in markets outside our local area and have been asked to do more and more work in those locations. We're thinking of opening a satellite office."

"This has been a good year for me," says Neil Fievet, president of Nitro-Green, Hayden, AL. "I anticipate ending the year with around a 30% increase in overall sales. Business (old and new) has been so good that I had to stop all my marketing efforts."

Pockets of trouble

Despite strong demand, some markets are showing weakness, especially those with high-tech or manufacturing firms laying off people, or ones with slowing construction. National data show consumer spending remains strong, construction and housing are holding their own and layoffs are only affecting a portion of the population. There are signs, however, of changes.

John Georgio, president of Gothic Landscaping, Valencia, CA, notes, "We are concerned about the slowdown but still

Time moves quickly and that's why 2005 isn't that far away for landscape professionals in the Houston-Galveston area of Texas. The year 2005 is when a ban on gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment use from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m. will take effect unless alternative ozone-reducing measures are created.

The Texas Nursery & Landscape Association (TNLA), plus other businesses in the area, are working together to find solutions such as mandating the use of spill-proof gasoline cans. Eddy Edmondson, president/CEO of TNLA, isn't wasting any time addressing the matter. "We have until 2002 to come up with a plan, but in our mind we start working on it now," he says.

A spreading concern?

Other areas are seeing smog reduction plans in the near future. Phoenix, AZ is studying options for prohibiting the use of gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment.

In Boulder, CO, an environmental advisory board recently asked the city's environmental affairs staff to stop city crews and subcontractors from using leaf blowers.

And Vancouver city council recently decided to ban gas-powered leaf blowers in the city by 2004.

have a high backlog of business."

According to Paul Mondri, general manager of Mariani Landscape, Lake Bluff, IL, "We are a little concerned and there has been a downturn in our slower months, but he haven't felt any negatives yet this spring. We still have a backlog of work."

A slowdown of residential and commercial construction may not yet be problematic, but some contractors see potential

problems. "With a construction slowdown throughout the country, there is pricing pressure caused by the increase in competition," explains Al Honigblum, president, Grounds Control, San Antonio, TX. "But we are going to continue to make acquisitions and expect 10% growth in maintenance work."

"The construction market will find its bottom this year," forecasts Scott McGilvray, presi-

"The bottom line is that this was an issue many thought would go away or wouldn't percolate anymore," says Robin Pendergrast. "In Vancouver, an ordinance got pulled out so fast that it's happening in other cities all over the U.S. When somebody as big as Vancouver jumps on the bandwagon, it's bad."

Ergonomics break

The Green Industry breathed a sigh of relief when the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) proposed ergonomic standard was defeated last March.

But the Department of Labor (DOL) will soon announce its plan for introducing a new ergonomics rule. Three ergonomic hearings were held around the country in July and August to provide the DOL with additional input on what constitutes an ergonomic injury, and what type of standard might be pursued. The American Nursery and Landscape Association fought vigorously against the previously proposed ergonomic standard because members argued that it would have unfairly forced Green Industry business owners into implementing thousands of dollars of workstation improvements.

— Jason Stahl / Managing Editor

dent of Jensen Landscape, Cupertino, CA.

"I think the industry will remain healthy but right now, there is definitely a bump in the road," says Rick Randall, president of Randall & Blake Inc., Littleton, CO. "In our area, there are several contractors who have gone bankrupt. We think commercial building is maxed out but will be back up eventually. Residential building

has peaked too but will be leveling off—that will put more pressure on us.”

Wayne Richards, president of Cagwin & Dorward, Novato, CA, explains, “The slowdown is affecting some sectors. We’re seeing some downsizing in Sili-

con Valley. We’re concerned about it and not seeing huge growth. It’s kind of flat, with the exception of new businesses we’ve started.”

‘A little bit less’

Areas of slower sales, intense

price competition and surprising labor and fuel costs are starting to make profitability a harder to maintain.

“We see negative conditions, with housing starts slowing,” reports Alan King, chief estimator of Park Landscape, Santa Ana,

CA. “They are down in our Las Vegas office but up in our Sacramento office.”

Underwood sees a similar pattern: “At the Arizona home builder show, they said custom residential is softening, but not

continued on page 10

TABLE 1. — DIVERSE INDUSTRY, GREAT GROWTH

Industry averages are good but a closer look at small, medium and large operations gives a better picture of this year's growth and challenges.

	Industry Average	Entry-level (<\$250,000)	Mid-level (\$250,000 - \$1 M)	Established (>\$1 M)
Average years in business	18	12.5	18	24
Revenues rising	72.4%	62.0%	72.6%	84.6%
Revenues holding	21.0%	25.8%	23.2%	10.7%
Average % of revenue rise	18%	24%	14.5%	18%
Prices rising	66.3 %	62.0%	73.2%	71.6%
Prices holding	31.7%	36.2%	26.7%	25.0%
Average % of price increase	8%	10%	7.5%	5.5%
Residential customer %	57%	72.5%	60.0%	35.5%
Commercial customer %	38%	26.5%	37.5%	55.5%
Government clients %	4.0%	1.0%	2.0%	5.0%
Other clients%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%
Residential profit margin	28%	39%	24%	18.5%
Commercial profit margin	23%	38.5%	20%	13.5%
Specialty services margin	30%	50.5%	39%	14.5%
Landscape maintenance margin	26%	47%	18.5%	14.5%
Custom chemical applications margin	26%	44.5%	25.5%	17%
Landscape design/install margin	24%	38.5%	22.5%	14.5%
Irrigation services margin	23%	40%	24%	16%
Tree care margin	23%	44.5%	34%	15%
# Full-time employees	34	3	7	131.5
# Part-time employees	13	2	6	41.5
# Family members employed	3	2	2	6.5
# Workers of foreign origin	36	5.5	7	85.5
Average rate, best supervisor	\$16.01/hour	\$14.20	\$15.03	\$18.56
Average rate, entry-level crew	\$8.24/hour	\$8.45	\$8.18	\$8.01



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continued from page 8

drastically. It's more of a market correction and it is normal business, not a recession."

"Our costs are up and pricing on competitive contracts remains low, but we don't see any effects of the economy in this area," says Jud Griggs, vice president of operations, Smallwood Design Group/Smallwood Landscape, Naples, FL. "We see no changes in demand for 2002 but we're constantly



PHOTO COURTESY: POST PROPERTIES

looking for ways to reduce costs and work more efficiently."

"We are having a slower year, with consumer sales slower," notes Tom Hofer, president of Spring-Green Corp., Plainfield, IL. "There is just not an exuberance out there. Altogether, we don't expect a strong year."

Scott Frith, director of marketing for Lawn Doctor Inc., Holmdel, NJ, says it's been a more challenging year in business. "There is less growth in new sales but I see the market with no official recession and some bounce-back being indicated already."

"REIT (real estate investment trust) stocks are down on commercial places like malls so they end up cutting back," explains Marc Marcus, president of CentreScapes Inc., Pomona, CA. "Commercial landscapers are one of the first cuts they make. Five percent of my normal business would be eliminated, but we're still growing by 25%."

Market changes may not have as dramatic effect on growth as internal changes do, reports Debby Cole, president of Greater Texas Landscapes, Austin, TX. "We have focused one person's efforts on business development and are also better at our delivery of services. Our resulting increase is due to us, not the market."

While his work continues to be in demand, Iorri finds that it's harder to be profitable. "This year, I've had higher costs and a little less profit per job. People are spending money to the max. I have later payments and more delinquents than before. I had more last year than in all my previous 27 years combined. It is the 'now' generation."

"One of our top challenges is financing and cash flow," notes Kevin Kilmer, president of The Groundskeeper, Tucson, AZ. "Finding financing is relatively easy. It's maintaining cash flow and staying on top of accounts receivable. Cash is king in every business and that is the same with clients.

They're going to push the envelope. 'I didn't get the invoice, the check is in the mail, you said you were going to do this and you haven't finished.' Everybody is stalling."

The competition game

The pressure on pricing, especially for maintenance services, continues. Many landscape professionals report low-balling in both residential and commercial segments.

"The inability (of landscapers) to charge properly is affecting the business," notes Jeane McNeil, owner of McNeil & Associates, Bainbridge Island, WA. "(New) people enter the field and charge less. One should be able to charge for the job one does."

"New sales are extremely competitive," notes Tom Heaviland, owner and president of Heaviland Enterprises, Vista, CA. "There are a lot of new faces in the marketplace. We've had to be more aggressive in sales,

where we used to rely on referrals for growth. We hired a business developer."

Heaviland's employees take competition seriously and receive bonuses for working with the business developer to get new business. He explains: "The whole team has their eyes open."

While everyone aims for profitability, competitive pressure on the maintenance side sometimes stresses costs and profits.

"Construction is still extremely strong in our region," Heaviland notes. "As a maintenance contractor, it's difficult to compete for labor (with construction contractors), because they can pay more than I can. We can't afford to pay like them or we won't be competitive."

With the slowdown in landscape consolidation, competition has taken on a more localized flavor.

"Competition here (in Canada) is really localized but it gets tougher as you get bigger," explains Robert Wilton, president of Clintar Groundskeeping Services, Markham, Ontario. "There are no TruGreens here."

"I don't think acquisition has gone away," says Randall. "TruGreen-LandCare is currently 'digesting,' and they'll be back in the market. When times get tough, there will be more acquisitions because people look for partners. In good times, people don't want to have the hassle of acquisition."

Current competition may only be temporary, Randall cautions. With a downturn, he expects many competitors to return: "Many of our competitors don't compete with us right now because they have contracts in the private sector. If that slows down, they'll be back in the public sector."

According to Michael Kemaghan, vice



Tom Heaviland

president of marketing, Weed Man, Mississauga, Ontario, "Our major competitors are not so much other landscape and lawn care companies, but painters, deck builders, carpet stores — all people competing for household dollars to spend on the home."

It's all about people

Without a doubt, landscape professionals continue to find labor their most vexing and consistent problem. News of massive layoffs to the contrary, managers in our industry still have difficulty attracting and keeping the employees they want.

"There are lots of layoffs here, lots of sad faces, but also some folks from high tech applying for our jobs," reports Cole. "When we had an HR opening, we were flooded with applications. We are getting good folks from

shuffling around in the (local) landscape industry. Entry-level employees come from our H2B pool, but foremen are still hard to find."

"It's never easy to find employees but we had very good applicants this spring," notes Robertson. "But the cost of employees continues to go up."

Phil Fogarty, sub-master franchisor for Weed Man/Turf Holdings Inc. in Cleveland, OH, notes, "It's been a very good business year and staffing is much better. It's not impossible like it was. We even get occasional calls asking if anything is available. It hasn't been like this for years."

Some contractors report that labor is still a challenge. "It's harder to recruit this year than last," says Brown. "At the end of last year when the economy was good, it created a problem — lack of qualified employees in the experienced or lead man/foreman category. It was worse this year. Those are the hardest people to find. We've used head hunters, employment services and more advertising."

"Labor is the biggest challenge for everybody," adds San Diego-based Newhard. "Guys just come and go. They'll leave for 24 cents more per hour."

Bay-area based Richards says high housing costs have driven away available workers. "An average home in northern California costs \$400,000. How many families can afford to buy a home? That's a big issue that strikes at labor availability. Our labor force is going to go to (California's) central valley

where housing is more affordable."

"I think the trend in production will be to get men off the ground and put them into a human-machine combination where the worker isn't doing so much of the physical labor," says James Wilhite, owner, Wilhite Landscape, Tyler, TX. "For example, the movement from 21-in. walk-behinds to a 44-in. walk-behind with a Velky to a ZTR."

"Employees are not a problem," says Kilmer. "It's easy to use it as an excuse for your problem, but there is no labor problem. There are plenty of good quality people available for work — it just takes time and effort and resources to make it happen."



Kevin Kilmer

Nasty surprises

Among the nastiest surprises for industry professionals was the sharp spike in fertilizer and fuel costs, both of which affected business from the start of the year.

