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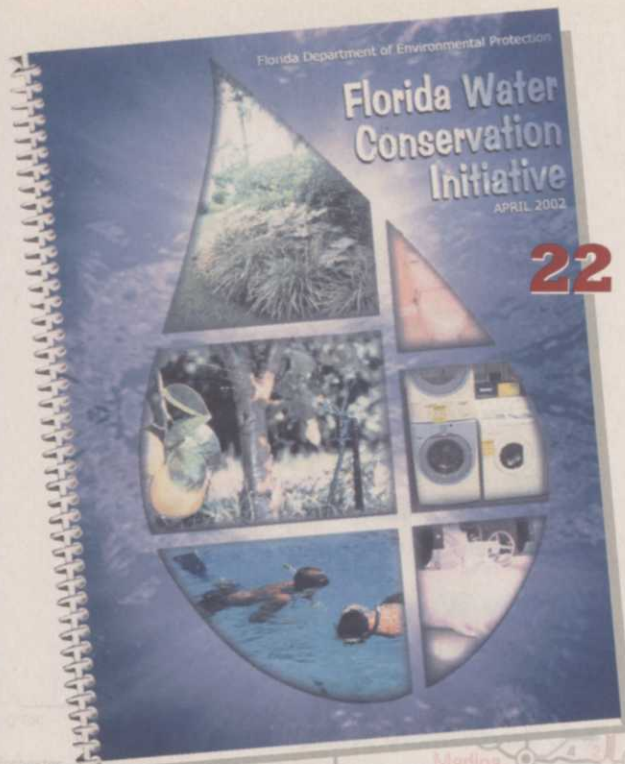
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Landscape MANAGEMENT

JUNE 2002 / #6 / VOLUME 41

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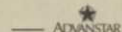
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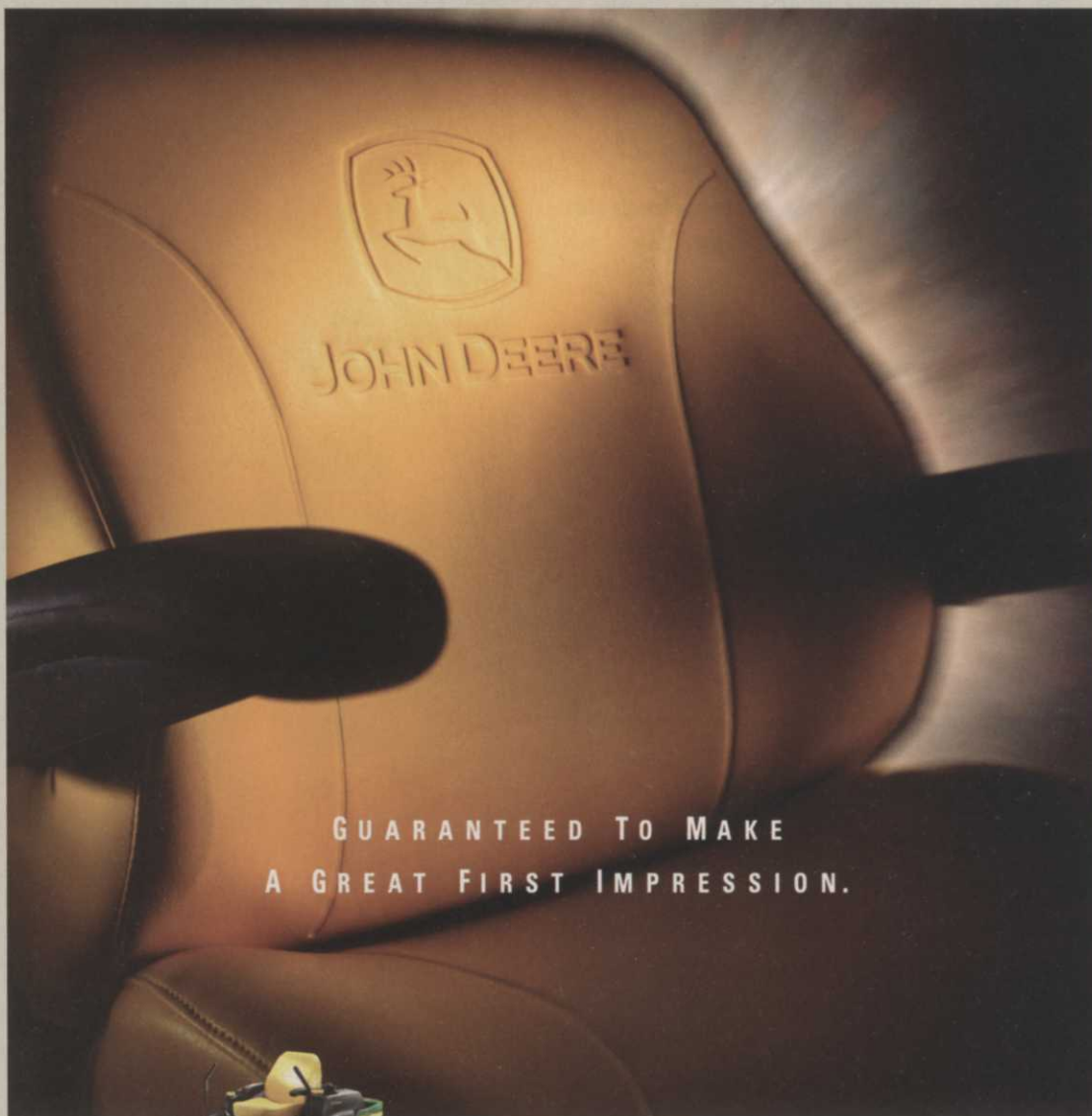
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■ Walls, edging and pavers

Read about the latest trends in pavers and retaining walls, plus a comprehensive listing of the best products on the market

■ Corporate Capabilities

Descriptions and contact information on the best companies in the Green Industry

■ Let's Hear It

More eye-opening comments from readers on mowing rates

■ Patio and deck profits

Learn from the experts how to make money installing patios and decks

■ Owners speak out

Landscape/lawn care business owners speak their mind on hot topics in "Inside the Owner's Head"

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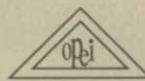
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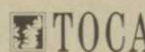
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Canada's industry under siege

Playing out in Canada is what lawn care business owners in the United States have long feared. Professional turfgrass and landscape application services there are under attack.

Every town in the country apparently has the green light to make whatever pesticide regulations it wants.

A ruling by Canada's highest court in the spring of 2001 gave the town of Hudson the right to ban professional lawn applications. That decision ended a 10-year battle between that town of 5,500 people and two lawn care companies that had been doing business there.

The floodgates fly open

A coalition of activist groups reacted like sharks smelling blood in the water. Vocal even before the ruling, they've intensified their efforts and are pestering cities across Canada to restrict or ban the activities of professional landscape services that use chemical pest controls.

At last count, about 50 towns in Quebec Province had passed some form of lawn care legislation. Imagine the confusion and waste for any company doing business in more than a few communities.

More cities are being targeted by these "crusaders," including Canada's most populated ones. The City of Halifax in Nova Scotia, which has about 70,000 households, will outlaw chemical lawn and garden care on residential properties on April 1, 2003. Toronto, Canada's biggest city in Ontario Province, is looking at bylaws. Ottawa and Vancouver are on the hit list, too.

Playing for keeps

These activist groups — the Sierra Club, the World Wildlife Fund, and others — mean to have their way. Their goal is to rid Canada of all chemical pest control product use, say the Green Industry people we've spoken to.

The activists started with the argument that pesticide use is unnecessary on turfgrass and landscapes for "aesthetic" or "cosmetic" purposes. We should ask, loud and clear, "Says who?"

That argument is just a smokescreen, say Canadian landscape professionals we talk to. The ultimate target is pesticide use in Canada's huge agriculture industry.

So, the activists started with the easiest group to pick on, the lawn care people. And, until recently, the battle has been pretty one-sided. They attacked; the lawn care people reacted. In recent months, however, the professional landscape industry has closed ranks. Owners who heretofore viewed each other as competitors joined forces to defend their profession. Dozens now attend town meetings when the topic of pesticide use is debated. The scary part is that they have to do this town by town, meeting by meeting.

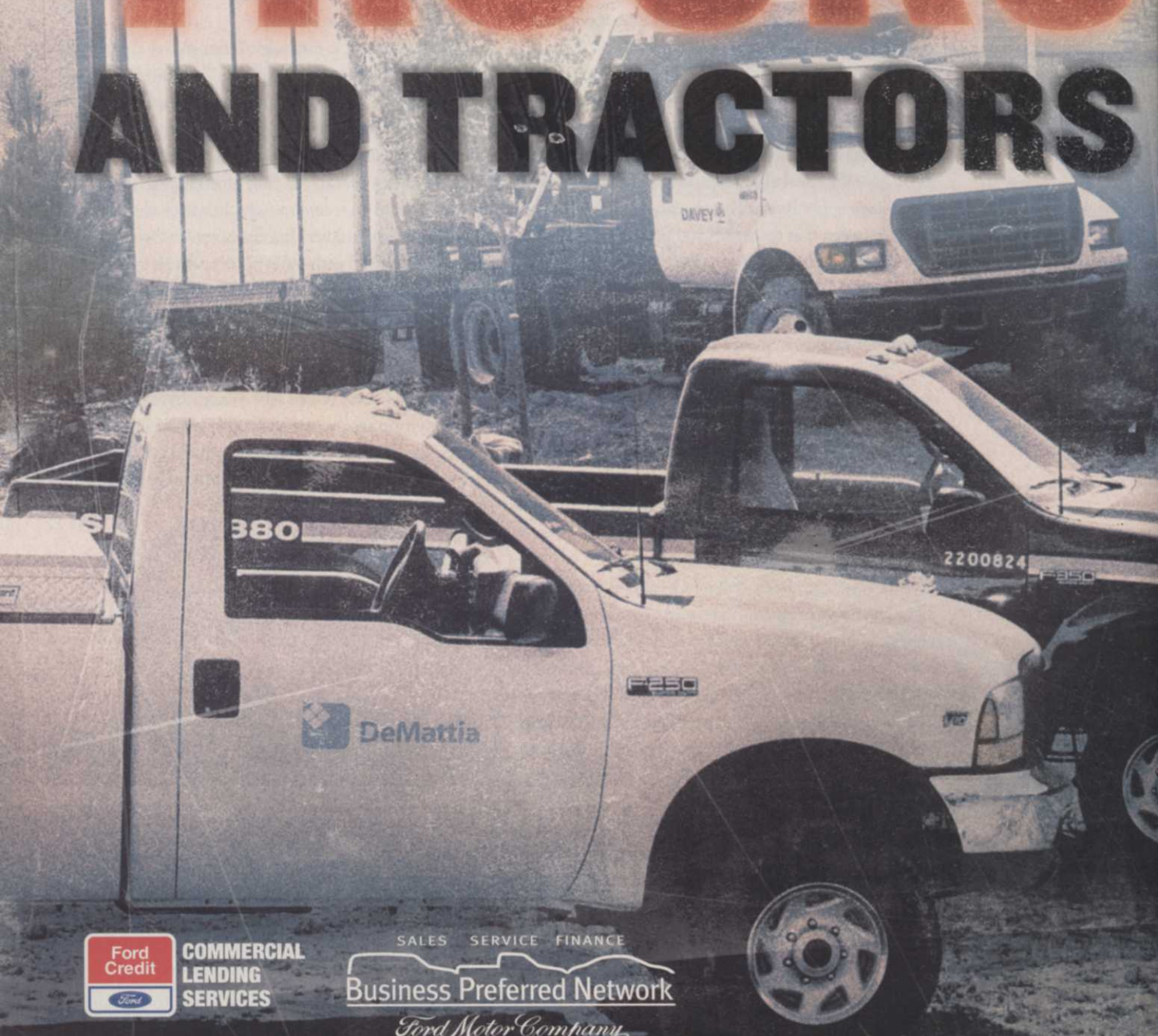
In spite of these efforts and a campaign to develop industry-wide acceptance and implementation of the principles of integrated pest management (IPM), the lawn care industry in Canada remains on the defensive . . . and pretty much on its own.

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



The activists started with the easiest group to pick on, the lawn care people.

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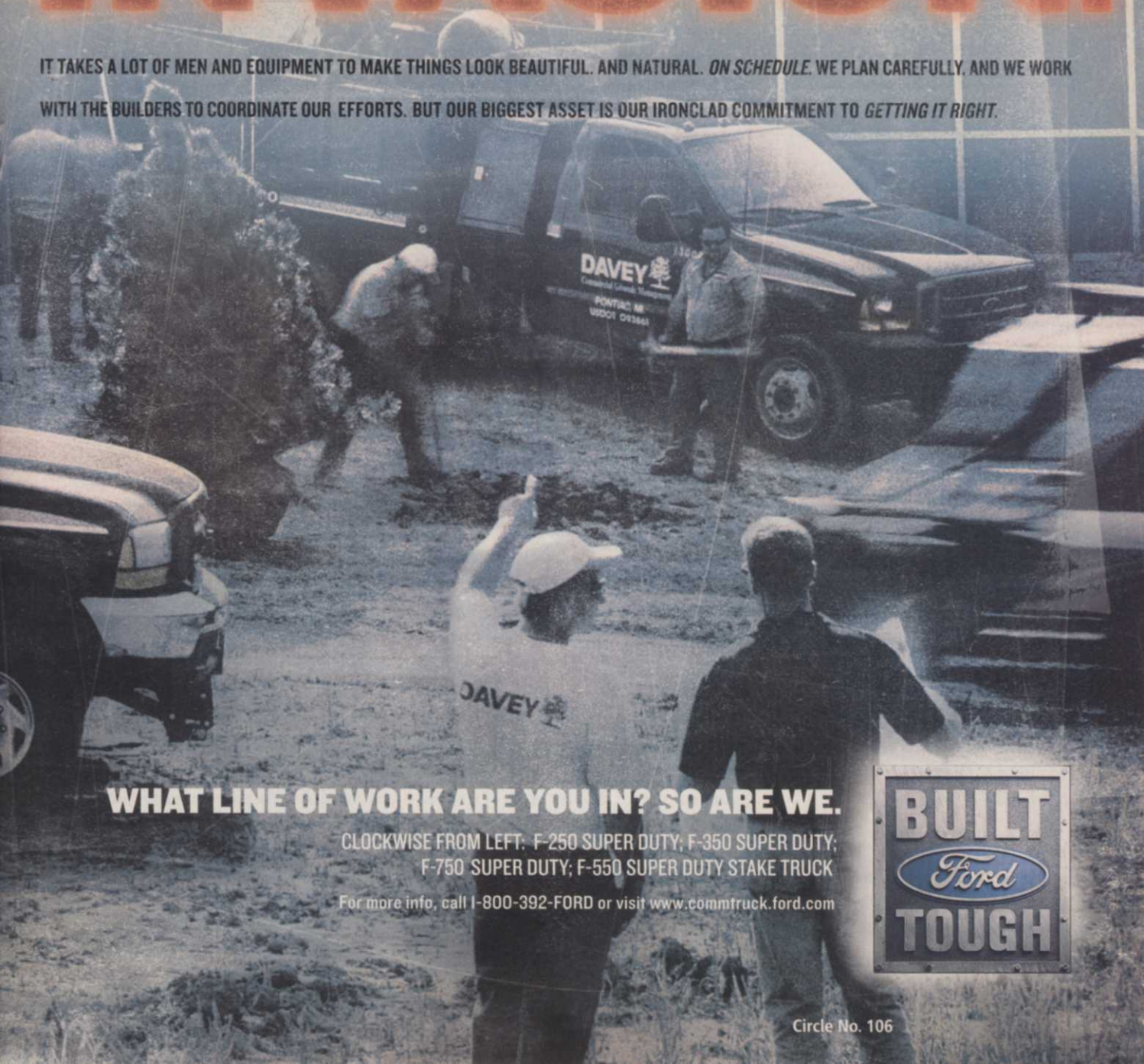
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inside the owner's head

BY JASON STAHL / MANAGING EDITOR

It's the battle of revenue vs. expenses!

