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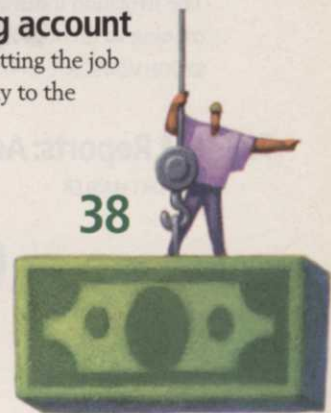
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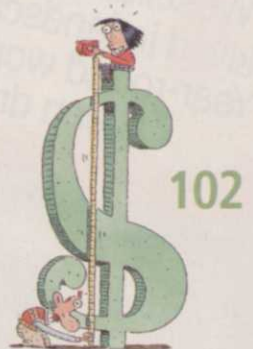
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BUSINESS

WHO'S WHO IN LM



Robert Andrews operates The Greenskeeper, a lawn service/grounds management company, based in Carmel, IN. Busily managing the business during the season, off-season finds Bob and his family hooking up with a small group of trusted colleagues and friends for periodic Margaritaville-style business retreats in Key West and other points south. A former PLCAA president, he shares great lessons that he's learned about "landing the big account." on page 38.

James "Jim" Coffey is in his 19th year in helping Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, fulfill its plan to become one of the most beautiful campuses in the United States. A graduate of tiny Berea College in Kentucky, Coffey reveals how he prepares his campus for Commencement Day. Read his step-by-step approach on page 82.



John Fech teams up with fellow Nebraska turf researcher/educator Dr. Fred Baxendale for the latest word on turf insect control on page 56. You'll leave this report with a broader view of what it takes to control those nasty critters that make turf management such a challenge.

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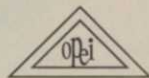
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Why I drink cheap coffee

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

Once upon a time I eagerly (and more than occasionally) spent \$7.99 for a pound of coffee beans. Full-bodied Colombian. French Roast decaf. Costa Rican breakfast. Not anymore. Call it pig-headedness or just chalk it up to human nature. There's a lesson here — just follow the rest of my story.

I bought the beans at a regional super store near my home. For several years after the huge retailer opened it maintained two stainless steel containers of coffee in the produce section and within arm's length of bins of beans of every variety. The coffee was always fresh and hot. When Vicky, my wife, and I shopped at the store, one of the first things we did was make a beeline to the coffee containers. Did I mention the samples were free?

Generally, I would squirt a sample of regular into one of the tiny styrofoam cups offered for the purpose, then fill a second four ounce with a decaf blend for Vicky. Then, often as not, we'd wheel our cart over to the bakery case for a sweet roll to go with our itty bitsy coffees. The next stop was to buy a pound of a specialty coffee, often a variety we'd just tasted. We weren't alone. Just about everybody with a shopping cart had a tiny cup of coffee, too.

So, what's it cost — really!

You guessed it; eventually the free samples began drying up. As the weeks went by, more and more often the containers were empty and untended. Finally they disappeared altogether.

Did some accountant at corporate tally up the cost of the beans used for the free samples? The expense of the styrofoam cups? Or did the staff just get tired of making the coffee and filling the containers?

After all, it's just a small thing, right?

Sure, we still shop there, but not as often and I can't remember the last time we bought donuts or coffee beans there. The way I see it, for the lack of the occasional tiny sample of coffee, this retailer is missing out (from me at least) on what's probably a pretty nice markup on its pastries and fancy coffee beans.

Now, whether we shop there or go to the Wal-Mart down the street, it's all the same to us. Both provide pretty much the same dreary experience.

We're different . . . well, maybe not

Think about those little extras that you provide your customers. Do you continue to build upon them, looking for more touches that please them?

Or do you provide special little extras only when you're trying to impress new customers? And now that they're yours you figure you can wring a bit more profit or get a bit more production on another property by gradually letting them slip slide away.

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Interns — you need a plan

BY BRUCE WILSON

Many companies struggle to find enough quality employees to meet their growth requirements. Larger companies generally feel the best way to build their companies is by promoting from within. But where do you find these high-potential employees in the first place?

An intern program can be a great way to identify and recruit new high-quality employees into your company. The beautiful thing about an intern program is that once you're able to bring in an intern you get to evaluate that individual for the three months before you commit to a full-time hire.

Many companies that hire interns for the first time have limited success. They fail to plan out a meaningful internship for the person, or they outline a program and fail to stick to it. The person ends up being a laborer, which is not what he or she signed up for.

A successful program rotates interns through different parts of your business and exposes them to various aspects of your work. For instance, if your company does maintenance and construction, interns would spend part of the time working in each department.

The intern wants to learn some of the technical parts of the work, so expose him or her to different aspects. A typical program might look like this:

► **Week 1-2:** Work on a maintenance crew. The objective of the time spent is to learn the routine tasks associated with weekly maintenance, learn to operate equipment, learn the importance of safety and get a sense for how long the work takes to do.

► **Week 3-4:** Work with a maintenance crew doing non-routine tasks such as fertilizing, pruning, annual flower planting and mulching.

► **Week 5-6:** Work with an irrigation technician learning troubleshooting of irrigation systems, repairs, controller scheduling and related tasks.

► **Week 7-8:** Work on an enhancement crew learning how to do common enhancement work.

► **Week 9:** Work with sales, making sales calls, developing proposals and getting involved in the estimating process.

► **Week 10:** Work in the office learning general office systems, such as reporting, time tracking, routing and job costing.

Expose the intern to a defined program where he or she will receive educational benefits. You also get to evaluate the potential employee in different circumstances and can see how he or she fits with other employees and where they might be successful in your company. The ideal outcome is that you get exposure to a employee with great potential who is impressed with your professionalism and wants to come back to your operation after graduation.

You want interns to leave with a positive impression of your company, because they will share their experiences with friends and classmates. If they say good things, future recruiting will be easier for you. Show interns that you care and want them to be part of the team. This will increase their likelihood of returning after graduation.

— *The author is a partner with entrepreneur Tom Oyler in the Wilson-Oyler Group, which offers consulting services. He is also the director for the Symbiot Landscape Network. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.*

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Circle 166

In the Know

BUSINESS

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Hazardous workplace and personal/protective equipment citations show the industry has to step up its safety efforts.

OSHA has its eye on you

BY SHANNON DECAMP

Last year, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued 161 citations for the lawn care industry, a total of \$67,423 in penalties. Avoiding costly OSHA citations requires that you provide a safe workplace and understand what OSHA might focus on your business. Looking at last year's OSHA citations can give you an insight into where to focus your compliance activities.

Most costly & frequent

Hazardous workplace citations were the most costly. Last year, most of the hazardous workplace citations for the Lawn Care Industry had to do with usage of vehicles or heavy equipment, and/or safety in and around traffic. It is the responsibility of the employer to furnish a workplace that is free from recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.

Personal/protective equipment was the most frequently cited regulation. OSHA found that employers were not providing necessary equipment based on the job hazards, including safety glasses or goggles for eyes, hearing protection, hard hats (as needed), gloves and safety shoes. Some of you will also need to provide protective clothing, respirators, and protective shields and barriers.

Improper excavation had only five citations last year, but they were the second most costly. If you do excavations or

trenches 5 ft. deep or greater, the employer must provide a protective system to prevent cave-ins. These precautions must be taken regarding underground utility installations, surface encumbrances and other factors.

Tool guarding, especially for portable power tools, is a frequently cited area. The safe condition of tools and equipment used by employees, including those furnished by employees, is the responsibility of the employer. Keep the manufacturer's guards on at all times. Specific rules pertain to specifications, usage and maintenance requirements for many of the tools and equipment used in the lawn care industry, including portable tools and mowers.

Electrical equipment on the job was the second most frequently cited area for last year. Costly citations resulted from frayed cords and improper extension cords, as well as selection and usage of equipment, improper wiring and the lack of safe lockout/tagout procedures.

When companies require their workers to use chemicals, including gasoline, they must inform them of the hazards of these materials. Employers also need to provide a comprehensive hazard assessment of the chemicals they use. This area is improving and had only 14 of the 161 citations. *For more information about OSHA compliance requirements for the landscape industry, order a Nursery and Landscape Federal OSHA Compliance Manual for \$135 from TechneTrain, Inc. Call 800/852-8314.*

OSHA CITATIONS IN THE LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Emphasis Area	Total Cost	# Citations	Average Cost
Hazardous Workplace	\$15420	10	\$1542
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	\$14457	31	\$466
Excavation Safety	\$7440	5	\$1488
Tools and Machine Guarding	\$6787	17	\$399
Electrical	\$4250	25	\$170
Hazard Communication	\$625	14	\$49

SIC 0782 (Lawn/Garden Services) for Oct. 2003 – Sept. 2004, www.osha.gov.

David who?
David Be needin'
a last name!

Great. Which week
in April?

Is he driving in the
same traffic I am?

If he would just fill
this in, I could cost
this job properly.

I dropped by Friday
at 4:00, and no one
was there!

I don't mind paying
overtime as long
as it's real.

Employee Time Card

Name: DAVID B.		Dates: April				
Day:	Start:	Lunch:	End:	Jobsite:	Activity:	Hours:
Monday	7:30	3:30	3:30	Morris Gen	Gen	8
Tuesday	7:30	3:30	3:30	'	'	8
Wednesday	7:30	3:30	3:30	'	'	8
Thursday	7:30	4:30	4:30	'	'	7
Friday	7:30	4:30	4:30	'	'	7
Employee Signature: <i>David B.</i>				Total Hours: 42		

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Employee Report

David Burns

Jobsite Name: **Morris Property** Date Range: 4/11/2005 through 4/15/2005

Day	Start	End	Activity	Hours
Mon 4/11	7:19 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:43 hours
	12:40 PM	3:39 PM	Irrigation	2:59 hours 7:42 hours
Tue 4/12	7:21 AM	12:06 PM	Irrigation	4:45 hours
	12:37 PM	3:42 PM	Irrigation	3:05 hours 7:50 hours
Wed 4/13	7:16 AM	12:04 PM	Irrigation	4:48 hours
	12:33 PM	3:44 PM	Irrigation	3:11 hours 7:59 hours
Thu 4/14	7:18 AM	12:25 PM	Planting	5:07 hours
	1:05 PM	3:42 PM	Planting	2:37 hours 7:44 hours
Fri 4/15	7:17 AM	11:50 AM	Planting	4:33 hours
	12:36 PM	3:41 PM	Planting	3:05 hours 7:38 hours
Signature: <i>David B.</i> David Burns			Employee total 38:53 hours	

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Kick fire ants out of school

MONTVALE, NJ — Through October 31, schools can save 50% on the purchase of Bayer Environmental Science's TopChoice fire ant prevention product.

Bayer ES's Fire Ant Free Schools Program is aimed at helping public and private schools keep their grounds safe and fire ant free. It's the second year the company has offered the program.

"At Bayer, we believe that the best way to treat fire ants is to prevent them in the first place. Realizing that budgets are tight, we are once again offering a non-profit rate so more schools can

treat more acres, which can help protect children from the threat of fire ants stings," said Bryan Gooch,

business manager, insecticides, Bayer Environmental Science.

TopChoice is a low-dose, non-bait granular insecticide. For more information, or to



download a Fire Ant Free School Program voucher, visit www.nofireants.com where you can also find a TopChoice-certified professional in your area. (See TopChoice Schools Program under Testimonials.) Or, call Bayer Product Support at 800/331-2867 for more information.



LM welcomes new managing editor

CLEVELAND — *Landscape Management* is proud to welcome Stephanie Ricca to its editorial team as managing editor.

Ricca comes to LM from a 2-year stint as associate editor with two other *Advanstar* publications: *Pest Control* and *Paperboard Packaging* where she wrote and edited news and feature stories about business management and technical issues. Ricca holds an undergraduate degree from Wittenberg University and a graduate degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

For her first assignment, Editor-in-Chief Ron Hall sent Ricca to this year's



Olympics of Landscaping, PLANET's Student Career Days, held in March at the University of Maryland (see: "Field Report: Student Career Days welcomes 850 aspiring students", LM Week in Review, March 24, 2005).

"It was great to see the equipment, the students' teamwork and the range of companies across the country," says Ricca. "Plus the arboriculture event was amazing. Maybe next year I can climb a tree!"

Ricca looks forward to getting to know LM readers either on the road, by e-mail (sricca@advanstar.com) or by phone: 440/891-2623.

Ewing now in Pacific Northwest

PHOENIX — Ewing Irrigation, Golf & Industrial opened its first location in the Pacific Northwest. Ewing now has 145 branch locations from coast to coast.

FMC partners with Wilbur-Ellis

PHILADELPHIA — FMC Corp. is partnering with Wilbur-Ellis Co. to commercialize Portfolio 75 DF and Crossing 75 DF, new herbicides to control weeds and maintain bare ground on railroad rights-of-way, as well as on highway, roadside, industrial areas, fence rows and other non-crop sites. Both products are dry flowable formulations containing 75% of sulfentrazone.

Scotts changes name, acquires co.

MARYSVILLE, OH — The Scotts Co. changed its name to The Scotts Miracle-Gro Co. to promote one of its best-known brands. The company also acquired Smith & Hawken Ltd., a leading brand in the outdoor living and garden lifestyle category, for \$68.5 million.

Cornell tree and shrub manual available

ITHACA, NY — Now available, the *Cornell Guide for Planting and Maintaining Trees and Shrubs*, from the Cornell Cooperative Extension, includes practical information for the planting and maintenance of ornamental trees and shrubs. The book covers plant selection, site selection, transplanting processes and schedules, drainage management, soil preparation and planting. Tips for maintenance and insect and disease prevention are also included. To order a copy, call 607/255-2080, e-mail resctr@cornell.edu or visit www.cce.cornell.edu/store.

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One Tough Animal

2004 good for LCOs, study says

MENDHAM, NJ — According to results of a recent research study of the professional turf and ornamental pesticide market in the United States, most professional lawn care operators reported a good year in 2004, with increased business. The study, completed by Specialty Products Consultants (SPC), surveyed more than 1,200 turf and ornamental pesticide product decision makers in the lawn care, golf, athletic turf, institutional turf, turfgrass sod production, ornamental nursery and greenhouse floriculture market segments.

Not including acquisitions, more than half of the respondents said their residential lawn care service revenue increased in 2004 compared to 2003. Slightly more than one-third said their business remained

the same, and 10% said their business declined this past year. In the Midwest, nearly three-quarters of the respondents said their residential service revenue increased. The South Central region had the largest percentage of respondents (16.0%) saying that their residential service revenue decreased this past year.