A January survey by the Professional Lawn Care Association of America reported

continued on page a14

TABLE 8 — THIS YEAR IN BUSINESS, COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

In 2001 we...	Industry average
Had more work	76.6%
Found it harder to compete	62.5%
Had more backlog / customers	64.4%
Used more suppliers	48.7%
Had more picky customers	59.4%
Found it harder to be profitable	64.8%
Had financing / cash flow woes	58.6%
Found it harder to recruit	64.0%

COMPLETE DATA AT: WWW.LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET

TABLE 3 — SERVICES OFFERED

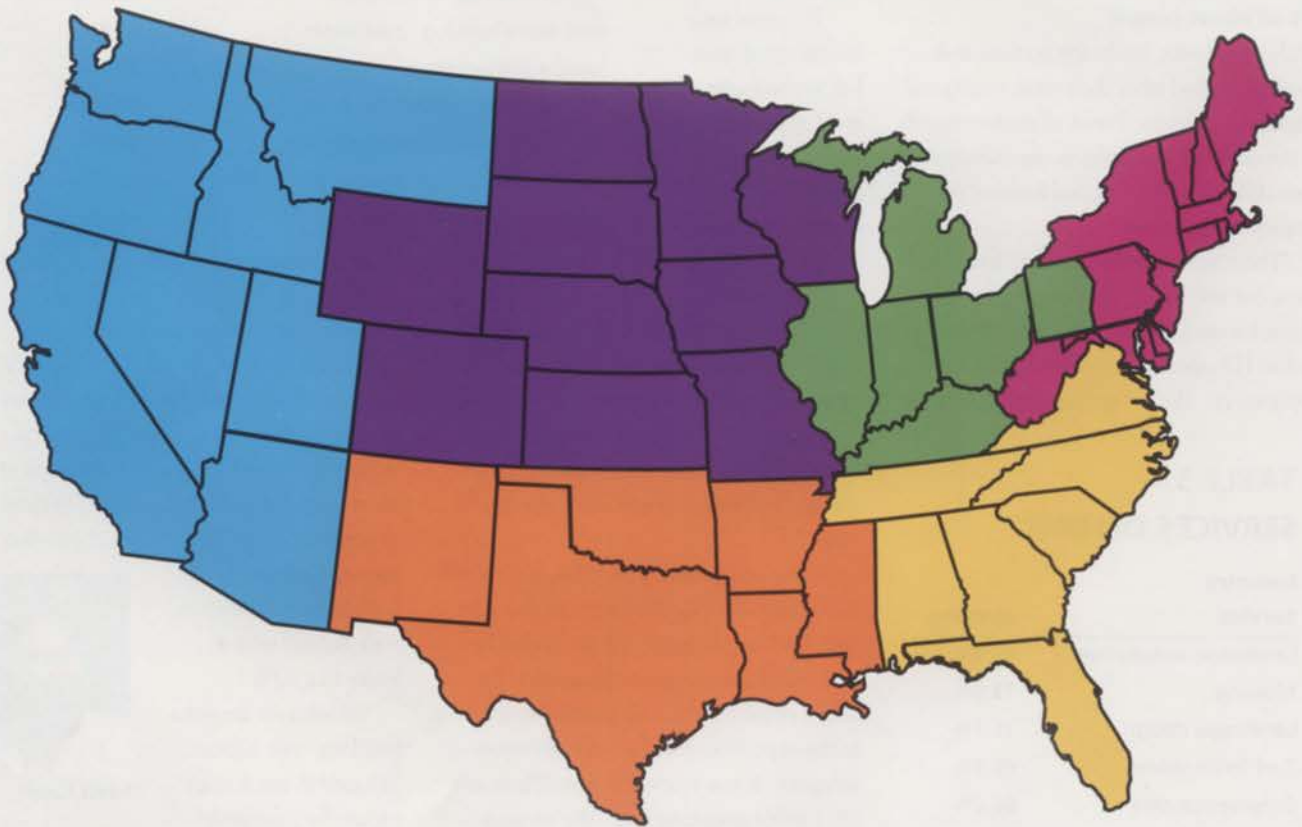
Industry Service	average
Landscape installation	86.3%
Mowing	72.6%
Landscape design	71.7%
Turf fertilization	69.3%
Ornamental care	66.0%
Turf weed control	62.3%
Turf aeration	59.0%
Turf insect control	54.7%
Turf disease control	49.5%
Irrigation maintenance	49.1%
Landscape lighting	48.1%
Irrigation installation	46.7%
Tree care	45.3%
Paving/deck/patio Install	43.9%
Snow removal	42.9%
Pond/lake care	24.1%

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Rich Kalik

National Accounts
Manager,
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Kyle Miller

Market Development
Specialist,
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that 91% of respondents had price increases, most averaging about 20% to 25%. About 77% of respondents said they planned to raise prices to cover their cost increases.

Hand-in-hand with the gasoline price increases were problems with fertilizer costs and even acquiring supplies, PLCAA's survey reported. A surprising 86% said they had problems ordering or locating supplies.

Most landscape professionals have absorbed costs, raised prices slightly or added surcharges. Some decided to absorb costs for established customers and raise prices or surcharges only for new customers.

"We are prepared to absorb most of those costs short term, because we have a many continuing customers, to show them thanks for their loyalty," says Robertson.

Richards reported jumps in both electrical and gasoline costs earlier this year. "Gasoline has been the real hit," he notes, "while electric prices came down and leveled off."



David Brown

"Our power rates have probably risen 50% to 75% this year," explains Washington-based Brown. "We're coping by gritting our teeth, tightening our belts and whining. It's something we have to account for in budgeting and pricing."

Time for innovation

Many landscape professionals are raising the level of their professionalism or positioning themselves for strong future business in boom or bust, such as opening new branches or servicing new client segments.

"We are hatching a new branch in Virginia dedicated to residential maintenance," explains Reeve. "It is a natural transition from design/build to maintenance."

Frith says his company is moving into

commercial lawn care. "We are looking into big jobs with wide area turf to keep employees on-site longer and increase our production capability. We are also adding services to maximize our customer base, retain current clients and generate new revenue."

Mondi from Mariani Landscape in IL says retail has appeal. "We started retail last year and are happy with that so far. We are hoping for double-digit growth – we are aware of the potential for this market."

"We are moving to sports turf maintenance work," notes Jensen's McGilvray. "Parks are being more heavily used than ever and there is a need for improved maintenance of sports turf facilities."

Heaviland thinks the move toward niche work may pay off: "We're concentrating on commercial maintenance. It's our best return, it's repetitive and that's what acquiring companies want."

"The industry is swamped with generalists and now we see a need for specialists," says Weed Man's Kernaghan. "You get paid better as a specialist and you are not seen as a commodity but as a 'boutique,' offering a one-to-one, personalized touch."

Suppliers' moves

The supplier side of the industry continues to experience consolidation as they struggle to be more profitable, position themselves more competitively and lower their costs. This will continue current trends of eliminating some products from the marketplace; changing distribution/dealer patterns; adding new transaction methods; raising prices for specialty products; bringing high-tech chemicals and equipment packages to market; and designing for efficiency.

Suppliers also are keeping have a watchful eye on the future of the Green Industry.

Jack Snow, president of Sheffield Financial Services, Clemmons, NC, says his firm

TABLE 11 —
EMPLOYEE PROGRAMS

Programs you offer	Industry average
Uniform	73.6%
Incentive/bonus	65.3%
Health care	54.2%
Promotions	36.1%
Retirement savings	33.3%
Transportation	30.6%
Cash for Educational	23.6%
Profit sharing	18.1%
Recognition programs	13.9%

COMPLETE DATA AT:
WWW.LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET

boasts a very low percent of defaults on loans to landscape and lawn care companies, but has noticed a slight uptick in problems this year. "There are a few more defaults and bankruptcies recently," he notes.

"We see that the economy has affected our customers," says John Chiera, sales director professional lawn care, Textron Golf, Turf and Specialty Products, Racine, WI. "They're trimming back crews and working longer hours, so they'll need bigger decks to remain productive. They're looking at contracts for more profitability and efficiency and starting to let the bad ones go."

He says Textron's dealers, like other suppliers, are very aware of economic trends. "Our dealers are more cautious about inventory management and their own profitability." **LM**

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Snapshot 2001

PART THREE:

Operations Review

Respondents in Landscape Management's 2001 survey represented all sizes and types of landscape and lawn care organizations, and are typical of thousands of others (see note Page a5).

While there is no "typical" professional landscape operation, certain statistics and practices clearly define this business. Our survey reflects the reality of the marketplace, where a majority (66.5%) of operations earn less than \$1 million annually. We've also studied three distinct

groups to see operating trends emerging for the entry-level firm (\$250,000 annual revenues or less), mid-level firm (\$250,001 to \$1,000,000) and large, established firm (\$1 million or more).

The typical customer mix is 57% residential, 38% commercial and 4% government. This changes depending on size, however. An entry-level firm averages 72.5% residential customers; a mid-level firm probably has around 60% and the largest firms may average about 35.5% residential customers.

It's easy to make a correlation between company size and length of time in business, too. The industry average years in

business is 18, but it breaks down like this: Entry-level 12.5 years average; mid-level 18 years; largest 24 years.

This year's survey showed that landscape installation is most prevalent, with 86.3% of respondents providing this service (entry-level, 78.3%; mid-level 87.6%; large established 90.7%). Mowing and design services were close second and third, with 72.6% of those surveyed providing mowing and 71.7% doing design work.

Favorite specialty services include water features (28.6%), erosion control (21.4%), masonry and retaining walls (14.3%) and garden centers and horticultural troubleshooting (both at 7.1%).

Operating issues

A glance at the typical operating budget shows that labor and re-

cruiting continue to take the largest budget share: 33% on average. However, it takes only 26% of the typical entry-level budget; as much as 40% of a typical mid-level budget; and a more manageable 34% of a large firm's budget.

Plants and landscape materials took a larger chunk of the 2000 budget than they did in 1999, an average of 20%, followed by overhead (19%), equipment and equipment maintenance (12%), fuel (9%), fertilizers and pesticides (5%) and other (2%).

This year presented several challenges, compared to 2000. While a full 76.6% said they had more work in 2001, 62% said they found it harder to compete. This varied depending on size, for only 66.6% of entry-level firms reported they had more work this year, while 82% of

mid-level and 82.5% of large firms noted higher demand.

A majority of respondents (59.4%) agreed that customers are more picky this year than in 2000. Larger companies (69.2%) reported this more often than mid-level (58.3%) or entry-level firms (43.4%), perhaps reflecting their larger proportion of commercial business.

Cash flow and financing seem to be more of a challenge in 2001, with an average of 58.6% saying it is difficult. A majority of entry-level firms (67.2%) noted financing/cash flow difficulties; with 48.5% of mid-level and 57.3% of large firms reporting the same.

This year's strange business climate and surprising jump in costs caused 64.8% of our respondents to say it is harder to be profitable in 2001, and this

was spread almost equally across small (60.7%), mid-level (60.0%) and large companies (69.8%).

Although a clear majority (62.5%) said they had more backlog or customers this year, 64% are still finding it harder to recruit. It is especially hard for entry level firms, with 83.3% saying its harder to recruit, compared to 57.5% of mid-level and 56.9% of large organizations

In the past year, only 9.1% of respondents said they dropped a service or customer segment, 7.3% bought another business, 6.8% opened a new branch and 4.1% offered employees stock.

Other business challenges that concern the industry include: Energy costs (35.5%), employee retention (31%), affordable products and supplies (28.4%), business management

TABLE 6 — FAST-GROWING SERVICES

Service segment	Fastest growth (industry ave.)	Rate of growth (industry ave.)
Landscape maintenance	45.0%	30%
Landscape design/install	41.9%	23%
Custom chemical app.	11.0%	47%
Specialty services	8.9%	23%
Irrigation	6.3%	18%
Tree care	4.7%	28%

issues (23.2%) and government regulations (23.2%).