After a busy day, a landscape professional might lie in bed and ponder this question: Which is more important, generating revenue or controlling expenses?

Judging from the responses from members of The Owners' Network, this question could sustain a lengthy debate.

Watch those expenses

"I've shown more bottom line profit by controlling expenses rather than raising prices," says Michael Hatcher of Michael Hatcher and Associates, Memphis, TN. "Look at the income statement to determine which expenses carry the largest percent and attack that area of your cost expenses."

Brian Akehurst of Akehurst Landscape Service, Joppa, MD, is a proponent of watching expenses, too, but that's not the most exciting thing to do. "Since generating revenue is the easy part, I think a lot of owners catch themselves spending more time in that role," he says.

"I remember a quote from some famous coach that goes, 'Offense wins games, but defense wins championships,'" says Jerry Merrill of Weed Man East Idaho/Merrill Quality Landscapes, Rexburg, ID. "Without a detailed cost control system (defense), the championship (a good net profit number) is out of reach."

Go make money!

Scott Ziebol of LandCrafters, Inc., New Berlin, WI, says he's an offense-minded player. In his opinion, a cost efficient organization without adequate revenues will die.

"Generating revenue requires more time and attention, and when you stop focusing on it, it goes away," Ziebol says. "Even the most basic cost control systems, once in place, have their own inertia and can be incrementally improved."

Dan Rooney of Rooney Landscape, Rolling Meadows, IL, believes that owners are entrepreneurs at heart and want to build revenues. But to do that, he says, you need a sound budget. "I spend time preparing a budget, and I review it on a monthly basis. Get confident with your budget, then turn your attention on building your business."

Johnette Taylor of Roundtree Landscaping, Dallas, TX, keeps it simple with regard to this subject: "I focus my attention on ways to generate revenue. I leave controlling expenses to the bookkeeper."



Scott Ziebol (left) says go make money, while Mark Baldwin favors a more balanced method.



Rub your tummy and pat your head

Some landscape pros advocate giving equal attention to both generating revenues and cutting expenses. As Billy Holly of Central Coast Landscape and Maintenance, Santa Cruz, CA, says — it's like rubbing your tummy while patting your head.

"If you don't generate income, you'll have no expenses to control, so the income has to come first," Holly says. "However, don't dare

When cost control can backfire

Scott Ziebol pointed to the typical strategy during tough economic times as an example of why cost control can backfire. "When revenue drops and cost cutting is chosen as a correction, the first things to go are the important things necessary to support revenue production. These include things like customer service support, marketing, training."

He continues: "The next step is to try to beat more productivity out of the production staff while cutting things necessary to support them."

lose track of where your money is going."

"What's more important to a car, the tires or the engine? They both need to be in working order for the car to run properly," says Mark Baldwin of Mark J. Baldwin & Associates, Plymouth, MI. "If you have a selling machine with only fair production, or great production but no cost control, there will be problems."

Taylor, while admitting she's a revenue generator, also advises caution on one-way thinking. "Generating revenues is the fastest way to add to the bottom line, but you need to make sure you're not just making a sale. It has to be profitable."

— Information provided by The Owners' Network, a program created by JP Horizons, Inc. and sponsored by Weed Man. Visit the Web site www.owners1.com or call

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Customers are people first

Some time ago I read that there's not a lot of customer loyalty in the lawn care business.

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Our company doesn't lose many customers because we don't treat them like numbers, concentrating too much on volume like some big companies. Proof of this is some of the things we do for customers that might seem a bit out of the ordinary.

Don't be afraid to be different

After the economy took a plunge last year many people lost their jobs, including some of our customers. We've had longtime customers who, when they lost their job, told us they had to cancel our service. We didn't let them. Instead, we offered to continue our service for free until they got another job. We don't do that for all our customers or else we'd go broke. But, for a special few, we will. And you wouldn't believe what kind of loyalty that builds.

Big companies would never service a customer for free, no matter what the circumstances. If you can't pay the bill they let you go. They want sales and growth. They don't think long-term, about how we're all human beings living and working on this earth together.

Another thing that goes a long way in developing customer loyalty is doing some random and unexpected nice things for your customers. One time, a longtime customer asked me to come out and give her some advice on her landscape. I have a special relationship with a local florist and I thought, what the heck, I'm going to bring some roses to her. Needless to say, she was quite surprised. It just made her week.

Be like the milkman

When I was a young boy growing up in Cincinnati, everyone had a milkman. After awhile, our milkman knew everyone in our family, plus the dog and the cat. Do you think my dad would have ever fired him? Heck no. He wasn't just providing us with milk — he knew us and cared about us.

We tell our employees to get to know their customers well, too, and take care of them in any way possible. We know they do a quality job because we pay them a salary so they're happy and comfortable. If we paid them on commission, quality would go out the window. If a guy is racing to finish 40 lawns in one day, would you want to be that 40th lawn?

We have customer appreciation parties where our customers and employees will mingle and further their relationship. If there's a new employee, we'll introduce him to a customer and say, "This is who's going to work on your lawn." This seems to work well. We have one employee who's been with us for seven years named Joe who customers will specifically request by name.

Treat your employees right

Developing loyalty among employees is important, too. When goals aren't achieved, companies want to lay employees off. We've never laid anybody off. As soon as you lay employees off, you lose their loyalty.

Make sure to do special things for employees who've been with you for a long time. Whether it's increasing vacation time or offering some other perk, we always make sure to reward longtime employees so their loyalty stays with us.

— The author is owner of GroGreen, a \$2 million lawn care company based in Plano, TX. He can be reached at 972/578-6600.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Minnesota passes fertilizer bill

MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura signed bill SF 1555, the state bill that regulates use of phosphorus lawn fertilizer, into law April 29, 2002. Most of the bill's provisions go into effect January 1, 2004. See LM story in May issue or at www.landscapemanagement.net.

IPM mandated for all PA schools

HARRISBURG, PA — Pennsylvania Gov. Mark Schweiker signed a bill this spring requiring all schools within the Commonwealth to adopt integrated pest management (IPM) plans by Jan. 1, 2003. The bill also imposes new pesticide notification requirements upon the schools.

DHG acquires Express Blower

CINCINNATI, OH — DHG Corp., the parent company of Finn Corp., bought the assets of Express Blower from Rexius Forest By-Products and formed a new company, Express Blower, Inc. Both Finn and Express Blower will continue to operate as stand-alone companies based in Cincinnati and Eugene, OR, respectively.

Becker Underwood now global

AMES, IA — Becker Underwood, Inc., says that the Canada and U.K.-based MicroGroup Ltd., which it acquired in 2000, has now officially assumed the Becker Underwood
continued on page 15

CLIPPINGS

ALCA Maintenance event — be there

ATLANTA — Reserve the weekend of Aug. 9-11 and start making your travel arrangements for the ALCA Maintenance Symposium that will be held here.

Symposium Coordinator Steven Glover, CLP, CEO of Symbiot Business Group, Sandy, UT, has put together an ambitious agenda. Event sponsors for the event are Husqvarna and Weed Man. Land-

scape Management magazine is the media sponsor for the Symposium.

It begins Friday with ALCA certification exams, or join colleagues in an afternoon tour of the five-acre, 24,000-sq.-ft. facilities of HighGrove Partners northwest of the city. This \$18 million landscape company (the former Post Landscape Group) has offices in both Atlanta and Charlotte, NC.



Steven Glover,
Symbiot Business Group

MAINTENANCE SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

Saturday (Aug. 10):



8-9 a.m. Roger Braswell, founder and owner of Southern Tree and Landscape Company, presents "Landscape Maintenance in the 21st Century."

9:15-11:30 a.m. "Sales, Getting the Job and Keeping It" covering the following topics:

- "Innovative Selling" by Bill Gordon, Signature Landscape, Olathe, KS.
- "Long-term Contracts" by John Allin, CLP, Allin Companies, Erie, PA.
- "Enhancements and Customer Up-sales" by Joe Skelton, ASLA, Roswell, GA.

11:45-1 p.m. "Power Lunch" with a range of roundtable topics.

1:15-3:15 p.m. "Pricing it Right"

covering the following topics:

- "Using Job Costing" by Scott Chatham, ChemLawn and Landscape Services, Atlanta.
- "Pricing for Profit" by Dan Foley, CLP, D. Foley Landscape, Inc., Walpole, MA.

3:30-5:30 p.m. "Building Successful

Teams" covering these topics:

- "Using Incentives" by Bill Lincicome, HighGrove Partners, Atlanta.
- "Building a Successful Hispanic Workforce" by Angelo Mino, Summit Consulting, Lenexa, KS.

5:30-6:30 p.m. Ask the Experts.

Sunday (Aug. 11):

8-10 a.m. "Secrets You Need to Know" by Tony Bass, Custom Landscapes, Bonaire, GA.

10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. "Expanding Your Service Lines" covering these topics:

- "Hazards to Avoid, Why Did it Fail?" by Bruce Wilson, Wilson-Oyler Group, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- "How to Move into a New Line Successfully" by Mike Senneff, CLP, Plant Interscapes, Inc., San Antonio, TX.



1-5 p.m. Optional seminar, "Owners' Network" by Jim Paluch, JP Horizons, Inc., Painesville, OH.

For more information or to register, contact ALCA at 800/395-2522 or visit the Web site www.alca.org.

Canada to overhaul pesticide laws

OTTAWA, CANADA — A nationwide ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides on lawns and parks is unlikely, Federal Health Minister Anne McLellan said earlier this spring. She made the statement while announcing a bill to overhaul Canada's Pesticide Control Products Act.

Canadian pesticide history

1969 Pest Control Products Act (PCPA) passed

1987-1994 Several different government commissions recommend pesticide reforms

1995 Pesticide responsibility moved from Agriculture Canada to Health Canada

1998 Pesticide Advisory Council calls for PCPA amendments

2000 House of Commons Environment Committee recommends PCPA overhaul

2001 Supreme Court upholds Hudson, Quebec bylaw banning cosmetic pesticide use

2002 Federal Health Minister Anne McLellan announces overhaul of PCPA

"Our jurisdiction is in relation to safety," said McLellan, responding to repeated cries within liberal governmental circles to phase out all use of pesticides on turfgrass for "aesthetic" purposes. "Once

something is deemed to be safe, then it is up to the provinces or municipalities as to how that will be used."

McLellan was referring to the June 2001 federal court ruling that upheld a pesticide ban by the community of Hudson, Quebec, Province. (In a similar case 10 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the small community of Wauconda, IL, didn't have that right.)

McLellan said that amendments to Canada's federal pesticide act will call for the scientific assessments of pesticides, particularly as they may affect children and pregnant women. The amendments would also require an automatic review of pesticides after 15 years, more inspections and higher fines for violations, according to reports from the Canada press.



[CLIPPINGS]

continued from page 14

name. "This consolidation further leverages the synergies between locations and products within a truly global entity," says CEO Roger Underwood.

BlueBird closes Denver plant

CLEVELAND — BlueBird International, a division of Husqvarna Turf Care Company, closed its operation in Denver and is consolidating manufacturing in Beatrice, NB. The Beatrice plant, which now makes commercial mowers, will be making aerators, dethatchers, seeders, sod cutters, stump grinders, lawn vacuum systems and engine lifts when the move is complete.

FMC Corp. unifies customer service

PHILADELPHIA — FMC Corp. has consolidated the customer service functions for its Agricultural and Specialty Products Business sectors. The result will be expanded hours and more customer service reps.

CLIP Conference set at BWI

IJAMSVILLE, MD — The 13th Annual CLIP Users' Conference, "Ready, Aim, Fire!", will be held at the Baltimore/Washington International Marriott, Baltimore, MD, Nov. 19-22. Features of the conference include industry-leading speakers, roundtable discussions, one-on-one CLIP instruction, hands-on business workshops and more. Contact Karen Paulik at 800/635-8485, ext. 306, or visit www.clip.com.

Free CD targets longhorned beetle

LISLE, IL — The Morton Arboretum is offering a computer-based training tool to aid in the early detection of the Asian longhorned beetle. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the tool helps landscape professionals and others in the Green Industry spot the beetles early and take steps to remove the threat.

The Arboretum has already distributed the CD to a number of professional groups, including everyone who attended Chicago's 2002 Greening Symposium. The training program is appropriate for both summary presentations and in-depth study.

For more information, contact the Morton Arboretum at ALB@mortonarb.org or visit the Web site www.mortonarb.org. Green Industry pros can receive a free copy while supplies last.

