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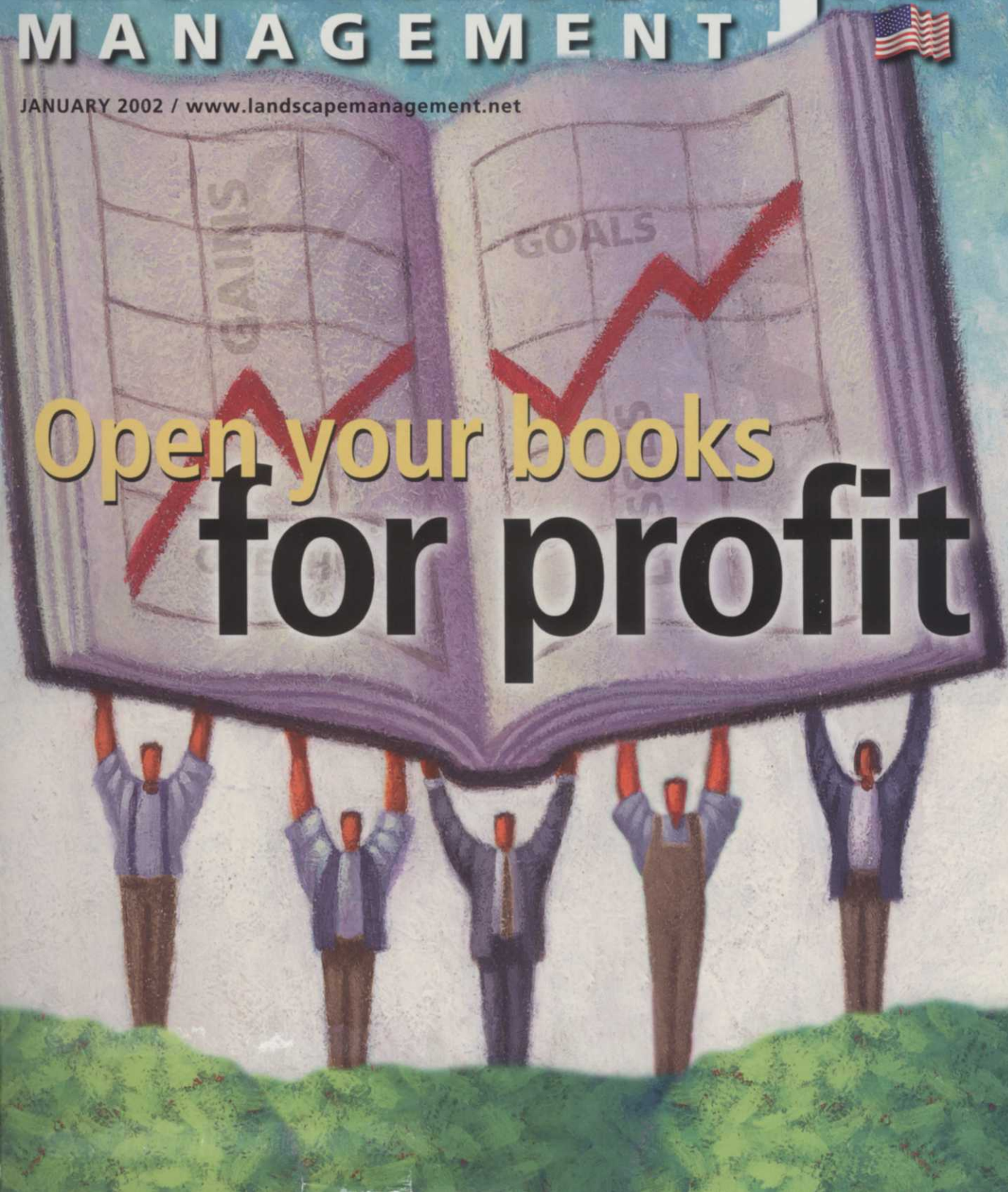
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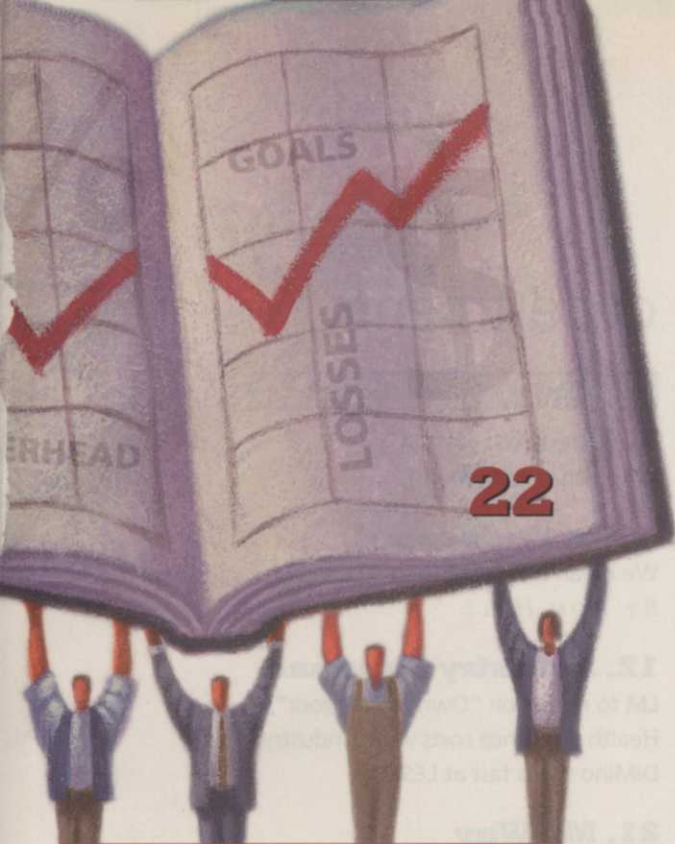
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# Landscape MANAGEMENT

JANUARY 2002 / #1 / VOLUME 41

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COVER IMAGE: ROB COLVIN FOR ARTVILLE, LLC; ADAPTED BY CARRIE PARKHILL



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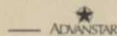
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# events

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

## January

**21-24 Michigan Turfgrass Conference** / Lansing, MI; 517/321-1660

**21-24 Professional Horticulture Conference of Virginia and Trade Show** / Virginia Beach, VA; 757/523-4734

**22-23 Cornell Organic Turfgrass Management Short Course** / Long Island, NY; 607/255-1792

**24-26 Gulf States Horticultural Expo** / Mobile, AL; 334/502-7777

**29 Maryland Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show** / Baltimore, MD; 301/345-4199

**29-30 Cornell Organic Turfgrass Management Short Course** / Long Island, NY; 607/255-1792

**29-1 Midwinter Conference** / Orlando, FL; Turfgrass Producers International; 847/705-9898; [www.turfgrassod.org](http://www.turfgrassod.org)

**31- Feb. 3 ANLA Management Clinic** / Louisville, KY; American Nursery & Landscape Assn.; 202/789-2900; [www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org)

## February

**6-9 GCSAA Conference & Show** / Orlando, FL; 800/472-7878; [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org)

**7-10 ALCA Executive Forum** / Cancun, Mexico; Associated Landscape Contractors of America; 800/395-2522

**15-16 PLCAA Business Management Meeting** / Charlotte, NC; 800/458-3466; [www.plcaa.org](http://www.plcaa.org)

**18-22 Cornell Turfgrass Management Short Course** / Westchester County, NY; 607/255-1792

**20-22 LCA Winter Workshop** / Bethesda, MD; Landscape Contractors Association; 301/948-0810

**22-23 Xeriscape Conference** / Albuquerque, NM; 505/341-5743

**25 NYSTA Southeast Regional Conference** / Suffern, NY; New York State Turfgrass Association; [www.nysta.org](http://www.nysta.org)

**27 NJLCA Trade Show & Conference** / Secaucus, NJ; New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association; 201/664-6310

## March

**5-6 CALCP Spring Training Conference** / Aurora, CO; 303/850-7587

**5-7 New England Regional Turf Conference & Trade Show** / Providence, RI; 401/848-0004

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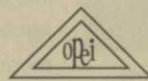
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[www.irrigation.org](http://www.irrigation.org)



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BY RON HALL / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## We mean business in '02

**Y**ou can't put your landscape or lawn care operation on autopilot and expect it to be as valuable to your customers as you want it to be. The same goes for us at *Landscape Management* magazine.

Any business worthy of being called a business requires continuous examination and and re-examination. That keeps it on track to deliver services that meet customers' needs — in our case information.

The year 2002 brings new promises and challenges and some changes in this magazine. The goal is to make it an even more valuable source of information for you. Among the changes:

► We've relaunched and improved our Web site, [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net). It contains more content and improved search tools. Also, many of you have been re-

ceiving our weekly e-mail newsletter of industry news and events. If you're not receiving it, please visit our Web site and sign up.

► We've shifted the responsibilities of several editorial team members. **Group Editor/Associate Publisher Sue Porter** ([sporter@advanstar.com](mailto:sporter@advanstar.com)) takes on additional and expanded challenges within our Landscape Group of magazines, but she'll continue to help plan and critique LM's business and operations-

focused coverage. Her knowledge of publishing and her experiences as a former business owner make her an invaluable member of the editorial team

However, the day-to-day activities pertaining to LM's editorial coverage, its newsletter and the information on its Web site are the responsibility of the following people:

**Editor-in-Chief Ron Hall** ([rhall@advanstar.com](mailto:rhall@advanstar.com)). That's me. I've been around a while. I joined this magazine (then named *Weeds, Trees & Turf*) in 1984. Contact me with any comments you might have about LM, its coverage or any suggestions for making it more useful to you.

**Managing Editor Jason Stahl** ([jstahl@advanstar.com](mailto:jstahl@advanstar.com)) is a graduate of John Carroll University, Cleveland, OH, former newspaperman and Cleveland Metroparks grounds staffer. Contact him with news and new product releases, event announcements and any other comments concerning LM or its coverage.

**Web Editor Lynne Brakeman** ([lbrakeman@advanstar.com](mailto:lbrakeman@advanstar.com)). Lynne, an award-winning journalist, says that readers shouldn't have to wait to learn about up-to-the-minute Green Industry news and announcements. See what she means by bookmarking [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net) and subscribing to the to our e-mail newsletter. You'll stay up to date.

**Graphic Designer Carrie Parkhill** ([cparkhill@advanstar.com](mailto:cparkhill@advanstar.com)), although an experienced magazine designer, is the newest member of our staff. A graduate of Bowling Green State University in Ohio, she's responsible for the readable and pleasing "look" of this publication.

We've had some changes at LM but our mission remains unchanged—to deliver valuable information you can use to improve your businesses, serve your customers and grow this great industry.



The LM team (l. to r.): Ron Hall, Sue Porter, Carrie Parkhill, Jason Stahl and Lynne Brakeman.

The new year brings new promises and challenges and some changes in Landscape Management. The goal is to make the magazine an even more valuable source of information for you.

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# industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

## Toro closes Indiana plant

BLOOMINGTON, MN — The Toro Company closed its Evansville, IN plant, shifting manufacturing to its Tomah, WI and Windom, MN plants. The move, which affected 94 employees, is part of a long-term strategy to strengthen operations and leverage enterprise-wide manufacturing assets. Toro also sold its Riverside, CA headquarters and plant, moving to El Paso, TX.

## Shindaiwa gets new distributor

TUALATIN, OR — Shindaiwa, Inc. signed JET Equipment & Tools Ltd. of Burnaby, British Columbia to distribute Shindaiwa products in Western Canada.

## CoCal acquires Pratt Landscape

DENVER, CO — CoCal Landscape, with offices in Denver, Colorado Springs and Ft. Collins, acquired Pratt Landscape, a division of Pratt Properties in Longmont, CO. Included is 60 maintenance accounts, including Pratt Business Park, a 2.2 million sq. ft. office park.

## FMC reorganizes, changes name

TUALATIN, OR — FMC Corp. reorganized into two independent, publicly traded companies, one chemical, the other machinery. It also changed its name to FMC2 to reflect this reorganization.

## LM to report on JP's Owners' Network

The new "Owners' Network" program provides real-life networking and business-building opportunities for lawn/landscape company owners. *Landscape Management* will be reporting on some of the business-building ideas arising from the program.

Three regional Owners' Network Jams kick off the program that is being offered by JP Horizons, Inc. The "Jams" are being conducted by consultant and trainer Jim Paluch and sponsored by Weed Man lawn care. The dates and locations are:

- Feb. 12, Dallas, TX
- Feb. 19, Columbus, OH
- Feb. 21, Baltimore, MD

The formula of the Owners' Network is simple but effective — small groups of non-competing company owners sharing common business-related issues and working toward developing best practices. Each participating member can call upon the other eight to 10 owners in their circle as their "Group of Advisors." They'll stay in regular communication by teleconferencing and through internet conferences at [www.jphorizons.com](http://www.jphorizons.com).

"We add to this a year-long opportunity



Paluch launches program

to efficiently share ideas, for participants to create their own board of directors and help other owners," says Paluch, "This is education process is interactive and affordable."

Says Bob Maffei, Maffei Landscape, Cape Cod, MA: "Every question that I may have about my business I can

get answered quickly and with the expertise of owners from around the country."

"It keeps the business owner thinking of new ways to reach the goals in their business, to examine their leadership style and continually raises the bar of professionalism among the companies involved," adds Dennis Barriball, Hemlock Landscapes, Chagrin Falls, OH.

Landscape Management Editor-in-Chief Ron Hall says: "When owners of lawn and landscape businesses share their experiences and ideas with colleagues they generate a lot of positive energy and great ideas."

"We'll be introducing you, our readers, to some of these business owners and their operation-building ideas here on our Web site and on the pages of *Landscape Management*," Hall adds.

[CLIPPINGS]



## LM Web site relaunches...

Check out the new look of the Landscape Management Web site at [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net). More great info in an easy-to-surf design. And make sure to sign up for our weekly newsletter if you haven't already. It's the best way to follow breaking Green Industry news!

# Rising health insurance costs worry industry

Budget for rising insurance premiums for 2002, your company's bottom line is going to take a hit.

Lawn and landscape business owners contacted by *Landscape Management* realize that the tragedy of Sept. 11 is resulting in higher premiums for most types of insurance, including vehicles, property and various forms of liability coverage. More troubling to them is the year-to-

year upward spiral of health insurance costs with costs rising 20%, more in some cases, in 2002.

"We can't blame every problem on terrorists," says Bob Andrews, of The Greenskeeper, Carmel, IN. "Health insurance was going up before 9-11." As premiums continue rise, he says, more small business owners are going to be asking employees to pay more of these costs.

Jack Robertson, Robertson Lawn Care, Inc., Springfield, says his company's health care premiums rose 22% from 2001 rates. "I don't think this has anything to do 9-11. Health care insurance was already on its way of getting out of hand."

Adds Michael Currin, Greenscape Inc., Holly Springs, NC: "Medical costs have been skyrocketing and really present some issues for us as a company. We have had to reduce some of the levels of benefits in order to keep the cost increases reasonable."

What can you do about it? Shop around, say some business owners. For instance, Rick Kier, Pro Scapes, Jamesville, NY, compared prices in the insurance market and ended up lowering his costs through the New York Nurserymen's Association.

"Regardless of economic conditions, every few years I think it pays to go out to bid and shop around insurance prices," he says. —Callista Tomallo

## TPI's suggestions to offset rising premiums

The Turfgrass Producers International, Rolling Meadows, IL, in its Dec./Jan. 02 *Business Management* newsletter offers these suggestions for coping with rising insurance costs:

- ▶ Take a hard look at the coverage your standard policy provides.
- ▶ Eliminate excess coverage. Get rid of unnecessary equipment and inventory.
- ▶ Raise the deductible. The time and effort needed to fill out a claims report are often greater than the risk of buying policies with slightly higher deductibles.
- ▶ Negotiate to reduce your health insurance costs. This will often yield somewhat smaller increases.