Handling people

While the average number of employees working full time was 34, the average number was three for entry-level firms, seven for mid-level and 131.5 for large firms. The use of part-time and family members is spread across the industry, as is the use of foreign-born workers.

Respondents report that they pay their best supervisors an average of \$16.01, ranging from \$14.20 for entry-level firms to as much as an average \$18.56 for large-firms. Average hourly rate for entry-level workers is \$8.24, with entry-level firms paying the most (\$8.45), followed by mid-level (\$8.18) and large (\$8.01).

Most firms, large or small, try to provide a employee benefits to boost retention and save large recruiting and training costs. Most popular are uniforms, which are provided by 73.6%, followed by incentives or bonus plans (65.3%), health care (54.2%), promotions (36.1), retirement savings (33.3%), transportation (30.6%), educational reimbursement (23.6%) and profit sharing (18.1%).

This is echoed in the comments of many respondents who mentioned new programs they are implementing. AAA Landscape's Underwood is an example, "We need to service our internal clients as well, and those are our employees. So we're making long-range plans, we've developed company values and a mission statement and we are concentrating on education." **LM**

Part 4 of this report ►

TABLE 2. — HARD WORKING LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS

	Industry Average	Entry level <\$250k	Mid-level \$250k-\$1M	Estd. >\$1M
Average working hours/week	56	54.5	58	55
Average years in industry	19	16	18.5	20.5
Average age	44	43	44	45.5
High school or less	12.0%	12.0%	6.2%	17.3%
Some college	30.4%	30.3%	39.3%	17.3%
Vocational / tech school	4.3%	6.0%	3.0%	4.3%
Associate's degree	10.9%	15.1%	9.0%	8.6%
Bachelor's degree	35.9%	36.3%	33.3%	43.4%
Post graduate degree	6.5%	0.0%	3.0%	4.3%
Very satisfied with career (well rewarded)	82.7%	71.6%	84.9%	90.4%
Somewhat satisfied with career (or rewarded)	14.9%	25.0%	12.3%	7.9%
Not satisfied with career (or rewarded)	2.4%	3.3%	2.7%	1.3%
Ave. personal take home pay	\$73,351	\$45,884	\$67,149	\$106,666

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PART FOUR:

Strategies for 2002

How do landscape professionals see five years into their future? A full 73.6% of survey respondents said they plan to grow much larger, and 48.8% predicted they'll be serving new customer groups. Some (30.2%) envision expanding into larger geographical markets. Nearly half (48.8%) plan to provide more employee benefits to improve retention, and about one fourth (25.6%) expect to be using new purchasing methods.

So how do you plan to get there from here, given today's uncertain economy? The direction of the economy has everyone puzzled, including leading economists. They're not ready to forecast any trends up or down, because the signs continue to conflict. The problem? This economy is not behaving predictably.

According to economists, the

typical recession starts with a drop in consumer spending, which then precipitates a drop in business spending and investment. But that pattern is reversed in this economy, where manufacturing and high-tech are stumbling, consumer spending continues and services like professional landscape management continue to be in demand.

Since consumer spending is driving this economy, economists are hoping that this summer's \$40 billion in tax rebates will continue the trend. Some sectors, like manufacturing and high tech, may take a while to recover, but strong consumer spending should encourage service industries. In fact, some economists see consumer belt tightening now as a threat to the economy.

As of mid-August, some economists saw signs of a further contraction of business in mid-2001, possibly signaling the start of a true recession.

The uncertainty in pivotal industries like construction and

Annual Revenue in 2000



home building obviously affects the Green Industry, since both installation and maintenance rely on growth in those markets. Other indicators of consumer confidence and disposable income may point to future spending for ongoing maintenance and lawn care services.

Opportunities to excel

However, many landscape professionals feel that business will remain good, even if the econ-

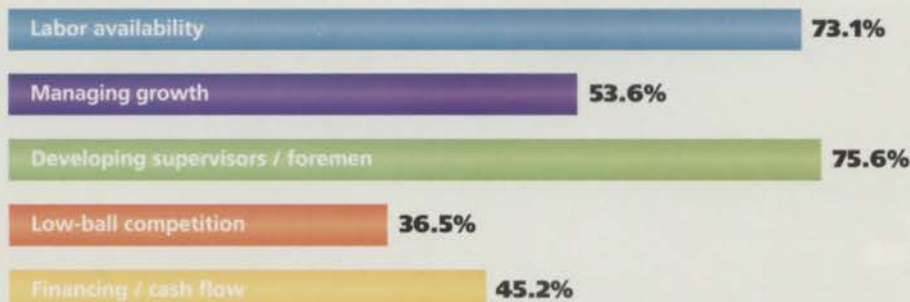
omy starts to sour. They point to property managers' need to keep commercial properties attractive, as well as homeowners' entrenched habits of using professional landscapers for installation and maintenance.

"This is a recession-proof industry," maintains Fogarty, who concentrates on lawn care.

Depending on the local market, there's no question that opportunities for new and better business will continue. "I think there's tremendous potential in the San Diego marketplace," Heaviland maintains, echoing many other landscape professionals in similar markets.

"This industry continues to be a growth industry," notes Kilmer. "The typical economic conditions are affecting everybody and I don't think of it as a negative. I think that there are opportunities for the industry leaders to continue to excel."

Top 5 Challenges in 2001





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Circle No. 115

Green 'Web' Outlook

Landscape Management's 2001 Reader Survey (see data at LM.net) shows that the Internet is already an important utility in this industry across all revenue categories. Here's how some pioneers are working better/faster/smarter thanks to the Internet.

Training made easy

Dick Jones, Davey's Training Services Manager, says Davey Tree Expert Service spent five years and more than \$300,000 to create Davey Institute Online. (www.davey.com/college). With more than 7,000 employees, Davey needed a way to keep its training and procedures manuals up to date. The company built online versions of its legendary training programs, including Spanish-language versions.

E-commerce continues

Bruce Wilson, vice president of Green2Go.com, says his company partners with more than 400 nurseries and 30 hard-goods companies. He says newer companies, headed by a young generation of managers, adapt more quickly to online purchasing.

Steve Cissel, CEO of GreenIndustry, Inc. (www.greenindustryonline.net), believes that e-commerce has already reached critical mass in this industry. "In the very near future, you will see the convergence of the PDA (Palm Pilot, Visor) with your cell phone. There will be one device, and you will be connected 24/7 via the Internet to your corporate Web database."

"Owners of companies in this industry are very smart people," says Michael Ferraro of PlantFind.com. "Companies that can locate, buy and sell their products online are starting to figure out ways they can incur lower costs and get higher returns."

Recruiting advantages

"The Green Industry as a whole has yet to realize the true value of Internet recruiting," says Dean Davis, president of GreenIndustryJobs.com. "And job seekers have to learn that, with specialized sites like ours, they can have new job listings automatically e-mailed to them."

Community building

"You'll see more and more community sites in the near future," says Green2Go's Wilson. "Landscapers are beginning to use online forums to get tips from each other on how to run their business, or find out what people are saying about a new product."

— Lynne Brakeman, On-line Content Editor

What's your plan?

Given the likelihood of this economy moving either way, having a plan that provides solid business and control of costs is just a start. Step two is to thoroughly analyze your operation and its services, customer base and competition, then ask:

- Are the financial and operating systems sound?
- Are service delivery and people management as good as possible?
- Is it time to adjust your customer base, service offerings, competitive stance?
- Do you need new resources of funds, people, expertise?
- If the economy takes off are you positioned to grow further?
- If the economy slumps, do you have a plan?

It may take some time for this industry to feel a slowdown if the economy does slump. When that happens, many managers react by taking drastic steps and cutting costs to the bone or making across-the-board cuts that rarely make sense. Business experts recommend careful cost cutting that makes sense for the way you do business and also allows for potential growth.

In fact, a strategy that positions your operation for flexibility is best, say many experts. A *Wall Street Journal* study of high-performing companies that excel in downturns says many of them focus on growth by developing meaningful value to customers, engaging employees, developing leaders, innovating service delivery, providing appropriate rewards and emphasizing career development.

The article also says that a focus today just on profitability, cost management and growth by acquisition may not be enough to compete in 2003. Instead, the authors suggest focusing on innovation, new markets and services, strategic partnerships and e-commerce.

Several landscape professionals are already working on these areas and have invested in employee and leadership programs, strategic alliances and unusual market positioning. They're prepared for a serious downturn too, and are taking steps like these:

- beefing up cash flow and receivables collections,
- focusing on services delivery and customer relationships,
- trimming costs but keeping valuable employees,
- lining up future sources of financing now,
- eliminating troublesome customers or service segments,
- contacting customers more frequently, and
- staying upbeat with customers, suppliers and employees.

Business experts also note that downturns can be good times to sell all or part of a business or even start a new service. The service that gets established in tough times has huge potential to grow in better times. Experts warn, however, that these moves may be riskier during a downturn. **LM**

Read More www.landscapemanagement.net

CLICK: "This Month's Features" page for more comprehensive coverage

Property management issues are different

BY GEORGE WITTERSCHEIN /
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

How is landscape doing from the client's perspective? We asked large property managers, who say the economy is slow, but not dead.

According to Mike Nalley, senior vice president of Trammell Crow Company, "The residential and corporate property management businesses are still doing extremely well." However, he admits, "We have seen a slowing in the economy."

A senior managing director at Trammell Crow observes, "We are seeing the outsourcing trend continuing. We still see it as a huge world that is untapped." Translation for the industry: property managers will be looking for facilities support partners like landscapers.

"Particularly in a down market, corporations are looking to reduce expenses and overhead," says Nalley. "Outsourcing is a big part of that."

Trammell Crow plans to keep spending on landscape services, Nalley says. "It's going to be very consistent with what

we're spending now, if not more. Landscaping and curb appeal are extremely important, particularly in a slow market, because it's how you retain existing tenants and gain new ones."

Work the 'creative' budget

A silver lining of a slow economy are pockets of leftover dollars transferred from "new capital budget purchases" to the "enhancement and maintenance" line (which should include landscape services).

That was the opinion of Todd Tibbitts, senior vice president for landscape operations at Post Properties Inc., Atlanta, owner and operator of 33,000 upscale residential apartment units in nine states.

Tibbitts agrees that we are in a "broad economic slowdown. Our company recognized that over 12 months ago, and we've intentionally slowed development activities since then.

"We will continue to spend the same amount of money," on landscape services, Tibbitts reports. "I think property managers will be forced to squeeze more service for fewer dollars

out of their support contractors. In many cases they will be turning work over to low bidders.

"On the other hand," he recommends, "because real estate companies will be spending less on new development, they will have capital budget dollars left, and may plow some of that into existing properties. Landscape managers should be prepared."

Tapping the market

Want to do business with major property managers? Here's how:

1. Plug into new procurement mechanisms like Sitestuff (www.Sitestuff.com), a purchasing service for property managers. It represents approximately 4,000 properties, including many top property managers in the U.S. For more information, call 888/251-0821.
2. Get information technol-

ogy capacity. "Having decent IT capacities is going to be a necessity for doing business with bigger companies, because of the move toward Web-based procurement," says Trammell Crow's Swink.

3. Provide vertical integration. Tibbitts explains that separate contractors often do design, build and maintenance of a property, when managers want one provider. "There's no overlap and no integration between those disciplines."

4. Embrace environmentalism and professionalism. "We are an environmental business," notes Tibbitts. "The industry needs to improve its level of professionalism, and gain further credibility in the business arena."

