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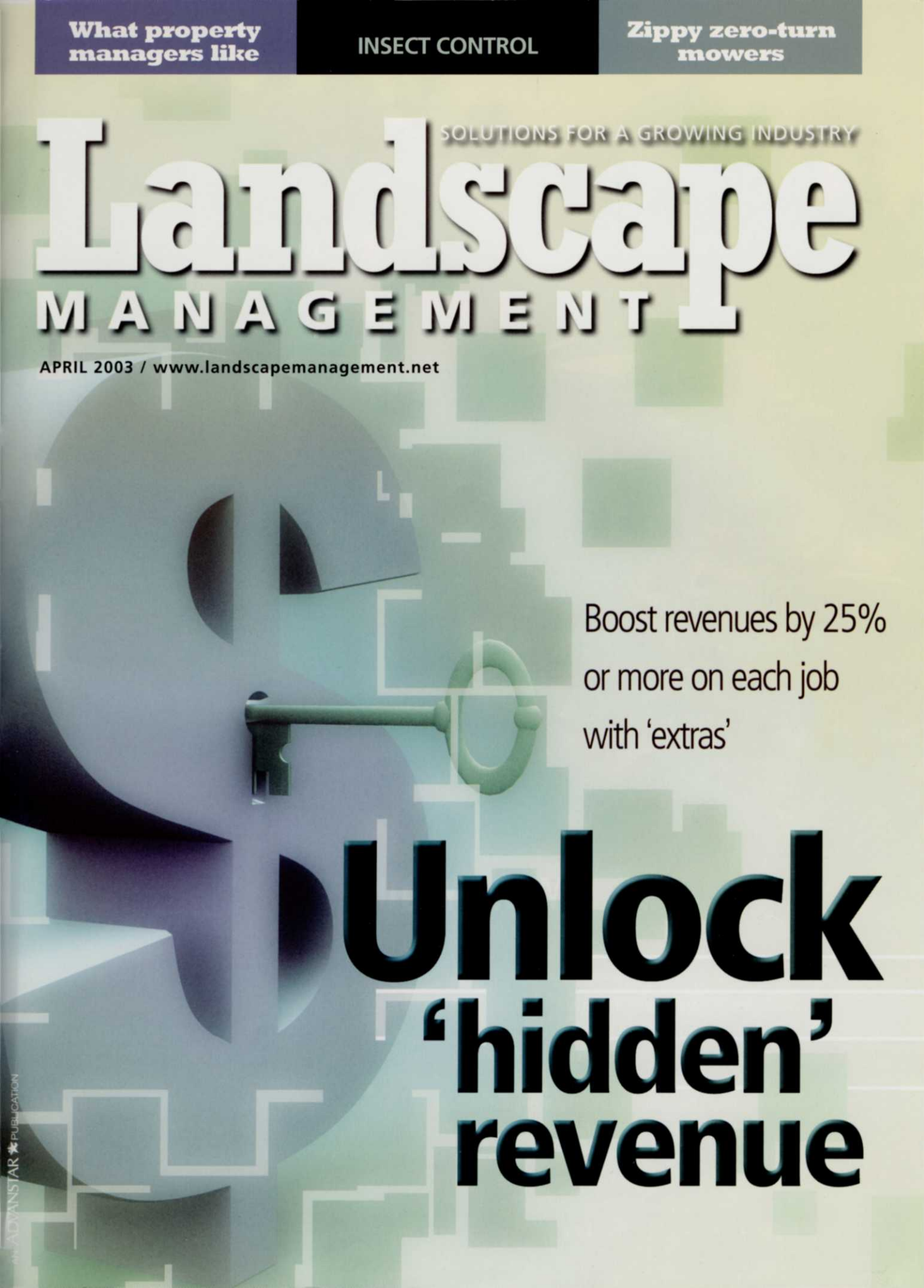
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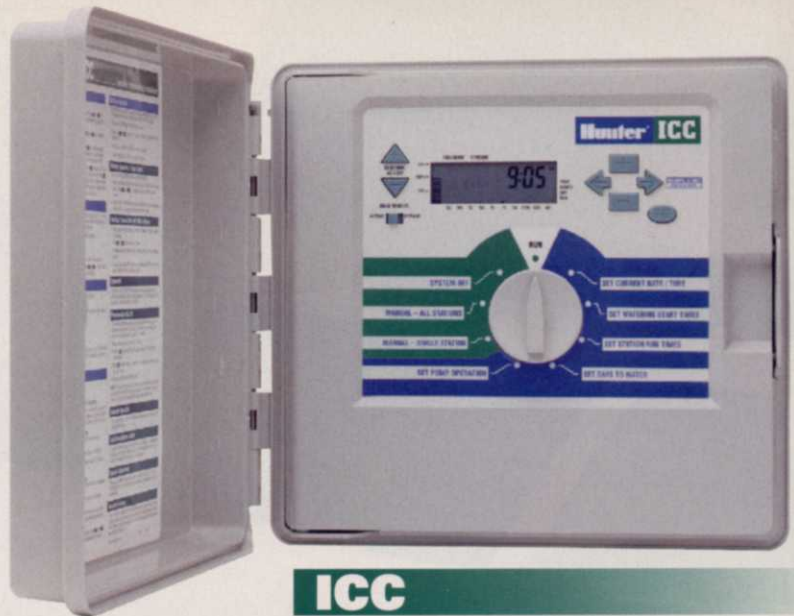
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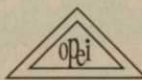
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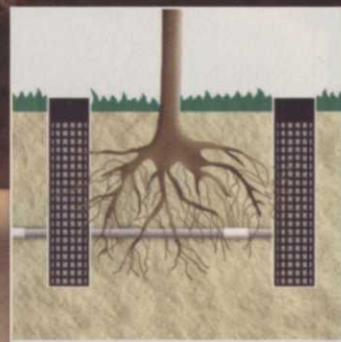
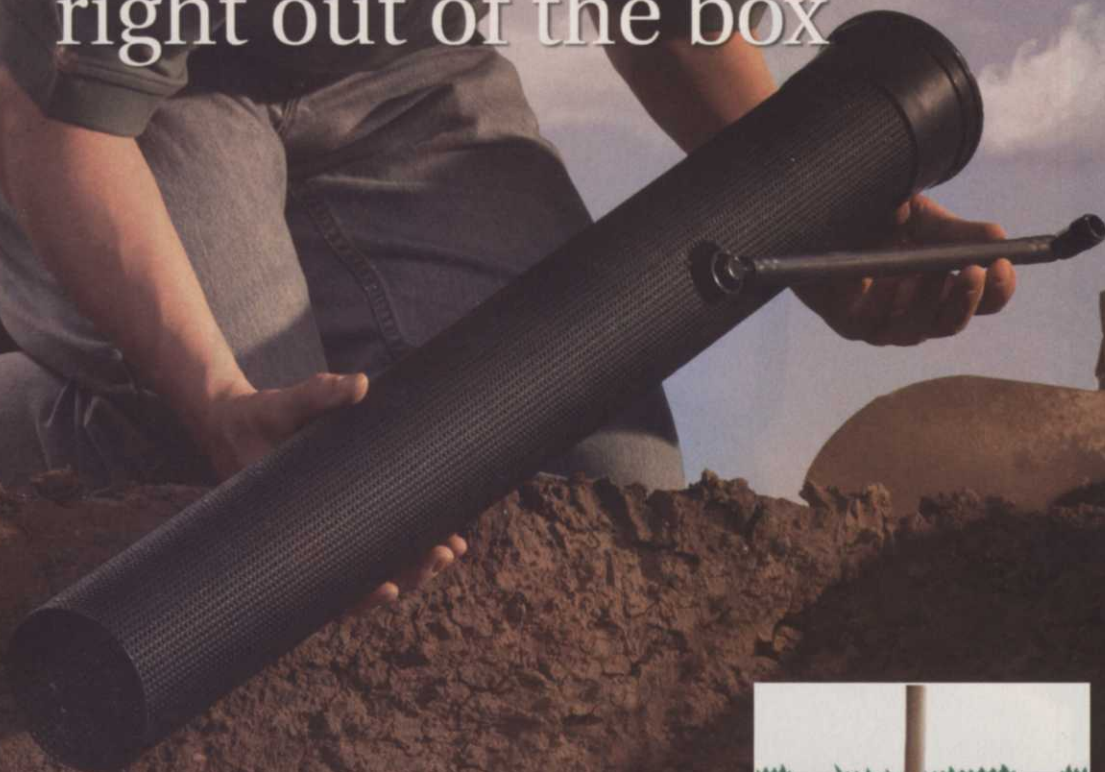


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And don't forget to write

I got a friendly card in our office mail the other day. I was surprised and delighted. Who takes the time to sit down and write a friendly note anymore? Think of the effort: You write it, sign your name to it, neatly fold it, put it in an envelope, address it by hand, put a stamp on it and mail it.

What an awful waste of time, right?

Not from my end it wasn't. The sight of my name and address neatly handwritten across the front of the envelope caused me to push aside more than a dozen other pieces of mail and open it immediately.

A rare thing indeed

After I shared the note with my colleague, Managing Editor Jason Stahl, it struck me how seldom I receive a pleasant handwritten note delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. A thoughtful, friendly letter? Forget it.

Perhaps it's a generational thing, and forgive me for the "it was better in my day," but I remember when I looked forward to the mailman's arrival because it often meant news and greetings from my mom or my kid brother or, best of all, that special someone. Those particular letters were the best ones I ever received, and the letters I wrote back must have been pretty darn good, too. (That special person saved all of them, and they're in a shoebox in our home. Maybe we'll read a couple of them together as we celebrate our 34th in May.)

These days, I dread seeing the mail lady approach my mailbox at home, or the mail cart roll by my desk in our office. Almost all of the mail I get is junk mail — credit card offers, promotions of every shade, news releases and product announcements that have little to do with what we do here at *Landscape Management*. Most is just a discouraging waste of paper and postage.

This isn't communication

Today, it's so easy to put together a form letter (complete with digitally produced autograph) and spew out hundreds of copies with the push of a button.

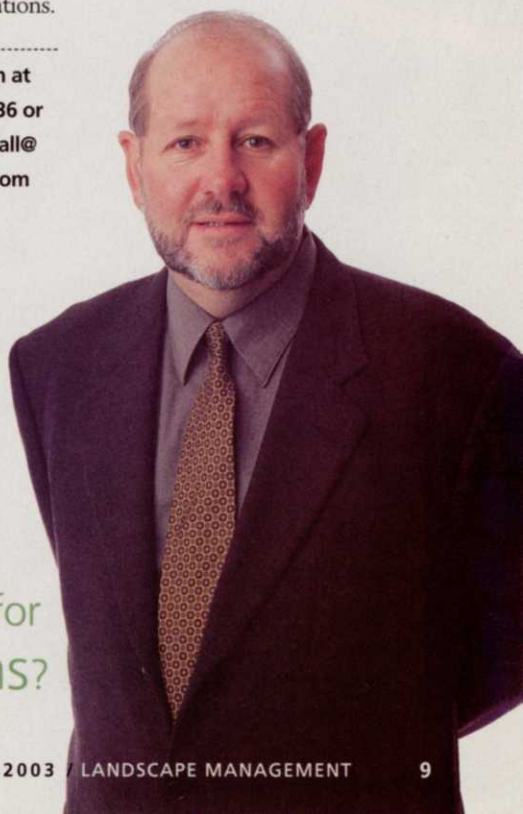
It's easier still to dash off an e-mail: "Dear XXXX (fill in appropriate name), How are you? We're fine. We greatly appreciate your XXXXX (select appropriate word from: business, kindness, gift, thoughtfulness.). Sincerely yours, Ron." Now that's efficiency.

But is that much efficiency necessary in our personal and customer relations? I don't think so.

Certainly not even our best friends or customers expect us to sit down and write them long newsy letters; It's just not done anymore. But what's wrong with the occasional friendly note or card? Absolutely nothing. In fact, it's one of the nicest things you can do. And one of the most appreciated.

Considering what the mailman brings every day, the recipient will remember your thoughtfulness long after all the bulk mail junk has been recycled for yet another round of credit card offers, print promotions and solicitations.

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inside the owner's head

BY RON HALL / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Imagination builds a team

Remember working like the dickens to write a great term paper or to finish a big project? I bet you haven't forgotten the guilty pleasure of playing hooky a few days later, either.

Gone fishin'

One day each July, the "team" at Russo Lawn & Landscape plays hooky. Employees at the 13-year-old landscape company grab their fishing poles, stock the coolers and head out together for a day on the ocean. Sometimes they land stripers and sometimes blue fish...and sometimes not much at all. But they always come back with great stories, and they always have a great time.

"Hey, thanks Mike!" That's what they say when they get back to the dock. That's because owner Mike Russo picks up the tab. It's one of the unique "perks" that make his operation a different place to work. In many respects, Russo is a different kind of an owner as is evidenced by community projects he and his crews do absolutely gratis. But let's focus on the imaginative team-building activities and exercises that make his company such a great place to work.

Cash, food and parties

For example, the owner gives his "team" an \$800 cash certificate each month. The money is to be used towards any controllable repairs. If any incidents occur that result in controllable damage, the dollar amount of the replacement/repair is de-

ducted from the \$800; the rest is divided among team members.

Pizza, anyone? If all of the company's crews meet or come in below their budgeted man-hours for the week, everyone gets pizza. Career Enhancement Director Samantha Wood wrote it for all to see.

Need a little bit extra in your paycheck this coming month? If you work on Russo's team, you can earn it if you accrue enough points to be selected as "Team Member of the Month." The rules are simple and they're in English and in Spanish. Heck, you might even earn "Team Member of the Year." Francisco Mari won it last year



The whole team at Russo Lawn & Landscape gathers for its July 2002 ocean fishing trip.

Where else do you get a day's pay for putting a fishing pole in your hands?

and earned himself and his family extra cash and a 27-in. television.

We all know what "sick pay" is, but what about paying somebody for "well days?" Mike does. A team member earns

Russo Lawn and Landscape

▶ AT A GLANCE

Russo Lawn and Landscape
Windsor Locks, CT

Owner: Mike Russo

Year founded: 1990

Employees: 20

2002 gross revenue: \$1,350,000

Services: Landscape maintenance & installation — 90% commercial and 10% residential

1/2 hour for each week they're on time every day and don't have any early dismissals. You're allowed two paid "well days" each year.

Russo Lawn & Landscape embraced the JP Horizons Pro Training Challenge, and won first place in the program in 2000 and shared first place in 2001. Team members have

continued to meet each week in "Career Enhancement Meetings." That's where the serious stuff takes place.

But there's plenty of fun stuff, too, like an annual holiday party and an annual Success Banquet to start each new season. Besides, where else do you get a day's pay for putting a fishing pole in your hands?

— 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 877/574-5267.

Green Industry pros must go to high schools to inform young people of potentially rewarding careers.



Needed: trained shop techs

Demand for skilled turf equipment technicians and maintenance shop managers increases daily. The Green Industry offers these trained personnel a range of exciting career opportunities. Too bad that few young people recognize this.

Working to meet a need

Lake City Community College is trying to change this. It has a long history of training professionals for the Green Industry. Its two-year Golf Course Operations and Landscape Technology programs began in 1967. LCCC's Turf Equipment Management program (TEM) started in 1973, and Irrigation Management began in 1999. These are one-year programs.

TEM was started to meet calls from the golf industry for mechanics trained in maintenance and repair on specific turf equipment. In recent years, the landscape industry has also been seeking more of these potentially valuable team members.

The Lake City program started small and developed slowly, and demand for these students wasn't that great, at least not until the mid-1980s. But that changed when golf's popularity as a televised spectator sport exploded. The public saw immaculately groomed courses on TV and pressured their superintendents for similar conditions. The superintendents, in turn, asked equipment manufacturers for help, and they responded by producing more sophisticated and technically complex machines.

Seemingly overnight, the golf industry began screaming for skilled equipment technicians capable of interpreting equipment manuals, establishing PM pro-

grams, setting up parts rooms, ordering parts properly, grinding and setting reel mowers, managing parts inventory, operating computers and keeping accurate records. Now the landscape industry needs them, too.

Today, graduates of LCCC's TEM program are in high demand. The 15 or 18 students completing the course each year receive several different job offers. Starting salaries range from \$22,000 to \$40,000.

It would seem that recruiting students to a one-year program that can place just about every graduate in a good job would be easy. It's not. Few people recognize it as a profession. Think about it: How many students are counseled into turf equipment mechanics?

Let's do something

Let's go to high schools to inform young people about this and other potentially rewarding careers in the Green Industry. High school automotive mechanics students are logical recruits, but don't overlook young people considering college. Many of them have no idea what major to pursue. Too often they overlook lucrative careers available through programs like ours.

We must talk to the student groups and invite them, their instructors and their counselors to our facilities so they can see a modern shop loaded with today's sophisticated turf equipment.

The landscape industry needs dedicated and trained young people, and nowhere is this need greater than in its maintenance shops. Who's going to keep our sophisticated turf equipment maintained and repaired?

— *The author is with Lake City Community College. For more information about recruiting students into Green*

Industry shop management, contact him at

piersolj@lakecitycc.edu




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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Shindaiwa teams with ServiceBench

TUALATIN, OR — Shindaiwa, Inc. has teamed with ServiceBench for its online product registrations and electronic submission of warranty claims. The web-based technology of ServiceBench is a complete internet solution for manufacturers, distributors, and dealers in simplifying and speeding up various business to business transactions.

Stihl to expand VA production facility

VIRGINIA BEACH — Outdoor power equipment manufacturer Stihl Inc. announced it will be expanding its operations in Virginia Beach. Total cost will be \$60.8 million, which will include adding 228,000 sq. ft. to its U.S. headquarters in the Oceana West Corporate Park.

Encore has new MI distributor

WATERFORD, MI — Encore Mfg. Co. has granted distribution rights for the state of Michigan to X-Sell Distribution. The Encore power equipment line includes riding and walk-behind mowers and dethatchers.

HSS RentX opens new branches

DENVER, CO — National rental chain HSS RentX has recently opened tool and equipment rental branches in Longview, TX and Oakland, CA. The company says it expects to open additional branches in Virginia and Colorado by mid-year.

[CLIPPINGS]

D'Avino leads Landscape Group

Advanstar Communications, the parent company of *Landscape Management*, *Golfdom*, *Pest Control* and the recently launched *Landscape Design/Build*, is pleased to announce that Tony D'Avino has been named Group Publisher for the Advanstar Landscape and Pest Control Group.

D'Avino comes to the group from Penton Media, Inc., where he most recently served as Group Publisher of *Material Handling Management*, *Transportation and Distribution* and *Supply Chain Technologies*. He replaces John Payne, who served as Group Publisher from 1995 until early 2003.

"We're extremely fortunate to have



D'Avino hopes to build on the success of the Landscape and Pest Control Group.

Tony joining our team as we continue to grow our businesses in the landscape, golf and pest control markets," said Alex DeBarr, Advanstar Executive Vice President. "We'd also like to wish John Payne all the best in his next endeavor and offer our thanks for his efforts over the past seven years."

D'Avino said he's excited to take on the new role. "This is a great chance to work with the most-

respected and fastest-growing group of magazines in our industry. We intend to continue our partnership with our readers and advertisers to build on that success."

D'Avino can be reached at 800/225-4569 or tdavino@advanstar.com.

John Deere Landscapes acquires Overbrook Nursery

John Deere Landscapes, a wholesale distributor of landscape and irrigation supplies, has acquired Overbrook Nursery in Round Hill, VA.

The new John Deere Landscapes branch will feature a complete selection of nursery stock on the seven-acre facility, along with irrigation equipment and landscape supplies, including seed, sod, fertilizer and more.

John Deere Landscapes now has a total of seven branches throughout Virginia: Chantilly, Chesapeake, Midlothian, Newport News, Norfolk, Round Hill and Springfield.

"The Overbrook acquisition is a major step forward in our strategic plan to provide landscape and irrigation professionals with an extensive selection of installation supplies," says Phil Kerchner, Regional Vice President for John Deere Landscapes. "Contractors will find everything they need — from nursery stock to soil amendments, grass seed, fertilizer, pavers and tools to irrigation equipment, landscape lighting and more."

"The Round Hill location is well-positioned to serve the expanding Washington, D.C. market, and key Overbrook staff members will remain on board," Kerchner adds.

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ValleyCrest acquires The Impact Group

CALABASAS, CA — ValleyCrest Companies, the nation's largest privately held landscape services firm, has acquired The Impact Group, a landscape maintenance company headquartered in Delray Beach, FL.

The acquisition is aimed at strengthening ValleyCrest's existing southeast Florida operations and landscape services capabilities in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties.

"We share a common commitment to responsive customer service and a similar approach to delivering quality landscape maintenance," says Richard Sperber, President of ValleyCrest. "As a national company, we bring technical expertise, resources and depth of experi-

ence to an already outstanding organization."

Co-founded by Ray Keenan, President, in 1990, The Impact Group has expertise in developing landscape maintenance solutions for a range of commercial customers including property management companies, office parks and homeowner associations.

Under terms of the agreement, The Impact Group will operate as ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance. Keenan and Impact Group Vice President Bob DeFrain will assume responsibility as ValleyCrest vice presidents and oversee the company's

landscape maintenance operations in Delray Beach, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, and West Palm Beach.

"Although the landscape maintenance industry is still fragmented following the roll-up activities of the late '90s, we believe the opportunities for strategic acquisitions remain strong," adds Sperber.



(L to R) Greg Pieschala, EVP, ValleyCrest Companies; Roger Zino, President, ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance; Bob DeFrain, VP, The Impact Group; Richard Sperber, President, ValleyCrest Companies; Ray Keenan, co-founder, The Impact Group.