## People & companies

**Briggs & Stratton** named **Doug Page** director of commercial marketing.

**Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products** named **Jon Carlson** president of its Turf and Professional Lawn Care business.

**Exmark Manufacturing Company's** **Michael Hirschman**, national sales manager, announced his retirement effective Oct. 31, 2001. Active in the outdoor power equip-

ment industry since 1972, **Hirschman** joined **Exmark** in 1990.

**Echo Inc.** appointed **Joseph F. Fahey** vice president of marketing.

The **RBI Companies** added **Rod Wiberg** to its landscape design/build team as senior landscape architect.

**Agrisel USA** appointed **Mike Zech** national sales manager.

**Symbiot Business Group** named **Bruce K. Wilson** to its Board of Directors.

**The Toro Company**, Irrigation Division, appointed **Leo Lovato** managing director, sales and marketing.

**Simplot** named **Mike Tentis** BEST fertilizer area manager for Northern California.

**PBI/Gordon Corp.** named **Mark Miller** sales manager for its professional turf and

ornamental and agricultural products.

**Harmony Products** appointed **Michael P. Bardaro** senior vice president, chief financial officer.

**Scag Power Equipment** presented its "Distributor of the Year" award to **PACE, Inc.** of Plymouth, MI.

**Valent USA** named **Masayo Tada** president.

## New LESCO prez off to fast start

CLEVELAND, OH — What does a company that provides uniforms to service businesses have in common with LESCO, based here? Plenty, says Michael P. DiMino, 43, who started as LESCO's new President and Chief Operating Officer Tuesday, Dec. 11. And that's what he's banking on to give him a running start in directing the day-to-day operations of this longtime professional turf products provider. DiMino came to the golf course and lawn care supplier after serving as president and COO of Uniforms To You, a Chicago-based division of Cintas Corporation.

DiMino met with editors from *Landscape Management* and sister publication *Golfdom* at LESCO headquarters his first week on the job. He said that although he came from a different industry, LESCO approaches and sells to its customers, in this case turfgrass and landscape professionals, in essentially, the same way.

"There are a lot of similarities to what I was doing," he said, including selling directly to customers. "We had sales people in every major city selling directly to ho-

tels and restaurants . . . similar to what LESCO reps do. The dynamics of how you create the customer and the vertical sourcing are similar, too."

DiMino described himself as a "detail" person. One of his goals is to study how the company is serving its customers and to investigate technologies to improve operating efficiencies. "Everybody has areas where they can improve," he said.

The new president said that LESCO "is addressing the right issues at the right time." He said he will help Chairman and CEO

William A. Foley execute the company's financial plan that's already in place for 2002. "Our goal is to meet or exceed our plans," he added.

During his 13-year tenure at Uniforms to You, the company went from being a private, family-owned business to a division of publicly held company, and sales increased from \$60 to \$215 million.

DiMino emphasized that his focus will be on helping the company to become more profitable, which, he said, will create value for shareholders.

— Ron Hall



Michael P. DiMino says LESCO on right track

## Surfin' Turf

### Get with the program

You're guaranteed to find more than one extension service Web site out in cyberspace, but the University of Massachusetts has a particularly good one. As soon as you log on at [www.umassturf.org](http://www.umassturf.org), information on management updates, workshops,



publications, references, education, diagnostics and pest identification is a simple

click away. Make sure to check out the management updates from UMass Extension Turf Specialists that offer the latest regional information on disease outbreaks, insect population status, cultural strategies for managing turf.



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Circle 110



## PLCAA president explores lawn care in Asia

PLCAA president Mike Kernaghan recently visited two major Asian franchise shows as part of a Canadian trade mission. His goal was to explore the development of lawn care in these emerging markets. Kernaghan, COO of Weed Man International, Toronto, Ontario, participated in the 12-day trip to Manila and Singapore with several other Canadian franchise firms in retail, restaurant and services.

The group attended Asia to Asia, a franchise exposition held this year in Manila, which attracted nearly 250,000 registrants, as well as Global Franchising 2001, another large show in Singapore which drew franchisors from 60 countries.

Both shows were eye-openers, said Kernaghan, who described the Philippine market for service franchises as "exploding." "There's an emerging

middle class there," he said. He described visiting golf course communities with large lots that "looked like those you'd find in Rochester." Those people are looking for similar services as their North American counterparts, he noted.

Kernaghan also reported that several large family-run businesses called Tai-pans appeared to be prime candidates to develop new franchise concepts in the Asian markets. "Some of them are master franchisors for several restaurant, retail and service franchises already," he noted.

During his visit to Singapore, Kernaghan had the opportunity to meet with other international lawn care franchisors from Australia and Wales, as well as a group of local Green Industry firms. "I was hooked up with the largest landscape firm in Singapore

### Women join PLCAA board for first time in history

The membership of PLCAA recently broke new ground by electing its first female director, Gina Neher, of Lawn Pride, Indianapolis, IN. The board will have an additional woman member with the presence of Jennifer Remsberg, Residential Market Manager, Bayer Corp., in her role as an appointed associate director. (If you need more info about Gina, her number is 317/882-3200.)

and others," he said. "We talked for about three hours. Some of them belong to our organizations." He noted the group has just established a

new professional organization for Singapore.

For more information about this visit, contact PLCAA at [www.plcaa.org](http://www.plcaa.org).

### Managers buy Post Landscape Group

**ATLANTA** — Managers of Post Landscape Group — Bill Lincicome, Jim McCutcheon and Ken Rogers — bought that business from Post Properties, Inc. (NYSE: PPS) this past November. The company's 240 employees are now a part of the newly named HighGrove Partners, L.L.C. with offices here and in Charlotte, NC.

"Our new company will have the benefit of Post's unmatched landscaping heritage along with an unwavering commitment to innovative design and dedicated customer service," said Lincicome, president of HighGrove Partners.

Post's separate internal landscaping division that performs design, installation and maintenance services for its communities was unaffected by this sale.

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CHM-0029

Circle 109

## Chipco Academy offers training on Chipco line

**MONTVALE, NJ** — The Chipco Professional Products group of Aventis E.S. has launched the Chipco Academy, a free on-line product training program for turfgrass professionals offering end-user training on Chipco fungicide, herbicide, insecticide and PGR usage.

Each Chipco Academy training program consists of information on target pests, product chemistries, benefits

and application procedures. After reviewing the information presented at [www.aven-tischipco.com](http://www.aven-tischipco.com), participants will be quizzed on-line. Upon successful completion of the quiz, professionals receive a certificate recognizing their training, along with a gift from Chipco Professional Products.

Read More [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net)

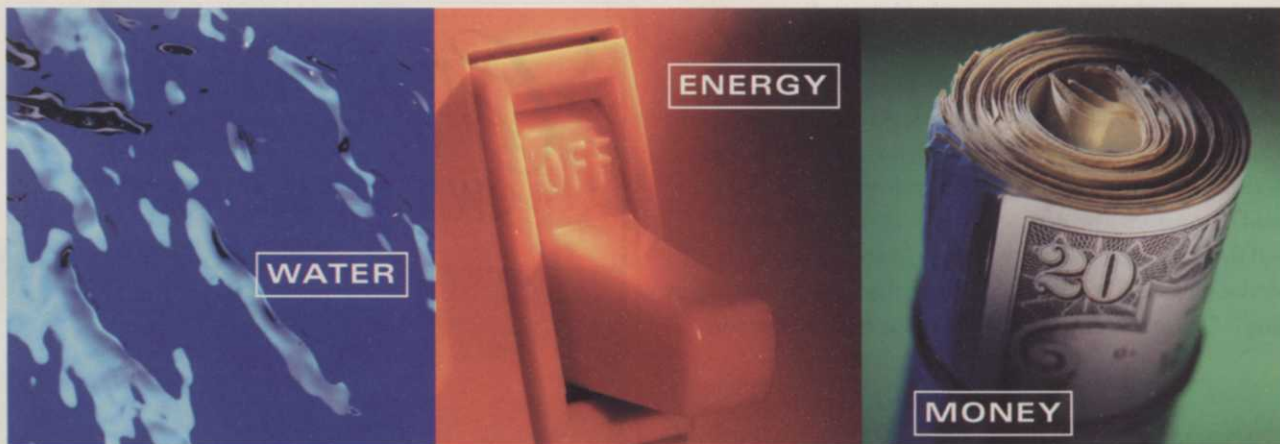
## Woods Equipment Company gets debt restructuring agreement

**ROCKFORD, IL** — Woods Equipment Company will stride into the new year with a fresh start thanks to an agreement with its debt holders to exchange all outstanding debt and accrued interest for common stock.

"This will improve the financial condition of our business and set us up for continued growth," says Mark A. Miller, Woods' Vice President and Chief Financial Officer.

Upon completion of the restructuring, the company will have eliminated \$176.7 million of long-term debt and related interest. Last year, before restructuring began, Woods had reduced its workforce by 18%, downsized facilities in Schofield, WI and Gardner, MA, and closed its Charlotte, NC facility.

— Jason Stahl



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***The proof is in the leaf.<sup>1</sup>***

*Monsanto scientists used scanning-electron microscopy to photograph the effects of weeds sprayed with Roundup PRO and an imitator. Taken just one hour after application, these images clearly show more formulation in the leaf sprayed with Roundup PRO.*

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***In the first two hours, it delivers three times more power to the roots than Syngenta's latest imitator product.***

***The proof is in the roots.<sup>2</sup>***

*Scientists also used autoradiography to photograph and measure the amount of herbicide in the roots two hours after application. Time after time, at least three times more herbicide showed up in the weeds sprayed with Roundup PRO. With the imitator, barely any herbicide has moved to the roots.*





*This is a cross-section of a weed leaf magnified 1000x. The yellow droplets mean Roundup PRO is already at work inside.*

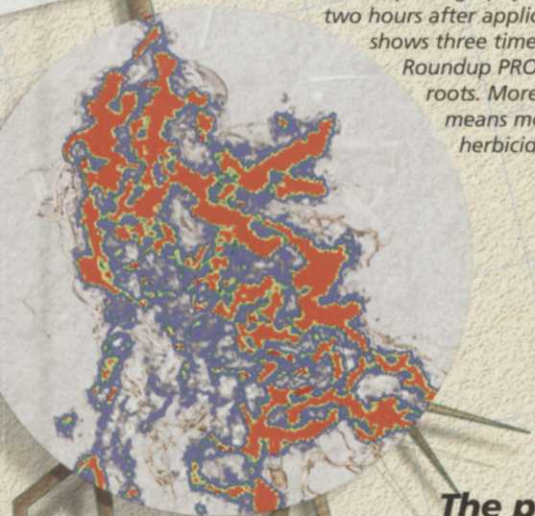
**Roundup**  
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Herbicide



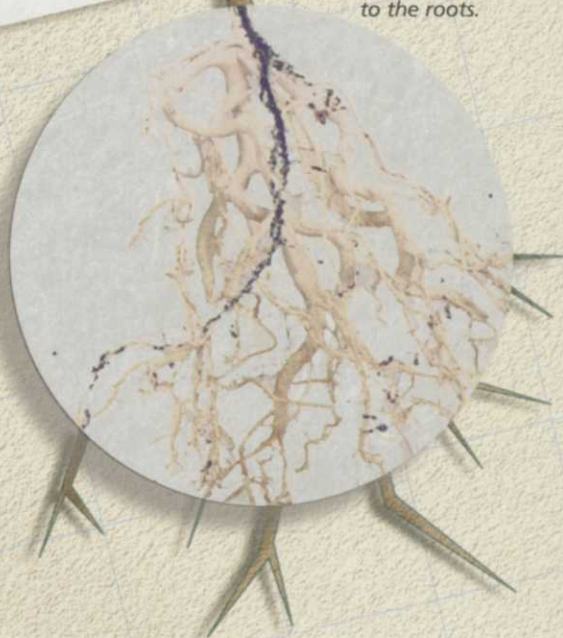
*This weed, sprayed with the imitator, has almost no droplets in the leaf.*

*Syngenta's latest imitator product*

*In the first two hours, almost no imitator herbicide has moved to the roots.*



*Scientific photography taken two hours after application shows three times more Roundup PRO in the roots. More color means more herbicide.*



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Always read and follow label directions. Test conducted with MCN 77360, EPA Reg #524-475 with comparison to Syngenta product carrying EPA Reg. #10182-449. 1. Test methodology: In scanning-electron microscopy, Monsanto scientists identified penetrated formulations of both Roundup PRO and Touchdown Pro in the mesophyll cell layer. These micrographs support the evidence that formulations containing Monsanto's patented PROformance technology rapidly penetrate the leaf surface. 2. Test methodology: Radiolabeled formulations were applied at equal acid-equivalent rates. Radioactivity was visualized by autoradiography following a simulated rain event two hours after application. Monsanto laboratory tests, 2001. Roundup®, Roundup PRO® and PROformance™ are trademarks of Monsanto Technology LLC. [12748 jct 10/01] ©2001 Monsanto Company RUPRO-12748

Sometimes it's difficult to swallow your pride and admit you need help from an outside source.

Don't be blind to the help available to you.



## Friends, your best resource

**W**hen I run into roadblocks in dealing with some of the challenges facing all of us in today's competitive landscape industry, I can either a) lose sleep over the problem and still be no closer to solving it than when I started, or b) seek advice from friends I've made in the industry over the years through my involvement in the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA).

It still amazes me how these friends will call me back even at the busiest times of the year. The advice I get is the best in that it comes from business owners who have faced the same problems and found innovative ways to solve them.

### Outside eyes

Last spring, I was struggling with how to restructure our landscape maintenance team. I kept coming to the conclusion that we weren't making the progress I wanted.

I realized I needed outside eyes to look at our situation, so I called Mike Rorie of Groundmasters, Inc., Cincinnati, OH. Mike is not only a great friend but someone I respect. He's grown his landscape maintenance business over the years through hard work and smart business decisions.

When I first talked to Mike he had some immediate questions and a few suggestions on how to solve my problems. I sent him our financial statements and job cost reports so that he could better understand our situation.

A few days later Mike called. Instead of offering a few simple suggestions, he astounded me by saying,

"I'm coming down to visit you. When are you available?" He boarded a plane and spent two of the most productive, beneficial days with us we've ever had.

Mike spent the first day meeting the staff, looking at our properties, asking questions and doing lots of observing. The next day we started formulating ideas and plans to reshape our landscape maintenance division. Some of his recommendations to us were:

■ **Reduce your labor cost.** We were spending too long on some jobs. Also, we had too many people on some of our other accounts.

■ **Eliminate the poorly performing accounts.** In some cases, it was costing us money to maintain a property!

■ **Develop a contract book to organize our accounts.** Through this we assigned an A, B or C to rate our accounts and set up a process to be better prepared at renewal time.

■ **Set up tracking devices.** These would enable us to hold our account managers and foremen accountable for the financial performance of our jobs.

By looking at our situation through unbiased, astute eyes, Mike Rorie was able to see some things I overlooked.

I encourage you to take the time to do the same thing. Sometimes it's difficult to swallow your pride and admit you need help from an outside source. Don't be blind to the help available to you. Build your own network of outside experts who can help your business. Attending ALCA or other professional association meetings is one of the best ways to start.

— *The author is vice president of operations at Smallwood Design Group/Smallwood Landscape, Inc. in Naples, FL. He is also a member of our Editorial Advisory Board.*

# Open your books for profit

**Here's how you can turn your employees into business partners intent upon cutting costs and building revenues**

BY RON HALL/ EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**B**usinessman Dan Foley and other players on his team huddle at 7 a.m. every Tuesday morning. There are usually about 10 people in the huddle. They're forecasting the financials for the month.

Together they scrutinize their landscape operation's key numbers. This is how they determine winning and losing. Then, with each person responsible for a particular line item, they develop action plans to get these numbers where they want them to be.

This is just one facet of the game being played at D. Foley Landscape, Inc., Walpole, MA. Foley says that "the game"—better known as open-book management—is greatly benefiting his organization. His experiences with the system have convinced him that it can offer substantial profit- and

team-building benefits for other landscape/lawn operations, too.

