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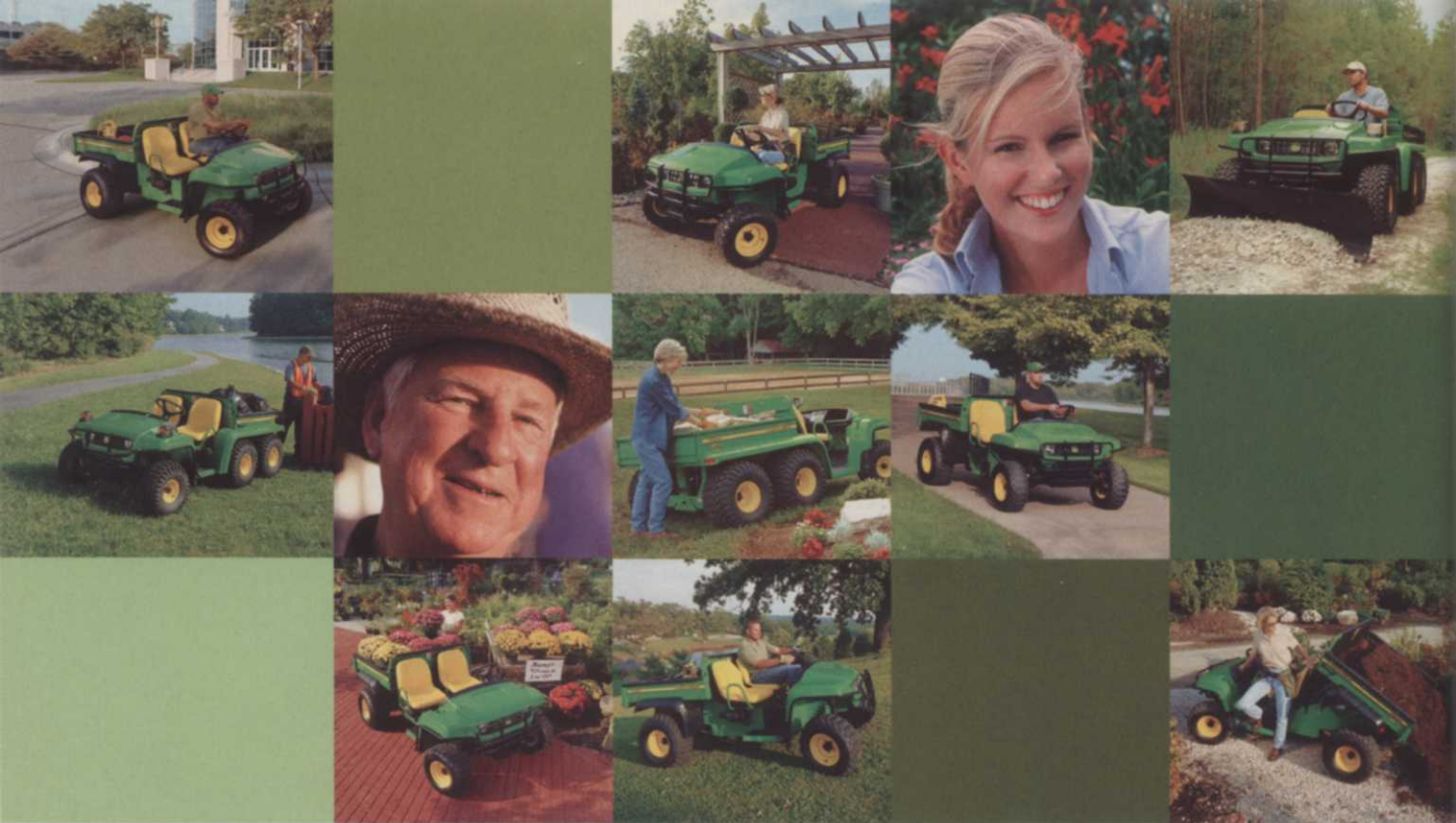
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Contents

FEBRUARY 2005 / ISSUE #2 / VOLUME 43

20

PRODUCTION BOOSTERS

Business

OPERATIONS ► MANAGEMENT ► MARKETING

10 On the Record

Too macho for our own good?
BY RON HALL / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

12 Best Practices

Keep a smile on their face
BY BRUCE WILSON

14 In the Know

Emissions update, the H-2B crisis,
Project Evergreen sets 2005 goals



— PROJECT —
EverGreen

16

20 Production boosters

Readers reveal their favorite labor-saving products, and we identify some new ones for '05
BY RON HALL & JASON STAHL

26 One for all, all for one

Gardeners' Guild Inc.'s approach to 'team-building' and safety training is paying off big time
BY RON HALL

32 The 'right fit' ►

Matching the right modified-duty tasks to injured employees keeps them working — and it controls workers' comp costs
BY BARB MULHERN



38 Don't be shy, network

The timid landscaper's way to promote their company and increase sales
BY GARY S. GOLDMAN

42 Inside the Owner's Head

This California dude loves his dirt biking
BY JASON STAHL

44 My Way

Our goal: leaner operations
BY KEVIN KEHOE

38



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PRODUCT ART COURTESY (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT): ASV, BLACKBERRY, LESCO, EXAKTIME AND TORO

Contents

Technology

RESEARCH ▶ EQUIPMENT ▶ CHEMICALS

46 Innovations

48 From the Shop

Need a technician?
BY HARRY SMITH

50 InfoTech

Add a 'techie' to your team
BY TYLER WHITAKER

54 Long live handhelds

Proper maintenance and transportation of handheld equipment will ensure long life
BY CHRISTINA A. THOMPSON

58 Hot handheld products ▶



65 Turf fertilizers in the crosshairs

It's not enough to use fertilizers responsibly; you have to speak out and defend their use, as well
BY RAY BUCKWALTER

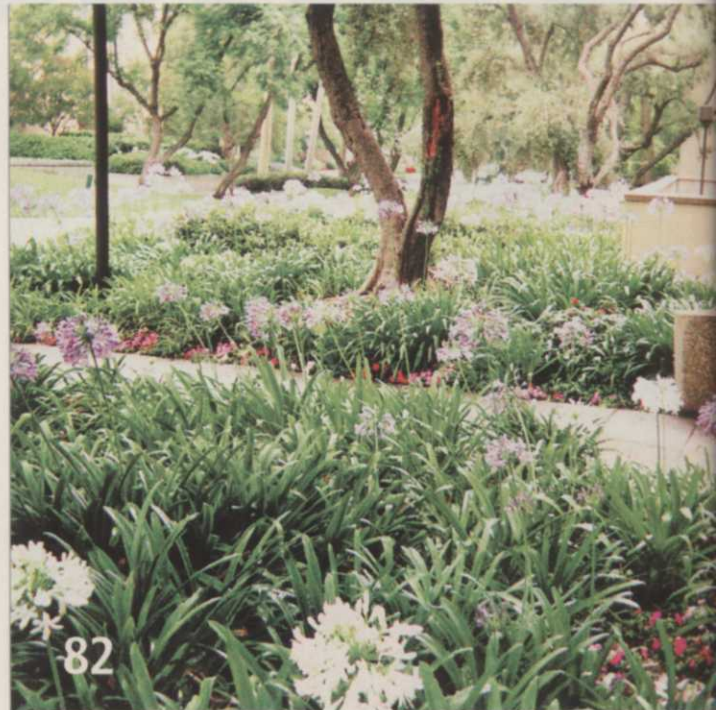
72 Solutions Center ▶

Power in their hands
BY GREG CLENDENIN



74 LM Reports: Comp

BY CURT HARLER



82

Grounds

BUDGETING ▶ PERSONNEL ▶ FACILITIES

82 PGMS

Pranks galore at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena

Resources

PRODUCTS ▶ EVENTS ▶ FYI

86 Products

92 FYI: Ad index

95 Events

102 Stats

102



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BUSINESS

WHO'S WHO IN LM



Lynette Hart is Manager of Portable Power Equipment for John Deere in Cary, NC. With a bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Michigan and an MBA from the University of Chicago, Lynette is more than ready for the competitive commercial handheld equipment market. When not immersed in the universe of trimmers and chain saws, she enjoys photography, scuba diving, and water and snow skiing. Her report on the state of emissions regulations for gasoline-powered handhelds starts on page 14.

Ray Buckwalter graduated from Penn State University in 1980 with a major in agronomy (minor in the consumption of fermented hops and yeast). He has 25 years experience in the Green Industry including lawn care, arboriculture, vegetation management and sports field maintenance. He's the marketing manager for the landscape market for Lebanon Turf, a division of Lebanon Seaboard Corp. He's also President of The New Jersey Alliance for Environmental Concerns. He enjoys snow skiing, water skiing, hiking, climbing and flying (private pilot). Read Ray's excellent overview of the growing move to regulate fertilizers, and what it means to us.



Gary Goldman tells why even the shyest business owner has to learn to network and "get in the game" with his or her peers on page 38. Goldman has over 20 years of experience in management in landscape construction, irrigation, maintenance, and pavement maintenance. With a master's degree in business administration from Babson College and a license as a factoring specialist, Gary is considered an expert in specialized areas of estimating, operations management, marketing, budget development and administration as well as other areas. He was a past Regional Operations Manager of TruGreen Landcare Corp. in the New England Region and was in charge of operations of four maintenance and two construction unit branches with annual revenues exceeding \$50 million. He was also a past president of an \$8 million landscape and pavement company. Gary also did a stint as an associate with Vanderkooi & Associates, Inc., a Green Industry and construction-consulting group, located in Littleton, CO. Goldman now runs his own consulting company.

Christina A. Thompson reveals how to get the most out of your handheld equipment. Turn to page 54. This lovely lass is no greenhorn to matters mechanical. She worked for *Landscape Management's* parent company, Advanstar Communications, for almost 13 years, and reported extensively on car parts and body parts — aka, automotive aftermarket and healthcare industries. Thompson recently moved from a suburb of Cleveland (pop. 84,000) to Shelby, OH (pop. 9,000). She is slowly adjusting to the small town life. When she isn't freelance writing, Thompson is playing Euchre at the local Owl's Club.



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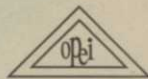
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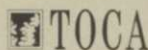
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Too macho for our own good?

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

We're a masculine industry. We like sweat, especially when we see it popping out on the brows of our employees. We sprinkle our conversations with terms like labor-hour production, horsepower and blade speed. We drive pickup trucks and love to hunt, and one of the ways we measure our standing in the industry is by revenues and how many guys we have working for us. (Okay, so maybe some of us don't like to hunt.)

We're manly men

Even so, go to almost any industry conference or trade show and count the nine men for every woman present. Sure, women own and operate successful landscape and lawn service companies, and they manage sizable grounds operations. But they compete in an industry of manly men. Some of the reasons are obvious. How many teenage ladies get their first taste of this industry mowing neighborhood properties?

Okay, so men dominate commercial landscape, lawn services and grounds care. You'll give me that, right? Will you also agree that too much testosterone might not be the best thing, particularly in selling to and servicing the residential market?

Think about your own household. Which partner makes the decisions about the state of your home or property? Which partner drives the big projects?

In my world it's Vicky, my lovely wife of 35 years.

Darned if I can think of one major household project that I initiated in the 29 years we've lived in our 80-year-old, two-story frame home. OK, well maybe some painting. But, not the dormer or skylights. Not the installation of an upstairs bathroom. Not the new hardwood floors. Not even my basement shop.

How about our landscape, you ask? Are you kidding?

The way it is

Vicky gets her inspiration and ideas from television (HGTV and the various "makeover" shows) and slick landscape/garden magazines. I'm relegated to capital support and bouts of manual labor. Hey, don't get me wrong — I'm not complaining. And as far as I've been able to determine, my situation is far from unique.

Robert Tillman, the CEO of Lowes, said at the Green Industry Expo that his chain's growth exploded after it shifted its emphasis from the commercial contractor to the decision makers (women) in the home and property fix-up market. It did this with such offerings as its well-stocked garden centers

The take-home message? Show the man of the house the respect he deserves, but give the woman of the house the type of landscape she wants. In most cases, she makes the call.

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Circle 109

Our employees in this industry fall into a common trap of over-promising to make customers happy. This usually starts the relationship down a road of distrust.



Keep a smile on their face

BY BRUCE WILSON

The key to any service business is a high level of customer satisfaction that leads to repeat business and business referrals. The landscape maintenance business is no different and has some unique challenges.

In thinking about customer satisfaction, there are at least four key elements:

1. Consistent core service delivery. This involves making sure that your core maintenance service is as close to flawless in its delivery as possible. Nothing fancy here, just take care of the basics very well. Make sure that crews are trained and that you have established best practices so that your service is delivered the same way day in and day out.

If your basic service happens on time and is done right, and the customer has confidence that it will be done right each time, they're generally satisfied. If you have repeated glitches, they'll always be looking for what's wrong instead of assuming everything is okay.

One of the unique challenges to this business is that we depend on relatively unskilled labor to make up a significant part of our labor pool, so we know things go wrong. It's well worth the effort to establish best practices and routines of service that become habits of your work teams. This mitigates the unskilled labor problem to a degree.

2. Meeting customer expectations. The first and most important part of this piece is understanding your customers' expectations. This is part of the sales process as well as having enough ongoing contact with the customer to understand when their expectations change.

It's a fact that many customers' level of expectations increases with time during your business relationship.

Our employees in this industry fall into a common trap of over-promising in an effort to make customers happy. This usually starts the relationship down a road of distrust. It's really important that you do a lot to shape customer expectations, and usually we're at least partially responsible when we reach the point of saying that our customers' expectations are unrealistic.

3. Responding to customer requests in a timely fashion. Apart from the core service, customers have additional needs. How we respond is another key element of customer satisfaction. Here I think there should be a good system for tracking customer requests, and a system should be set up for making sure those requests get a timely followup. This is a core responsibility of the person managing the customer relationship, and there should be good accountability around it.

4. Building a relationship, preferably personal. Sometimes it isn't enough to do good work, meet expectations and be responsive. Service problems arise sooner or later that may or may not be your fault. This is where having a relationship with your customer saves the day. If there is no relationship, it's too easy for the customer to say, "I need to change." But if there is something personal to the relationship, they're more apt to try to work through it. It may be a low bid from another contractor at renewal time, but a personal relationship might be enough to overcome it, or at least get you the last look.