Commercial lawn service revenue increased for 46% of the companies surveyed, and a similar number (46.5%) said their business remained the same, not counting acquisitions. Nationwide, 7.4% of the commercial turf care companies said their business declined. The biggest decline in commercial business was in the West, where 15.6% of the respondents said their business decreased in 2004.

What a gas!

Anybody with a car has noticed the steady rise in fuel prices recently, not to mention landscape company owners who gas up their trucks all the time. A recent landscapemanagement.net survey says a whopping 61% of respondents have raised fees thanks to rising gas and diesel prices (see chart for complete results).

This issue isn't new. Last year, 59% of respondents to a similar LM.net online survey said they were worried that rising fuel costs would hit profits. This year, though, you're doing something about it and passing those costs along.

Crude oil prices hit \$55 a barrel again at the beginning of this month, and some investment banks predict that the ever-strong demand and tight supplies could cause a "super spike" that sends prices to more than \$100 a barrel.

What is your company doing to off-



set high prices at the pump? Let us know your opinions and fuel-saving ideas at info@landscapemanagement.net.

■ ■ ■

Q. Have rising gasoline and diesel prices forced you to raise your fees?

- Yes, we couldn't let our margin get completely eaten up.61%
- Somewhat. But fuel prices aren't that bad yet.14%
- We're still trying to decide what to do.20%
- I guess we don't know how fuel prices impact our bottom line.5%

Percentages based on 189 responses

SOURCE: LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET

CLIPPINGS

BES heading to new quarters in NC

MONTVALE, NJ — Bayer Environmental Science (BES) will move its North American operations from here and Birmingham, AL, to Research Triangle Park, NC, the company's American headquarters for Bayer CropScience. The move, set for mid-2005, will unite all three of Bayer CropScience's business groups: BioScience, Crop Protection and Environmental Science.

Maruyama promo runs through mid-July

AUBURN, WA — For Maruyama's 2005 "Demand More for Your Money" promotion, lawn care professionals can receive a free M409 manual backpack sprayer or a \$30 mail-in rebate with the purchase of either a BC3020 brushcutter or MC3020-SB multicutter. Purchases must be made between April 1, 2005, and July 15, 2005.

Same company, shorter name

MENLO PARK, CA — Full-service tree care company Safe and Beautiful by The Care of Trees has changed its name to The Care of Trees. This comes two years after The Care of Trees acquired Safe and Beautiful. The Care of Trees has 500 employees and serves more than 60,000 clients in 28 locations.

Spanish labels for Dimension, Mach 2

INDIANAPOLIS — Dow AgroSciences offers Spanish label information and application guides for Dimension herbicide and MACH 2 insecticide. Last year, the company issued posters in Spanish detailing user practices for Snapshot and Gallery herbicides, which were well received.

ILLUSTRATION: CLIPART.COM

People & companies



James O. King, founder of **Regal Chemical Co.**, died Feb. 26, 2005. King

started his career at Diamond Shamrock. After working at the company for 20 years, he founded Regal Chemical Co. in 1970.

SePRO Corp. restructured its turf and ornamental business structure. The company named **Roger Storey** vice president, **Shane Barney** marketing manager, **Todd Bunnell** research manager, **David Ross** national sales manager and key distributor

accounts manager, and **Steve Dal Sasso** regional sales representative covering Florida and other Southern states.

ValleyCrest Co. named eight new vice presidents. **Katie Bouvier** is vice president, risk management; **John Johnston** is vice president and CIO; and **Paul Wolbert** is vice president, development for U.S. Lawns. For the company's Landscape Maintenance business, **Todd Chesnut** is vice president and Mid-Atlantic regional manager; **Michael Dozier** is vice president and Southeast regional manager; **Darby Gilmer** is vice president and

Dallas regional manager; **Doug Lape** is vice president and Northern California regional manager; and **Barry Troutman** (left) is vice president, technical services.



David Baker, **Lee Rogers** and **Brett Rush** were named sales representatives for **Arvesta Corp.**'s turf and ornamental group. **Doug Houseworth** joined the company as turf and ornamental technical service representative.

BASF Corp. appointed **Philip Donahoo** sales specialist for

the company's turf and ornamental business in southern Florida and **Fred Eckert** turf and ornamental sales specialist for Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington.



Diane Noecker joined **Hunter Industries** as marketing manager.

Paul Ecke Ranch named **Paul Ecke III** as CEO, **Steve Rinehart** as COO and **Andy Higgins** as president.

Plantscape, Inc. named **Stephen Falatovich** as CEO.

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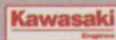


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In the Know

Good-bye to TG-CL research site

DELAWARE, OH — TruGreen ChemLawn recently sold the 108-acre site of its Technical Center here to Columbus State Community College for a Delaware

County campus. The school plans to open this new branch, it's second location, in the fall of 2009.

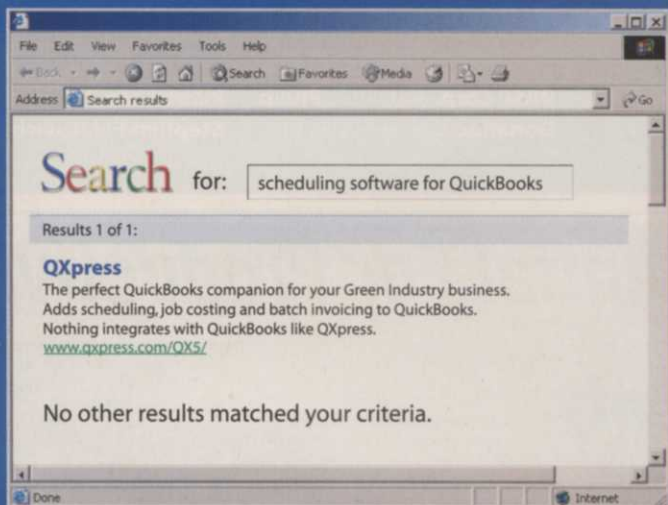
Originally built by ChemLawn, whose

corporate headquarters were several miles further south, the site was taken over by ServiceMaster when it acquired ChemLawn and merged it with TruGreen.

The lawn care giant tested products for cool-season turfgrass and also ornamentals at the facility.

TruGreen ChemLawn sold the site to Columbus State Community College for a reported \$5.6 million.

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Circle 117

Hey, where's the odor?

ORLANDO, FL — Nufarm enlisted the help of some unlikely ambassadors, four live skunks, to help promote its Triplet Low Odor herbicide at the recent GCSAA Trade Show here.

The skunks — Ambush, Kiko, Scamp and Tonka (how can you tell one from the other?) — posed for hundreds of photographs and countless more pats on the back while Nufarm personnel compared their de-scented quality with that of their new herbicide.



"This was a creative and memorable way of explaining the low odor characteristics of our new herbicide and we were extremely pleased with the response we received from not only trade show attendees, but from other exhibitors and show management as well," said Sean Casey, Nufarm turf sales manager.



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In the Know

Kostecky inducted into ANLA Hall of Fame

WASHINGTON, DC — The Landscape Division of the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) inducted Joanne Kostecky, president of Joanne Kostecky Garden Design, into its Hall of Fame. Kostecky founded her Pennsylvania company 22 years ago, and her designs are installed throughout the greater Lehigh Valley, northern Philadelphia and western New Jersey.

Articles on Kostecky's business philosophy and plant use have appeared in publications including The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, American Nurseryman, Country Living, Home and INC., as

well as several books.

Throughout her tenure in the industry, Kostecky has volunteered her time in leadership positions in numerous associations. She has served as a board member and chairperson of the Excellence in Landscape Design Awards Program for the Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association (PLNA). She is past president of ANLA's Landscape Division and is currently on the ANLA Board of Directors.

The American Nursery & Landscape Association's Landscape Division honors Joanne Kostecky with its Hall of Fame award.



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PLANET

Meeting Brief

NEWS FROM THE
**PLANET STUDENT
CAREER DAYS**



Ray Keenan of ValleyCrest Co., left, talks shop at the Student Career Days job fair with Illinois State University student Keri Poldek.

Give me an S-C-D!

PLANET Student Career Days participants give it the old college try in Maryland

By Stephanie Ricca / Managing Editor

More than 950 horticulture and landscape contracting students and faculty representing 57 colleges descended on the University of Maryland's College Park campus March 19-22 for the

largest-ever PLANET Student Career Days (SCD).

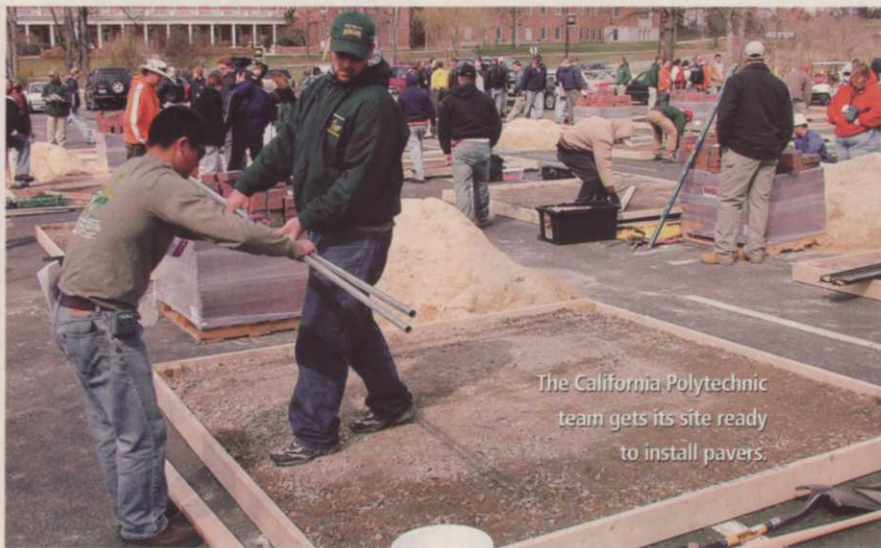
The event, known around the industry as the "landscape Olympics," gives students the chance to show off their skills in equipment operation, business strategies and design/build, as well as participate in hands-on workshops.

"Stick your hand out, introduce yourself and be bold," event chair Jim McCutcheon, CLP, of Atlanta-based HighGrove Partners, told the students at the opening rally. "Take advantage of these opportunities. This is the nucleus of the future of the Green Industry."

"Inside each and every one of you is a passion," said Ron Marcellus, national accounts manager for Ariens/Gravely/Stens Co., the event's gold sponsor. "That passion is your fuel for here at the event, back on campus and later in life." To reward that, the Brillion, WI-based company gave out six \$500 cash prizes during the career fair.

STIHL, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA, the event's platinum sponsor, presented McCutcheon with a \$30,000 sponsorship check to continue the event.

Dan Foley, CLP, PLANET president and president of Walpole, MA-based D.



The California Polytechnic team gets its site ready to install pavers.

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Foley Landscape, Inc., assured students that "the state of our industry is very positive, and business is strong."

Students banked on that statement as they visited with more than 80 regional and national landscape companies at the annual career fair. They chatted one-on-one with representatives from companies like The Brickman Group, The Davey Tree Expert Co., Ewing Irrigation Products and Shemin Nurseries about entry-level jobs and future opportunities. Many set up interviews for later in the weekend.

The state of our industry is positive, and business is strong

But the crowds really came out for the competitive events. Under the clock, teams competed in a range of activities on the business, technical and mechanical sides of the landscape business. They climbed trees, installed pavers, designed and built landscapes and irrigation systems, identified plants and pests, maneuvered equipment and role-played different business scenarios, all for points.

Most events required more than just technical knowledge. Students had to

And the winners are . . .

Yes, the experience of participation is great, but nobody turns down an award. This year's PLANET Student Career Days Top 3 schools are:

- **First place:** Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO
- **Second place:** North Metro Technical College, Acworth, GA
- **Third place:** Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA

Individual winners in each event received awards, and overall Superstar award winners are:

- **First place:** Jimmy Barnett, North Metro Technical College, Acworth, GA
- **Second place:** Justin Banford, University of Maryland, College Park, MD
- **Third place:** Bryce Carnehl, California State Polytechnic University-Pomona, Pomona, CA



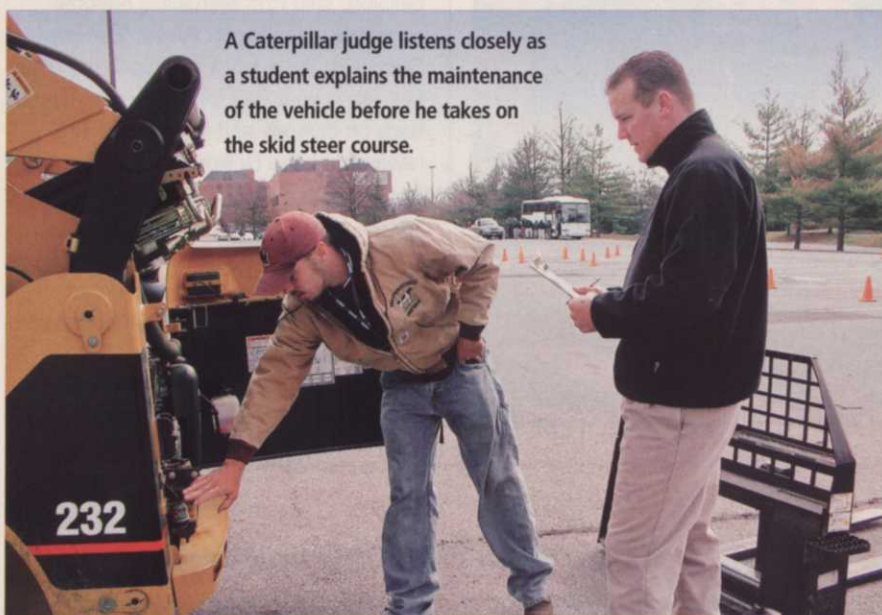
North Metro Technical College's Jimmy Barnett, right, pictured with teammate Keith Mercer, is this year's Student Career Days first place Superstar.

demonstrate to the judges their customer service skills and how they would complete jobs start to finish. In the maintenance equipment operation event, for example, competitors used power hand

tools and mowers to clear plots of land. In addition to showing proficiency on the machinery, they had to explain how they would tackle the job, and their plans for maintaining and storing the equipment.