Homeowners buying pro mowers



Modernization continues at mower-producing KMA plant

plant north of here in May. The KMA plant, which has undergone 10 expansions since it began operations in 1988, also builds front loaders, backhoes, lawn & garden tractors, and sub-compact tractors. Its newest entry into the sub-compact category is the BX 22, a beefed up four-wheel drive unit equipped with a six-ft. backhoe and front loader.

ATLANTA, GA — Sales of zero-turn commercial mowers keep climbing. This past year, about 115,000 riding rotary mowers were sold, most of them zero-turns.

Not all of them are going to contractors or other landscape professionals, not by a long shot. Many — including expensive high-production models — are now being purchased by homeowners. That fact didn't go unnoticed by Kubota, which began manufacturing its ZD-Series last year.

Magazine editors saw just how these units are produced during a tour of the Kubota Manufacturing America (KMA)

Like the ZD-Series mowers, the BX 22 (described by a Kubota market manager as "the ultimate Swiss army-type tractor") is most popular with homeowners. It's also being targeted for rental yards and at smaller landscape companies seeking a lot of versatility at a reasonable price.

"The green side has really started to take off," said Juichi "John" Shiraishi, president of KMA, who met with and accompanied the editors on the factory tour. "We perceive our future and our growth to be on the green side."

Iowa turf pros develop phosphorus policy

LISLE, IL — The issue of phosphorus in waterways (see pg. 18 in the May '02 LM) is causing turfgrass professionals around the country to reassess their use of phosphorus-containing fertilizers.

John Ausen, CGCS, Hyperion Field Club, reports in the May issue of *The Reporter*, the monthly publication of the Iowa Golf Course Superintendents Association, that the state's leading turfgrass groups are agreeing to limit use of phosphorus when:

- ▶ a soil test by a state certified laboratory indicates that levels of available phosphorus in the soil are insufficient to support healthy turf growth,
- ▶ deemed necessary by a licensed applicator, in their professional opinion or otherwise limited by the manufacturer's product line,
- ▶ the property owner is first establishing turf via seed or sod during the first growing year, or
- ▶ using organic turf fertilizers derived primarily from animal or compost waste that doesn't exceed a natural phosphorus content of 2% by weight.



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Characteristics:

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- Requires 29% less water than Tif 419
- Better divot recovery than Tif 419
- Excellent winter color retention

Recommended Use:

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Climatic Zones: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (may not be adaptable to all areas within each climatic zone)

Establishment & Maintenance:

Under ideal conditions, germination may begin within 7 days. After 14 to 21 days for full germination. Mowing may begin when grass is 1/3 taller than desired mowing height. It is recommended that no more than 1/3 of the leaf blade be removed per mowing.

Winter overseeding may be done for year round green color, but is generally not recommended on turf less than 6 to 8 months old.

This is a dense hybrid – periodical verticutting may be required under high maintenance conditions.

Seeding Rates: All applications

1 to 2 lbs./1000 sq. ft.

Tree worker receives national safety award

An employee of Swingle Tree & Lawn Care won one of three National Arborist Association Safety Awards for saving the life of a co-worker.

Derek Stroden, supervisor in Swingle's Enhancement Services division, helped co-worker Robert Sasser escape a swarm of bees that attacked him after he cut into their nest while attempting to re-

move a tree limb. Stroden slowly lowered the bucket

Sasser was standing in, but Sasser panicked while he was still ten feet off the ground and attempted to jump out of the bucket. He was still in his safety harness, however, so Stroden stood underneath him so he could put his feet on Stroden's shoulders and undo

the harness. The two men then ran for cover in the customer's house.

Stroden had minimal stings, but Sasser had many all over his body, including 16 on his head.

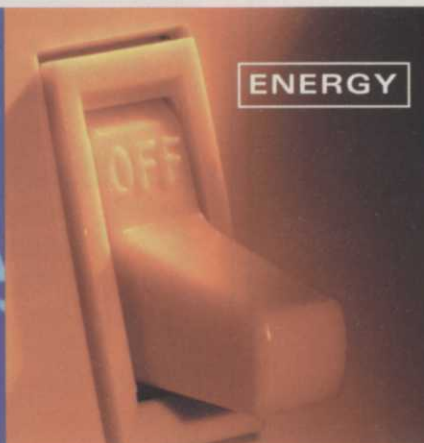
"Derek's regard for safety and his reaction to saving his co-worker's life is a tremendous acknowledgement to him and our internal dedication to safety," said Tom Tolkacz, president of Swingle.



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WHAT'S NEW ON-LINE

- Features from the May issue of *LM*
- LM Week in Review
- The latest Green Industry news
- Sign up for the Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards 2002
- Read biographies of LM staffers



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Howdy pardner, let's do business

GLENVIEW, IL — Autumn Tree Care Experts of Glenview knows how to turn a fun time into a sales and marketing opportunity.

Case in point: the April Spring Fling held at company headquarters for the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA). The event drew more than 140 attendees.

Autumn Tree converted its industrial office space into a western hoedown complete with fence posts, barn doors, and mountain range backdrops. The casual setting lent itself well to putting guests at ease,

opening the door for friendly conversations and relationship building opportunities.

Autumn Tree vice president Dan Klindera said the tree care company invested upwards of \$10,000 from its marketing budget into the Spring Fling sponsorship this year.

He added that he believes the investment was well worth it, noting that over time, friendships established at the event will likely result in client relationships for Autumn Tree and other businesses and individual consultants in attendance.

"People came early and stayed late, and, overall, we think it was a sound investment of our marketing dollars," Klindera said.

"It just goes to show you that sales and marketing efforts don't always have to be strictly advertising-based, or direct mail pieces. Relationships are the most valuable marketing tool we have."

Most of the 140 attendees were landscape architects and contractors. Others included industry vendors, individual tree care consultants, and property management officials.



Among those "working the crowd" were Mariani Landscape of Lake Bluff, IL, Christy Webber, a Chicago-based landscaper, Mindy Maggio of Coromandel Home Owner's Association, Hendricksen, the Care of Trees of Chicago, and Bartlett Tree Experts of Ohio.

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Circle 112

People & companies



Seed Research of Oregon's Mike Robinson

stepped down as president to become director of international sales and marketing.

Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products

appointed **Steve Chicken** managing director and **Michael Vickers** vice president of engineering — Turf Products.

J. R. Simplot Company named **M. Vincent (Vince) Restucci** director of Simplot Marketing Solutions.

Syngenta Crop

Protection named **Bill Lewis** vice president of its professional products business unit and regional business group, **Steve Ligon** vice president, national account management, and **Rob Neill** vice president, marketing.

Dow AgroSciences LLC promoted **Fred Pretzer** to technical accounts manager covering the western U.S.

L.R. Nelson Corp. named **Douglas Ramsdale** president of its turf business unit.

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WIN WITH Water

Progressive Atlanta company devises
a proactive strategy to keep customers
from drying up

BY RON HALL/ EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



The aging rocker twisted and wailed on the outdoor stage as an exuberant knot of adolescents slid baseball-style in a gummy bog they had created. Ahh, the sweet smell of a rock & rap concert: sweat, mud and spilled beer.

The 3.5 inches of rain released onto the revelers during the weekend rockfest provided only temporary relief to the area's lingering water shortage. Pulsating, expanding Atlanta metro, with its four million people clustered in a ring of 20 surrounding north Georgia counties, is sucking up the area's fresh water supply.

The water shortage also has the potential to threaten Atlanta's reputation as one of the nation's most attractive and progressively landscaped regions.

The 100-plus communities within the metro area are working (often, it seems, at cross purposes) to make every last drop of water count. It's a challenge the Green Industry — here as well as elsewhere — can help them face.

Meeting the challenge

Indeed, the lingering water shortages in the Atlanta market have caused landscape companies like The Morrell Group, a division of Omni Fa-

cility Services, Inc., to focus more intensely on installing, maintaining and managing efficient irrigation systems. They, like increasing numbers of landscape companies across the nation, must deal with landscape watering restrictions that differ from community to community.

But, the way the Morrell Group managers see it, droughts create opportunities as well as challenges for enterprising landscape firms.

Over a recent breakfast in a packed country-style restaurant just north of Atlanta, they shared their thoughts on dealing with ongoing water woes. Meeting LM behind plates of grits and eggs and cups of steaming coffee were:

► Atlanta regional manager **Kirk Talgo**, who oversees three operations managers and three field supervisors,

► Irrigation Director **Bert Wood**, CLI, responsible for one operations manager and five service crews;

► water management director **Bill Beckley**, who supervises three technicians; and

► business development director **Bart Parker**.

As the managers' titles suggest, their company takes a multilayered approach in promoting efficient landscape irrigation.

"Our entire company has to be focused on what's going on, starting with the designers providing designs with native and

drought-tolerant material, our maintenance group that handles just about everything on a site, and all the rest of us," says Parker. "Otherwise, we're defeating our purpose as a landscape company."

As always in landscape maintenance, the employees with the most contact with each property are the crew members who, as part of their duties, monitor the effectiveness of each site's irrigation.

"We are the ones who are actually managing the irrigation systems on a property," says regional manager Talgo. "We set the clocks and make minor repairs if we can. We also have to keep track of the restrictions from one area to another because they vary depending on the location of the properties."

"A lot of the irrigation systems are 10 to 15 years old and we sometimes have Bert (Wood) and Bill (Beckley) come in and make these systems as efficient as we can make them, either with a redesign or going to other water sources," says Talgo.

Irrigation director Wood provides the second level of service when a client's irrigation needs attention. The third level is provided by water management director Beckley, who gets the call when a customer's irrigation needs exceed the ca-

Landscape industry assists with Florida BMPs

BY HERMAN "GENE" YEARTY

Preventing non-point source water pollution involves more than just state-of-the-art stormwater management systems. Reducing urban landscape pollution of water resources requires wise landscape management, pollution source controls and a great deal of public education.

It used to be that when we talked about Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would reduce pollution of surface and groundwater by stormwater runoff, the implication was that agriculture industry practices needed better management. But that's all changing. Residential and commercial

landscapes, sports fields, recreational grounds and other urban landscapes have been identified as the largest crop in the State of Florida, covering more than an estimated 4.5 million acres.

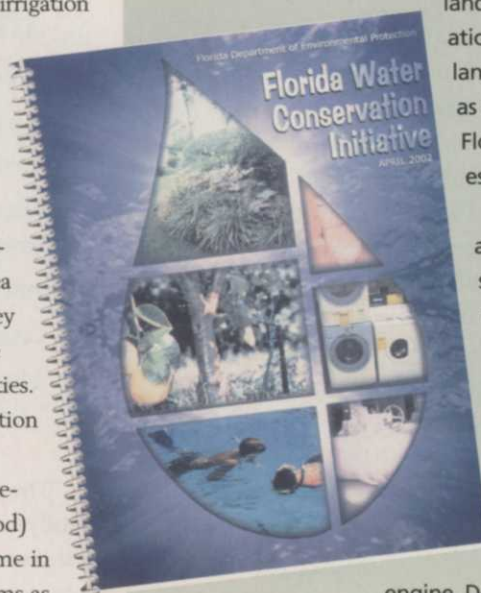
Minimizing excess nutrients and other pollutants carried in stormwater runoff that make their way into surface water is a challenging task. Excess nutrients include fertilizers, grass clippings, plant debris and phosphorus bound up in soil. Other pollutants are pesticides and even the drops of oil from your automobile

engine. Despite the fact that Florida boasts more stormwater treatment systems than any other state in the nation and upholds some of the nation's most stringent water quality permitting regulations, pollution caused by excess nutrients and other pollutants carried by stormwater remains the greatest threat to Florida's ground and surface waters.

It's the law

After the drought conditions and mandatory water use restrictions of the late 1980s, the state legislature enacted a law (373.185.F.S.) in 1991 that required the state's five water man-

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agement districts to encourage local governments to pass landscape ordinances to eliminate pollution and conserve water resources. As a result of state stormwater rules and regulations that are now citing communities as the source of surface water pollution — not to mention the drought of 2001 — local governments are enacting ordinances.

To implement urban landscaping BMPs at a statewide level, representatives from the landscaping industry, state agencies and universities, water management districts and environmental interests have developed a manual, as well as a Model Landscaping Ordinance. The manual, "*Florida Green Industries' Landscaping Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources in Florida*," and the new model ordinance address both traditional and Xeriscape landscapes.

Let's base decisions on science

The Model Landscape Ordinance will assist local governments in developing a sound, science-based program. It contains language that local governments may adopt as is or modify.

It's estimated that more than 100,000 Florida landscape maintenance providers will be impacted by implementing urban landscape best management practices. To train the small independent landscape providers, the model ordinance contains proposed language that urges local governments to require these businesses to provide proof of training by either the extension service or through a professional organization in order to obtain an occupational license. Continuing education will be required annually in order to renew their license.

The author is a former pest control business owner who lives in Jacksonville, FL, and assisted in developing the BMPs.

pabilities of other company resources. Often, the customer is having trouble getting enough water for the landscape. Beckley, an expert on computerized systems like the Rain Bird Maxi-Com, often proposes alternative water sources, system modifications or management plans that can save owners of large properties up to \$1 million a year in water costs.

"Upgrading an irrigation system is almost always a wise investment considering how much money some of these properties have invested in their landscapes," explains Beckley. "Some property management companies understand that and some don't."

The problem, Beckley believes, is tied to customers' perceptions of the role of irrigation



PHOTO BY RON HALL

The Morrell Group, a division of Omni Facility Services

The Omni team approach: Pictured from l to r: Bert Wood, Kirk Talgo and Bill Beckley of The Morrell Group

Established: 1989 by George Morrell as a full service landscape provider

Purchased: Dec. 1999 by Omni Facility Services, Inc.

Locations: Atlanta; Destin, FL; Bessemer, AL

2001 sales: \$23 million

"The irrigation system is hardly ever treated as a crucial piece of a property's infrastructure or a utility, with some exceptions," he explains. "Usually, it's treated as a support system for the landscaping, not as a higher level of engineering."

Irrigation director Wood agrees that many property managers are unaware of the latest irrigation technology that could greatly benefit their properties as well as save water. For instance, most properties

are still watered with systems operated by manual or older electro-mechanical clocks. The tendency is to overwater rather than underwater with systems that rely heavily upon human judgement, he says. "People want to make sure the landscape stays green."