— *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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Why emissions standards matter

BY LYNETTE HART

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and California Air Resource Board (CARB) set emission standards for the gasoline engines that power our handheld power tools. They set two types of standards, exhaust emissions and evaporative emission standards.

CARB sets them for California, and EPA for the other 49 States. No state except California can set its own standards; everyone else must follow EPA rules. So where does the power equipment industry stand with regulations?

On January 1, 2005, EPA Phase II became equal to CARB Tier III, which came into effect for exhaust emissions at the same time, making the regulations basically the same in all 50 states.

Not just a CA issue

CARB III for evaporative emissions will take effect January 1, 2007. In other words, no matter where you work you need a clean burning engine; it's not just a California issue.

Unfortunately, this doesn't mean any product you pick up is low-emission and conforms to the latest standards. You'll need to read the label on the engine. It'll tell you as to which regs the engine conforms to.

Engines manufactured prior to the beginning regulation date may be sold at a future date. Also, engines with higher emissions than the current limits may be manufactured and sold by use of emissions credits. Also, products and engines of a certain (smaller) volume of production may be, for a limited time, certified to the older emissions limits.

In other words, you may see a lot of different products and changes in the next



For more handheld equipment coverage, see page 54 ►►

several years as manufacturers strive to meet regulations before their credits and older stock of engines run out. This also means that certain prod-

ucts may not be available in some areas, especially California.

Selection criteria

In light of this, what should you look for when selecting a product based on the engine? Consider two areas first — the engine category rating and the type of engine.

Engine category rating is the CARB and EPA useful life category rating of the engine. There are three designations — Category A 300 hours, Category B 125 hours and Category C 50 hours.

Category A is the best rating, generally reserved for commercial grade products. Be sure to check the label for the rating rather than relying on the word "Commercial" in the labeling, as some Category C 50-hour products say "Commercial."

Your next choice is type of engine, 2-cycle vs. 4-cycle, and what type in each of those categories. First off, each type has its advantages. And, contrary to popular belief, most of the low-emissions engines ac-

tually generate more power than their non-low emission predecessors as they burn fuel more efficiently. Manufacturers such as John Deere, Echo and Stihl have all made claims of increased power output with their new engines.

The advantages usually touted for a 2-cycle engine over 4-cycle are: less weight, less maintenance, less cost, fewer moving parts and therefore less potential to break.

Also, they're familiar; you'll probably find more people used to working on a 2-cycle trimmer than a 4-cycle unit, for example.

The pros of a 4-cycle vary based on the configuration of the engine. Many can be easier to start and quieter. This isn't always the case as other components on the machine can significantly impact noise and vibration in a positive or negative manner.

Not having to mix fuel is often stated as a 4-cycle advantage. This, too, depends on the engine, which can be confusing for some if they think all 4-cycle products run on straight gas.

Other 4-cycle products have an oil reservoir and the engine is either oil injected, meaning the oil reservoir must be refilled as the oil is internally mixed with the gas, or a splash system in which the oil lubricates the engine but isn't mixed with the gas. Both systems claim operation in any position.

In the end, it's a matter of preference. The most important thing to the end user is to find and use emissions-certified products best suited for their particular applications.

— *The author is the manager of portable power equipment for John Deere. She can be reached at 919/804-2355 or hartlynetted@johndeere.com.*

LCOs dismayed by Rochester action

ROCHESTER, NY — Lawn care companies here oppose a movement to make Monroe County the eighth county in the state to opt into its 2000 Neighborhood Notification law. The proposal was announced by county executive Maggie Brooks in January.

The bill, if passed, would require applicators to give neighbors 48 hours notice before spraying chemicals on residential yards. Neighbors within 150 feet of any pesticide application would have to be notified. Seven other NY counties have the law.

Lawn care companies, many of whom claim they already contact neighbors prior to treatments, say the law, which exempts granular products, would increase their administrative costs dramatically, that it would be difficult and costly to enforce and that it would slow and hamper their response to harmful plant diseases and insects on client properties.

Scotts off to strong start in 2005

MARYSVILLE, OH — Scotts reported that the acquisition of lawn and garden retailer Smith & Hawken boosted record sales for the first quarter of 2005. It reported a first-quarter net loss of \$49.1 million, or \$1.49 per share, compared to a net loss of \$70.7 million, or 42.21 per share for the same period last year. First quarter sales for the North America business increased 9% to \$113 million.

Hunter files suit from 2003 fire

SAN MARCOS, CA — Hunter Industries filed suit against Guardsmark, Inc., the company responsible for providing security at Hunter's manufacturing facility on October 26, 2003, the date of the irrigation company's costly fire. The suit claims Guardsmark was negligent in hiring, training and supervising personnel providing security to the Hunter facilities.

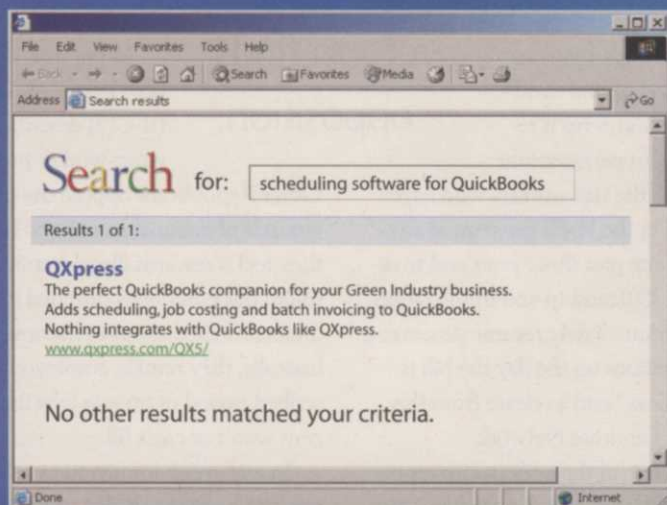
Schiller-Pfeiffer still buying

SOUTHAMPTON, PA — Schiller-Pfeiffer, Inc., manufacturer of Little Wonder, Mantis and Classen brands, acquired the assets of Germantown Tool & Machine Works of Huntingdon Valley, PA. The machining and fabrication facility, which employs 44, will continue operation as usual.

continued on page 16

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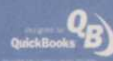
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Circle 137

PLANET, ANLA seek H-2B fix

Leaders of industry groups that count heavily on using immigrant labor — landscape, restaurant, cannery, horse training/breeding, resorts, etc. — convened in mid January in Washington D.C. They discussed strategy to convince Congress to pass legislation to help them with a serious labor shortage. This shortage became more critical with the January 3 announcement that the 66,000 limit on H-2B seasonal guest workers visas had been met.

"We determined the only viable political option to address in the short term is to ask Congress to permanently exempt from the cap workers who have participated in the H-2B program at any time during the past three years and to direct the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to immediately resume processing H-2B applications on the day the bill is signed into laws," said a release from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), one of the associations representing small business at the meeting. Also participating were representatives from the American Nursery and Landscape Association (ANLA).

Bush's call for immigration reform finds opposition.

"This option was deemed to have the greatest likelihood of success since many Senators and Member of Congress are already working on similar legislation," the release continued.

Meanwhile, President George W. Bush, on January 27, repeated his goal to reform immigration policy. Many legislators, even within his own party, oppose his plan, which is anchored by "guest worker" visas for illegal immigrants already in the country.

"A pig with lipstick," is how Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO) described Bush's guest-worker proposal.

Other Republicans oppose the plan on grounds of national security or because they feel it rewards illegal immigrants. Central to the President's proposal is allowing undocumented aliens to become legal if, basically, they remain employed for a prescribed period of time in jobs that U.S. citizens won't or can't fill.

In any event, immigration reform appears to be down the list of Bush priorities, taken in context of hostilities in Iraq, his oft-stated desire to overhaul Social Security and to rewrite tax laws.

continued from page 15

Harrell's targets lawn care

LAKELAND, FL — Vernie Pickhardt is heading a group at Harrell's Fertilizer to serve the Florida lawn care market. Harrell's produces custom-blended fertilizers and distributes pesticides and grass seed to the professional market. Pickhardt, formerly with Verdicon, is directing six sales reps for Florida and southern Alabama.

Kinmans set cruise and learn

DUBLIN, OH — The Kinman Institute is holding a Design Build Symposium at Sea on Jan. 8-15, 2006. The Caribbean cruise, which will visit the ports of Nassau, St. Thomas and St. Maarten, will include educational sessions and a two-day expo, including: keynote and general sessions, workshops, panels, cocktail parties, beach party, round tables and prizes. Featured speakers include Gary Kinman, Judith Guido and others. Contact Cynthia Kinman at 614/764-8733 or visit www.kinmaninstitute.com/atsea.pdf.

CLIPPINGS

Project Evergreen sets '05 goals

Project Evergreen, an alliance of Green Industry associations, suppliers, media companies and end-user companies, announced its goals for 2005. Some of the projects it has targeted include:

- ▶ Develop a tag line to be used by supporters at their businesses and on their product materials.
- ▶ Develop consumer pieces for professionals to distribute to their customers.
- ▶ Create and distribute news releases

to national, state and local media describing the benefits of green spaces.

- ▶ Create pilot landscape projects for consumers in several cities.
- ▶ Conduct national surveys of consumers, suppliers and end-user professionals to gauge attitudes and opinions about the Green Industry, and the products and services used by the industry.

Paul McDonough of LESCO follows



Phil Fogarty of Weed Man USA as the organization's new president. Other '05 officers are: Cindy Code, GIE Media,

first vice president; Chris Kujawa, Kujawa Enterprises, Inc., second vice president; Bill Klutho, John Deere, secretary; and Tom Delaney, Professional Landcare Network, treasurer.

For more information, visit www.projectevergreen.com

People & companies

The F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company promoted **Kenneth J. Karp** to Vice President, Marketing and Public Relations.



Shindaiwa hired **Chris Nordling** as the company's Product Manager for trimmers, brush-cutters, and lawn edgers.

Encore Manufacturing appointed **Billy Harms** National Service Manager.

Hillenmeyer Landscape Services hired **Ken Hochkeppel** as Sr. Vice President of Operations.

Redexim Charterhouse added an additional sales professional, **Nate Patrick**,

to support its expanding network of North American distributors.

Hunter Industries appointed **Charles B. Huston** to serve on the company's Advisory Board of Directors.

Total Landscape, Inc. of St. Louis, MO, added **Elizabeth Burns** as Lead Designer on Total Landscape's Design/Build team; **Julia Warner** as Sales Representative on the Design/Build team; **Tom Watson** as Production Manager on the Production team.



Hunter Industries hired **Tim Jones** (above, left) as Sales Manager I for sales through Hunter's exclusive distribution network. His territory will cover San Diego County. The company also hired **Jason "J.T." Kidwell** (above, right) as Sales Manager for Indiana and Kentucky.

Landscape Images, Ltd. was selected by CityBusiness New Orleans as one of the region's "Best Places to Work."

Lifestyle Landscaping promoted **Greg Stout** to PlantCare Manager.



Dow AgroSciences has promoted **Ryan Messner** to serve as a sales representative for the Turf and Ornamental business.

Rain Bird Corp. has become a member of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), an organization renowned for setting environmental precedents among businesses nationwide.



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and precision engineering, both compact radius and standard models

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PRODUCTION BOOSTERS

Our readers help us select 10 great labor-savers for 2005

BY RON HALL & JASON STAHL

T

here are only three main arenas where we can set ourselves apart from the other landscape and lawn service providers in our markets:

- Lowest price
- Best service
- Most advanced technology.

While we can build a presence within our markets on any one of these three, it's unlikely (make that highly unlikely) that we can lead in all three. However, if we deliver our service specialties with the latest labor saving technology, we'll be better able to compete on both price and service, perhaps even lead our marketplace in either category.

How do we do this? In a word, productivity.

The more customer-pleasing jobs we can do in a certain amount of time (remember, none of us are blessed with more hours in a day than others), the more we can bill out. This seems ridiculously simple, yet many of us still remain buried in the world of wheelbarrow and shovel.

Market leaders systemize and mechanize their operations. Market leaders are always looking for ways to reduce their dependence on labor, which they recognize as their greatest expense and their greatest revenue (our surveys say 30% of revenues), and the greatest variable in providing ongoing service to their customers.

In that spirit, we offer the following suggestions from your colleagues, with a few of our own thrown in.



1 **Compacts save labor**
 Claude Mauldin, Jr., owner of Outdoor Service Specialist, Rock Hill, SC, swears by his Vermeer S600 compact skid-steer loader because of its versatility. He says it can be fitted with attachments such as an auger, trencher, fork, tiller, bucket and land-leveler. At just 42-in. wide, he maneuvers the rubber-tired machine through gates into homeowners' backyards. "The more places the compact skid-steer loader can go, the less time our crews spend completing jobs by hand," he says.

Landscape and grounds pros constantly tell us about the incredible production they get

from their compact construction-grade machines. The Dingo, imported from Australia about a decade ago and now a Toro product, got the category off to a roaring start, but the number of manufacturers to the category (and the choices) keeps growing.

"Now we have almost every attachment that you can buy for it (Dingo)," says Greg Cole, owner of Cole Landscape, Inc., Peabody, MA. "I believe that having the Dingo on a job site replaces two men." He purchased his unit in 2002, a purchase he's never regretted.

2 **Match quality with production**
 Get a continuous view of customer satisfaction, and you'll feel more confident that your production and quality control are pretty much in balance.

The Symbiot Business Group ClientServ product is a way to receive constant client feedback, which tells you how well your services are being received by customers.

Here's how it works. By offering a small incentive (perhaps a monthly drawing for movie tickets), you encourage clients to call an 800 number, key in an access code and verbally respond to 10 or 11 ques-

tions concerning your company's service. The responses will give you a "temperature gauge" of how you're doing.

This type of survey gives you a faster read on any problems that need correcting and, generally, a higher rate of return of mail-in customer surveys. Too bad this particular product is available only to Symbiot partner companies right now. But you get the idea. Find or develop a customer survey tool to gather timely feedback and you'll better match customer satisfaction with your production.