5. Don't play games with bids. Be up-front about all costs involved in a project. **LM**



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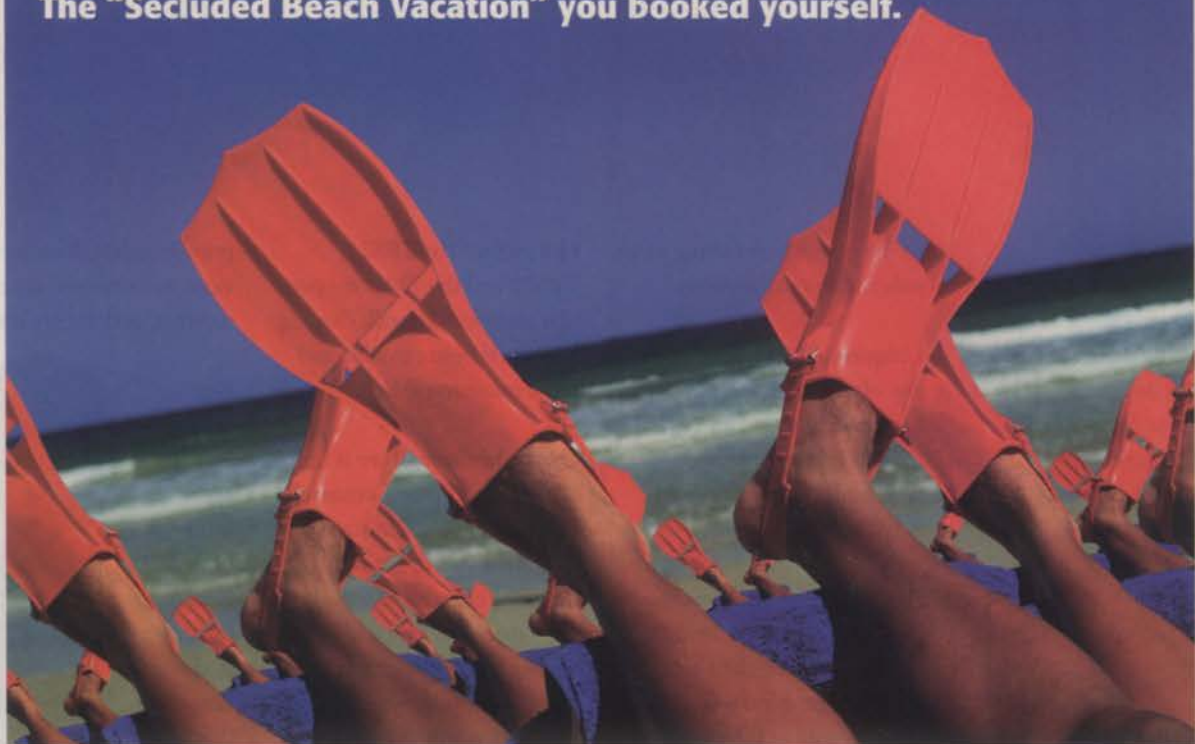
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The "Secluded Beach Vacation" you booked yourself!

continued from page 42

On the horizon: "I see rubber track machines getting to point where you have multiple models to choose from in terms of size and horsepower."

Boss Snowplow

Rick Robitaille, Marketing Manager

Product: Snowplows and accessories

Key points: "Dealers back their products by staying open when it snows. Dealer who stock parts and can service the product when the contractors are out plowing are patronized the most."

Hot picks: "Landscapers like multiposition plows because they save time. Many contractors claim that they cut their time in half but we think its more like 25% to 33% depending on what kind of jobs their doing. Lately we have been

seeing contractors buying more poly multiposition plows."

Uniqueness: "We offer a full line of multiposition plows in both multiposition and straight blade configurations and we offer both configurations in poly and steel."

Purchasing/finance trends: "Smaller contractors tend to own and operate their equipment. Larger contractors generally subcontract the work out but they oversee the work. The reason they do this is to keep their equipment costs down."

John Deere

Sean Sundberg, Lawn & Garden Product Manager

Product: WBSBs

Key points: "Crews are asking for a reliable product that starts on the first or second pull, that clears snow down to the pavement in a single swath and that is very simple to operate."

Hot picks: "The TRS21, TRS22 and the 724D are popular units for sidewalk clearing because they are smaller and more maneuverable."

On the horizon: "Toro is introducing their Snow Commander, which is a single-stage design that rivals the snow throwing capacity of a dual stage machine. You will see new engine options, smaller more powerful machines that are much easier to operate."

Dixon Industries

Mike Kadel, Marketing Manager

Product: Zero turning radius mowers

Key points: "Many landscapers survive the winter with snow removal work."

Hot picks: "Our zero turning radius mowers are highly maneuverable, and equipped with snow removal attachments, are perfect for moving snow, especially in areas where tight turning is beneficial like sidewalks and driveways."

DTN Weather Services

Dave Oberle, Director/Turf and Recreation

Product: Supplier of weather solutions,

providing data, forecast services, accurate real-time weather, and display systems

Key points:

"With our Storm Guard, a customer can download real-time radar to his Palm

Pilot or pocket PC. Users can use mobile phones when on the road to show them exactly where they're at in the storm or snow arrival and snow forth."

Hot picks: "Our DC7000 weather monitoring station is our most popular product. Users can instantaneously view real time radar right down to county level."

On the horizon: "New this month is our Weather Century which is a PC-based product which will sit on an individual's PC or laptop."

Fisher Engineering

John Murphy, Director, Sales & Marketing

Product: HD Series and EZ-V Snowplows

Key points: "Professional landscapers and property manage-



ment organizations are not afraid to pay more for products that they can rely upon to do the job."

Hot picks: "Our HD Series and EZ-V plows all for trucks in the 3/4-ton and one-ton segments continues to be our most popular selling models."

Uniqueness: "Unlike trip blade designs, our trip-edge blades won't dump their load of snow once the blade is full or an obstacle is encountered — requiring the operator to make a second pass."

On the horizon: "With the help of organizations like SIMA, the industry is becoming better organized. Members have a higher expectation of the equipment that they use, and we're gearing our product development to meet or exceed those expectations."

Grasshopper Co.

Ruthanne Stucky, Marketing Director
Product: Zero-turning radius commercial lawn mowers and all-season implements

Key points: "Landscapers ask for equipment they can use year round, that is equally maneuverable and productive in snow and on turf."



Hot picks: "Equipment that can adapt for sidewalk and driveway clearing is in demand. A system with interchangeable snow thrower, rotary broom and dozer blades provides the versatility required to deal with the vagaries of winter weather and enables the contractor to respond quicker."

Uniqueness: "Grasshopper's QuikConverter design creates ease of implement attachment."

On the horizon: "A combination of effective compact implements with zero-turning-radius maneuverability is the wave of the future."

Hiniker Co.

John Berlowski, Sales Manager
Product: Snowplows

Key points: "Plow designs have changed to meet those needs and improve profitability. There are more specialized plows than ever before including V plows, backdrag plows and snow boxes."

Hot picks: "Our C-Plow combines the functions of a conventional reversible plow and a backdrag plowing system into a single unit."

Uniqueness: "When configured in the backdrag mode, the cutting edge of the C-Plow has a rearward angle of attack improving surface cleaning. As with all our snowplows, the Quick Hitch is standard. The system allows the complete snowplow assembly to be mounted and removed from the truck in one piece."

On the horizon: "Efficient electrical systems

will be needed on snowplows. The increased functions available on the new plows create a higher draw on the truck's system."

JRCO

Jim Schweigert, President
Product: Commercial mower attachments

Key points: "Landscapers use our attachments on their zero-turn mowers to decrease time and increase productivity."

Hot picks: "One of our most popular attachments is the JRCO electric broadcast spreader that can be used for ice melt products as well as fertilizer, seed and insecticides."

Uniqueness: "We offer seven front-mount attachments for commercial mowers that quickly attach with clevis pins to the same JRCO mount bar."

Natural Solutions

Mike Klasek, CFO
Product: Ice Ban and liquid anti-icers and deicers

Key points: "Many people are learning about environmentally friendly liquid anti-icing and deicing products. These products allow landscapers to put product down in advance of, during, or after the snow storm. The obvious appeal is the ability to spread out the work and acquire more customers with the same equipment. That's money in their pockets."

Hot picks: "Ice Ban products to pre-treat rock salt for anti-icing and deicing purposes. They are also asking for liquid anti-icers and de-icers such as IceBan Summit, Performance Plus and Ultra which can be used in direct spray applications in advance of an approaching storm."

On the horizon: "The PNS and ASSHTO environmental standards for deicing products have been adopted throughout the highway and municipal markets and are raising the bar for everyone."

Ventrac Products

Lloyd Shankel, National Sales Manager

Product: Ventrac Compact Articulating Tractor (C.A.T.)

Key points: "The landscaper today wants a machine that will do more than mow and still be fast and efficient."

Hot picks: "Our Ventrac Compact Articulating Tractor C.A.T. not only will mow quickly and efficiently, but can be used 360 days of the year. It can perform all the jobs required by a landscaper, from mowing, mulching, seeding, tilling, trenching, snow removal, ground preparation and more."

Uniqueness: "Armed with an arsenal of over 25 Quick-Attach attachments, landscapers now have a machine that works for them every day all year long."

On the horizon: "The industry has available to it more technology than any other time in history. In the next year

you will see many new designs and changes."

Simplicity Manufacturing, Inc.

Troy Blewett, Corporate Communications Manager

Product: Snow-clearing attachments

Key points: "Landscapers cannot afford downtime."

Hot picks: "Landscapers use the Simplicity single-stage walk-behind snowthrower to clear walks or to clean-up in front of garage doors, etc., after they've finished plowing. The single-stage works efficiently and is light enough for one person to load and unload from a truck. Ferris Industries offers a commercial three-wheel rider with an out-frontdeck that changes out for winter use to either a snowthrower, snow blade or snow broom."

On the horizon: "Operator comfort is becoming more important. A comfortable Operator stays on the equipment longer and is more productive."

Daniels Box Plow



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Circle 124



Snowman Snowplow, Inc.

Ed Altheide, President

Product: Snowplows

Key points: "Landscapers are looking for products that offer productivity and are dependable."

Hot picks: "We see contractors running trucks with the front and back blade combination because of the efficiency they gain by adding a back plow. The driver eliminates all backdragging and turnaround time when they have a backplow. It's great for driveways, condos, circle drives."

Uniqueness: "Our Snowman models have a patented spring trip release that protects the plow and vehicle when encountering hidden objects."

On the horizon: "Closer attention by the auto industry will be given to trucks and SUVs that can have front snowplows mounted on them. Light front axle weight capacity trucks will become accustomed to using power angle pull plows that hook up to the vehicles' receiver hitch. Snow removal with these vehicles will be done without a front plow."

Walker Manufacturing, Inc.

Bob Walker, president

Product: Zero-turn radius riding mowers

Key points: "Landscapers want mowers that can be used for a multitude of tasks."

Hot picks: Versatility is key because landscapers want a piece of equipment they can use all year round."

On the horizon: "There are interesting advancements going on with engines. We

were fortunate to start with Kohler engines, introducing fuel injection in small engines. These small, fuel-injected engines improves starting in cold weather."

Western Products

Dan Bousman, Sales and Distribution Manager

Product: Western Snowplows

Key points: "Landscapers are looking for snow and ice equipment that is both durable and can perform multiple tasks."

Hot picks: "The Western MVP is an adjustable V-type plow that allows operators

to tackle many different snow removal jobs and finish them much quicker than a traditional straight blade plow. When put in the scoop position it can carry a large amount of snow the full length of a run and significantly reduce the number of passes needed to clear a parking lot."

Uniqueness: "We recently introduced our new UltraMount attachment system. Because of the UltraMount's unique pivot bar construction, the operator can drive into and attach the plow, even if the plow or the truck are on uneven surfaces. Also the attachment process is extremely simple. It takes only seconds, and there are no loosepins to deal with."