Educating employees about key financial aspects of the business and then empowering (and rewarding) them to put this knowledge to work is a powerful tool for improving a company's operating efficiencies and/or cutting costs, says Foley.

"One thing I think is confusing about the open-book management concept is its name," he adds.

No kidding! Foley himself amends the definition by sometimes referring to the system as "the game." (He follows many of the suggestions offered by Jack Stack, a popular expert on the subject who collaborated with author Bo Burlingham to write the book, "The



Dan Foley plays the "game of business."





Great Game of Business.”) Other times he refers to the process as “sharing the success.”

However you describe it, don't fear it, he says. “In this process you teach employees to think and act like business owners,” explains Foley, who started his company after graduating with a business degree from Babson College in 1989.

“It's not about digging out your check book and passing it around to your employees. It's not even necessarily about sharing financial statements with your employees. And it's not about paying financial bonuses to your employees, although that may a part of it.”

And, most of all, insists Foley, open-book management is not a fad. “It's been around awhile and it works.” Indeed, the system's key points — sharing appropriate company financial information and offering incentives to spur production or efficiencies among employees — aren't new. But it wasn't until people like author and consultant John Case (“Open Book Management: The Coming Business Revolution”) put the elements into comprehensive business systems that it excited owners of U.S. businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized businesses.

Foley's company, which focuses on commercial landscape maintenance, has been playing a variation of that game since 1998. He says he's sorry now that he didn't get his team onto the field and start playing sooner.

He says that open-book management has benefited his operation by:

- improving and stabilizing profits,
- infusing his company with a spirit of teamwork,

## You have to know your numbers

Nick DiBenedetto used to think that if he worked hard and served his clients well, profits would take care of themselves. He now realizes that's not enough. Not in today's marketplace.



DiBenedetto

“My partner and I were both trying to push to the next level and we were discouraged about our employees not really seeing why we wanted to push and being involved in the decision making,” says DiBenedetto, whose company specializes in residential landscape construction and maintenance.

DiBenedetto, at the urging of consultant Jim Paluch, began taking a harder look at the fiscal side of the company, including switching to open-book management about two years ago.

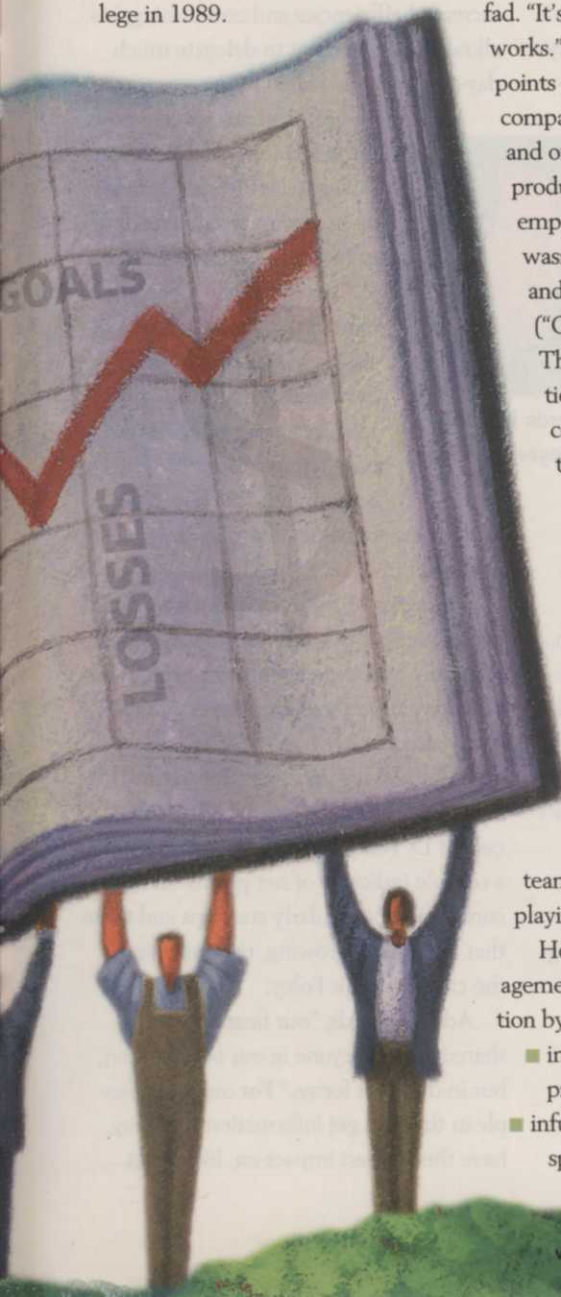
The step signaled a big commitment for DiBenedetto, co-owner of N.D. Landscaping, Inc., Topsfield, MA, who readily admits he's more comfortable with production than accounting.

“I realized that if I didn't have the discipline to know my own numbers, how was I going to share them,” he says. The journey to a more financially stable and profitable company starts with having a solid budgeting process, he insists.

When DiBenedetto began to study his company's financials and, particularly, when he got key foremen involved in tracking certain critical numbers from week to week, the company started to perform much better.

“We meet once a week on our numbers, a half hour meeting, and we go through a one-page exercise where we look at direct costs,” says DiBenedetto. “It helps us tighten up a little bit of every area of the company.”

—RH





**D. Foley Landscape managers track their efforts with Tuesday morning meetings.**

- getting more people within his company involved in the budgeting process,
- giving team members more responsibility for making day-to-day decisions that he formerly made, and
- improving employee recruiting and retention.

John Barringer has also been bringing open-book management into his company, Barringer Landscape Services, Charlotte, NC, for several years. He describes the process as "evolving" only as fast as his company of about 25 employees is able to generate more and better data to track and positively influence employees' decision making and performance.

"We do it more and more as we can generate good numbers," he explains. "If you don't do accounting on a weekly or monthly basis, and a lot of people just leave that up to their accountants, you don't know what you're doing month in and month out."

In fact, he and some of his managers met a couple of days before this past Christmas to determine whether to work the Saturday following the holiday. "We



**John Barringer says you need good data.**

we're in business is to make money. Everybody must understand that. Then we all have to speak the same language and make sure that everybody is on board."

Wayne Richards, vice president and COO of Cagwin & Dorward, Novato, CA, says that as his company grew he realized that to become more profitable it would have to find a way to give employees, particularly managers, more responsibility. The company has over 300 employees contributing to five profit centers — landscape maintenance, landscape construction, irrigation, tree care and environmental restoration. But Richards didn't want to assign more financial responsibility to his managers without first educating them to the significance of some of the company's critical numbers, specifically those numbers that the managers directly affect.

"We were fearful of turning loose financial information to our employees because we didn't know what the result would be," he admits.

Even so, impressed with an open-book management presentation at an ALCA Masters seminar, Richards' team began de-

veloping its own home-grown system. In 1997, Cagwin & Dorward presented the concept to its employees.

"We brought about 40 or 50 of our managers and did on-site training," recalls Richards. "We had to do some upfront development so that they understood the information."

The results have been very encouraging, he insists. In addition to allowing employees to share in financial gains arising from increased efficiencies and cost-cutting, it's allowed management to delegate much day-to-day decision making.



**Richards: informed employees perform**

"All the fears we had never came fruition," says Richards. "We got a lot of people in our company involved in helping us to become more successful."

"By sharing financial information the people making decisions have a much better understanding that little mistakes here and there can have a huge impact on the bottom line. We know that a

lot of costs are being controlled by people in the field."

The types of financial information that companies provide employees varies from company to company, but to work it must be information these employees can directly affect.

Foley and his managers, for instance, track gross profit dollars, which, in the case of D. Foley Landscape, Inc., has been a reliable indicator of net profits. In other companies, particularly start ups and those that are rapidly growing, this may not be the case, cautions Foley.

Adds Richards, "our financials are shared with everyone in our organization, but in different forms." For instance, people in the field get information that they have the greatest impact on, like direct

## 5 steps to turn employees into "partners"

- 1** Educate employees to your company's operation. Share your vision and basic goals.
- 2** Build employees' skills so that they can use the information you provide them to better understand their and your company's performance.
- 3** Give them financial information that is relevant to their tasks and challenge them to use this information to improve your operation.
- 4** Regularly track their and your company's efforts, and keep score.
- 5** Give employees reasons (profit sharing, bonuses, career advancement, special recognition, etc.) for making cost-cutting or revenue-producing business decisions.

labor, materials, equipment, even uniforms. Department managers and key account managers get more detailed financial statements. With 13 different locations, the company uses e-mail to communicate and relies upon management at each branch to pass along pertinent information.

But what's in it for the employees who are asked to take on added responsibility?

Generally, employees earn financial bonuses for meeting or exceeding well-defined production or cost-saving goals.

Most companies post these goals (Foley calls them "scoreboards") so that employees can track their progress day-by-day, week-by-week.

"We let everybody participate in the

benefits of having profit in our organization, so everybody does have a stake in the outcome," adds Foley. "Because people understand that, they're more willing to make decisions for the benefit of the company." **LM**

Read More [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net)

Sources for open-book management on [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net)

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# Sales & marketing

## 2002: *be flexible*

### Developing a flexible sales and marketing plan?

#### Step one: get closer to your customers

BY SUSAN PORTER/ EXECUTIVE EDITOR

**L**ooking for that one true economic weathervane? Keep watching the economic indicators but remember to focus on your own market. Many landscape professionals are so uncertain about the direction of the economy that they've devised two, or even three, different operating budgets with scenarios for growth, no growth or negative growth (see sidebar). Those who have survived past recessions stress the importance of good business basics, especially now.

"As far as preparing the business for the future, it is really no different than any other time," says Chuck McIntire, President, TurfPride, Inc., Kennesaw, GA. "A savvy owner or manager is in tune with fluctuations in his market or business and manages accordingly."

Most contractors and lawn care operators are optimistic about 2002 business, but they're also realistic about the shifting economy and the need to adapt quickly.

Frank Mariani, President of Mariani Landscape, Lake Bluff, IL, sums it up: "If the economy is garbage and my 'guesstimate' for business is wrong, I want to shift. I don't want to shift in two months. I want to shift in two weeks."

This nimble philosophy is critical to survival, but also challenging for marketing and sales. The key, say experienced contractors, is your customer relationships.

"Any Green Industry manager who wants to keep the operation profitable needs to do everything to hold on to the customer he or she has," notes Ed McGuire, President of The Lawn Co., S. Dennis, MA. "It's also important to focus on obtaining new customers, because usually if you're not growing, you're sliding back."



Frank Mariani tracks his business week by week.

Customer relationships as we know them may shift if business slowdowns and layoffs continue. Some insiders expect significant low-balling in the near future, and wonder if their customer relationships can outlast those price pressures. Even if when a turnaround begins, it will take some months to recover and for people to return to work. The surprises of 2001 have had strong psychological effects on both residential and commercial clients.

It should not be surprising if some long-time customers take work in-house, contact other contractors or ask for more value for the money. Be prepared to answer their objections with a plan of your own to become more valuable and critical to their needs.

#### **Familiarity breeds respect**

Business experts have long recommended the practice of "grading" customers from "A" (good business, quick pay, minor problems) to "F" (poor business, slow/no pay, constant hassles). Smart entrepreneurs concentrate their efforts and service mix on the best customers. Several Green Industry professionals already do this and are focused on replacing their "bottom feeders" with higher quality customers. In the process, they're also adjusting services to concentrate on delivering their "cash cows."

"We are redefining the services we provide and the clients we serve so that we can maintain consistency and efficiencies," says Jeff Aronson, President, As You Like It & Potomac Valley Landscaping, Potomac, MD. "We are defining who we are and what we do. The most important thing is to solidify relationships with existing customers. When times get busy, we take these relationships for granted. Great customer contact and support allow good companies to maintain sales."

"In (landscape) maintenance, we're renewing old acquaintances and making sure all channels are open in case work becomes available," explains Rick Randall, President of RBI Companies, Littleton, CO. "We're contacting clients and getting long-term contracts signed. We're emphasizing talking to clients."

How much communication is enough? Thomas Hall, President of Halls Horticulture Design Inc., Charlotte, NC, believes in a comprehensive approach: "We are communicating with newsletters, e-mails, quality

control visits, thank you letters, holiday gifts and more. And yes, we plan to deliver consistent quality and continue to strive to improve. We feel this will reinforce our value."

"A lot of our clients are uneasy (about the economy)," notes J. Landon Reeve, President of Chapel Valley Landscape Co., Woodbine, MD. "Our opportunity is, how do we take advantage of this? This is still a very strong market. We have more opportunities than we could possibly handle."

Jim Campanella, owner, The Lawn Dawg, Nashua, NH, also sees opportunities for sales. "Sales won't come as easy as in recent years but they will still come. We must continue to market aggressively and be more persistent and diligent in pursuing new business, and in saving potential cancels."

"While we have consistently done a very good job



**Rick Randall looks for long-term relationships.**

*continued on page 30*

## Is it a Plan A, B or C day?

In shifting economic times, the best plan may be several plans. Many landscape professionals already have 2002 budgets for a growth or no-growth year. Here's what they said at the recent ALCA Conference:

■ "We're doing two budgets for next year...our normal growth budget (projecting everything stays the same and we'll move forward on a regular growth track), and a 'what if' budget for a recession." —Tom Davis, Bozzuto Landscape

■ "All of us as owners and managers like to see growth in our company and hopefully we can continue to do that, but the idea is to be prepared for 'what if.' That doesn't mean to be negative, but to be prepared." —Glenn Jacobsen, CLP, Jacobsen Landscape Design & Construction

■ "I remember in the early 1990s we did two budgets and we thought it was appropriate to do two budgets this year also. A budget is our best guess — it's just a guess. I like these scary times. I feel that I have control over my destiny based on my banking relationship and watching over my budget. We look at our budget every two weeks." —Frank Mariani, Mariani Landscape

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RAIDERS KNOW THAT IT  
TAKES CLAY TO MAKE A GREAT FIELD.



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There isn't much of an off-season at Network Associates Coliseum in Oakland, California. At least not for Head Groundskeeper Clay Wood and his grounds crew. After maintaining a diamond for most of the year for the baseball

Athletics, Clay and his crew have to make sure the field is ready and striped for the football

Raiders. To keep both clubs running on a good surface, Clay and his

crew rely on John Deere turf equipment. "I won't buy anything else,"

says Clay. "John Deere equipment has come full circle. They have

great quality in terms of mowers, reels, and blades. The 1200A Field



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*continued from page 27*

keeping customers over the years, we are approaching 2002 with the idea that we need to do a better job at customer retention than we are now doing," says McGuire. "We're not trying anything new. We just want to make sure we are living up to our customers' expectations."

**Be their best partner**

Adding value is easier said than done, but what matters is how your customers perceive your value. As commercial and residential customers revise budgets in the wake of a changing economy, it pays to become proactive and address the issue.

"I want my customers to please talk to me

first before they change," says Jesus Medrano, owner, CoCal Landscape, Denver. "I want to know what's on their mind. For our customers, it takes 20 years to develop a beautiful landscape, so it's a serious investment for them."

"Team up with your customer," suggests Tony Bass, owner, Bass Custom Landscapes, Bonaire, GA. "It may be time to change the marketing message to, 'We're flexible to save you money.'"

"You have to be proactive in this case," adds Ron Kujawa, President, KEI, Cudahy, WI. "Tell your customer, 'Let's talk first, then make adjustments.'"

Often, long-time contracts are ripe for revisiting, he notes.

"We got back to several long-time accounts and said, 'Let's re-check the specs.' With newer and very efficient equipment, we may need to adapt the specs and maybe even charge less."

Experienced pros say it's good to review these accounts regularly. Most agree, however, that customers wanting reduced prices for regular maintenance services should get reduced services. "A company that cuts prices and keeps the service levels high can tank," Kujawa says.

As for low-bidders stealing customers away, many landscape professionals are not very concerned. Bob Andrews, President of The Greens-keeper, Carmel, IN, believes customers are more educated than in the past. "Smarter customers now understand the difference between good, bad and indifferent service."