By contrast, a computerized system with digital controls has the ability to report real-time operations to an irrigation manager. Adjustments can easily be made through a computer

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Conservation efforts bring rewards

Being recognized as a company that provides exceptional service to clients in spite of scarce water resources is good business. Las Vegas-based Yards 'R' Us Landscape Services, a J.R. LandCare Group company, promotes this expertise.



This past year, the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) honored the company with special awards for the maintenance it provides to two beautiful, water-efficient landscapes.

"Being recognized for these projects pumped us up. It was a big morale

booster within the company," says President Rob Diaz, who operates the company with his wife, Joyanna. "I think it builds credibility with our customers, too."

The seven-year-old company maintains a 24-hour irrigation hotline for its customers. "An emergency is any kind of running water," explains Diaz. "We're always on call to get the water turned off."

He says his company prides itself on educating customers on proper irrigation and on the importance of following the SNWA's stringent water regulations.

continued from page 24
monitor or hand-held unit. These sophisticated tools take the guesswork out of irrigation, including optimizing zone irrigation and efficiently watering areas of a landscape that have different moisture needs.

"Basically, it's like the difference between the AM radio in your '66 Olds with its two knobs and today's car audio

system with its 20 different preset stations, auto seeking and all the other modern features," says Beckley.

As impressive as this technology is, people are still in control, Beckley admits. "It takes a person with horticulture, mechanical and computer knowledge to operate it," he says. Once a property owner or manager makes a commitment



Modern irrigation systems keep landscapes healthy without wasting precious water.

PHOTO COURTESY: HUNTER INDUSTRIES

to installing such a system, they also have to make a commitment to hiring a knowledgeable person to manage and use it to its full potential.

"If they don't, it's like buying a Ferrari and driving it up your driveway to get the mail and then back into your garage," he says.

Technology is just part of the answer to water conservation.

Not just technology

Technology is just part of the answer. Taking a more active role in shaping customer water use habits and helping mold water regulations are other parts.

Wood, who also serves as president of the Atlanta Chapter of the Irrigation Association, says that government agencies are quick to implement watering restrictions because they don't fully comprehend the importance of attractive and healthy landscapes. Healthy, attractive landscapes are a key factor in a marketplace's economy.

This is particularly true of Atlanta, headquarters of 14 "Fortune 500" companies and dozens of other national companies.

Wood says that a group Green Industry professional have been meeting at the Ag Extension Office in Griffin, GA, to stay abreast of water the water issue.

"We chose to become involved and find out for ourselves and have some ability to provide input," he explained. **LJM**



Gary Mason, Director of Housekeeping, ProPlayer Stadium

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Business plan basics

Most owners of a small enterprise will tell you they understand their business. They'll tell you that they've filled every

position and performed every task. They think they have a clear picture of how to continually improve their business. While this sort of talk might convince the owner that he knows his business, it doesn't necessarily mean that he does. The world is filled with intelligent, hard-working and committed people who are prepared to perform essential tasks for their business, yet fail to build a successful one.

Understanding your business isn't easy. Instead of "winging it," formalize the methodology by which you look at your business. In the book, "The Book of Survival," author Anthony Greenbank wrote: "To live through an impossible situation, you don't need the reflexes of a Grand Prix driver, the muscles of Hercules, the mind of Einstein. You simply need to know what to do."

Your easy-to-follow road map for building short- and long-term success in the Green Industry

BY ROGER MONGEON

Build your own plan

"Knowing what to do" is called a business plan. It's a process that allows owners and managers to understand how to deploy the business's capital, labor and intellectual property in the most efficient manner to ensure its short- and long-term prosperity.

A business plan:

- ▶ provides owners and employees with a clear sense of purpose and direction. Objectives are better defined and understood within the context of the total business. We've all heard of the manager who, in his quest to increase production, forgoes customer service, or vice versa. It's difficult to motivate employees when an objective isn't defined within the context of the total business. You'll be amazed by your employees' positive response to ob-

jectives they might not agree with when those objectives are defined within the total business.

- ▶ allows owners and employees to turn the page on past performance and makes them focus on the future, while using past performance as a guideline. After a bad year, there's nothing better for your employees' moral than the establishment of new objectives coupled with a solid plan to achieve those objectives.

It's okay to be aggressive when formulating a long-term plan.

Remember that a business plan isn't a budget, but all business plans should have a detailed budget. This will allow the owner to understand the financial performance of his business by providing month-by-month profit and loss and cash flow projections crucial to the survival of the business.

Also, a long-term plan should be included in a business plan. While a short-term business plan should be realistic, it's okay to be aggressive when formulating a long-term plan. This will crystallize the business's vision and show long-term com-

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Circle No. 116

5 steps to a business plan

1. Allow for a minimum of three consecutive days of intense discussions.
2. Involve everybody who has direct responsibility and accountability for the business's performance.
3. Prepare well. Appoint the appropriate persons to ensure that all of the information required in your business plan, including past company performance, is available prior to the start of the meeting.
4. Evaluate alternatives, discuss new ideas, and get consensus or, more importantly, "buy-in" from everybody.
5. Stress the process's importance. Participants need to be focused, so, except for emergencies, there should be no interruptions, including phone calls.

continued from page 30

mitment by its owner, which may increase a company's employee retention rate and its ability to attract strong leaders.

Here's how you do it

How do you build a business plan?

Select a date and time to talk about it. Allow for a minimum of three consecutive days of intense discussions. Choose a period near the end of your fiscal year when there's not as much going on at your business.

Involve everybody who has direct responsibility and accountability for the business's performance, especially the president/owner whose participation is essential

to showing commitment to the business and the process. It will also allow for final decisions to be made.

Evaluate alternatives, discuss new ideas, and get consensus or, more importantly, "buy-in" from everybody. Because past performance is a key component to the discussion, prepare well. What a waste to have four or five managers sitting in a room watching somebody spend 10 minutes calculating last year's closing rate on quotes; this will de-energize and frustrate the participants. Highlight the information required in your business plan and appoint the appropriate persons to ensure that all of the information is available prior to the start of the meeting.

Stress the process's importance. Participants need to be focused, so, except for emergencies, there should be no interruptions, including phone calls.

A plan to drive your company

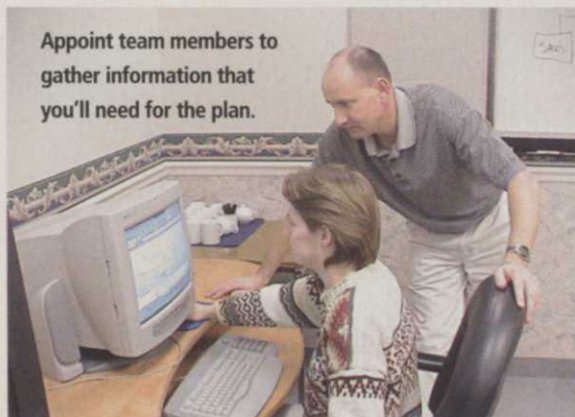
One mistake many companies make is to assume their budget is their business plan.

They tend to go through the process to generate numbers, which puts more emphasis on generating numbers as opposed to encouraging discussion, generating ideas and understanding their business. A business plan isn't a budget, but use the business plan to generate a budget to create a solid foundation for your business's financial performance.

Take this example: Some companies project their current year revenue by applying the percent increase of last year's revenue. If a company generated sales of \$500,000, a 15% increase over the previous year, it would assume it would maintain its growth rate and generate sales of \$575,000 the next year. This methodology will do nothing for your business. In fact, it could harm your company. The reason is that objectives in this example are generated from projections based on accounting, not ideas. It's difficult to get employees to buy in to this approach, and the result may be lower moral.

Get a consensus or,
more importantly, a
buy-in from everybody.

A better way to go about creating a business plan is to use a systematic method, which my company, Weed Man, calls zero base planning. In this example, I'm assuming that your company has already established its target market. Once you identify your target, look at how you generate customers. Examples are renewing existing customers, soliciting old customers and old leads, generating new leads from a direct mail campaign or a telemarketing campaign, and others. Then, look at each category individually and understand how you can affect performance.



Appoint team members to gather information that you'll need for the plan.

Evaluate alternatives and
discuss new ideas.



Scrutinize your data

When Weed Man chooses to tap in to its old customer file to generate customers, we look at three indicators: the number of files, contact rate percentage and closing rate percentage. You need to have systems in place to provide historical data of your

year's contact rate 10% lower than the previous year's?" The answer could lead to a plan to increase the old customer file's integrity or to review the sales staff's performance.

After reviewing each indicator and making sure you have a solid execution

company's performance in relation to those indicators.

In your formal business plan, you should keep four years of data. That data will allow you to answer questions like, "Why is last

plan, you can calculate the number of customers that will be generated from tapping old customer files. A company with 2,000 old clients, an 80% contact rate and a 10% closing rate will generate 160 customers.

You also need to discuss your pricing for both basic programs and add-on services. Make sure you understand market pressures and your position within that market in relation to your target market. Once you've established pricing, you can calculate income from sales for each category. This process needs to be applied to every cost category. **LM**

— The author is chief executive officer of Turf Holdings Inc./Weed Man. He can be reached at 416/269-5754.



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Franchising's revival

Landscape service entrepreneurs find a growing number of franchisers eager to show them how to become a player

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE

In 1962, each U.S. resident ate four lbs. of french fries annually. Today, each of us, on average, eats 33 lbs. of french fries. This is one impact of McFranchising on our McWorld. Several Green Industry companies want to make a similar impact by franchising lawn care/maintenance services.

Franchising's impact on our economy is incredible. The U.S. Small Business Administration says 38% of all 2000 retail sales in the U.S. were generated by franchises — and the numbers keep rising. Some Green

Industry experts suggest that, by 2010, franchising will account for almost half of the lawn care marketplace. That might be a stretch considering there are only less than 10 major franchise firms serving the professional landscape and lawn care management industry today.

Nobody, however, disputes that franchising within the industry will grow.

"Franchising is going to be an important element in the Green Industry as it moves forward," says Jim Miller, director of franchising for Scotts LawnService, Marysville, OH.

continued on page 36



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The franchise advantage

Franchising provides a new proprietor or prospective entrepreneur with a bank-friendly business plan, training, proven marketing and horticultural strategies, and a network of professional and personal support. Franchising allows a person to own a growth-oriented business without making mistakes common to most startups. It offers brand-name recognition, a marketplace niche and big-company backing while allowing the franchisee to retain a sense of independence.

Not for everyone

Of course, not everyone can or should become a franchisee.

People that like to run their own show or don't like the idea of paying someone a percentage of their revenues for support they don't think they need probably shouldn't hook up with a franchiser.



Phil Catron touts the "natural" program.

"You're not reinventing the wheel," says Janet Keen, co-owner with husband, Bill, of a NaturaLawn lawn care franchise in Providence, RI. "You know what trucks and equipment you need, and they give you a formula that has been successful."

Adds NaturaLawn president Phil Catron, "If an enterprise is well backed, the owner can direct his or her focus toward entrepreneurial pursuits within a given marketplace or an exclusive protected territory."

"We're not selling jobs; we're selling a business concept. The owner isn't working the business; he or she is growing the business," he says.

Each franchiser's emphasis is directed at a specific niche of the landscape services market, yet all say their goal is to build owners/managers, not owners/production workers. While some encourage mom-and-pop operations, others seek to attract more ambitious individuals.



Franchisers help with equipment needs.

"Our franchisees aren't pushing a spreader," says Kenneth L. Hutcheson, general manager and vice president of U.S. Lawns, Orlando, FL. "They're building sustainable businesses." In the U.S. Lawns model, franchisees build operations that produce revenues from \$750,000 to \$1.25 million annually, he says.

Franchise-friendly times

A tight economy and layoffs among individuals with management skills and some savings usually spark a surge in franchising interest, a fact that hasn't gone unnoticed in the Green Industry.

"The times that we had this past year are

continued on page 38

COMPANY	HEADQUARTERS	SERVICES	FRANCHISEES	START-UP COSTS (EST.)	CONTACT
DryJect	Wayside, NJ	injection/aeration	5	\$30,000 to \$60,000	800/270-8873 www.dryject.com
Lawn Doctor Inc.	Holmdel, NJ	lawn care	400	\$20,000 to \$50,000	800/631-5660 www.lawndoctor.com
NaturaLawn of America	Frederick, MD	lawn care	55	minimum net worth of \$250,000, of which \$50,000 is liquid	301/694-5440 www.nl-amer.com
Nutri-Lawn Inc.	Toronto, Ontario	lawn care	4 (in the U.S.)	\$50,000 to \$100,000	416/620-7100 www.nutri-lawn.com
Scotts LawnService	Marysville, OH	lawn care	45	\$75,000 to \$300,000	937/578-5615 www.scottscsco.com
Spring-Green	Plainfield, IL	lawn care	72	\$30,000 to \$80,000	800/435-4051 www.spring-green.com
TruGreen-ChemLawn	Memphis, TN	lawn care	67	\$100,000 to \$125,000	901/681-2008 www.trugreenchemlawn.com
U.S. Lawns	Orlando, FL	commercial landscape care	100	Under \$50,000	800/875-2967 www.uslawns.com
Weed Man	Scarborough, Ontario	lawn care	41 (in the U.S.)	\$45,000 to \$70,000	888/321-9333 www.weed-man.com

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Scotts LawnCare is penetrating large markets.

continued from page 36

what we call franchise friendly," adds Hutcherson. "We've opened 24 new offices since June of last year ('01)." By mid spring '02 we had 100 franchises in 24 states.

Spring-Green continues to expand, now supporting 100 franchises in 19 states.

"Spring Green's startup costs and income potential fit my plan," says Roger Grose, Marietta, OH, who purchased a franchise after serving in the U.S. Army and holding positions as an air-traffic controller, a sales manager and a purchasing agent.

"I like having control of my future, my income and the hours that I work," says Grose. He says the franchiser provides the support but he supplies the "hard work and aspirations."

The Scotts Company, Marysville, OH, has become one of the more active lawn care franchisers. The number of Scotts LawnService franchises jumped from 25 in March '01 to 45 by mid-March this year. Sixteen were in some of the nation's biggest lawn care markets. The company plans to offer franchises in 200 additional markets within the next five to 10 years.