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SIMA Symposium set for June 12-14

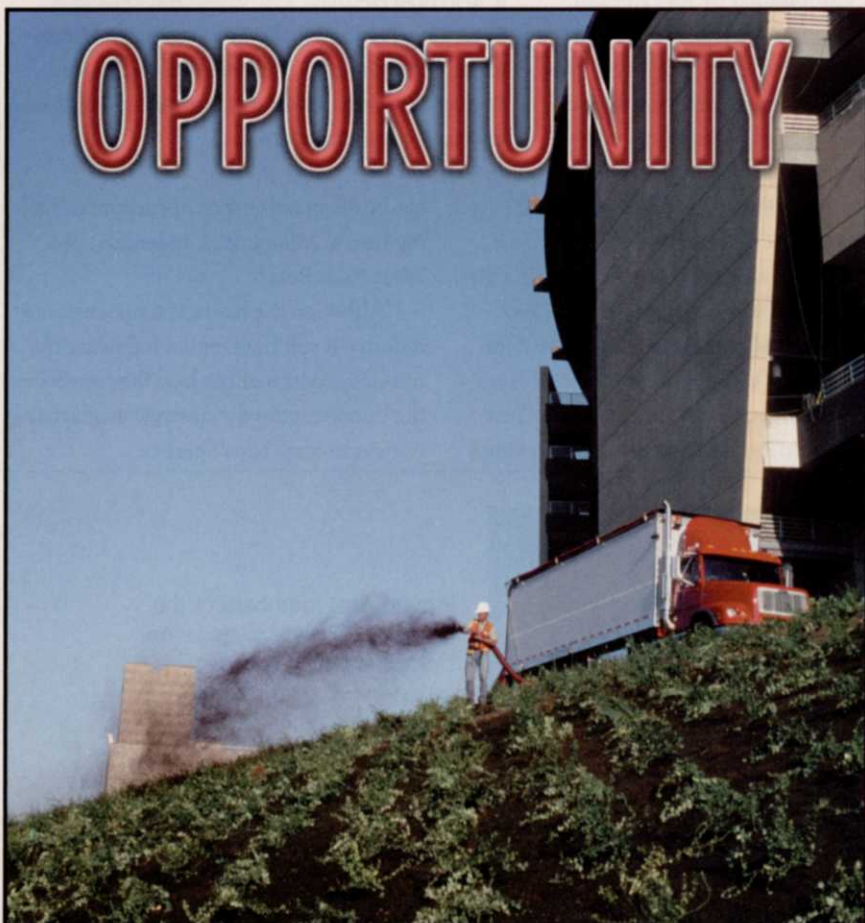
BUFFALO, NY — The Sixth Annual Snow and Ice Symposium unfolds in the Buffalo Convention Center here June 12 to 14. If you're in the snow and ice management

business, this will be the place to see the latest equipment, network with fellow contractors and hear some of the industry's most knowledgeable owners and consultants.

The following are some of the show's presenters:

- ▶ **Joseph Giambra**, Commissioner of Public Works, Parks and Streets for the City of Buffalo: Buffalo's Snow Fighting Plan
- ▶ **Gerald Krueger**, Ph.D., CPE, Krueger Ergonomics Consultants: Strategies to Manage Operator Fatigue
- ▶ **Atty. Robert Kennaley**, McLaughlin & Associates, Toronto: Winter Maintenance Contracts and Managing the Risk of the Slip and Fall
- ▶ **Rick Winnestaffer**, CLP, CSP, WinnScapes, Inc., Columbus, OH: Plow Your Profits into Real Estate
- ▶ **Ed Laflamme**, Grass Roots Consulting, Inc., Huntington, CT: Proven Sales Techniques
- ▶ **Nick DiBenedetto**, ND Landscaping, Topsfield, MA: An "Ideal Modeling" System to Boost Snow Profits
- ▶ **Peggy Allin**, CSP, VP of Operations, Allin Companies, Erie, PA: Dispatching Made Easy
- ▶ **Judith Guido**, KehoeGuido Co., Laguna Niguel, CA: Strategic Planning Essentials
- ▶ **Jeff Tovar**, CSP, President, and **Rick Lenth**, CSP, VP of Administration, Tovar's Snowplowing, Inc., Elgin, IL: Job Costing: Control Your Cos
- ▶ **David Tucker**, President of CLIP-Sensible Software, Inc., Ijamsville, NJ: Make Systems Work

For more information or to register, call SIMA at 814/835-3577 or visit the Web site www.sima.org.



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Correction

In last month's article, "Seed trade keeps innovating," Seed Research of Oregon's Showcase Kentucky bluegrass variety was mistakenly listed as a Patten Seed Co. variety. Also, SRO's SR 9554 variety was called "Providence." This was inaccurate as well.

People & companies



RedMax promoted **Jim Gabrielson** to Deputy General Manager of Sales and Marketing.

ValleyCrest Companies was named recipient of the 2003 "Publisher's Award" from the *San Fernando Valley Business Journal* for leadership, longevity and continued community commitment.

Jacobsen has awarded the employees of its **Johnson Creek Mfg. Facility** the 2002 Textron Award of Merit in recognition of achieving one million hours of operation with a lost time injury.

Jacto, Inc. promoted **Lee Richey** to Vice President.

ALCA announced that **James E. McCutcheon, Jr.**, of HighGrove Partners, LLC, Smyrna, GA, recently passed the Certified Landscape Professional exam.

Exmark named **Blalock Mfg. Co.**, College Park, GA, as the 2002 Exmark Distributor of the Year. Blalock's **Dale Stark** was named Exmark's Salesperson of the Year for the Southeast Region.

Bozzuto Landscaping Co., Greenbelt, MD, was named "Business of the Year" by the Baltimore/ Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce.



Skinner Nurseries has hired **Roger Claybaugh** and **Mike Vlcek**

as sales representatives.

Valent hired **Chris Threadgill** as sales

rep for the Midwest Division of the Professional Products Group.

Schiller-Pfeiffer, Inc., manufacturer of Mantis and Little Wonder branded lawn

& garden power equipment, has announced that **Dave Navroth** was named President of Associate/Affiliate Board of Directors for the Outdoor Power Equipment and Engine Service Association.

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Dealer Inquiries Welcome!

Stihl talks expansion, emissions on facility tour

BY JASON STAHL

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA — In this cozy seaside town one name reigns supreme in the corporate world: Stihl Inc. It may not be the largest company in town, but its name is everywhere.

Stihl Inc., a subsidiary of German-based Stihl Holding AG & Co., has called Virginia Beach its U.S. headquarters for 29 years. The company doesn't plan to move elsewhere any time soon, as is evidenced by a

Emissions legislation is expected to hit Europe in 2007.

recent announcement that it will be undertaking a \$60.8 million expansion. The expansion will create 200 new jobs and add 228,000 sq. ft. to its Oceana West Corporate Park facility.

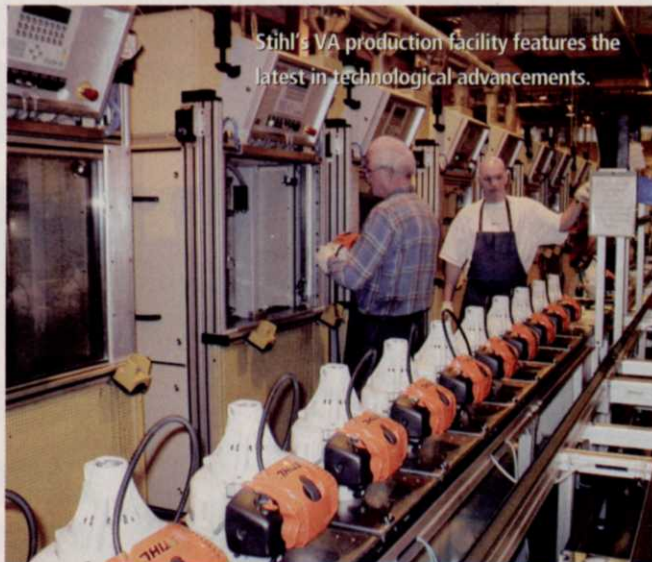
You couldn't pick a better home office location than Vir-

ginia Beach, as trade press editors from the U.S. and Canada found out last month when Stihl invited them to tour its production plant and test new outdoor power equipment. The editors could see the Atlantic Ocean from their hotel rooms, and a daring few even dipped their feet in it, closed their eyes and tried not to think of sub-zero temperatures back home.

A serious message

But the trip was not all fun in the surf and the sand. Stihl had a serious message to get across, and that was this: Only strong companies in the outdoor power equipment business will survive.

All equipment has to provide solutions to future emissions regulations set forth by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Canada and Europe will also be held to stricter emissions regulations in the future — emissions legislation is expected



to hit Europe in 2007.

"Emissions is the biggest single challenge facing this industry," said Thomas Elsner, Stihl's National Service Manager, emphasizing that companies will continue to make significant investments to comply with stricter emissions regulations.

That investment was obvious on the tour of the Stihl plant, where editors saw emissions labs that cost Stihl \$1 million each to build. Also seen

were machines showing the latest in technological advancements, another key to survival in the face of increasingly strict emissions laws.

With an eye on survival, Stihl has established a list of criteria for its equipment:

- ▶ Powerful engine
- ▶ High reliability
- ▶ Compact design
- ▶ Comfortable, low weight
- ▶ Simple maintenance
- ▶ Low emissions



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10 Hottest Housing Markets*

Market	Increase	Median Price
Sacramento, CA	26.7%	\$224,200
San Diego, CA	26.6%	\$379,300
Providence, RI	24.6%	\$206,100
Nassau-Suffolk, NY	23.6%	\$333,600
Monmouth-Ocean, NJ	22.1%	\$261,700
Melbourne-Titusville-Palm Bay, FL	20.9%	\$115,600
Hollywood-Pompano Beach, FL	20.8%	\$204,800
Anaheim-Santa Ana, CA	20.4%	\$434,600
New York-Long Island-North NJ	20.2%	\$320,300
Bradenton, FL	20.1%	\$156,800

* Based on year-over-year change.

10 Worst Housing Markets*

Market	Increase	Median Price
Biloxi-Gulfport, MS	-6.0%	\$100,400
Albuquerque, NM	-5.1%	\$134,900
Charleston, WV	-3.6%	\$106,400
Beaumont, TX	-2.4%	\$81,500
Kalamazoo, MI	-2.0%	\$116,500
Peoria, IL	-1.8%	\$87,000
Ft. Wayne, IN	-1.7%	\$93,100
Toledo, OH	-0.5%	\$108,400
Austin/San Marcos, TX	-0.5%	\$151,000
Columbus, OH	-0.4%	\$135,700

SOURCE: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

UNIT SHIPMENTS MODEL YEAR BASIS (model year Sept.-Aug.)

	2000	2001	2002	2003 (forecast)	2004 (forecast)
Walk-behind powered mowers	6,201,000	5,622,000	5,824,000	5,879,641	5,954,582
Percent change	4.7%	-9.3%	3.6%	1.0%	1.3%
Rear engine riding mowers	157,369	139,550	104,501	85,139	74,825
Percent change	8.2%	-11.3%	-25.1%	-18.5%	-12.1%
Front engine lawn tractors	1,359,540	1,213,680	1,343,400	1,382,427	1,427,762
Percent change	6.8%	-10.7%	10.7%	2.9%	3.3%
Riding garden tractors	198,450	180,651	151,500	154,423	161,076
Percent change	2.5%	-9.0%	-16.1%	1.9%	4.3%
All riding units	1,715,359	1,533,881	1,599,401	1,621,989	1,663,663
Percent change	6.4%	-10.6%	4.3%	1.4%	2.6%
Commercial intermediate walkers	48,122	48,088	43,014	43,473	44,843
Percent change	-3.7%	-0.1%	-10.6%	1.1%	3.2%
Commercial riding mowers	109,406	114,884	113,781	123,981	133,104
Percent change	24.4%	5.0%	-1.0%	9.0%	7.4%

SOURCE: OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT INSTITUTE

WHAT ARE YOU WORTH?

The Professional Grounds Management Society recently polled grounds management personnel on how much they get paid. The study, based on 2002 historical data, suggests the continued elevation of the grounds management profession as evidenced by increased reported salaries even as the American economy has faltered. Here are some of the results of that survey:



Avg. salary for superintendents/managers
▶ \$27.87/hr.

Avg. hire rate for superintendents/managers
▶ \$21.95/hr.

Avg. years on the job
▶ 21.69

Avg. base salary
▶ \$58,145

Avg. vacation time
▶ 17.73 days/yr.

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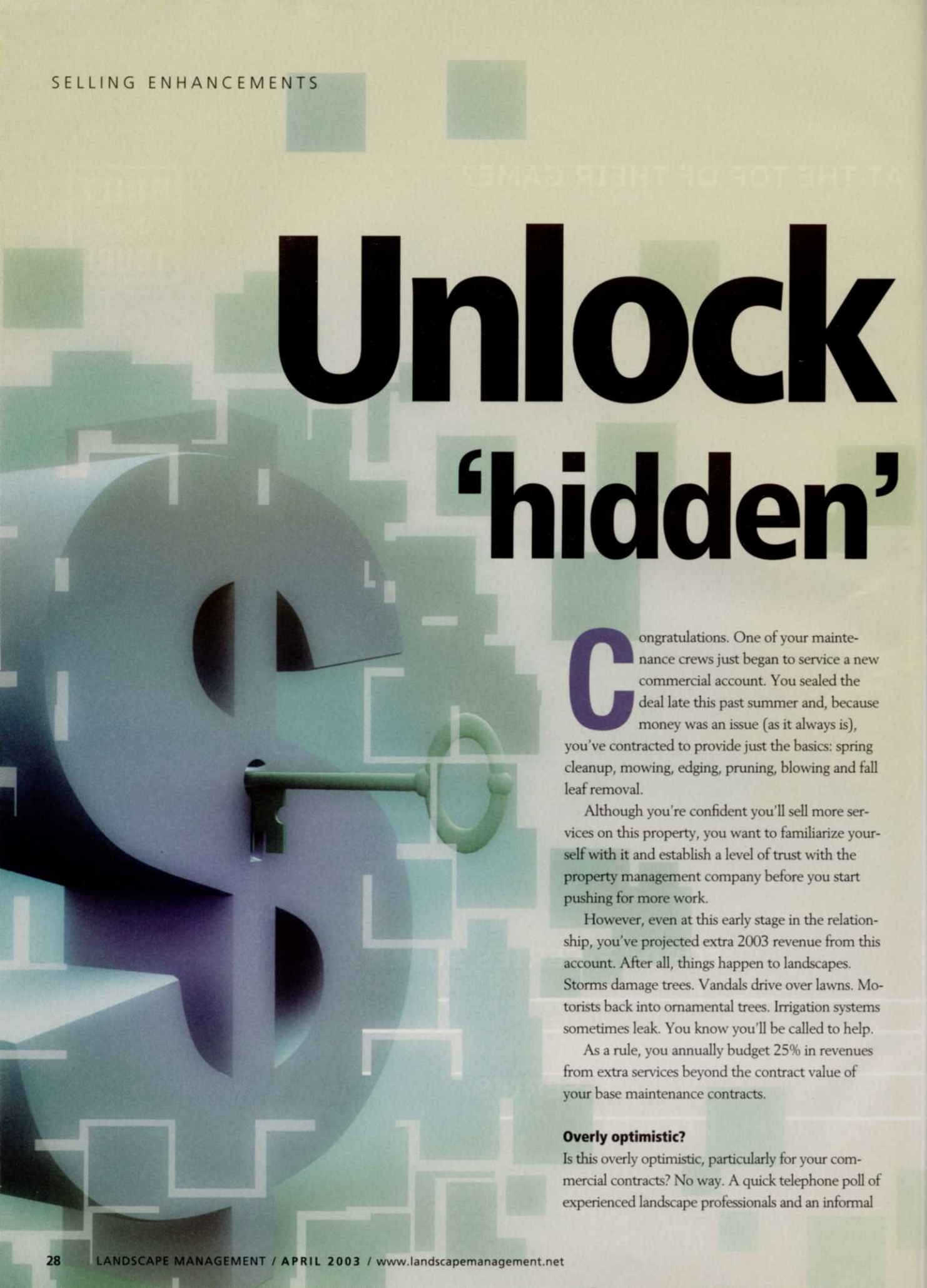
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Unlock 'hidden'



Congratulations. One of your maintenance crews just began to service a new commercial account. You sealed the deal late this past summer and, because money was an issue (as it always is), you've contracted to provide just the basics: spring cleanup, mowing, edging, pruning, blowing and fall leaf removal.

Although you're confident you'll sell more services on this property, you want to familiarize yourself with it and establish a level of trust with the property management company before you start pushing for more work.

However, even at this early stage in the relationship, you've projected extra 2003 revenue from this account. After all, things happen to landscapes. Storms damage trees. Vandals drive over lawns. Motorists back into ornamental trees. Irrigation systems sometimes leak. You know you'll be called to help.

As a rule, you annually budget 25% in revenues from extra services beyond the contract value of your base maintenance contracts.

Overly optimistic?

Is this overly optimistic, particularly for your commercial contracts? No way. A quick telephone poll of experienced landscape professionals and an informal

Read this if you're not generating 25% or more in extra revenues from each maintenance account

BY RON HALL / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



revenue

Landscape Management on-line survey this past winter suggests that most expect to sell 20% to 30% more in extras. The percentage should be



Paul Siciliano

even higher for upscale residential properties, believes Paul Siciliano, owner of Siciliano Landscaping in New Jersey

Siciliano says about half of the maintenance revenues of his 19-year-old company, which grossed \$600,000 this past season, come from maintaining upscale residential properties in pricey Bergen County. In fact, he often doubles the revenue of some of his annual base contracts on residential properties by providing extra-charge services each season—extra mulching, additional pruning, turf renovations, flower pots/beds, landscape debris removal and

major tree work. The tree work he subs at a fair markup.

"Many of my customers have been with me 10 to 15 years. When we get

them, we generally keep them," says Siciliano. "They tell me, 'Paul I want my property taken care of,' because when they come home from work they expect it to look a certain way. When they have people over, they expect it to look a certain way."

Where is this extra work?

You say you're not getting this extra work? Or, at least, not at the level you think you should? Keep reading.

Most landscape company owners refer to these extra sales as enhancements. Others call them remedial services, add-ons or upsells. Whatever services

you include in your particular definition, most owners agree these enhancements are crucial to their company's long-term success and growth.

Joe Skelton, business consultant and former owner and president of Atlanta-area Lifescapes, Inc., describes enhancements as "any services provided that are not in the base contract and therefore an additional charge to the client." They may be as simple as replacing a single plant on a property or as complex as a total redesign of a property, he says.

This additional revenue is often "hidden" to the contractors whose main concern is fulfilling *just* the maintenance agreement letter and flying to the next job site. Experienced owners, however, see enhancement opportunities in just about every corner of a property, especially if they're ac-

quiring a landscape that hasn't been properly maintained or is starting to show its age.

The key to unlocking these revenue opportunities is "educating" clients by telling them how extras will make their lives and jobs more pleasant or easier. Property owners and managers warm to any suggestions for landscape improvements that:

- ▶ improve the safety of the property,
- ▶ improve the site's curb appeal,
- ▶ lower monthly expenses, such as improvements to an irrigation system that offers substantial water savings, or
- ▶ replace dead or unsightly plants before customers complain.

"Most property managers are stressed because they're short of time, over budget, have low occupancy or are dealing with complaints from owners or tenants," says Skelton. "Anything your company can do to address any of these issues will make you more valuable to them."

Landing a maintenance account, in all but the most cold-

blooded bid situations, should signal the start of a long-term business relationship. The contractor gets this "partnership" off to a good start by meeting with the person managing the property, getting to know as much as they can about the property (paying particular attention to its budget) and then presenting



Munie often lands installations from maintenance work.

the manager with a proposal that meets his/her needs.

"During an initial meeting with a property manager, you have to have your ears open and your ballpoint pen turned on so you can write things down," says Rick Kier, owner of ProScapes, Inc., Jamesville, NY. "One of the first questions

Why enhancements are good

- This "value-added" service can differentiate you from your competition.
- You can create strong, lasting relationships with property managers.
- Your cost-saving recommendations may allow you to renew contracts without a price increase (or even a price reduction).
- It can help you build strong synergies between your maintenance and contracting departments.
- The potential is incredible. In one year, my company had base maintenance contracts of \$2.3 million. It added \$360,000 in seasonal color and \$800,000 in enhancements (35%).
- In addition to maintenance enhancements, you can land sizable installation and/or construction projects on the site.
- If you don't offer this service, your competition will.

— Joe Skelton

- It's easier to sell to current clients than find new ones.
- You're actively answering a customer need instead of reacting to a problem.
- You can increase your company's revenue without adding more clients.

When enhancements are bad

- They're proposed as a result of a customer's complaint.
- They're unanticipated and not in the client's budget.
- The client expected the service to be included in his/her monthly contract.
- Your proposal doesn't demonstrate a cost savings or show its value to the property.
- The customer cannot justify the proposed expense.

— Joe Skelton

that I always ask is, 'What didn't work out so well for you in the past?' or 'What services did you like on your landscape?' I want to find out exactly what they're thinking."

Kier's 25-year-old company derives about 70% of its \$1.2 million revenues from commercial maintenance. Kier does all the selling for his firm and offers potential clients a

full palette of maintenance services up front. They choose what they want, depending upon needs and budgets.

"When I present the contract, I have it broken out by service. I then go through each service and explain it to clients so they understand the value of it," says Kier. "We get a lot of people who understand

continued on page 32

¹Standard on many John Deere models. [†]The Single-Source 2-Year Bumper-to-Bumper Warranty on all new John Deere Commercial Mowers covers the entire machine, except for normal wear items like batteries and tires.