Despite the draw of the outdoor events, the indoor sales presentation event always pulls in a crowd and this year was no exception. Competitors (most of them slightly sweaty-palmed and looking uncomfortable in suits instead of outdoor gear) role-played for points as a representative of a fictitious landscape company applying for a bank loan to build a memorial garden. Facing industry "loan officers," students requested specific dollar amounts for contracted projects and backed up their requests with equipment and labor cost data. As onlookers (many of them potential employers) watched, the loan officer asked tough questions, forcing students to step up and negotiate.

Landscape company owners all agreed this event is a particularly useful



A Caterpillar judge listens closely as a student explains the maintenance of the vehicle before he takes on the skid steer course.



Valley Community College in Waterbury, CT; Spokane Community College in Spokane, WA; and Columbus State Community College in Columbus, OH.

Next year, Brigham Young University hosts the event at its Provo, UT, campus; and in 2007, Michigan State University will welcome competitors. ■

Six colleges received PLANET accreditation during 2004, bringing the total number of accredited schools to 22. Faculty from Illinois Central College, Fleur de Lis Institute, Ozark Technical Community College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Spokane Community College, and Columbus State Community College accepted their certificates in March.

way to size up potential hires.

Thanks to generous equipment and landscape company sponsorships, students had top-of-the-line machinery and expert judges. In addition to the platinum and gold sponsors, Caterpillar Inc., Peoria, IL, and Husqvarna, Charlotte, NC, were silver sponsors.

Bronze sponsors included The Brickman Group, Glendale Heights, IL; Envirosapes/Mulch Mule, Louisville, OH; John Deere Landscapes, Alpharetta, GA; Outside Unlimited, Hampstead, MD; Pavestone Co., Grapevine, TX; Ruppert Nurseries, Laytonville, MN; Symbiot Business Group, Sandy, UT; The Toro Co., Bloomington, MN; and TruGreen LandCare, Memphis, TN.

Student Career Days isn't all about the students. Faculty met to share program ideas about fundraising, computer resources and the challenges of organizing the event, which takes place on a different campus every year.

This year, six college programs were recognized at SCD for receiving accreditation in 2004. PLANET's endorsement of colleges and universities with outstanding landscape contracting or horticulture programs is extended to schools that meet or exceed industry standards for a model curriculum. Newly accredited schools include Illinois Central College in East Peoria, IL; Fleur de Lis Institute in Tucson, AZ; Ozark Technical Community College in Springfield, MO; Naugatuck

Thoughts on success

A member of the winning Colorado State team weighs in

COLLEGE PARK, MD – Colorado State University in Ft. Collins, CO, took home top honors at this year's PLANET Student Career Days. The 16-member first-place team included landscape design and contracting, turfgrass, and floriculture majors. Colorado State's Grant Reid, a 30-year veteran of the Green Industry, received the annual "Educator of the Year" award.

The following is an account of the event from Clark Taylor, Colorado State junior landscape design and contracting major:

The best part of PLANET Student Career Days was the spirit of good competition. Even though the events were challenging and intensely competitive, an overall feeling of camaraderie and friendship existed among the members of all the teams.

This was most apparent at the closing ceremonies, my favorite part of the weekend. The way the organizers announced the event winners and then the top 10 schools overall was exciting. As they announced all the winners I noticed lots of applause from most of the students of most of the universities.

It seems PLANET was able to foster a friendly event full of strong desires to beat the competition, superseded by a spirit of good sportsmanship from the winners and the runners-up. This feeling of friendly competition added to my experience by helping me to do my best to succeed without losing focus on the principles of education, friendship, industry and good sportsmanship.

Because I was able to focus on and develop these principles I was able to gain much more than any individual or team trophy could offer a student. In addition to — and ultimately more important than — winning the event, I came away with the potential to be a better student and ultimately a better member of the Green Industry.

— Clark Taylor

Snapshots

1. Students working in teams of two assemble irrigation systems.
2. Representatives from Denver's CoCal Landscapes describe job opportunities available to recent graduates.
3. Ohio State ATI students Ryan Krieg, Joe Rickard and Hanson Sponseller get psyched for the paver installation event.
4. Jimmy McClure, North Carolina State University, tackles the arboriculture techniques event. After scaling the tree, he had to ring three strategically placed bells.
5. Andrew Prociuk, left, from Milwaukee Area Technical College, role-plays with John Balzarini, sales presentation judge from ValleyCrest Co.
6. The SUNY Cobleskill team participated in all events at this year's PLANET Student Career Days.



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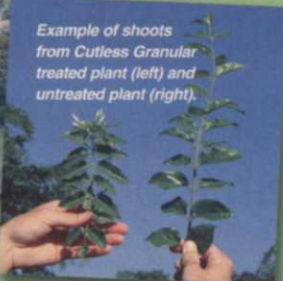
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SePRO Corporation Carmel, IN 46032

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Employees

Help Wanted—General

LANDSCAPING

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BY GEORGE WITTERSCHEIN

The kitchen sink approach works
as well as any for getting them,
but keeping them is another matter

finders keepers

Employees are the Green Industry's biggest blessing and its biggest headache. Owners of landscape and grounds maintenance operations have lots of questions about them but they always start with: How do you find them? How do you keep them?

Dan Foley owns and operates D. Foley Landscape, Inc., a \$4 million company in South Walpole, MA. His 18-year-old firm offers commercial landscape maintenance, plus special projects and enhancement work. It also has divisions doing snow and ice management. Its CampusCare operation maintains school properties. It employs 15 full time and 25 seasonal employees.

Foley relies on many methods to find good employees. "But we always start by letting our present employees know of the company's need," he says. "We also broadcast our personnel needs by networking with other contractors, subcontractors and vendors, and post help wanted ads in newspapers and on some industry Internet sites." This year his company also competed for young talent at PLANET's Student Career Days job fair. (See page 29.)

What else? There's a help wanted sign outside the company's offices, and he seeks employees at regional schools along with postings at the annual New England Grows trade show held in Boston each February.

Foley says this "kitchen sink" approach works reasonably well. His company has been growing about 20% annually. He realizes he will have to continue attracting solid employees for his company to reach \$10

million in seven years. "There's turnover," he admits. "We can lose key players for many reasons, sometimes good ones."

Foley says his company does not hire everybody that shows up at its door seeking employment.

"We consider both their technical skills and their personality. The technical skills are fairly easy to determine. Have they done it in the past? Have they been trained on it? Those are easy," he says.

"Personality traits are more important. We look for self-starters who follow through and complete tasks and projects, people who are motivated and upbeat, have a can-do attitude, and want to learn.

"Whether it's going to a seminar or getting more training, we're looking for people who want to learn and grow themselves as well as grow our company," he says.

Become an ape

Distinctively named, YardApes, is a 15-year-old company in New Milford, CT, approaching the \$1 million mark. Its seasonal work force of 17-20 employees does turf management and some design/build, mostly for residential customers. Most of the time, the company finds new "YardApes" (as it calls its employees) through referrals.

"We've had the most success with referrals among our existing employees," says Nikko D'Alessio, vice president for marketing and operations. "That applies to our domestic-born employees as well as the international workers.

"With the H2B employees, if we have a

Learn to Earn — it works

The "Learn to Earn" program at YardApes, Inc., New Milford, CT, encourages continuing education. If an employee enrolls and completes a horticultural course at the local community college, he or she can earn as much as a dollar per hour more in wages. But the extra training isn't strictly tied to horticulture. Employees can boost their pay by mastering other skills like learning to drive a truck with a trailer.

The goal for some of the employees is to become a Certified Landscape Technician through the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). Earning the CLP designation shows an employee's commitment to the company and to the industry, says Nikko D'Alessio, vice president for marketing and operations.

"This year, we're going to turn the Certified Landscape Technician program into a competition," he says. "We'll break out the tasks within the CLT program and create a chart showing each task and where each employee stands versus that skill set."

To encourage ongoing learning the company is establishing a new program — Ape Achievements. "We're always moving up the competencies and skills ladder," he adds.

good worker we ask him to return next year and to refer other good workers, whether they're relatives or friends. When they make referrals to us, the workers know they're putting their reputations on the line. They want to be proud of their recommendations. They also understand that they will be working with anyone we hire," D'Alessio says. His company also keeps its eyes open to any talent it can recruit from local schools and colleges.

Referrals also play an equally big role in the hiring at the growing and recently re-named and refocused Ecoscape Solutions Group in Charlotte, NC. The 11-year-old company, resulting from the recent merger of Countryside Landscaping and Green-

"We look for self-starters, people who are motivated and upbeat, people who have a can-do attitude"

— D. Foley

lawn Landscape & Irrigation, has about 200 employees and is on track to bring in revenues of \$15 million this season. The majority of its work is in production landscaping, custom enhancements, grading, lawn maintenance and design/build.

They find us

"We get a lot of referrals coming in the door," says Todd Witherspoon, vice president for sales. "People in our industry are aware of us, so we have good folks coming in. We also get quite a few referrals from vendors. Once people get in the door we do things like personality profiling as part of our hiring process."

Even when there seems to be a great fit between the landscape company and new hire, Witherspoon says he takes a wait-and-see approach.

"We've learned to let new people prove what they can do instead of offering them the world before they walk in the door," he says. "Given the large number of applicants we get, we can afford that approach. We make it clear that the benefits of working for our company, especially the opportunities for advancement made possible by our growth, will be awarded to them if and when they meet certain clear requirements."

Don't let go

Once hired, how does a landscape company hold onto the good employees?

"Have an environment of growth," Foley advises. "A lot of people want to see a career path, and we're proud that we've had a fairly consistent growth over the years. What that pattern says to anyone on our staff or to prospective employees is that opportunities exist here.

"Our people respond to this. When you're in a growing company, sometimes life gets stressful. But, we've been fortunate to have some of our people with us for a long time and I think the reason why they stayed is that we've offered new and different opportunities. Things are always changing and developing," he adds.

D. Foley Landscape, Inc. uses many of the usual techniques for keeping its people on board — competitive wages and benefits, an open-book management style and quarterly bonus payments based on company performance.

A little humor and fun doesn't hurt either, YardApes' D'Alessio says.

"We have an Employee of the Month that we call Ape of the Month," he says. "Everybody who works here votes. The winner is someone who has done a little extra and who deserves to be rewarded with the 'title,' which also includes a small gift certificate.

"The big thing here is that our people all share in our company vision and feel like family as part of that," says Todd Witherspoon at Ecoscape Solutions in Charlotte.

A matter of the right fit?

Is that new employee, the one who looked like a "can't miss," struggling? Many small business owners firmly believe in the saying, "hire slowly, fire quickly," but before you pull the plug on that employee, consider whether you have him or her in a job that suits individual skills or personality.

Sometimes new hires just aren't happy and don't succeed. In this case, Dan Foley, D. Foley Landscape, Inc., says he looks to see if that person might fit better in another position within the company.

"Many times you let someone go and find out they're doing great in another company. All along the problem was that we didn't have the position lined up with the person's natural attributes," Foley says.

"If that is not the case, you have to terminate professionally and promptly. Prompt action is important because human nature sometimes leads us to let things slide, and that sends a confusing and conflicting message to the rest of the team."

"Our customers have commented that we are obviously a cohesive group that gels and enjoys working together. So if customers can see the bond that we have, it's pretty clear that this is a good place for people to work and that we all enjoy working here.

"That creates business for us, because consumers want to do business with a company like us," says Witherspoon. "By the same token, people want to come to work for this kind of company, and they tend to stay with us as well. People stay here because of the atmosphere and the culture within our company. Once they get here they don't want to leave.

"They feel that they are on a good ship and they want to stay on it." **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer who lives in Mendham, NJ. Contact him at

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Circle 121



Landing that 1st big account

Ten things to know about getting the job that will grow your company to the next level

BY BOB ANDREWS

Time and time again, I've watched small contractors face the first big account, some more successfully than others. Some will tell you that the two happiest days of their lives were the day they got their first big account, and the day they lost it!

To a great extent, success or failure with a big account can be pre-determined by the procedure you follow in interacting with the potential customer and how well you build that mutually beneficial relationship.

A big account provides quick and often significant growth. It generates revenue to finance expansion of more big accounts.

So why are so many contractors hesitant to go after that first big account? More often than not, they don't know some of the basic rules of the road. Consider these as you eye that project that can grow your company to the next level:

- 1** Do the demands of the new account fit your company profile? The account may need services that you don't offer. Do you have the expertise or financial ability to deliver when you get the account?
- 2** Will servicing the big account require additional personnel and/or equipment? If so, do you have the financial resources to buy or hire what you need? Will this stretch your finances so thin that it hurts service to existing customers? Remember, your goal here is to grow your business, not simply to trade old customers for new ones.
- 3** Most big accounts require a contract for a specified time of service, but for how long? One year? Two years? The key point here is that the longer the contract, the more stable its revenue becomes. Ramping up manpower and equipment for a short-term contract then losing it in a year could hurt. Convince the big account to commit to a few years. Then you can invest in their property, dedicate people and equipment, and not cut corners with service.

4 Check the credit of any new big account. Too often a contractor extends significant amounts of credit to a big customer without checking its credit rating or past payment history. Requiring one is not an insult, just good business.

5 If subcontractors are required to complete the work, can you find them? Use caution in bringing in a sub, and find one whose level of performance matches your own. This is vital since your work eventually will be judged by what the sub delivers.

6 Begin developing relationships with subcontractors before that first big job. You should do this even when your operation is small. Do it in steps and on a small scale before you need the sub on a bigger project. This allows you to get to know them, judge their competency, response time and quality of work. When you're ready to grow, the sub will grow with you.

7 Can you service the big account without sacrificing service to your smaller accounts? This is an operational issue, different from the second point where the financial strain of growth may hurt existing accounts. Would you and your staff put the big account above other accounts? It's bad policy to devote inordinate attention to the

continued on page 40



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Circle 122



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big account while paying lip service to the smaller ones. The smaller accounts are often long-term customers and most likely more profitable in the long run. Losing a

smaller account may not mean the end of the world, but don't do anything to get that ball rolling.

8 If the big account wants a lower price for your service, are you prepared to

deliver a corresponding level of service? It's not uncommon for the contractor to bid a lower price for the big account without thinking about lowering the quality of the product. This isn't about short changing the big account; it's about reality. Judge accordingly, purchase accordingly, bid accordingly and deliver accordingly.