"Brand recognition is something consumers are looking at," says Scotts' Jim Miller. "The response we get in any market is incredible. We really didn't become aggressive about it until last year."

Branding's the game

All of the major franchisers count on branding and customer recognition to carry

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their message from one market area to another and across geographic boundaries. This is important when dealing with customers with multiple locations. Distinctive uniforms, signage, promotions and marketing literature separate the franchisers, sometimes more than the programs their franchisees offer to customers.

"We're expanding our reach pretty rapidly," says Scott Frith, marketing director of Lawn Doctor, Holmdel, NJ. "We've seen a lot of development in the south and southwest and we want to continue that."

"We have programs tailored to any particular region."

— **Scott Frith,**
Lawn Doctor

Lawn Doctor, like most of the other franchisers, provides ongoing training — both business management and agronomic — to its franchisees. "We have agronomic programs tailored to any particular region," he says. Also, the company hosts an annual meeting and trade show for more than 600 of its people that features Lawn Doctor's approved vendors and custom turf care equipment.

Toronto-based Weed Man has 41 locations in the United States and 131 in Canada. An aging population of homeowners and busier "do-it-for-me" lifestyles bode well for the next 20 years, believes Jennifer Lemcke, director of franchise development. She believes the industry is strong enough to absorb a healthy influx of franchised operations. "There has been a lot of acquisitions in recent years, so there's room enough for all of us," she says.

Choose a good match

Just as all fast food franchises have their own particular menus, so it is within the Green Industry. Pick a franchise that



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Circle 121

matches your personal goals and philosophies, including your horticultural leanings.

For example, Nutri-Lawn, owned by Toronto-based FirstService Corp., seeks

franchisees that like its "natural" approach. That firm recently incorporated a "natural" herbicide into its program produced by Greener Pastures Corp., Minneapolis, MN,

from sugar beet waste and soybean oil (see August '01 LM, page 25).

These services, marketed as more eco-friendly than traditional lawn care, attract customers who would otherwise avoid professional lawn care, say franchise promoters. "There's a whole segment out there that did not buy lawn care because they don't like pesticides," claims Nutri-Lawn president Larry Maydonik.

"We're working with the passion of the owner/operator."

— Ken Hutcheson,
U.S. Lawns

While companies like Nutri-Lawn discourage people seeking a franchise for a retirement occupation or as a mom-and-pop operation, others encourage small-time operators in markets. All franchise operations said they prefer franchisees with an entrepreneurial spirit and some business knowledge because they believe it's easier to teach them agronomic or horticultural skills.

Weed Man is asking for both in its franchisees since it's adding many of its lawn care operations to existing landscape companies, enticing maintenance operations to add lawn and ornamental application services for a full-service sell to their clients. Irrigation and structural pest control companies are



Des Rice's Weed Man sprouts in the U.S.

warming to the concept, too, says Lemcke of Weed Man. "There's quite a bit of cross marketing a company like this can do," she says.



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Ready to buy — don't get lazy now

Interested in investing in a franchise? Do your homework and "trust your gut instinct," says Charlie Elliot, general manager of The Bison Franchise Network, a Louisiana-based marketing organization. "If you go to see a franchiser and it doesn't feel right, you're probably correct," he says.

Check into the company's business track record and franchisee turnover rate, along with evidence of any lawsuits filed against the firm. "The company should also have enough cash in the bank to carry it through," says Elliot. Compare the pricing of the franchisers and what they offer. Find out which services you pay for and how much they cost over time.

"It's not like a stock where you call your broker and it either goes up or down. This is a life-changing decision," says Elliot. "I'm amazed at how lazy some people are when they look at franchises. If you're lazy when you look at a franchise, you'll be lazy when you run one. It takes hard work to run a franchise."

One of Weed Man's most vocal and visible proponents has been Phil Fogarty, Cleveland, OH, co-owner of one of the company's regional U.S. franchises. "As an independent, I could go all over town and make as many mistakes as I wanted," he says. "I paid for that freedom with a lot of missed opportunities."

U.S. Lawns, owned by Environmental Industries, Inc., Calabasas, CA, concentrates on attracting franchisees that provide full-service maintenance and application services for commercial accounts.

"Our model demands customer intimacy and service excellence," insists Hutcheson.

He believes the landscape maintenance marketplace is so huge that a quality operation can gain as much as 2% market share

in any sizable market and still return an acceptable profit to a franchise owner.

"We're working with the passion of the owner/operator and the support of a very large company," he adds. "That's hard to beat in a local market."

Along with the advantages of centralized

buying, franchisers also tout the efficiencies of special techniques or equipment.

For the Green Industry entrepreneur looking for support, there has never been more franchise choices. **LM**

— The author lives in Cleveland, OH, and is a frequent contributor to LM.

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Circle 123

Treat trees right

**Avoid hassles and
ensure good-looking
landscapes by staying
aware of municipal
tree ordinances**

BY MIKE FITZPATRICK

Municipal tree preservation ordinances are a relatively new reality in the landscaping industry. All types and sizes of projects are affected — everything from simple landscaping on existing residential properties to huge subdivisions and commercial construction projects. As cities and suburbs continue to expand, homes and offices are being built in natural, wooded areas. Unfortunately, construction in these areas can cause extreme damage to trees, diminishing not only the land value but also its aesthetic appeal.

Growing popularity

People recognize that trees add value to residential and commercial property, and that's why tree preservation ordinances are also becoming increasingly popular.

Most real estate agents agree that a property with mature, healthy landscaping and trees can sometimes sell for 20% more. Mature trees are also an aesthetic asset because they make a property look stately and established. People enjoy having trees around them because they provide inviting shade and make an area more livable. And trees provide obvious environmental benefits such as absorbing pollution,



Home sites that contain mature trees command higher prices.

reducing land erosion, maintaining the water table and providing habitats and food for birds and other wildlife. If placed correctly, trees can even save on energy costs by helping cool or heat a building.

Assuring compliance

Tree preservation ordinances are designed to prevent tree loss and reduce damage during development, replace trees

continued on page 44



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*A recent survey indicates that 55% of consumers would switch from a company that doesn’t offer recurring payments by credit card to one that does (all else equal).



Saving natural areas with mature trees is good for communities.

continued from page 42

that are lost during construction, plant trees where none occurred previously, and maintain preserved trees after construction on residential and commercial property. Unfortunately, tree preservation ordinances vary from community to community, which can make it difficult and time consuming for you to assure compliance. The best way to approach this problem is to check with the municipality's forestry department before you begin landscape renovation on a site.

Since the majority of tree preservation ordinances require you to perform a tree inventory and prepare a preservation plan before beginning work on a site, it's worthwhile to hire a certified arborist to perform this inventory. The arborist can determine the species and size and number of trees, as well as which trees are healthy or diseased and what care they may need. Include a certified arborist in your planning meetings with the property owners and architect to ensure that the tree preservation plan is effective and practical.

After the municipality approves the plan and you have the appropriate permits, be sure the site workers know which trees need to be saved by marking the trees and explaining why the trees and their critical root zones are to be protected.

One complex project

In a recent project at Middlefork Farm, a planned housing development located north of Chicago, arborists not only had to follow the municipality ordinances but also the preservation requests of the property owners. While working with the developer and the government agencies, a tree

preservation plan was designed to provide an ideal residential community with an established neighborhood feel. Century-old oaks and hickories reside on the site, but since the trees hadn't received care for at least 15 years, many were being choked by invasive buckthorn, which had grown as high as 30 feet.

A significant challenge during the project was minimizing damage to the sensitive root zones of the site's 100-year-old oaks. During renovation or construction projects, the root zone is the part of the tree most often damaged. There are three primary factors that result in long-term damage to tree roots: soil compaction from machinery and materials, grade changes, and severed roots from improper trenching and excavating.

Have weekly field meetings

During the Middlefork Farm renovation project, a certified arborist participated in weekly field meetings with all contractors and equipment operators. The meetings helped the site workers understand the extensive root zones and how to preserve them. The workers also learned the appropriate techniques to protect the trees during construction, including how to fence off the area around the critical root zone and how to conduct supplemental watering, mulching and fertilization that will promote root growth.

To prevent soil compaction around the critical root zones, the certified arborist helped plan in advance all the construction roads, parking places, and equipment and material storage areas.

Where majestic oaks were once barely visible, there are now scenic woods, wetlands, fledgling savanna plants and more wildlife at Middlefork Farm. The work on the site has given the trees the greatest chance for long-term survival.

But the tree preservation work doesn't stop there. Now that the project is complete, it's necessary to monitor tree health continuously and implement complete ongoing tree care, including fertilization, mulching and pruning. Middlefork Farm is now more ecologically balanced and scenic than it has been in decades. Residents are willing to pay a premium for the beautiful surroundings, and have the satisfaction of knowing they live in a place that's a model for balancing development and tree and land preservation.

— *The author is a certified arborist with the Tree Preservation and Land Restoration Division of The Care of Trees.*

You can reach him at 847/394-4226 or

mfitzpatrick@thecareoftrees.com

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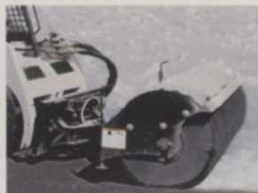


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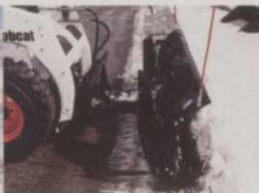
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Circle No. 125

Property at a glance

Location: Sylvania, OH

Staff: Sylvania Recreation Department

Category: Parks, Recreation Area or Athletic Fields

Total budget: \$560,500

Year site built: 1989

Acres of turf: 135

Acres of woody ornamentals: 1

Acres of display beds: 1

Total paved area: 15 miles

Total man-hours/week: 70

Maintenance challenges

- Maintain high quality turf despite high traffic
- Performing maintenance around activities
- Poor soil for athletic fields (heavy clay)

Project checklist

Completed in last two years:

- Installation of four new ball diamonds
- Planting of over 100 woody trees
- Installation of paved access paths

On the job

- Five full-time staff, 13 seasonal employees, three licensed pesticide applicators

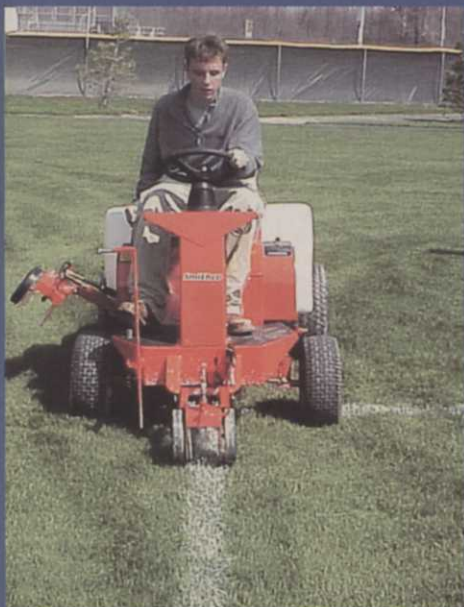
Pacesetter Park

2001 PGMS Grand Award Winner for Parks, Recreation Area or Athletic Fields

Pacesetter Park in Sylvania, OH, gives "field traffic" a whole new meaning. With 25 game-only soccer, lacrosse and flag football fields, eight ball diamonds, two open-air shelters and 66 acres of practice facilities, maintenance facilities and a state-of-the-art playground, it's the epicenter of all recreational activity in this northwestern suburb of Toledo. In 2000, the entire facility averaged between 191,000 and 200,000 players, spectators and other community users.

Obviously, this intense traffic makes maintenance a challenge. Grounds workers have become experts in aeration, fighting compaction in soil that's heavy in clay. Mowing is performed three to four times a week at a height of 1 3/4 in. All work must be completed by 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, as evenings and weekends are reserved for games.

Pacesetter Park was the first recreational facility in Ohio to install the Toro Touchnet irrigation system, which works



Pacesetter Park's grounds crew members spend a good deal of their time lining and re-lining the numerous on-site athletic fields.

off a computer and satellites to allow pinpoint precision of watering cycles and easy troubleshooting. There are over 500 irrigation heads on the soccer facility.

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 2002 winners will be named at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. For more information on the 2001 Awards, contact PGMS at:

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



Mowing has to be scheduled around the park's numerous athletic activities.



With over 135 acres of turf to care for, grounds crew members must schedule jobs appropriately and complete them before 3 p.m. each day.



It's cleanup time

BY CURT HARLER

Will the motors of future brushes and mowers be powered by zinc and air?

It's not as far-fetched as you might think.

Briggs & Stratton, Milwaukee, WI, is working with a Carlsbad, CA, firm called Metallic Power (MP) to develop power systems based on zinc/air fuel cells.

While they require less power, cell phones using zinc/air batteries are commonplace. Some power backup systems for personal computers also use zinc/air. In fact, most applications between one and 10 kilowatts are candidates for zinc/air.

The zinc/air system is a completely closed-loop system with nothing to add, nothing to discard, and nothing wasted, the companies say. The cell is safe and three times as energy efficient as gasoline. Californi-

ans will be happy to hear that the system reuses the zinc over and over, is quiet and completely zero emission — so CARB standards are no hassle. "It can be used indoors," says Jeff Colborn, CEO of MP.

The demo unit MP delivered last year fulfilled Briggs & Stratton's test requirements. The companies say they hope to work on prototype projects in the future.

The system consists of a zinc-recycling unit as well as zinc/air fuel cells. Zinc pellets one millimeter in diameter combine with oxygen from the air in the presence of an electrolyte, forming zinc oxide — the same stuff used in skin creams and sun block.

The recycling unit uses wall electricity to convert the zinc oxide back to fresh zinc, which is then recombined with the electrolyte to be reused.

The companies figure the cost of zinc/air to be comparable to gas-powered units.