**Marketing mix**

Challenging times require inventive responses, such as Swingle Tree & Landscape Services' recession pyramid. "We established

the pyramid to look at our services by type and determine which ones we believe are going to be the first to go and the last to go," says Tom Tolkacz, President. "We are adjusting our marketing approaches based on this now."

Like many others in the industry, Greg Bechtold, vice president of Longhorn Maintenance Inc., McKinney, TX, is focusing more on marketing for 2002. "We're stepping up advertising and direct mail and getting more aggressive with getting commercial maintenance accounts. We're doing more hobnobbing with people, attending Chamber of Commerce meetings, developing relationships, etc. Our focus is to go after clients who can afford our services."

Savvy contractors also realize the benefit of quick response to customer inquiries. This new sense of urgency is obvious at Down to Earth Landscape, Wilmington, DE. According to President Larry Iorii, "If we have a new telephone lead, it is handled immediately. We figure if they're calling us, they're also calling two or three others and we want the chance to get the job. We try to do it immediately if we can, to squeeze it in."

Iorii also uses every advantage he can to cement new business and enhance existing customer relationships. "We're using our credentials to the max, including any accolades, awards — anything complimentary we have.



**Andrews says clients know good from bad.**



**Tony Bass "teams" with his landscape clients.**



**Tom Tolkacz reviews his company's services.**

**Opportunities for lunch**

They say recessions are times "when the big dogs eat." Don't let all that negative economy talk get in the way of opportunity. *Landscape Management* polled several experienced professionals for their take on new areas for growth, and here's just some ideas they suggested:

- Subcontract concrete and excavation work for general contractors
- Pressure washing
- Security lighting systems & pruning services
- Residential phase-by-phase renovations
- Water management services
- Organic landscapes
- Government/school construction/maintenance projects
- Large flag pole installation
- Buy a competitor
- New opportunities & staff generated as competitors go out of business





Larry Iorri says to jump on new opportunities.

We put them all on the table to clinch the work."

The same sense of urgency is apparent at Rainy Days Irrigation Inc., Garner, NC. David Williams, owner, explains: "We're going to follow up every lead, good or

bad, no matter what. We're going to try to make something happen with good customers or bad. In the past, we just took orders. Now, we're actually going to start selling."

#### Make your move

Because the economy shows little sign of pointing one way or another, most successful professionals we contacted, there's still reason for optimism about 2002 business.

"Have a plan of how you're going to deal with the market as you see it."

— J. Landon Reeve

"I just hope small business people do not give away any chance at a decent bottom line because of exaggerated and mostly psychological fears that I really believe are unfounded at this point," adds Bill Hoopes, Director of Training and Development at Scotts Lawn Co., Marysville, OH. "I remember the recession of the 1980s, when everyone preached doom and gloom, and we continued to grow!"

"In tough times, people like to spend their hard-earned dollars on important things, and home has traditionally been high on the list of items for which Americans will spend."

Reeve also sees opportunities as well as

reasons to focus. "I think you have to look at the next two years seriously and evaluate how strong or weak you feel about the market, and adjust. Things can change quickly.

Six months down the road, it could be different. Just make sure you have a plan of how you're going to deal with the market as you see it. And be a little cautious." **LIM**

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Circle 113

## Property at a glance

**Location:** Atlanta, GA

**Staff:** Post Landscape Operations

**Category:** Condo, Apartment Complex or Planned Community

**Total budget:** \$275,000

**Year site built:** 1997

**Acres of turf:** 1

**Acres of woody ornamentals:** 10.25

**Acres of display beds:** 27,000 sq. ft.

**Total paved area:** 33 acres

**Total man-hours/week:** 160

## Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Maintaining vines and window boxes with arbor truck
- ▶ Managing water garden
- ▶ Monitoring Watersmart irrigation system

## Project checklist

Completed in last two years:

- ▶ Wildflower plot project on gas easement
- ▶ Liriope installation at Town Square
- ▶ Post additions at River Room Restaurant

## On the job

- ▶ 4 full-time staff, 1 seasonal employees, 4 licensed pesticide applicators

# Post Riverside

## 2001 PGMS Grand Award Winner for Condo, Apartment Complex or Planned Community

Post Riverside is an 80-acre, mixed use, "live, work, walk and play" planned community that contains 527 apartment units. That's a lot of picky residents, and the employees of Post Landscape Operations, Atlanta, GA, know they have to be extra meticulous with the grounds or they'll hear about it.

One of the most difficult features to maintain is the entirely organic Urban Vegetable Garden, which is designed to resemble Claude Monet's Garden at Giverny. The Post Landscape team coordinates three plantings a year, and provides materials, support and advice to apartment dwellers.

Speaking of organic, Post Landscape claims total dedication to 100% organic fertilization of all of the property's trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials.

A quarter-mile parkway winds its



Post Landscape technicians maintain more than 10 acres of woody ornamentals and 27,000 sq. ft. of display beds at Post Riverside with its 527 apartment units.

way through the heart of the community and features 27,000 sq. ft. of color beds (annuals, perennials and roses) and 160 pots that demand a rigorous maintenance and irrigation program. Keeping this parkway sharp helps maintain the community's 98% occupancy rating.

**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 2000 Awards, contact PGMS at:

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

Pleasing designs, healthy and appropriate plant selection and a commitment to on-going care characterize this prize-winning project.



Post brought color to its properties several decades ago, a trend that has spread across the United States. Post Landscape Operations continues this tradition by beautifying its residential properties with quality turfgrass and incredible seasonal color.

# Buy right in 2002

**Industry experts say good equipment buying policies and practices will keep you profitable**

BY GEORGE WITTERSCHEIN



Before buying a nice piece of equipment like this Ransomes Turfcut 600 rotary, do your math.

**W**hat effect should the current slow economy have on your equipment acquisition plans for 2002? Not much, provided you already have good equipment acquisition policies and practices in place.

That was the consensus of the experts we talked to as the year 2001 — the year of an economic slowdown and the infamous Sept. 11 attacks by terrorists on U.S. soil — drew to a close.

"Let's assume that our readers have developed purchasing habits that are well grounded," says Ken Hutcheson, Vice President and General Manager of U.S. Lawns Inc., the Orlando-based nationwide division of Environmental Industries, Inc. "If they do, then today's economy requires no significant changes in their purchasing habits."

To Hutcheson, a person who has well grounded purchasing habits is a person who knows that:

- *Equipment is just equipment.* "It's not emotional. There are too many equipment junkies in our industry. In fact, I visited a contractor the other day who, although in other ways is an excellent manager, surprised me when he opened his garage door: he had twice as much mowing equipment, some of it new or nearly new, as he needed to do his annual dollar volume."

- *A piece of equipment is just a machine — a machine that produces revenue.*

- *The revenue a machine will produce in ratio to the capital required for it is crucial.* "For

*continued on page 36*



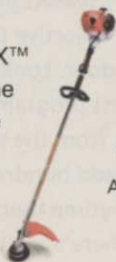
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continued from page 34

example, if a machine will produce 75,000 sq. ft. of turf in an hour, and will cost me \$7,400, how does that compare to a machine that will produce 45,000 sq. ft. in an hour while costing me \$3,000? It's a no-brainer." Not every decision is that easy; many will require the contractor to sit down with a calculator."

■ *The Opportunity Cost of Labor can't be ignored.* "Over the last five or six years, all of us in this industry struggled with labor because it was in short supply. The people we considered to be 'our labor pool' were in many cases out working in the construction industry. So, if that new machine will produce 75,000 sq. ft. an hour, and I need to have one operator sitting on it, that's a key issue — and one you cannot put a calculator to. It's a case of sitting back as a manager and thinking, 'I have five well-trained, capable employees, but I cannot readily find a sixth.' That consideration will affect your equipment purchasing decision. If your labor situation is still tight — and for many people it is — you might do better to purchase a more expensive machine if it will let you use labor more productively, no matter what the capital outlay is. That's an individual judgment call."



**Rod Bailey: budget before you buy**

Consultant Rod Bailey of Bellevue, Washington agrees that "you need to base your equipment buying decisions on sound considerations such as your budget assumptions for the coming year or two, more than just on prevailing economic conditions."

"And that should not be too hard to do," Bailey says. "At this time of year, most contractors, particularly those in the commercial arena, will have their contracts in hand for the year 2002. And I think it's sound pur-

continued on page 38



As a general rule, a mower like this new Walker unit should pay for itself within three years.

## Pre-buying tips from the pros

**Brian Burley, Sheffield Financial:**

- *Don't purchase on anticipated income.* "We see a lot of people do that, and it gets them in trouble."
- *Don't tie up revolving lines of credit on large capital purchases.* "When times are recessionary, and people are losing contracts, they need to have those lines of credit available to them, possibly to help float them through a bad time or for maintenance. And they really should not tie up those short-term financing options on long-term purchases."
- *Do consider total cost of purchase.* "As with consumer car purchases, '0% financing' can backfire. Those incentives are usually teasers and very restrictive. The objective is to get you in the dealer's door. Look carefully at deferred interest programs that charge interest from the sale date. This can often add hundreds of dollars to the cost. Anytime there is a zero interest deal, there's a catch somewhere. So you've got to consider the

*total cost of the purchase."*

As a landscape contractor, one of your ten commandments for business is to first establish a "working relationship" with a local dealer. They are the backbone of a successful business. A good dealer can make or break you — and, in an economic slowdown, they are even more important.

**Ken Hutcheson, U.S. Lawns:**

"Project your revenue. That's the key. Before you buy equipment, you need to have the appropriate revenue in hand. If you do that, things will be no different for you this year than for last year as far as equipment purchases are concerned."

**Rod Bailey, consultant:**

"Do your cash flow and profit planning. This is especially true in a bad economy. With good planning and budget management you should know what's going to happen to you before it hits you as a surprise."



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*continued from page 36*

chasing practice to base your buying decisions on contracts in hand, and not on contracts *possibly* in hand."

"Some things do not change in a recession," Bailey continues. "For example, as a general rule you should still expect any investment in equipment to pay for itself within three years."

### Buy vs. lease

The age-old question of "buy vs. lease" is not as much of an issue as it used to be — at least according to Hutcheson.

"Today, the two options are so similar that the only distinguishing factor in my eyes is the possibility that a lease may offer you chances to save money on service and maintenance for the machines," Hutcheson says. "If you have a lease program that allows you to return the equipment at the end of the warranty/lease period, then you may be foolish not to lease. The plan U.S. Lawns uses makes it possible for us to minimize downtime without getting into the repair business. We do this with the support not only of the finance companies but also of the manufacturers. When the equipment comes in, say a new mowing machine, we do not do any of the repairs beyond basic maintenance. When necessary, we send the units to the dealer to get repaired. Ideally, if the warranty period is two years, and the lease is over, at that time the machine goes back to the manufacturer and we bring in a new machine. That way we never get into repair mode."

Brian Burley, vice president of Sheffield Financial Corp., a Clemmons, NC-based financial services company serving the Green Industry, amplifies the point. "It's six of one, half a dozen of the other. In most cases, contractors are going to buy, and sometimes their accountants will want them to lease for tax reasons because the contractor can treat the monthly payment as an expense as opposed to depreciating it. I recommend that the con-

tractor carefully do the math before trying this option because it's tricky in the sense that what matters is your total cost for the equipment in the end. You have to know that dollar amount in order to make this kind of decision. Basically, I'm talking about adding up what the payments are, what you put down, until you get to the total cost of the machine over the life of the loan or lease."

Consultant Bailey also points out that a lease might be a good option for a contractor who needs to conserve working capital, or who has reached his borrowing limit. Also, leasing is sometimes just plain cheaper. "I used to manage a fairly well-known landscaping company called Evergreen in Washington State, and we did a lease vs. buy analysis on every truck we considered buying. We found that, on average, it cost us five dollars per month less to lease than it did to buy." Part of that is due to the possibility that a leasing company may have access to capital at lower financing rates than contractors can get, or may get better original prices on the equipment.

### Not everybody cutting back

The current economic slowdown does not mean that mowing contractors are automatically trimming their equipment buying plans for the coming year. For one thing, not everybody's business is hurting. "In fact, some of the contractors I know are increasing their business substantially," says Bailey.

Decisions to buy "more or bigger" may be driven by two other factors:



Match the size of the equipment to the task for better efficiency.

- Dealer/manufacturer incentives
- Individual contractor needs

The current crop of incentives (and a slow economy usually produces buyers' incentives, just as in the consumer automobile market) doesn't seem focused on price but rather on terms. "As far as we can tell," says Bill Kent, manager of Western Equipment in Kent, WA, "the slowdown has not yet reached the stage where it drags prices down. The incentives being offered today are mostly around payback terms — offering contractors a chance to buy a piece of equipment with no money down and no payments for perhaps six months."

Burley has seen the same thing. "Back in August and September of this year, there were manufacturer and finance company promotions out there which generally offered a 'buy now, no payments until spring' option," he says.



### Time to buy bigger/better?

As U.S. Lawns' Hutcheson indicated earlier, a contractor may wish to buy a "bigger" (in the sense of more productive) piece of mowing equipment if it offers a chance to address oppressing local problems like labor. "If I can add 30% productivity just by increasing the size of the equipment I own, then I'm probably foolish not to do it," Hutcheson says, "especially if a particular piece of equipment means that I can add customers without having to add labor, regardless of the economic climate."

Going back to the theme that you should base your purchasing on your actual business needs, Sheffield's Burley counsels: "Upgrade purchases make sense for somebody who's been running all walk-behinds, and who looks forward to a couple of new or expanded contracts that would benefit from the efficiencies of a larger ride-on zero-turn mower or some other piece of equipment that would allow them to take on more work without adding additional labor."

Bailey has one question you should ask before buying bigger: "Will you be using the larger piece of equipment 60% or more of the time than it is available? If the answer is yes, you may well wish to take advantage of that larger piece of equipment."

### A good time to sharpen up

In the "silver lining" department, a recession may be a good opportunity to take the time to sharpen your business skills, and not just in equipment purchasing. "Pay attention to your budget planning and cash flow planning," Rod Bailey advises. "Maybe do some, 'What if?' scenarios. In particular, make sure you're going to be able to meet your cash flow needs in a down economy. The more advanced knowledge you can give yourself in a slow economy, the better off you're going to be."

— The author lives and works in Mendham, NJ, and is a frequent contributor to LM.

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Circle 116



Ferris has added a 61-in. deck to its 1000Z

# It's all about the Zs

**Zero-turns are still the hot market, but don't count out walk-behinds and stand-ons in tight times**

BY JASON STAHL /  
MANAGING EDITOR

**Z**ero-turn mowers are still red hot. That's the general consensus among the major players in the commercial mower market. And they don't see demand slackening any time soon. But recent economic and demographic changes have led them to believe there may be a shift in the demand for certain types of zero-turns over others, while more economical choices like walk-behinds might make a small comeback.

#### Big or small?

While some people are talking about bigger zero-turns being the hot ticket item in 2002, others are predicting the opposite.

"More and more baby boomers who are becoming affluent are opting to have some-

body else do their lawn maintenance," says Dan Kilgas, Product Category Manager for Ariens/Gravely. "A lot of them are living on postage stamp-sized pieces of land, so they don't necessarily need a huge unit to do massive amounts of mowing. So I think the smaller units are going to become more prevalent in future years."

Hal White, Vice President of Marketing for Ferris Industries, believes it will be the bigger zero-turns with 72-in. decks and diesel engines that will grow in popularity.

"I think you'll see the larger zero-turn market take more and more of the mid-z market. The smaller zero-turns with larger decks will then start filling that niche," White says.

Mike Houge of Husqvarna agrees. "I think the 61s will be a big seller. The question will be whether you want a 26-hp fuel injected motor or a 23-hp one for a price point."

With larger mowers in

mind, Walker Manufacturing has come out with a mower that features a new engine, 74-in. deck and larger gas tank. Husqvarna introduced a mower with a 72-in. deck last year. Ferris added a 61-in. deck to its 1000Z. "It's pretty unique in the industry to have that wide of a deck on that small of a machine," White says.