For more production boosters, please turn the page ▶▶



3

In touch, online 24/7

It was an act of fate, really. James Ormond dropped his Palm Pilot while trying to look up a client's number and broke it. The reason he was fumbling for the Palm Pilot? "If I had to call someone, and that someone's number wasn't pre-loaded into my Nextel phone, I had to look it up in my Palm Pilot," he says.

So, with a busted Palm Pilot, Ormond was left to shop for another one...or something better. And he found it. "Some guy had told me about a thing called a BlackBerry, and he swore by it," Ormond says. "And it did everything — Outlook (a calendar), e-mail, Nextel, phone..." The BlackBerry is a small handheld device like a Palm Pilot that provides access to a wide range of applications on a variety of wireless devices.

Ormond is now a slave to another technology toy, and happy about it. As the co-owner of Barringer & Barringer Landscape Services in Charlotte, NC, he needs to leave his desk frequently to meet with customers, and now he can take everything with him...and keep it all right at his fingertips. He doesn't have to run back to the office to answer e-mails. His secretary can e-mail phone messages to him with the callback number, and, with only his thumb, he can look at those messages, push a button and call those people back.



4

Multi-tasker? You bet

There once was a man who had two machines, a tractor and a boom truck, both of which were getting old and starting to fail him. Then, he found a machine that could do what both the tractor and boom truck used to do, bought it and lived happily ever after.

The man is Tom Conway, Jr., owner of Smithfield Gardens, a \$3.1 million retail nursery and landscape design/build company located in Suffolk, VA. When he found the Bobcat Versahandler, he realized it could replace both his tractor and boom truck at the same cost, about \$60,000. One of the first things it did was cut his "load" time in half.

"We load about eight or 10 trucks each morning, and now that we have a two-yard bucket, it's cut our load time in half and has gotten our crews on the road more quickly," Conway says.

Conway says it's a big machine and heavy (around 11,000 lbs.), so it's not ideal for

small residential jobs. But it handles rough terrain well and is perfect for installing trees.

"We hand dig a lot of trees, ball and burlap them and create a sling around the rootball," says Conway. "With the extendable boom, we can get above 12- to 15-ft.-tall trees or on the side and help lift them out of the hole. And the Versahandler is more maneuverable than a boom truck."

Conway has also found use for a pallet fork attachment with the Versahandler. It can unload the heavy stone delivered to a site where a design/build project is underway.

Everyone's making tracks

When the Lemke family in Minnesota started manufacturing their first ASV tracked vehicles, landscape pros almost immediately saw their advantages, especially for sites where they didn't want to damage existing turf. These machines, for as much work as they perform, leave an astoundingly light footprint. In recent years, other manufacturers have begun producing smallish, tracked workhorses of their own.

"Within the past 18 months, we have added one Bobcat with tracks and two Boxers with tracks," reports Tom Pruett, President, LanArc, Inc., Durham, NC. "We have found the track machines to be more productive, especially in wet conditions.

"We have a wide assortment of attachments for these ma-



5

chines: 4x1 buckets, straight buckets, forks, grapples, tillers, rock hounds, Harley racks, backhoe, augers, trenchers, tree booms and levelers.

"We are trying to use horsepower and hydraulics to make our work force more efficient," Pruett tells us.

New insecticide control options

Lawn care pros should be pleased with the introduction of two new insecticides this season. What makes them particularly exciting is that both have tested very well against surface and sub-surface turf insect pests.

Allectus G, developed through a partnership of FMC Corp. and Bayer Environmental Science, combines two popular and well-known products — Talstar from FMC and Merit from Bayer.

"In areas where both grubs and general insects are present, professionals typically need to perform separate applications. Now, with Allectus, they can make just one application, saving time and labor costs," says Jim Walter, FMC's commercial product manager.

For more production boosters, please turn to page 24 ▶▶

"CLIP Propelled My Business Into The Top 10%"

Tony Bass, President Bass Custom Landscapes Bonaire, GA



"I firmly believe time is the single greatest asset we possess. Good stewardship of our time on this earth enables us to make profit and prosper. When I started my business I was full of energy and ideas, but I knew in order to succeed I had to maximize the use of my time. I knew I needed systems that would run independently of me. I wanted a system that was so simple and easy to learn that Bass Custom Landscapes could change personnel without missing a beat. That's where CLIP Software in.

In March of 1992 I purchased a computer to run my new CLIP program. I knew nothing about computers. My annual sales were \$300,000. CLIP saved me over \$13,000 in office personnel that first year. Today with \$3 million in sales we still use CLIP daily with only two office employees maintaining client history, scheduling, routing, and billing in CLIP.

CLIP's steadfast system requires very little maintenance. It's a tool that tells you exactly where you are and gives you the ability to monitor and plan for future growth. I track job profitability with CLIP. It's not good enough for me to track labor by the hour. I prefer to track it by the minute. CLIP gives me the ability to track my profitability on every job easily, quickly, and efficiently-by the minute! I learned years ago that just six minutes was standing between profitability and breaking even.

CLIP allows me to spend time focusing on long-term solutions. In January 1993 I went to my banker with a business plan requesting financing for what was to become my patented Super Lawn Truck system. The primary focus of my business plan was building efficiency with systems and CLIP Software. Today, thanks to CLIP, I have branched out from maintenance to include irrigation, landscaping, design, and installation services.

But, it's not just the software. As much as I love CLIP, the real value is the team behind the software. The team at CLIP Software were the "first kids on the block". They were there when nothing else was and they'll be there when nothing else is. I know they'll be there because they have their ears open. With so many changes resulting from the growth of my business, from technology and from the industry itself, CLIP has been there for me every step of the way, often anticipating enhancements to CLIP even before I asked!

I've come a long way since 1992 when I purchased CLIP. Without CLIP, growth would not have been so easy. I'm now at the top 10% of my industry. In CLIP I've got a user-friendly system that runs without me and helps ensure my profit. With CLIP I can honestly say, "All Systems Go!"

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Go to www.clip.com to learn more about Bass Custom Landscapes

CLIP Service Software

◀ continued from page 22

ARENA insecticide from Arvesta Corporation is also new. It received U.S. EPA approval this past December. This new neonicotinoid controls grubs, chinch bugs, webworms and other turf-damaging insects. It also offers suppression of cutworms and mole crickets.

"The data indicates that the unique chemistry in ARENA will provide the user consistency in grub control while controlling or suppressing many of the surface-feeding insects," says Tom Kroll, Arvesta's fungicide and insecticide product manager. "There aren't many products that can do all that."

7 More than a mower
Steve Holmes's small landscape company in Prairie City, IA, provides landscape services to about 35 clients including local businesses, the post office, local schools, some apartment complexes, a factory and a church.

"It was immediately evident that investing in a mower compatible with a wide range of implements was superior to purchasing separate pieces of specialized equipment," said Holmes, who uses a Grasshopper unit with a wide variety of attachments.

For example, he attaches a 60-in. rotary broom to his Grasshopper zero-turn unit for light powdery snow, but changes over to a snow thrower attachment when the snow gets deeper or heavier. "Because I can change attach-

ments quickly without tools, I can clean up anything I miss with the rotary broom. I am a real believer in zero-radius maneuverability," he says.

8 Spread it and spray it
Some of you in the lawn care business may remember the seemingly endless granular vs. liquid debate of the past generation. Thankfully, we're not squabbling about the merits of one or the other anymore but accept whichever best fits our needs, meaning that most of us now use both. This has given rise to a nice selection of products that apply both granular and liquid products — with a single pass over a property.

"The product that has generated the most return for us the last year was the Z-Sprayer," says Wayne Shiveley, Pine Ridge Landscaping, Inc., Chantilly, VA. "As a full-service maintenance contractor, we do all our weed control and chemical programs in house. We purchased three Z-sprayers (L.T. Rich Products) last year and have been thoroughly impressed and pleased with their productivity. They have made a real impact in that department."

9 Show'em a picture
How many landscape pros would think about leaving their offices without their Nextel phones? But, how about those digital cameras? They're so reasonably priced, you can't afford not to have and use them.

Mark Stupcenski, CLT, Russo Lawn & Landscape, Inc.,



Windsor Locks, CT, often uses the images he takes to show crews what they're doing well, what needs improving and, in many cases, what still needs to be done. Showing instead of explaining saves time.

"I'll make a print from my computer and take a marker and circle the area that I'm talking about, and sometimes all I have to do is staple the print to the work order so that they can take care of it," says Stupcenski. This is an especially effective way to make a point with non-English speaking workers or crews.

10 Keep time, meet production
If you've had trouble managing employee time and attendance, especially at fixed sites away from the office, take a look at the Jobclock System that we learned about last year.

Invented by a contractor who found it nearly impossible to manage his workers when he wasn't at a job site, it's mar-



ked by Exakttime (www.exakttime.com), Woodland Hills, CA. The Jobclock itself is a rugged, weatherproof, battery-powered unit that, in effect, acts like an on-site supervisor. Combining both hardware and software, it records exactly when employees arrive and leave a job site, and provides accurate timekeeping, too. Because it prints out clean and accurate time reports and summarizes workers' activity, it also streamlines payroll preparation.

By ensuring that you pay workers for the time they worked (no rounding off hours, no bogus overtime claims), this system saves you time and money. **LJM**

Sure Thing #1:

**SPRING
CAN'T BE
HURRIED.**



One for all, all for one



Any small business's success depends on measurements. This is especially true for lawn service and landscape companies. Pro-perties. Expenses. Customer retention. Sales.

Gardeners' Guild Inc. (GGI), a 100% ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) landscape company headquartered in San Rafael, CA, measures all of these. But it also painstakingly tracks lost-time accidents. And, apart for its genuine concern for employees' welfare, it also tracks the costs and extra expenses that lost-time accidents gen-

Gardeners' Guild Inc.'s participatory approach to 'team-building' and safety training is paying off big time

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

erate. The company, the object of a CAL OSHA inquiry four years ago as a result of a serious employee injury, has since squared its jaw about safety with dramatically positive results.

"While the company had a fairly decent training program, there was some concern about how well documented it was, specifically for its Spanish-speaking workers," says

Guadalupe Sandoval, loss control specialist for insurer USI Northern California.

Sandoval, who now assists GGI with its supervisor training, describes the company's present-day training efforts as "excellent."

Says Sandoval: "Gardener's Guild said that 'our system is not broken but we think we can get better,' and they've made

continued on page 28

Sure Thing #2:

**THREE OF
A KIND BEATS
TWO PAIR.**



continued from page 26

the effort to implement change and invest in safety."

In addition to reducing employee injuries, lots of other good things started happening, too. Employee morale rose. Insurance expenses fell.

Say yes to training

The question then becomes, should your company also start a comprehensive program to avoid lost-time accidents and their related costs? The answer: an unqualified yes. Should it go beyond the break room and involve participatory field training, too? Again: absolutely.

Consider the following GGI experience, as related by President John Ossa. It will help you get started.

"We're not a mom-and-outfit but we're hardly the biggest company in our region either, and our workers compensation premiums began to skyrocket several years ago," says Ossa. "We're talking big dollars,

and we made a decision to aggressively take on the problem with a comprehensive top-down approach."

One of the first realities to confront Ossa (within days of his being named president of the company in 2002) was an incredible jump in the company's annual workers comp insurance premium.

"It was a staggering increase," he recalls. "It was scary."

And it got scarier in 2003 when the company, in spite of a good reputation and safety record, was slammed with a higher premium yet.

Management responded by ramping up a unique program. Instead of focusing too narrowly on either job skills or safety, or even a combination of both, it felt it needed a "team-building" program involving all 125 of its employees.

It came up with the slogan, "My hand is your hand (Mi mano is su mano)," and built it into the heart of their ongoing train-

continued on page 30



Start the season with a jamboree

SAN RAFAEL, CA — One day each spring, Gardeners' Guild, Inc. conducts a Safety & Team Building Jamboree at a community center here. All of the company's employees participate. The purpose of the Jamboree is to increase awareness that by working together, everyone will become more successful and work more safely. Here's how it works.

The employees are divided into groups and, during the course of the day, these groups rotate to the 12 training and safety stations that have been prepared for them. Each station covers the use of a specific piece of equipment (with hands-on instruction), offers a team-building exercise, presents specific safety information or explains a particular aspect of the company's operation.

Equipment suppliers and service vendors participate in the Jamboree, and assist GGI Director of Operations Kevin Davis.

"Safety training is expensive," admits Guadalupe Sandoval, loss control specialist for USI Northern California. "When you're willing to put 100-plus employees through a day of training, paying their salaries and taking time away from production, you know they're serious about it."

But GGI President Ossa thinks that safety, as important as it is, is just one reason for the training day. The ownership behaviors that are developed during the Jamboree translate into a workforce that's empowered to take constructive action on behalf of the customer, he believes.



Each employee visits the 12 stations during the annual training day.

Sure Thing #3:

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NEWLY
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[†]Prior to tillering.

GGI at a glance

Founded: 1972

Number of employees: 125

Market area: San Francisco Bay Area

Approximate annual revenue: \$8.5 million

Business mix: 56% exterior maintenance, 10% interior maintenance, 44% enhancements, irrigation & construction

Mission statement: We are a team of employee owners who take pride in creating and enhancing landscape environments for the benefit and enjoyment of our customers and community.



GGI employees look forward to the spring team-building day.

continued from page 28

ing and team buildings efforts.

"That slogan means that we watch out for each other," says Ossa. "It means that I'm not going to let you fail and you're not going to let me fail."

"Think about it. There is no way that a field supervisor, even a very good supervisor, can watch every person all the time. That's why you have to have the guys watching each other. Not just watching, but helping each other, too. For example, if one guy sees

another trying to lift a heavy object by himself, we expect him to say, 'Wait, before you lift that, let me help.' We decided we had to weave this into everything that we do."

Keep education coming

GGI is 100% employee owned, and Ossa says that it takes ongoing education to get that message across to the front-line employees.

"Of course everybody understands salary, exchanging units of their time for

dollars; everybody gets that," he explains. "The notion that they're building equity in a retirement plan based on the profits of the company is more difficult for them to understand, particularly when you try to explain concepts such as a vesting schedule to them."