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tem and goes anywhere a cell phone does. Dialing in to an internet service provider, via the cell phone, allows the user to automatically download weather information to his or her PDA. Call DTN at 800/328-2278 or www.dtn.com / circle no. 304



Quick position plow

Fisher Engineering's EZ-V multi-position snowplow's adjustable V-plow configures to scoop, straight or "V" position in seconds. Insta-Act hydraulic system locks blade wings to act as one while Fish-Stik hand-held control operates all blade functions. For more information log on to www.fisherplows.com / circle no. 305

Attach and throw snow

Kubota Tractor Corp.'s versatile T-series tractors can be fitted with a belt-driven, single-stage snow blower with a 38-in. cutting width, a standard mechanical lift, replaceable skid shoe/cutting edge and manual-rotating discharge chute. Contact Kubota at 888/4KUBOTA, ext. 900 or www.kubota.com / circle no. 306

Don't get iced in

Natural Solutions Corporation's Ice Ban deicers have a melting power to -78°F. Ice Ban products are less corrosive than rain water, yet they melt snow and ice on contact. Applied with your existing equipment before, during or after the snowstorm, they add flexibility and sales volume to your snow removal business. Call Natural Solutions Corporation at 888/423-2261 / circle no. 307

Quick on/off

Western Products' Ultramount System makes the on/off attachment procedure on plows simpler by incorporating a pivot bar which ro-

Western's Ultramount System ▶

tates, allowing the drive in points to remain level — even when the blade is not. Two receiver brackets on the vehicle are easily removable for better off-season ground clearance. No tools are required. Call Western Products at 414-354-2310 or www.westernplows.com / circle no. 308

Sassy brat

Country Clipper's Brat is more compact, with most of the features of its Zeton "Big Brother." It has Zeton's stand-up deck for easy under deck maintenance, and your choice of either joystick or conventional twin stick steering. Drive is total hydraulic, with Hydro Gear Pumps and Parker Ross wheel motors. Twenty-three-in. rear drive wheels assure full traction. Choose between rugged 42- or 48-in. decks with 17 hp or 19 hp Kawasaki V-Twin engines. Contact Country Clipper at 800/344-8237 or www.countryclipper.com / circle no. 309

Look Ma, no hands!

Simplicity's two-stage, commercial duty snowthrowers are available in eight (860DLX), nine (970M) or 11 (1180M) hp models. Designed to make snowthrowing easier and faster. Contact a Simplicity dealer nearest you or www.simplicitymft.com / circle no. 310

Load or blow snow

The Bobcat skid-steer loader can blow snow off driveways, sidewalks and tight places. A rotating chute and deflector point the snow in any direction. With an attachment control kit, the user can hydraulically control these functions from the operator's seat. High-flow models are available for 753H, T190H, 773H, 863H, T200H, 873H,



and 883H. The two-stage design eliminates metal-to-metal contact between the blower and the rotating chute base, helping prevent freeze-ups. For more information, contact Bobcat at www.bobcat.com / circle no. 311

Stay cool spreader

JRCO, Inc.'s electric broadcast spreader features a polyethylene no-rust hopper with 130 lb./2.2 cu.ft. capacity. The spreader improves productivity by maintaining a constant spread pattern at increased ground speed, reducing operator fatigue. A variable speed drive controls the width of spread from five to 24 ft. Call JRCO, Inc. at 800/966-8442 or www.jrco-inc.com / circle no. 312

Cut down turnaround time

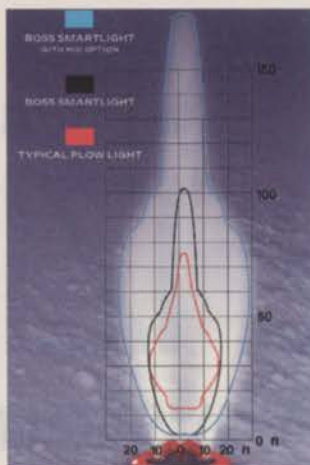
Snowman receiver hitch models are designed for commercial use with full size 1/2- to one-ton four-wheel-drive trucks. The Snowman pull plow eliminates back dragging and turnaround time. Add extension wings to the 7-ft. moldboards to increase blade width to 8-1/2 ft. for high volume jobs. Contact Snowman Snowplow Inc. at 888/766-6267 or www.snowmansnowplow.com / circle no. 313

A broom for all seasons

Walker Manufacturing Company's rotary broom with 47-in. sweeping patch and five-position angle head is ideal for lawn dethatching and raking and for sweeping debris or light snow on hard surfaces. Contact Walker Mfg. Co. at 970/221-5614 / circle no. 314

Versatile rotary cutters

Woods Equipment Company's BrushBull single spindle cutters are available in 10 models with cutting widths from 48 to 84 in. The series includes rotary cutters for a variety of applications. The BrushBull series features the sloped, clean-top deck design and contoured rear frame, with a two-in. round tubing rear



Light for dark mornings

BOSS Snowplow's plow light package, called SmartLight, projects light wider and further out in front of the vehicle. The light output of the SmartLight features a custom-designed composite light with dual halogen bulbs and has been specifically designed for snowplow use. The High-Intensity Discharge (HID) option will provide up to six times the light output of the typical snowplow light for even greater nighttime visibility. For more information, contact BOSS at 800/286-4155 or

www.bossplo.com / circle no. 315

bumper. Contact Woods Equipment Co. at 815/381-6028 / circle no. 316

Wide spread

TrynEx International's Micro Pro 375 tailgate spreader features a material flow gate that, with a standard 10-ft. control cable, calibrates

and controls material flow. Hopper holds up to 3.25 cu. ft./225 lbs. of dry, free-flowing material spread up to a 40-ft. width with a 10-in., powder-coated steel spinner. No belts, pulleys or chains allows for trouble-free operation. Call TryNex International at 800/725-8377 / circle no. 317

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Circle 125

Winterizing your irrigation system

YOGITA SHARMA /
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Expensive equipment needs care and irrigation systems are no exception to this rule. In areas where the frost level could extend below the depth of installed pipe, irrigation systems need to be drained to prevent freeze damage.

Enduring the stress of repeated water expansion weakens the pipe, whether it is made of polyethylene or PVC, and can lead to fractures along the pipe's length. The preventive procedure is easy but needs to be done on time.

Winterizing an irrigation system without a check valve can be done using manual or automatic drain valves. Systems with check valves need to use an air compressor to blow water out.

These are a few tips irrigation contractors around the country follow while blowing out a check-valve irrigation system.

- Jim Brinkerhoff, education manager, Hunter Industries, San Marcos, CA, suggests activating the zone furthest from the compressor, beginning with zones at higher elevations before opening the compressor valve to gradually introduce air into the system.

- The irrigation system should be evacuated in two short cycles rather than one long one according to Tracy Shields, outside sales, Horizon, Denver,

CO. He suggests blowing out each zone twice in short cycles of two to three minutes for better results.

- If the temperature has already dropped considerably, the sprinkler nozzles must be inspected to make sure they aren't frozen. If not, eliminate excess water where necessary.

- The pipe closest to the compressor should be checked to make sure it isn't too hot since excessive heat due to high air velocity can damage the system.

- The pump should be drained after the system has been allowed to bleed dry. Bob Giordano, irrigation department manager for Cagwin and Dorward Landscape Contractors, Novato, CA, advises shutting off the manual drain valves and insulating the ones above ground using a blanket.

- Any excess water that may have been trapped in the backflow devices must be removed by opening and closing the lever handle. Brinkerhoff suggests leaving the devices partially open for winter.

- All exposed areas of the pump system or the pipe must be insulated.

- The electrical system's controller must be left in the "power on" position to prevent condensation inside the enclosure that could lead to corrosion or component failure. The rain or station start switches must be in the "off" position before allowing your system to hibernate for winter. **LM**



Tracy Shields advises to evacuate an irrigation system in two short cycles rather than one long one.



Jim Brinkerhoff



Bob Giordano



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Selecting ornamentals

Understanding how different plants respond in different regions might help you find something new for your client

BY DANIEL WEISS/
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

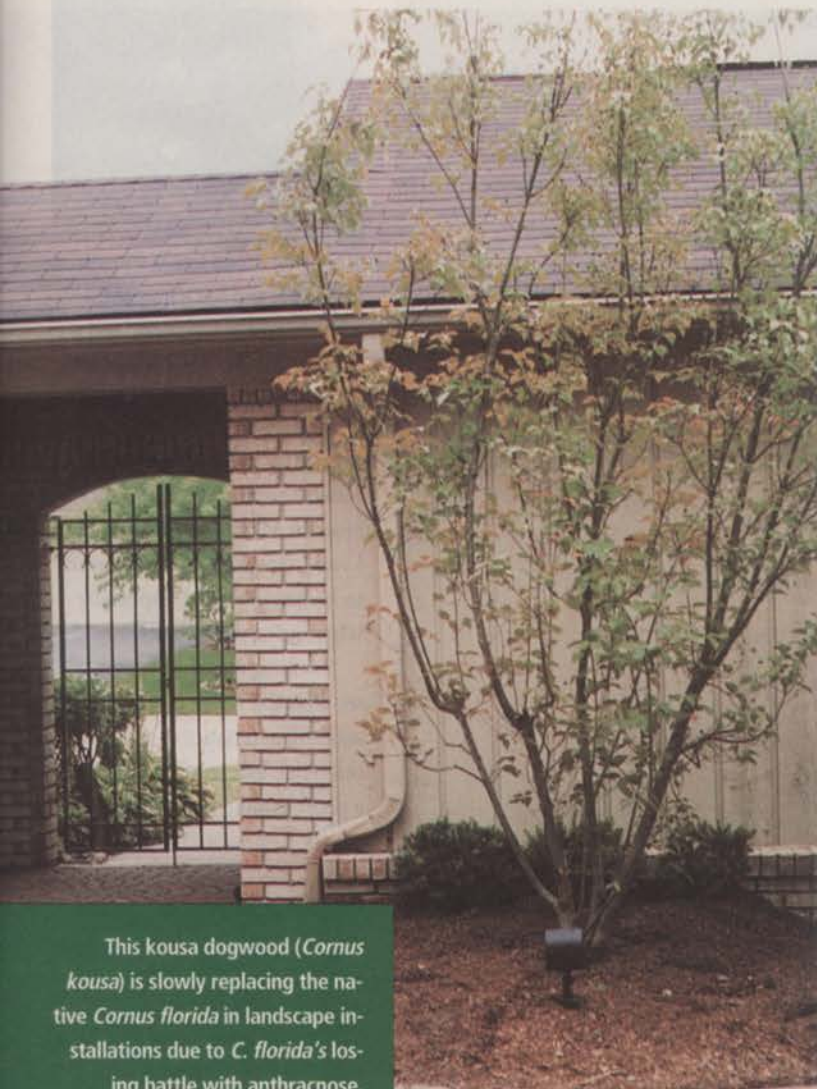
Over the years, hundreds of articles have been written on selecting plants. That's because there are hundreds of things to think about when selecting ornamentals. I want to propose two new ways of thinking about plants for your customers or yourself: Know the differences and try something new.

Know the differences

Plants rarely browse the references written about them. If they did, they'd find many of these references are written at a national or even international level. With such a broad scope of coverage, there could be some confusion when palms, which don't survive in northern climates, are listed in a general reference manual. More confusion may occur when looking at plants that survive in Florida that have a related species that grows in Minnesota, or the same species grows in both locations to a much different outcome. The *Viburnum* species has plants adapted to Florida, but different ones grow in Minnesota. Plants installed in different regions, though the same, behave differently.

Also, plant catalogs advertise nationally. Though these catalogs may solve the problem of availability, plants listed may not live in a specific region.

Plants respond differently in Florida than they would in Minnesota and vice versa. Therefore, cast a



This kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) is slowly replacing the native *Cornus florida* in landscape installations due to *C. florida*'s losing battle with anthracnose.

TABLE 1

Plant	Location
<i>Cornus florida</i> (flowering dogwood)	Michigan: understory tree, protect from wind & salt North Carolina: full sun turf tree, street
<i>Buddleia davidii</i> (butterfly bush)	Michigan: tender woody plants, dies back down to ground, grows 4 to 6 ft., good use in a perennial garden New Mexico: woody shrubs, grows 6 to 15 ft., use in perennial border or informal shrub mass
<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Kentucky: can use for street tree (Canadian hemlock) Michigan: needs wind and salt protection, partial shade
<i>Rhododendron catawbiense</i>	Michigan: avoid western and southern exposure, protect from northern winds, grows 4 to 6 ft., possibly a little larger if well cared for. Pennsylvania: good evergreen screen, grows 10 to 16 ft.