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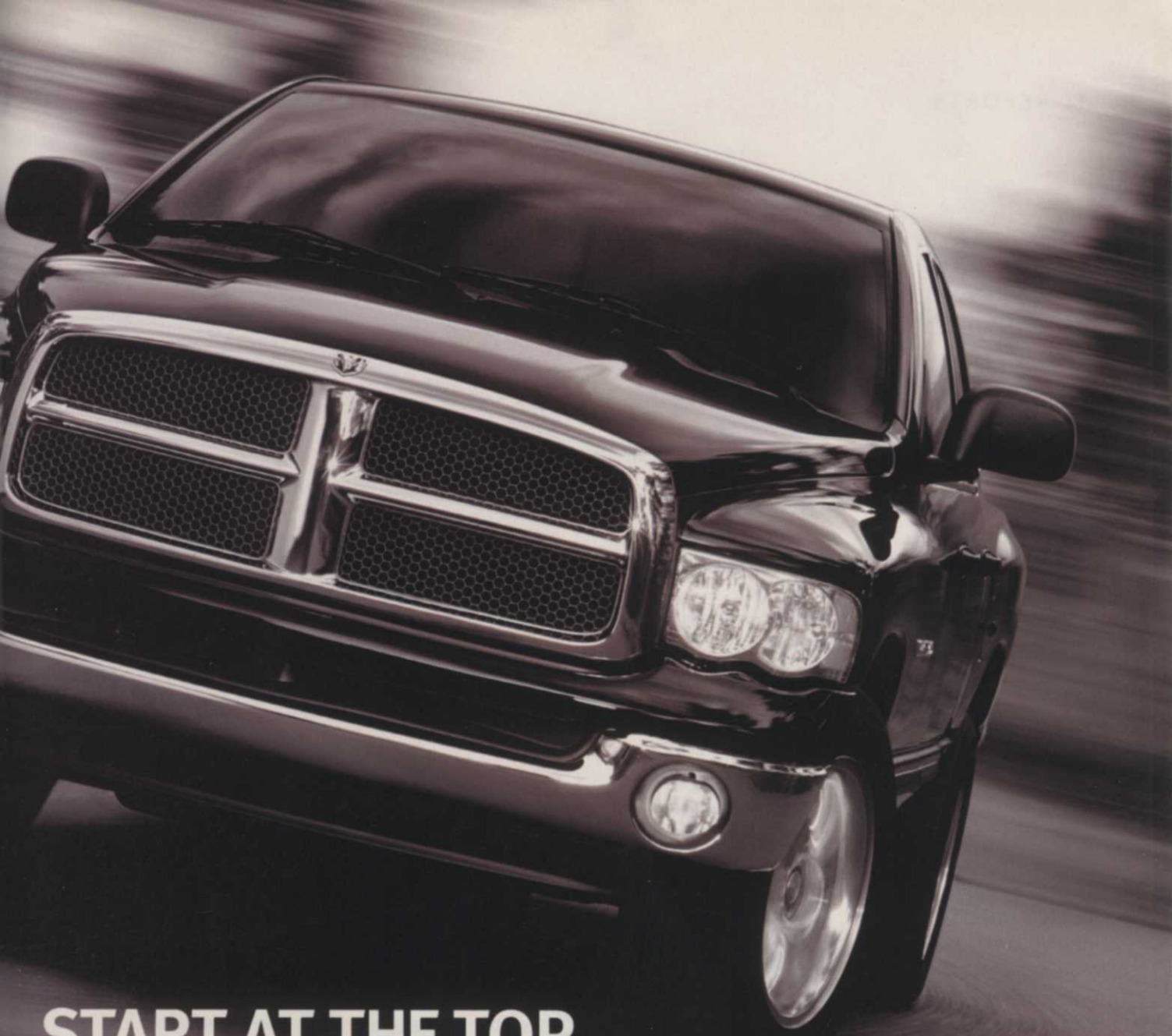
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continued on page 50



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Circle No. 126

continued from page 48

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David Vick, general manager of sales at RedMax, recommends using a nylon brush for cleaning grass clippings, wood chips, sawdust, mulch or other debris from sidewalks.

Rubber paddles work better to clean debris from new construction sites or for removing light snow from walks or driveways. Likewise, the rubber version should be better for cleaning up aeration plugs or smoothing sand traps.

Some manufacturers are moving from steel bristles to polypropylene bristle sets. "We have used steel bristles but found them to wear and take a set at a much faster rate than the poly," says Dwayne Shaufler of Sno-Way. He notes the poly strips can be rotated periodically from front to back for even longer life.

Keep in mind that bristle brushes are more gentle on new seedlings. If the job involves rock picking or heavy debris, however, go with steel.

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continued on page 52



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continued from page 50

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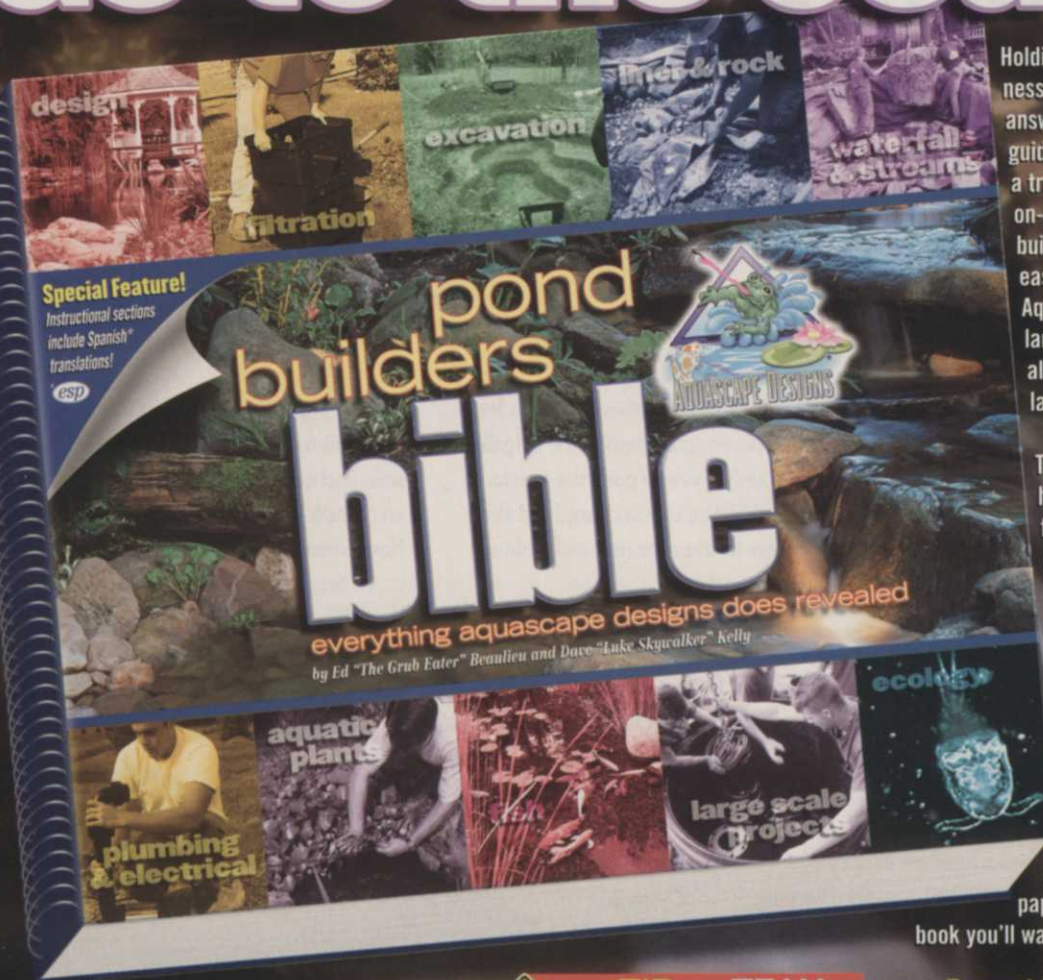
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your unique needs**

BY RON HALL / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Timothy Kilgallen's CSI Landscaping, Scarsdale, NY, does a lot of work in Manhattan. Driving there is tough, never mind pulling a trailer loaded with mowers and trimmers.

That was one reason why he equipped his crews with Super Lawn Trucks. They're not complicated vehicles — a cab-forward Isuzu with an 18-ft. long by 7-ft. high box equipped with customized equipment and tool storage areas.

It is, in some respect, its own lockable maintenance yard since Kilgallen's crews only have to park the trucks at the end of the day and not load their mowers in the morning and unload them at night.

Laurent Girard, general manager of Pacific Topsoil, Everett, WA, knows about trucks. His wholesale landscape supply outfit has a fleet of well over 100, including five huge material blowing vehicles — three Express Blowers and two Blowtechs.

These vehicles are capable of hauling 40 to 50 cu. yds. of mulch or bark at a time.

Pacific Topsoil operates retail stores in addition to being a major supplier of soils and compost. It also provides contract bark blowing for landscapers, homeowners and property managers.

A single operator can dispense more than 50 cu. yds. of material an hour, depending on its particle size, density and moisture content, says Girard.

continued on page 56



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continued from page 54

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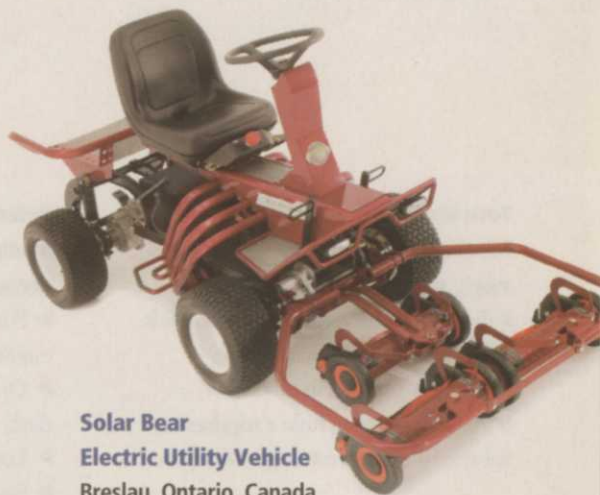
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Circle No. 133

solutions center

WEED CONTROL

Goodbye Crabby

**Veteran turf manager lets the crabgrass
poke its nasty head up before he attacks**

BY FRANK ALLEN

With 12 years of experience, Damon Ervie is no stranger to turf management. For the past three years, this director of fields and grounds and his staff of five full-time employees have been maintaining and renovating 87 acres of high-profile sports turf, as well as 230 acres of common areas, for Liberty Public Schools in a suburb of Kansas City, MO.

The problem:

crabgrass on a rampage

As with all maintenance and renovation projects, Ervie had some interesting challenges. One was the crabgrass at the Liberty Soccer Complex, a soccer field that had been renovated and seeded with Kentucky bluegrass. The preemergent herbicide he'd used to control it had been a disappointment.

"The window of application for this herbicide is crucial," Ervie explained. "And we had to have perfect conditions for application." Ervie also said he was disappointed with the product's results. Since he had to apply it in early spring — the same time as seeding — it thinned out the grass.

"About 90% of the time, the roots were thin and came to the surface," Ervie

continued on page 62

Damon's domain

Institution: Liberty Public Schools

No. schools in district: 20

No. grounds employees: 5 full-time, 10 seasonal

No. of acres maintained: 230 common school grounds, 87 sports turf

Herbicide used: BASF's Drive

Equipment: Toro mowers, John Deere tractors



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JOHN DEERE

Circle No. 134

solutions center

continued from page 60

says. "The grass had tip burn. Add foot traffic to that, and you know you'll wear out a field fast."

Besides the poor results in the grass he was trying to grow, Ervie was getting less than desirable crabgrass control. "We were lucky if we got 50 to 70% control," he says. "More often, it was 40%." Plus, he had as much as six to eight months of residual activity with this herbicide, so he had to wait up to eight months before he could reseed — regardless of how the field looked.

The solution: let 'em show themselves first

The solution for Ervie was to use a post-emergent herbicide. He used BASF's

Drive 75 DF postemergent.

"We can get grass up and going before we apply the herbicide, so we know what we're up against when it comes to weeds," says Ervie.

Ervie also reports that the post-emergent product is more flexible to use. He can make an application as soon as the crabgrass germinates — even in temperatures as low as 50 to 60 degrees. And when he applies it to weeds early, there's normally no need for reapplication.

"Now, we're in a maintenance phase, and we only have to put down a half-application each year or do a spot application, as needed," says Ervie.

The lack of residual activity with product is

The new school soccer field is one of the nicest in the Kansas City area, green and weed free.

another plus. "Most people with high-profile sports turf don't want a preemergent because of residual," Ervie says.

The effectiveness of the treatments resulted in significant savings to Ervie's budget. "It cost us about \$700 an acre to use our previous herbicide when I took into consideration all the equipment costs, labor and product costs," says Ervie. Using the post-emergent product he figures the cost is about \$150 to \$200 per acre." **LM**

The author is a freelance writer who lives in Chicago. Email: frankxallen@yahoo.com