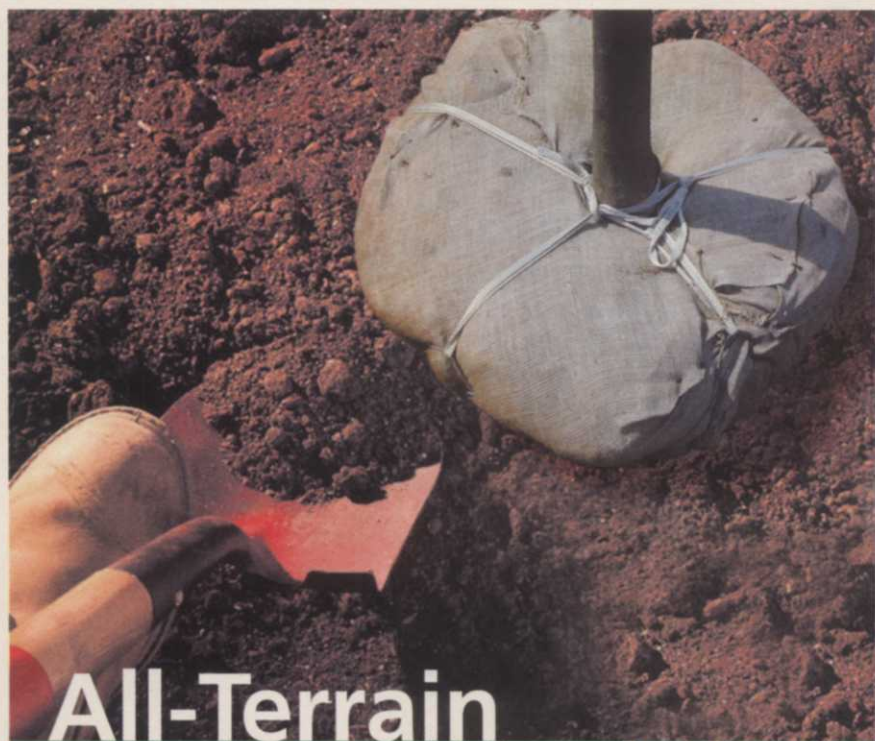
9 If you get a big account and determine that you can serve it successfully, start looking for other similar projects. That first acquisition generally means a jump in your company's income. Conversely, the loss of the big account can result in a big hit. One solution to this is to find more than one big account, maybe even two or three more. This tends to happen naturally once you've confirmed your first big account. Having more than one big account, particularly if their contracts are staggered, means you may be able to soften the blow when you lose one since you have others to fall back on. Having more than one big account also means you can shift crews from one to another and not lose the rhythm by jumping between a big job and smaller jobs.

10 Watch your big account for rule changes along the way. Too often contractors bid and get one set of specs, only to see them changed once the contract is in place. One example is a client that asks you to quote several lawn care treatments per year, awards you the business, then reduces its needs once your service starts.

Carefully read the contract. You may find that the client has wiggle room while you virtually have none. Knowing the rules of such games will help you decide if this is work you really want.

Acquiring that first big account is a sure sign you are growing. Doing so successfully is a sure sign that you have arrived at a new level of growth. **LM**

— The author is president of The Greenskeeper, Inc., Carmel, IN, and past president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. Contact him at lawncareba@aol.com.



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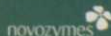
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What separates companies is the amount and quality of interaction between service providers and customers.



Your clients define value

BY JUDY GUIDO

Your competition keeps nipping at your heels with new services and products, replicating your processes and systems and forming formidable partnerships you never dreamed possible. Perhaps they're even stealing your employees. If that weren't enough, new competitors spring up every year.

Sound familiar?

In this environment of brutal competition, technology, mobility and the incredible rate of change, what can you do to stay ahead?

In a phrase — understand your customers. You have to find out exactly what they appreciate most about your services or products. You become a market leader by developing and nurturing this customer-centric strategy. The only way to do this is to learn their definition of value. Once you determine and deliver your customers' perception of value, you leave little or no room for competitors to get between the two of you.

I've discovered, unfortunately, that many customers perceive the level of Green Industry service to be hardly distinguishable among companies. That being the case, customers usually turn to other criteria when deciding to buy one company's service over another.

The question we wanted answered was: Why do you buy from one company rather than another?

Almost every customer we talked to said that they expect great service, industry knowledge and fair pricing. Those are givens. What separated companies, and what really mattered, was the amount and quality of

interaction between service provider and customer. Customers often value that relationship as much as or more than what they actually buy.

Let's think of this in a different light. Consider your own personal experiences with service providers that you've dealt with, both those that you were satisfied with and those that failed to live up to expectations. Have you been satisfied with the time it takes you as the customer:

- ▶ to learn about their services or products?
- ▶ to acquire their services or products?
- ▶ to actually use their services or products?
- ▶ to maintain their products or services?
- ▶ to get rid of or exit the relationship?

Did you have to leave four phone messages before they called back? Did it take three weeks to get an appointment? Once an appointment was made, did it take another two weeks to get a proposal? And once the proposal was approved, did it take another four weeks before the work was scheduled?

Or were you able to jump on their Web site, quickly learn about their services and request an appointment within a few seconds?

Certainly, factors such as convenience, ease of doing business and trust drive customer choice. Although many companies realize they need to pay attention to these and other customer-focused factors, most companies still fall short in creating an executable value strategy that translates into market leadership and sustainable growth.

— *Judy Guido is principal of Guido & Associates, dedicated to helping green companies grow their people and profits. Contact her at 805/553-9095 or jmguido@sbcglobal.net*

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1



2



3



4



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2 Pump you up

Honda Power Equipment's WX10 lightweight water pump has gotten a makeover. The redesigned 13-hp unit, WX10K1, features a 50% improvement in priming time to 80 seconds in 16.4 ft.; an 18% improvement in total head lift to 118 ft.; a 15% improvement in suction head lift to 26 ft., a maximum output pressure increase from 43 psi to 51 psi and its weight was reduced by 1.6 lbs. to 13.4 lbs. Honda's 25cc overhead cam mini 4-stroke engine powers the WX10K1. Through the use of a rotary slinger pumping lubrication system, it can be started, operated and stored in any position. Expect a 37-gpm capacity with this unit.

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3 Brush destroyer

The new Vermeer BC600XL is capable of processing material up to 6-in. in diameter. With the standard Auto Feed II system to maximize productivity and the innovative Bottom Feed Stop Bar to enhance operator safety, the BC600XL chipper is an excellent unit for municipal work crews, landscape and grounds pros and tree service contractors. The unit's 27-hp Kohler Command Pro engine is an 8% increase in horsepower over the BC625A. Its compact size (110-in. long, 53.5-in. wide, 94-in. high) allows it to be towed by a small pickup or SUV. Fewer switches and parts result in increased ease-of-operation and decreased service costs.

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1. Spark (Ignition System) — Assuming the hand recoil or electric starter is operating properly, the first step is to examine the ignition system. Remove the sparkplug and check that it has proper gap and is not fouled. If necessary, replace with the correct plug. Then check the ignition system using a tester, such as a Briggs & Stratton Ignition Tester (#19368). **Never test for ignition by allowing a removed spark plug to dangle by the coil wire against the engine block** as this can ignite exiting cylinder fuel vapors and it doesn't put the ignition system under true engine operating conditions. If there still is no spark, there may be a problem with either the ignition coil or coil grounding wire or the equipment interlock system.

2. Fuel — Once there is spark, place one teaspoon or less of gas directly into the spark plug hole. Reinsert and tighten the spark plug and try to start the engine. If it starts, but dies after a couple of seconds, there is a fuel system problem. Make sure there is fuel in the tank and that it's getting to the carburetor by inspecting flow at the end of the fuel line. If the unit was stored over winter and the fuel was either not drained or treated, the fuel could have gummed up and blocked the carburetor passage ways. After disassembling the carburetor, use carburetor cleaner to dissolve residue and varnish.

3. Compression — If you have spark and added fuel to the spark plug hole and the engine still won't start, it may have weak compression. This means the cylinder pressure is not building to vaporize the fuel and/or transmit the force after the fuel has ignited. In this case, the cylinder gases bypass the piston, piston rings or valves and a major engine repair is needed.



*By Mark Nelson,
Product Service Trainer,
Briggs & Stratton Commercial Power*

From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY GETTING A GOOD TECH

Does the potential employee know about the opportunities you can offer them in your shop?



Radical recruiting

BY HARRY SMITH

So you're still looking for a technician or more probably you're looking for a technician again.

The competition is fierce. Good technicians are constantly barraged with offers.

One of my graduates (a talented technician) has moved three times in five years always to a better position, better benefits, higher salary and challenges that have kept him enthusiastic about his career.

I have talked in the past about finding and recruiting good technicians. Perhaps it's time to explore not only recruitment but also retention.

First let's explore a few ideas about recruitment. I've suggested previously that you look at retirees, people exiting the armed forces and technical school students that are near graduation. Another idea that has been recently suggested is to look within your current employees. I'm not just suggesting you pick a mechanically adept crew member (a good idea) but that you also look further down the road. Your current employees have kids. If you have a maturing workforce, which is usually the case, then these "kids" are becoming young adults.

Where are they going after high school? Are they car nuts and do they love all

things mechanical? Do they know about the opportunities you can offer them in your maintenance shop?

Here's a radical idea. Offer to send them to a vocational program to build their skills. Require in return that they repay your investment by agreeing to work for you for two years.

Many good small engine and turf equipment technician programs are only six to eight months long. They then work in your shop as an apprentice with the opportunity to advance as their skills increase. They fulfill their obligation to you and you get a good employee.

What about retention? The son or daughter of a faithful employee has a powerful incentive to stay in your employ. You have a successful history with the family.

What about other retention techniques for your other employees? Think about things like branching career paths that provide lateral and upward advancement. Can a mower operator become a spray technician in your company? Is there a path to supervisory jobs that includes appropriate training?

Many employees quit because they're in a dead-end position. Don't forget the move does not always have to be upward to keep an employee satisfied.

— *The author is turf equipment professor at Lake City Community College, Lake City, FL. Contact him at smithh@lakecitycc.edu.*

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Circle 124

A CRM database can help you track everything from phone calls to sales orders to customer service requests.



Streamline customer contact

BY TYLER WHITAKER

What happens when one of your account managers or sales reps quits? What happens to the customer and sales prospects relationships? How long does it take the new employee to come up to speed? Do you spend weeks trying to pick up the pieces? If the answers to these questions stir up feelings of anxiety, you need a customer relationship management (CRM) solution to store critical customer information.

Using a CRM database in your business can help you track everything from phone calls to sales orders to customer service requests. Centralizing all of your customer communications in one place fosters consistency. With consistency comes the ability to first measure and then manage your people and processes.

When I talk with business owners about CRM solutions, I get different responses. Some companies still use paper forms and filing cabinets. In my opinion, this category of solution includes Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, documents and e-mail inboxes. This approach limits accessibility and no reporting. Others rely upon software geared toward the single user. But what about sharing that information with the rest of the company? The sign of a poor solution is when the method of reporting requires people to compile the report instead of doing the work. The act of doing the work should be independent of the reporting of that work.

What's needed is a centralized database that tracks all of your employees' data in one place. Combine this with a Web user interface and you have a solution that

removes the problem of limited accessibility. Next consider reporting. Does the solution have built-in standard reports that make sense? If you cannot easily understand the reports, look for another product.

It's believed that 50% of all CRM deployments fail. Most problems occur between the employee and the software. Getting sales people to use the solution is usually the number one hurdle. Try using the reports from the CRM solution to manage your people. If employees feel that they're being graded on the data in the CRM, then they'll feel compelled to maintain it.

Often companies can't find a CRM tool that fits their business because they don't have standard processes and procedures. Using the standard approach that the CRM suggests can help remove the hurdles of user acceptance. The minute the employee has to perform a non-standard action in the CRM solution, you will start to run into opposition.

Also, provide users access only to the customer records they manage. This lessens the chance of an employee walking away with your complete customer list. If users need remote access to the solution to perform their work (from home, office or in the field), then make sure the connection is secured by encryption.

We all have customers and employees. As your business grows you will become limited in your involvement with each customer. Managing these relationships in a consistent manner can be the difference between success and failure. Remember the term customer relationship management or its acronym CRM — you need it.

— *The author is the chief technology officer for Symbiot Business Group (www.symbiot.biz). He can be reached at 801/733-6900 or twhitaker@symbiot.biz.*

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Insect control in transition

Finding the best control option from a widening range of products challenges today's grounds pros

BY FREDERICK P. BAXENDALE
AND JOHN C. FECH

Lions and tigers and bears, oh my! Navigating through the ever-changing landscape of products, formulations and regulations can be scary. After all, you're just trying to follow the yellow brick road to successful pest control. Well, we're not in Kansas anymore. As times change, pest control strategies change with them. As grounds managers, golf course superintendents and arborists, you'll need to adapt to a new world of pest control.

A quick history lesson

During and after WWII, chlorinated hydrocarbon insecticides such as DDT, chlordane and Toxaphene were developed as the early synthetic approaches to pest control. They were slightly to moderately toxic to mammals including people, and controlled pests for a very long time. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, most of these chemistries were discontinued because of development of insect resistance and adverse environmental concerns. Of greatest

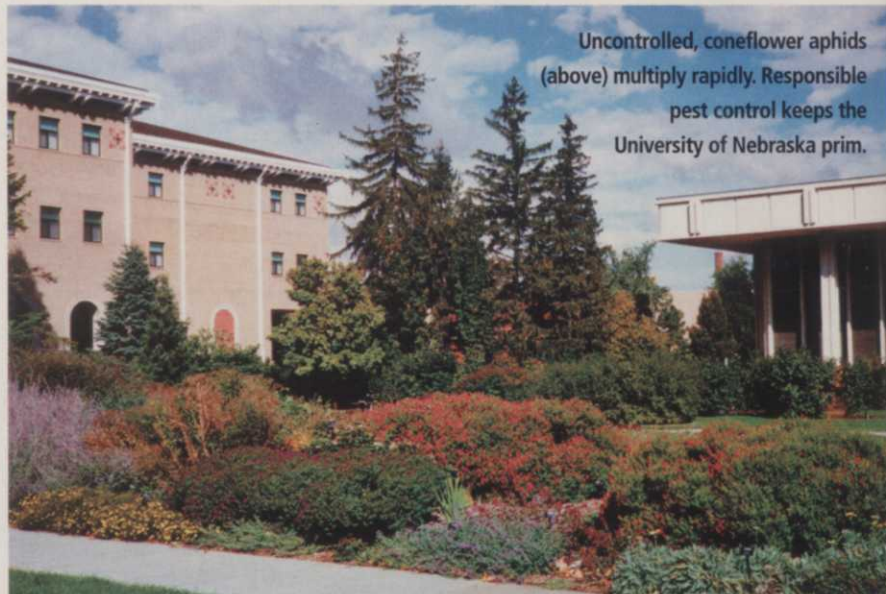
concern was their persistence, the extended time it took for these materials to break down in the environment.