#### Walk this way

Bigger mowers may be hot, but they're also more expensive. And with the economy in recession, many are hedging their bets by paying attention to the walk-behind market. Those who aren't in it are studying it, and those who are in it are improving their current lines.

Ariens/Gravely completely redesigned its walk-behinds. "Part of any great strategy says that you want to go where the competition isn't," says Barry Adamski, Product Manager for Ariens/Gravely. "We already have a very good zero-turn, but

#### 3 deals to look for

► **\$3,999** — A hydrostatic drive, 15-hp Ariens-Gravely walk-behind with Kawasaki V-twin engine and 36-in. deck.

► **\$6,995** — The Ferris 1000 series mid-mount zero-turn riding mower with 23 hp and 61-in. deck.

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our walk-behind line was 10 years old, so it was pretty antiquated compared to our competitors."

"Our walk-behind line has been energized with the ECS," says Dan Dorn of Exmark, referring to the addition of Exmark's popular Enhanced Control System (ECS) to all of its walk-behinds, including the Turf Tracer hydros and Metro.

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"A lot of people stuck to the original design, and maybe it lost appeal or interest. Dealers have put more focus on walk-behinds because riders can only go to so many areas and slopes."

Some companies have resisted jumping into the walk-behind market for various reasons. Warren Evans of Dixie Chopper, for instance, believes that the zero-turns flat-out out-produce the walk-behinds.

"Anybody's belly-mounted zero-turn can outmow three to four walk-behinds," Evans says. "They have a purpose for hillside use, but we've been able to go anywhere on hillsides that walk-behinds can go." Evans did admit, though, that stand-ons have taken a good

piece of the market because they fill a niche for customers transitioning from a walk-behind to a rider.

### Collection system wars

Two companies in particular have invested in new hi-tech collection systems for their ride-ons, and both are saying their system is the best. And it's obvious that a lot of thought has been put into these improvements with the idea that they will become hot-ticket items.

Through an affiliate company named Giant Vac, which, according to Hal White, started out working in the jet turbine industry and evolved that technology to the outdoor power equipment industry, Ferris In-



John Deere's new Quik-Trak stand-on mower fills the gap between walk-behinds and riders.

dustries has developed a turbo collection system for its IS 3000Z and 1000Z mid-mount, zero-turn mowers. White says it's different than conventional systems in that it moves 27% more air and doesn't plug.

"Most turbos are enclosed and sealed and clippings come in and tend to get caught up in the turbo," White says. "Our system has air vents on the inside of the panel so a vacuum is not created and an impeller kicks the clippings right out of a discharge chute. The clippings are then pulverized, which allows for more compaction so you can bag more." The Toro Company's new Z-master Dump Vac for its zero-turn mowers was created, Randy Harris says, to address the market demand for OEMs to provide a bagging collection system for zero-turns and support it with their own parts and service network.

"Our system is a true vacuum design and the industry's first, and it will separate us from the competition," he says. "The perception is that a vacuum system would be better to pull material instead of push it. Ours reduces plugging."

continued on page 46

## Walk-behinds: Alive or dead?

■ "Everyone right now is zero-turn crazy. It has all the flavor of a fad, though. Everyone predicted the demise of the mid-sized walk-behinds, but if demand for them is going down, it's going down very slowly."

**Barry Adamski**, Product Manager, Ariens-Gravely

■ "I think there will always be a need for walk-behinds, mostly because of cost. They make cheaper ones with lightweight decks, which last three years and you're done. Starter guys will look for cheaper ones."

**Jim Velke**, Director of Product Development, Wright Manufacturing

■ "We're currently looking at the walk-behind market to see if there's a need and a large enough market for it."

**Randy Harris**, Marketing Manager, The Toro Company

■ "The walk-behind market isn't responding at the rate the zero-turn market is. The problem is that you can't be in business without a comparable walk-behind."

**Mike Houge**, Husqvarna

■ "We've stayed away from walk-behinds because anybody's belly-mounted zero-turn can out-mow three to four of them. They have a purpose on hillsides, but we've been able to go anywhere that they can go."

**Warren Evans**, Dixie Chopper

■ "When you see different effects on the economy, I see walk-behinds becoming a more viable product line. Even dealers have put more focus on them because riders can only go so many places."

**Dan Dorn**, Exmark

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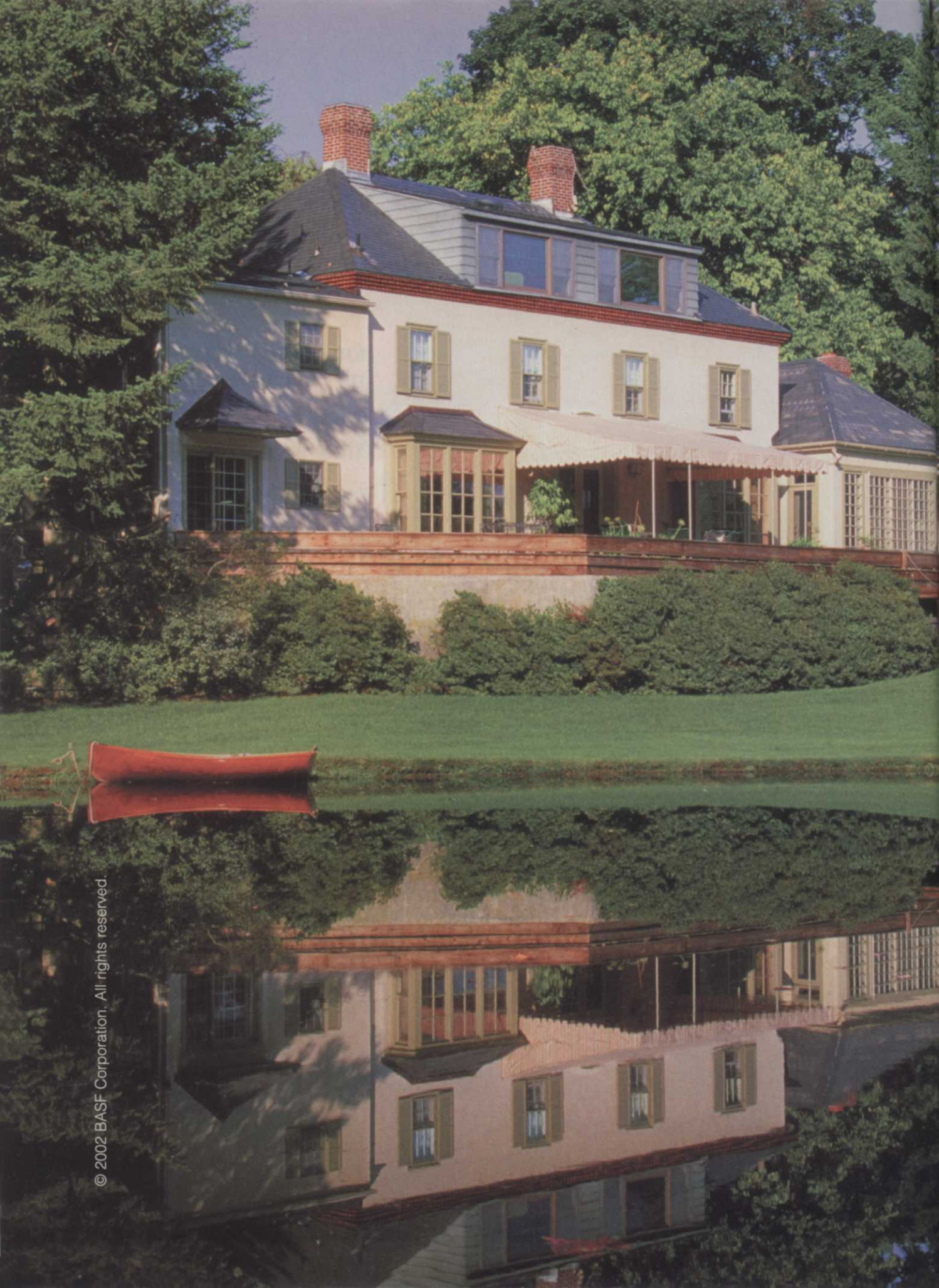
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# mowers

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## Value at a good price



Woods Equipment Co. says its M2050 mid-mount zero-turn mower offers all of the commercial grade features at an entry level price. A hydrostatic drive train, hydraulic cutting height adjustment, and 11-gal. fuel capacity are some of its features.

For more information contact Woods at

815/732-2141 or visit

[www.woodsonline.com](http://www.woodsonline.com) / circle #288

## Zoom through jobs

John Deere's 717 and 727 mini-frame Z-Trak zero-turn mowers feature smaller frames for easier trailer access, air-cooled Kawasaki gas engines and seven-gauge steel decks. The 717 has a 19-hp engine with 48-in. deck, and the 727 has a 23-hp engine with 54-in. deck. Also, Deere has a new line of 600 Series Quik-Trak stand-on mowers in 48-, 54- and 60-in. deck and 19 and 23 hp engine options.

For more information contact John Deere at

800/537-8233 or [www.johndeere.com](http://www.johndeere.com) /

circle #289

## Out front

Kubota's F60 Series front mount mowers include 22-, 25- and 30-hp four-wheel drive models that automatically transfer power to all four wheels when necessary. Available are 60- or 72-in. decks with side or rear discharge.

For more information contact Kubota at 888/458-

2682 or [www.kubota.com](http://www.kubota.com) / circle #290

## Take a chomp out of grass

Textron's Bob-Cat ZT 200 Series zero-turn mowers are known for their fully floating, suspended ContourCut system for quality cutting and minimal scalping. The Z-219 features a 19-hp Kawasaki v-twin OHV gas engine and 48- or 52.5-in. DuraDeck. The Z-223 has a 23-hp engine and a 52.5- or 61-in. deck.

For more information contact Textron at

888/922-8873 or [www.textronturf.com](http://www.textronturf.com) /

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## No shock

Ferris Industries' new compact IS 1000Z mid-mount zero-turn mower features pivoting upper shock mounts that keep all four wheels on the ground for a smoother ride, increased mowing speed and better quality of cut.

For more information contact Ferris at 800/933-

6175 or [www.ferrisindustries.com](http://www.ferrisindustries.com) / circle

#292

## In the game



Cub Cadet carries a full-line of walk-behinds and ride-ons, including the 5521 walk-behind with 21-in. deck and 3-speed Tuff Torq transmission, and the M60 tank

mid-mount zero-turn with 23-hp Kawasaki V-twin OHV engine and 60-in. Command Cut System deck.

For more information visit [www.cubcommercial.com](http://www.cubcommercial.com) / circle #293

## Bigger and better

Husqvarna has added the ZTH7226 to its zero-turn mower lineup, which has a 72-in. deck and 26-hp Kohler electronic fuel injected engine. To its walk-behind line, the company has added an Easy Touch System for easier operation.

For more information contact Husqvarna at

800/487-5962 or [www.husqvarna.com](http://www.husqvarna.com) /

circle #294

## All steel

Encore's Z-34 zero-turn mower is a 34-in. mid-mount rider with steel-welded uni-body construction and a 10-gauge steel deck with seven gage steel plate supporting it. The machine also has a lifetime sealed hydrostatic drive and greaseless blade spindles.

For more information contact Encore at

402/228-4255 or

[www.encoreequipment.com](http://www.encoreequipment.com) / circle #295

## All in one

Wright Manufacturing says its Sentar zero-turn mower has the power of a sitdown and the agility of a standup. A Quad Lever control system allows for precise work in tight areas, and the company claims its Rapid Hite deck height adjustment is the quickest in the industry. The fold-up seat allows for quick dismount.

For more information contact Wright at

301/330-0086 or [www.wrightmfg.com](http://www.wrightmfg.com) /

circle #296

## Mow like crazy

New Holland's commercial front mowers

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\*Payload capacity includes 200-lb. operator and 200-lb. passenger.



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# mowers

continued from page 46

feature diesel engines, two-range hydrostatic transmissions and optional dual-mode and automatic four-wheel drive.

For more information contact New Holland at 717/355-1240 or [www.newholland.com](http://www.newholland.com) / circle #297

## Go like a pro

Gravely's Promaster 260Z zero-turn has Gravely maintenance-free XL spindles, tungsten carbide coated blade and



hydraulic deck height adjustment as just

some of its highlights. Also, get up to a 72-in. deck and 25-hp Kawasaki engine.

For more information contact Gravely at 920/756-2141 or visit [www.gravely.com](http://www.gravely.com) / circle #298

## Power walking

The "ultimate" zero-turn walk-behind from Scag boasts 36-, 48-, 52 and 61-in. floating deck size options, de-clutch cold start feature, and 15-, 17- or 21-hp Kohler or Kawasaki engine.

For more information contact Scag at 920/387-0100 or [www.scag.com](http://www.scag.com) / circle #299

## Zippin' along

Zipper offers front cutting zero-turn riding mowers with gas and diesel engine sizes from 20 to 31 hp and deck sizes from 54 to 74 in.

For more information contact Zipper at 888/876-6937 or [www.zippermowers.com](http://www.zippermowers.com) / circle #300

## One bad mower

The Bad Boy zero-turn takes a bite out of grass thanks to a 27-hp Kawasaki water-cooled engine, 1/4-in. solid steel construction, heavy duty hydro drive and 60- and 72-in. deck.

For more information contact Bad Boy at 866/622-3269 / circle #301

## Hop on that grass

Grasshopper carries front- and mid-mount zero-turns. Its mid-mount diesel 400 Series mowers feature 61-in. full floating Level-Eze decks and Hydra-Smooth control levers.

For more information contact Grasshopper at 620/345-8621 / circle #302

## The price is right

Front-mounts, mid-mounts and walk-behinds can all be found under the Howard Price Turf Equipment label. The company's mid-sized walk-behinds feature decks from 36 to 52 in. and five-gear or dual hydro transmission.

For more information contact Howard Price at 636/532-7000 or [www.howardpriceturf.com](http://www.howardpriceturf.com) / circle #303

## Mow to the max



Yazoo/Kees' new MAX2 large frame, mid-mount zero-turn mowers feature Kohler 23-27 hp or Kawasaki 23-25 hp options, 52-, 61- and 72-in. decks, height adjustment lever and dual 5.6-gal. fuel tanks.

For more information contact Yazoo/Kees at 877/368-8873 or [www.yazookees.com](http://www.yazookees.com) / circle #304

## Master mowing

The Toro Company has mowers for every job, including its Z Master ZRT Riders. Z280 Series features Super Flow System decks, Z Stand kit, and choice of Kohler or Kawasaki engines.

For more information contact Toro at 800/595-6841 or [www.toro.com](http://www.toro.com) / circle #305

## On the mark

Exmark now has its Enhanced Control System on all of its walk-behinds. Two new models of Lazer Z zero-turn riders have been added as well: a 20-hp Kohler with 52-in. deck, and a 25-hp Kawasaki with 60-in. deck.

For more information contact Exmark at 402/223-6300 or [www.exmark.com](http://www.exmark.com) / circle #306

## Steer clear

The Hustler hydro walk-behind's H-bar steering works like a motorcycle's, with a forward twist to go forward and a twist back to go in reverse. Choose from 37-, 48- or 54-in. deck and 15- or 17-hp Kawasaki air-cooled gas engine.

For more information contact Excel/Hustler at 800/395-4757 or [www.excelhustler.com](http://www.excelhustler.com) / circle #307

## On the mark

Dixie Chopper now features Honda 24-hp and Kawasaki 25-, 26-hp electronic fuel injected engines in its line of zero-turn riders. A flip-up floor pan makes maintenance a snap, and a bigger 10-gal. fuel tank reduces fuel stops.

For more information contact Dixie Chopper at 765/246-7737 or [www.dixiechopper.com](http://www.dixiechopper.com) / circle #308

## Mower of steel

Dixon Industries' Model 7523 zero-turn rider has an all-steel construction, 23-in. tires, and full-floating deck with 52- or 60-in. deck.