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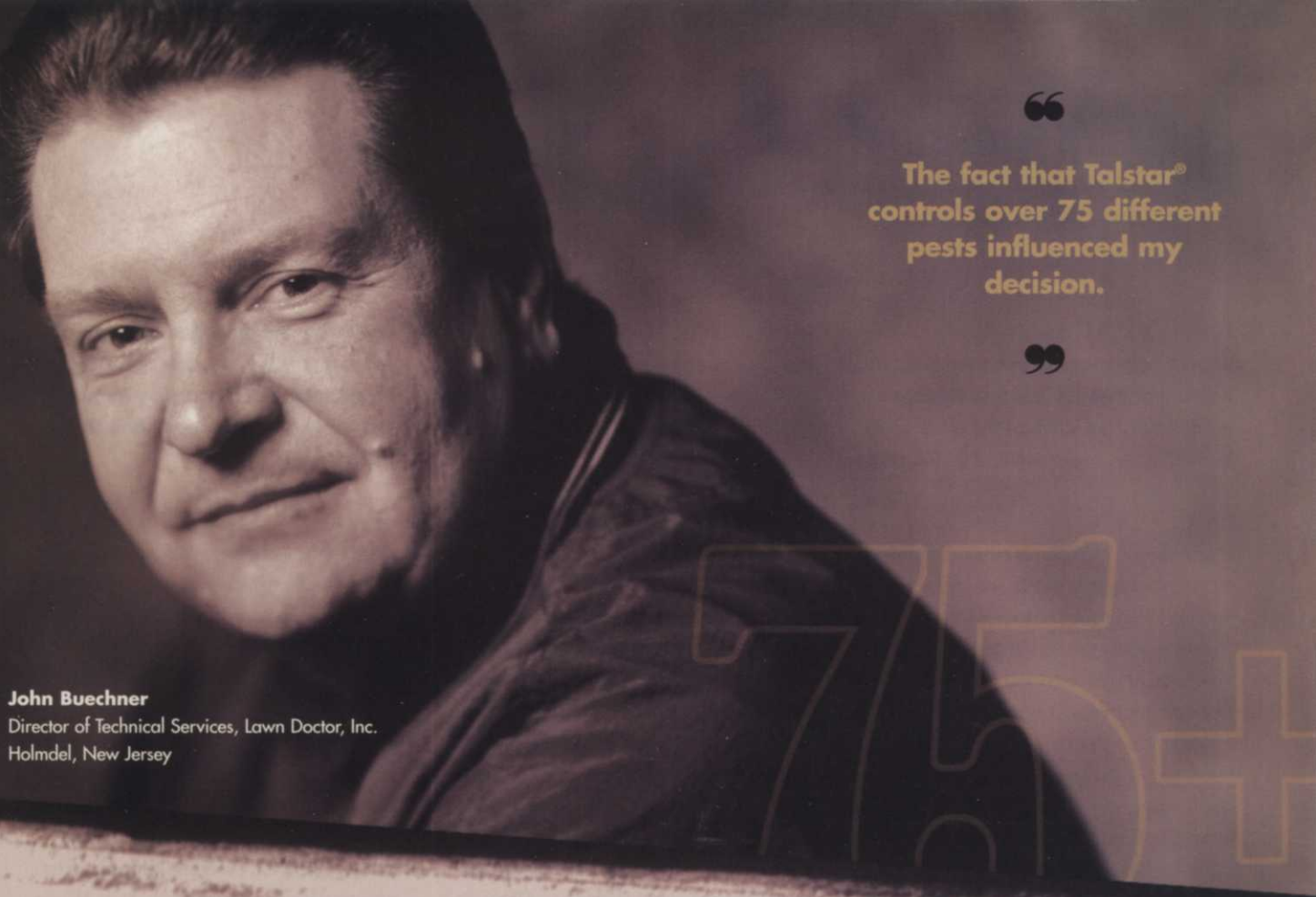


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John Buechner

Director of Technical Services, Lawn Doctor, Inc.
Holmdel, New Jersey

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Lawn Doctor is the largest franchise lawn-care company in the United States. John Buechner, Director of Technical Services, has been with them for 18 years. “With 415 franchises in thirty-eight states, I need an insecticide I can count on. The fact that Talstar controls over 75 different pests influenced my decision, but I selected Talstar because it won’t harm sensitive turf and ornamentals.”

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franchisees, because it enables us to offer services we can be proud of and helps us deliver on our promise of quality.” Lawn Doctor’s trained and licensed staff care for more than a billion square feet of America’s turf. They are a proud supporter of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA), and we at FMC couldn’t be prouder to support their great work with our great products.

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ask the expert

BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

Falling berries

Many of our customers planted holly trees because of their red leaf and fruit color in winter. Why are some of the trees' holly berries remaining green and falling off?

— VA

Study the affected plants on site for any potential environmental soil and/or root related problems such as exposure to extremes in moisture and/or temperature, abnormal or dysfunctional roots resulting from poor growing conditions and soil type.

Also, consider the possibility of a holly berry midge problem. The adult midge is a small, mosquito-like insect 1.6 to 2.3 mm long. The larvae are 1 mm long and yellow. Look for brown pupal cases protruding from the berries.

The midge has one generation per year and over winter as larvae. Adults emerge when holly plants produce flowers; females lay eggs in the young fruit while the petals are still on the flowers. Adults emerge from the berries around May, fly short distances of two to three feet and hide under leaves or other protected places. When the infestation is severe, affected fruit berries fail to turn red because of the holly berry maggot, so the trees don't look as pretty.

Weevil woes

White pines in our area are showing 2-ft. long terminal dieback. They tend to bend into an inverted "U" shape. What do you think is the problem? Any suggestion to manage this?

— OH

From your description of the symptoms, the problem appears to be related to white pine

weevil insect damage. This insect is a common pest of white pine in landscaping and forest areas, and can also attack spruce trees.

White pine weevils attack the terminal new growth of white pines. Affected plant parts discolor and show dieback, curled into the shape of a shepherd's crook. Upon closer examination, you can see minute holes the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen. Remove the browned-out bark from the affected area and look for larval tunneling and lots of sawdust-like frass. You may find yellowish larvae (1/3-in. long) if the life cycle isn't completed.

The larvae feed on inner bark, the sapwood of leading branches and terminal shoots of the main trunk. The affected leader will be killed and the subsequent branches growing in that area will be distorted or killed. The larvae pupate in wood chip cocoons and emerge as adults. The beetles begin to emerge in late July to late August, leaving distinct emergence holes in the bark. The adults feed on the bark of terminals before dropping to the litter to overwinter. On warm spring days, adults move to treetops to mate and lay eggs in the bark.

To manage the problem, prune and destroy all infected branches in early spring. Applications of insecticides such as Talstar or Astro might help manage the adults. Treat leaders in spring when overwintering beetles appear, about mid-April to mid-May. Valuable plants also should be treated again between mid-August and mid-September.

Mowing in the rain

Our athletic field maintenance crews won't mow in the rain because they say

it will tear the grass and compact the ground. If this is the case, why do I see landscapers out all the time in rain showers? Is there a cutoff point? What is the criteria?

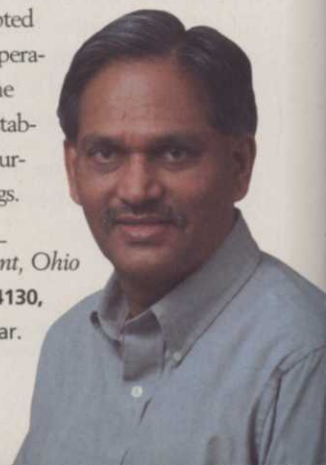
— PA

If you have a choice, avoid mowing in the rain or when it's too wet. Landscapers are sometimes so busy, however, that they don't have a choice and must mow when they can. In a situation like that you could mow during light rain. Avoid mowing in pouring rain as visibility is bad.

Adjustments can be made to deal with mowing in the rain. Keep the rpm higher and blades sharper, and run the blades faster to prevent turfgrass clippings from accumulating in the mower deck. When you're finished mowing, wash off the clippings and clean the deck.

It's also important that the mower wheels not follow the same tracks with each mowing. This is particularly important when the soil is wet as it tends to cause compaction. For example, there's a tendency to edge or border an area in the same manner each time, which would put the wheels in the same track. To minimize compaction during edging, you could offset the wheel track by using only a portion of the deck of a mower that had multiple reels or making a half swath with a single reel. Also, you should mow the open areas in different directions each time.

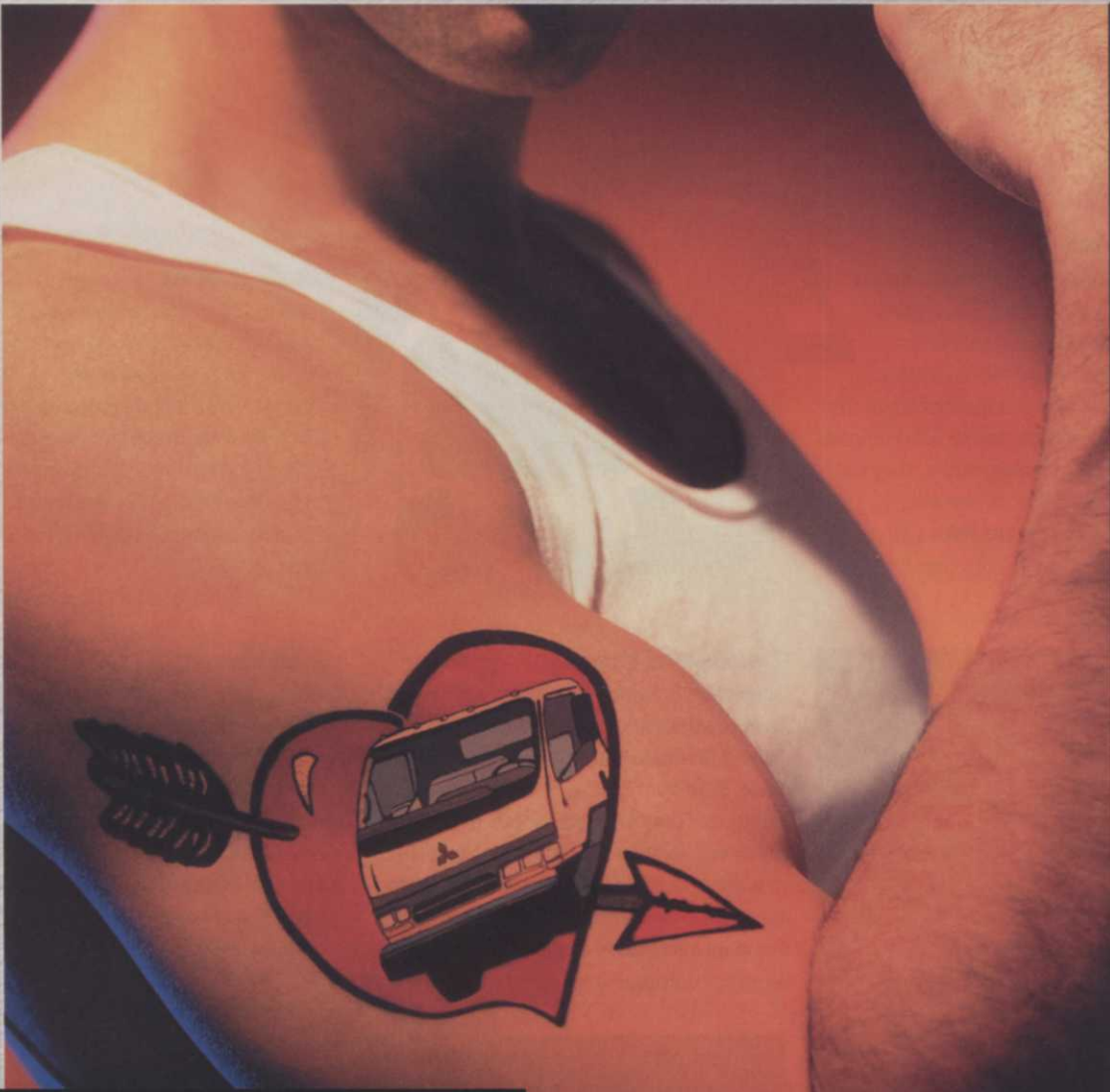
Make sure the turfgrass in these areas is adapted for the mowing operation. Wait until the turfgrass is well established to avoid injuring young seedlings.



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 e-mail: jstahl@advanstar.com. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear.



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products

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Fiskars' loop handle hand pruners feature a Softgrip upper handle that adds padding against friction and keeps hands from slipping. The loop handle allows hands to relax without having to put the tool down. The precision-ground steel blades are fully hardened to withstand years of cutting duties. They can cut branches up to 5/8 in. in diameter.

For more information contact Fiskars at 800/500-4849 or www.fiskars.com / circle no. 250



Fork it over

Precision Farm Machinery's new multi-purpose fork bucket for skid-steers is suited for digging, picking, loading, leveling and grapple-type work. It features a grated bottom to allow dirt to escape. The reel system is operated by a simple hydraulic cylinder for minimum downtime and maintenance.

For more information call 877/736-2226 / circle no. 253



Trim it high

John Deere's EH2659 extended-reach hedge trimmer has a 59-in. boom and 22-in., double-sided, double-reciprocating blade that allows trimming up to 12 ft. high.

For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.johndeere.com / circle no. 251

Get in deep

Rain Bird's new root watering system series combines deep root aeration and irrigation in a single package. Products consist of an irrigation retaining cap and a 36-in. long tube that allows nutrients to reach deep root systems directly. It can be ordered with pre-installed irrigation components that include a swing assembly, check valve, riser and Rain Bird 1401 bubbler. It's also designed to accommodate drip tubing and emitters as an alternative installation.

For more information visit Rain Bird's Web site at www.rainbird.com / circle no. 252

Leader of the pack

Simplot announces a new line of soluble fertilizers called SoluPack, composed of nine formulations: Bermudagrass Special, High Potash Formula, Potassium Special, SP All-Purpose, SP Bentgrass Formula, SP Rapid Green, SP Root Enhancer, Summer Aid, and Super Cal Formula. A number of these products will incorporate the UMAXX stabilized nitrogen technology.

For more information contact Simplot at www.simplotpartners.com / circle no. 254



One wide cut

Howard Price Turf Equipment introduces its new 360Z-80 floating wing mower featuring a 80-in. cut with cutting capacity of up to 6.46 acres per hour at 8 mph. It also features maximum flotation for dips and knolls with wing operating to 20 degrees up and 12 degrees down.

For more information contact Howard Price at 636/532-7000 / circle no. 255

Kill the ants

Oakfield Apparatus' new fire ant probe enables the user to apply insecticide directly into a fire ant mound. The probe is 30 in. high, made of steel, and features four holes at the tip through which a powerful burst of insecticide is delivered.

For more information contact Oakfield at 920/583-4114 or www.soilsamplers.com / circle no. 256

Punchin' holes ▼

BlueBird's TA 10 aerator is designed to be towed by a 16-hp or larger tractor. It has an aerating width of 36 in. and aerating depth of up to three in. for coverage up to three acres an hour. Two independent tine rotors with 32 interchangeable, 1/2-in. closed spoon tines provide good maneuverability around corners and tight areas.

For more information contact BlueBird at 800/808-2473 or www.bluebirdintl.com / circle no. 257

continued on page 68



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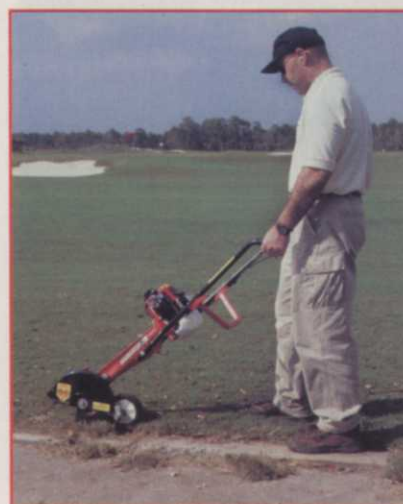
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Circle No. 138

products

continued from page 66

In control

Myron L Company introduces the 720 Series II pH and ORP monitor controllers. The company claims their advanced isolated circuitry eliminates potential ground loop issues associated with non-isolated circuitry. Only 6 in. by 4.8 in., their sensor preamp allows longer distances between sensor and monitor/controller.