The removal of insecticide products from the market continued in the 1980s and 1990s. The targets included the organophosphates (Cygon, diazinon, Dursban, Oftanol, Triumph) and the carbamates such as Turcam. Organophosphates and carbamates were shorter residual materials,

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Uncontrolled, coneflower aphids (above) multiply rapidly. Responsible pest control keeps the University of Nebraska prim.





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but due to their typically higher toxicities, were targeted for cancellation by their detractors. Even the common vegetable garden insecticide, Sevin, is under scrutiny by the EPA, with many scientists predicting its removal from the market in the near future. Bottom line — we continue to lose our traditional pesticide products.

Let's look forward

So now what? Hide under a rock? Nah. Not necessary. Let's look at what you'll need to know in terms of new products and new technologies in pest control. The future of ornamental and turf insect management falls into 8 categories:

1. synthetic pyrethroids
2. neonicotinyls
3. insect growth regulators (IGRs)
4. bio-insecticides
5. oils and soaps
6. genetic resistance
7. genetically modified plants
8. IPM - Still alive and kicking'

The loss of chlorinated hydrocarbons, organophosphates and carbamates has lead to a greater reliance on synthetic pyrethroids. In general, pyrethroids remain active in the environment for a shorter time than the previously mentioned materials, produce a quick kill of the target pest and are only moderately toxic to humans and other mammals. Representative insecticides in this class include Astro, DeltaGard, Scimitar, Talstar, Tempo and others.

The most recent insecticide class to be developed are the neonicotinoids. As the name implies, these compounds mimic the action of naturally occurring nicotine by interfering with the insect's nervous system. Arena, Flagship, Merit, Safari and Tristar dominate this group. These products are popular because of their high efficacy and lower potential for injury to non-target organisms.

Among the first commonly available IGRs, Procur (methoprene) made front

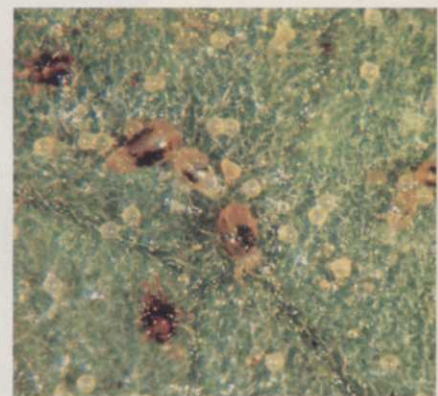


A spray containing Bt finished off this unfortunate looper. These two-spotted spider mites (below) were controlled with a horticultural oil.

page news in USA Today, touted as "birth control for roaches." IGRs are compounds that interfere with the production and use of natural insect hormones either through over-stimulation or inhibition. Because these hormones are only present in insects, IGRs have little or no effect on people or other vertebrates. Mach 2, a molt-accelerating compound, is classified as an IGR.

The so-called bio-insecticides are both old and new. Nicotine sulfate, pyrethrum, rotenone, sabadilla and ryania have been used for decades, with the assumption that because they were derived from plants, they must have a low toxicity. Au contraire. Nicotine is highly toxic and has been shown to be both a carcinogen and a mutagen. Many of the other traditional botanicals have also recently experienced difficulty advancing through recent EPA re-registration protocols.

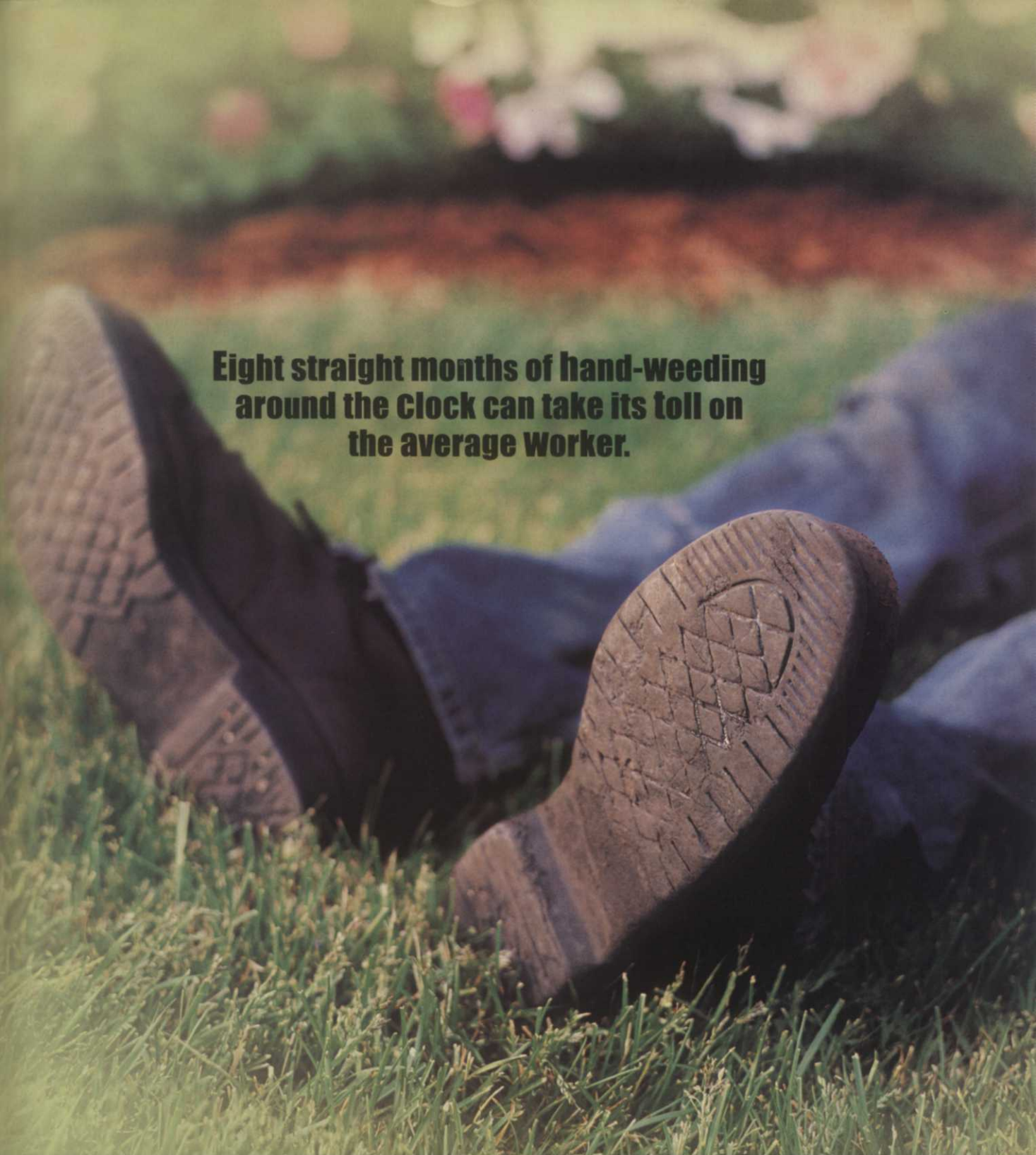
Most grounds managers are aware of the effectiveness of products containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), which has been available since the early 1980s. Various strains and formulations of this bacterium continue to play an important role in insect control in the turf and ornamental market. Its high degree of host specificity and short residual are both its boon and bane. While Bt products generally pose little environmental risk, they must be re-applied often.



Additional bio-insecticides, including citronella, avermectin (derived from the soil bacterium *Streptomyces avermitilis*) and neem (azadirachtin) products have been in the research and development phase for years. Unfortunately, many of these products have had difficulty breaking into the mainstream pest control market, partly because of their failure to provide both effective and consistent insect control. An exception may be the bio-insecticide Conserve (spinosad), which has been shown to be highly effective (80% to 90% control) against soft-bodied insects such as caterpillars and aphids. Research is also continuing to identify and develop new strains and formulations of beneficial nematodes.

Horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps continue to be available for control of soft-

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bodied pests including whiteflies, aphids, mealybugs, caterpillars and spider mites. An attractive feature of oils and soaps is that they are essentially non-toxic. This feature can be a powerful customer relations tool for the grounds manager — effective results with low environmental risk. However, there are significant drawbacks associated with using these materials. First, to be effective, the spray solution must physically contact the target pest. Once dry, spray residues remaining on the foliage are no longer active. Insects recolonizing or hatch-

ing after sprays have dried are usually not affected. Second, the target pest must be in a susceptible life stage.

Mealybugs and scales produce protective coverings that greatly reduce the effectiveness of both oils and soaps. Finally, thorough coverage is essential for successful control. An aphid hiding on the unsprayed underside of a leaf stands a good chance of survival.

Landscape plantings themselves can often be effectively used to minimize the incidence of insect pests. Consider a wind-break. These plantings typically consist of a single tree species, such as Austrian pine,

Scotch pine and blue spruce. The trees are laid out in an "L" shape to provide shelter and snow protection for people or livestock. Because the trees are the same species, and in most cases came from the same seed source, you'd expect them to look exactly alike. However, that's just not the case. Think back again to the look of the trees. Most likely, you envisioned tall and upright trees next to shorter, blocky trees, next to ones sharing some features of the other two forms. Why? Genetic diversity. Each tree has similar features — number of needles in

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IPM success stories

BY ILLINOIS BLASDEL

The key to successful integrated pest management (IPM) begins with healthy plants and diligent scouting, but that's just the start. Effective control products are still needed. Many grounds professionals are experimenting with a range of insect control methods, such as natural enemies or bio-controls for insect population management.

One naturally occurring option is azadirachtin, an active ingredient from the neem tree. "Neem products have been used for centuries in India," says Georgia Kleppner, director of grounds for the community of Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury Retirement

Center in Irvington, VA. Kleppner and her crew of six manage the 65 acres of heavily landscaped turf and ornamentals at the center.

"For insect management in a retirement community, health and safety are our primary concerns. I needed an alternative from the synthetics that I'd been using," she explains.

Azadirachta indica is a naturally occurring active tetranortriterpenoid in the neem tree, which is common in India and Asia. Azadirachtin causes hormonal imbalances and disrupts the maturation cycle in insects, which results in unsuccessful molts, or heavily deformed immature insect stages. It also has anti-feedant, repellent and anti-ovipositioning activities. The insecticidal characteristics of azadirachtin have sparked growing research.

The neem tree derivative has been found to affect more than 220 different species of insects, mites and nematodes, says Casey Sclar, Colorado State University researcher. Even insects that have become resistant to synthetic pesticides can be controlled with azadirachtin due



Keith Reid, owner of Bioscope Integrated Pest Management, fits his insect control choice to the pest.

to its complex structure and multiple modes of action.

Keith Reid, owner of Bioscope Integrated Pest Management, Virginia Beach, VA, is committed to IPM. Reid, a commercial pesticide applicator with 25 years of experience, still uses traditional chemical insecticides when required, especially when infestations have reached overwhelming populations or damage levels. But even then, he uses azadirachtin to enhance effectiveness and decrease the amount of chemical required. "I use Azatrol EC Insecticide because it tank mixes with other chemicals," Reid says.

Dave Fearis, Azatrol product manager at PBI/Gordon, says that the technical

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Georgia Kleppner, director of grounds for a Virginia retirement center, added an azadirachtin tool to her arsenal.

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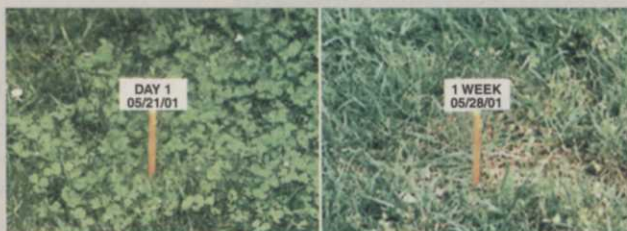


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continued from page 60

material used to formulate the product is extracted with a patented process that isolates the azadirachtin without crushing the neem seed kernel. "This results in a product with fewer impurities. It contains no neem oil," Fearis says.

Another reason Reid uses azadirachtin insecticide is the almost immediate cessation of damage from chewing and sucking insects and the overall reductions in insect populations. Some of the insects he successfully controls with azadirachtin include white flies on gardenias, and beetles on crepe myrtle. He says he also gets excellent results controlling scale, both cottony cushion and waxed species, on Nellie R. Stevens holly and Burford holly. For azalea lace bugs, Keith tank mixes azadirachtin with dimethoate.

Kleppner also has found Azatrol to be a superior formulation of azadirachtin. "I like the almost pleasant smell," she says. Most insecticides, including other azadirachtin products, have offensive odors. "That makes this product an even better solution to our pest problems."

Kleppner's successes include control

of lace bugs, Japanese beetles, thrips, bagworms and spider mites.

Her first test of the product involved 25 azaleas heavily infested with lace bugs. She got complete control, finding only two lace moths within the next 30 days. Since then, she uses it as her main pesticide spray.

"In my opinion, products with azadirachtin represent a valuable tool for IPM programs," says Geoff Zehnder, entomology professor at Clemson University and coordinator of the IPM and sustainable agriculture programs. "They are relatively broad-spectrum so they can be used against a diversity of pests."

— The author is a partner with Blasdel Cleaver Schwalbe and can be reached at Illinois@bcsthinktank.com.



Keith Reid uses a product with azadirachtin as its active to control cottony scale on ornamental holly (left) and also to knock down lace bugs, above.

Older insecticides like these are making way for new, less toxic formulations.



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a pair, bark coloration and cone structure, enough to be considered the same species, yet there can be dramatic differences in the genetic makeup of individual trees.

The grounds manager can put this diversity to work. It can be used to reduce insects and diseases without the need for pesticide sprays. Many plants are naturally resistant to insects and diseases. Entomologists, plant pathologists and horticulturists are screening plant material to identify resistant species and cultivars. Research is underway to understand the mechanisms of this resistance, breed insect and disease resistance into existing cultivars, and introduce resistant plants into the marketplace.