They're now aware, however, that every dollar of revenue lost as a result of a lost-time accident, every extra dollar spent for a higher insurance premium, comes off the company's bottom line and, ultimately, affects them, says Ossa.

"Being an employee-owned company helps give us a unified spirit and a collective mindset. But, it takes a lot of effort to get everybody on that page, and thinking and acting like an owner. It's very rewarding, though."

And how about those skyrocketing workers comp premiums? They dropped 14% this year and the company is expecting another substantial decrease for the following year.

General market conditions are one factor, Ossa says. That can't be controlled. However, the aggressive steps GGI took to reduce exposure and claims, in partnership with its insurer, its suppliers and all of its employees, is the bigger reason. **LJM**



Employees get basic instruction in stretching and lifting at the spring jamboree.

19 out of 20

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* Results based on 2004 Wiese Research Associates survey conducted with landscape professionals.

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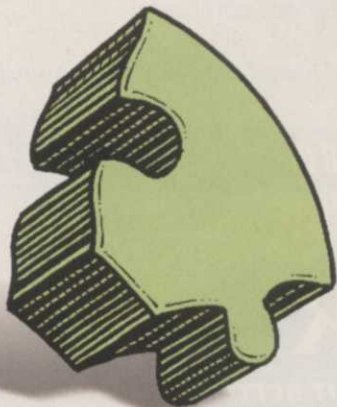
Best-Selling Brand of Mowing Equipment for the Landscape Professional

Circle 114

The 'right fit'

Matching the right modified-duty task to injured employees keeps them working — and it controls workers' comp costs

BY BARBARA MULHERN



W

hen an employee at Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping in Portland, OR, is injured, he or she shouldn't expect to sit home. Unless it's clear from a doctor that the person is unable to work at all, company managers will work hard to find a "modified-duty" task that matches the person's medical restrictions and quickly return the employee to the workplace.

"The longer they sit at home, the more they think it's their fault, and the harder it is to get them motivated," Dennis' Seven Dees Construction Manager Nathan Dirksen says. "We

work real hard to get injured employees back to work as soon as possible. They know that if it's to the point where they can sit two hours, stand one hour, we will find that kind of work for them here."

Dennis' Seven Dees, which employs 200 to 240 people, has a proactive return-to-work/ modified-duty program — a program insurance company officials say is critical to controlling workers' compensation costs.

"Without a return-to-work program, a company will see significantly higher workers' compensation claims," says Benjamin Atkinson, a risk control

continued on page 34



Are you still pulling weeds?

No matter how terrific the turf looks, your customers won't be happy if



Expo® slow release potassium sulfate, and IBDU® slow release nitrogen. So

their shrub beds are overgrown with unsightly weeds. And, unless you have free labor available don't even think about hand weeding! Woodace Preen Plus® gives you the power of two active ingredients, stopping more weeds than any other shrub bed weed preventer on the market. One application of Woodace Preen Plus prevents weeds for up to 6 months. Woodace fertilizers are specially formulated for ornamentals with exclusive technologies like Perk® slow release iron, MESA® slow release ammonium sulfate,

don't walk by an opportunity every time you knock on a customer's door. Make Woodace Preen Plus the foundation of your ornamental bed maintenance plan. Combined with Woodace plant nutrition, Woodace Preen Plus will make your customer's shrub beds the envy of the neighborhood. For more information and to get your free handy spreader visit our website at www.LebanonTurf.com, click on promotions and enter coupon code LM5025.



Circle 115

LebanonTurf

continued from page 32
 director at CNA Insurance in Chicago. "The longer a claim is open, the greater the cost." CNA's experience with the companies it insures shows that the average cost of a claim that is open less than 90 days is \$1,500 to \$2,000; that figure jumps to \$37,000 when the injured employee is out of work more than 720 days.

"There's a host of psychosocial stresses affecting injured workers."

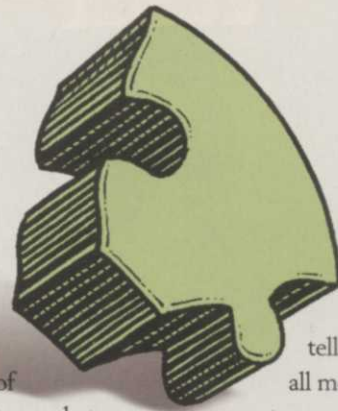
— Benjamin Atkinson

"When an injured employee is out more than a few weeks, it becomes increasingly harder to get the person back to work," Atkinson says, noting that fewer than 2% of injured workers out of work more than a year ever return to full employment.

"There is a whole host of psychosocial stresses that affect injured workers. One of the best ways to combat these is to get them back to work — keep that bond with their co-workers, and feel part of the team."

Essential work

Joe Tommasi, manager of loss prevention at The Davey Tree Expert Co. in Kent, OH, says a return-to-work program is also a key part of that company's safety program. "You keep their attitudes up, and hopefully can speed their return to full duty," says Tommasi, whose company employs more than 5,000 workers. "We've managed cases that were significant and have, in fact, saved dollars. It definitely makes a difference."



Dennis' Seven Dees' written return-to-work policy tells employees that all modified job duties

are temporary and are designed to facilitate a return to regular duties as soon as possible. The company works closely with a local hospital where injured employees are medically evaluated.

"There's a group of six or seven doctors there, and we talk to them a lot," Dirksen says. The company also has a Return to Work Recommendations form it sends to the physicians doing the evaluations. Among the items included in the form are the date the person can return to modified work and the estimated date he/she may return to regular work; specific temporary restrictions on physi-

continued on page 36

Return-to-work program checklist

✓ Identify a person in your company who will coordinate your return-to-work program, including maintaining contact with the injured employee, the person's physician/clinic and your insurer. This person should also monitor medical treatment, including early diagnosis, work limitations, establishment of a treatment plan, progress of the plan and communication between all of the above parties. Be sure to designate a back-up coordinator as well.

✓ Clearly communicate your return-to-work policy in writing to all managers, supervisors and non-supervisory employees. Let your supervisors know that they're an important part of your return to work "team."

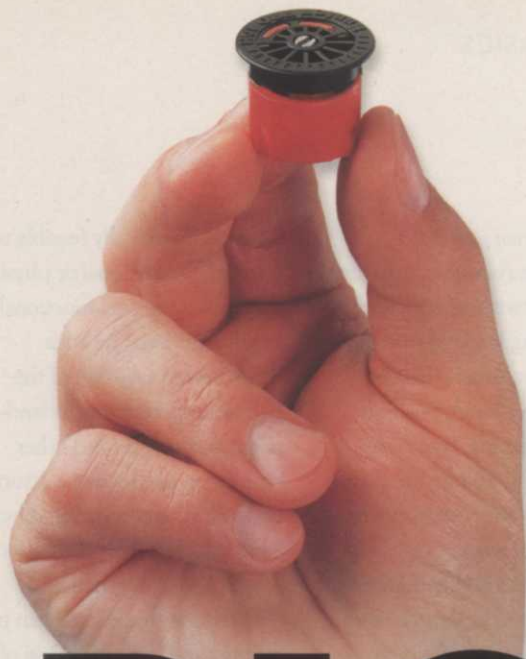
✓ Make sure you have written job descriptions for all current positions, including the physical requirements for the job.

✓ Develop a list and job descriptions for potential modified-duty jobs. Seek assistance from your insurer/workers' compensation carrier and/or an occupational or physical therapist at a local clinic you use if needed.

✓ Establish a good relationship with physicians, occupational therapists and others at the clinic you're likely to use for evaluation of an injured worker. Invite the physician/clinicians to visit your operation to see the

type of work that's done. If that isn't possible, provide them with a videotape or photos. Also, provide the clinic with your list/descriptions of potential modified duty tasks.

✓ Immediately report all work-related injuries to your insurer/workers' compensation carrier when medical attention will be required or a potential for time off of work exists. Timely reporting will help facilitate your ability to control costs.



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continued from page 34

cal abilities (bending, squatting, climbing, twisting, crawling; lifting/carrying loads of a certain weight); endurance (sitting, standing, walking); pushing/pulling, grasping, (reaching above the shoulders; etc.); and the total number of hours the person may work.

Both Atkinson and Dr. Steve Kirkhorn, medical director of systemwide Occupational Health at the Marshfield (WI) Clinic, say that ongoing communication between the employer and both the company's insurer and the injured worker's physician is important.

it isn't economically feasible to have an occupational or physical therapist do formal functional job descriptions," he adds.

Atkinson says one of the biggest impediments to landscape contractors and other employers not having a return-to-work program is that they "don't see how job evaluation can be a simple process."

"Yet this simple tool can pay off big time," he says. "One of the dynamics is that MDs are under increasing time pressures. Therefore, your job descriptions must convey the physical demands of the jobs at a glance."

Your insurer, Atkinson says, can be a source of help with this. CNA, for example, has a one-page form called a Job Function Evaluation. "With 10 minutes of instruction, you could fill it out," he says. Your insurer/workers' compensation carrier can also help begin the process of communicating with the evaluating physician once a claim is filed.

Modified-duty tasks

Another reason some landscape contractors don't implement return-to-work programs is because they don't think they can come up with appropriate modified-duty tasks. But both Tommasi and Dirksen cite examples of modified duty work their companies have come up with for injured workers.

"We had a herbicide applicator who used a backpack sprayer and couldn't fill the tank up to the full five gallons. So we reduced it down to three gallons" and he was able to still do the work, Tommasi says.

"There might also be opportunities to shift injured workers to sales and office work, such as helping with estimates. We have seen some people really help around the office; they had skills on the phones or were good in planning."

An employee at Dennis' Seven Dees who went over the end of a wheelbarrow and had to have knee surgery "didn't even want to tell us he was injured," Dirksen says. "We kept finding things for him to do and kept him busy. For example, we do holiday decorations and there was garland that needed to be wrapped."

Injured employees are evaluated on a "case by case basis," Dirksen continues. "We will have them work with our person who washes trucks if they can. Or, they may be sitting on a chair in the warehouse putting irrigation parts in the parts bin. Or, they may be filling out job sheets. It's based on the employee and the person's medical restrictions."

"Employers can plan ahead by identifying modified duty jobs suitable for different types of injuries," Kirkhorn suggests. "For example, seated work for lower extremity injuries; no overhead work for neck or shoulder injuries; one-handed work for wrist/elbow/shoulder injuries; and jobs allowing alternate sitting/standing with little bending for back injuries." **LJM**

— *The author is PLANET's Safety Specialist and a freelance writer who lives in rural Belleville, WI. Contact her at bamu100@aol.com.*



"Modified duty should be presented as doing essential work that otherwise doesn't get done."

— **Dr. Steve Kirkhorn**

"Modified duty — which can include anything from light to moderate to heavy duty tasks — should be presented as doing essential work that otherwise does not get done. Otherwise, it is seen as punishment, and the injured employee becomes resentful and feels demeaned," Kirkhorn says.

"Job descriptions of the regular work and modified duty tasks are helpful. Health care providers are not comfortable returning people to work when they think the employer will not follow restrictions and the person may worsen. Seasoned employees and managers can help develop these job descriptions if

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Don't be shy, network

The timid landscaper's way to promote their company and increase sales

BY GARY S. GOLDMAN

We could role-play until we turned blue in the face. We could read all the self-help books ever written, watch all the videos ever made and some of us would still have a hard time meeting and greeting strangers.

We're all different when it comes to assertiveness, being social and doing public speaking. I've taught workshops where attendees couldn't stand up and say their name in front of others.

What are these contractors to do? Simple — they *must* be able to get the message out about what they do. At some point in the relationship between the contractor and the client, a face-to-face meeting or, at the very least, a telephone call will be necessary. Bluntly put, you need people skills to be successful.

Networking = momentum

Networking is momentum. The

greater the number of people who know you, the greater the momentum will be toward your success. You increase the number of opportunities for potential pieces of business. By networking, you become known by those who count. You could meet one of your most influential clients at just about any gathering. The key is being there!

Woody Allen said, "80% of life is showing up." If you're a little timid about getting up and speaking at a

meeting, don't do it. Simply show up at meetings and shake hands.

Here's a tip: Be the first one there and the last to leave. This gives you the opportunity to shake hands and introduce yourself to people as they enter or leave the room. You may feel more comfortable surrounded by fewer people. The people you meet can spend more time with you before or after the event. It also enables you to walk up to individuals without feeling nervous about approaching the small cliques that form once many of the people have arrived.

It sounds like psycho babble, but it's possible to turn negative energy into positive energy. Butterflies in your stomach aren't necessarily a bad thing. They keep

continued on page 40



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Circle 118

An  Ingersoll Rand business



continued from page 38

you alert and thinking about what you're going to say. Take your fears and negative thoughts and turn them in your favor. You're working anyway, you might as well enjoy it! There's little risk in a networking event. Very little can go wrong. Just introduce yourself. Just be there.

Take action daily

How often should you go to an event? For the reticent, the question really is, "How often do I have to go?" You or someone in your company should go to at least two networking events per month and make at least two networking telephone calls each week. That should be easy.

These numbers will vary by the size of your company. A larger company with a

dedicated sales staff may attend as many as one event per week and make two telephone calls per day. Do the math; by the end of the year, you've done some serious marketing. This formula is a tried and true method for growing your business and certainly not a strenuous one even for the busy, unassertive contractor.

Take at least some action each day. Don't allow a single day to go by without doing something to move your business forward, no matter how small. Hand out a business card, call an existing contact, or call a new one. Turn existing clients into friends by staying in touch, and they become excellent sources of referrals. Remember, it may take as much as six months to two years to develop a relationship that

will bear fruit. You must remain visible if not vocal.

Networking is too valuable a tool for it to go unused by a contractor. In the long run, its momentum will allow the contractor to work smarter, not harder.

Your new contacts will present potential work to you as opposed to you scratching for each potential deal on your own. It's important to build and nurture these relationships simply by continually making appearances in the same place, even if you don't give speeches.