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Circle No. 117

continued from page 30
and, in many cases, opt for those services that they might not have otherwise.

"We try not to overdo it or underdo it," he adds. "We want our clients to be getting the right level of service. I'm in this business for the long run. I'm interested in having a good long-term relationship."

For this reason, Kier likes to sign a new client to a one-year contract as "an education process" for both parties. If it works out, he seeks a multi-year agreement. Even then Kier doesn't slow down. He continues to "educate" the client about additional services he feels are right for the property.

Different strokes

Fredric R. Haskett is a Senior Facilitator with Orlando-based U.S. Lawns and regularly advises franchise holders whose target market is commercial maintenance. Most of these operations gross \$500,000 to \$1 million annually, with contracts of \$600 to \$1,000 monthly. He advises his owners to keep the percentage of "remedials" they sell below 30% of base contracts. An 80/20 ratio is right for their operations.

"We're maintenance contractors," he stresses. "Maintenance work has reliability. It provides a certain level of stability and security." Haskett believes that once the percentage of extra services exceeds a certain level, however, the owner



Fred Haskett

of a U.S. Lawns firm risks moving too far into installation and loses focus on his core business.

These landscapers, like others, seek

to develop trust-based and mutually beneficial relationships with those who make property management decisions, Haskett emphasizes.

Joe Munie, owner of Munie Outdoor Services, Inc., Caseyville, IL, takes a consultative approach to offering enhancements. He prefers to "guide" clients in the direction of an extra service such as a renovation.

"We can inform a customer that their landscape is 20 years old and tell them something



like, 'You ought to be thinking about this particular issue in the next couple of years.' And sometimes they'll say, 'Well, let's do something now.'

"Generally, customers know what they want. You just have to inform them of their options and try to find a way to make it available to them," says Munie.

Munie Outdoor Services also

Skelton's powerful selling strategy

Consultant Joe Skelton suggests this "Pro-Active Site Analysis Program" to increase your service offerings to core maintenance accounts. Here's how it works:

1 Determine when each property manager must submit his/her budget for the coming year.

2 Schedule a meeting with a property manager to discuss his/her goals and objectives. Do this well in advance of when they submit their budget.

3 Thoroughly inspect the site, paying particular

attention to problem areas and opportunities for improvement.

4 Prepare a professional presentation book with photos and descriptions of each area to be improved.

5 Describe the problem, the solution, potential savings, and the budget for each area.

6 Offer recommendations in a pick-and-choose format in your presentation. Some properties may have many pages of options to consider.

has a strong construction presence in its St. Louis market area, so it sometimes lands big-ticket property enhancements from maintenance clients.

But a maintenance company doesn't have to deliver every enhancement it offers clients if it can count on the services of reliable subcontractors.

Sub for success

For example, Rob Estes, owner of Estes Lawn Maintenance, Peachtree City, GA, maintains strong working relationships with a chemical application company (Whitley's Lawn Service) and a tree

care/removal company (White-Meadows Tree Service), allowing his team to focus on basic maintenance and providing extras such as lawn and bed renovations, and also installations through Rob's other company, Estes Landscape Design.

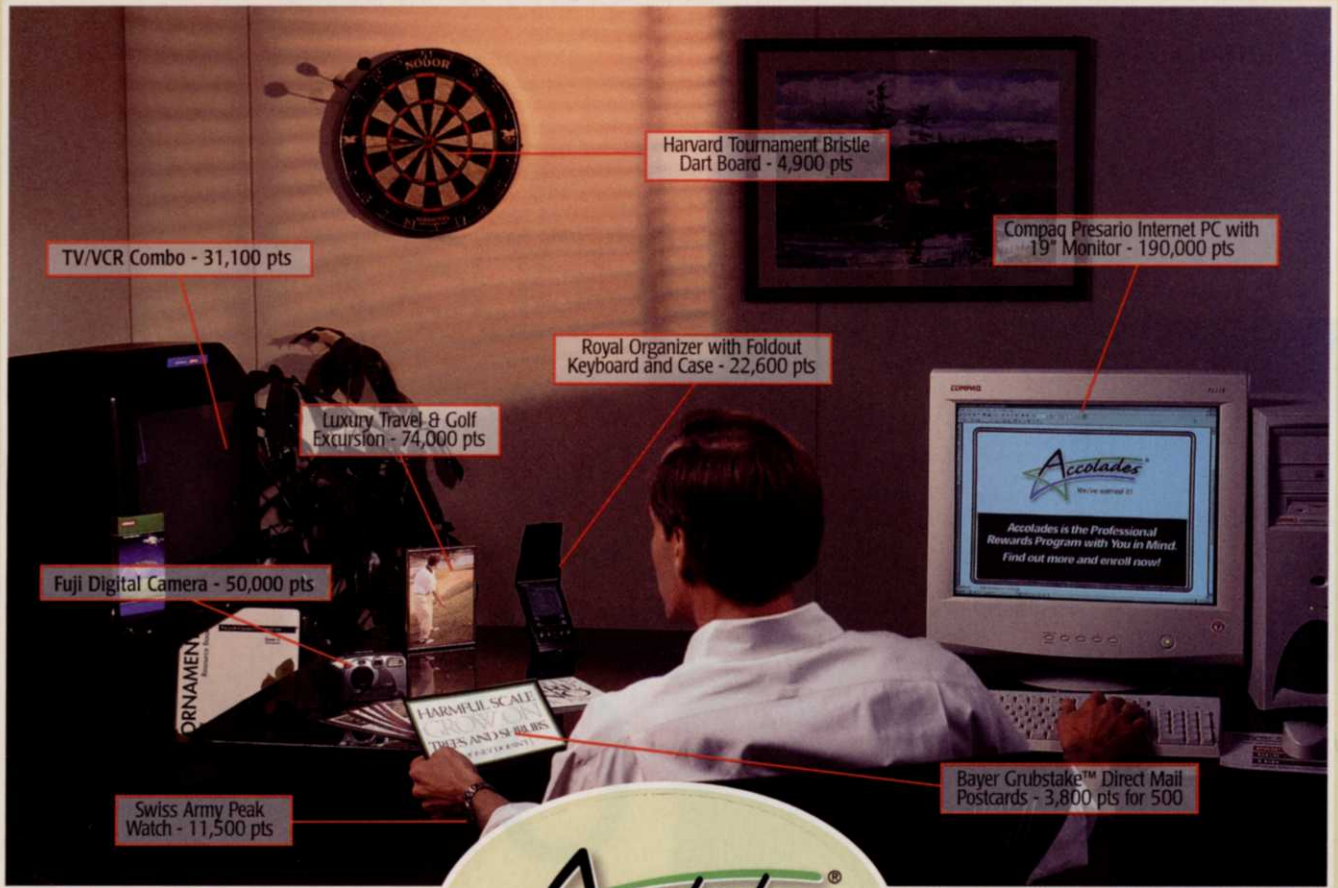
Estes acknowledges there's a risk when relying upon subs, and the margins aren't as large as if his guys did the work. "But it's worth it because we can

offer all the services that clients need for their piece of mind," says Estes. **LM**

— To comment, contact the author at rhall@advanstar.com.



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Property managers speak out

Brent Flory's Freedom Lawns provides on-call services to Great Lakes Chemical Corporation.



Forget being the lowest bidder — here's the real lowdown

BY GEORGE WITTERSCHEIN

Whoa partner, wrong idea

Three property managers — one in New Jersey, one in Indiana and one in California — told us what they want from a maintenance contractor, and it may surprise you since not one selected price as the overriding consideration. Sure, price is a big deal, but you'd better understand their property and their needs. And — this is crucial — you must be able to fulfill those needs.

The Jersey story

Susan Morgan has managed Mendham Commons, a residential town house community of 300 homes in New Jersey's up-

scale Morris County, for the past nine years. What does she want from a landscape contractor?

"Know the community, what the residents expect, what the budget is and any unique qualities that the community may have," says Morgan with emphasis. For example, the size of Mendham Commons is unique to that region of New Jersey. Few other home associations in that area have 100 acres of property.

"I don't think that a smaller landscaper could take on this contract. The contractor has to know his company's limitations and avoid getting his company,

continued on page 36

Editors' note: This is the second article in a two-part series. Last month, we let landscape contractors discuss how they successfully deal with property managers. This month, we let property managers do the talking.

You'd love to land the contract at that upscale apartment complex on the edge of town. "I'll drop a low-priced bid on the property manager's desk and win the contract hands down. That'll do it."



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continued from page 34
and us, into hot water down the road," Morgan says. "The contractor has to be honest and he has to be realistic." That starts with the contractor thoroughly understanding the specifications of the project, "and not just quoting a dollar figure to me," Morgan adds.

Low bid blues

Morgan says that she and the owners in the tight-knit Commons community got stung by a low-cost service provider once and learned their lesson.

"Almost a decade ago, our Board accepted the lowest bid on the landscape maintenance contract. It was a disaster," she says. "The contractor and his people didn't know what they were doing. Their crew didn't seem knowledgeable. They cut

corners. Their manager wasn't here when we needed him. I spent a lot of hours out on the property coaching the landscaper's crew. I don't have the time to be doing that."

The Commons canceled that contract and went back to its former maintenance contractor. The town house community gladly agreed to that contractor's original bid price. "Price is just one factor in the whole picture," says Morgan.

She adds that she most appreciates contractors who are willing to be frank. "Learn and understand what we're looking for. Then be honest about whether you can provide the services at the level required and at the price point you've bid," she says. "For example, do you have the staff resources needed to perform the services?"

"I also want the contractor to be proactive and not act on a problem only after I've found it," she continues. "For example, prior to bidding, examine the property and, if you see something like Bradford (pear tree) roots pushing up sidewalks, mention that to me going into the bid, saying, 'Don't you think that situation with the Bradfords should be in here, Susan, and that the price in the contract should reflect that?' I'd rather hear this sooner than later."

Also, the bid should break things down in detail so the property manager sees how many man-hours per week or month the landscapers antici-



Property managers want crews with equipment that gets the job done efficiently.

pate for each service, such as turf management, tree care and weeding.

"This tells us that you understand what you're getting into as well as what we're asking for. That will let me compare bids on something other than price. I'll compare not only dollars, but services and hours," Morgan says.

Another heads up from Morgan — submitting a rock-bottom price, at least to an experienced property manager, signals potential trouble ahead.

"Don't cut your bid price to the bone and then come back to me six months later and say, 'I didn't realize how much property you have here, and we can't do the job for the money you're paying us,'" Morgan says. "It's up to the bidder to know how big the property is and how many man- and equipment hours it will take to get the work done at the needed quality level and within the specified times."

Stylin' in California

Rich Perona manages the landscape at Rossmoor Walnut Creek, a nearly 40-year-old "active adult" community east of San Francisco that has more than 6,000 homes and 9,000 residents. Perona and residents

are proud of their award-winning landscape, which is maintained by two contractors. (He actually worked for one of them, ValleyCrest, the former Environmental Industries, Inc.)

Perona says he wants quality service at a reasonable price. He also wants somebody who's knowledgeable in the latest horticultural practices — "someone who can use the most modern techniques, such as pre-emergent and post-emergent herbicides and growth regulators," he says.

Perona admits that price is important but not the determining factor in hiring a contractor. "Rossmoor Walnut Creek is divided into several 'mutuals,' or areas, each with its own board of directors and its own budget, so we need companies that provide quality work within those budgets," he explains. "We've worked with our present contractors to develop a relationship with them and an understanding of our budgets and the level of service we want."

In it for the long-term

Long-term business relationships based on trust mean a lot, Perona points out. For example, ValleyCrest founder Burton

continued on page 38

Susan Morgan
 ► Property Manager, Mendham Commons Morris County, NJ
Unique features: Upscale, 100 acres
Likes: Thorough knowledge of the property, "realistic" appraisal of service capabilities, proactive/communicative style
Turnoffs: Requests to renegotiate because the contractor misjudged the size of the property or the services it requires



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continued from page 36
Sperber began working with pioneer retirement community developer Ross Cortese almost 40 years ago, before Cortese even developed Rossmoor Walnut Creek. Even so, sometimes decisions are made based on low price, which can be a gamble.

"We had a low-bid contractor here last year who was doing rehab landscape for us," recalls Perona. "I wound up having to go out and supervise the work myself. I don't have the time or inclination to do this."

He advises contractors to learn as much as possible about the property and the person who manages it prior to putting



Rich Perona

► **Manager,**
Rossmoor Walnut Creek
San Francisco Bay Area,
California

Unique features: Active adult community, 6,000 homes, safety and noise issues

Likes: Long-term win-win relationship, technically skilled crews, detailed bid sheet that breaks down services

Turnoffs: "Don't think I'm going to supervise your crews for you."

together bids. For instance, the contractor should understand the kind of community Rossmoor Walnut Creek is, including the retirees living there and the quality of life they expect.

"They must understand that our older population puts some special requirements on a landscape contractor," Perona explains, such as safety issues, noise and hours of operation.

Perona estimates about half of the proposals he gets from contractors are "really good." The ones that get disqualified either show a lack of understanding of the property or an unrealistic budget, often both.

"I think sometimes they just type in numbers without really knowing the situation here. The two main contractors we use here always put together really good, thorough bids that take into consideration our idiosyncrasies as a site," Perona says.

Classy Midwest site

Jess Washburn has been the Maintenance Supervisor for Great Lakes Chemical Corp.'s site in West Lafayette, IN, since 1989. About one-fifth of its 80 acres are finished grass, landscape and buildings. About 350 people work at the facility, which is nicely landscaped with turf and primly edged beds.

"We're very proud of the property's appearance," says Washburn, who likes the convenience of dealing with a single contractor who provides just about all of the outside ser-



Jess Washburn

► **Maintenance Supervisor,**
Great Lakes Chemical Corp.
West Lafayette, IN

Unique features: 80-acre site, 15 acres extensively landscaped

Likes: Reliable local contractors, prompt service response, contractors with modern and efficient equipment

Turnoffs: Contractors who bad-mouth other contractors, "hotshot" experts

vices he needs. He also appreciates being able to deal with a locally owned firm.

"I want a local business that employs local people and is part of our economy. I want someone I know will be here when I need him," says Washburn. "We feel that we get better service from a situation like this." (This is the relationship Washburn says he's enjoyed for five years with Brent Flory's Freedom Lawns, Inc. of Delphi, IN.)

Price, says Washburn, is always considered, "but I want to be able to talk to a real person on the phone. If I have an issue that needs attention, I don't want to get an answering machine. My overriding considerations are service and response."

High on the list of Washburn's contractor "must-haves" are knowledge and the right

kind of equipment to do the job efficiently. "Our terrain poses challenges, including sharp slopes, so walk-behinds are the best thing to use on these," he explains.

Washburn values the win-win relationships he builds with his contractors, and he wants to continue them as long as he's getting the service he expects.

Hotshots stay away

"Because we're a very visible property that looks beautiful, a lot of landscapers drool when they drive by and see us," Washburn remarks. "Some of them will sweep in here, and some of them will take pictures. They push these pictures at me, but does this contractor convince me they'll be better than my present contractor at dealing with the situation? So far it hasn't happened."

As for lowballing, Washburn says he has little respect for "hotshots" that bad-mouth the competition or try to win his favor by dropping an unrealistically low-price bid on his desk.

Price is important, almost all property managers agree. But it's just one part of winning the contract. Take the time to learn their needs, be honest, reliable and proactive. Then you stand a good chance of landing their business. **LM**

— *The author is an experienced business writer who particularly enjoys reporting on landscape and lawn service industries. He can be reached at 973/543-6386.*

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10^{Killer} marketing strategies

Separate your company from the competition with these simple yet effective marketing tips

BY CHERI JONES

Whether you're a landscape professional or the owner of a billion-dollar sporting goods empire, marketing means the same thing: creating demand for your products. It really doesn't matter whether you sell lawn care services or tennis rackets. You're still trying to position your company to potential and existing customers as a dependable provider of your products or services through market planning and research, advertising, publicity and other marketing efforts.

Marketing is as much an art as it is a science, but the basics are pretty simple. Here's some key advice to help you put together a killer marketing plan:

1 Never underestimate the importance of a professional image. You can separate

your company from its competitors by ensuring that employees, equipment and all correspondence look as professional as possible. Think about it: You want to do business with people who look like they know what they're doing. Don't you think your customers feel the same way? Your company projects its image in many different ways — through its logo, written quotations, the cleanliness of your trucks and equipment, and the "can-do" attitude of employees.

2 Invest in a professionally designed logo. Hiring a graphic artist or ad agency to design a logo may cost some money, but it's worth the investment. Your logo is "you" to your customers. It's the foundation of your image. A well-designed logo can create a positive impression in the minds of your customers and can separate



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Customized thank you cards go a long way in showing customers your appreciation.

your company from its competitors. An ugly or outdated logo is a real turnoff. When you develop a new logo, make sure it's on all business cards, stationery, trucks, company uniforms and your Web site if you have one. A professional logo will tie together your image and is an important part of your overall marketing strategy.

3 Make all quotes look as professional as possible. To market yourself as a top-quality contractor, make sure your presentation of a quote on a job to a customer

comes off professionally, too. There's plenty of software out on the market to help you do this. A nice touch is to present your quote to a customer in a pocket folder emblazoned with your company's logo. It doesn't take much: Just print out your company's logo on computer labels and stick the labels on the folders. You may also want to include references and photos of recent jobs in your quotation folders.

4 Follow up all quotes promptly. You have two important challenges at quotations time. You must market your quotation as a fair price for the work to be done and market your company as a dependable supplier of that service. Part of that marketing is promptly following up on quotations. You don't have to be a pest, but you must show that you want the job.

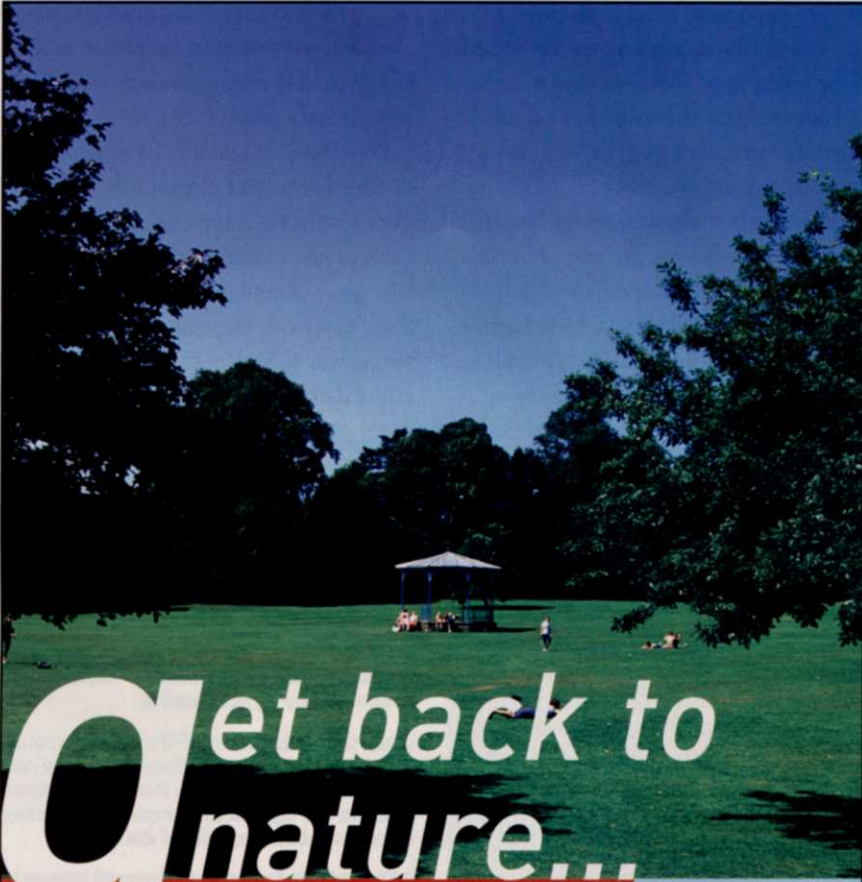
5 Promote your company with customized clothing. Investing in golf shirts, caps, sweaters, jackets, caps or other clothing for your workers that have embroidered company logos can really set your operation apart from the competition.

6 Consider a company newsletter. Promoting yourself as the local expert in your particular line of work is another effective marketing strategy. You can do this fairly inexpensively through a company newsletter that you send to existing and prospective customers. One Kansas City, MO-based lawn service and landscaping company sends out a quarterly newsletter that's chock-full of tips on proper mulching, perennial varieties, spring cleanup and many other interesting topics for homeowners.

7 Don't underestimate the power of a simple "thank you." In this age of mindless junk mail, thoughtless telemarketing and annoying e-mail blasts, a simple handwritten note goes a long way. Consider getting some "thank you" cards printed that you can send to customers to express appreciation for their business. Customer appreci-

ation is at the heart of any good business. Send a card with a discount on one of your services, or team up with a local restaurant to give your customers a free appetizer —

it's free advertising for the restaurant, and it will give your clients a nice treat for choosing you. You may also want to get customized greeting cards for the holidays.



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Circle 121

8 Create a professional-looking Web site. There are many Web site "designers" out there. You should choose a company that actually employs designers. Ask for samples of sites they've developed. Looks are very important, as are load times. Many sites will list the design firm on the bottom of the home page. If you see one you like, try contacting that firm for your site. Also, remember to update your site for each season with tips and images.