A second approach for using genetic diversity to reduce insect and disease problems involves planting a variety of plant material. In our windbreak example, instead of selecting exclusively Scotch pines, choose a diversity of evergreen species to reduce the potential of losing the entire stand to an insect outbreak or fatal disease such as pine wilt.

Pine wilt is a malady similar to Dutch Elm Disease in that an insect, the pine sawyer beetle in this case, transmits a destructive nematode which feeds on the inner tissues of the sapwood and clogs the vascular cambium of the tree. Designing a windbreak that includes a mixture of resistant species such as Ponderosa pine, blue spruce, Serbian spruce, Douglas fir, white fir, limber pine, Bosnian pine and Rocky Mountain juniper will go a long way to ensure a healthy windbreak for many years.

Some researchers are taking the concept of genetic manipulation a step further.

The idea is to genetically engineer a plant for insect or disease resistance. This approach involves extracting specific genetic material from a plant, fungus or bacterium and splicing it into the DNA of another. In the agronomic world, the use of Bt corn has proven to be an effective tool for some farmers in their efforts to control corn rootworms and European corn borers. Potential for the ornamentals and turf arena might include incorporation of the same Bt genes into trees to provide borer control. Development of genetically modified plants is likely to expand in the future.

Whether you choose an existing insecticide, or start experimenting with one of the newly available products, the foundational techniques of integrated pest management (IPM) — proper timing, economic threshold, scouting, resistant cultivars, right plant, right place and good cultural practices — will remain important strategies in your overall pest management program. The IPM hallmarks don't change, just the products.

Of course, it's wise to get to know new products thoroughly. This includes how they work, when to apply them and how long they last. Realize, however, that no matter how much they change, insecticides are still just one tool in the grounds manager's arsenal. **LJM**

— John C. Fech (jfech@unlnotes.unl.edu) is an extension educator and Dr. Frederick P. Baxendale (fbaxendale1@unl.edu) is professor of entomology and extension specialist, both at the University of Nebraska.



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Circle 130

Disease management

Three Texas-based lawn care operations agree their clients need it and will pay for it

BY KRISTEN ESKIN

— *profitable add-on*

Offering disease management is a simple way to provide a more comprehensive package — and ultimately have a more satisfied lawn care customer.

Gary LaScalea, owner and president of GroGreen, Plano, TX, has been offering disease control for years for both lawn care and tree and shrub maintenance customers. In fact, it is now part of the regular services that GroGreen provides.

"Disease management in lawn care is almost entirely weather related," LaScalea says. "But when it comes to trees and shrubs, disease problems may not always be as visible to the customer. That's why a big part of our business is education and recommendation."

LaScalea actively promotes customer education. He does numerous mailings throughout the year and always makes sure to fill out recommendation forms for each customer before leaving. He even does evaluations for non-customers as a way to grow his customer base.

"We like to inform the customers of exactly what is going on," he says. "The recommendation forms are used to note any diseases that we may see. We also tell them



Gary LaScalea

about proper mowing, trimming and watering techniques. It's up to the customer to decide

whether or not they want the extra disease control, but at least they can be informed about exactly what it is they have and what they can expect to see with our services."

In Texas, brown patch heads the list of lawn disease problems, followed by leaf

spot, anthracnose and summer patch. Trees and shrubs are prone to apple scab, powdery mildew, rust and rhizoctonia root rot.

GroGreen's trucks are set up to do both tree & shrub and lawn care disease management. If the truck is designed to handle both services, the stop is twice as profitable on customers who choose tree and shrub care as well as lawn care. "Lawn care companies can't afford to ignore disease management," LaScalea says. "If your customer needs the service, and you don't offer it, you've lost a customer."

LaScalea generally uses Compass fungicide for residual disease control in lawns because it controls

a wide range of turf diseases. Since the product also controls most of the common tree and shrub diseases, it proves to be a broad spectrum fungicide with lasting results. Used at the rate of 0.25 ounce per 1,000 sq. ft., it provides control for up to 28 days.

For Harold Zick, owner of Green Up in Houston, TX, tree and shrub diseases just aren't that prevalent.

Tips for adding on disease services

Steve Ambrose, lawn general manager of ABC Pest and Lawn Care, Austin, TX, offers the following advice to other lawn care operators who are considering adding disease control to their services:

- ▶ Price your service properly.
- ▶ Make sure you know the causes of disease (temperatures, moisture, cultural, etc.).
- ▶ Know how long fungicides last.
- ▶ Watch out for your guarantee – know what you are getting into.
- ▶ Educate your customers on repair time of turf.

"We also like to inform our customers of basic cultural practices that they can tend to on their own," Ambrose says. "For instance, we educate them on when and how to water and explain proper mowing techniques. For our part, we make sure to treat our wheels and tires of mowers after each mowing, and the blades once a day so as not to transfer diseases from one lawn to another."

— KE

Zick believes that his market is the brown patch center of the world. He says the disease takes hold in September and continues through the end of the year.

"We offer a brown patch reduction program, which consists of three treatments of Compass or ProStar over the whole yard as a preventive measure. The first treatment is usually around September 1, with the second one about four weeks later." This service is a completely separate entity from regularly scheduled maintenance, and as such is billed separately.

Steve Ambrose, lawn general manager of ABC Pest and Lawn Care in Austin, TX, says that turf disease control is an add-on service with his firm, too. If customers decide to subscribe to the care program, they can then pay out over five visits, so the cost

is spread out over time and not as much of an sticking point.

A lot of the work that ABC does is preventive, but because St. Augustinegrass is so prone to brown patch, it can be difficult to predict exactly when it will show. It's important to educate customers ahead of time.

One thing LaScalea, Zick and Ambrose all agree on is good customer service. Not only can disease management retain and grow an existing customer base, it can be a way to reach new customers as well. As LaScalea says, "You've got to be a well-rounded company, prepared to handle all required services. After all, that is our job, isn't it?" **LM**

— The author is a writer with Tierney Communications in Philadelphia and can be reached at keskin@tierneyagency.com.

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Circle 163

Staying current

The irrigation industry steps up its education and training to meet growing Green Industry challenges

BY JON WATSON

Dedicating time and resources to educate employees to stay up-to-date on irrigation knowledge and business trends is a challenge that's too often overlooked or not given the priority needed to ensure high-quality service.

Now's the best time put together regular training sessions that provide technical

reference study and practical hands-on instruction. This ensures that irrigation installers, contractors and designers understand equipment, troubleshooting and operations to meet clients' expectations.

Among the many training resources available to the irrigation technician and contractor is your local irrigation equipment distributor. A distributor can walk you through various irrigation products, show you how products work and instruct

you on the benefits of the products in an irrigation system. Additionally they can connect you with local irrigation contractor organizations or manufacturer technical support personnel.

Association support

Local irrigation contractor organizations are a great tool for knowledge as well as for networking. These organizations may be state sponsored or managed privately by a landscape contractor or landscape specifier/designer association. These organizations may meet quarterly or annually. Training ranges from basic installation, troubleshooting and design, to business classes suitable for contractors and public agency irrigation technicians. These associations may have irrigation programs that lead to certifications or offer classes that meet national irrigation certification programs. Examples of these associations are Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and the Irrigation Association (IA).

The IA is a global association of irrigation professionals in the fields of agriculture, turf, landscape and golf. It encourages members to work toward a shared vision — water conservation through efficient irrigation. The IA promotes and supports professional training and certification. It also acts as a source of technical and public policy information within the industry. Additionally, the IA unites irrigation professionals. These include equipment manufacturers, distribu-



Several industry associations and manufacturer/suppliers offer instruction leading to certification.

tors/dealers, designers, contractors, educators, researchers and technicians from the public and private sectors.

The IA's education program delivers numerous classes, which build public awareness of water management issues. It also provides certifications for irrigation practitioners and ensures access to research data pertinent to industry practices and products. IA offers several certification programs, including Landscape Irrigation Auditor/Golf Irrigation Auditor, Irrigation Contractor, Irrigation Designer (in several disciplines), Irrigation Manager and Agriculture Irrigation Specialist. Classes are conducted at the international and national IA shows as well as at regional events. Learn of additional information on certifications and classes at the Web site www.irrigation.org.

Local water districts and extension service personnel are good sources for training materials and water conservation seminars, too. Typically these address the water use needs of a geographic area and local regulations. Staying current on electrical and water use codes is critical for an organization's survival. Networking with other contractors in the plumbing or electrical fields also fuels business growth.

Manufacturer's guidance

Other excellent resources are the training programs conducted by irrigation system manufacturers. Often, these deal with the particular manufacturer's products (central control, valves, sprinklers, for instance). But that's not always the case. Some training programs offer educational programs and

training that cut across brands, like Rain Bird's Academy Program.

This program has classes that target diverse audiences — the new technician/contractor, experienced irrigation contractors, golf course superintendents, landscape architects/specifiers and residential users. The Academy Program offers classes in the United States and around the world.

Some Academy topics include electrical troubleshooting, controller programming, wire tracing, grounding, sprinkler and valve operations and troubleshooting, and design/hydraulics. Specialty courses include intermediate and advanced design, bidding and estimating, contract writing, drip irrigation design, and troubleshooting. These courses are not brand specific. Some are eligible for continuing education units leading

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The sophistication of today's irrigation systems calls for ongoing training at every level.



to IA certification and some state contractor licensing boards.

As the Green Industry service industry grows, irrigation manufacturers seek to become closer business partners by building business course programs aimed at business management issues.

Multimedia library

The amount of irrigation knowledge that's becoming available to contractors and grounds professionals grows daily. It includes textbooks, reference manuals and design guides, CDs, DVDs and e-learning tools. Many irrigation consultants write instructional guides that can be purchased on the IA's Web site (www.ia.org), at your local irrigation equipment distributor or through trade organizations.

The easy availability of instructional CDs, DVDs and videos allow individuals to build their knowledge in spite of their demanding schedules. It allows people to learn at their own speed while being able to review lessons over and over again. Additionally, having self-paced exercises and tests in the multi-media tools reinforces learning and provides students with an assessment of learning knowledge.

E-learning and Web-based training are available in many variations, as well. They range from point-and-click to streaming video live instruction over the Internet at predetermined times. Some of the Web-learning programs are found at Golf Course Superintendents Association's site (www.gcsaa.org) and Landscape Management/PLANET's Green Industry

Hub. You can access it at www.greenindustryhub.com.

With technology advancing faster than ever before, no matter your background or years of industry experience, you must stay current on the latest techniques and trends.

Calls for water conservation, growing regulatory pressures and the efficient use of time demand that you stay on top of irrigation technology and best practices. **LM**

— The author is the Training Services Manager of Rain Bird Services Corp.

Contact him at JWatson@rainbird.com.

For more information on the Rain Bird Academy Program visit

www.rainbird.com/landscape/training.

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BY CURT HARLER

Aerators

Buying tips

- ▶ Examine the quality of plugs a machine produces.
- ▶ Do you need a unit that does dry, coring, or ripping to open the soil?
- ▶ Check the coring pattern.
- ▶ Compare number of holes per square foot.
- ▶ Compare time it takes to do 10,000 square feet or an acre.
- ▶ Number of tines per rotor is important.
- ▶ Buy a unit that gives choice of depths.
- ▶ Machine weight is important to get consistent depth.

John Deere ▲

The Deere Aercore Models 1000 and 1500 aerators are tractor mounted to deliver high productivity without sacrificing hole quality, durability or ease of service. They feature heavy-duty frames, tine rams and adjustable hole spacing. Both models can pull as many as 30 cores per square foot, depending on the ground speed of the tractor. They come in coring widths of 40-in. and 60-in., respectively. Tine sizes from quarter to three-quarter inch are available.

For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.deere.com/ circle no. 263

Agri-Fab

Tine dethatchers do a gentle but thorough job of bringing matted layers of dead grass, build up and large clippings to the surface for a healthy lawn. One-lever transport is easily accessible from the tractor seat. Weight trays handle from 4 or 5 standard-size concrete blocks with convenient strap-down points. Units come in 32-, 40-, or 48-in. widths. Hitch pin is included on all units.

For more information contact AGRI-FAB at 217/728-8388 or www.agri-fab.com/ circle no. 264

continued on page 74

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LM Reports

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Classen ▶

The 48-R is a heavy-duty 3-pt. hitch core aerator built of 1.5-in. solid square steel (not tubing) with weight tray for optional added weight. Tine shafts operate independently for greater turning ease. The 48, three-quarter-inch O.D. tines give 4-in. aerating depth. Hole pattern is 5.25 x 7 in. Requires 15-hp tractor with 3-pt. manual lift.

For more information contact **CLASSEN** at www.classen-mfg.com or 888/252-7710 / circle no. 265



and 100-in. working widths, they are powered by a heavy-duty pto drive system with overload clutch. Pre-formed skids positioned between the blades minimize surface disturbance. Skids control blade-digging depth from 3-10 in., adjusted by screw.

For more information contact

BLEC 888/325-BLEC or www.blec.co.uk / circle no. 266

Woods

Three heavy-duty core aerators operate with Cat 1, 20-65 hp tractors. The 48-in. PL48, 67.5-in. PL60 and 78.5-in. PL72 have a reinforced carrier frame that holds up to 1,000 lbs. of weight to vary penetration down to 4.5 inches. Greased journal bearings turn independently to help reduce lock-up. Case hardened, one-

eighth-inch thick, closed spoons ensure uniform and frequent penetration even in heavy soil conditions.

For more information contact **Woods** at 866/T0-WOODS or www.woodsequipment.com / circle no. 267



BLEC

The Blec Groundbreaker relieves compaction down to 10 inches. Available in 40-, 60-, 80-

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Source One ▲

The Plugr PL800 is a tough-duty 30-in. commercial aerator by SourceOne (formerly Rock Solid). Hole punching power is generated by a camshaft and engine. Tines are driven deep with no add-on weights or water drums. It has 8 cams for a 2.25 x 8-in. aeration pattern. Engine options include a 6.5-hp B&S Intek OHV or 5.5-hp Honda OHV.

For more information contact **Source One** at 888/418-9065 or www.plugr.com / circle no. 268

Woodbay

The Greensron 3000 ventilates turf with five spikes per blade set to penetrate up to 1.5 in. It has a working width of 35 in. using 31 blades, each made of hardened steel. Unit weighs 65 lbs. and fits on TurfBroom brackets.