For more information contact Dixon at 877/288-6673 or [www.dixon-ztr.com](http://www.dixon-ztr.com) / circle #309

### Quite compact

Walker Mfg. Co. claims its zero-turn mower is one of the most compact ones available on the market. Seven tractor models with 11-26 hp are offered with gas or diesel engines. Seven mower deck sizes range from 36-74 in. and tilt up 90 degrees for easy access.

For more information contact Walker at 970/221-5614 or visit

[www.walkermowers.com](http://www.walkermowers.com) / circle #310

### Two-in-one

Rich Mfg.'s Convertible is not only a zero-turn but a hydro walk-behind. It comes available with a 17-hp Kawasaki or 17-, 20-, 22- or 25-hp Kohler engine, and 48-, 52- or 61-in. deck. Lots of attachments fit on it too.

For more information contact Rich at 765/436-2744 or visit [www.convertiblemower.com](http://www.convertiblemower.com) / circle #311

### All decked out

LESCO's Viper mid-mount zero-turns have three new deck widths of 48, 54 and 60 in. Decks are fitted with four adjustable anti-scalping rollers on the front and back.

For more information contact LESCO at 800/321-5325 or visit [www.lesco.com](http://www.lesco.com) / circle #312

### Hoggin' all the turf

The mid-mount zero-turn mower from Bush Hog offers a choice of three engines and two cutting widths (54 or 60 in.). Fuel tank holds 12 gallons, and cutting height is adjustable from 1-1/2 to 5 in. in 1/4-in. increments.

For more information contact Bush Hog at 800/321-5325 or visit [www.bushhog.com](http://www.bushhog.com) / circle #313

### Surf that turf

Great Dane's Super Surfer stand-on mowers, with cutting decks from 36 to 61 in., ensure a smooth ride with a spring loaded

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# athletic turf

PROGRESSIVE ATHLETIC FIELD MANAGEMENT

## The 'dirt' on infield skins

**A former Major League grounds pro's tips for the perfect infield**



BY PAUL ZWASKA

*Editor's note: This article is the first in a series of three that will discuss the basics of infield care.*

**E**very sport played on an outdoor field has its own set of unique groundskeeping challenges. In football, it's attempting to maintain turf and good footing

throughout the season between the hash marks. In soccer, the challenge occurs with maintaining turf in the goalmouths. Baseball is somewhat unique in that it has both turf and exposed soil surfaces, or skinned areas, on the playing field.

The skinned areas are where baseball grounds professionals earn their reputation, be it good or bad, from ballplayers. You can have the most lush and beautifully striped turf on your ballfield, but if the infield skin doesn't meet player expectations, your reputation as a groundskeeper can go right down the tubes. The most important decisions about a baseball or softball field concern the skin, its makeup, and its management. This article will address the skin, including its profile and traits.

### Profile of an infield skin

Generally, a good infield skin profile consists of two layers. The top surface should be a 1/4- to 1/2-in. thick layer of a topdressing material that typically stays loose

**Keys to a great infield: traction, playability, resiliency, drainage, appearance and consistency.**

on the soil surface. Topdressing creates a cover for the underlying soil, similar to how mulch protects the soil in gardens and around landscape plantings. Topdressing helps to shade the soil from the sun and wind and slows the evaporative loss of moisture, which is critical to the proper performance of the infield skin.

The topdressing layer also helps to create a buffer zone between the players' cleats and the soil below. When wet or rainy conditions occur, the moist soil is much less likely to stick to the player's

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cleats. This buffering effect will also typically allow you to re-enter a field more quickly after rain to prepare it for play again. It provides a relatively dry top layer that equipment can be driven on even though the soil beneath it may be moist.

Different types of topdressing materials can be blended together in various proportions depending on the rate at which you want your topdressing layer to dry out. Topdressings that don't absorb much moisture, such as vitrified clay products, will dry out more quickly at the surface and allow you to re-enter the field sooner. Other topdressings like calcined clays, which hold or absorb moisture, can somewhat slow re-

entry at times but also help retain moisture longer during drier periods in the year.

The lower portion of the infield skin profile is a 3- to 6-in. deep layer of a soil that is often times imported onto the site. It should be clean of any debris such as stones, pebbles, trash and twigs, and should be able to pack fairly easily. This is what will be referred to as the "base soil mix." This material provides a stable foundation upon which the game can be properly and safely played. These soils may be amended to optimize their performance.

**Goals for an infield skin**

In order to create and maintain a quality infield, you need to understand what traits

are important to those who use the field and why. There are essentially five goals that should be met when building and maintaining an infield skin. They are valid regardless of age group or skill level because each goal affects the overall safety and playability of any field.

**Traction** refers to the stability of the soil as it pertains to footing. It's largely a function of the base soil mix used on the infield skin, although topdressing and management practices can also play a role. The soil chosen needs to contain enough binding qualities to provide the firm base needed for good player footing. Very little soil should be disturbed when a player makes a sudden move such as breaking for second base on a

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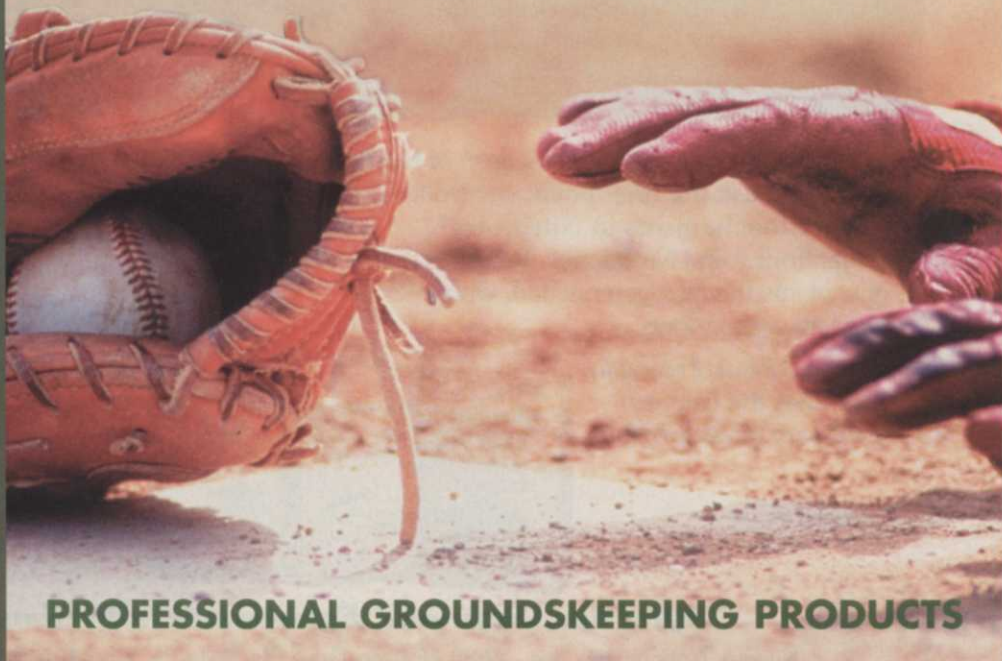
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## Infield Skin Profile

- Generally, an infield skin profile will show two layers:

1.) The top layer is usually 1/4" to 1/2" thick of topdressing

- similar to a mulch

2.) Beneath the topdressing will be a 3" to 6" layer of a base soil mix

- this soil should be firm



steal or planting their foot to make a hard throw. A player's cleat should leave a fairly clean imprint in the skin without easily displacing a significant amount of material. If the infield skin soil is too high in sand content (generally greater than 70 to 75%), poor traction often occurs due to the lack of binding capability. Likewise, a heavy topdressing layer or over-aggressive management can also create traction issues. Poor traction is potentially dangerous and can result in muscle pulls, joint injuries and other related medical problems.

**Playability** is how the ball plays through the infield skin. It's a function of the base soil mix, the thickness of the topdressing and the management practices used to

maintain the skin. For example, if the base soil mix is too soft due to a high sand content (>70-75%), a hit ground ball may not take the expected hop when it strikes the skin. The loose material will absorb the energy of the ball and it may skid underneath a player's glove. The same may be true if the topdressing layer is too thick (>1/2-in.),

or if you have spiked/nail dragged the skin too deep and dramatically loosened the top material. Conversely, if the infield skin either is too hard due to a high clay content or lack of moisture, if it lacks sufficient topdressing, or if it has not been adequately spiked/nail dragged, the opposite may

*continued on page 56*



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Circle 127

## ATHLETIC TURF

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occur. This creates the "superball effect" — a ball that becomes charged by the bounce and takes an erratic or higher than predicted bounce. The ball may bounce over the glove or head of the infielder, or worse, may strike them somewhere in the face or body.

**Resiliency** is the ability of the infield skin to provide a surface that can absorb and lessen the impact of a player's body with the ground. Like playability, it's also a function of the base soil mix, topdressing thickness and management practices. Ideally, an infield skin should be resilient without compromising traction or playability. A firm base soil mix combined with the proper topdressing layer can provide a tremendously resilient surface for a player. The topdressing acts as ball bearings between the player's body and the firm base soil. This helps the player to glide or "roll" along on the ground smoothly when sliding (this is why Major League ballplayers can slide such long distances).

Proper moisture management of the base soil mix further enhances this resiliency. Loose base soil mixes and overly thick topdressings create excess drag on a player's body. This not only reduces their sliding distance, but also negatively affects traction and playability. Maintaining a firm base soil with the proper moisture content and topdressing thickness, along with regular nail dragging to "fluff" the topdressing layer, will help provide enough cushion to absorb the shock of a sliding, diving or falling ballplayer without adversely affecting traction and playability on the skin.

**Drainage** is what we, as grounds professionals, always consider the number one goal, but in baseball and softball traction, playability and resiliency are more important to the game. Drainage is a function of the base soil mix and the management practices used to maintain the field. Contrary to what many people believe, water should be drained from an infield skin via surface drainage — not by relying on infiltration and percolation through the skin. In order to achieve traction, playability and resiliency, the skin must pack firmly thereby greatly reducing the percolation rate of that soil. In fact, an infield skin should generally percolate less than 0.05-in. of water per hour. Thus, the installation of subsurface drains beneath an infield skin is, in most cases, a large waste of money. Very little water, if any at all, will ever make it to the drain in a reasonable amount of time.

In order to have proper surface drainage, there must first be adequate surface grades established during the initial construction of the field. An infield should be graded to have a minimum of 0.5% slope with the maximum allowable slope of 1%. This should generate an adequate grade to move water effectively across the surface of the infield. After construction, grounds professionals must be conscientious enough to maintain the infield so as not to drastically affect or damage the grade. This is accomplished by keeping lips well maintained and re-leveling the infield skin periodically to remove high and low

spots that may develop with play and regular maintenance.

**Appearance** of an infield is sometimes just as important as how well it plays. All field managers want that "curb appeal" that brings in spectators and fans to their facility. Appearance is mostly a function of the topdressing used on the infield skin. There are many different topdressing materials available, and the color options are much wider than they were just a few years ago. Blending various topdressings can also generate additional color combinations. Avoid topdressings that may cause reflection or glare due to their mineral content and/or light color. Red and reddish-brown are still the most popular topdressing colors. However, the darker colored grayish-black infields can actually enhance player performance by providing a better background for an infielder to track a ball to their glove.

**Consistency** is the most important goal of any groundskeeper. Along with everything else, players expect consistency across the entire playing surface. Consistency is a function of the management practices of the playing field. An inconsistent infield skin can suffer from localized hard, soft, wet and/or dry spots. All of these factors can negatively affect the quality of the play on that infield. It can also increase the probability of player injury. If the field is inconsistent, a player may approach the game by playing less aggressively for fear of bad hops, slipping on a loose surface or diving on too hard of a surface.

The ball will play uniformly across the entire skinned area of a quality skin infield. A ballplayer can comfortably play at a high level of intensity with confidence that the field will not adversely affect their play.

The next installment of "The Dirt on Infield Skins" will cover the recommended soil make-up of the base soil mixes and a detailed look at the four major types of infield topdressings. **LJM**

— The author is the former head groundskeeper of the Baltimore Orioles and is now with Beacon Ballfields, Madison, WI.

Contact Paul at [pzwaska@ballfields.com](mailto:pzwaska@ballfields.com). or visit the Web at [www.ballfields.com](http://www.ballfields.com) for a schedule of his 2002 winter seminars.

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Circle 128

# Soccer in the desert

## Las Vegas gambles by building soccer fields on flood plains, and citizens win

BY DON DALE

**T**he City of Las Vegas is covered with stretch marks. It's growing so fast that it has trouble building enough roads, schools and other facilities, including sports fields. One of its most pressing recreational needs is more soccer pitches.

Lee Pringle, city recreation director, says there are more than 400 youth and adult soccer teams in the city. Until a few years ago, most of the practices and games took place on the outfields of baseball or softball fields. This couldn't last, not with soccer being played practically year round in the desert city.

The recreation department is meeting some of these needs by building turfgrass pitches on unique parcels of property within the city, including basins designed as floodwater retention areas.

"We heard that Arizona was doing some interesting stuff with their basins," says John Black, parks maintenance manager for the city. He visited Arizona and came back with ideas to more intensively use some of the city's flood control basins. In 1995, as an experiment, the city built a soccer field on the 13-acre Buckskin Basin. After the field was sodded with Tifway 419 hybrid bermudagrass, it looked so

good that the city contracted three other fields and literally covered the bottom of that basin with turfgrass. The three newer fields were sprigged. The four fields cost \$2.5 million for design and construction.

### Where's the flood?

The biggest question in the minds of the maintenance division was whether flood runoff would damage the turfgrass. It didn't have long to wait. Several major floods have since covered portions of Buckskin Basin, in one instance under about seven feet of water. A bigger threat to the turfgrass was a lot less dramatic.

"The flood water got out of there in a day or two," says Black. "That surprised us. The worst part was the daily nuisance runoff." This came from several sources, including street runoff from car washing and other human activities. The basin collects runoff from a five square mile area, and a lot of water enters it more or less continuously, resulting in a sandy wash running across areas of the turfgrass.

To correct this annoying problem, workers excavated a three-foot drainage-way around the turf. This works fine except after downpours when water still sheets across parts of the soccer fields.

Apart from the water, the biggest problem resulting from the runoff has

been weeds, which maintenance crews control with mowing and the judicious use of herbicides.

Although Black says that he anticipated "a huge problem" with sediment because of the flooding, the fine sand deposited on the fields has proved beneficial to the fields. He believes it is helping to build up the thin soil in the basin.

But floods create other problems like litter — candy wrappers and other discarded bits and pieces of daily urban living. "For items like styrofoam cups and wrappers, we use street sweepers," says Black. The fields are allowed to dry, then they're swept with a standard city street sweeper. Does the sweeper damage the turfgrass? No, says Black; it seems to invigorate it.

"One year we had fish," he adds. He's not sure where the carp came from although one possibility is a golf course pond upstream from the basin.

Because of the success of the soccer fields in Buckskin Basin, the city decided to put in seven baseball/softball fields in nearby Gowan South Basin. The complex also includes a skateboard park and vehicle parking lots.

Realizing that the 100-acre Gowan South site could, and probably will, experience flooding just like Buckskin, the fields were constructed higher above water level. A lot more water has to come down before these fields flood, and then a warning system alerts anybody on or near the fields.

The basin fields look pretty worn out by spring as the soccer season winds down. The fields host practices, games and tour-



Las Vegas city parks maintenance supervisors (l. to r.) Jerry Jones, Ray Montoya and Ron Baum at the Bettye Wilson Soccer Complex.

naments. They're also used for other sports, including lacrosse, not to mention pickup games that result in wear and tear from neighborhood kids.

### Leasing from the feds

Another unique source of land for soccer within the city came from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, site of the 20-acre Bettye Wilson Soccer Complex with its 10 lighted fields and 12 other small fields. "This land was originally designated for new BLM offices," says Black. When the agency changed its mind, the city stepped in and obtained the property for free under a long-term lease through provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

The city spent \$7.4 million developing the soccer-exclusive facility, which is adjacent to Cimarron Memorial High School.