9 Be active in the local business community. Networking is also part of the marketing game, and it's important to get to know local business leaders who are active in organizations such as the Lion's Club, Chamber of Commerce and other small business organizations. Along with being a

wonderful resource for jobs, you can also work the grapevine at these meetings to learn about local market conditions, new development in the community, and ideas for running your business more profitably.


10 Look at advertising as an investment in your business, not just an expense. Relatively few contractors advertise their companies beyond placing an ad in the Yellow Pages. While that's a good start, it should only be part of your advertising plan. Too many companies think of advertising as just another expense, like buying a new piece of equipment to replace something that has broken down. That's the wrong way to look at it. Advertising helps create demand for your product and can pay for itself many times over. Think about

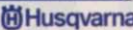
taking a small percentage of the profit you make on any job and putting it aside into an advertising and marketing fund.

You don't have to be a multi-million dollar company to take advantage of what marketing has to offer. The aforementioned marketing tips will help a company of any size grow and prosper. It takes an average of seven exposures for customers to remember your company's name, so try various methods to lead your company in the right direction.

— The author owns YourBiz Greetings, Overland Park, KS, and offers customized greeting cards and other marketing materials to small businesses. E-mail her at yourbizgreetings@kc.rr.com or visit her Web site at www.yourbizgreetings.com.

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Customer *sensitive* service

In a quest to increase revenues, you put on your sales hat and seek out new maintenance clients with vengeance. You call on a long list of potential clients and set up appointments. You arrive 20 minutes ahead of schedule and walk their sites with them. You prepare and present professional proposals. You do everything you can to convince them that you're different, that you're genuinely concerned about customer service.

Once your bid is accepted, you put a check mark in the "W" column and you're off to the next client. But too soon, many of the promises you made are beginning to fall by the wayside. The foreman you dedi-

cated to this job is rarely seen on site. Monthly site reports haven't been submitted. You're too busy to conduct monthly site inspections yourself, and sometimes it takes you two days to return telephone calls.

Stop! Grab the controls and start turning your organization around.

Whether you work on commercial or residential properties, your clients are looking for a contractor who will respond to all of their needs. Start being more proactive with your clients. Begin anticipating their needs before they do.

This isn't as hard as you think if you follow what I describe as QSRC&V, which stands for Quality, Service, Responsiveness, Communication and Value.

Implement QSRC&V at all levels of your organization — sales, estimating, of-

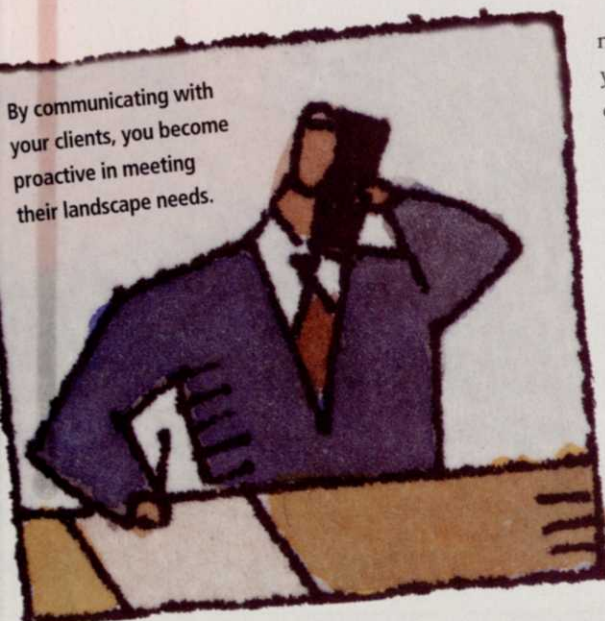
fice staff, production and shop personnel. It will elevate your organization and make your team a champion provider of customer sensitive service.

Q is for quality

Most people equate quality with the completion of a job according to the specifications. True enough, but other elements figure into the concept of quality as well. To understand them, remember another acronym, CARA — Consistency, Authority, Responsibility and Accountability. (See sidebar on page 49.)

S is for service

Crew performance in the field is the most obvious part of customer service, but there are other parts, including the manner in which a receptionist answers the phone, the style the accounting department uses when making a collection call, checking with clients to see how things are going, and keeping appointments that you've made.



Every company needs a client assurance policy that states the company's objective to customer service. This policy must be something that employees can and will implement — clear, concise and understandable by everyone on your team. Here are some items to include in your policy:

- ▶ Dedicated on-site management personnel
- ▶ Annual client survey
- ▶ Client seminars
- ▶ Return telephone calls the same day received
- ▶ Assign a specific contact person in the office to handle clients

Remember, it's easier and more cost-effective to service an existing client than it is to replace them or look for new prospects. Also, never forget that commercial property managers as well as residential clients talk among themselves about the contractors they use. If they don't like your service, others will hear about it. Track your renewal ratios — they'll tell you a lot.

R is for responsive

Is it enough just to provide acceptable services to clients? In today's competitive marketplace, probably not.

Today, customers expect contractors to be more proactive, to have policies and procedures in place, to not only perform contracted services reliably and on schedule but also educate them about other service opportunities.

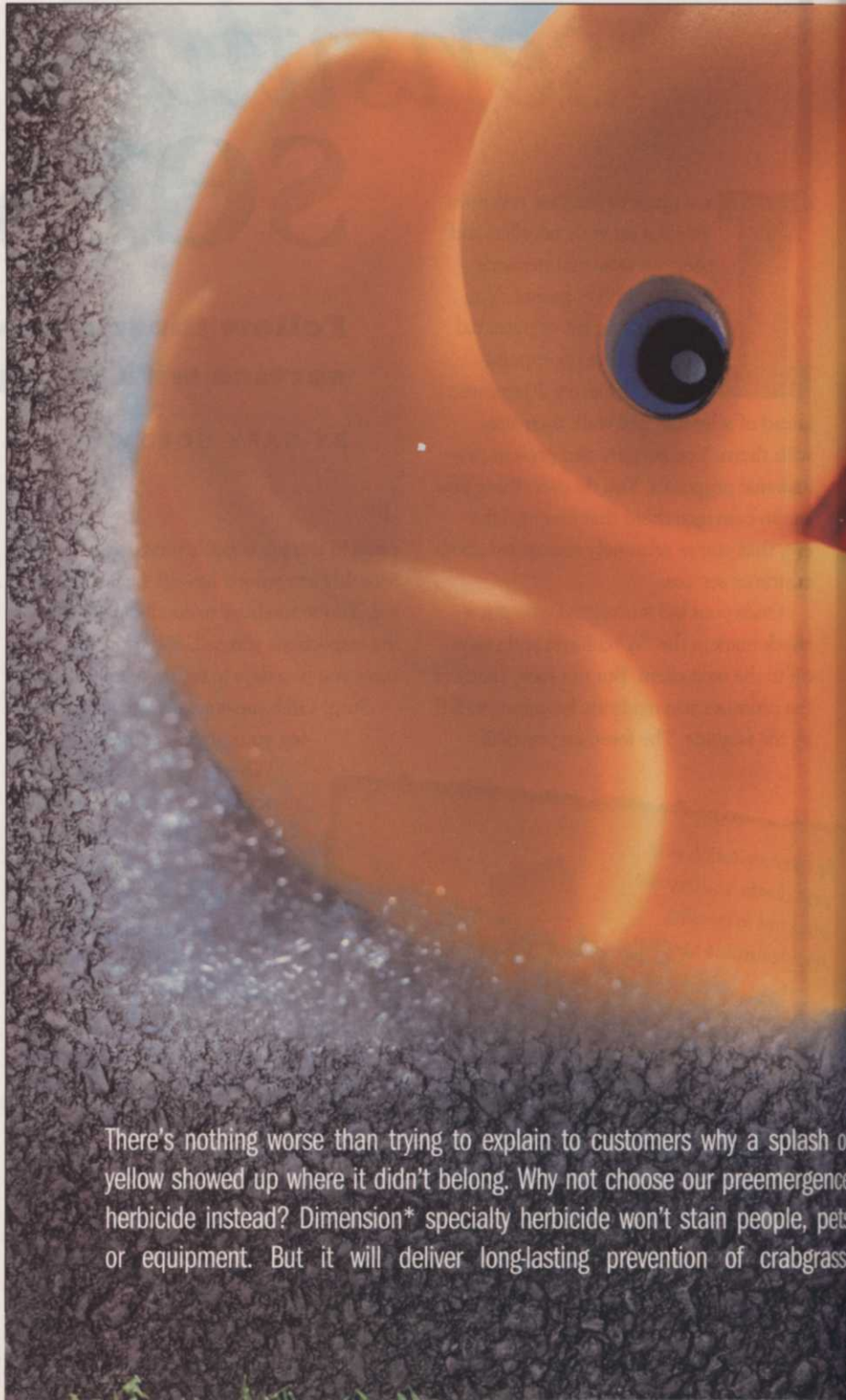
When you're hired to work on a property, your objective is to keep your team focused on the task at hand. However, you need to be able to point out to your clients other areas where you can help them.

If your company has a policy of reviewing properties on a monthly basis, that's great. These regular property reviews almost always generate more "good" in the form of extra work because they strengthen your image as a professional.

C is for communication

With e-mail and cell phones, there's no reason why contractors can't communicate regularly with clients. Surprisingly, one of the biggest complaints by homeowners and

property managers remains their inability to get in touch with their contractor — often the same person who, during negotiations, assured the client that they'd be accessible anytime day or night.



There's nothing worse than trying to explain to customers why a splash of yellow showed up where it didn't belong. Why not choose our preemergence herbicide instead? Dimension* specialty herbicide won't stain people, pets or equipment. But it will deliver long-lasting prevention of crabgrass

CARA about your clients

When you're ready to put the idea of "quality" into practice at your company, remember the acronym CARA, which stands for Consistency, Authority, Responsibility, and Accountability. Let's break it down:

► Follow consistent best practices. You can do this only after you develop and implement standard operating proce-

dures at all levels of your company.

► Give appropriate authority to team members to perform their tasks once they understand your consistent policies and procedures.

► Hold your staff responsible to carry out the policies and procedures of your company.

► Hold employees accountable for the success of your company and for providing the quality of service that clients demand.

— GG

Whether you're a one-man operation or you have several employees, how you communicate with your clients profoundly affects your company's success. Every company must have a policy about returning



**Some things
are supposed
to be yellow.**

**Your equipment isn't
one of them.**

Poa annua and several broadleaf weeds, including spurge and oxalis. All with an application window so wide, it even offers early postemergent crabgrass control.

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calls or other correspondence, preferably the same every day, if possible. You may not be able to answer a specific question or make a commitment when returning the call, but your prompt response gives clients confidence that you recognize their needs.

If you don't have a receptionist in your office, use voice mail on your office and cell phones and check it regularly. Don't let messages pile up because you'll be less likely to return them.

V is for value

Clients view value as getting what was paid for and, in many cases, a little bit more. That doesn't necessarily mean planting an extra tree or cutting the lawn three additional times. Often, "the little bit more" is an intangible benefit, perhaps an issue related to quality, service, responsiveness or prompt communication. These items don't receive a specific dollar value on the bid sheet, but they carry weight with clients.

Being customer service sensitive is a culture that permeates every level of an organization. Companies that adopt this concept have more dedicated and committed team members and achieve greater profits through client retention. **LM**

— *The author has over 20 years of experience in management in numerous industries, including landscaping and maintenance. He is a past Regional Operations Manager of TruGreen Landcare Corp. He can be reached at gmanaf@msn.com.*



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THE FOREST LAWN & GARDEN
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Show all the tasks you do when asking for extra funds.

Win at the budget game

Grounds managers must maintain properties that measure up not only to their own standards, but also to the standards imposed by their employers. Then, of course, there are the expectations of their real customers, the people that visit or use their site, whether it's a college campus or a community soccer complex.

In many cases, however, the funds available to grounds managers have been slashed, making it imperative that managers carefully put together their budgets.

Start at the beginning

Budgeting is never pleasant, but it's vital to survival, meaning continued gainful employment. Often, your destiny is determined by the budget you prepare. Don't deceive yourself — no matter the size of your department or the facilities you manage, you'll someday prepare a budget. It's the first step in determining what you'll be able to accomplish at your facility the coming year, the projects you can accomplish and the staff you can expect to have.

A step-by-step financial plan that gets the funds you'll need to provide your grounds services

BY GEORGE VAN HAASTEREN, JR. / CGM

Keep in mind that a budget is not written in stone; it's more of a well-reasoned guess of the resources you'll need. It's unreasonable to expect that you'll ever meet the demands of the budget exactly, but it will help guide your decisions. Take care when you put one together.

Described another way, a budget is a financial plan. It should predict the money that you'll need to maintain and make improvements to the grounds and other facilities under your care within a fiscal year. In a sense, it's a policy document that identifies, in dollars, what gets funded and how much you can spend. It's also a definition

of operational action, expressing where the resources are to be allocated, for example, for equipment, supplies, construction and likely more than a dozen other categories.

Capital planning

Operating budgets reflect expenditures used to operate and maintain facilities. They reflect expenditures that adjust the assets of the school, commercial campus or recreation department. Capital money is often raised through borrowing, bond issues or gifts. Items covered by capital budgets include:

- ▶ machinery that's depreciated,
- ▶ construction that's depreciated, and
- ▶ large expenses.

Examples of routine facility renewal projects that are often considered capital budget items are restoring beds around a building, renovating an athletic field, installing irrigation or any of your other sizable, non-routine projects.

Preparing a budget

You must be intimately familiar with your responsibilities as well as any new ones you're likely to get. Communicate regularly with your administrators, your managers and the coaches at your facility. Have them provide you with a list of daily, weekly and monthly schedules. List any ongoing maintenance or renewal programs. Projects such as five-year plans may be included. Scrutinize the following categories carefully:

Employees — Workers should be your greatest asset, but you must know personnel costs, including fringe costs. Look at each employee's base pay, including predicted overtime. Incorporate the costs of seasonal or part-time help, and include the costs of benefits as a percentage of labor.

Student seasonal help can reduce labor costs, providing breathing room in the "labor cost" column of your budget. It has the added benefit of introducing these students to the grounds profession.

Know your employees skills. Determine how much additional training is needed to improve the productivity of your employees. Your crew must be properly trained to carry out daily tasks safely and efficiently, especially now as departments are being downsized because of revenue shortfalls.

Equipment — Workloads are increasing, but the size of your staff probably isn't. Budget to acquire productive, efficient equipment. Evaluate the equipment you have and determine if you have a good match between equipment and staff. Consider the equipment's age. Is it reliable or is there a lot of downtime? Do the math. Would it be more cost effective to purchase, lease or rent?

Facilities and responsibilities — Look at the many different areas you maintain and manage. These may include common areas, athletic fields, annual beds and parking lots. Know the square footage or acreage. Maintain a log of the amount of resources and, in particular, labor man-hours and materials required to keep them at the level that's expected.

Special programs — During the course of your fiscal year, you'll have to give special attention to certain areas under your care. These could be athletic fields, or where Parents' Day or graduation ceremonies are going to be held on your campus. Special events will call for additional manpower and expense, so don't overlook them.

Keep in mind that all budgets are incremental. Usually, you will receive what you received the previous year, plus or minus adjustments for program changes (plus or minus a percentage). In other words, know your present budget inside and out.

- ▶ Are you meeting expectations on your expenditures?
- ▶ Is department overtime too high because of added events or weather?

- ▶ Are there programs or lines in your budget that need adjustment?

Work on the areas you know need improvement. Learn as much as you can

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about the type of budget your administrators expect to see. Are you in a situation where you have to explain your department operations, or are they only inter-

ested in numbers? Find out the budget guidelines.

If you know that spending cannot grow more than a certain percentage in a year,

then requesting more funds may be unwise. If you absolutely have to have the extra money, suggest to those participating in the budgeting process that they take a look at the facilities under your care. Hopefully, they'll begin to see the many tasks that your department must accomplish, and what more it could do with better funding.

Add up what you know along with your existing costs and the level of services you provide along with the level of services you offer with those funds.

Add or subtract the items you know will change (retirements, rate change, staff changes). If you expect program changes, estimate the impact, then add or subtract. Next, consider the need for changes in staff or materials, depending on program changes. Also, know the unit costs for routine tasks.

Defend your budget

Finally, prepare to defend your budget. You're the person responsible for the appearance, safety and functionality of the grounds under your department's umbrella. You know more about your job than anyone else, and you should be able to explain the reasons why you've included certain expenditures in the budget. They may be for aesthetic reasons, or they may be for safety or security. Provide documentation if you can; it helps.

You can also build your case by text writing, spreadsheets, keeping daily logs and incorporating either pictures or videos into your budget presentation.

The best justification for expenditures is high performance, but usually that's not enough. To be a successful grounds manager, you have to know how to put together a budget, too. **LM**

— The author is Director of Grounds Operations for Dwight-Englewood School, Englewood, NJ, and a former President of the Professional Grounds Management Society (www.pgms.org).

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Silverado technology is tough technology, designed to bring you a more dependable, longer-lasting truck. That's why Silverado was the first full-size pickup ever built with a hydroformed steel front frame* – an innovation that makes our frame exceptionally tough, strong and durable.

And now, specific Silverado models are available with QUADRASTEER four-wheel steering,† making Silverado with QUADRASTEER the most maneuverable full-size pickup you can get.‡ At highway speeds, the front and rear wheels turn in the same direction for added stability when passing or changing lanes while trailering.

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The broad and powerful lineup of engines available in a Silverado is something CAR AND DRIVER always applauds, and who are we to argue? Silverado has six legendary Vortec™ gas engines to choose from. The Vortec 8100 Big Block V8†† cranks out a full 340 horses while the mighty Duramax™ Diesel††† generates 300 horses and 520 lb.-ft. of torque to handle the biggest jobs.

BROAD RANGE OF MODELS.

Silverado isn't just one truck. It's a whole lineup of trucks that are precision-engineered and built to our high quality standards. Whether your Silverado is light-duty, heavy-duty, long box, short box, regular cab, extended cab, crew cab, two-wheel drive or 4x4, it can help you get the job done, and get it done right.

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Property at a glance

Location: Atlanta, GA

Staff: Post Landscape

Category: Condominium, Apartment Complex or Planned Community

Total budget: \$80,500

Year site built: 1998

Acres of turf: 1

Acres of woody ornamentals: 3

Acres of display beds: 1

Total paved area: 4 acres

Total man-hours/week: 48

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Parking decks
- ▶ 100% organics (trees, shrubs, beds)
- ▶ Eight theme gardens

Project checklist

Completed in last two years:

- ▶ Dry stream beds
- ▶ Turf converted to ground covers
- ▶ Low volume irrigation

On the job

- ▶ 3 full-time staff, 1 seasonal employee, 3 licensed pesticide applicators

Post Gardens

2002 PGMS Grand Award Winner for Condominium, Apartment Complex or Planned Community

Organic is the word at Post Gardens, a nine-acre apartment community set in the upscale neighborhood of Lenox Park in the the community of Buckhead. Post Landscape uses a 100% organic fertility program for trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials due to the high use environment and to be environmentally sensitive.

"Another reason we do this is for the residents who have pets," says Property Horticulture Supervisor Kevin Hostetler, a 15-year grounds veteran.

Hostetler graduated from the University of Georgia with a horticulture degree and has worked for Post Properties ever since. He's a Certified Nursery Technician and is working on becoming a certified landscape professional. And he finds nothing wrong with taking his job home with him — he loves to work in his own yard, provided he finds the time to do it.

He and his crew have their hands full at Post Gardens, which features



University of Georgia grad Kevin Hostetler and crew maintain eight gardens.

eight theme gardens that are each their own "micro" environment

with unique needs for sun, shade, soil structures, water management, proper pruning, IPM, fertility and horticulture. The irrigation system was recently upgraded in the theme gardens, allowing the crew to become even more "water savvy" and better meet each garden's individual requirements.

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 2003 winners will be named at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. For more information on the 2002 Awards, contact PGMS at:

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



An organic program keeps Post Gardens' property bright and blooming.



The one acre of turf, one acre of display beds and three acres of woody ornamentals require a total of 48 man-hours per week.



Contractor favorites

Contractors expect a lot from their trucks. They want accessibility, good gas mileage and proven brands they can rely on — all for a fair price.

However, there's always a new model that comes along that makes their "far-out" trucks seem "far gone." We wanted to know what features matter most when it comes to buying a truck, so we grilled three landscape contractors mercilessly on the topic. Here's what they had to say:

HighGrove Partners



Greg Nelson

Name: Greg Nelson
Title: Fleet Manager
Location: Smyrna, GA
2002 gross revenue: \$15.3 million
Business mix: 80% commercial, 20% residential

Employees: 200 year-round/full-time and 30 seasonal/part-time. There are 19 three-person crews (strictly maintenance) and two floriculture crews in Atlanta.

Company profile: In business since 1991, the company's services are divided as follows — 55% landscape maintenance; 35% landscape design/build; 7% irrigation installation/maintenance; 2% chemical lawn care/fertilization; and 1% snow removal.

Trucks: "We have a total of 107 vehicles, in-

cluding three utility work vehicles, eight dump trucks of various sizes, 42 pickup trucks, 10 SUVs, four irrigation install and repair trucks, 23 open ramp trucks, eight van body ramp trucks, three Turf Care spray trucks, and one mechanic service truck."

Features: "All of our vehicles are built to do the intended job. Having lockable storage for the small equipment is our 'must-have' feature. For management vehicles, such as 1/2-ton and 3/4-ton trucks, driver comfort features is the must-have. Most of these are now ordered as base-extended cab units with seating and stereo upgrades. For upper management and sales vehicles, four-door seating is a must-have."