For more information contact **Woodbay** at 800/661-4292 or www.greensron.com / circle no. 269

continued on page 76

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LM Reports

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Ferguson

Plug aerators are available in models from 3 to 8 ft. Choose between 3-pt. hitch and trail-type hitches. Units create a five-eighths inch plug to a depth of 3 in. Sturdy construction with heat-treated tines. Fill plug on the drum allows adding additional water weight for hard-to-penetrate soil.

For more information contact Ferguson Mfg. Co. at 757/539-3409 or fermfgsu@nettek.net / circle no. 270

SISIS

The MaxiSlit aerator has a working width of 63 in. and an overall width of 77 in. The unit's wide rim

plates reduce surface marking. An optional floating roller gives smooth finish, striping effect.

For more information contact SISIS at 864/261-6218 or www.sisis.com / circle no. 271

Dry-Ject ▶

The Dry-Ject process aerates and amends soil on sports fields, golf courses or landscapes in one hour. Using high-pressure water, it creates half-inch aeration holes that are instantly filled with sand to improve soil quality. Penetrates to 10 inches. Allows deep-root injection of soil amendments, insecticides, fertilizers or fungicides while rejuvenating the lawn with water.



For more information contact Dry-Ject at 800/270-8873 or www.dryject.com / circle no. 272

First Products

The new AE-40E Aera-vator features an open frame for better tine and rotor visibility. Use it on sports turf to maintain both infields and grass by using the fine tine rake and brush attachment. An 11-hp Honda engine powers the AE-40E. The AE-40L model is pto-driven.

For more information contact First Products at 800/363-8780 or www.1stproducts.com / circle no. 273

Gandy

The Model 2848DP dethatcher has a self-leveling, 3-pt., Cat 1 hitch requiring a 540-rpm pto with slip clutch for tractors with a minimum 18 hp. It has 24 blades on 2-in. spacing, each made of annealed spring steel. Unit is 66 in. wide and weighs 442 lbs.

For more information contact Gandy at 800/443-2476 or www.gandy.net / circle no. 274

JRCO, Inc.

Attach the Hooker soft-plug aerator to front-mount zero turn

mowers like the Exmark or Walker. This unit is 38 in. wide and aerates 66,000 sq. ft. per hour at a 5 mph rate. It produces 6 holes one-half in. wide, 1.25 in. long, and 3 in. deep per sq. ft.

For more information contact JRCO, INC. at 800/966-8442 or www.jrcoinc.com / circle no. 275

Wicko Industries

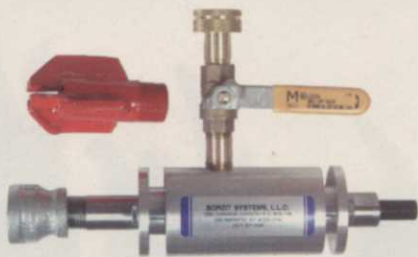
Model 300 or 600 core plug aerators are pulled by an ATV, garden tractor, turf truck, tractor or commercial mower. Available in 30- and 60-in. widths, they aerate a maximum of 4 in. Each unit has replaceable tine wheels (four on model 300, eight on model 600), each section has 10 tines. All steel construction for commercial and professional use.

For more information contact Wicko Industries at 402/464-2070 or www.wikco.biz / circle no. 276

Reist Industries

The Ditch-Pro's heavy duty cutting blades make opening hard ground easy. Available in 48-, 60-, 72-, 84- and 96-in. models, it can tilt up 26 degrees or down 10 degrees for crowning. Optional skid-steer

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For more information contact Reist Industries at 877/467-3478 or www.reistindustries.com / circle no. 277

Textron/Ryan ▼

The Ryan Lawnaire 28 cores 24,000 sq. ft. per hour, creating 12 holes per sq. ft. This unit has a true zero-turn radius while aerating. Powered by a 8-hp Kawasaki, it creates a 3.5 x 5-in. pattern in 28-in. swaths.

For more information contact Textron/Ryan at 888/922-TURF or www.textronturf.com / circle no. 278



Redexim ▲

New for 2005, Verti-Drain 7007H is powered by a 13-hp B&S Vanguard OHV engine. Unit has forward speed of 6.5 mph and a working capacity of 12,000 sq. ft. per hour. The 7007H is equipped with biodegradable hydraulic oil as standard, works at a 6-in. depth, with either coring or solid tines, and provides the forced heave of all Verti-Drain machines. 3-wheel drive option available.

For more information contact Redexim Charterhouse at 800/597-5664 or www.redexim.com / circle no. 279

Selbro, Inc.

Core Processor returns turf to playable condition fast. Cores are harvested, fed into the hopper, then pulverized. Cores become fine-ground topsoil, reducing thatch and putting soil back to the turf. Unit attaches to a Tractor in seconds and does the job in one pass.

For more information contact Selbro at 800/973-5246 or www.selbro.com / circle no. 280

JRCO, Inc.

Front-mount dethatchers are available in 36-, 46- or 60-in. widths for commercial walk-behind and riding mowers. Remove thatch while you mow. Flexible tines allow zero-turning without damage. Ideal for spring cleanup, it removes large amounts of thatch and makes room for new grass growth, leaving the turf-grass with a clean combed and striped appearance. When seeding, it can be used to scarify the ground and rake the seed into the soil.

For more information contact JRCO, Inc. at 800/966-8442 or www.jrcoinc.com / circle no. 281

Turf-Aire

Three models of aerator – 36-, 48- and 60-in. – are available from Bishop Enterprises. Units' working widths are 30, 42 and 57.5 in., respectively. They drill up to 9 holes per sq. ft. when single-tined, 18 holes double-tined. There are 8 tines per wheel.

For more information contact Turf-Aire at 800/854-4851 or www.turf-aire.com / circle no. 282



Toro ▲

The Hydroject 3010 is a high velocity water injection system for aeration to ensure that play on sports fields won't be disrupted. This new Hydroject is powered by a Kohler 27-hp engine and offers four spacing control settings ranging from 1.5 to 6 in.

For more information contact Toro at 800/803-8676 or www.toro.com / circle no. 283

LM Reports

T.I.P. Inc. ▶

Aerate grass and drop seed at the same time. Choose 3-pt. hitch, the GS-48 pull type (pictured) or self-propelled 16-in. walk-behind Greens Spiker seeder. It creates thousands of shallow, closely spaced holes for dropping seed at the proper depth.

For more information contact T.I.P. Inc. at 715/592-4650 or www.textronturf.com / circle no. 284

Wiedenmann

The Terra Spike XF gives deep aerification with hole spacings of 7.5 in. down to 8.5 in. depth. It is effective at speeds up to 3.6 mph. Even square hole spacings of 2.5 and 5 in. are possible at 1.2 and 2.4 mph. TwinDrive can be configured to various transmission ratios, allowing crankshaft speed to be adapted to available tractor power.



For more information contact Wiedenmann at 866/790-3004 or www.terraspike.com / circle no. 285

Turf-R-Ator

For fast, good turf aeration, the tractor-mounted Turf-R-Ator mounts to standard trac-

tor's 3-pt. hitch. It also can be operated as a pull-behind unit. There are nine wheels running on a 6-in. spacing. All 22-in. opener wheels have eight spikes.

For more information contact Turf-R-Ator at 262/639-2516 / circle no. 286

Turfco

The TurnAer 26 aerator drives like a mid-sized

mower with brake-assisted turning. Powered by a 4-hp Honda engine, it has 36 heat-treated steel tines in a 26-in. coring width. This spring-lifted machine eliminates lifting. Covered chains and belt drives reduce problems.

For more information contact Turfco at 800/679-8201 or www.turfco.com / circle no. 287

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Oregon Tall Fescue Commission

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Property at a glance

Location: Pinehurst, NC
Grounds Supervisor: Chris Burrows
Category: Hotels
Total budget: \$673,000
Year site built: 1895
Acres of turf: 15
Acres of woody ornamentals: 31
Acres of display beds: one
Total paved area: 24 acres
Brick walkways: 2.5 acres
Total man-hours/week: 720

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Brick walkways
- ▶ Numerous special events
- ▶ The many varieties of turf/ornamentals

Project checklist

- Completed in last two years:
- ▶ Landscape at the spa
 - ▶ Upgrade the Dining Room Gardens

On the job

- ▶ 13 full-time staff, five seasonal workers, three licensed pesticide applicators

Pinehurst Resort

2004 PGMS Grand Award Winner for Hotels

The Pinehurst Resort, located in eastern North Carolina, is more than world-class golf courses, although when anyone mentions Pinehurst in a conversation, the next question that's invariably asked is — "Have you played there?"

In all, five championship 18-hole courses start and end at the resort's legendary clubhouse. The most famous is Pinehurst Number 2, site of many historic matches and this summer's 2005 US Open.

But, you don't have to be a golfer (certainly not a scratch golfer) to appreciate the Pinehurst experience. The resort is anchored by the grand Carolina Hotel. Built in 1901, the hotel, fondly referred to as the "Queen of the South," is a visitor's first view of the resort. What a magnificent view it is. Lush green grass, flowers at every turn, Mid-South charm at its warmest.

Then there's the 110-year-old Holly Inn which is located in the center of the Village of Pinehurst. Rich green turfgrass and vibrant (especially in spring) flower

and shrub gardens again welcome guests.

Much of the credit for Pinehurst's colorful and meticulously maintained grounds goes to Grounds Manager Chris Burrows and his crew. His crack landscape crew does it all at the resort — turfgrass, the annual color beds that delight visitors

from early spring through Carolina's lingering autumn, the primly trimmed evergreen hedges and the container plantings that adorn many of the resort's porches. The centerpiece of their work is the insignia topiary that spells "Pinehurst."

Burrows's first taste of the Green Industry was working in a retail lawn & garden center.

This year the native Tar Heel is

finishing his ninth year at the resort. He started out as a crew member and, within a year, was promoted to foreman. Recognizing opportunity, he enrolled at the nearby Sandhills Community College and earned an Associate Degree in Applied Science in Horticulture. He gained valuable on-the-job experience as an intern installing the landscape for the Corporate Village for the 1999 US Open at Pinehurst.

"The visitor expects a manicured landscape experience throughout the resort," explains Burrows who, true to his outdoor bent, enjoys hunting, hiking and camping. "The maintenance challenges at this resort are not immediately evident. They include climate and soil, aesthetic qualities, heavy pedestrian traffic, horticultural requirements and special events."



Chris Burrows and his crew beautify Pinehurst.

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 2005 winners will be named at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. For more information on the 2004 awards, contact PGMS at: 720 Light St. • Baltimore, MD 21230

• Phone: 410/223-2861. Web site:

www.pgms.org



Pinehurst Resort's fame as a golfing destination is legendary. But you don't have to be a golfer to appreciate the charm and beauty of this North Carolina site. Its grounds crew of 13 fulltime employees maintain 31 acres of woody ornamentals, 15 acres of turf and 2.5 acres of brick walkways.

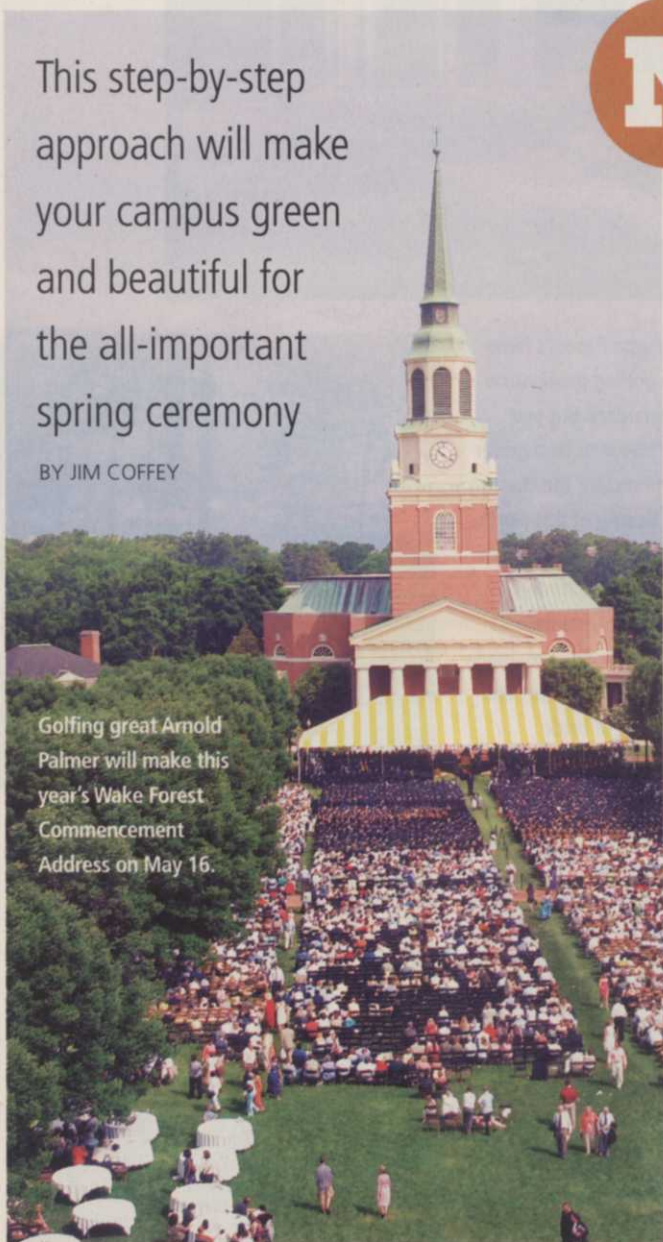


Commencement Day SUCCESS

This step-by-step approach will make your campus green and beautiful for the all-important spring ceremony

BY JIM COFFEY

Golfing great Arnold Palmer will make this year's Wake Forest Commencement Address on May 16.



N

o matter what college or university we work for, we want our campuses to look great on Commencement Day.

That's the day of the year that brings together all of the visiting family and friends of future alumni.

Every school has long-standing traditions, and at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC, the tradition is to graduate on the main lawn in front of Wait Chapel. This area is fondly known as the "Quad." We all pray for good weather so the graduates can leave us knowing they followed tradition. Commencement Day is also a big day for the university's administration and faculty. As they welcome the seniors' families and friends to our campus, they obviously want to feel proud about the way the campus looks.

Here are 10 tips that help make our Commencement Day beautiful and memorable. Good luck on your campuses.