TABLE 2

Plant	Substitution
<i>Cornus florida</i> (flowering dogwood)	<i>Cornus kousa</i> (kousa dogwood)
<i>Hemerocallis</i> (daylily)	<i>Liriope spicata</i> (creeping lily turf)
<i>Craetaegus sp.</i> (hawthorne)	<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i> (white fringe tree)
<i>Acer sacharum</i> (sugar maple)	<i>Cladrastis lutea</i> (yellowwood)
<i>Euonymus alata</i> 'Compacta' (burning bush)	<i>Viburnum dentatum</i> (arrowwood viburnum)
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> (common lilac)	<i>Vitex agnus negundo</i> (lilac chaste tree)
<i>Azalea sp.</i> (rhododendron)	<i>Daphne x burkwoodii</i> (burkwood daphne)
<i>Juniperis horizontalis</i>	<i>Microbiota decussata</i> (Russian cypress)
<i>Spiraea bumalda</i> 'Goldflame'	<i>Callicarpa dichotoma</i> (beautyberry)
<i>Picea abies</i> 'Conica' (dwarf alberta spruce)	<i>Sciadopitys verticillata</i> (Japanese umbrella pine)
<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i> (rockspray cotoneaster)	<i>Erica</i> or <i>Caluna sp.</i> (heath or heather)
<i>Hydrangea sp.</i>	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i> (black chokeberry)
<i>Amelanchier sp.</i>	<i>Amelanchier sp.</i> (nothing beats a good amelanchier!)

critical eye at reference information. References describing zone and habit often give a wide range of variability. For example, a plant that thrives in zone 3 acts differently in zone 9. Sometimes it's difficult to gauge what the difference will be. It may be a matter of sur-



This white fringe tree is a multi-stem tree, and has a fragrant white flower in late spring and a yellow fall color. The flowers are pendulous and delicate looking.

vivability. When I told a customer that Bougainvillea didn't grow in Michigan, she thought I was joking! These items need to be kept in mind, especially when using new plants.

Looking at Table 1, you can see that the range of behaviors and characteristics detailed in reference lists may not hold for a plant installed in multiple regions.

Try something new

The good old favorites we select are often our good old favorites for many reasons. They're hardy where they're planted, offer

This amelanchier creates a beautiful arch over some hydrangea. It's difficult to beat as a total package: hardiness, availability, cost, white flowers in spring, open shrub or tree, edible berries, apricot fall color, few disease and pest problems.

good flower, form or color characteristics, are cost effective and readily available. You can never replace a good burning bush, hydrangea or sugar maple, but there are situations where other plants you haven't thought of recently can be used.

Plant selections also change due to pest and disease problems associated with specific plant species. For instance, *Cornus florida* has had a problem in recent years with anthracnose, and cultivars of *Malus* can be selected for hardiness to fireblight and applescab if these diseases are prevalent in a certain region.

Table 2 is a listing of plants with plant



substitution suggestions. These new plant suggestions aren't supposed to replace the old favorites, but, in an installation, one new plant in place of an old one might prove to be exciting not only to the cus-

tomers but to you as well. **LM**

— The author is president of *Natural Landscape Design and Maintenance, Inc.*, Keego Harbor, MI. He can be reached at 248/333-4986.

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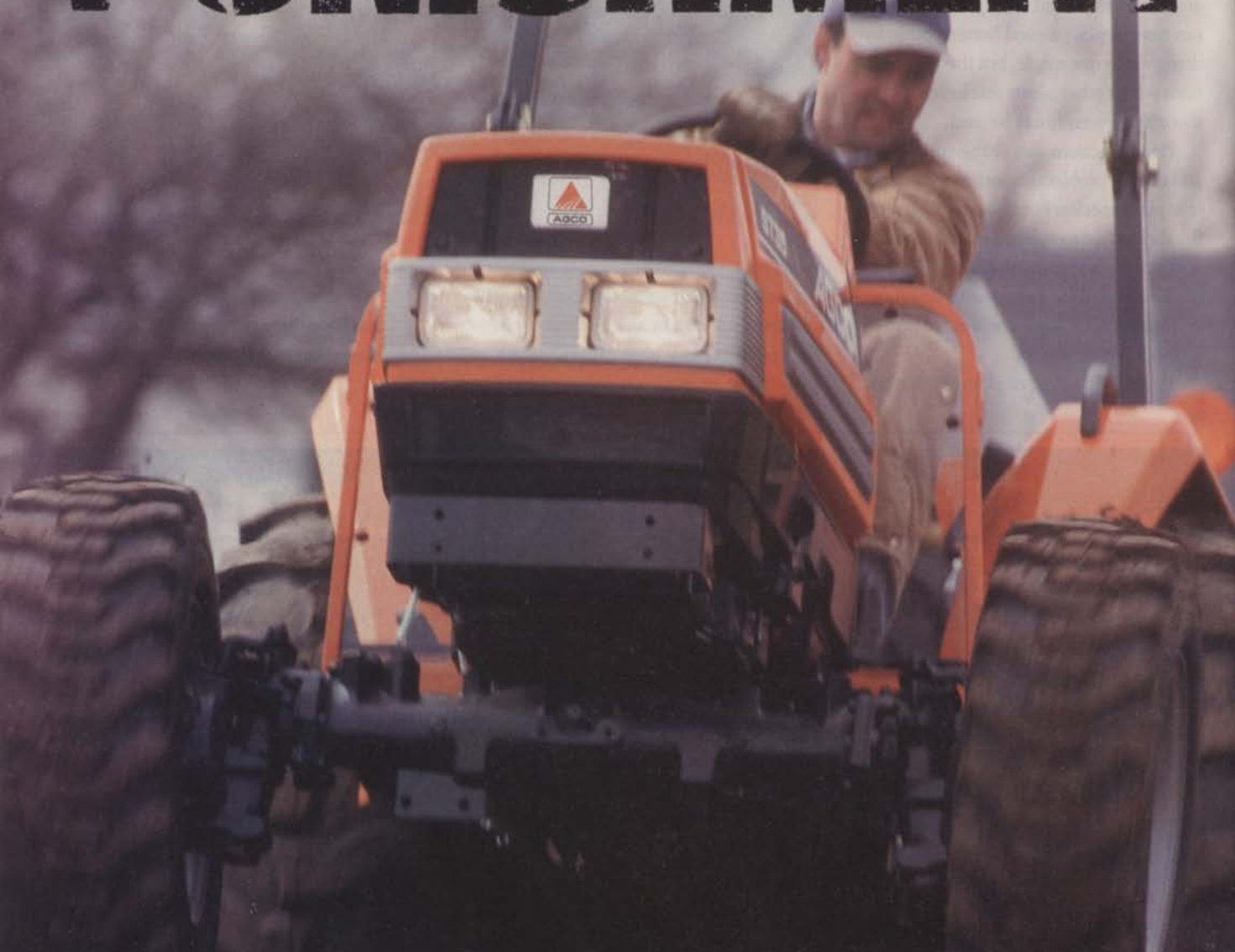
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Circle No. 139 on Reader Inquiry Card

Tree tools go high tech

BY CURT HARLER /
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Tree management has gone high tech. While the old standbys like tree trimmers and tree spades remain important parts of the landscaper's toolbox, the business has changed.

Injectable and sprayable materials are making it easier for landscapers to keep trees healthy in an environmentally friendly manner.

The environment gets a boost from new mulching products, too. One product contains at least 80% recycled tire rubber. The recycled material forms protective decoration for trees and shrubs in areas where cypress mulch or bark chips are unavailable or impractical.

Of course, there are plenty of traditional tools available as well. Check them out below.

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Circle #283

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www.bennersgardens.com

If deer are a problem, check out the Deer Shield system from Benner's Gardens, Conshohocken, PA. Combining motion detection, physical barriers and low voltage elec-

tronics to keep deer from entering through driveway openings, it's a good alternative to gates or cattle grates. It detects the presence of large animals and deploys a physical barrier to keep them out.

Circle #284

BIG JOHN

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www.big-john.com

Truck-mounted tree transplanters from Big John, Heber Springs, AK, can handle tree trunks from 3 to 12 in. in diameter. The 12 to 15 gpm hydraulic system on the Model 45 can handle a root ball up to 42 in. wide, 38 in. deep and 1,500 lbs. The Model 90 can handle a root ball up to 90 in. wide, 60 in. deep and 11,800 lbs.

Circle #285

continued on page 58



▲ Tree Toad can move trees up to 3 in. in diameter

Buying questions for chippers

- ▶ Does it have enough horsepower?
- ▶ Is it towable or self-propelled?
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lm reports

RECENT

John Deere's CS62 heavy duty chain saw ▶

continued from page 57

FINN CORP.

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www.finncorp.com

Specially designed for tree work, the Tree Fork from Finn Corp., Fairfield, OH, features a hydraulic fork which grabs trees and large shrubs for accurate placement. Hydraulically operated, it handles tree balls up to 36 in. in diameter. The company also has a line of adjustable forks that can carry or maneuver fence posts, plant materials, pallets and other bulky supplies. Either unit will attach to the Finn Eagle compact skid steer loader.

Circle #286

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www.growthproducts.com

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Circle #287

HUSQVARNA

704/597-5000

www.husqvarna.com

The 325P4 pole trimmer from Husqvarna,

Charlotte, NC, weighs just 10.4 lbs. but is powerful enough to do most jobs. Its 24.5cc engine develops 11,000 rpm at 1.2 hp. It has a reach of 13 ft., 1 in. Unit comes standard with 12-in. bar, but a 10-in. bar is available as an option.

Circle #288

JOHN DEERE

800/537-8233

www.johndeere.com

The line of professional grade chain saws from John Deere, Research Triangle Park, NC, includes the CS36 and CS40 lightweight professional saws, the CS56 and CS62 (pictured) heavy duty professional saws, and the CS71 and CS81 professional saws. The lightweights have 32.5cc and 39cc engines with 2.1 and 2.4 hp and bars from 12 to 18 in. The CS56 and CS62 develop 4.1 and 4.7 hp respectively and offer bars from 16 to 24 in. The CS71 and CS81 come with 20- to 32-in. guidebars and 3/8-in. chisel chains.

Circle #289

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www.lebturf.com

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flowering and the 18-5-10 long term formulation. All feature IBDU (isobutylidene diurea) slow-release nitrogen. Products come in tablet form, packed in a re-sealable bucket.

Circle #290

LITTLE WONDER

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www.littlewonder.com

Lightweight but rugged, the family of trimmers from Little Wonder, Southampton, PA, pack power to cut growth from shrubs and hedges up to 1/2 in. thick. All units have two reciprocating, hand-finished blades made of high-carbon steel. Single-edge blades are available on 19-, 24- and 30-in. models. Double-edgers, suitable for right or left-handed use and making cuts in any direction, are available in 19-, 24- and 30-in. models. Company claims units are virtually vibration-free, even at 2,400 cuts per minute.

Circle #291

continued on page 61



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Circle No. 131 on Reader Inquiry Card



The logo for Simplot, featuring the word "Simplot" in a white, sans-serif font with a small green leaf icon above the letter 'i', set against a dark green background.

continued from page 58

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Scape Tree Rings form a protective decoration for trees and shrubs. Rings look like wooden mulch chips, yet are durable and last up to 10 years. They come in 20-, 24- and 30-in. diameter sizes and are priced at \$15,

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www.planthealthcare.com

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Circle #293

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a dual-activated inertia chain brake and dust-free intake system, Oregon chain and 12-in. bar and climbing ring.

Circle #294

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Circle #295

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www.rootsinc.com

New Transplant 1-Step from Roots, Inc., New Haven, CT, is available in a 4-oz. foil pack. Packed 65 in a 4-gal. pail, it contains 17 species of mycorrhiza, plus water-holding gels to give each planting the best chance to survive. In addition, the company's mycorrhizaROOTS, available as a biostimulant that works well in deep root feeding of trees and shrubs, now has 17 species of mycorrhiza in it. Each 16-oz. bag provides a broad spectrum application of mycorrhiza for increased nutrient uptake, enhanced root systems and plant stress management.