How long has it been since you last went to a network meeting? If not now, when? **LJM**

— *The author is the owner of the consulting firm, Gary S. Goldman & Associates. He can be reached at 508/652-9771 or gmanaf@msn.com.*

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Circle 119

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Circle 120

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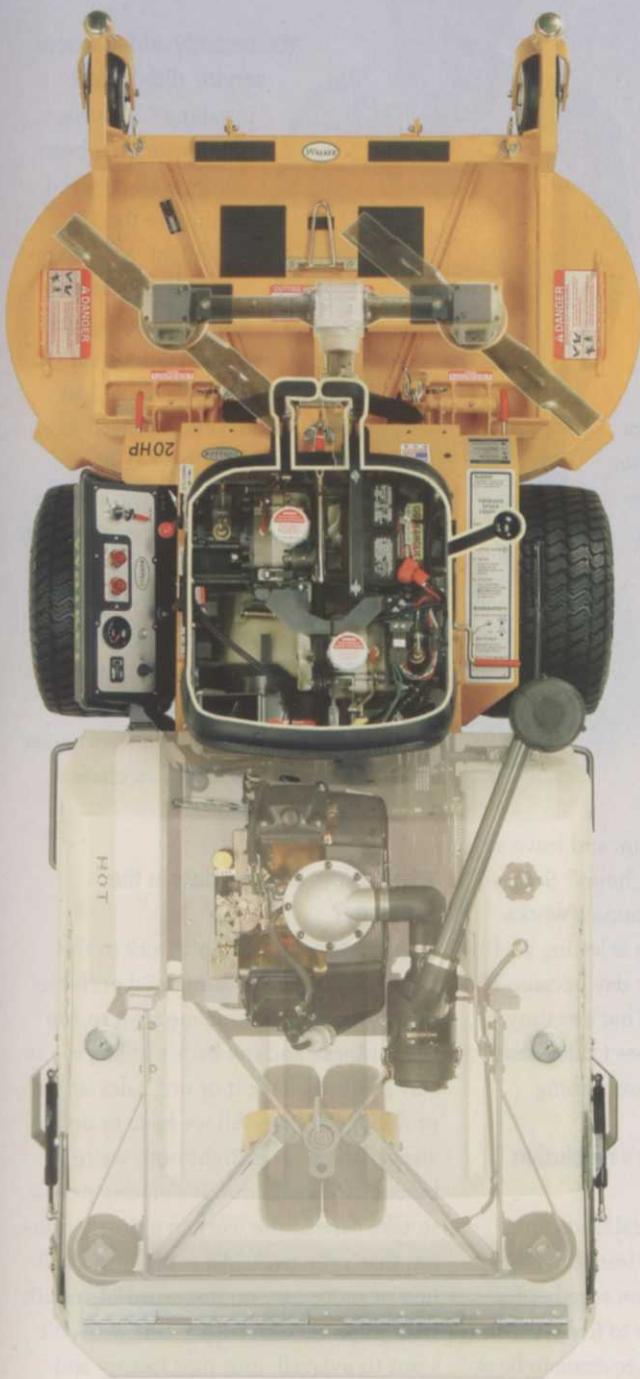
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Circle 121

Inside the Owner's Head

BUSINESS PERSONALITY PROFILE

Chris Kaylor

► Kaylor Landscape

BY JASON STAHL / Managing Editor

Chris Kaylor owns Kaylor Landscape, a \$1.2 design/build company located in Porterville, CA that has been in business for 30 years. About 95% of its customer base is residential. The company, which has 14 employees, also performs some maintenance for select clients and has recently begun to offer Christmas decoration installation. Sales are projected to be \$1.5 million in 2005.

In the beginning there was...

Me working for an irrigation/agricultural business during high school that went out of business. I then worked for another company installing irrigation systems and said to myself, "I can do this." So I started Kaylor Landscape in 1974.

Did you have any schooling in landscaping?

Nope. I studied liberal arts for two years at Porterville Junior College but didn't take any landscape courses.

What drew you to the Green Industry?

I loved being outdoors and creating things with my hands. Creating water features is probably my biggest love.

Outside of business, what do you do to cultivate your love for the outdoors?

My 18-year-old son L.C. and I go dirt biking, snowskiing and flyfishing. Once while we were dirt biking, I crashed and broke four ribs and bruised my lungs. That's

why I want to get my business to where, if I'm laid up for six months, I have someone in place to handle sales and do everything I do. But we just love dirt biking. We go to the desert with other fathers and sons and camp out and go for day-long rides. We once did a 600-mile trip in Baha.

How many hours a week are you logging these days?

Well, I get to work at 5 a.m. and leave at 6 p.m., so what's that? 13 hours? Somewhere along the line I became a workaholic. My biggest problem is letting go. I swept the floors the other day because I couldn't stand the mess. That's not my normal duty but sometimes I think that I have to get my fingers in everything.

Did you make a New Year's resolution this year?

Yes, and it was to visit several landscape companies in California to learn how they do things and put a structure together for growth over the next three to five years. In five years, I'd like our gross revenue to be at \$3 million and I'd like our company to be self-sustaining. I want to work only six to eight hours a day rather than 13. I suppose I could sell my business too, but I won't retire because I don't sit well. I'm always on the move doing something.



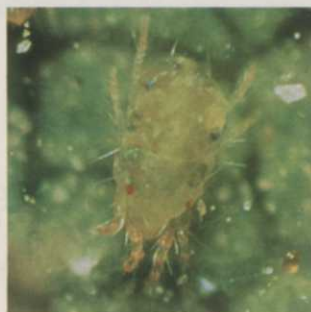
You recently added a new service, didn't you?

Installing Christmas decorations has been more well-received out here than I thought. My daughter Alyssa was very thorough and aggressive and did a great job selling it. We've had some clients spend as much as \$8,000. It's a happy time of year, and our clients love the service. And we can get up on the roofs here without worrying too much about weather conditions. I guess you don't know who's interested in a particular service until you chase down the market.

What is your primary duty in the company?

I handle the sales. I don't work in the field as much, even though I'd prefer to be out there. But someone's got to run the business, and my back's telling me to stay inside. Believe it or not, sales isn't a problem out here. All we have to do is answer the phone. Right now, we're booked 10 weeks out. It's getting people to take care of the work in a timely fashion that's the trick. We could do \$2 million or more easy on just word-of-mouth with minimal advertising. But we don't want to oversell. Our past history and good recommendations and word of mouth is what does it for us.

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Circle 116



The best way to drive down costs is to reduce waste by standardizing value-added processes and reducing non-value-added processes.



Our goal: leaner operations

BY KEVIN KEHOE

Reducing waste has to be the number one priority of every contractor over the next several years. Your profits depend upon it because the market has changed. The old profit model of identifying your cost, adding a profit margin to determine a price ($\text{Cost} + \text{Profit} = \text{Price}$), has morphed to the new and permanent profit model, where the customer determines price, then you pay your ever-escalating costs, and what's left is your profit ($\text{Price} - \text{Cost} = \text{Profit}$).

When you can't raise your prices, the only way to increase profits is to decrease your costs. The best way to drive down costs is to reduce waste by standardizing value-added processes and eliminating or reducing non-value added processes in the field, the yard and the office. This means thinking lean all the time.

Waste defined

Here's the key to understanding waste. Your customer pays you, for example, to cut the grass. Therefore, the only true value-added time is that time that crews are actually moving the mower and cutting grass. Getting to the job, loading, unloading, planning, moving equipment, billing, fixing equipment and waiting for other crew members to finish work are all by definition non-value added tasks — they're waste.

Lean Management is a proven management system that focuses on identifying, reducing and eliminating waste using the kaizen blitz process made famous by the Toyota Motor Company.

I know what you're thinking. This type of manage-

ment system might be great for manufacturing businesses, but we're different. We're a service business and it won't work for us. In fact it does, and it is. In fact, we're in the early stages of adopting and translating the tools of lean management for use by contractors.

Touching the surface

We can't emphasize enough the importance of lean in a contracting/service business. The elimination of waste accomplishes two important strategic results:

- ▶ First, it reduces the need for manpower and machines necessary to produce a given level of sales, thus reducing per-labor hour cost.
- ▶ Second, it provides pricing leverage as a result of the lower per-hour labor cost. Jobs can be priced competitively without sacrificing profits, and increases the potential for revenue growth and job retention.

My company needs your help to continue to develop tools and examples that can benefit you the contractor in your own businesses. We're embarking on a long-term program to quantify the impact of lean in the industry. In order to do this, we need information about you that will ultimately benefit you. The only way we can get this information is through your participation in a series of surveys. Keep in mind that the information is tabulated by a third party company guaranteeing your confidentiality. And your participation guarantees you a copy of the actual results as we produce them.

To complete the survey, go to www.kehoe.biz and click on Lean Survey.

— The author is owner of Kehoe and Co., which specializes in management training and consulting services. He can be reached at 714/363-8416 or kkehoe@earthlink.net.

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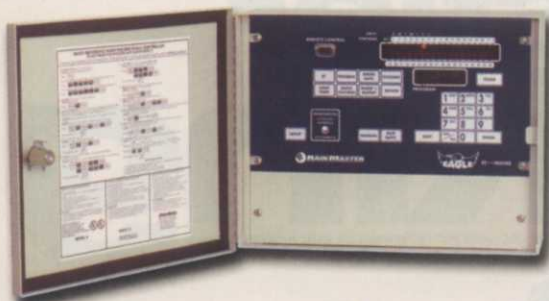
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For more information contact Rain Master at www.rainmaster.com / circle no. 280

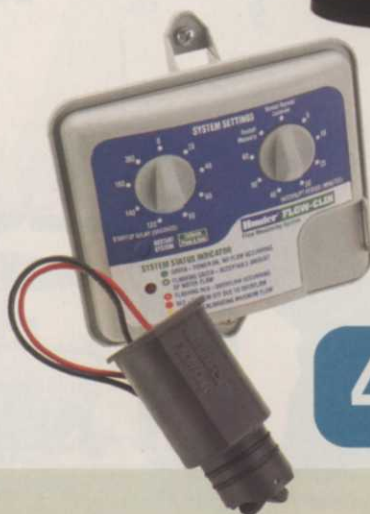


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4

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Circle 124



COMMERCIAL POWER

Shopping for replacement parts is an important aspect of repairing an engine and the piece of equipment it's mounted to. When your engine is in need of repair or maintenance parts, remember these important points:

1. Use Original Equipment Manufacturers' replacement parts. This will make a big difference in how well an engine performs after a repair.
2. Order OEM parts from authorized service dealers and outdoor power equipment retailers. Maintain a good working relationship with your supplier because, when you need an odd part for a piece of equipment that's down, the supplier can help you get the part in the most expedient time.
3. Many individuals think Original Equipment Manufacturers' parts cost significantly more than aftermarket parts. In many cases, the difference (if there is any) is small. Remember, OEM parts meet original manufacturing specifications and are designed to last an extended amount of time.
4. Many customers forget the value of their employees' time. If someone found an aftermarket part that was \$5 or less than an OEM part, but spent half an hour of their time finding this great deal, was it really worth the savings?
5. Many Original Equipment Manufacturers offer specials on parts or repair services in the off-season. If you forecast what maintenance parts you need for the upcoming season, you can save some money and also will have the needed parts during the busy season.
6. When shopping for replacement parts, always take the equipment model and serial numbers, the engine numbers and any parts removed. Or visit an OEM Web site as many have illustrated parts lists available. Try to supply the dealer with the most accurate information you can find. This helps authorized service dealers identify the right parts for your piece of equipment. It will avoid costly mistakes.



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

From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY RECRUITING PLANS

There's a technician shortage. You'll find that out when you need one. They're hard to find and harder to keep.



Need a technician?

BY HARRY SMITH

You need a technician...again? What's going on here? There's a technician shortage. You'll find that out when you need one. Ask any power equipment dealer. Ask any distributor that deals with turf or power equipment. Ask a golf course superintendent. Good technicians are rare. They're hard to find and harder to keep.

Find them, retain them

Are there strategies for finding and keeping good technicians? I asked a few top technicians these questions since they're the objects of our affliction. Hopefully, they'd know what's going on. Here's what they said:

Gary on the east coast of Florida says: "I know there is one (a technician shortage)." As the shop manager, he has been recruiting from the automotive industry and providing training. He also mentioned that he watches his crew for potential trainees. He puts them in the shop on a 30-day trial. He recently hired a retired machinist. He has hired techs from personnel leaving a nearby Coast Guard installation. He has hired technicians from the automotive import field,

and he staffs several part-time positions with retirees.

Mike, a shop manager in South Florida, echoes many of Gary's sentiments. He also mentioned that the average age for equipment technicians is nearly 56 nationwide. This means that there will be a mass exodus in the near future, further aggravating the technician shortage. Mike also mentioned he has even hired aircraft A&P mechanics and techs from the heavy equipment and construction industry. He stated that one of the other shops nearby recently spent several months trying to fill an assistant technician position.

Bad to worse

It appears the technician shortage isn't only real but about to get worse. You need a recruiting plan. Is there a unique labor pool you can draw from? Do you have retirees, people exiting the military from a nearby base or other groups that contain potential technicians? Are you willing to cross train or even take on a raw recruit and train them to be a technician? Create a strategy and be flexible. The situation may get worse before it gets better.

— *The author is the turf equipment professor at Lake City Community College, Lake City, FL. He can be reached at smithh@lakecitycc.edu.*

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Circle 125

With technology changing daily, business owners are realizing the need to add a technology person to their list of trusted advisors.



Add a 'techie' to your team

BY TYLER WHITAKER

Surround yourself with the brightest people you can find and you're on the road to success. Your "dream team" of advisors might include the right banker, the right lawyer and the right accountant. But, have you found the right technology advisor? Have you found someone that can guide you through the information technology maze?

This can be difficult and it may even appear impossible because of your company's size and budget constraints. Believe me, it's not.

Basic needs

First, let's examine your company's basic technology needs — someone to help you fix your e-mail problems, keep the systems running and train you on how the latest software works. This person needs to have solid customer service skills and be eager to share the tips and tricks he or she learned with others.

Second, we need someone to help us select the correct software to buy, decide when to upgrade our desktop machines and make sure that our finance software works with our customer relationship management software. These strategic issues set the company's course for several years.

The typical small business has a single office person, who may or may not be dedicated to technology issues. Often, this day-to-day operational person doesn't have the training to set the strategic technology direction of the organization. Typically, they're too close to the problem and don't have the time and expertise required to research and design the right solutions for the business. Being able to develop formal systems requirements and then match up the right software to the project are the skills you should be looking for.