Finance methods: "We have bought and leased, but we're currently acquiring all new vehicles with open-end leases. About half are owned and half are leased. Cost considerations would be truck specific. The sky

isn't the limit when building a truck, and we won't go bare bones either. Our trucks are more middle-of-the-road priced. The truck has got to fit the job requirements, it must be efficient to work out of and it must present a good image."

Dream truck: "A Kenworth SUV or a truck that will never require a brake job. But realistically, I build my dream truck every time we spec out a new ramp truck, SUV or pickup."

R.A.R. Landscaping Co.



Allan Davis

Name: Allan Davis
CLP, CSP
Title: Executive Vice President
Location: Baltimore, MD
2002 gross revenue: \$5.4 million

Business mix: 100% commercial

Employees: "R.A.R. Landscaping has 120 employees. We have a full-time Director of Human Resources, a full-time sales staff managed by a Director of Sales, Fleet Manager, and various support administrative staff. We have an executive management team of four people — President, Executive Vice President, Controller, and Vice President. Crew sizes range from two to five people. We believe that small crews are the most efficient. We handle all size properties."

Company profile: "R.A.R. Landscaping Co. has been in business for over 25 years, servicing the Baltimore metropolitan area. We have five service lines: grounds management, landscape design and installation, snow and ice management, tree care, and holiday decorating. We see grounds management as our core service and add services around it that offer value to our core client base. We have a commercial client base and believe in building lasting relationships."

Trucks: "Sales and field managers use small pickups, either Ford Rangers or Toyota Tacomas. We're looking for accessibility, good gas mileage and the ability to occasionally transport something small. Our tree care division uses various specialty vehicles, such as bucket/chipper trucks, spray rigs and regular chipper trucks. Any landscaping or landscape maintenance is handled with Ford F700 and F800 trucks with 14-foot dump bodies on them. We have several that have crew cabs to accommodate larger crews. These trucks have cab protectors and side boxes for storage. They have racks on the sides for handled tools. They also have rear swing doors, and we have custom-installed ramps on the rear. Many of our crews have Ford F350 trucks with either pickup beds or eight-foot dump beds on them. These are versatile and can be used by mowing crews, cleanup crews and install crews."

Favorites: "The vehicles I'm most proud of are in our van fleet. Several years ago, we began purchasing off-rental vans from Ryder. These vans are three to four years old and have anywhere from 90,000 to 130,000 miles each. We pay between \$9,000 and \$12,000 for them. We spend an additional few thousand dollars to have them painted red and have our logos emblazoned across them. They're workhorses that we use for everything, including mowing, installation, flower plantings, snow removal and even for repairs in the field. We have racking inside for equipment, and ramps that we built to load them with equipment."

Finance method: "We always purchase, not lease, vehicles, and most of the time take the lump sum discounts the manufacturer is offering and arrange for financing through our banks. We try to use the same dealerships and negotiate the best prices we can. We also are on a fleet discount program through Ford. We also occasionally purchase used vehicles, as in the vans, but also for our other operations."

Dream truck: "My dream truck would be one that never needs to sit in my lot. The vans come close, because they can be used for so many different jobs. Any vehicle that can be used for multiple functions and put in the field no matter what season is the best."

Dickerson Landscaping



William Dickerson

Name: William Dickerson

Title: President

Location: Tallahassee, FL

2002 gross revenue: \$700,000

Business mix: 60% residential, 40% commercial

Employees: The number averages around 13 in winter and 17 in summer. Although the company prefers teams of two employees, crew sizes can range between two and five employees depending on the size of the project.

Company profile: "Dickerson Landscaping has been serving Tallahassee's landscaping and outdoor maintenance needs for years. We started in 1987 as Dickerson Enterprises, a lawn maintenance company. In 1993, we changed our name to Dickerson Landscaping to encompass the real focus of our company. We now offer an extensive venue of products and services including landscape design and installation, landscape maintenance, and irrigation repair and installation."

Trucks: "We've made a few changes with our truck fleet. We had Chevy trucks, but we dropped them and went with Fords and Toyotas. I like Toyotas for their longevity, but they aren't the most suited for this industry, so Fords have been winning out. Our fleet breakdown is as follows — three Ford 150s (2001, 2002), two 1999 Ford 350s, one 1997 Ford 477 Super Duty, two 1998 Toyota T-100s and two 2002 Toyota Tundras."

Favorite features: "I would have to say with Ford is the diversity. You can get so many bed designs. The Toyotas you can put through anything and they still go."

Financing methods: "We buy new. The reason for that is that we get better prices and warranties. When we're looking for a new truck, we write down what it is we want, then fax it out to all the dealers in the state of Florida and south Georgia. We then sit back and wait for the bids to come in."

Dream truck: "Toyota is my favorite, but we're going to be looking at some of the new hybrids coming out just for lawn maintenance like the Super Lawn Trucks."

Power, versatility, comfort

Yesterday's options are today's standard features on many model year 2003 and 2004 trucks

BY VICKY POULSEN

Whether it's a Ford F-150 or a heavy-duty Dodge Ram, we've found that many truck manufacturers have packed their 2003

and 2004 lines with Herculean engine and hauling power, comfortable, spacious seating, greater handling capabilities and more standard features that were once optional. We've picked the hottest trucks — the best of the best — to make this year's list. Which one do you like?

Chevrolet-GMC

2004 Canyon

Best features:

► Two in-line engines based on the Vortec 4.2-liter in-line six-cylinder engine. The standard engine, the 2.8-liter Vortec in-line four-cylinder, delivers 175 hp and 185 lbs.-ft. of torque. The optional 3.5-liter Vortec in-line five-cylinder delivers 220 hp and 225 lbs.-ft. of torque

► Five-speed manual transmission, a transfer case for four-wheel-drive models, and the four-speed Hydra-Matic 4L60-E automatic transmission

2003 Silverado (available in 3/4- and one-ton pickups, including 3/4-ton 2500HD and one-ton 3500 Series regular cabs, four-door extended cabs, crew cabs and chassis cabs)



GMC's 2003 Silverado with four-door extended cab.

Best features:

► Equipped with a Vortec 6000 6.0L V8 with hardened, upgraded valves and seats

► Special versions with reduced Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) (8,500 lbs.) and 9,200-lb. GVWR models are available

► Available with gas or diesel engines — Duramax 6600 6.6L diesel V8 delivers 300 hp at 3,100 rpm and 520 lbs.-ft. (705

Nm) of torque at 1,800 rpm; an optional Vortec 8100 8.1L V8 gas engine has 340 hp at 4,200 rpm and 455 lbs.-ft. (617 Nm) of torque at 3,200 rpm

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continued on page 62

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continued from page 60

► A handling and trailering package standard for HD pickups

2003 GMC TopKick C4500 and C5500 series trucks

Best features:

- GVWR of 16,000 lbs. for C4500; 18,000 to 19,500 lb. GVWRs available in the C5500
- Allows turning diameters as low as 35.3 ft.
- Greater maneuverability and visibility
- Advanced chassis and braking system

Isuzu

2004 NQR

Best features:



GMC's 2003 TopKick offers better visibility.

- GVWR of 17,950 lbs. and body/payload range from 11,733 to 11,965 lbs.
- Body lengths range from 12 to 20 ft. with a choice of four different wheelbase lengths
- A straight channel, ladder-type frame with a section modulus of 7.20 cu. in. and a Resistance Bending Moment (RBM) of 316,800 lbs. for those demanding heavier body applications

- Equipped with front and rear semi-elliptical, multi-leaf springs and shock absorbers
- A front stabilizer bar contributes to greater handling and steering capabilities
- Equipped with ABS
- 4.75-liter, 4HE1-TC, four-cylinder diesel engine
- It incorporates an overhead cam engine design and direct fuel injection. This 4HE1-TC is rated at 175 gross hp at 2,700 rpm and 347 lbs.-ft. gross torque at 2,000 rpm
- A choice of transmissions

2004 low cab-forward crew cab (NPR-HD and NQR)

Best features:

- Seats a crew of seven people comfortably — three across in the front and four abreast in the back
- Available in two wheelbase configurations — a 150-in. wheelbase accommodates 12-ft. bodies, and a 176-in. wheelbase handles 16-ft. bodies
- The crew cab's diesel engine, coupled with a four-speed overdrive automatic transmission, delivers 175 hp at 2,700 rpm
- Visibility is enhanced with an oversized panoramic-view windshield
- The NPR-HD crew cab is rated at 14,500 lbs. GVWR. The NQR is rated at 17,950 lbs. GVWR
- NPR-HD crew cab features 4,500-lb. GVWR; 150- and 176-in. wheelbases; accommodates 12-ft. bodies
- NQR crew cab features 17,950-lb. GVWR; 150- and 176-in. wheelbases; accommodates 16-ft. bodies

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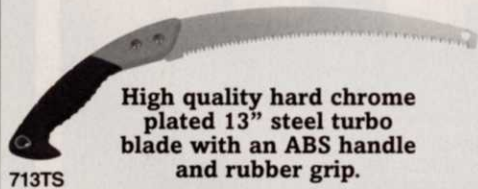


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Circle 127

continued on page 65

We don't want no stinking weeds!

We hear you.

We've got a solution for all your problems.

**CHASER
ULTRA**
THREE-WAY HERBICIDE

CHASER
HERBICIDE

CHASER 2
AMINE HERBICIDE

KLEENUP PRO
GRASS AND WEED KILLER

CHASER ULTRA is three way combination of MCPA, Clopyralid and 2,4-DP, which is aimed at providing effective control in both cool and warm seasons. It is an excellent choice for broadleaf weed control and has demonstrated exceptional control on white clover, dandelion and plantain.

CHASER is the original ester formulation of 2,4-D and triclopyr that controls most broadleaf weeds, including hard-to-kill weeds that other comparable chemistries do not control. It has shown excellent turf safety and mixes well with most pesticides and fertilizers.

CHASER 2 has all the power of Chaser with the safety of a warm weather amine formulation. It can be used on ornamental turf such as lawns, golf courses (fairways, aprons, tees and roughs), parks, highways, cemeteries and similar non-crop areas; and sod farms.

KLEENUP PRO is the easy-to-use and proven 41% glyphosate solution for keeping landscaped areas clear of weeds and unwanted grasses and for spot controlling weeds in hard to reach places. The long-lasting systemic control prevents regrowth and has virtually no residual activity.

For more information, contact your local UHS representative

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Circle No. 128



United
Horticultural Supply



Get In. Hang On.



No matter what you're spraying, these adjuvants will get you where you need to be.

The basic role of an adjuvant is one of two tracks, to either help chemicals penetrate into the plant or to adhere to the leaf surface.

If your goal is systemic action, no other non-ionic surfactant or penetrant product is superior to **LI-700** and **Liberate**.

If you desire to enhance the effectiveness of contact products, look no further than **Tactic**.

All of these high-performance, premium adjuvants have been tested to ensure plant safety and used effectively around the world.

LI-700

- Maximizes penetration through waxy layer of foliage while maintaining integrity of the plant's protective system
- Acidifying feature reduces pH of spray solutions
- Unique chemistry provides excellent drift control
- Allows more uniform coverage and even spreading

LIBERATE

- Same penetrating and low-phytotoxicity benefits of LI-700
- pH neutral with a "CAUTION" label for maximum safety
- Low-odor formulation also provides superior drift control

TACTIC

- High quality sticking agent maximizes residual activity
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- Resists wash-off by dew, rain or irrigation

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Circle No. 129



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Horticultural Supply.

Dodge's 2003 Dakota features a choice of two Magnum V-8 engines.



continued from page 62

2004 Class 6-7 F-Series commercial trucks

Best features:

- ▶ Class 6 FSR, Class 6 to 7 FTR and Class 7 FVR are powered by an Isuzu 6HK1-TC diesel engine in two horsepower configurations
- ▶ The 7.8-liter overhead cam engine is turbocharged, intercooled and equipped with electronic fuel injection
- ▶ Installed in the FSR and FTR, the six-cylinder diesel develops 200 hp at 2,400 rpm and 441 lbs.-ft. gross torque at 1,500 rpm. The version used in the higher payload FVR diesel engine develops 230 hp at 2,400 rpm and 506 lbs.-ft. gross torque at 1,500 rpm
- ▶ All F-Series models include as standard an Isuzu MLD6Q six-speed manual overdrive transmission, synchronized in gears two through six. The transmission has a standard PTO opening. An Allison AT545 four-speed automatic transmission is available as an option in the FSR and FTR

Dodge

2003 Dakota

Best features:

- ▶ Choice of two Magnum V-8 engines
- ▶ Dakota Quad Cab offers six-passenger seating
- ▶ New 5-45RFE five-speed automatic transmission with 4.7-liter engine provides a second overdrive ratio
- ▶ Four-wheel disc brakes with rear-wheel anti-lock (RWAL) are now standard on

4WD models and 2WD models

- ▶ 5,350 lbs. GVWR and over

2003 heavy duty Ram 2500/3500

Best features:

- ▶ The high output Cummins Turbo Diesel engine is available in the 2500/3500 segment, producing 305 hp at 2,900 rpm and 555 lbs.-ft. of torque at 1,400 rpm
- ▶ Delivers a towing capability of 23,000 lbs. (GCWR)
- ▶ Comes with a 3500 single rear wheel option

Ford

2004 F-150

Best features:

- ▶ Its fully boxed frame is about nine times stiffer torsionally than its predecessor
- ▶ A maximum tow rating of 9,500 lbs. and maximum payload capacity of 2,900 lbs.
- ▶ Regular Cab and SuperCab models have a passenger compartment that is six in. longer, providing more space inside for occupants and their gear
- ▶ A 5.4-liter, 3-valve Triton V-8 engine produces 300 peak hp
- ▶ 8-ft., 6-1/2-ft., and 5-1/2-ft. box lengths offered

2004 F-250/F-350 series super duty

Best features:

- ▶ A 32-valve 6.0-liter Power Stroke V-8 diesel engine and five-speed TorqShift automatic transmission
- ▶ A newly designed five-speed gearbox

and electronic control system

- ▶ Transmission's tow-haul mode helps improve shift control under demanding operating conditions



Hino

FB medium-duty Class 5 truck

Best features:

- ▶ An 11,000-lb. body and payload capacity
- ▶ It can be spec'd as a flatbed, with stake beds or with a small dump body
- ▶ Powered by a turbo intercooled four-valve overhead cam engine and driven through a five-speed direct drive transmission or optional four-speed automatic
- ▶ Its cabover design makes driving in tight residential areas easy
- ▶ Cab features an enlarged interior with room for three people
- ▶ Six-way adjustable air-ride driver's seat with improved support on a chassis that's supported by long, taper-leaf springs

Mitsubishi Fuso

2003 FG four-wheel drive cabover

Best features:

- ▶ 145-hp, intercooled, turbocharged diesel engine, five-speed manual transmission and optional, limited slip differential
- ▶ Available in Class 3 (12,000 GVWR) and Class 4 (14,050 GVWR)
- ▶ Advanced diesel engines with either

Mitsubishi's 2003 FG 4-wheel drive cabover has a 145-hp engine.



manual or automatic transmissions
 ▶ Three-person cab with side door crush bars and a collapsible steering wheel for added safety

Toyota

2003 Tacoma

Best features:

- ▶ Standard four-wheel anti-lock brake system (ABS)
- ▶ 17 model configurations, based on three cab types — standard, extended Xtracab with rear jump seats and the four-door Double Cab. The Tacoma standard-cab and Xtracab models feature a 74.5-in.-long bed. The Double Cab comes with a bed length of 61.5 in.
- ▶ A 142-hp, 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine with 160 lbs.-ft. of torque powers the 4X2 standard cab and features a 1,480-lb. payload capacity
- ▶ PreRunner and 4X4 models are available with two engines, a 150-hp 2.7-liter DOHC four-cylinder that produces 177 lbs.-ft. of torque and a DOHC 190-hp 3.4-liter V6 that puts out 220 lbs.-ft. of torque
- ▶ The V6-powered Tacoma models can tow up to 5,000 lbs.; four-cylinder models tow up to 3,500 lbs.

2003 Tundra StepSide Access Cab

Best features:

- ▶ Available in V8 Access Cab two-wheel drive and four-wheel drive models in SR5 and Limited grades
- ▶ Available in 15 configurations comprising two cab styles (Regular and Access Cab), two engines (3.4-liter V6 and 4.7-liter i-Force V8), two- and four-wheel drive, two bed lengths (98 in. for regular cab model, 75 in. for Access Cab models) and three model grades (Base, SR5 and Limited)
- ▶ Powered by the 4.7-liter i-Force V8, which produces 240 hp at 315 lbs.-ft. of torque
- ▶ A 3.4-liter DOHC V6 engine is standard in five of the Tundra models and produces 190 hp and 220 lbs.-ft. of peak torque. The V6 engine comes standard with a five-speed manual transmission
- ▶ Offers up to a 1,875-lb. payload capacity (V8 2WD Access Cab SR5) and up to 7,200 lbs. of towing capacity (V8 4x4 regular cab)
- ▶ All V8 models offer a new towing package which includes a Class IV tow hitch

Cub Cadet

Series 8000 utility tractors

Best features:

- ▶ Power ranging from 40 to 45 hp
- ▶ Shuttle shift transmissions allow for easy, efficient operation and increased maneuverability under any condition

- ▶ Cast-iron engine
- ▶ Standard four-wheel drive operation
- ▶ Optional attachments include loader, backhoe and standard Category I rear mount attachments, which result in a convenient multi-task tractor whether you're pulling, pushing or clearing

Series 7000 utility tractors

Best features:

- ▶ 20 to 36 hp and a choice between gasoline or diesel engines
- ▶ Hydrostatic transmission allows for easy, efficient operation and increased maneuverability under any condition



- ▶ Two- or four-wheel-drive operation keeps tractors from turfing in two-wheel drive and provides maximum traction to operate with four-wheel drive in rough terrain

John Deere

ProGator utility vehicle

Best features:

- ▶ Available in 23.5-hp diesel and 26-hp gas versions
- ▶ Five-speed, fully-synchronized transmission
- ▶ One-piece axle supporting the rear wheels, and dual leaf spring suspension

continued on page 68





ABSOLUTELY HAMMERS MITES.



Pampers Everything Else.

No miticide performs as well as Floramite® against key mite pests in all life stages. It pounds tough pests like two-spotted and spruce spider mites with hard-hitting contact action. Then, it gives long residual control, up to 28 days, to get those late hatches.

Floramite features a unique mode of action and highly selective activity so it's easy on predacious mites and beneficial insects. And its low toxicity means it's easy to work with and safe for the environment.

If you want to drop the hammer on mites, while you pamper everything else, get the economical, user-friendly control of Floramite.

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continued from page 66
instead of coils

- ▶ Hydrostatic steering provides for precision control and a tight turning radius of only 33 in.
- ▶ A 2,650-lb. load capacity

E-Z-GO Textron

Workhorse LX line

Best features:

- ▶ Like the standard Workhorses, the LX models have differential scuff guards, tubular front bumpers, bed liners, horns and fuel gauges or charge meters
- ▶ The LX line offers a 36-volt high-efficiency electric motor, 9-hp twin-cylinder, overhead cam gasoline engine and a 11-hp



twin-cylinder, overhead cam gasoline engine

Leer Inc.

700 Series Tonneau cover

Best features:

- ▶ Fiberglass construction produces a snug-

fitting, tight-sealing lid over the entire cargo space

- ▶ Spring-assisted gas struts make opening and closing the lid easy
- ▶ Entire installation and mounting of the 700 Tonneau engineered without drilling or cutting the pickup bed steel, minimizing any risk of cosmetic damage or rust
- ▶ Instead of a flat surface with no character, the 700 Series features curves and shapes that will improve the pickup truck's overall appearance

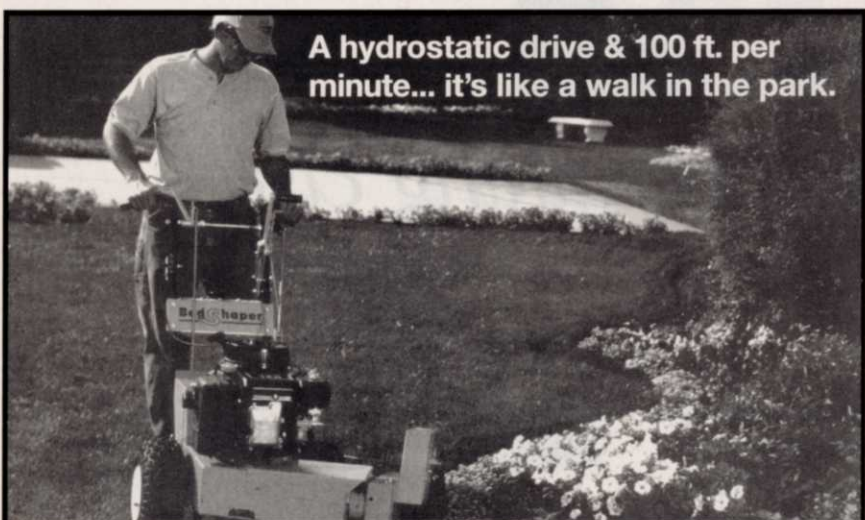


Omaha Standard

Landscaper Body

Best features:

- ▶ 10-gauge sides (available in 40- and 52-in. heights) and rear gate
- ▶ The 48-in. cargo door on the curb side front swings open to allow for loading of palletted materials, balled trees, shrubs and bagged materials
- ▶ Triple acting 16-in. tailgate folds down flat to extend platform length for dumping or spreading materials, and drops 280-degrees for rear loading



A hydrostatic drive & 100 ft. per minute... it's like a walk in the park.