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A whole series of 19 hand-held cutting tools crafted for the professional is available from Stihl, Virginia Beach, VA. The line includes five pruning saws, three pole pruners, three loppers, one hedge shear, four pruners and three axes. Saws come in sizes from 6 to 13 in. All offer blades that can be sharpened or replaced, strong lightweight handles, comfortable grips and computer-designed cutting teeth or blades. Pole pruners offer adjustable pole length, bark cutter and hook.

Circle #297

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Tree Staple of Berkley Heights, NJ, says its below-grade tree and shrub stabilization system is safer, stronger and more cost effective

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Control glassy-winged sharpshooter on ornamental plants, shrubs, trees and non-bearing fruit trees with Tame 2.4 EC spray from Valent, Walnut Creek, CA. This insecticide/miticide has a 2(ee) recommendation in California where it was approved to keep glassy-winged sharpshooters from migrating from trees to grapes. It is labeled for application at 10.66 fl. oz. per 100 gallons.

Circle #300

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Designed for large volume wood and yard waste disposal, the TG800 tub grinder from Vermeer, Pella, IA, delivers 800 hp into a gear-reduction, transmission-driven hammermill. The Cat 3412E is an electronic, fuel-injected, twin turbo-charged aftercooled engine. At 11 ft., tub has largest inside diameter in the industry, with a top flare of 13.6 ft. Belly conveyor, a 60-in. belt, operates at 744 ft. per minute. Debris exclusion shroud diverts spillage away from the machine.

Circle #301

Artful way to inlay

This landscape contractor combines art and technology to produce great looking patios

BY YOGITA SHARMA

Johnston's Nursery has been in the landscape design and maintenance business since 1928. Yet the task of building a paved patio with an inlay elk head 16 feet by 20 feet proved to be a challenge for owner Corey Johnston Wise, who not only accomplished this task but also seems to have devised a new inlay technique in the process.

Art in the woods

In the spring of 1999, Wise was assigned the task of installing two patios for a customer who owns a cedar-log house in the forest of northwestern Pennsylvania. Nestled in a 30-acre woodland at the base of a steep hill, this house has a large A-frame room at its center. The front and rear windows of this room overlook the two patios on either side of the house.

The customer wanted to keep with the



natural ambience of the log cabin, so Wise presented the idea of creating an elk head silhouette on the lower patio. As work progressed, Johnston's artist created silhouettes of a herd of running deer and a howling wolf for the second patio as well.

Getting to work

For Wise, who had been working with colored pavers for years, this was a large project that offered him an opportunity to do



"something really innovative with color inlay." To create the silhouette, Wise used contrasting

colors of Stratford concrete pavers, manufactured by R. I. Lampus Co. of Springdale, PA, using Bayer Corporation's Bayerferrox synthetic iron oxide pigments. Charcoal tone pavers were chosen for the elk head inlay to provide a sharp contrast to the desert blend pavers used for the background.

The elk head patio was dry-laid and took around two weeks to complete. First, a firm patio base was built by placing geotextile over the subsoil, which was then covered with six to eight inches of com-
Wise's elk head design looks painted or etched onto the pavers because the joints are so tight.

pacted aggregates. A one-inch layer of sifted sand was laid over the aggregates before placing three different lengths of interlocking pavers over the entire patio to create a cobblestone effect.

The most cumbersome aspect of the installation was the drawing and cutting of the elk head, which took four days. A computer-generated silhouette was traced onto the patio using a black permanent marker, and then each desert blend paver crossed by the outline was removed and cut using a diamond blade saw. To create the inset section, a corresponding charcoal paver was cut and placed along the outline. The rest of the pavers were later installed in the interior of the silhouette.

The result was an inlay that looks painted or etched onto the pavers. "The joints are so tight," says Wise, "that people can't believe it's an inlay."

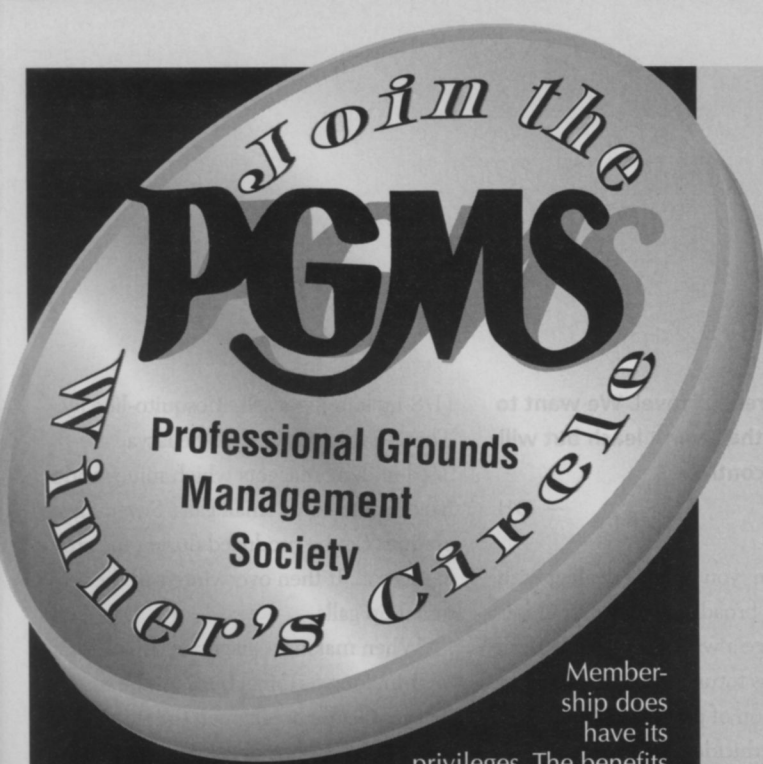
The second patio was laid using the same technique. Both patios provide durable and low maintenance pavement that adds to the aesthetic appeal of the house.

The artful elk head patio won second place for concrete pavers in a residential setting at the ICPI National Competition in 2000.

For more information on this technique, contact Johnston's Nursery, Penfield, PA at 814/765-9081 or westwood@penn.com.

COMPANY PROFILE:

Name: Johnston's Nursery
 Owner: Corey Wise Johnston
 2000 revenue: \$1 million
 Full-time employees: 12
 Customer mix: 100% residential
 Service mix: 70% design/build, 30% hortiscaping



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- Annual conference and Green Industry Expo

ask the expert

BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

Kudzu quandary

We're having problems managing Kudzu weed. Can we use PBI-Gordon Brushmaster herbicide safely to manage it?

— NC

Kudzu is a severe weed pest in many parts of the southeast. Transline, a selective herbicide by Dow AgroSciences containing clopyralid, can be applied if the Kudzu is growing over desirable, tolerant tree species. Check the supplemental label for examples of tolerant species before applying. Only plants that have emerged at the time of application will be affected and some needle/leaf curling of the desirable species may occur if applied during active tree growth. Another selective herbicide, Brushmaster by PBI-Gordon, can be used where desirable sensitive plants are not involved. Brushmaster is a low-volatile ester formulation containing 2,4-D, 2,4D-P and Dicamba. Low-volatile ester formulations can volatilize, particularly under high heat conditions, so be careful when treating an area around desirable broadleaf plants. Herbicide applications are most effective between late June and early October, as long as the Kudzu are actively growing and not under drought stress. The ideal application time is just prior to or during flowering. Always read and follow label specifications for best results.

Railroaded by weeds

We're interested in controlling vegetation near a railroad right-of-way for hiking trail clearance. What would be the best way to control all weeds?

Some of the area is gravel. We want to use chemicals that won't leach but will provide good control.

— OH

In your situation, you may be dealing with both grassy and broadleaf weeds. Your best option to manage a wide variety of existing weeds, as well as future weed growth, is to use a combination of postemergent and preemergent herbicides. Consider using a combination of herbicides such as Roundup and Surflan, or Roundup and Karmex.

Before applying, be sure that you or the person doing the application have the proper right-of-way vegetation management license to apply herbicides near specific sites being managed.

Roundup is a non-selective herbicide, which means it will discolor and kill any green vegetation. Therefore, use caution while applying. Depending on the vegetation type, the spray mix concentration will vary.

If the weeds present a problem in certain areas, consider spot treating with herbicides such as Roundup, Finale or Scythe.

Jumpin' junipers!

What might be responsible for the browning of juniper plant tips? On some plants we have found that .25- to .5-in. long tips are damaged and brown.

— PA

Based on your description, the problem is most likely caused by the juniper tip midge (*Oligotrophus betbeli*). Adults are a small

(1/8-in. long), grayish, mosquito-like fly. This is a true native fly. The larvae are 3/16-in. long maggots which mine inside needles and cause small galls. Several generations can be produced during the growing season. It then overwinters in the terminal tip galls.

When making a diagnosis, look for .25- to .5-in. long terminal buds on the outer foliage. Gently break open the tips and examine for evidence of mining and possibly the presence of reddish insects (maggots). They may also be in the pupal stage. Throughout the winter months, larvae can be found in tip galls. These galls are formed as a result of midge maggots mining in several needles at the bud tips. These galls are about the size of normal buds. Galls will remain green until the larvae begin to mature, then turn red and eventually become brown.

If it isn't severe, selectively prune infested tips and discard during dormant season. In heavy infestations, consider treating with insecticides such as Acephate or Dimethoate. Treat around mid-May and again around mid-June, early August and mid-September as needed.

If the problem is due to fungal blights such as juniper tip blight (caused by *Phomopsis* sp.) or Kabatina blight (caused by *Kabatina* sp.), larger portions of the tissue will be discolored and, as the disease progresses, fungal fruiting bodies will be found upon incubation in labs. Accordingly, treatment can be provided to manage these. Read and follow label specifications for best results.

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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Landscape MANAGEMENT

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products

TECH CENTER

Tight walkin'

Sutech says its Stealth mower, a 33-in. walk-behind, is lightweight and maneuverable and can get into tight areas and trim around anything. The deck is made of 11 gauge fabricated steel, and mower has mulching and cutting capabilities. Other features include zero-turn radius and three forward ground speeds.

For more information contact Sutech at 888/536-8368 or visit www.sutechusa.com / circle no. 250

Strength with support

Tree-Mate-O permits a newly planted tree to achieve proper development. It was made to encourage greater caliber and quicker root strength. When it is attached to a single "T" or "U" post, a torsion bar effect improves the post's ground gripping action. Tree-Mate-O is for all types of trees up to 2 in. in diameter.

For more information contact T-Mate-O at 812/256-1069 or visit

www.treesupports.com / circle no. 251

Fun in the sun

Irritrol Systems' SPC-2 converter allows the company's battery-operated IBOC Plus Series hybrid controllers to run on solar power. It can be mounted either on top of the controller or up to 1,000 feet away, and contains a three-year, maintenance-free gel cell battery.

For more information contact Irritrol at 909/785-3625 / circle no. 252

Brush it away

Geo-Boy's brush cutter tractor, featuring a Cummins diesel engine and Seppi cutter heads, is designed for clearing brush and small trees in



Precise coring

Textron says its Ryan Lawnaire 28 aerator offers the precision technology of golf course aerators in a machine designed for professional lawn care. The reciprocating, crankshaft-mounted tines produce precise vertical coring. With zero-turn radius maneuverability, the Lawnaire 28 has a 28-in. aerating width and covers up to 24,000 sq. ft. per hour.

For more information contact Textron at 888/922-8873 or visit www.textronturf.com / circle no. 253

difficult locations. It's available in standard and heavy duty models.

For more information contact Geo-Boy at 800/436-2691 or visit www.geo-boy.com / circle no. 254

Rad rake

Billy Goat Industries' CR Series compact power rake is engineered with fewer parts and less hardware mounted on a steel deck to reduce noise, vibrations and maintenance.