Finding the right person

How do you find the right technology person? Hiring is always an option. Ideally, you'd like to find an employee with good computer skills who can also double as your daily

office support. Alternatively, you can outsource the responsibilities to a trusted company or consultant. Ultimately, most companies discover that using a combination of both works best. They like the flexibility of having what amounts to a dedicated employee, but with a variable cost based on use.

This outside company should perform a review of all of your systems every three to six months. This helps you catch problems before they start and sets up a baseline for future technology plans.

With technology changing on a daily basis, smart business owners are realizing the need to add a technology person to their list of trusted advisors.

— *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.*



What to ask

Before hiring an IT consultant or computer services company, get answers to these questions:

- ▶ What's the cost structure?
- ▶ Monthly fee or per incident?
- ▶ What can I expect in terms of response?
- ▶ Are they on call, with acceptable hours of operation?
- ▶ 800 number? On-site support?

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Plants & Planting helps users learn to make plant selections suited to the site, as well as serving appropriate



functions within a landscape (such as a wind screen, shade, etc.). Key elements this course covers are:

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- Selection with plant functions in mind
- Physical characteristics used to identify plants (size, shape, foliage, etc.)
- Plant classification terms
- Understanding a planting plan
- Steps for proper planting of trees and shrubs
- Pros and cons of annuals and perennials
- Staking and establishing trees
- Understanding climates and microclimates

Many color photographs, additional online information links, and other elements enhance this worthwhile and critical course. Use it to give all employees a thorough pre-season review or give new employees an interactive and interesting way to learn this critical information.



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For more information on sponsoring Green Industry-specific courses on the Hub, contact Kevin Stoltman at 800/225-4569 x2772 or email: kstoltman@advanstar.com

Long live handhelds

Proper maintenance and transportation of handheld equipment will ensure long life

BY CHRISTINA A. THOMPSON



two string trimmers, two stick edgers, one pole saw, two hedge trimmers, one backpack blower, one hand blower and two chain saws.

Monthly inspection

Thompson inspects each piece of equipment every month and keeps a log of what service was done to the equipment. He said, "So far, I felt that once a month under my use, which is not too terribly heavy, does just fine.

"It probably takes five minutes to go over each piece really well. That's plenty for them," Thompson added.

He sprays all of the triggers with lubricant to make sure they're working smoothly. He also checks throttle linkages and sprays oil on the throttle cables to keep them lubed.

"Basically, there's really not too much maintenance involved on my part. Just run high octane fuel through them. I use No Smoke oil mix in mine at a 50-1 ratio," Thompson said.

At the end of the season, he drains the gasoline from the equipment and is sure to run each piece of equipment dry. At the start of the season, he changes the spark plugs in all of the equipment.

Because his equipment is in tip-top shape, he hasn't seen any signs that the

Most handheld equipment doesn't follow a regular manufacturer-recommended maintenance schedule like trucks or mowers, but you still need to keep track of how

your handhelds are running in order to get the most life from them.

As an owner/operator of Thompson's Landscaping, Matthew Thompson can't afford to lose any piece of equipment due to failures. He's been in business for four years and hasn't needed to replace any of his handheld equipment. His Henderson, N.C.-based company owns

continued on page 56

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continued from page 54

equipment needs to be serviced immediately.

"So far, I haven't witnessed anything that would lead to servicing. I think that a regular maintenance schedule keeps those problems from happening. So if you just basically keep it up monthly, chances are something else happening are pretty slim."

Thompson said handheld equipment should typically last three to four years, and he plans to run his as long as he can.

Quick turnaround

As a larger company, DeSantis Landscapes of Salem, OR, has a different view of handheld maintenance. "In our smaller equipment, we're trying to move toward a two-year turnaround so that we're constantly using newer stuff and not having to spend a bunch of time on maintenance repairs," said Ken DeSantis, Division Manager of Maintenance.

"In our smaller equipment, we're trying to move toward a two-year turnaround."

— Ken DeSantis

The 30-year-old company owns seven hedge trimmers, seven weed eaters, 16 blowers, eight edgers and five chain saws. The company uses brush cutter attachments on the weed eaters. With 45 employees in peak season, the company can afford to have a full-time mechanic that supports seven maintenance crews and six installation crews.

He said the mechanic doesn't keep a regular schedule for smaller equipment, like handhelds.

"It's not like he checks them every month or every few months," DeSantis

said. "Because most of the smaller handhelds are two-stroke, there are no oil changes or anything like that."

The mechanic works on it as needed for tune-ups and blade sharpening. It's up to the crew to oil blades on hedge trimmers and chain saws.

"The mechanic and the crew leaders will go through and identify problem equipment that needs to be repaired or replaced for the coming season. We are in the middle of that right now," DeSantis said.



Ken DeSantis

For example, the mechanic will check hedge trimmers for how worn the bars are and if the engine is running well.

DeSantis said division managers will make purchasing decisions based upon input from crew leaders. The cost and the history of the equipment is determined.

"We will do a cost comparison. Like this past year, we were looking at hedge trimmers. It was going to cost \$50 to \$100 less to replace the bar on it, so it made sense to replace the equipment altogether," he said.

He added that if the equipment has been in the shop frequently, then the company might consider purchasing a different brand. The company is currently trying to settle on a brand of blower.

DeSantis said that once they find a brand that works for a specific type of equipment such as trimmers, then the company replaces all trimmers with that brand. He added that makes it easier for repairs.

Transport safely

Proper transporting of equipment is the key to maintenance, he said. DeSantis recommends adequate tie downs or slots for

Maintenance tips

- ▶ Keep a log of what service has been done to what handheld equipment. Include the date and an identifier for the piece of equipment. This will help you determine the service history.
- ▶ Take five minutes to inspect all handheld equipment monthly. This will curb equipment problems and related downtime.
- ▶ Try not to damage equipment when transporting to the next site. Properly tie down equipment or dedicate a slot for handhelds in a trailer. The constant rustling from speed bumps or potholes can damage the equipment.
- ▶ Tie together employee bonuses with equipment purchases. Employees will take better care of the equipment when they know their bonus is on the line.

equipment in the trailer.

"That's the time when you're going to have the most damage done. If you don't have a good place for it in your truck or trailer, then it might not last a year," he added.

The DeSantis Landscapes provides a profit-sharing plan that considers the costs of replacing equipment. "We emphasize to crews that they need to take care of the equipment," said DeSantis. "If we have to replace equipment or repair equipment, that comes out of what profit we might share. There is somewhat of a financial incentive for each individual. "We've only had it (profit sharing) for two years now, but with that we've seen an awareness of how things are being taken care of." **LM**

— *The author lives in Shelby, OH, and is a longtime writer for the aftermarket. Contact her at editwrite4u@neo.rr.com.*

To see some hot handheld products, turn to page 58 ▶▶



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For more information call Efcó at 800/447-1152 or visit www.tiltonequipment.com/ circle no. 284

Convert with ease

John Deere showcases the XT140LE trimmer/brushcutter in its Pro-Series line. The product offers a 1.6-hp (JIS) (25.6-cc), low emission, M-Series engine for efficient, quiet and long-lasting use. The solid steel, straight, 59-in. shaft reduces vibration and increases durability. The XT140LE also features a 17-in. cutting swath. The Commercial EZ Load string head provides fast, accurate line feed for increased productivity. The product is lightweight, weighing 12 pounds. A brushcutter blade is available. The device can be converted to pole saw and hedge trimmer for added versatility.

For more information call John Deere Inquiry Department at 800/537-8233 or visit www.johndeere.com/ circle no. 285

Sure starter

Shindaiwa, Inc's 352s chain saw is the company's first new chain saw since the introduction of the 357 top handle saw in 1995. The modern designed chain saw is based on the popular 360. With only 35.2 cc displacement, 2.5 horsepower (1.9 kW), the 352s packs a lot of profes-



Efficient 4-stroke

Husqvarna's new 324Lx commercial trimmer features a fuel-efficient 4-stroke engine, which provides powerful performance with lower noise levels. It also eliminates the need to mix gas and oil. The new trimmer is equipped with a heavy-duty commercial gear box for smooth operation, durability and reduced "grass wrap." With an adjustable loop handle, the trimmer is easy to rotate for use at varying angles. The 324Lx's straight shaft allows extended reach under trees and shrubs. The trimmer features automatic Smart Start for easier starting and less wear on starter components and the LowVib vibration damping system to help decrease operator fatigue and increase control.

For more information call Husqvarna at 800/487-5962 or www.husqvarna.com/ circle no. 286



sional features in a small, lightweight package. For example, an inertia chain brake system, dual bar studs, easy pull Sure Start recoil starting system and a convenient thumb screw access on the air filter cover. For operator convenience, the 352s also comes standard with both a nylon mesh air filter for damp climates, and a flocked air filter for dry, dusty conditions.

For more information call Shindaiwa at 800/521-7733 or visit www.shindaiwa.com/ circle no. 287

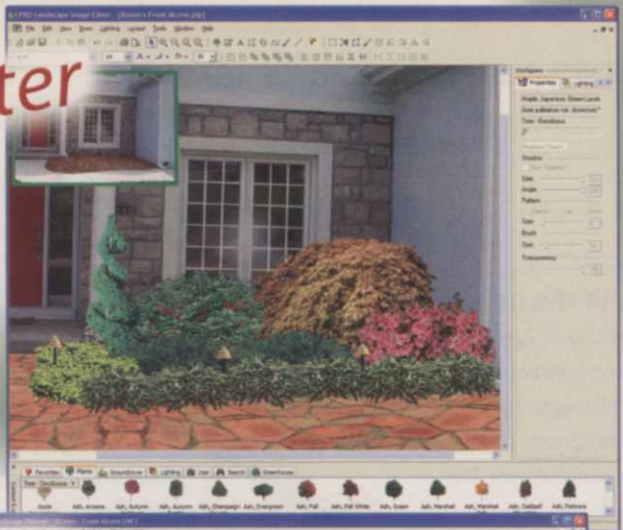
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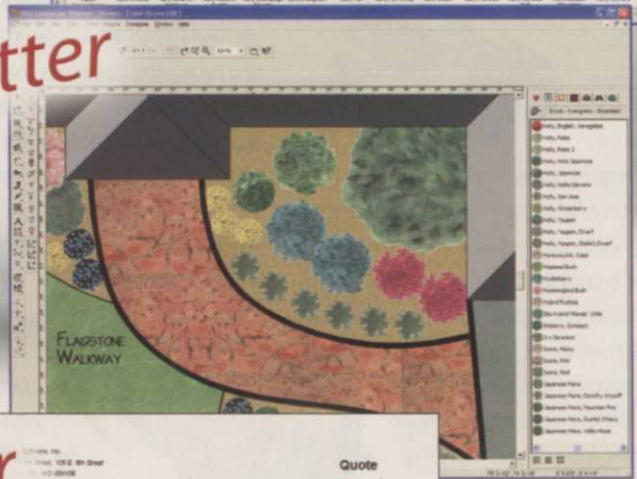
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continued on page 60

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Notes:
Project Name: Sports Front Almond
Project #: 200403

Item Description Quantity Unit Price Estimated Price

BC010	0.04	Hyd. Blue Pines	1.00	\$80.00	\$80.00
PL041	0.01	Marbletop Concrete	0.00	\$10.00	\$0.00
TR002	0.0	Stucco Almond Slat	1.00	\$80.00	\$80.00
SH076	0.04	Acacia Pine	2.00	\$90.00	\$180.00
SH102	0.04	Juniper Blue Chip	2.00	\$97.50	\$195.00
TR004	2.7	Hyd. Japanese Laurel	1.00	\$275.00	\$275.00
PL008	0.01	Walls, Portland	0.00	\$10.00	\$0.00
MC10	0.10	Gravel 1/4"	3.10	\$30.00	\$93.00
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continued from page 58

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The RedMax BCZ2600S trimmer is powered by a 25.4-cc, pure two-cycle Strato Charged engine. The engine introduces fresh air between the exhaust gases and the fresh charge of air/fuel mix. This eliminates the need for a catalytic converter. A pure 2-cycle engine like this has fewer moving parts than a 4-cycle engine. This increases reliability and reduces maintenance, especially valve maintenance. The 11.1 lb. trimmer is equipped with RedMax's PT104 Plus bump-and-go head. The head is molded of heavy-duty nylon, and a metal insert in the tap knob reduces wear and abrasion as operators tap the head on the ground to extend the monofilament cutting line.

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Tanaka added a lightweight 24-cc, 1.2-hp grass trimmer to its professional landscape lineup. The TBC-2500 weighs 10.8 lbs. (with cutting head) and combines the same power as the TBC-2501 with the TBC-230's proven gear box. Additional specifications include: bearing supported, 7mm solid steel drive shaft; 5-in. semi-automatic cutting head holding 25 ft. of line; 19.3 fl. oz. fuel tank; blade capable; and a

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Maruyama's ED2320 handheld edger makes short work of curved edges, side hills, beds with overhanging bushes and unusually shaped flowerbeds. It has a fully-supported, heavy duty flex steel drive shaft and rugged steel clutch drum that's designed to withstand the stress of commercial operation without breakage or failure.

The CARB-compliant machine has an open shield that allows greater visibility and, with the oversized guide-wheel, offers excellent control even on curves. Other features include a 22.5cc "CE" commercial engine, light weight of 14.6 lbs., great portability and maneuverability, 8-in. steel blade, and the same exacting standard as commercial-grade brushcutters.

For more information contact Maruyama at 253/735-7368 or www.maruyama-us.com / circle no. 292



Cutting edge

The new Little Wonder double-edge gas hedge trimmer offers high-quality craftsmanship in 24- and 30-in. blade lengths. These heavy-duty trimmers pack enough power to easily cut through stubborn growth up to one inch

thick. The Little Wonder Double-Edge gas hedge trimmer makes 4,100 cuts per minute. All gas hedge trimmers feature a commercial-grade 21.2-cc engine with electronic ignition and a primer bulb carburetor to ensure quick starts.