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Coates Landscape Supply	208-656-0600	MT, ID, UT, Western WY
Secrist Distributing	800-834-0572	CO, East WY

Circle 131



Polaris

Professional Series UTV 1500 2x4

Best features:

- ▶ 18-hp V-twin air-cooled engine, heavy duty transmission and lowering gear
- ▶ Auto tranny with low, super-low, reverse
- ▶ Can carry a payload of up to 1,250 lbs. and tow 1,000 lbs.
- ▶ Upfront, independent MacPherson strut suspension with 4.6 in. of travel
- ▶ Spacious seating for three

Reading

Landscape Body

Best features:

- ▶ Side access door (curbside) features reinforced, 14-gauge, two-sided, A-60 galvanized steel; heavy duty, full opening door, two heavy duty hinges on door, draw latch holds with a 51-in. clear door opening width



- ▶ Rear cargo doors are 14-gauge, two-sided, A-60 galvanized

steel, perforated and reinforced — two heavy-duty hinges on each door

- ▶ Four-way double hinged lower tailgate, fully welded and reinforced, converts easily to all purpose platform or flat dump and allows for manual metering of material

Super Lawn Trucks

Super Lawn Truck Equipment Storage & Transportation System

Best features:

- ▶ Eliminates the need for trailers
- ▶ Equipped with a hydraulically operated ramp that allows large commercial mowers to drive right into the back of the truck

- ▶ Large box-type van is equipped with a hand and power tool storage system
- ▶ Fuel transport tanks carry enough fuel for the whole week



Renovation Equipment Designed with You in Mind.

TURNAER 26

\$3,245.00
\$170/mo



A revolution in aeration technology!
Finally, the aerator you've always wanted.

- Aerate a lawn like you mow it
- Less work on you and your staff's backs
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- 30% more productive than conventional aerators

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Cutting sod has never been so easy.
The KisCutter gets the job done—faster!

- Lightweight, with folding handles make it easy to load and unload
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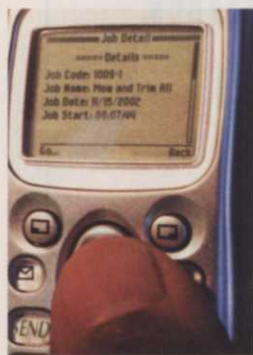
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Circle 134

Stay in touch

Stay connected

CLIP Connect from Sensible Software, Inc. offers real-time information exchange between the office and the job site, and simplifies business management to allow for efficient task supervision away from the office. It uses Web access platform technology to keep office and field personnel connected. Using a Web-enabled



cell phone, field personnel can update the CLIP Connect Web portal with job information.

For more information, contact Sensible Software, Inc. at 800/635-8485 or www.clip.com / circle no. 291

Small talk

Vertex Standard's VX-6000 Mobile Series is available in lowband, VHF and UHF models. The VX-6000 meets or exceeds Mil Std 810 C/D/E standards for dust, humidity, pressure, salt, fog, shock, solar radiation, temperature and vibration. It offers an advanced 120W (lowband), 110W (VHF) and 100W (UHF) RF



power output (selectable by channel) to get the user's message through under the most demanding of operating conditions.

For more information contact Vertex Standard at 800/283-7839 or www.vxstdusa.com / circle no. 292

Be the boss

Fleetboss's The Boss fleet management systems are based on Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology. These systems combine location tracking and vehicle event data with proprietary

EFFECTIVE

That's One Way to Describe Our Industrial Aerators.

Effective circulation is critical to water quality management. Weeds and algae can surface at any time and are indications of troubled waters. Otterbine's Industrial Aerators and Aerating Fountains are designed to work in even the most difficult environments, leaving your waterways clean and beautiful.

For over 50 years, Otterbine has been manufacturing aeration systems designed to improve pond and lake circulation.

The complete Otterbine product line includes:

- Aerating Fountains
- Industrial Surface and Sub Surface Aerators
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- Fountain Glo™ Underwater Lighting
- Bioaugmentation and Lake Dye



For a pond and lake management CD-ROM, free site evaluation or Otterbine product information, call **1-800-AER8TER, 610-965-6018** or visit www.otterbine.com.
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software that monitors and measures drivers' efficiency and productivity.

They also feature on-demand automatic vehicle location (AVL) for real-time reporting of vehicle stops and locations, and provide tracking and routing data.

For more information contact 877/265-9559 or www.fleetboss.com / circle no. 293

What's the frequency?

Motorola Spirit XTN Series radios are available in both one-watt and two-watt models with one-channel operation and user-selectable frequencies (56 UHF and 27 VHF). Available in VHF radios for use in and around wooden structures and forested areas or the UHF models for use in and around concrete/steel buildings and structures. Each Spirit XTN-Series radio comes with coded squelch and digital coded squelch.

For more information contact Forestry Suppliers at 800/360-7788 or www.forestry-suppliers.com / circle no. 294

Something in the air

Airput Mobilizing Operations' Air Hours eliminates paper timesheets for field personnel in construction and other service-related industries. Exchange information between any Nextel Internet-ready phone and AirHours' Web site (www.airhours.com) using Nextel On-line wireless Internet service. Collect timesheet and project information around the clock.

For more information contact AirHours at 610/635-1500 or www.airput.com / circle no. 295

Communicate great

The Garmin Rino 110 combines the navigational capabilities of a full-featured, WAAS-enabled, 12-channel parallel GPS receiver with the

reliable communication power of a 22-channel FRS/GMRS radio. This combination allows for peer-to-peer position reporting using the FRS spectrum to transmit your exact location to an-

other Rino 120 within a two-mile radius.

For more information contact Forestry Suppliers at 800/360-7788 or www.forestry-suppliers.com / circle no. 296



The thing practically crawls up walls.

This may very well be the most versatile tractor line on the globe. To be versatile, you've got to do two things first: be agile and be userfriendly. Lots of old guard tractors are so big and clunky that they're hard to maneuver. Yes, they're durable, but difficult. Options can cost you.

Carraro tractors offer a unique array of ergonomic and operational functions built in, and are engineered for simplicity, comfort and increased return on investment.

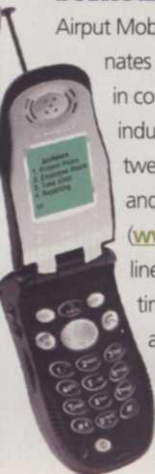
A patented system called "Actio" in all Carraro tractors lets the chassis articulate to all terrain types and each wheel independently grips the ground for superior balance and stability. The center of gravity is so low that it

virtually hugs the turf. Each wheel being the same size means you get equal ground pressure on all 4 wheels, all the time.

Other neat features include a completely reversible seat and control system that changes direction in seconds, loads of attachments that mount front, back and even on top, as well as powerful, yet fuel minimizing, engines that help keep operations costs down.

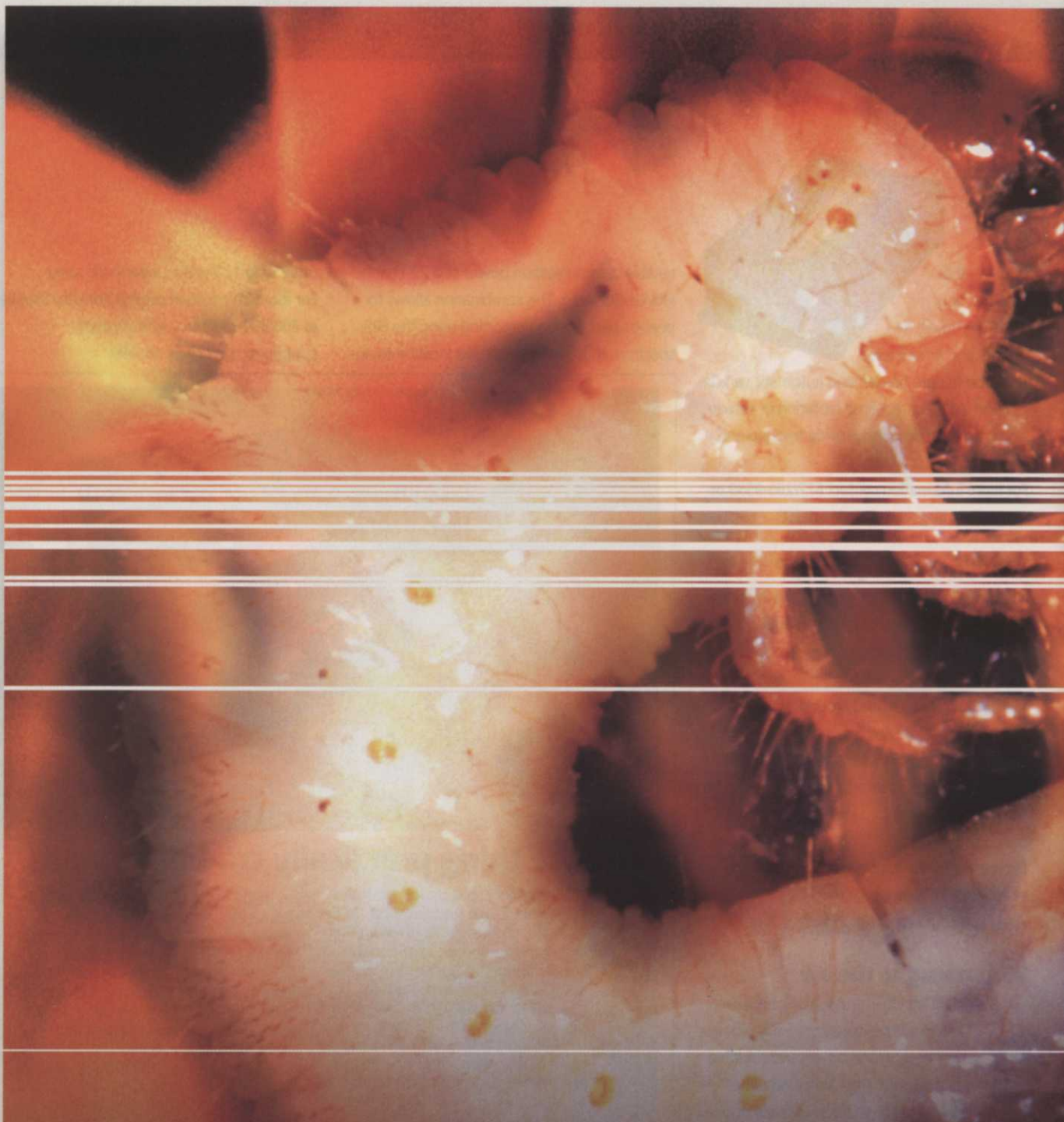
Recently, Carraro was honored in the "Best of Specialized" category in the international Tractor of the Year competition. So you know quality and engineering are high priorities at Carraro as well as value pricing.

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Circle 133



RATED
PG-2.0 Pounding grubs with 2.0 pounds
per acre of a.i. for all grub species.

DOW AGROSCIENCES AND MACH 2 PRESENT A GRUBGONE PRODUCTION
KEITH VAN MOWER JIMMY TURF DARRIN "APPLY PRIOR TO SECOND" INSTAR

Game over, grubs. MACH 2* specialty insecticide is *the* proven season-long force against grubs – not to mention cutworms, sod webworms and armyworms. And now, it's available with a standard 2-lb. per acre a.i. rate for all grub species. That's more power for the same cost. With its wide application window, you can control grubs clear through the second instar – without the need for immediate irrigation. The competition can't make that claim. Fact is, nobody's better at putting insects two inches below six feet under, baby.

MACH 2 PRESENTS

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from the Director of *"More Decimation, Same Dollar"*

No more prayers for rain, baby.



A SARAH HUNT FILM "MAX POWER 2" THE CHAFER TWINS SVEN "EUROPEAN" CHAFER MARIO "MASKED" CHAFER
MAY JUNE BEETLE AS HERSELF MUSIC BY LEPIDOPTERA CO-PRODUCERS SCOTT "ORIENTAL" BEETLE AND DARA "JAPANESE" BEETLE

**Maximum power for
season-long grub control.**

 **Dow AgroSciences**
MACH 2*
Specialty Insecticide

www.dowagro.com/turf 1-800-255-3726 *Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. Always read and follow label directions.

Really know your pest enemies

Get to know — really know — the pests that commonly damage the turfgrass and ornamental plants under your care. You will dramatically increase your chances of controlling them.

It will take some training, but your customers, not to mention your company's bottom line, will benefit from your knowledge.

A limitless supply

The number of organisms that inhabit nearly all turfgrass and ornamental plants is almost limitless. These include disease pathogens, insects, weeds, micro-fauna and micro-flora, earthworms and vertebrate animals. Some cause no measurable damage and require no control. Some are beneficial because they help aerify the soil, decompose thatch or control other pest species.

Surprisingly, compared to the millions of insect species on earth, less than 100 plant-feeding species cause measurable damage to turfgrass and ornamental plants. In many instances (and to the untrained eye), pest and non-pest insects, including beneficials, look the same. That's why you must be able to accurately distinguish between them. In other words, before you

Knowledge is the key to dramatically increasing your chances of controlling turf/ornamental pests

BY DR. R. CHRIS WILLIAMSON



You have to get down and look carefully if you want to make an accurate pest ID.

can control a pest, you have to recognize what kind of pest it is and learn as much as you can about its biology. That knowledge must encompass behavior and habits, life cycle, plant-damaging life stages, and the life stage when it's most vulnerable to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) control.

suggests, it specifically targets the pest(s) causing the damage. Therefore, any information related to the pest in question is critical to successfully managing the pest.

Essentially, there are four steps for successful pest management:

Control with IPM

The concept or idea of understanding a pest's biology is fundamental to the concept of IPM, which is a synthesis of all possible control options available to you. IPM is a management approach and, contrary to what some people think, it is not exclusively biological or "organic."

IPM provides you with a variety of pest control options, strategies and techniques. As its title

continued on page 76

Speed. Kills.

24 HOURS

Introducing QuickSilver.™ Fast control of broadleaf weeds.

Introducing the most advanced chemistry in herbicides—QuickSilver, for extremely fast control of post-emergent broadleaf weeds, including tough-to-control weeds such as clover and thistle. But even though QuickSilver is tough on broadleaves, it is soft on sensitive turf varieties, such as Bermuda and St. Augustine Grasses. Which makes QuickSilver the smart alternative to clopyralid.

Just add a few drops to your tank mixture and you'll see plant response within 24-48 hours. That's because QuickSilver blocks chlorophyll synthesis causing the release of peroxides that result in rapid plant cell degradation. And because of its excellent range of effectiveness across wide temperature ranges, it's suitable for many regions across the U.S.

What's more, QuickSilver is applied in extremely low quantities—just 0.55 to 2.1 oz/acre. That's lower than other herbicides on the market.

That means less herbicide released into the environment. Less herbicide to store. And less visits to customer sites.

For more information, contact our Customer Satisfaction Center at 1-800-321-1FMC, or visit: www.fmc-apgspec.com

**The only things smarter than our products
are the people that use them.**

QuickSilver™
T&O HERBICIDE



FMC

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Circle No. 136

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► **Precise pest ID.** Spiders, mites, nematodes and other animals inhabit turfgrass and ornamentals. You must be able to tell non-pests and beneficial species from the pests. Often, you've already developed good control strategies for a particular pest because of previous experience. If not, you'll have to rely on resources such as university fact sheets, bulletins, insect flash cards, Web sites or insect collections. Other valuable resources include county extension agents, colleagues, consultants and agricultural chemical technical managers.

► **Behavior and habits.** After conclusively identifying the target pest, study its behavior and habits. You have to know where, when and how the target pest functions. In a sense, you have to be like a football coach who reviews game films of the opponent before building his team's game plan.

For example, consider the biology of black cutworm caterpillars. Since these caterpillars feed on the foliage of turfgrass plants at night, the most effective control strategy is to apply an insecticide that's been proven effective in black cutworm caterpillar control in the late afternoon or early evening, and to withhold irrigation for 12 hours. This gives the caterpillars time to contact and consume the insecticide. If you apply the product in the morning, you may decrease its effectiveness due to factors such as photodegradation (breakdown by sunlight) as well as volatilization (natural dispersion into the atmosphere). All pest insects have different control strategies.

► **Life cycle.** Knowledge of an insect's life cycle allows you to sample and monitor target pests. Monitoring is key to anticipating subsequent damage and implementing timely controls. Some insect species only have one generation per year, while others have multiple generations per year. As a result, control strategies for respective insect pests with only one generation per year are



Late afternoon treatments offer best control for the black cutworm caterpillar.

often different than those for insect pests that have several generations per year.

Insects that have multiple generations per year typically require repeated control treatments. When the best IPM control strategy is the use of an insecticide, however, there's greater risk of promoting pest resistance, especially if similar insecticide chemistries (i.e. modes of action) are used. Technicians who understand the life cycles of insect pests are best prepared to develop control strategies that exploit the most susceptible or vulnerable life stages of the pests.

► **Damaging life stage.** You must be able to recognize signs that point to pest damage before it reaches a certain threshold. Again, frequent sampling and monitoring of plant material reveals early signs of insects and the damage they cause. This knowledge also allows you to solve the insect pest problem when it's easiest to solve — when the pest is at its most vulnerable stage.

Insects are more vulnerable to control measures or strategies at certain life stages. Typically, it's easier to control younger and smaller insect pests. For example, Japanese beetle grubs are considerably more vulnerable to certain insecticide treatments when they're young (newly hatched through first-instar grubs) compared to older or more mature (late-second and third-instar grubs).

This information enables you to time their treatments. Applying a curative insecticide treatment of a grub control product in the spring when the grubs are nearly fully mature would likely not be a good idea. This grub control treatment would be more effective if it was done in August

when Japanese beetle grubs are younger and more vulnerable. (Because dates vary due to geography and climate, check with your local extension service for best dates in your area.)

Be smart for a sound plan

Establishing an IPM program requires a sound understanding of growth habits and cultural requirements of your turf and ornamentals. You also need to understand any insect pests that threaten the turf and ornamentals you maintain. This includes knowledge of their behavior, life cycle, damaging life stages and vulnerable life stages.

Remember, there are three critical steps in successfully managing an insect pest. First, accurately identify the specific pest you're attempting to manage or control. Next, gain a comprehensive understanding of the organism's biology including but not limited to behavior and habits, life cycle, damaging life stage and vulnerable life stage. Finally, implement an IPM control strategy that provides the most effect control while taking into consideration the economic cost, potential environmental impact, and public perception. **LM**

— The author is the Turfgrass and Ornamental Specialist of the Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison. He can be contacted at rcwillie@entomology.wisc.edu.

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LM-03

Beetle- mania



Adult Japanese beetles inflict characteristic feeding damage called skeletonization.

The Japanese beetle is a destructive urban landscape pest in the eastern United States. This metallic colored beetle was accidentally introduced to a nursery in

Riverton, NJ in 1916. It's likely that the beetle larvae (white grubs) arrived in the soil ball of nursery stock. The beetle is currently present in all states east of the Mississippi River except Florida.

Japanese beetles have one generation per year. The adults are present from June to August in Kentucky, when they'll actively feed and mate on susceptible plants, often defoliating them.

The females leave the plants to seek out turfgrass and lay eggs, which will hatch into grubs. The grubs feed on roots and organic matter in the soil and continue to grow throughout the summer. In the fall, as soil temperatures cool, they move down in the soil below the frostline for winter. In the spring, they move back up into the root zone and begin feeding. During May, they pupate in the soil in preparation for adult emergence in June. (Check with your local extension service for a more precise timing of the Japanese beetle life cycle in your region.)

Research and careful observation dispel some long-standing beliefs regarding Japanese beetles and their control

BY DAVID HELD

The damage Japanese beetles cause to trees, ornamentals and turfgrass is extensive. More than a half billion dollars a year is spent trying to control them. Since its introduction into the United States, the problem of managing this beetle has resulted in an array of management recommendations such as companion planting and host plant resistance. Let's take a careful look at some of the folklore surrounding Japanese beetles and try to balance those anecdotes with recommendations based on field research.

Trapping folklore

The Japanese beetle is strongly attracted to blends of plant odors, particularly those that are floral and fruity. Based on this, commercial traps were developed and proposed as a possible management tool for the adults and larvae. The use of traps in commercial and residential landscapes has been touted for reducing or eliminating de-

foliation by the adults and reducing the presence of grubs in the local turf. When evaluated in replicated experiments, however, the presence of traps didn't reduce the amount of damage to nearby plants. In fact, traps increased defoliation of nearby plants while having no effect on grub populations in surrounding turf.

Milky disease

Milky disease is a bacterial infection of grubs that results after it ingests spores of *paenibacillus popilliae* while it feeds. An infected grub has a distinctive milky-white appearance relative to a healthy grub. In the field, this disease is often present when grub populations are high. Milky disease is considered one of many natural buffers in the soil that suppress heavy populations of grubs.

Commercial products containing the bacterial spores have been developed for use as a microbial insecticide for Japanese beetles. Users apply powders containing lit-

erally millions of bacterial spores to infested turf for grub control. These products, however, didn't fulfill the claim as a "natural" insecticide. Also, the application of commercial powders to turf didn't increase the occurrence of the disease or result in reduced grub numbers. A contributing factor to the products' failure was their purity. Analysis showed significant contamination of milky disease powders with other non-infective bacterial spores.

Companion planting

Companion planting is a horticultural synergism between a crop plant and one or more plant species that results in the protection of the crop plant from pests. These garden companions are commonly aromatic herbs or other fragrant plants grown to mask the smell of a favorite garden ornamental or vegetable plant.

There are several recommendations regarding Japanese beetles and roses, one of their favorite foods, in organic gardening books and magazines. For example, interplanting members of the onion family, *allium* sp., anise or fennel *foeniculum vulgare*, and rue, *ruta graveolens*, with roses are said to protect the plants from Japanese beetle attacks. Likewise, certain plants like four o'clocks, *mirabilis jalapa*, and zonal gera-



A milky disease infected grub on the left, compared with a healthy grub on the right. Milky disease is common among concentrated infestations in the field but has been shown to be ineffective as a commercial microbial insecticide.