The city lets the school soccer team practice and play there at no charge, and it built the school a softball field. In return, the school allows city soccer parents to use the school's huge parking lot.

These fields contain 419 turf, overseeded with perennial ryegrass each autumn. During its first season in 2000, these fields hosted 797 games between Dec. 11 and May 5.

City crews spent this past summer repairing the fields and getting them ready for fall and winter play.

Ron Baum, the maintenance crew leader for both Buckskin Basin and the Bettye Wilson properties, says all of the fields get phenomenal use, making scheduling a huge challenge. Practice is not allowed on many of the fields because there are so many players on the fields at once.

Goalmouths take a beating, and the sidelines, where parents and coaches

stand, get worn out pretty quickly, too. To protect the Bettye Wilson facility, the city put up three- and six-foot fences.

### Still learning

Baum aerifies the turf by pulling plugs on the fields at least twice annually on the fields, and slices (vents) the fields several times a year, too, usually during the winter.

"It's a learning process for me," admits Baum, who had not worked on soccer pitches previously. He fertilizes the turfgrass every four weeks during the growing season, and keeps fresh ryegrass seed in the worn areas of the goalmouths and sidelines. Foot traffic works the seed into the soil.

"In the goalmouths and the sidelines we'll apply more nitrogen than in other areas," says Baum. Still, certain parts of the fields are beat up by season's end, though annual overseeding helps.

He mows soccer turf at 1 1/4 in. during the season but raises the cut to 1 1/2 in. each summer to help the turfgrass recover.

Baum says that irrigation is the most important factor in his management program. Without it, the fields would fail in a hurry. The Bettye Wilson fields are watered by a Rainbird Maxxi system with Watertronics controls. Precise scheduling is a must because of the amount of use the fields get in this desert climate.

In spite of the advances the city has made in delivering new sports fields, it's almost always in catchup mode because of explosive population growth.

John Black, city parks maintenance manager, says the city still has lots of Bureau of Land Management and basin property that it can convert to sports fields when the need becomes even more critical.

### LMI

— The author is a freelance writer who lives in Hollywood, CA, and reports on the Green Industry when he isn't writing television or movie scripts.

# Get a grip

**Here's the low-down on today's lighter, more versatile and easier-to-use landscape trimmers**

BY CURT HARLER /  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**E**ngineers designing power hand tools are finally getting a hand on the problems users have faced for years. That is, those designers are coming out of their ivory towers and making it easier for workers who use the tools to keep their hands on trimmers, edgers and cutters for six to eight hours a day.

Make it lighter and more versatile, and reduce vibration — these are the key design points landscape professionals want in their edgers and trimmers.

## Good vibrations

Kent Hall, Product Manager for power tools at Stihl, Virginia Beach, VA, says vibration reduction is a key to operator comfort. "The material used, handle design and the engine buffers all play a role," he says. Minimizing vibration in a gas-powered hand-held tool is important from the standpoint of operator safety as well as comfort, agrees Ken Speece, Product Manager for Cub Cadet Commercial Products, Cleveland, OH. He says there are two ways to dampen vibration: first, by designing the product to minimize or eliminate the sources of vibration, and second, by incorporating features to dampen any unavoidable vibrations.

Vibration dampening is almost standard on most manufacturers' lines. Landscape pros will find that most well-designed com-



mercial products use both techniques.

"Eliminating the sources is important, and we pay a lot of attention to this as it reduces the need to address it with dampers later," Speece says. Favorite engineering techniques include using lighter moving components such as pistons and lightweight caged needle bearings to minimize the inertia they produce.

"Use of finely balanced crankshafts produces less vibration and allows the use of precision-balanced counterweights," Speece says. The result is greatly reduced vibration. Rubber isolators are often used to further protect the operator from any remaining vibration.

Perhaps the most impressive change in

**Today's lightweight machines provide a lot of performance in a small working package.**

the past couple years is the variety of hand grips provided on the newest machines: swivel handles, ergonomically shaped handles, easy-grip handles, adjustable handles.

More units are coming with balanced front and rear grip handles. Lots of attention is paid to grip design, focusing on how the product is used and held. "The idea is to maintain a natural and balanced position when using the product," Speece says.

Remember the old days when cars had the radio, lights and cruise controls on the dashboard or shifter column? Now they're all within thumb or finger reach even when

both hands are on the steering wheel. The same is true for a whole range of power equipment as engineers design units with power controls next to the dominant hand position. Some tools have the controls on both handle positions.

Being able to use hedge cutters in either direction is a time and arm-saver. More companies are coming out with bi-directional units. The trend is likely to continue.

Hall says the first place to check is on the carton. He says to look for the ANSI sticker or other industry standards bodies. "But the best way to find out if the machine is right for you is to use it for a while," he says.

#### Losing weight

Ounce by ounce, gram by gram, the machines are losing weight. One exception is the Brown Manufacturing's edger, which weighs about 90 lbs. However, it's designed for the brutal handling, dished out at rental operations or at large building complexes where edging never stops.

Reducing weight minimizes operator fatigue and avoids injury. When an operator is tired, productivity drops.

"The single largest area to reduce weight is the trimmer boom or tube," Speece states. Aluminum is usually the best material to use here. "We make efforts to minimize the amount of fasteners used while still ensuring the product is securely assembled. High-tensile plastic is used to produce parts with thinner walls without compromising strength," he adds.

A slightly different approach is to continue to increase the power output of the engine while not increasing its weight. This boosts the power-to-weight ratio.

Stihl's Hall says to focus on the power-to-weight ratio. A well-designed tool will have a high ratio — doing more work for less weight.

Ease of starting is a plus with landscape professionals, also. High-end transistor magneto ignitions produce a stronger and

longer spark than traditional CDI magnetos, which helps with quicker and easier starting. "Compression release systems can

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Circle 129

be used, but some types result in lost power and commercial landscapers care a lot about their power," says Speece.

Two-cycle engines remain the power source of choice, although some four-cycle units are nosing their way into the market. Given the CARB and noise standards, sales of four-cycle models will likely grow.

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**Cub Cadet Commercial 30HC**

The 30HC from Cub Cadet Commercial, Cleveland, OH, has 25.6cc 2-cycle engine. Hedge clipper's wide single-sided blade opening handles thick branches, sculpting. Self-cleaning blades allow continuous operation.

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**JOHN DEERE**

**800/537-8233**

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

The XT170B trimmer from John Deere,

## Pipe down

Noise control continues to be important. Reducing noise from trimmers and blowers benefits both operators and the neighborhood where they're working. "But it is not only about noise," Speece says. "It can be as simple as making sure that the foam pad on your backpack blower has deep grooves to allow air circulation or that the fuel filler neck on the trimmer is positioned off to the side of the unit to allow easy and safe refueling."

"There are a lot of improvements that can still be made to these products," Speece says. "The industry is still in its infancy in this area. It will always be a balance between the cost of improvements and the value perceived by the user."

Californians, check for the state approval on any product. Also check for CARB II and other pollution standards, Hall says.



**John Deere trimmer with bike-style grip**

Raleigh, NC, has easy-start, 2-cycle 1.7 hp Deere M-Series engine that runs cooler with less vibration, lower sound levels. Bike-style handlebars have shock-absorbing grips. Weighs 15.5 lbs.

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

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**Scag has 10-in. milled-edge blade**



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## Get your life back

**How this Minneapolis contractor boosted profits, reduced stress and reclaimed his weekends**

BY JAY LEMKE

**S**ure, John Perkins was making money, but he often asked himself if the headaches and stress were worth it. Equipment was expensive, and manual laborers gave him another set of problems, including payroll, health insurance and workers' comp.

### **The problem: no personal life**

"We just had too many irons in the fire," says the owner of Perkins Landscape Contractors, Minneapolis. At his most hectic, Perkins, with 40 employees to keep busy and supervise, tackled everything from sports fields to asphalt paving to working at his own nursery and sod farm.

"There were too many things to keep under control. I got to the point where I decided to downsize in the early '90s," he admits. It wasn't easy, but Perkins was committed. He feels he's reached the level that most landscape professionals aspire to — profits are strong, stress is relatively low and he can actually take weekends off.

### **The solution: efficient equipment**

"What we've done with equipment has made all the difference," he explains. "First, we discovered that there was a lot of large equipment that we didn't need. We could rent a lot cheaper than we could buy. Secondly, we bought equipment that could do what hand laborers used to do."

For that, Perkins bought a RC-30 All-Sur-



face Loader from ASV. The machine is small (4 ft. wide and 6 ft. tall), but it has a rubber-tracked undercarriage that gives it high traction, stability and ground sensitivity (2.5 lb. per sq. in. compared to the 6.0 psi of a man and the 50 psi of a traditional rubber-tired skid-steer). As a result, using such attachments as a bucket, trencher, auger or sod-layer, it can work in areas once relegated to hand labor. And it does this work with no damage to surrounding terrain such as turf.

"We've pretty much said goodbye to the shovel," says Perkins. "I'd never be able to do what I'm doing without it (RC-30). Most of the jobs we're on would be several more thousand dollars in cost, and that's one of our selling points."

On the rare occasions when he needs hand labor, Perkins uses temporary workers.

"For 10 bucks an hour, they'll deliver

**Small but powerful machines like this RC-30 can significantly reduce the need for laborers.**

the guys to the job, they'll pay all workers' comp, all the insurance, and they'll pick them up at the end of the day," he says.

As an example of his new strategy, Perkins recently converted a softball field to a baseball field by himself with a few temporary laborers considerably faster than when he did similar projects with numerous full-time employees.

"In the past, we could sod a 12,000 square yard ball field, and it would take me two days and 10 guys. Now, with four guys, we can do it in a day," he says. "A lot has changed from the old days."

— The author is with Carmichael Lynch Spong, Minneapolis, MN, and can be reached at [jlemke@clynch.com](mailto:jlemke@clynch.com).

## ask the expert

BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

### Weeding out the problem

**We're a small landscape design, installation and maintenance company with many weeds in our ornamental planting areas — mostly grassy weeds, some broadleaf weeds. What kind of herbicide can we use as a preemergent, and what should we do with the existing weeds?**

— MI

Managing weeds in ornamental planting areas is difficult. Applications of selective pre-emergent herbicides such as Pre-M, Barricade, Dimension, Pendulum or Sulfate can manage many grassy and broadleaf weeds. A number of these herbicides have been registered for use on several ornamentals. Refer to the label to determine whether a given herbicide is suitable to your concern.

Become familiar with the rate, timing and best method to achieve good post-emergent weed control. Consider using herbicides such as Roundup, Finale or Scythe. Exercise caution when using these non-selective herbicides as they can injure plant parts if they come in contact with them. Keep the treatment away from non-target desirable plants, and use the herbicides as needed.

### Mite be stressful

**From time to time we get severe mite problems on burning bush (*Euonymus* sp.). We've used Sevin to control the chewing insects and Kelthane for mites. Sometimes we get good control and sometimes we don't. What are we doing wrong? How can we improve our mite problem control?**

— PA

Managing mite problems on ornamental plants is a challenge for arborists. If not managed properly, populations can build up and cause extensive feeding damage and premature defoliation, which weakens plants and affects their overall health.

The key to managing mites is properly identifying the problem and treating it as needed. It's important to occasionally rotate miticide use when mites are active so they don't build up a resistance to one particular kind.

One of the problems in your program is that you've been using Sevin to manage chewing pests. In doing so, you may have eliminated some predators of mites. Monitor the plants and use pesticides only as needed. If there is no evidence of chewing pests, avoid using pesticides aimed at controlling them.

Add other miticides such as horticultural oil, Avid, Hexigon or Sanmite to your current mite management program. Reports also indicate that Talstar might be useful as a mite management tool if it's rotated with other miticides.

Mites on *Euonymus* are considered warm-season mites, which means they're active on the plant during warmer months of the growing season and dormant in cooler seasons. Warm-season mites overwinter away from affected plants on the ground, or leaves and debris. Therefore, if you treat plants when mites aren't on them, you'll see good results. It may be too late to treat plants when they're discolored and defoliated because, at that time, the majority of the mites may have already fallen to the ground.

To manage the problem, monitor the suspect plants periodically and provide the treatment as needed by rotating different

products from time to time. To detect mites, take a white sheet of paper or cloth, hold it under the leaves, and shake the leaves. If there are any small pests with eight legs on the paper, they're mites. Products like horticultural oil won't have any residual effect, so it's important to cover all areas, including the underside of leaves, to achieve good results. Repeat applications as needed.

### Paint the trees

**In our shade tree production nursery, we put paint markings on some four-inch diameter maple trees we wanted removed. Now, someone is interested in purchasing them. How do we remove the paint? Can we use paint remover without hurting the cambium?**

— OH

Removing paint from these maple trees without causing injury to the bark and cambium isn't practical. Using paint remover isn't a good idea because it may injure the plant tissue.

Consider cleaning the painted surface with mild soap and water, gently brushing the paint with a nylon brush. If this doesn't help, consider applying water-based paint over the original paint to mask it. Also, before using the masking paint, make sure it's compatible with the paint on the tree and isn't going to result in a different objectionable color. Test the color combination separately on a small portion of the tree before using it on the tree trunk.

*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: [jstahl@advanstar.com](mailto:jstahl@advanstar.com). Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear.



# Landscape MANAGEMENT

January 2002

This card is void after March 15, 2002

I would like to receive (continue receiving)  
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 Yes  no

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
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 \*Is this your home address?  Yes  No  
 PHONE (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**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 <input type="radio"/> A Mowing              | 22 <input type="radio"/> F Turf Fertilization   | 27 <input type="radio"/> K Paving, Deck & Patio Installation |
| 18 <input type="radio"/> B Turf Insect Control | 23 <input type="radio"/> G Turf Disease Control | 28 <input type="radio"/> L Pond/Lake Care                    |
| 19 <input type="radio"/> C Tree Care           | 24 <input type="radio"/> H Ornamental Care      | 29 <input type="radio"/> M Landscape Installation            |
| 20 <input type="radio"/> D Turf Aeration       | 25 <input type="radio"/> I Landscape Design     | 30 <input type="radio"/> N Snow Removal                      |
| 21 <input type="radio"/> E Irrigation Services | 26 <input type="radio"/> J Turf Weed Control    | 31 <input type="radio"/> 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 <input type="radio"/> 1 Aerators          | 39 <input type="radio"/> 8 Herbicides              | 46 <input type="radio"/> 15 Sweepers                   |
| 33 <input type="radio"/> 2 Blowers           | 40 <input type="radio"/> 9 Insecticides            | 47 <input type="radio"/> 16 Tractors                   |
| 34 <input type="radio"/> 3 Chain Saws        | 41 <input type="radio"/> 10 Line Trimmers          | 48 <input type="radio"/> 17 Truck Trailers/Attachments |
| 35 <input type="radio"/> 4 Chipper-Shredders | 42 <input type="radio"/> 11 Mowers                 | 49 <input type="radio"/> 18 Trucks                     |
| 36 <input type="radio"/> 5 De-icers          | 43 <input type="radio"/> 12 Snow Removal Equipment | 50 <input type="radio"/> 19 Turfseed                   |
| 37 <input type="radio"/> 6 Fertilizers       | 44 <input type="radio"/> 13 Sprayers               | 51 <input type="radio"/> 20 Utility Vehicles           |
| 38 <input type="radio"/> 7 Fungicides        | 45 <input type="radio"/> 14 Spreaders              |  |

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

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

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

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

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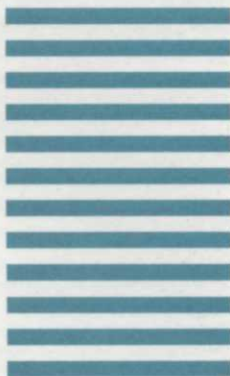
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MANAGEMENT**

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PO BOX 5054  
PITTSFIELD MA 01203-9697



**Landscape  
MANAGEMENT**

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- 16  50 **Other Titled and Non-Titled Personnel** (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
 TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
 FIRM \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS\* \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Is this your home address?  Yes  No  
 PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. SERVICES PERFORMED (fill in ALL that apply)

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

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

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

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

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

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- 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
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106	118	130	142	154	166	178	190	202	214	226	238	250	262	274	286	298	310
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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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## Tackling tough grass

Billy Goat says its Contour mower can tackle knee-high grass and weeds, plus the toughest grasses. Features include a 24-in. deck, a 6.5-hp Briggs OHV Intek Pro V/C engine, 16-in. rear pneumatic tires and ergonomic handle.