For more information contact Billy Goat at 816/524-9666 or visit www.billygoat.com / circle no. 255

Process this

Vandermolen Corp.'s 20Q14E is the newest member of the company's All Vegetation Processor line. It's powered by a 14- or 16-hp Vanguard engine and can process four- to five-in. fully dressed branches. A two-in. ball hitch makes it easy to tow.

For more information contact Vandermolen at 973/992-8506 or visit www.vandermolen-corp.com / circle no. 256

Split 'em up

Foster Manufacturing Corp.'s Model FLS-550-HV commercial series log splitter can be used in

either a horizontal or vertical position. It has a Honda GX-160 5.5-hp engine and can handle logs up to 26 in. long. The splitter also contains a 1-7/8-in. ball coupler hitch.

For more information contact Foster at 262/633-7073 or visit www.fostermfgcorp.com / circle no. 257

Collect 'em up

The ODB Co.'s Metro is a belt-driven vacuum leaf collector with a rear loading unit and hydraulic hose boom. It features a John Deere Model 4020D 4-cylinder water-cooled diesel engine and 14-in. x 120-in. wire reinforced urethane suction hose.

For more information contact ODB at 800/446-9823 or visit www.theodbco.com / circle no. 258

Capable cart

Bachtold Bros.' commercial duty cart wagon has the ability to hold 400 lbs. and up to 5 cu. ft. of material. It has a 14 gauge stainless steel body, angled front and 20-in. nickel-plated wheels. For extra heavy hauling, the handle of the cart converts to a wagon tongue so it can be pulled along by a tractor or riding mower.

For more information contact Bachtold Bros. at 217/784-5161 or visit www.bachtoldbros.com / circle no. 259



Light up the night

Sculpturite lighting by Pinecrest can be mixed and matched to suit your tastes. Many of Pinecrest's lighting posts are triangular in configuration. Each design is first carved into hardwood, then used to form the sand molds into which aluminum is cast.

For more information contact Pinecrest at 800/443-5357 or visit www.pinecrestinc.com/ circle no. 260

Floodlight fun

RAB Electric Manufacturing's "H101" is a landscape floodlight with a bell design made for

easier relamping and glare reduction. The new floodlight has durable one-piece die cast construction with rugged mounting arm. It accepts 150 watt PAR 38 lamp maximum. The fixture also has a large silicone gasket to provide weatherproof protection around the lamp and socket.

For more information contact RAB Electric Manufacturing at 201/784-8600 / circle no. 261

Keep tools neat

Intromark Incorporated introduces Tool Hugger, a new tool holding clamp that is mounted and used to hang anything from tools to sports

Feed me

Bandit Industries' Auto Feed Plus chipper is digital and has a control device that starts, stops and reverses a unit's feed system. The reverse feature eliminates the potential for burning and dulling knives and is infinitely adjustable from a millisecond up to 65 seconds.

For more information contact Bandit at 800/952-0178 or visit www.banditchippers.com/ circle no. 262



equipment. It is constructed of zinc coated steel, flexible steel cables encased in rubber, and can hold objects weighing up to 50 lbs.

For more information contact Intromark Inc. at 800/851-6030 / circle no. 263

continued on page 68

TEMPORARY / SEASONAL LABOR VISAS



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products

continued from page 67

Get a grip

Bahco Tools has come up with the PX and PXR ergonomic hand pruners. Key benefits of these pruners are less fatigue and a more productive working life. There is a choice of cutting heads that allows the user to adapt pruner to the diameter of plant material being pruned.

For more information contact Bahco Tools at 800/387-8295 or visit www.bahco.com / circle no. 264

Hedge hacker

Stihl's HL 73 is an extended-length hedge trimmer with an adjustable

angle cutting head that maneuvers from 0 to 90 degrees. The HL 73 can also convert into a broom or power scythe with additional interchangeable attachments. The trimmer is built with a stratified charge engine and a solid shaft drive that transfers more power from the engine to the cutting head.

For more information contact Stihl at 800/467-8445 or visit www.stihlusa.com / circle no. 265

No tearing here

Vermeer Manufacturing Co. claims its SC50TX stump cutter doesn't tear up the ground as it goes. It has a 50-hp Caterpillar 3024 diesel engine that allows it to travel from 18

to 110 ft. per minute. Also, it can cut 17 in. deep and 70 in. wide.

For more information contact Vermeer at 888/837-6337 or visit www.vermeer.com / circle no. 266

Curtain call

Rain Cane is a sprayer that sprays a high volume curtain of water for more gentle and accurate watering of flower beds, seedlings and flats. The company claims users will have less wrist soreness and frustration when using Rain Cane. Watering wands are available in 18-in., 9-in., heavy foliage and hanging basket sizes.

For more information contact Rain Cane at 970/495-0389 or visit www.raincane.com / circle no. 267

The reel deal

The Hannay GHAT1200 reel, made by Hannay Reels is engineered for

portable use in grounds maintenance and features a permanent direct crank rewind. It operates at pressures to 1000 psi and temperatures from -80°F to +185°F.

For more information contact 877/467-3357 or visit www.hannay.com / circle no. 268

Time to excavate

Caterpillar's 320C L utility hydraulic excavator is ideal for use in urban construction areas and other space-restricted sites. The 320C L has net power of 138 hp produced by a Cat 3066 turbocharged, six-cylinder diesel engine. It also has the advantage of a smaller swing radius. Features include automatic boom and swing priority functions.

For more information contact Caterpillar at www.cat.com / circle no. 269


continued on page 71

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Circle 134



Retaining beauty

Versa-Lok's Cobble retaining wall system undergoes a special manufacturing process to achieve an aged look that closely resembles old-world cobblestone. The company claims that it is ideal for landscaping projects such as retaining walls, planters, and elevated patios. The Cobble units are 6 in. high, 8 in. wide and are easily assembled without mortar.

For more information contact Versa-Lok at 800/770-4525 / circle no. 270

Landscape MANAGEMENT

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

CONTRACTORS/SERVICE COMPANIES

- 02 255 Landscape Contractors (Installation & Maintenance)
- 03 260 Lawn Care Service Companies & Custom Chemical Applicators (ground & air)
- 04 285 Irrigation Contractors & Consultants
 Other Contractors/Service Companies (please specify) _____

LANDSCAPING/GROUNDS CARE FACILITIES

- 05 290 Sports Complexes
- 06 295 Parks
- 07 305 Schools, Colleges & Universities
 Other Grounds Care Facilities (specify) _____

SUPPLIERS AND CONSULTANTS

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

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

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

3. SERVICES PERFORMED (fill in ALL that apply)

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

4a. Do you specify, purchase or influence the selection of landscape products?

- 58 Yes 59 No

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

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

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

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

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

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

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106	118	130	142	154	166	178	190	202	214	226	238	250	262	274	286	298	310
107	119	131	143	155	167	179	191	203	215	227	239	251	263	275	287	299	311
108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240	252	264	276	288	300	312
109	121	133	145	157	169	181	193	205	217	229	241	253	265	277	289	301	313
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111	123	135	147	159	171	183	195	207	219	231	243	255	267	279	291	303	315
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continued from page 68

Fabrics for flowers

Dalen Products Inc. has introduced a new line of commercial landscape fabrics. The Pro-Shield line includes five materials that the company claims can handle any nursery or commercial application. Pro-Shield Woven 5 and Woven 4 are both needle-punched woven fabrics. Pro-Shield Woven 3 is a 3.25 oz. woven fabric. There are also two spun bonded materials.

For more information contact Dalen at 800/747-3256 or visit www.gardeneer.com / circle no. 271

Safe storage

Safety Storage Inc.'s shelving, available in flat or spill containment styles, provides storage and handling of bottles, buckets, bags and boxes of dry and liquid chemicals. Separation walls can keep incompatible materials apart. Both shelving and separation walls are made from sheet steel protected by chemical resistant coating. Stainless steel units are also available.

For more information contact Safety Storage at 800/344-6539 or www.safetystorage.com / circle no. 272

On the level

Glenmac, Inc.'s Harley Power Box Rake grades, levels and backfills trenches. The carbide-toothed roller lifts the loose material and directs it back to the trench with the activation of the

powered angle and the collecting effect of the box-end plates to replace and refill the disturbed trench area.

For more information contact Glenmac at 800/437-9779 or www.glenmac.com / circle no. 273



Convenient compacting tool

BOMAG's BT80D is a diesel-powered vibratory tamper with a 4.4-hp Yanmar diesel that offers travel speeds up to 52.8 ft. per minute or 3.6 mph. The BT80D is capable of compacting up to 3,400 sq. ft. per hour and has a maximum compaction depth of 25 in.

For more information contact BOMAG at 800/235-0008 or visit www.bomag-america.com / circle no. 274



Can you dig?

Nupla Corporation's fiberglass-handled construction and material-handling tools, which include shovels, post-hole diggers, timber handling tools and others, are rugged and nonconductive. The Power Pylon shovels and spades feature a molded, fiberglass-reinforced composite handle attachment where the handle and blade are fused as one. They're available in round, square, landscaping and trenching models.

For more information contact Nupla Corp. at 800/872-7661 or www.nuplacorp.com / circle no. 275

Get a load of this

Karl Schaeff & Co. says its new SCL 515 compact wheel loader is an alternative to skid steers because it saves fuel, is more comfortable and doesn't tear up the ground. It weighs 7,400 lbs. and has an operating load of 2,260 lbs. and a 50-hp four-cylinder diesel engine. Hydrostatic drive keeps engine rpms up, lessens tire wear and provides a more comfortable ride.

For more information contact Schaeff at 214/357-8300 / circle no. 276

No danger here

Environmental Products' hazardous material storage buildings comply to building, environmental and safety codes and feature advanced coating technology, oversized containment sump, modular, interlocking wall panels, stainless steel interior panels, support beams and forklift channels. Fire suppression system is optional.

For more information contact Environmental Products at 440/934-2180 / www.benko-products.com or circle no. 277

Powerful pickin' up

The LB Power Pickup Broom attachment from M-B Companies allows equipment operators to use skid steer or articulated loaders for street sweeping. The front-mounted pickup broom comes with sweeper, bucket and quick-attach mounting hardware. A hydraulic drive motor powers a broom that sweeps dust, gravel, stones and leaves into bucket. Brush speed is variable up to 180 rpms. The loader's bucket can be emptied without the removal of the sweeper. Brushes are available in 48-, 60- or 72-in. lengths. Optional equipment includes sprinkler system and gutter broom.

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continued on page 72

continued from page 71
and safety. It carries up to 500 lbs. in its tilt cargo bed.

For more information contact Snapper at 770/954-2500 or www.snapper.com / circle no. 279

Just a sprinkle

NIBCO says its new electronic control device, XeriTron, improves lawn sprinkler system performance while saving homeowners water and money. Easily connected to an existing sprinkler system's controller, the XeriTron unit sends a series of electronic signals through the system, creating a

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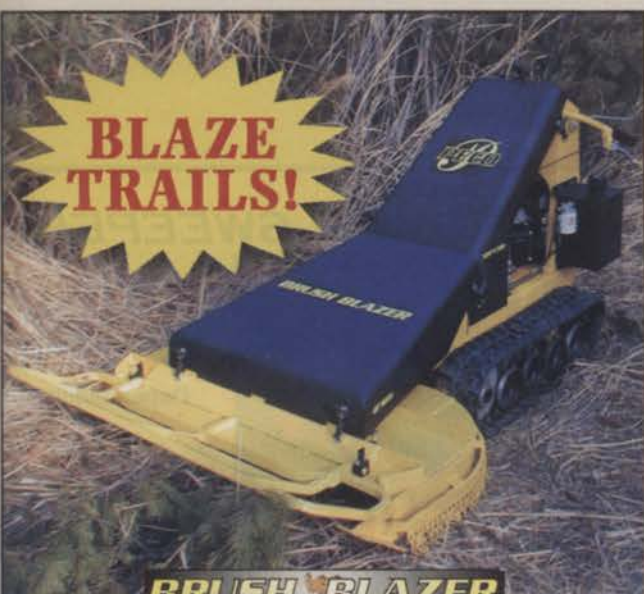
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Circle No. 102



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