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Complete line

Honda Power Equipment produces a complete line of premium 4-stroke string trimmers and stick edgers for commercial and residential applications. The HHT31S handheld trimmer uses Honda's 1.5-hp, 360-degree inclinable GX31 mini 4-stroke engine, which is known for low noise level, low vibration level and ease of starting. The lightweight HHT25S trimmer is powered by Honda's GX25 mini 4-stroke e-SPEC engine. The HHT25S LTA and HHT31S use Honda's stronger new Flex Shaft system, made of advanced materials for reducing weight. Honda includes a standard kit containing harnesses and safety glasses with all of its trimmers. The HHE31CA stick edger is also powered by the GX31 mini 4-stroke engine. The HHE31CA edger features a flex shaft rather than a straight steel shaft and incorporates an 8-in. blade.

For more information call Honda at 678/339-2600 or visit www.honda.com / circle no. 293



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Turf fertilizers in the crosshairs

Every day, I roll out of bed at 5 a.m., get dressed and, on my way out the door, I look over my shoulder and say, "See you later, dear, I'm off to pollute our rivers, contaminate the Chesapeake

Bay, and turn our home state into a toxic wasteland. Be home around six." Who am I?

- A. A terrorist
- B. An industrialist
- C. A lawn care professional.

If your answer is "C," you may share the same opinion as many lawmakers. The reason involves the Clean Water Act (CWA), non-point-source pollution (NPSP), and total maximum daily load (TMDL). Think CWA, NPSP and TMDL are Greek fraternities? If so, you should probably read on.

Point-source pollution

If you're as old as I am, you probably remember a television ad in which a lone Native American paddles his canoe through a grotesquely polluted body of water. In the background, you see an industrial moonscape where smokestacks and sewer pipes spew vile muck into the air and water. As the shot fades, you see a single tear roll down his weathered cheek. This was powerful imagery that mirrored the political climate of the day.

In 1972, concerns over water quality

It's not enough to use fertilizers responsibly; you have to speak out and defend their use, as well

BY RAY BUCKWALTER

lead to the passage of the Clean Water Act (CWA). In those days, industry was targeted as the primary culprit and the initial focus was point-source pollution. Find a discharge pipe, follow it to its source and force the polluter to fix it. In 1972, there was a lot of work to do, but finding point-source discharges was relatively easy. As a result, any discharge into a lake, stream or waterway requires an EPA permit. Thousands, maybe even millions, of permits have been issued. You can visit the EPA Web site to see for yourself. Browse to http://oas.pub.epa.gov/enviro/ef_home2.water and enter your zip code.

All of these discharges are now monitored, and the originators are accountable for treating and removing pollutants to comply with our clean water regulations. I doubt anyone would argue that we haven't made great strides in understanding the point-sources of water pollution and cleaning them up. After all, it has been a long time since a lake or river caught fire and burned, and that's a good thing.

Part of the CWA required the EPA to





Non-point-source pollution is essentially all runoff that enters streams and lakes.

establish "Total Maximum Daily Load" (TMDL) standards for various bodies of water. TMDL is the amount of any pollutant that can enter a body of water without causing it to exceed the clean water quality standard. It sounded like a great idea, but experts considered fair enforcement of TMDL almost impossible. Legislators effectively sidelined enforcement by refusing to pass funding. That is, until President William J. Clinton signed an executive order as he was leaving office. Establishment and enforcement of TMDLs is still hotly debated, but compliance is no longer optional. One of the more troublesome aspects of enforcing TMDL is that much of the problem is a result of non-point-source pollution (NPSP).

Not so simple task

Non-point-source pollution is essentially all

runoff that enters streams and lakes. On its way there, it picks up residues from everything it touches, including oil from the parking lot at the local mall, detergents from your neighbor who washes his car in his driveway, byproducts from leaves decomposing in the storm water system, overflow from malfunctioning septic fields and animal waste from the geese living in the local park. All are carried along and discharged into streams and lakes. These pollutants are categorized as biological, metals, nutrients, pathogens, thermal, pH and sediments. Sources of NPSP are everywhere, and they're easily detected by water testing. However, locating the sources and reducing them isn't so simple.

Phosphorus and nitrogen are common problems if concentrations are too high,

continued on page 69

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Circle 162

continued from page 66

but where does it come from? We use nitrogen and phosphorus as plant nutrients. Therefore, along with farmers and other related industries, we've become the target of regulators. These folks are working against a deadline to comply with TMDL limits. The science to support them and help them make sound decisions isn't complete. Even so, under executive order, the courts won't wait for that to happen. Right or wrong, regulations will be put in place in an attempt to bring their water levels of various pollutants into compliance. Once again, our industry is on the defensive.

To anyone who charges that turf is bad for the environment, I would say, "What is your alternative?" Left to its own devices, nature doesn't produce anything as serviceable as a lawn without some input and

management. Did you ever go hiking in the woods and stumble across a lawn or anything resembling one? Can we eliminate fertilization and just mow and let nature take its course? Many of the folks who advocate this aren't thinking it through.

In many cases, they're the same ones who have a heart attack over a dandelion. How would they feel about a whole yard full of weeds and invasive plants? Without proper fertility, it would require much larger amounts of pesticides to maintain anything resembling a lawn. Are there alternative ground covers? Maybe, but I for one believe that after thousands of years of trial and error and turfgrass cultivation, if there were a better option we would have stumbled on it by now. If you live in a desert, downtown Manhattan or on a house boat, maybe you can imagine your environment

BMPs to combat NPSP

- Limit paved (impervious) surfaces — use grass swales and porous walkways
- Install gravel trenches along driveways to collect water and allow infiltration
- Divert gutter downspouts to allow infiltration and avoid runoff
- Prepare soil adequately for plants to encourage infiltration
- Use core aeration in heavy soils to reduce compaction
- Grade away from structures and impervious surfaces at 1% slope or greater
- Soil test before fertilizing
- Use slow-release fertilizer
- Calibrate spreaders
- Use the right kind of spreader and spreading technique
- Fertilize grass at appropriate times for your turf type, weather and location
- Develop fertilizer programs carefully

- using university recommendations
- Sweep up spilled fertilizer
- Avoid fertilizing over impervious surfaces
- Leave a buffer along waterways; don't fertilize within 15 to 25 ft. of shoreline
- Advise customers to not feed ducks and geese
- Advise customers to keep storm gutters and drains clear of leaves
- Select the best plant or turfgrass for the site
- Mow high and often
- Select best watering method and maintain irrigation systems to avoid runoff
- Don't overwater
- Maintain dense, healthy turf to reduce runoff and erosion
- Restore bare patches; use phosphorus where it will speed establishment
- Use mulches to cover bare soil

— RB

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completely devoid of turf. A lot of people can't.

Good science rules

Can turf maintenance be a source of water pollution? Improper maintenance can, but there's a great deal of good science that supports the environmental benefits of properly maintained turf.

Turf and the turfgrass root-zone act as an effective bio-filtration media, removing many toxins from air and water. Turf absorbs pollutants including carbon dioxide, thus reducing greenhouse gases. Runoff from areas that are mostly paved is

about 55% of rainfall, compared to healthy turf where runoff volume is almost zero. Healthy turf reduces runoff and prevents soil erosion, a source of both sediment and phosphorus in lakes and streams. Turf cools the air in summer. On a hot summer day, a turf area will be 30 degrees cooler than asphalt and 14 degrees cooler than bare soil. Turf helps to control dust and pollen, which can cause allergic reactions. Every 2,500 sq. ft. of lawn supplies enough oxygen for a family of four for one day. Turf reduces noise and discomforting glare. Not to

mention that turf provides a wonderful surface for all types of outdoor activities.

So we should have no problems, right? Think again. Regulation of turf fertilizers has already begun and will likely continue. Accountability for various water bodies isn't always clear, so regulation occurs at the state, county and local level. One town may restrict phosphorus, another may ban lawn fertilizer altogether, while a third might require slow-release sources. These are scenarios that already exist in the world of nutrient regulation.

Not unfamiliar territory

Proliferation of regulation makes doing our job harder and could even reach a point where our ability to maintain turf is severely impaired. Assess the threat from a political viewpoint and it's easy to see that the lawn fertilizers and the landscape industry are among a handful of highly visible targets for regulation. After all, Canada

geese are protected. You can't control them and you certainly can't fine them.

This isn't unfamiliar territory — we've been here before with pesticides. And just like before, the threat of regulation may drive a wedge between farmers, landscapers and those who supply "do-it-yourself" products. Environmental activists have already seized on the issue to bolster anti-industry rhetoric. One thing we've learned is that our industry must proactively work with lawmakers to prepare them with the facts, or they'll quickly buckle under pressure.

There is some good news. Our industry has had success resulting in reasonable and environmentally sound regulation. Delaware is one such success story where regulators, university researchers and industry stakeholders worked together to help protect the Chesapeake Bay. H.S. Waite, S.S. Barton, T. Ilvento and J.S. Sims at the Department of

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Turfgrass — the solution

One big culprit in NPS is impervious surface. Concrete, asphalt and other surfaces don't allow water to infiltrate and be purified. Water moves across these surfaces and picks up contaminants, which find their way into streams and lakes. Building codes limit impervious surfaces and require storm water management systems for developments that create runoff. Detention basins are a common feature of these systems where excess runoff collects and is allowed to percolate into the soil to be cleaned. What do engineers use as the surface of detention areas? You guessed it — turfgrass, of course!

— RB

Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Delaware, Newark, developed a comprehensive summary report. This is an excellent place to start if you want to learn more. Even though turf is an environmental hero, improper maintenance practices can lead to nutrients going where they aren't needed or wanted.

Three recommendations

The three most common recommendations are: 1) use soil tests before making any fertilizer decisions, 2) use slow release in preference to quick-release fertilizers, and 3) leave grass clippings on lawns to recycle nutrients and to reduce the need for fertilizer. For a more comprehensive list of best practices, see the sidebar on page 69.

Following best practices means you're doing the right thing the right way.

Following best practices means you're doing the right thing the right way. It's important, but not enough. Become an emissary for your industry. Know the facts and be prepared to set the record straight. Don't be afraid to speak up and answer questions. When faced with regulation, get involved. We lose battles too many times, particularly at the local level, because no one shows up.

If you need help, reach out to your associations. There are many associations that help represent your interests. Most importantly, you must support your associations both financially and by participation. The regulatory process takes time and money. Associations need manpower and money to participate in the process and be at the negotiating table from day one. It's much more expensive and usually fruitless to try to intervene and change the out-

come at the last minute.

The next time you venture out to start your day at zero-dark-thirty and someone asks where you're going, hold your head high and tell them you're off to save the

world...or at least your corner of it. **LM**

— The author is an agronomist with the Lebanon Seaboard Company. He can be reached at 908/479-6533 or rbuckwalter@lebsea.com.

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Power in their hands

Middleton Lawn & Pest Control's techs use new mobile tools to drop costs, boost customer service BY GREG CLENDENIN

With 300-plus employees operating out of 16 branch offices across central Florida, Middleton Lawn & Pest Control knew there was a better way to track its 50,000 residential customers. Its lawn techs alone have as many as 25 appointments daily.

The problem:

Too much paperwork

Until recently, technicians returned from their routes loaded down with paperwork, which then had to be mailed to one of the company's district offices where employees manually updated Middleton's central customer database.

This process translated into significant back-office costs.

It also meant that Middleton's managers often had to wait up to five days before having access to reports on such key business indicators as operational revenues and chemical usage.

"The customer would call in and ask what we did at their house. We couldn't tell them until several days later," says Mike Reynolds, Director of Information Technology. "We would have to contact the technician who actually did the work and then have him call the customer back later."



The solution: pocket PC

Reynolds and his IT team realized they needed a reliable mobile technology package that was easy for Middleton's field technicians to use. The package had to operate on a versatile and robust hardware platform and communicate seamlessly with the company's central data repository. The solution turned out to be the HP iPAQ Pocket PC running SmartBiz Mobile, a software application from FMC Software Solutions optimized for the lawn care and pest management business.

Today, Middleton's lawn technicians arrive for work and download their day's route onto their iPAQ Pocket PCs using a wireless connection. Once on the jobsite, they can access all the information they need to provide service. "The handhelds allow the techs to look at a customer's history, previous problems that the customer has reported to the office, and exactly what kind of stop it is," Reynolds notes. "When the job is complete, they use the iPAQs to enter information about the chemicals used, capture any notes they need to tell the office about and then create a verification record for the appointment that will be used to create the customer's invoice."

At the end of the day, the technicians return to the branch office and upload their day's activities to the company's HP ProLiant servers. By 10 a.m. the next day, managers can access all the numbers from the previous day's routes.

"This also allows us to catch any appointments that were missed so we can put them on the next day's schedule and any follow-ups that have to be done the next day," Reynolds points out. The iPAQ Pocket PC interface allows technicians to be up and running with only a few hours of train-

Middleton Lawn & Pest Control

▶ AT A GLANCE

U.S. Headquarters: Orlando, FL

Founded: 1952

Employees: 300

Telephone: 866/352-3764

URL: <http://www.middletonpest.com>

Primary business: Lawn and pest management services for 50,000 residential customers

ing, Reynolds says. In fact, acceptance of the new technology by technicians has been so favorable that the IT team is working on new mobile applications, including a module that allows technicians to keep track of their hours. Another IT initiative under development involves geo-coding Middleton's customers and using iPAQ Pocket PCs equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS) modules to calculate more efficient service routes.

Reynolds and his IT team are also taking advantage of the lightweight HP Compaq Tablet PC tc1100 to provide real-time wireless communications between Middleton's sales force and the central customer database at the home office. "For our salespeople, the customer information has to be live so we don't double-book an appointment," Reynolds explains. "Thanks to the Tablet PC, we can have salespeople update their customer data dynamically without coming into the office."

"Outstanding." That's how Reynolds describes the results of HP's mobile technology solutions on his company's bottom line. With the back office workload reduced by 75%, Reynolds estimates Middleton is saving \$10,000 monthly and that the project will pay for itself in less than a year.