For more information contact Billy Goat at 816/524-9666 or [www.billygoat.com](http://www.billygoat.com) / circle no. 250

## Trimmer with a charge

RedMax's CHT2500 double-sided hedge trimmer with Komatsu Zenoah's strato-charged 25cc two-cycle engine allows operators

to realize a 34% fuel savings, 73% fewer exhaust emissions and 5% less weight, according to the company. Double-sided, 24-in.,

dual reciprocating blades are at an ergonomic 1.62-in. pitch. Blade speed is 3.85 ft. per second.

For more information contact RedMax at 800/291-8251 x213 or [www.redmax.com](http://www.redmax.com) / circle no. 251

## Transform rough terrain

The Toro soil cultivator attachment for use on Toro Dingo compact utility loaders transforms rough terrain into an ideal planting bed in a single pass. An optional seed box attachment allows users to cultivate and seed at the same time.

For more information contact Toro at 800/344-8676 or [www.toro.com](http://www.toro.com) / circle no. 252

## Hitch it up

The new Lift-Pro from Hitch Things features a powerful electric motor, a variety of platforms and is available with 400 or 800 lbs. capacity. It easily pins to the back of a truck and adjusts to any receiver height.

For more information contact Hitch Things at 877/734-3920 or [www.hitchthings.com](http://www.hitchthings.com) / circle no. 253

## Mid-range rotor

Irritol Systems' CR500 is a mid-range, gear-dri-

## Tough guy

The Thomas 254 turbo loader features a turbo-charged Kubota diesel engine that produces 87 net hp. It also has over 6,970 lbs. of breakout force combined with a lift capacity of 2,400 lbs.

For more information contact Thomas at 866/238-6844 or [www.thomasloaders.com](http://www.thomasloaders.com) / circle no. 254



ven rotor designed for commercial, light commercial and residential applications. The rotor can be adjusted from 40 to 360 degrees and provides continuous rotation for even coverage when set to full-circle operation. The features of this rotor include: a pre-installed check valve, a pressure-activated seal, and a robust trip mechanism.

For more information contact Irritol Systems at 909/785-3623 / circle no. 255

## Lock and load

The new Allmand TLB-325 compact tractor loader backhoe features an ESL backhoe design to reduce friction and extend service intervals. Powered by either a Kohler CH25S or Robin EH72 25-hp gasoline engine, the 3,950-lb. TLB-325's backhoe offers 4,611 lbs. of digging force and 9 ft., 8 in. of digging depth.

For more information contact Allmand at 800/562-1373 or [www.allmand.com](http://www.allmand.com) / circle no. 256



## Spray away

Hunter Industries' Institutional Spray is a new multi-featured spray sprinkler that was made for use in high traffic commercial or institutional sites. The spray is available as a 4-, 6- or 12-in. pop-up and features a built-in pressure regulator which maintains water pressure at 30 psi.

For more information contact Hunter Industries at 800/733-2823 or visit [www.hunterindustries.com](http://www.hunterindustries.com) / circle no. 257

## 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.benkoproducts.com](http://www.benkoproducts.com) / circle no. 258

## Improved sprinkler performance

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 pulsing action. Large water droplets fall close to the sprinkler heads as they open and close for even distribution.

For more information call 800/845-6233 or [www.nibco.com](http://www.nibco.com) / circle no. 259

# products

157493 1237



## Save labor

PowerHouse Equipment's new PowerHouse Prodigy is a 13-hp compact loader that can trench, auger, till, move materials and more. The loader and its attachments can be transported easily on a custom built trailer, which can be pulled behind a standard SUV or pickup truck.

For more information contact PowerHouse Equipment at 800/467-9673 or [www.powerhouseequipment.com/](http://www.powerhouseequipment.com/) circle no. 260

## Plant and mulch

D & G Products' Tree Mantis and Mulch Mantis attachments for commercial front mowers let landscape professionals do more with less. With the Tree Mantis, one person can plant trees or shrubs with a ball or bucket ranging from 9- to 24-in. A hydraulically controlled, bowl-shaped mandible grasps the root ball without causing damage. The Mulch Mantis uses the same mower deck mounting system, and lets you scoop and move mulch quickly and easily. It has a capacity of 5.5 cu. ft., with dead load of 135 lbs. and live load of 350 lbs.

For more information contact D & G Products at 615/754-5125 / circle no. 261

## The wood deck alternative

CertainTeed Outdoor Living Products' EverNew vinyl deck is the low maintenance, durable alternative to a wood deck. It never needs to be sanded, stained or painted, and it installs directly on the joists. Vinyl planks are light, easy to transport and require no special tools. Planks are available in five lengths — up to 24 ft. Snap-in fill pieces conceal all fasteners, while vinyl rails and matching fascia boards ensure a finished look.

For more information contact CertainTeed at 800/233-8990 or [www.certainteed.com/](http://www.certainteed.com/) circle no. 262

## Boost plant health and yield

Agreaux Organics now offers their natural and organic fertilizers to commercial growers, nurseries and landscapers. The fertilizers come in

pelletized or crumbled form, in 20 lb. bags which cover 1,000 sq. ft. each. The 6-2-4 natural fertilizer is ideal for lawns where extra nitrogen promotes leaf, grass and foliage growth. The extra phosphorus in the 2-10-10 enhances flower development, and the 5-5-5 balances the N-P-K ratio and is good for flowers and any soil where nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are depleted.

For more information contact Agreaux Organics at 877/378-5407 or [www.agreauxorganics.com/](http://www.agreauxorganics.com/) circle no. 263

## Appealing machine



Earth-a-peel Industries' Cable-a-peel buries cable, wire and small tubing at tractor speed. The ground is left virtually undisturbed.

For more information contact Earth-a-peel Industries at 847/382-7147 or [www.earth-a-peel.com/](http://www.earth-a-peel.com/) circle no. 264

## A blanket of protection

Simplot Turf and Horticulture's new APEX

Wulkap is an all wool pellet containing no manures or compost and designed for weed prevention, soil media amendment and moisture retention. It turns into a wool "blanket" that reduces plant stress up to 12 months by increasing mean temperature. It also reduces water loss by evaporation by 30 to 60%, improves air porosity and reduces compaction.

For more information contact Simplot at 800/992-6066 or [www.simplot.com/](http://www.simplot.com/) circle no. 265

## Fuel catalyst

Advanced Power Systems International's (APSI) Fitch Fuel Catalyst is a pre-combustion fuel treatment device that improves the combustion of diesel, gasoline (2- and 4-stroke) and other fuels. Simply drop the catalyst into the fuel tank to induce a chemical reaction that changes the fuel's molecular structure. Degraded elements of fuel are converted into higher energy components, reducing problems with stale fuel such as pre-ignition, knocking, soot and smoke.

For more information contact APSI at 888/881-APSI or [www.fitchfuelcatalyst.com/](http://www.fitchfuelcatalyst.com/) circle no. 266

## Sharp stuff

STIHL pole pruners feature adjustable pole length, bark cutter and hook to keep the blade in the cut, and a revolving arm for precise cutting. Other sharp hand tools can be found in STIHL's new Precision Series Hand Tools product line.

For more information contact STIHL at 800/467-8445 or [www.stihlusa.com/](http://www.stihlusa.com/) circle no. 267

## Get energized

Motorola's new impres series of replacement batteries and chargers for existing Motorola two-way radios reduces memory effect. This occurs when a battery is recharged before it is fully discharged, which makes the battery lose capacity and the user have to buy a new battery long before its life expectancy. When used together, impres chargers and batteries are covered by a 24-month capacity/workmanship warranty.

For more information contact Motorola at 800/422-4210 or [www.motorola.com/](http://www.motorola.com/) circle no. 268



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Circle No. 133

## The Evergreen Foundation

Bringing professionals and volunteers together to create green spaces that improve our lives

### It's a proven fact:

Green spaces such as public greenways and trails:

- Act as filters to cleanse the air of pollutants
- Act as sound buffers
- Have a calming effect on mind and body
- Are places for recreation as well as enjoyment
- Provide habitat for wildlife that would otherwise be driven away

The Evergreen Foundation is unique among existing organizations working to create new greenways. We harness the skills and resources of professionals in the Green Industry, including manufacturers, and couple them with dedicated volunteers from local communities.

### WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US

Become a member of the Evergreen Foundation in one of three ways

- Green Backer
- Green Supporter
- Green Promoter

For more information about joining the Evergreen Foundation please contact:

Den Gardner, Development Director  
120 W. Main St., P.O. Box 156  
New Prague, MN 56071  
1.877.758.4835

[www.evergreenfoundation.com](http://www.evergreenfoundation.com)  
[evergreenfound@aol.com](mailto:evergreenfound@aol.com)



evergreen  
foundation

Landscape Development



## Seeking Director of Maintenance Operations

Landscape Development Inc., a national top 20 landscape firm, is seeking a highly talented and experienced professional to fill the position of Director of Maintenance Operations for its Southern California Offices.



This position is responsible for all aspects of our maintenance operations, reporting directly to the company president. The goal of this position is to create in our maintenance operations the same leadership status we currently enjoy in landscape construction.

We seek a highly motivated, capable and self-directed individual to lead this exciting effort for **Landscape Development**.

Contact Samantha Fleming Tel : 661-295-1970 Fax : 661-295-1969  
Email : [SFleming@landscapedevelopment.com](mailto:SFleming@landscapedevelopment.com) WWW: [www.landscapedevelopment.com](http://www.landscapedevelopment.com)

Circle No. 135

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Advanced growing solutions

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\$1.12 per 1" Caliper  
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SAVE \$\$\$...  
Reduce Plant Mortality!



## 4-in-1 ALL-PURPOSE T/O PLANTING GRANULES

Four (4) Critical "Plant Survival Essentials"...  
In 1 Convenient, Cost-Effective Planting Package!

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- #2. ENDO-ECTOMYCORRHIZAL FUNGI
- #3. ADVANCED POLYMER GEL
- #4. BIO-PLEX BIO-STIMULANT



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Circle No. 134

# Landscape MANAGEMENT

For ads under \$250, payment must be received by the classified closing date. VISA, MASTERCARD, and AMERICAN EXPRESS accepted.

Send to: Advanstar Marketing Services, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130.  
Advertising Information and Placement: LESLIE ZOLA, 1-800-225-4569 (ext 2670) or 440-891-2670, Fax: 440-826-2865, Email: lzola@advanstar.com

## Business For Sale

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Started by the present owner 42 years ago  
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Real Estate Also Available

A. Jay Hoyal & Company - 800-757-6088  
www.BizForSaleInColorado.com

## Unique Lawn & Garden Business

located on one of Florida's most exclusive islands.

\$1.2MM Sales / \$300K Owner Benefits  
Business includes just under 1 acre of prime island property.

Contact to Buy or Sell

Tom Gerber (Business Broker)  
C-21 Sunbelt Realty 800-809-5645 X371  
Email gerber@c21sunbelt.com  
www.fibiz4sale.com

## LANDSCAPE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Well Established

20-year Landscape Company  
Boston, Massachusetts Area.

Annual volume \$3.1 million PLUS!  
Company breakdown:

- 70% Construction
- 20% Maintenance
- 10% Snow Operations

Well managed and organized operation with a meticulous fleet. Will sell with or without the Real Estate, which has all the necessary provisions for repairs and parking.

The 2001 backlog to date is \$2.9 Million!

Contact GLOBAL BUSINESS EXCHANGE  
MR. JOHN F. DOYLE at: 781-380-4100

## LONG ESTABLISHED NURSERY IN AFFLUENT COMMUNITY

Features Include:

Approximately six acres with

- Buildings & Facilities
- Nursery Equipment
- Shade Houses
- Wholesale Annuals/Flowers Nursery
- Contract Growers

Asking \$695,000

Please reply to e-mail:

janeschwiering@norris-realestate.com

## Business For Sale (Cont'd)

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO Maintenance & Landscaping Business For Sale. Well established with long-term commercial customers. Substantial assets including real estate. Sales \$1,100,000+. Adjusted Profit: \$110,000+. Call Ron Branch: 800-395-7653. www.fbb.com 1/02

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Put the power of Classifieds to work for you!

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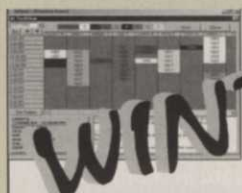
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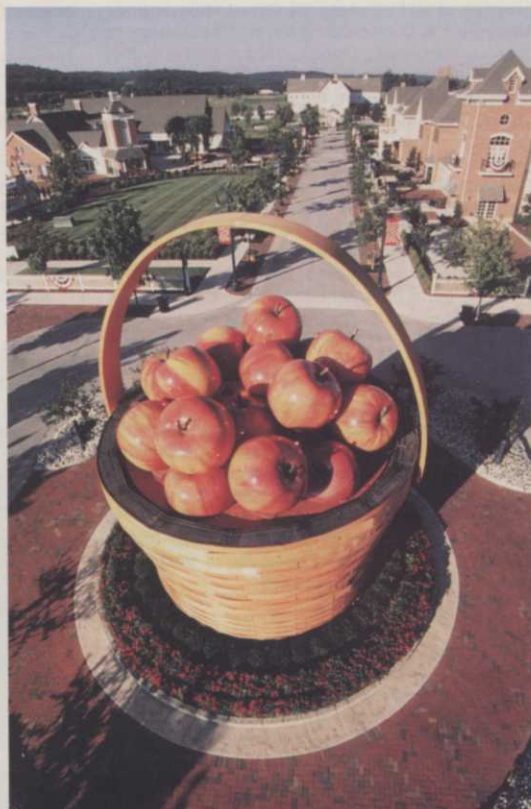
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THIS AND THAT

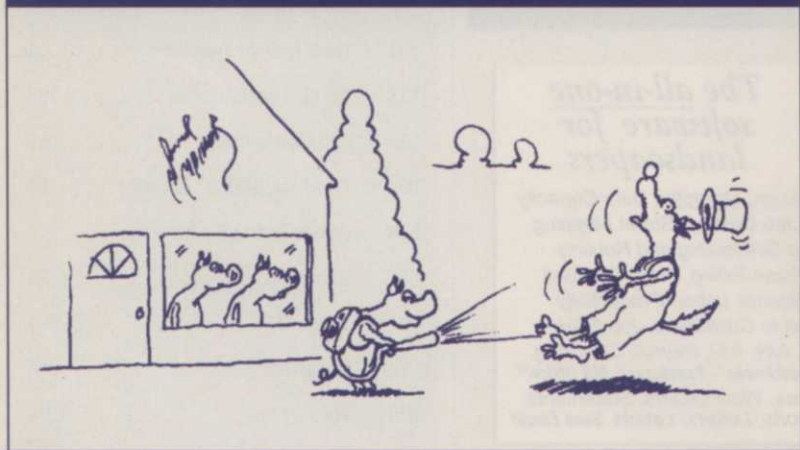
To support the relief efforts at Ground Zero in New York and Washington DC, The Toro Company contributed material support in the form of heavy duty vehicles for transportation on the sites of the terrorist attacks. Bob Dole is among the dignitaries who have reviewed the relief efforts from the passenger seat of a Toro Workman, which was originally designed for demanding terrain covered by grounds and sports turf crews. Toro distributor Storr Tractor of Somerville, N.J. played an integral role in delivering the Workman vehicles to the relief effort sites.



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## The last laugh



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