This infestation of grubs has completely consumed the roots of this turf. Turf damaged by white grubs like Japanese beetles is easy to diagnose. It will roll back like a loose carpet.

nium, *pelargonium x hortorum*, are considered effective trap crops because they may intercept beetles as they're flying to roses to feed.

When tested in replicated small garden plots, however, there was no reduction in the number of beetles on roses interplanted with rue, garlic chives or zonal geranium. Roses interplanted with geraniums generally had more beetles than roses planted alone.

Plant selection

Japanese beetle adults feed on over 300 species of plants in 79 plant families, but there are plants that are truly resistant to feeding. This resistance occurs across species and among cultivars of the same species. In field trials with different cultivars, resistance is quite evident when one cultivar is completely defoliated and the other cultivar next to it is untouched by the beetles. While no apparent resistance to beetle feeding has been shown among rose cultivars, there's considerable variation among the crabapples, lindens, elms and birch.

Selection of a resistant species or cultivar can be an important strategy for managing beetle feeding damage. Some of the information regarding resistant and susceptible woody plants can be found at: <http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/PAT/rec/crop/pdf/entfa409.pdf>.

Japanese beetle adults feed on over 300 species of plants in 79 plant families.

The flowers of certain ornamental plants such as cannas, hibiscus, hollyhock, dahlias and roses are like candy to Japanese beetles. If these plants are in bloom, beetles will land on the flowers and begin feeding, almost ignoring the leaves. Among roses, cultivars with white or yellow flowers are more attractive to Japanese beetles.

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Beetles become paralyzed after feeding on the petals of zonal geraniums.



Tantalizing but toxic

Along with the anecdotes about trap crops, some plants are believed to be toxic to the Japanese beetle. It was even suggested that extensive planting of these alleged toxic species would slow or eliminate the spread of the beetles across the eastern United States. Leaves of the castor bean, *ricinus communis*, and leaves and flowers of the garden larkspur, *delphinium sp.*, and bottle-brush buckeye, *aesculus parviflora*, are said to kill the beetle if consumed. The toxicity of castor bean leaves to the beetles was disproved in a series of experi-

ments published in scientific papers during the 1930s and 1940s. Likewise, experiments with larkspur and bottle-brush buckeye failed to show any negative effects to Japanese beetles that feed on the flowers or leaves.

The zonal geranium, *pelargonium x hortorum*, is one plant that has fulfilled the claims of toxicity to the beetle. Zonal geraniums are a preferred food plant for Japanese beetles, which proves to be a fatal attraction. In 1920, a USDA entomologist noticed large numbers of dead beetles under zonal geraniums growing in the full sun. Beetles can eat just half a petal and become temporarily paralyzed. The paralysis occurs only when beetles

feed on the flowers and not the leaves, although paralyzed beetles falling from the flowers are often seen on the foliage.

Paralysis from feeding also occurs with other ornamental geraniums such as ivy geraniums, *pelargonium peltatum*. Beetles that become paralyzed on the plants in the landscape lose about 30% of their body weight in just a few hours. This likely explains why beetles die on plants growing in the full sun but may recover on plants growing in the shade. If beetles do recover, they typically shake off their buzz and feed again on the flowers that just intoxicated them.

—DH

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A littleleaf linden tree in mid-summer completely defoliated by adult Japanese beetles. Notice the typical top-down feeding pattern common to trees defoliated by Japanese beetles.

continued from page 79

Varieties with larger blooms are also more appealing to the beetle. In experiments with red or yellow flowering rose bushes, Japanese beetles will land on the yellow flowering ones, sometimes ignoring even the most fragrant red varieties.

Biorational insecticides

Adult beetles are commonly managed with applications of short-residual insecticides, like carbaryl or synthetic pyrethroids. There has been increased interest in the use of other biorational insecticides, including various formulations of neem-based feeding deterrents. In laboratory tests, these products effectively reduce the amount of feeding. In field tests when beetle infestations are heavy, even repeated applications aren't sufficient to prevent damage.

Regardless of the control product, once a plant becomes damaged it can serve as a beacon to other beetles, attracting them with odors produced by the damaged

leaves. Therefore, preventing feeding damage early and keeping plants undamaged as long as possible reduces the attraction of more beetles to those plants. **LM**

— *The author is with the University of Kentucky Entomology Department, Lexington, KY. Contact him at dwheld@uky.edu.*

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Circle 138

Large 'scale' woes

When a customer called Jeff Hazlett and complained that her family couldn't use the front door due to swarms of bees and flies, he had his suspicions about what was attracting the insects. He inspected the customer's landscape plantings and confirmed that scales had infested three 9-ft. tall star magnolias in her front yard.

"Honeydew produced by the scale insects was dripping on twigs and stems near the front door, and insects were feeding on it," says Hazlett, owner of Ever Green Tree & Lawn Care in Lancaster, PA. "Sooty mold had formed over the honeydew, and whole branches had turned black. It wasn't a pretty sight."

Sure signs of scale

The presence of honeydew is a telltale sign of scale infestation. Honeydew is a sugary, liquid waste product that covers surrounding areas. This sticky, sweet liquid serves as a growth medium for sooty mold, a black fungus that eventually covers honeydew-laden areas. Another indication of scale is a greater-than-usual number of nuisance insects such as ants, bees, flies, hornets and yellow jackets, which are all attracted to honeydew.

In severe cases of scale infestation, foliage and fruit turn black from sooty mold and drop prematurely. In large enough numbers, scales remove enough sap from plants to starve limbs, branches and leaves.

Recognize a scale infestation and the type of scale before you begin treatment

BY DEBBIE CLAYTON



This soil application initiated scale control.

For his customer with scale-infested magnolia trees, Hazlett soil applied Merit Insecticide in early spring, and followed it with a treatment of dormant oil. Later in spring, he made a foliar application of Merit mixed with a contact insecticide, ensuring that coverage was complete. The problem vanished by mid July.

"The customer was really impressed that the combination controlled scale so quickly," Hazlett says. "I attribute the successful treatment to the systemic properties of Merit combined with the dormant oil spray."

Preaching IPM

With three full-time employees, Hazlett provides landscape maintenance for primarily residential customers in Lancaster

County. Though he's been in business for 15 years, he keeps his operation small, offering customized services such as fertilizing, spraying and mulching. He regularly monitors plantings, explaining to his customers the benefits of an integrated pest management (IPM) system.

In spring 2002, after two relatively mild winters in eastern Pennsylvania, an outbreak of cottony camellia scale on yews and hollies erupted in Hazlett's area. "Cottony camellia is a soft scale," he says. "If customers have a lot of evergreens and hollies, I'll make a preventive treatment of Merit for scale."

In addition to applying insecticides and dormant oils, Hazlett often prunes out damaged branches and foliage, and fertil-

izes beds or trees to restore vitality. Because pachysandra is easily affected by scale, he often applies dormant oil in spring to prevent infestations. **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer and frequently writes about the Green Industry from her home in Horsham, PA.



Only a mother could love these magnolia scales with crawlers emerging.

Two scales, two treatments

Not all scale species ingest sap and produce honeydew. Two general types of scales commonly appear on U.S. ornamental trees and shrubs: soft scale and armored scale. Learn to identify the two since control strategies are different for armored (hard) and soft scale.

Soft scale characteristics:

- ▶ Bodies are exposed and immature stages are "soft"; mature adult females have a hardened shell to protect the young
- ▶ Females are oval-shaped and usually conspicuous — about 1/10-in. long
- ▶ One generation per year
- ▶ Produce honeydew, attracting nuisance insects
- ▶ Overwinter as immature females
- ▶ Relatively prolific, producing more than 600 eggs at a time

Soft scales damage plants and make

them unsightly by sapping juices, making sooty mold grow on honeydew. This substance is difficult to remove from parked cars, houses, porches and sidewalks.

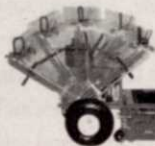
Armored scale characteristics:

- ▶ Produce detached wax shell or "armor" over their bodies
- ▶ Females are usually elongated or circular and about 1/10-in. long
- ▶ Don't produce honeydew
- ▶ Two or more generations per year
- ▶ Overwinter as eggs, immatures or adults
- ▶ Produce fewer than 50 eggs at a time

Armored scales also damage plants by inserting long, straw-like mouthparts into plant tissue. Damage may appear as chlorotic areas of the leaves or yellowing of entire leaves or needles, resulting in leaf drop or dieback.

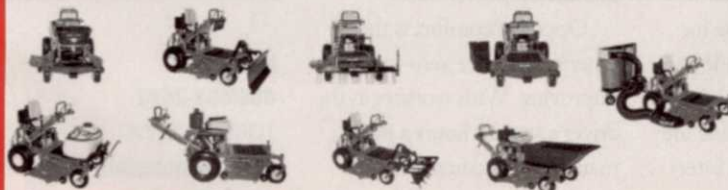


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Zero-turn tech zipping along

BY CURT HARLER

The zero-turn industry is growing and evolving the same way minivans have changed since their introduction years ago by Chrysler.

While many manufacturers changed both the look and role of minivans, look for zero-turns to change in the areas of maintenance and operator comfort.

"While the base platform of zeros continues to evolve, most of the changes will boil down to serviceability and maintenance," says John Cloutier, Product Manager for Exmark of Beatrice, NB (www.exmark.com). He notes that landscape professionals, like car owners, prefer to turn a key and go rather than deal with upkeep. "Commercial mid-mounts are the same," he remarks.

Serviceability is a given. After all, landscape pros make money running their mowers, not working on them in a shop. "People don't want so many service points. They want fewer places



Kubota's ZD Pro Series mowers feature 54-, 60- and 72-in. decks.

to grease," Cloutier says. As a result, manufacturers are designing-out high maintenance components. Examples include sealed bearings and spindle assemblies that don't require periodic greasing.

Room for improvement

Blade maintenance and air filtering are other areas ripe for improvement. Many blade manufacturers are looking at technology to extend blade life and to increase the time interval between sharpenings, Cloutier says, but most of them have yet to show the investment-to-value return that many professionals desire.

Air filters are another story. The industry is moving to a canister air filter fitted vertically above the engine. What used to be an option is now standard for many zero-turns. "They're more expensive," Cloutier says, "but they lengthen change intervals and even provide a slight horsepower boost."

Operator comfort is the other area where zero-turns are improving. With workers in the driver's seat 10 hours a day, many mower companies are looking for ways to add comfort with such items as seats or operator controls. Landscape pros are also interested in convenience items such as deck lifts.

4 key areas of performance

There are four key areas of mower performance, according to Harold Redman, vice president of product management for Simplicity (www.simplicitymfg.com, Port Washington, WI):

- ▶ cutting ability
- ▶ ease of use
- ▶ traction
- ▶ reliability

While some landscapers buy zero-turns on the basis of horsepower, it should not be the bottom line of a purchase decision. "Purchase a product based on its ability to provide lasting performance, not just on its horsepower or price," Redman says.

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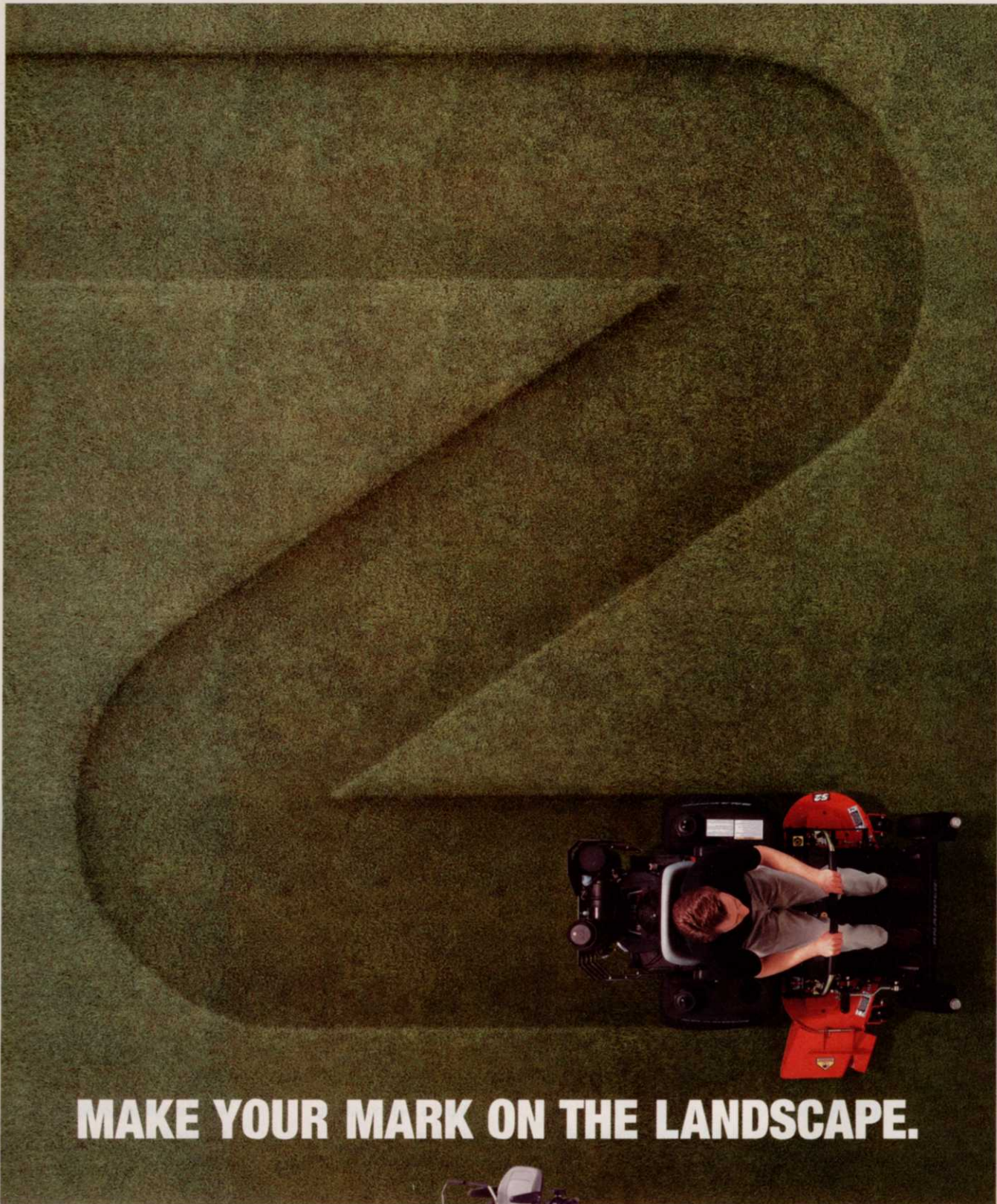
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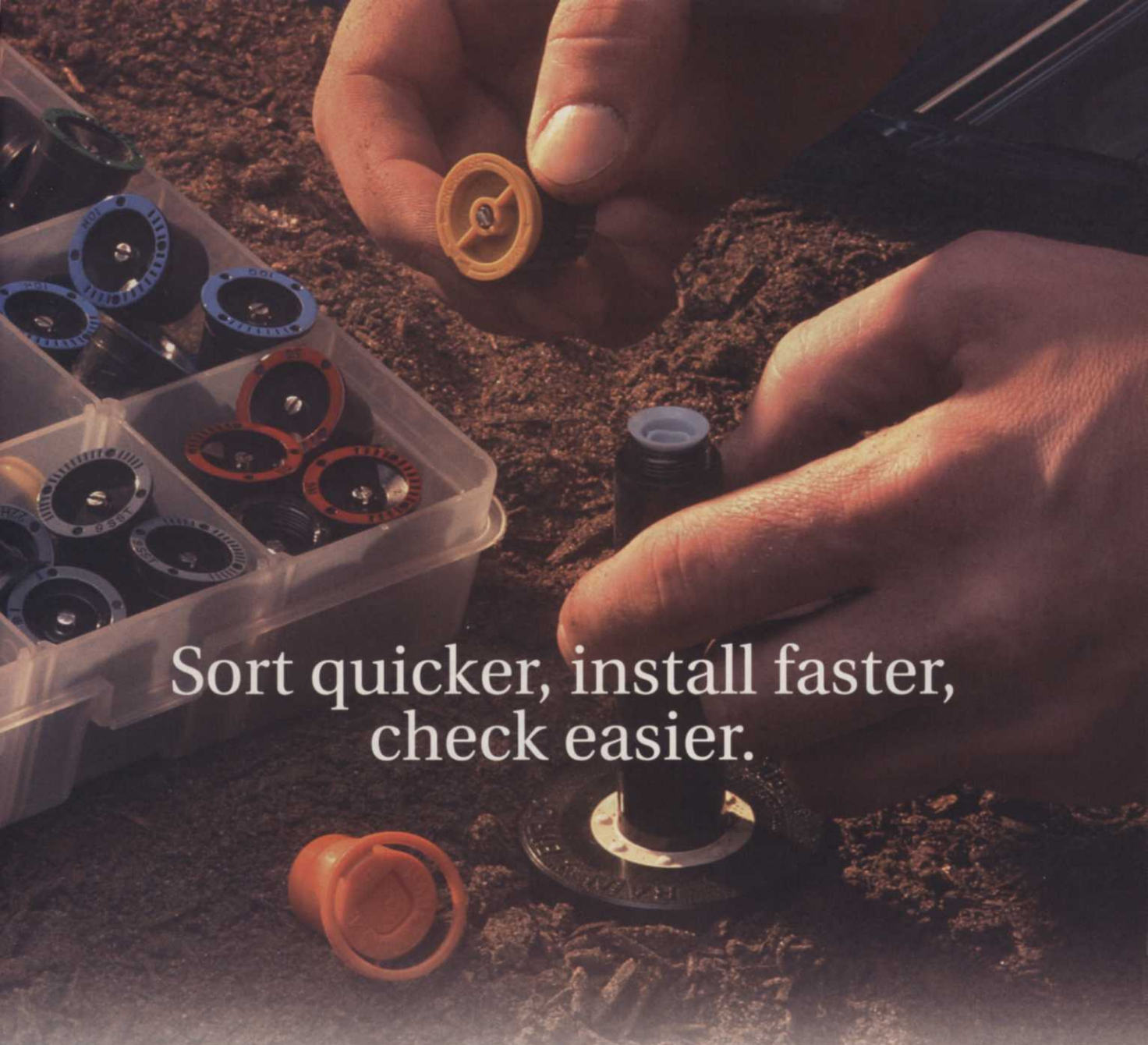
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GREEN INDUSTRY EXPO

Professional Products, People and Ideas

ask the expert

BY BALAKRISHNA RAO

Oak infestation

A number of oak trees in the San Francisco Bay area are infested with an insect. The caterpillars feed and cause extensive damage. When they're small, they feed on one surface of the leaf. As the larvae become larger, they feed through the leaves and can remove the leaves. We see the adults around May and again around October. What are they, and how do we get rid of them?

— CA

From your description, the problem is most likely related to the California oak-worm (or oak moth), *phryganidia californica*. It's considered to be one of the major insects affecting oaks in your state.

These insects are cyclic, which means in some years they may be very active and in other years their population may not be high. Extensive outbreaks and feeding can cause defoliation, affecting the tree's shade and aesthetic benefits.

In your area, you may get two generations of the insect. It may overwinter as an egg or young larvae. As the temperatures increase in spring, the larvae mature and start feeding as you described. First, they tend to feed on one side. Then, as the larvae mature, they feed through the leaves.

They pupate on leaves, branches or trunks of oaks and/or other trees or objects nearby. Adult moths emerge from May through July and fly at dusk time. Then, they repeat the cycle and produce second generations of adults, which emerge in October or November. These adults produce eggs on leaves, branches and trunks. Deciduous oaks may get less infestations than evergreen oaks in the spring because eggs produced on leaves in late summer or early

fall will be shed along with the leaves, which can be raked or blown away.

To manage the California oak moth, consider treating with insecticides such as bacillus thuringensis (Bt), Sevin, or Orthene. Bt is a biological control bacterial agent. This treatment works better on younger stages of the insect larvae. Also, it may help to rake and dispose of infested leaves.

Hit-and-run

A customer of ours has a young Chinese red maple tree that was run over by a station wagon and stripped of bark from the base of the trunk to the top of the tree. What can be done to save this little five-foot tree?

— CT

Depending upon how much bark has been stripped and damaged, the tree may survive the winter and produce normal growth next spring. Injury resulting from mechanical damage often doesn't become obvious until moisture and heat stress occurs in the summer and the tree shows scorching symptoms and starts to decline.

In the meantime, consider removing all the loose bark by using the bark tracing technique — without harming the uninjured, intact areas. Go around the injured bark with a sharp knife, trying to take only the loose bark. Also, provide proper watering, mulching and fertilizing as needed. Because of the injury, the tree is now stressed and susceptible to pest problems such as borer insects and canker diseases, so provide management as needed.

Dursban alternatives

We're in the process of reviewing our insect control program for landscape pest management. In the past, we've used Dursban for a number of pests on trees and shrubs. Now, because Dursban won't be available and/or we can't use it anymore, we need to find alternative products. What can we use in its place?

— IL

As far as Dursban use, it's my understanding that you can still use it until your supply is depleted if you have the product and label in your inventory. To confirm this, check with your Dow AgroSciences representative or account manager. However, if your clients are aware of Dursban's removal, they may object to using it on their property.

As an alternative, consider using an insecticide such as Merit (imidacloprid), a systemic insecticide from Bayer. You can apply this in fall to get the benefit of systemic action and managing pests the following spring. It should be good for beetles, borers, leafminers and sawflies, Japanese beetles, etc.