For more information contact Myron at 760/438-2021 or www.myronl.com / circle no. 258



Bright lights

Hessamerica's new high performance outdoor indirect area luminaire features the company's advanced secondary reflector technology, which eliminates glare while effectively illuminating paths and public areas.

For more information contact Hessamerica at 704/471-2211 or www.hessamerica.com / circle no. 259



Take the curve

RedMax's HEZ2500F edger has a curved shaft for hard-to-reach areas and is powered by a 25.4cc strato-charged

two-cycle engine that the company claims will give operators a 34% fuel savings, 73% fewer exhaust emissions and 10% noise reduction.

For more information call 800/291-8251 / circle no. 260

Wrestle weeds

PBI/Gordon Corp. announces the addition of Blade selective herbicide to the Gordon's Professional Turf and Ornamental product line. The active ingredient in Blade, metsulfuron, is used primarily in the south to control bahiagrass, ryegrass and foxtail. The company claims it's effective at very low rates, ranging from 0.125 to 1.0 dry oz. of product per acre, yet has an extremely low toxicity to animals.

For more information contact PBI/Gordon at 800/821-7925 or www.pbigordon.com / circle no. 261

Go blue

Becker Underwood claims its Admiral Liquid controls the growth of algae and aquatic vegetation in lakes, ponds and other bodies of water while adding a beautiful, natural-looking blue. Used as an integral component in a lake and pond management program, Admiral is one of only two products of its kind on the market to receive EPA registration. Available in

the following package sizes: 4x1-, 5-, and 30-gal. drums.

For more information call 800/232-5907 / circle no. 263

Treat a tree

With its Wedgle tree injection system and tree care products, ArborSystems claims turf care pros can treat a tree in less than three minutes and generate from \$25 to \$65 of revenue per tree. A free CD-ROM provides all the details.

For more information contact ArborSystems at 800/698-4641 or www.arborsystems.com / circle no. 264

Time to excavate



The 314C Cr hydraulic excavator from Caterpillar features a compact radius design that makes it ideal for urban contractors and others who work in space-restricted applications. It weighs as much as 32,590 lbs. depending on how it's equipped, and produces 90 net hp. Maximum digging depth is 19 ft., 6 in., and tail swing radius is 4 ft., 10 in.

For more information call 877/736-2226 / circle no. 265

Make trees stand tall

Roy Enterprises' Tree Trainer is a self-supporting tree brace that helps straighten crooked-growing trees. It comes in two sizes: a small unit to fit tree calipers up to 1 in., and a large unit that fits tree calipers of 1 to 2 in. Straps are



Wash it away

Landa Water Cleaning Systems' new line of hot water pressure washers with a vertical burner design and cleaning power of up to 5 gpm in flow rate and 2000 psi in pressure. A trigger gun with variable pressure wand allows remote operation of the spray and low-pressure application of the soap. Tubed, pneumatic tires allow for easy maneuvering in all terrain. For more information contact Landa at 800/547-8672 or www.landa.com / circle no. 266

polypropylene and are impregnated with an ultraviolet inhibitor to protect against sun rot.

For more information call 660/485-6768 or visit www.treetrainer.com / circle no. 267



Fenced in

T.C. Manufacturing and Powder Coating's new Architectural Fencing System (AFS) has a linear wire design that allows creative solutions that enhance landscaping. ITC's "no tag" coating formula is graffiti resistant. Panel sizes come 4-8-in. wide, with 2-ft. x 6-ft. standard welded grids.

For more information contact ITC at 800/567-6592 or www.itcmfg.com / circle no. 268

Hear the thunder

New handheld Thunderbolt Storm Detector detects and tracks thunderstorm activity from 75 miles, determining storm severity, approach speed, and estimated time of arrival. Upon detection, warning information appears on Thunderbolt's LCD display, along with flashing LEDs and audible alarm.

For more information call 877/738-7330 or visit www.spectrumthunderbolt.com / circle no. 269

How stimulating

J.F. Oakes Sales & Marketing's Konsume is an insect feeding stimulant that the company claims, when mixed with any insecticide, will increase the control of insects and reduce the rate of active ingredients being applied.

For more information call 800/844-9296 / circle no. 270

Dig a little

Kobelco's new SR-2 Series of compact excavators features zero-tail-swing for working in tight areas, rubber tracks for minimizing damage to paved sidewalks and driveways, and single and bidirectional auxiliary hydraulic valves and piping as standard equipment.

For more information call 281/240-4800 or visit www.kobelcoamerica.com / circle no. 271



Rake it in

The new Harley Power Box Rake for tool carriers and small pay-loaders enhances the amount of work a contractor can do with the Harley rake. The tool carrier allows the Harley to grade and reshape drainage ditches, as well as rebuild road shoulders. Use the tool carrier rake for roadside landscaping.

For more information call 800/437-9779 or visit www.glenmac.com / circle no. 272

It's a visual thing

Help your customers visualize their dream landscape with Individual Software Inc.'s Total 3D Home Deluxe and Total 3D Landscape Deluxe. Designed for Microsoft Windows XP, the software creates realistic 3D renderings of landscaping ideas for a variety of buildings.

For more information call 925/734-6767 or visit www.individualsoftware.com / circle no. 273

It's a coverup

Roll-Rite offers a wide variety of tarp systems for various truck and trailer applications, available in both automatic and semi-automatic for 1-ton and light duty applications. The Tarp-Stretcher, Roll-Rite's new electric gear motor for side tarping, comes standard. Several system variations are available and may feature either single front arm with rear bungee operation or dual-arm operation.

For more information call 800/297-9905 or visit www.rollrite.com / circle no. 274

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Circle 137

events

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

June

19 Turf Research Field Day / South Deerfield, MS; Sponsored by the Umass Extension Turf Program; 413/545-3066

19-23 Retail Roadshow / Chicago, IL; Sponsored by the National Garden Center Organization; 202/789-2900; www.anla.org

20-22 ITODA Summer Meeting / Los Gatos, CA; Sponsored by the Independent Turf & Ornamental Distributors Association; 810/229-9405

July

11-14 ANLA Convention & Executive Learning Retreat / San Diego, CA; 202/789-2900

15-16 Summer Express Short Course / Chattanooga, TN; Sponsored by the Chattanooga Association of Landscape Professionals; 423/886-8874

17-18 OPE Dealer Convention / Louisville, KY; 800/558-8767

17-19 Turfgrass Producers International Summer Convention and Field Day / Ft. Collins, CO; 800/405-8873

19-21 International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo / Louisville, KY; 800/558-8767

22-23 PLCAA's Legislative Day on the Hill & Arlington Renewal Project / Washington, DC; 800/458-3466; www.plcaa.org

23 Midwest Regional Turf Field Day / West Lafayette, IN; 765/494-8039

23-25 Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show / Fort Washington, PA; 717/238-1673

30-31 Virginia Turf Council Field Day / Blacksburg, VA; 540/942-8873

31 Rutgers Lawn & Landscape Turf Research Field Day / Freehold, NJ; 732/932-9400, ext. 339

August

2 Southern Nursery Association 2002 / Atlanta, GA; 770/953-3311; www.sna.org

7 Illinois Landscape Contractors Association Summer Field Day / Hampshire, IL; 630/472-2851

9-11 ALCA Maintenance Symposium / Atlanta, GA; 800/395-2522; www.alca.org

13 Michigan Turfgrass Field Day / Lansing, MI; 517/321-1660

15-16 Northern Plant Symposium / Eastlake, OH; 440/350-2583

17 Certified Landscape Technician Exam / Joliet, IL; 630/472-2851

25-1 International Garden Centre Tour / Amsterdam-Maastricht, Netherlands; 202/789-5980, ext. 3010

September

12-13 Southwest Horticultural Trade Show / Phoenix, AZ; 480/966-1610

16-18 Florida Turfgrass Association Annual Conference and Trade Show / Tampa, FL; 800/882-6721

Landscape MANAGEMENT

June 2002

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☐ 03 260 Lawn Care Service Companies & Custom Chemical Applicators (ground & air)
☐ 04 285 Irrigation Contractors & Consultants
☐ Other Contractors/Service Companies (please specify) _____

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

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

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

- ☐ 12 10 Executive/Administrator - President, Owner, Partner, Director, General Manager, Chairman of the Board, Purchasing Agent, Director of Physical Plant
☐ 13 20 Manager/Supervisor - 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)

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

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)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 32 A Aerators | <input type="radio"/> 39 H Herbicides | <input type="radio"/> 46 O Sweepers |
| <input type="radio"/> 33 B Blowers | <input type="radio"/> 40 I Insecticides | <input type="radio"/> 47 P Tractors |
| <input type="radio"/> 34 C Chain Saws | <input type="radio"/> 41 J Line Trimmers | <input type="radio"/> 48 Q Truck Trailers/Attachments |
| <input type="radio"/> 35 D Chipper-Shredders | <input type="radio"/> 42 K Mowers | <input type="radio"/> 49 R Trucks |
| <input type="radio"/> 36 E De-icers | <input type="radio"/> 43 L Snow Removal Equipment | <input type="radio"/> 50 S Turfseed |
| <input type="radio"/> 37 F Fertilizers | <input type="radio"/> 44 M Sprayers | <input type="radio"/> 51 T Utility Vehicles |
| <input type="radio"/> 38 G Fungicides | <input type="radio"/> 45 N 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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Landscape MANAGEMENT

June 2002

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NAME (please print) _____

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*Is this your home address? ☐ Yes ☐ No

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11 ☐ 370 Manufacturers
☐ Other (please specify) _____

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13 ☐ 20 **Manager/Supervisor** - 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 | 23 <input type="radio"/> G Turf Disease Control | 28 <input type="radio"/> L Pond/Lake Care |
| 18 <input type="radio"/> B Turf Insect Control | 24 <input type="radio"/> H Ornamental Care | 29 <input type="radio"/> M Landscape Installation |
| 19 <input type="radio"/> C Tree Care | 25 <input type="radio"/> I Landscape Design | 30 <input type="radio"/> N Snow Removal |
| 20 <input type="radio"/> D Turf Aeration | 26 <input type="radio"/> J Turf Weed Control | 31 <input type="radio"/> O Other (please specify) _____ |
| 21 <input type="radio"/> E Irrigation Services | 27 <input type="radio"/> K Paving, Deck & Patio Installation | |
| 22 <input type="radio"/> F Turf Fertilization | | |

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"/> A Aerators | 39 <input type="radio"/> H Herbicides | 46 <input type="radio"/> D Sweepers |
| 33 <input type="radio"/> B Blowers | 40 <input type="radio"/> I Insecticides | 47 <input type="radio"/> P Tractors |
| 34 <input type="radio"/> C Chain Saws | 41 <input type="radio"/> J Line Trimmers | 48 <input type="radio"/> Q Truck Trailers/Attachments |
| 35 <input type="radio"/> D Chipper-Shredders | 42 <input type="radio"/> K Mowers | 49 <input type="radio"/> R Trucks |
| 36 <input type="radio"/> E De-icers | 43 <input type="radio"/> L Snow Removal Equipment | 50 <input type="radio"/> S Turfseed |
| 37 <input type="radio"/> F Fertilizers | 44 <input type="radio"/> M Sprayers | 51 <input type="radio"/> T Utility Vehicles |
| 38 <input type="radio"/> G Fungicides | 45 <input type="radio"/> N 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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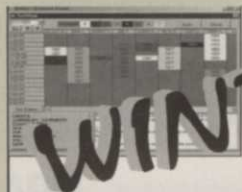


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best practices

GUIDELINES TO HELP AN INDUSTRY GROW

Devote 2% of your sales to get results

BY RON HALL /
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Most landscape and lawn care business owners like getting their hands dirty. They'd rather be outside than developing a plan to establish their operation as a brand in their marketplace.

Not just for cereals

Branding? It's okay for breakfast cereals, but what does it have to do with Green Industry businesses? Plenty.

Check out TruGreen ChemLawn. Who doesn't recognize its trucks? Its uniformed employees? Its logo?

Maybe you're too busy working on projects and hustling for sales to build a "brand." Shame on you.

Take a long look at your competitors. Is there one that the public immediately recognizes? Why shouldn't that company be yours?

Advertising and marketing — in all of their many forms — aren't branding. They are tools to help you build a brand, so don't think that just because your numbers compare favorably with ALCA's "2001 Operating Cost Study," below, that you're a branding whiz.

The survey says...

The Study, sponsored jointly by ALCA and ANLA, contains averages of financial data gathered from 233 member companies. It reveals that most



Ed LaFlamme says
to build your brand.

landscape contractors spend less than one percent of their revenues on advertising and promotion.

That, of course, is not taking into account the cost of all of the other things that go into making a brand, down to the company stationary.

What's the number?

For many years, Ed LaFlamme operated a successful landscape firm in Connecticut. Today, he consults to help other contractors build their operations. He says a company that delivers quality customer service should expect to spend 2% on marketing and advertising, almost double the ALCA study average.

"At two percent, you're bringing in results," LaFlamme said in a recent "Owners' Network" teleconference (www.owners1.com). "You're getting results if you're marketing your company correctly. You'll have a lot of work to choose from."

Sound off

I think your estimates on what an owner should pay himself/herself from the article, "Payday for the Owner," (April LM, page 108) are on the low side, \$60,000 for a \$1 million company. I find that if you price your jobs correctly, avoid lowballing at all costs and watch your budget carefully, you should be able to pay yourself more than what you indicated.

— Marco Goncalves
Clean Cut Lawns
Ossining, NY

Speak your mind

What do you think about our take on branding? E-mail your thoughts to jstahl@advanstar.com.

If we print your comments, we'll mail you a copy of "Spanish Phrases for Landscape Professionals" by Jason Holben and Dominic Arbini. To learn more about this book, call 303/863-1685 or send an e-mail to StockPotSpanish@hotmail.com.

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION (% of net sales)

Typical contractor	0.9
Exterior design/build	1.3
Exterior installation	0.7
Exterior maintenance	1.1

SOURCE: "2001 OPERATING COST STUDY." FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ALCA AT WWW.ALCA.ORG OR ANLA AT WWW.ANLA.ORG.

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