1 **Early January.** Know the expectations of the commencement planning committee. More often than not, the

landscape team is responsible for setting up commencements if they are outdoor ceremonies. To start with the planning committee should give you a detailed work order of its needs. This is your signal to begin planning, but you will certainly have to make minor changes as the day draws near. If a rental company handles the setups for your outdoor ceremony, you will want to be included in those pre-planning meetings. Once the event is over, rental companies are notorious for leaving a site with broken irrigation systems due to tent stakes driven down through pipes and damaged lawns caused by delivery vehicles. You can avoid this if you meet with them early to clarify your expectations.

2 **In February.** Evaluate all the trees on your commencement site. If you already have a good tree care program, you will not have much to do. If not, make sure at least to remove dead wood from the tree canopies. You don't want any limbs or twigs falling out of your trees and onto the heads of parents while they're



The tradition at Wake Forest University is to hold commencement exercises in the grassy "Quad" in front of Wait Hall.



proudly watching their off-spring graduate. You may also need to do some branch leveling after the trees leaf out to open views to the main platform and to protect the heads of your walking guests. We typically do branch leveling a week or so before commencement.

5 Early April. If one of your responsibilities is decorating the commencement stages with greenery and flowering plants, get your order now. Once spring breaks out and everybody starts buying plants, the good stuff disappears.

3 Early March. This is the time to start work on your turf and make sure your overseeding and fertility programs are where they should be. Commencement day calls for lush, green turfgrass.

6 April and then some. We dedicate the next six to seven weeks to adding those finishing touches to the campus landscape. Our punch list includes, but isn't limited to, freshly mulched beds and tree rings, weed-free and nicely edged flower and shrubbery beds, and shrubbery pruned to perfection. Those green lawns deserve nicely edged sidewalks and curbs too

4 First day of April. We don't take on any major landscape projects after the first day of April. You may have to do some negotiating to convince your physical facility utility and construction teams to do the same. You want the beauty of your campus to shine through on Commencement Day without unsightly project work.

7 April and May. Expect the unexpected. Spring often brings rainstorms and some can be violent. That can create havoc on commencement preparations. It's inevitable but

we all have a commencement horror story or two.

8 The first week in May or two weeks prior to the event. Is your commencement site not green enough? Give the lawns and the shrubbery an application of iron. The extra shot of iron will not harm the plants if it's done correctly. By the time Commencement Day rolls around, everything will be greener than ever. The effect is temporary, but you will be pleased with the end result.

9 Also first week in May. If you work in the Transition Zone, as we do, you can get a hot or a cool spring. Your early spring beds will decline quickly when it's unseasonably warm, and they typically start looking their roughest right about the time you want them to look their best for Commencement Day. Have a replacement plan in place. If you purchase your annuals from a local garden center or grower, they can help. They will understand your predicament and will hold some nice bedding plants for you in case you need to change your beds. Again,

plan ahead and give them the heads up if you already know you're having a blast of hot spring weather. Also, consider having a street cleaning company clean your streets and parking lots several days prior to the event.

10 The day before commencement. If your commencement site is near your housing areas, have a litter collection plan in place. Seniors and soon-to-be graduates want to celebrate, and litter is going to happen. Litter collection teams should be out until dusk the day before the event. Start at dawn the day of the event and work right up until the event begins. Focus on the areas around the commencement site main entrances.

Commencement Day, in spite of all the planning and work, is a rewarding day for our landscape team. The campus looks great, we receive compliments, and we know that we're a valuable part of a great event and a great university. **LJM**

— The author is manager of Landscaping Services, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC. He can be reached at coffeyjb@wfu.edu.

No city water? No problem

An irrigation consultant earns his keep on this unusual sports field project

BY THOMAS G. DOLAN

Every irrigation job has challenges. But the one Michael Agram was called in as a consultant for the Somers Athletic Field in Somers, NY, had a special challenge—no water. Agram, who owns Northern Design, LLC, Milford, CT, and is a member of the American Society of Irrigation Consultants, was on the design team that also included the city's civil engineer and a landscape architect.

The standard-size soccer field was a new project. City water was not available. The city decided it would be too expensive to build a main out to the field. There was also the cost of the water itself.

So why didn't the city simply choose a site in an area which did have access to the city's water supply? The main reason, Agram replies, is simply that the city regarded the site as a good location for such a field, one that fit in with the constellation of other parks in the area.

"A well was drilled, but they found out

the water supply was not sufficient to run an irrigation system," Agram says.

He explains that the well had a low yield capable of producing only two to three gallons a minute. It was hydrofractured

to bring the flow up to 12 to 14 gallons a minute, still not the desired flow of 60 gallons a minute.

Agram and the rest of the design team came up with a solution to add a 10,000-gallon storage tank to the ball field. The well was about 500 feet away from the storage tank. Water was pumped slowly from the well to the tank, so that it would be available when irrigation was required. There also was no electrical power on site,



Somers, NY, stores water in this 10,000-gallon tank to irrigate the turfgrass of its new sports field.

so electrical service had to be brought in and the site metered for the irrigation pump.

"Once we got the water and power there, the rest went pretty easily," Agram says.

"Once we determined the water requirements for the project, based on the soil and well yield, we were able to do the irrigation design.

"In general, water requirements for a playing field are based on evapotranspiration. Basically, you take the intake rate of the soil and its water holding capacity to determine the GPM (gallons per minute) for your sprinklers, as well as the total amount of water you will need to irrigate the site. Then we provided specifications on how the system was to be installed."

After the design was completed, the bid went out to about half a dozen general contractors. The one awarded the contract chose the various subcontractors.

Monitoring its progress

"Once the project was awarded, we were brought in to oversee the installation," Agram says. "This was to make sure the contractors followed our stake locations for the sprinkler heads, valve box location and main line pipe routes. Typically the main-line piping is trenched, whereas the lateral pipes that the sprinklers are connected to are installed with vibratory flow.

"Although we go out and stake the location for the sprinkler valve pipes, there's always the situation in which I may want a pipe on the left, but the contractor says it's easier to dig on the right. So we work together for the final installation process."

This project took about a year, due to adverse weather and other delays. During this time, Northern Design representatives made periodic visits to make sure the installation conformed to specifications.

One of the typical problems here, Agram says, "is that the irrigation contractor

has a relationship with the general contractor, who typically wants to get the project done in timely fashion. This puts pressure on not just the irrigation contractor, but the other subs as well. The situation may not be ideal for them. They may be told that they have to install piping in early spring when it is too wet or muddy. They may work one area one day, then stop and catch up where the site contractor is

leveling the field or grading. It's not as if they can start at one corner and work to the other. They have to jump around. The general contractor is saying hurry up and get it done and we're saying, slow down and do it right. There has to be a little give and take from both parties. It's not a perfect world."



Irrigation consultant Michael Agram sited the irrigation heads, valve box location and pipe routes.

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Only minor corrections, such as lowering valve boxes below grade, had to be made.

When the job was significantly complete, Astram did a final walk-through with the city representative and contractor. "We made sure the system performed as designed," Astram says. "We made sure the sprinkler heads are flush with the grade, the valve boxes are in a safe place where they won't be tripped over, and the tank system functioned properly. We had a punch list of items to make sure the work was accepted by the customer.

"There were some minor issues. A couple of sprinkler heads had to be moved, a couple of valve boxes had to be lowered below grade and there had to be an arc adjustment on a sprinkler. This job went smoothly. Sometimes they don't."

One important additional function to

the design has to do with the rain sensors that measure the rainfall. A half inch of rain or more and the irrigation system doesn't go on as scheduled. "This means someone won't be driving by and see the sprinkler system on [in the rain]," Astram says.

At this point, Astram says, the job was turned over to the site contractor who works for the parks and recreation department. Ideally, this person is an irrigation specialist. But in some smaller towns, this person is usually a jack-of-all trades.

Don't forget adjustments

He explained to the site contractor that a theoretical schedule of automated irrigation is set based on such factors as the historical rainfall. "This should be adjusted on a weekly



basis, but some do it monthly," Astram says. "And a lot of times, unfortunately, people set it in April and don't adjust it until June. Here in the Northeast, water conservation is not as big an issue as it is in states like California and Arizona. Sometimes you have the city janitor in charge of this, who has a lot of other things to do, and this is not a priority. That's why you should have an irrigation specialist in charge." **LVM**

— The author is a freelance writer who lives and works in Anacortes, WA.

Contact him at 360/299-2286

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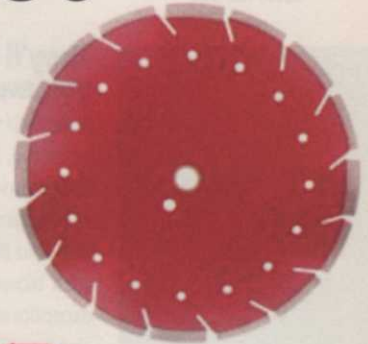
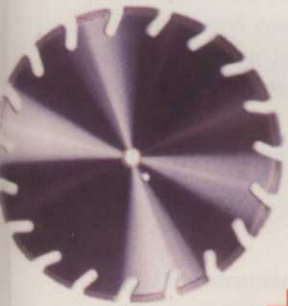
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New hybrid fertilizer

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Tough compact loaders

New Holland Construction added compact track loaders to its line of rugged construction equipment. The new LT185.B and LT190.B compact track loader models feature 2,400 and 2,900 lbs. rated operating capacity, respectively. Both new models feature the superior lift capacity and reach of the

patented Super Boom vertical lift linkage to deliver more forward reach at maximum lift height for precise load placement. The wide stance, low center of gravity and superior stability combine with a standard suspension seat to provide a smooth ride, while the rugged, simple undercarriage design provides long life with minimum maintenance. The New Holland track loaders also feature industry-leading visibility with no rear frame towers to block the operator's view. Both models feature a standard two-speed transmission for travel speeds up to eight miles per hour. The optional hydraulic mount plate allows the operator to securely attach or remove buckets and attachments without leaving the seat.

For more information contact New Holland Construction at www.newholland.com / circle no. 252

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Meet the Challenger ▶

AGCO Corp.'s new MT200B Challenger compact tractor features more than 40 improvements made on the B Series, from new front axles with higher load capacities to new piston and fuel injection technology, improving durability while reducing sound levels. Also new is an independent PTO system allowing control of the rate of engagement as well as the AutoPower IV transmission, enabling powershift capability. Also, controls have been repositioned to improve ease of use, and the operator platforms are some of the largest in the

business. Routine maintenance is fast and efficient, with improved engine compartment access and service. The Challenger Series tractors are sold and serviced exclusively by Caterpillar dealers. Models range from 23 - 52 gross engine hp.

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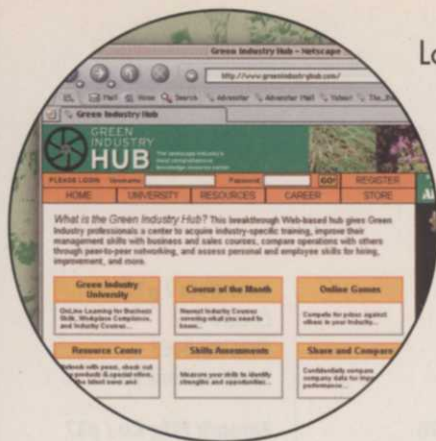
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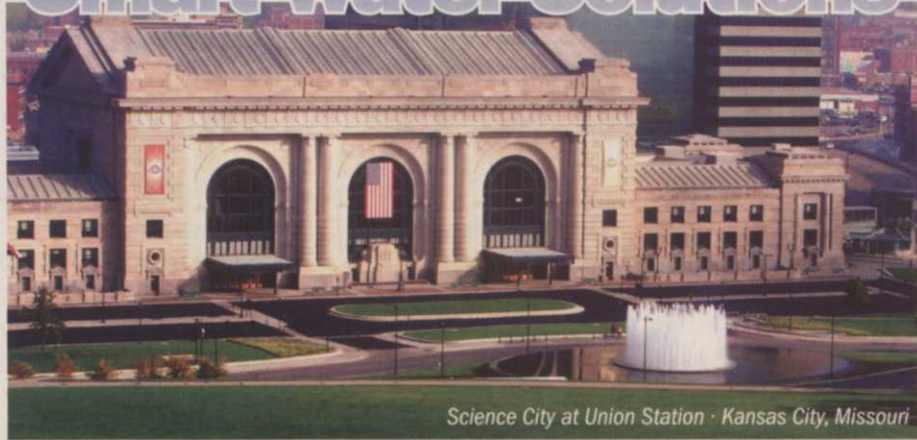
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SOURCE: NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

394%
Hispanic
Growth

THE NEW SOUTH?

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State	Growth
North Carolina ▲	394%
Arkansas	337%
Georgia	300%
Tennessee	278%
South Carolina	211%

SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

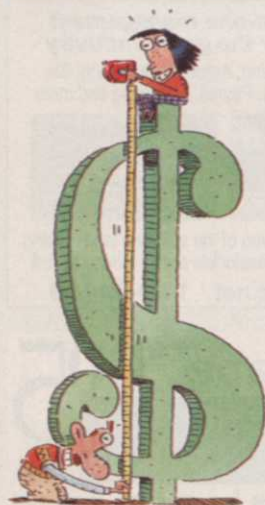
Sales of **commercial turf products** should show "significant growth" in model year 2005, predicts the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute. Shipments of commercial riding mowers are forecast to grow by 10.8% and expand by 14.6% the following year, model year 2006. By contrast, shipments of commercial intermediate walk-behind units will dip slightly, about 1%, from 2004 levels.

GROUNDS PERSONNEL SALARIES

The 2004 Professional Grounds Management Salary Survey gives grounds managers across the country a snapshot of the compensation and benefits that their PGMS peers are receiving.

Position	# Responding	Low \$/Hr	Avg. \$/Hr	High \$/Hr	Hire Rate
Supt./Manager	42	\$23.91	\$27.89	\$30.59	\$21.87
Supervisor/Chief	90	\$17.24	\$20.93	\$23.49	\$17.30
Foreman	125	\$13.05	\$15.44	\$18.27	\$13.37
Equip. Operator	124	\$11.85	\$14.08	\$15.90	\$11.74
Mechanic	46	\$13.36	\$15.73	\$17.70	\$13.71
Perm. Labor	562	\$10.27	\$11.75	\$14.07	\$9.96
Temp. Labor	287	\$8.06	\$8.93	\$10.00	\$7.85
Part-time Labor	241	\$7.39	\$7.97	\$10.15	\$7.43

SOURCE: 2004 PGMS SALARY SURVEY



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