Another group of new chemicals is called pyrethroids (Astro, Talstar, Deltagard, Scimitar and Tempo). Read and follow label guidelines for specific rates and specific insect control. Also become familiar with their safety issues. Some of them may have concerns regarding throat, skin or eye irritation. These pyrethroid products are slowly replacing the traditional insecticides of the past for landscape pest management.

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: rhall@advanstar.com. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear.



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Circle No. 108

products

TECH CENTER

The right fit

Rain Bird's Landscape Drip Division has unveiled a new line of Easy Fit compression fittings engineered to reduce the amount of pressure required to insert tubing. Designed to accept a broad range of 1/2-in. tubing diameters, the fittings are available in coupling, tee and elbow configurations, and the "perfect fit" design is compatible with .63-in. to .71-in. (16 mm to 18 mm) OD tubing.

For more information contact Rain Bird at 520/741-6100 or www.rainbird.com / circle no. 250

What's at stake?

Berkshire Products' Earthwings is a tree staking system available in three sizes: 3C for trees up to 3-in. caliper, 5C for trees up to 5-in. caliper, and 10C for trees up to 10-in. caliper. The tree anchors are made of steel with a pre-attached galvanized cable. Install in three steps: drive anchor, pull to lock in place, attach to tree.

For more information contact Berkshire Products at 413/229-7919 or visit www.berkshireearthwings.com / circle no. 251

Map it out



Garmin GPS Map 176 and GPS Map 176C Portable Chartplotter are 12-parallel channel. WAAS-enabled GPS receivers feature an extra-large display that makes keeping your eye on the map easy. Whether you choose the 12-level gray high-contrast FSTN on the GPSMAP 176, or the 16-color TFT on the 176C, you'll get a display that measures 3.80 in. diagonally and delivers a crisp picture (to a pixel count of 320x240).

For more information, contact Forestry Suppliers at 800/360-7788 or www.forestry-suppliers.com / circle no. 252



Pond-cleaning power

Aqua Products' new commercial Pond Power Vac cleans ponds without removing or changing the water. There's no need to catch or remove Koi or water plants. A built-in powerful pump (80 gal. per minute) and filter bag (2 micron) pick up all pond debris. Clean, filtered water returns immediately to the pond without altering its biological balance.

For more information contact Aqua Products at 800/221-1750 or www.aquaproducts.com/domestic/general/home1.htm / circle no. 253

Shindaiwa heads

Three popular Shindaiwa trimmer heads have now become much more user-friendly. Instead of ordering eight different part numbers — one for each arbor bolt size — customers now just need to order three part numbers for fit-up on all Shindaiwa straight shaft models. The High-Profile, Semi-Matic, and Pro-Matic trimmer heads now come with all available arbor bolt sizes already included in the new clam shell packaging.

For more information contact Shindaiwa at 800/521-7733 or www.shindaiwa.com / circle no. 254

Mow like lightning

The newest Dixie Chopper riding mower (Model XT3000) is able to cut an average of eight acres of grass in an hour and packs maximum performance in one package with a powerful Generac 30-hp OHV engine. Choose either a 60- or 72-in. deck width. Fuel capacity is 10 gal. It also has a beverage cooler large enough to hold six cans of soda.

For more information contact Grasshopper at 765/246-7737 or www.dixiechopper.com / circle no. 255

Green it up

Woodstream Corp.'s Ringer All-Natural Restore Fertilizer is organically produced and feeds microorganisms in the lawn's soil, which in turn feeds the grass, reducing thatch. Its temperature-sensitive process feeds grass only when feed is needed. There's no burning, no runoff

pollution and no toxicity to children and pets. Each natural feed granule contains a fully balanced, sustained release 10-2-6 formula that delivers 10% nitrogen (N) to turf, 2% phosphorus (P) to roots and 6% potassium (K) to add heat, cold and drought resistance.

For more information contact Woodstream at 402/223-6300 or www.victorpest.com / circle no. 256

Fill it up

Treegator says that its drip irrigation bags are the fastest, easiest, most efficient means of watering any tree. The 20-gal. Treegator Original (green bag) is designed to irrigate one to four-inch caliper trees with branches at least 25 in. from the ground or higher over a 6- to 10-hour time period. Just zip the bag around the trunk of the tree, fill it up and walk away. Also available is the 14-gal. Treegator Junior.

For more information contact Treegator at 866/873-3428 or www.treegator.com / circle no. 257

No skids

Penda Corp. says its Skid Resistor truck bedliner delivers two times the skid resistance of the next-best performing drop-in bedliner.



The company also claims the non-abrasive skid-resistant texture of its bedliner won't wear away. The product comes in both over-and-under-rail models.

For more information contact Penda at 608/742-5301 or www.pendacorp.com / circle no. 258

Punch in

Exaktime Inc. says its Jobclock is the perfect solution to track the arrival and departure times of your workers without the need of an on-site supervisor. Attach the battery-powered,



weatherproof Jobclock at the jobsite, and employees clock in and out with digital timecards. The supervisor can download the time records with a Palm Pilot at any time. Back at the office, the supervisor "HotSyncs" all attendance records from the Palm to a PC.

For more information contact Exaktime at 888/788-8463 or www.exaktime.com / circle no. 259

Power up

Exmark has powered up its Lazer Z EPS mower line with the addition of an available fuel-injected 28-hp Kohler Command Pro engine. When paired with Exmark's 72-in. Ultra Cut deck, the mower can cut up to six acres an hour. The new Kohler engine uses electronic fuel injection (EFI) to maximize engine efficiency while providing increased output.

For more information contact Exmark at 402/223-6300 or www.exmark.com / circle no. 260

All in one

Stihl introduces the STIHL KombiSystem, a complete family of multi-task landscaping tools using

a split-shaft design and numerous attachments. Designed for multiple user levels, the KM 55R, KM 85R and KM 110R combine the functionality of an edger, trimmer, sweeper, mini cultivator and pruner into one complete grounds care system. The KM 85R is powered by a STIHL Professional Series engine, and the KM 110R is equipped with the patented, emissions-compliant STIHL 4-MIX engine.

For more information contact Stihl at 800/467-8445 or www.stihlusa.com / circle no. 261

Watch 'em grow

Becker Underwood's new product Rhizanova increases water absorption, nutrient availability and survival rates of trees, shrubs and ornamental flowers by putting the fungal inoculum at the roots where the opportunity for contact with feeder roots is highest. The Rhizanova family consists of five products known as mycorrhizal fungi inoculants. The chemical activities of these fungal extensions on minerals help make inorganic nutrients available to plants.

For more information contact Becker Underwood at 800/232-5907 or www.beckerunderwood.com / circle no. 262

What a tool

The Mantis tiller/cultivator is powerful and rugged enough for daily use, and small enough



to handle tight spaces in flower beds and gardens. The commercial two-cycle engine is rated for hundreds of hours of trouble-free use. It only weighs 20 lbs., and the tines spin at 240 rpm and are guaranteed against breakage for life. Optional attachments include border edger, furrower, crevice cleaner, lawn aerator and lawn dethatcher.

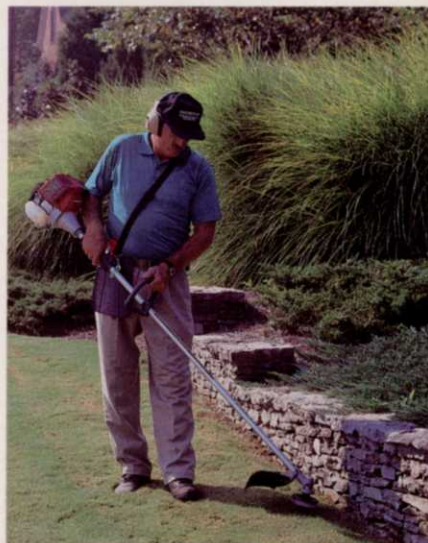
For more information contact Little Wonder at 877/596-6337 or www.littlewonder.com / circle no. 263



Cover-up

Reemay's Typar Premium Landscape Fabric is a durable, nonwoven fabric that helps prevent weed growth for years when covered with mulch. A continuous filament, tough polypropylene fabric, it's porous to allow air, water and nutrients through so the soil can be healthy and desired plant roots can have access to the ingredients necessary for their growth. The fabric resists tearing, punctures and rotting, and its performance is guaranteed when it's installed and covered properly.

For more information contact Reemay at 800/321-6271 or www.reemay.com / circle no. 264



Just a trim

Honda Power Equipment says its HHT25S four-stroke trimmer is the quietest of its kind with a weight reduction of 2.58 lbs. and a noise reduction of 2.1 decibels over the UMK422 model it replaces. The new 360°-inclinable unit features Honda's new GX25 mini four-stroke engine. The company maintains that its lightened flywheel works with a new accelerator pump-equipped carburetor to achieve rapid acceleration on par with that of a two-stroke trimmer.

For more information contact Honda at 800/426-7701 or visit www.hondanews.com / circle no. 265

products



Aerate great

The new Ryan Lawnaire IV Plus and V Plus self-propelled, high-speed, core-type aerators offer updated styling, refined ergonomics, easier servicing and increased reliability. Improvements include a folding handle for lower transport height and lift grabs on the IV Plus. Both models feature a handle-mount throttle and comfortable rubber grips. With a 19-in. aeration width, the Ryan Lawnaire IV covers 28,975 sq. ft. per hour. For bigger jobs and added stability, the Lawnaire V Plus features a 26.5-in. path, allowing it to aerate more than 40,400 sq. ft. per hour. Both models offer a choice of engines: a 4-hp Honda or a 3.5-hp Briggs & Stratton.

For more information contact Textron at 866/522-6273 or www.textron.com / circle no. 266

Tough bird

Koyker Manufacturing's new entry into the light utility vehicle category is the Raptor 4000 M-Series. Powered by a 16-hp twin-cylinder Briggs & Stratton engine, this four-wheel drive model features rack & pinion steering and MacPherson-type strut front suspension. Tubular frame construction and a full-steel belly pan allow this unit to travel over some tough terrain. Its 12-gauge steel bed and sides can carry 1,000 lbs.

For more information contact Koyker at 605/647-2811 or www.koykermfg.com / circle no. 267

Aerate 'n' ride

Measure your aeration in acres per hour, not square feet with the new GatorRator from Ground Breakers Inc. The owner of the com-



pany, Bryant LaFlair, says the GatorRator fits most major ZTR riders because of its fully welded, patent-pending front-mount and quick hitching systems. The coring width of the unit is 31.5 in. with a 3.75-in. coring depth. At 10 mph, the unit can aerate up to 3.1 acres of turfgrass, says LaFlair. The unit weighs 113 lbs.

For more information contact GatorRator at 866/433-9300 or www.gator-rator.com / circle no. 269

New and improved

BASF Professional Turf's new formulation of its Pendulum herbicide, called Pendulum Aqua-Cap, features a patented micro encapsulation technology that delivers the performance and value of pendimethalin while offering enhanced application techniques and advanced performance. It has a higher concentration of active ingredient, which reduces packaging needs. It also presents no odor, has less potential for staining and has improved storage stability under hot and cold conditions.

For more information contact BASF at 800/545-9525 or www.turffacts.com / circle no. 270

Seed with speed ▶

Sisis's Auto-Seeder is a maneuverable, self-propelled seeder that's well-suited for commercial properties, home lawns and sports fields. This

Don't get stumped

BlueBird stump grinders offer the power and maximum cutting performance needed for the quick and safe removal of stumps. The SG1114 has an 11-hp Honda engine and the SG1314 has a 13-hp Honda engine. Both have cyclone air filters, Noram automatic centrifugal clutches and Hayes brake calipers to ensure outstanding stump grinding results for many years. The adjustable handle with four height adjustment positions enables the user to maintain a comfortable and safe stance throughout the grinding process.

For more information contact BlueBird at 800/808-2473 or www.bluebirdintl.com / circle no. 268

unit, which fits on the back of a trailer, features contra-rotating tines that cut grooves two inches apart (depth is adjustable). Grass seed is accurately metered and placed into the grooves simultaneously. Pick the seed rate you desire. Overall width 31 in. (operating width 18 in.), weight 298 lbs., operating speed 2 mph, seed hopper capacity .407 cu. ft.

For more information contact Sisis at 864/843-5972 or www.sisis.com / circle no. 271



events

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

April

24 Managing Low-Budget Sports Fields / Davis, CA; 800/752-0881; www.extension.ucdavis.edu/agriculture

26-28 TOCA Annual Meeting / Charleston, SC; 952/758-6340; www.toca.org

27-30 North American Snow Conference / Quebec, Canada; 816/472-6100

May

2-6 Western Chapter Int'l. Society of Arboriculture Conference & Trade Show / Las Vegas, NV; 530/892-1118; www.wcisa.net

3-6 ASIC Annual Conference / Asheville, NC; Sponsored by the American Society of Irrigation Consultants; 312/372-7090; www.asic.org

4-9 Hawaii MIDPAC Horticultural Expo / Hilo, HI; Sponsored by the Hawaii Export Nursery Association; 808/935-9361

15-17 LICH Annual Convention and Trade Show / Honolulu, HI; Sponsored by the Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii; 808/956-2150

21 NC Turf & Landscape Field Day / Raleigh, NC; 888/695-1333; www.ncturfgrass.org

June

12-14 Snow & Ice Symposium / Buffalo, NY; 814/835-3577; www.sima.org

12-14 The Super Floral Show / Salt Lake City, UT; 617/728-0300; www.superfloralshow.com

17 Cornell University Field Day / Ithaca, NY; Sponsored by the New York State Turfgrass Association; 800/873-8873; www.nysta.org

July

14-15 PLCAA's Legislative Day on the Hill & Arlington Renewal Project / Washington, DC; 800/458-3466; www.plcaa.org

14-15 Summer Express Short Course / Collegedale, TN; 423/855-6113

16 Michigan Turfgrass Field Day / Lansing, MI; 517/321-1660; www.michiganturfgrass.org

16-20 ANLA Convention & Executive Learning Retreat / Boston, MA; 202/789-2900

23-25 TPI Summer Convention & Field Days / Dayton, OH; 800/405-8873

26-30 Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference / Spokane, WA; 515/289-2331

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www.landscapemanagement.net

WHAT'S NEW ON-LINE

- Put down that mower and take a chance — participate in our on-line poll
- Features from the April issue of *LM*
- Sign up for our weekly newsletter, *LM Week in Review*
- Green Industry news
- Follow LM staffers as they visit various companies "On the Road"
- Check out the latest listing of upcoming Green Industry events
- Have a question about grounds management or other topics? Click on "Reference Shelf" for an answer
- Place a classified ad
- Have an opinion on something? Speak out and maybe you'll be featured in "Let's Hear It"

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- 1. My primary business at this location is: (fill in ONE only)**
CONTRACTORS/SERVICE COMPANIES
 02 255 Landscape Contractors (Installation & Maintenance)
 03 260 Lawn Care Service Companies & Custom Chemical Applicators (ground & air)
 04 285 Irrigation Contractors & Consultants
 Other Contractors/Service Companies (please specify) _____

- LANDSCAPING/GROUNDS CARE FACILITIES**
 05 290 Sports Complexes
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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/Superintendent** - Arborist, Architect, Landscape/Grounds Manager, Superintendent, Foreman, Supervisor
 14 30 **Government Official** - Government Commissioner, Agent, Other Government Official
 15 40 **Specialist** - Forester, Consultant, Agronomist, Pilot, Instructor, Researcher, Horticulturist, Certified Specialist
 16 50 **Other Titled and Non-Titled Personnel** (please specify) _____

- 3. Which of the following services does your company provide? (fill in ALL that apply)**
 17 A Mowing
 18 B Turf Insect Control
 19 C Tree Care
 20 D Turf Aeration
 21 E Irrigation Services
 22 F Turf Fertilization
 23 G Turf Disease Control
 24 H Ornamental Care
 25 I Landscape Design
 26 J Turf Weed Control
 27 K Paving, Deck & Patio Installation
 28 L Pond/Lake Care
 29 M Landscape Installation
 30 N Snow Removal
 31 O Other (please specify) _____

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

- 4b. If yes, indicate which products you buy or specify: (fill in ALL that apply)**
 32 A Aerators
 33 B Blowers
 34 C Chain Saws
 35 D Chipper-Shredders
 36 E De-icers
 37 F Fertilizers
 38 G Fungicides
 39 H Herbicides
 40 I Insecticides
 41 J Line Trimmers
 42 K Mowers
 43 L Snow Removal Equipment
 44 M Sprayers
 45 N Spreaders
 46 O Sweepers
 47 P Tractors
 48 Q Truck Trailers/Attachments
 49 R Trucks
 50 S Turfseed
 51 T Utility Vehicles

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

- 5a. If so, how often do you use it?**
 54 A Daily 55 B Weekly 56 C Monthly 57 D Occasionally

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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**

ADVANSTAR COMMUNICATIONS INC
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BUFFALO NY 14205-9836



**Landscape
MANAGEMENT**

April 2003

This card is void after June 15, 2003

I would like to receive (continue receiving)
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1. My primary business at this location is: (fill in ONE only)

CONTRACTORS/SERVICE COMPANIES

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

LANDSCAPING/GROUNDS CARE FACILITIES

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

SUPPLIERS AND CONSULTANTS

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

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

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

NAME (please print) _____
 TITLE _____
 FIRM _____
 ADDRESS* _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 *Is this your home address? Yes No SUBSCRIBER NUMBER FROM LABEL _____
 PHONE (____) _____ FAX (____) _____
 E-MAIL ADDRESS _____
 Signature: _____ Date: _____

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3. Which of the following services does your company provide? (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"/> O 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 Yes 53 No

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

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

LMINET

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
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111	123	135	147	159	171	183	195	207	219	231	243	255	267	279	291	303	315
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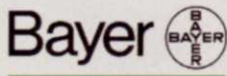
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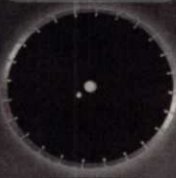
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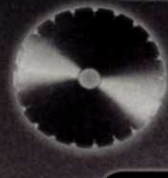
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10"	\$55.00
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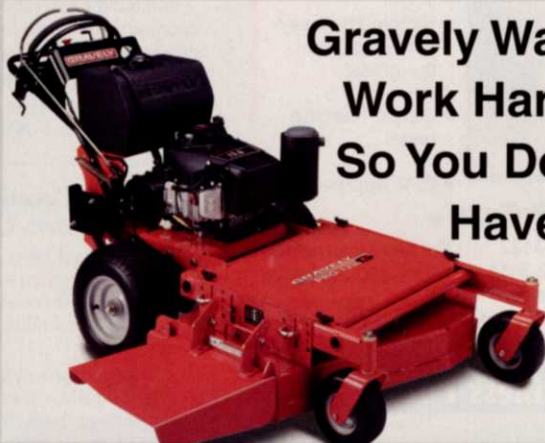
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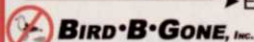
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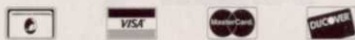
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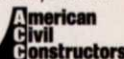
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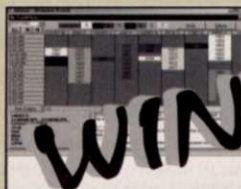
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best practices

GUIDELINES TO HELP AN INDUSTRY GROW

branch offices

No need to reinvent the wheel

BY BRUCE WILSON

Opening a branch office is a big decision for a company. Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ Don't open a branch office unless your current business is running smoothly and operating at a top tier profit level.
- ▶ Develop a step-by-step plan to transfer your good systems to the new branch.
- ▶ Have a couple of trusted, competent people in place to run the branch.
- ▶ Preferably, you'll have a significant piece of business as a base to build from. (Many companies build a satellite first, then convert to a branch when it reaches a significant size).

The next issue is how to build the branch in a way that

gives it the best chance to succeed. You can sum up the answer in a single word — control. Vital to establishing a successful branch operation is the system that you use to control it. For example, you must establish limits on spending and set approval levels for estimates and pay increases, to name just a few of the controls you should have. These controls help you eliminate a lot of "surprises."

In other words, you build your branch with defined systems and policies that mirror the base company's procedures. There should be a standard way of doing things like proposals, contracts, estimating,



Bruce Wilson

billing and employment documents. You can probably think of others unique to your operation.

You should have a good cost tracking system so you can track the branch's progress. It should build budgets and set sales and margin targets, which you can track it against. Since you won't be on site, you'll need real-time information letting you know how the branch is doing.

Consolidate overhead

Whenever possible, use the main company as a hub for doing as much centrally as possible. The goal should be to look for the most efficient way of doing things in a way that overhead isn't duplicated.

Also, make sure that the new branch doesn't develop a culture of its own, to the degree that it ends up being a different company. The customer experience is key here.

And don't forget to establish best practices within your company. You don't want the new branch reinventing the

wheel. Decide ahead of time what things will be done the company way and which things can be done differently to accommodate variances at the new branch.

There's a fine line here between allowing an entrepreneurial environment and obtaining consistency of performance.

Sound off

What's your experience with starting a branch office? Share your story with the readers of *Landscape Management* magazine by contacting Managing Editor Jason Stahl at jestahl@advanstar.com.

To comment on this month's "Best Practices" column by Bruce Wilson, contact him at bwilson@wilson-oyler.com. Wilson spent 30 years with Environmental Care, Inc., before partnering with Thomas L. Oyler to form the Wilson-Oyler Group, which offers consulting services. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.

How to measure

Most people in the landscape business consider a branch operation successful if it:

- ✓ develops into a profitable business,

Success...

- ✓ complements the original company, and
- ✓ gives customers the same experience that they came to expect from the parent company.

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