With reports available on a next-day basis, Middleton's management is more agile, spots trends earlier and responds more quickly to new opportunities. "As a result, we can use our human resources in

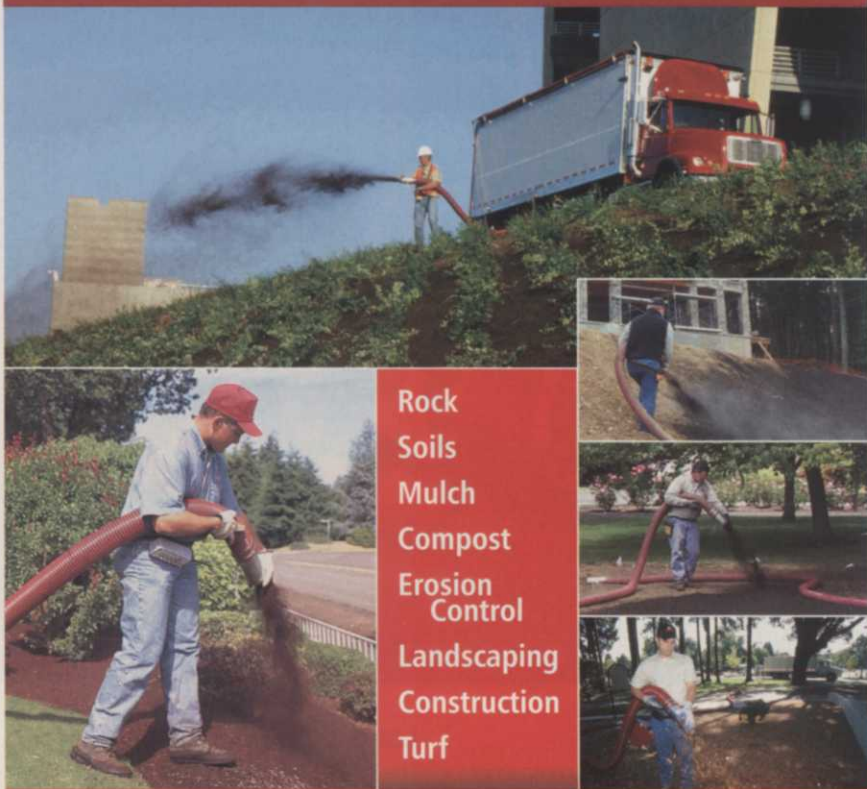
ways that will give our customers better service and increase our opportunities to cross-sell other products."

Sales growth is easier to accommodate. The company was able to add five additional lawn technicians and 10 salespeople

without adding any back-office staff, Reynolds says. The company has grown 20% since adding iPAQ Pocket PCs. **LMI**

— The author is president & CEO of Middleton Lawn and Pest Control. Contact him at gclendenin@middletonpest.com.

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TECHNOLOGY

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH

Compact tractors

BY CURT HARLER



Ditch Witch ▲

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For more information contact Ditch Witch at 800/654-6481 or visit www.ditchwitch.com / circle no. 262

Long

The 270DTC and 320DTC are both 4-WD tractors with partial synchromesh shuttle drive. They offer eight forward and eight reverse speeds. The 270 has 27-hp, 4-stroke, water-cooled engine; the 320, 32-hp. Both have 9.8-gpm, 3-pt. Cat 1 hydraulics and hitch with hydraulic position control to handle the optional loader, finishing mower or tiller attachments.

For more information contact Long at 877/639-5194 or www.farmtrac.com / circle no. 263

Walker

The new Model MB tractor uses the same

principles as the original Walker Mower, including tilt-up body, zero-turn maneuverability, low center of gravity and operator comfort in an even more compact configuration. The tractor design is simplified and is more economical for non-catching applications by eliminating the provision for the built-in Grass Handling System used on other Walker Mowers. Two independent Hydro-Gear transaxles and two steering levers make it easy to operate. Ground speed up to 8 mph with the 18-hp Briggs Vanguard engine.

For more information contact Walker at 800/279-8537 or www.walkermowers.com / circle no. 264

continued on page 76

Buying tips

- ▶ This isn't NASCAR — size your horsepower requirements to the task.
- ▶ Consider a diesel for continuous operation, gas for job hopping.
- ▶ Check how many attachments the vendor offers.
- ▶ The transmission should be easy to shift, especially forward to reverse.
- ▶ Check that the hydraulics meet your work needs.
- ▶ A pto (power take off) gives extra versatility.
- ▶ As with mowers, width and turning radius are important.
- ▶ Be sure your in-house mechanic is familiar with the vendor's make and models.
- ▶ Bounce around in the seat. You will be putting many hours on your rear end there.
- ▶ Order your unit with the right tires for your work conditions: turf tires, big lugs, etc.



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continued from page 74

John Deere ▶

New from Deere is the 3000 Twenty Series, with four new models: the 3120, 3320, 3520 and the new "high-horsepower" 3720 that range from 30 to 44 gross horsepower. These tractors feature powerful, Yanmar, Tier II-compliant diesel engines, while the 3520 and 3720 include turbocharged performance for more powerful and efficient operation. The new performance tracking system allows operators to monitor all tractor functions with the touch of a button while offering operators a familiar automobile-style console. The 12F/12R PowrReverser transmission allows operators to change directions quickly and easily without clutching through the use of a lever. The eHydro transmission provides infinite speed selection and unmatched productivity with no clutching or shifting required.

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Bobcat Company ▼

The T180 features a Tier II-compliant, Kubota direct-injected 56-hp engine. Similar to the existing T190 model, it features an 1800-lb.-rated operating capacity and a lift height of 114.5 in.



Direction and speed are controlled by two steering levers, while the lift and tilt loader hydraulics are controlled by separate foot pedals or an optional Advanced Control System (ACS). Its rubber tracks deliver excellent flotation, traction, and a smooth ride, letting it adapt to unexpected ground conditions, and giving it a ground pressures of just five psi.

For more information contact Bobcat at 866/823-7898 or www.bobcat.com / circle no. 266

Branson Tractors

The 38-hp Branson 3820 tractor features synchro-shuttle transmission with 12 forward and 12 reverse gears. Unit has 4-wheel drive, with a 4-cycle water-cooled diesel engine. There is a live, 2-speed 540/1000 rpm pto and a Cat 1 3-pt. hitch with 8.2 gpm hydraulic pump.

For more information contact Branson at 877/734-2022 or www.bransontractor.com / circle no. 267



Allmand ▼

The TLB-220 heavy-duty compact tractor loader backhoe tackles many jobs reserved for larger TLBs, maneuvers easily in tight areas and can be towed on a trailer behind a pickup truck. The 3,115-lb. TLB-220 features a Robin EH65D air-cooled gasoline engine generating 20.5 hp at



3,600 rpm. Optional Kohler 20-hp air-cooled engine is also available. Industrial-class backhoe features a 2,875-lb. digging force as well as an 8-ft., 4-in. digging depth. Dual cylinder, 180-degree hydraulic cushioned swing allows precise work in tight areas. Joystick controls and hydrostatic drive make it easy to operate.

For more information contact Allmand at 800/562-1373 or www.allmand.com / circle no. 268

Terratrak

The Aebi TT75 is the newest model from Terratrak. Powered by a Kubota V 2003-T, 4-cylinder turbo diesel, it has speeds from 0-7.5 mph in slow range, 0-25 mph in high. Has both front and rear engageable pto shafts, and front and rear 3-pt. Cat 1 hitches. Comes with cab and infinitely variable hydrostatic transmission.

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continued on page 78



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LM Reports

continued from page 76

Massey Ferguson

The MF 431 is a 44-hp utility tractor with a 1103C-33 Perkins engine. It offers eight forward and two reverse speeds. Center shift levers are placed for easy access and smooth shifting. Includes rear work light, 3-pt. hitch and 18.5-gpm hydraulics with lift capacity of 2000 pounds. A foldable ROPS frame is designed for low clearance situations.

For more information contact your local Massey dealer or www.masseyferguson.com/ circle no. 270

New Holland ▲

New Holland's former LS Series yard tractors have been replaced by the new MY Series. These yard tractors feature improved mower decks and an EZ-Latch system to make switching between attachments easy. MY17 and



MY19 models boast new, reliable commercial-grade 2-cylinder Kawasaki engines. Tight, 16-in. turning radius is on all three models (MY16, MY17, and MY19). With horsepower ranging from 16-19, they have several mower decks including a 42-in. side-discharge, 48-in. side-discharge mulching option) and a 52-in. side discharge with mulching option.

For more information contact New Holland at 717/355-1121 or www.newholland.com/ circle no. 271

Redexim Charterhouse

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Kubota

The B7800 features a 4-cylinder, 30-hp (gross) engine that produces tremendous power and high torque, yet it still meets EPA Tier-1 emissions regulations. Choose industrial R4 or R3 turf tires, depending on the job. Dual hydraulic pumps boost hydraulic power to levels of larger tractors. Full-floating ISO-mounted flat deck gives ample leg room, reduces vibration and driver fatigue through the use of rubber mounts. Rear PTO is standard.

For more information contact Kubota at 888/458-2682 or www.kubota.com / circle no. 273

Cub Cadet Commercial ▼

New Series 6000 compact tractors join the 5000, 7500 and 8000 Series. The 6000s are powered by a 28-hp Caterpillar diesel. PosiTrak tranny automatically engages on-demand 4WD with no shifting. The 5000s are designed for smaller jobs and offer a 550-lb. loader lift capacity and 68-lb. 3-pt. hitch.



Hitch, with float position, accommodates 60-in. rear dozer blade, 9-in. post hole digger, 40-in. tiller, rake and box blade.

For more information contact Cub Cadet Commercial at 877/835-7841 or www.cubcadet-commercial.com / circle no. 274

Ventrac

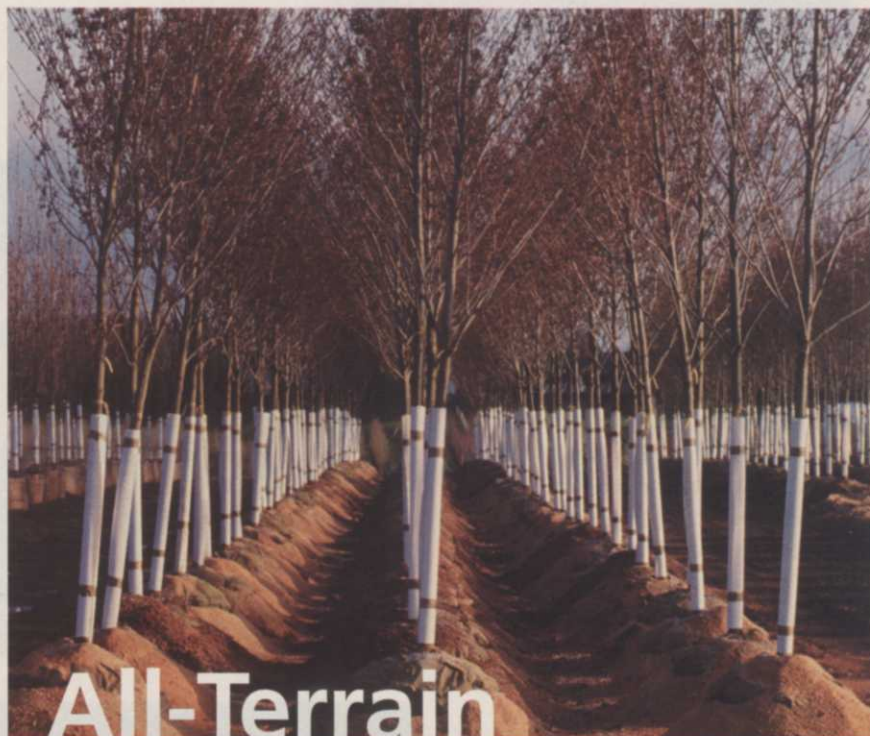
The Ventrac 4200VXD comes with choice of four liquid-cooled engines: a Kawasaki 27-hp, 2-cylinder gas; 3-cylinder Vanguard diesels with 26.5 or 31-hp turbo; or a 3-cylinder Vanguard gas with 31-hp. All offer power steering, electric pto, 5.2 mph speed in the low range with turf tires, 10 mph in high range.

The tractor has 30 attachments to tackle a variety of job applications.

For more information contact Ventrac at 866/836-8722 or www.ventrac.com / circle no. 275

Simplicity

The newly released Legacy XL is available in three powerful 27-hp engines: a V-twin, air-cooled Kohler Command featuring cast iron cylinder liners, a mechanical fuel pump, hy-



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Circle 141

LM Reports



draulic valve lifters, a 15-amp charging system and an external oil cooler; or a liquid-cooled Kawasaki V-twin with radiator, fan and water pump, cast iron cylinder liners, 20-amp charging system and electric fuel pump; and finally, a B&S Daihatsu three-cylinder, in-line, liquid-cooled diesel with radiator, fan and water pump. All three offer full pressure oil lubrication, 500 cold cranking amp battery, large five-inch muffler and a 5.5-gallon fuel tank with large filler neck. The Tuff Torq K92 transmission provides plenty of hydraulic capacity for powering the tractor and large attachments.

For more information contact **Simplicity** at 800/933-6175 or www.simplicitymfg.com / circle no. 277

Power Trac

The PT-2430 is a hydrostatic drive tractor powered by a 30-hp diesel engine and features turf-friendly 4-WD articulated steering, with all wheels rolling on the ground — not twisting or digging into turf. Its bucket loader has optional backhoe attachment. Over 40 front-mounted attachments with Quick-Attach are available and can be changed from the operator's seat.

For more information contact **Power Trac** at 800/843-9273 or visit www.power-trac.com / circle no. 278

AGCO ▶

The ST55 has a 12x12 synchronized mechanical shuttle transmission with three ranges and four gears to keep the unit moving. It features liquid cooled, 4-cylinder diesel engine that delivers up to 55 hp. This tractor has both left and right entry doors and all controls are easy to access on the right console with directional

shuttle control to the left.

For more information, contact your local AGCO dealer or visit www.agcocorp.com / circle no. 278

▼ Challenger

Available this spring, the Challenger MT200B series has over 40 improvements. Tilt up hood makes access to air filter, radiator screen and battery easy, even with loader installed. Fuel capacity is up 34%. Six models range from

22.5 to 52 hp in a variety of chassis sizes and transmissions. Scooped fender design creates 20% more hip room (3 in. on each side) and more room to operate controls. Increased hydraulic flow gives faster loader and backhoe operation, with 3-pt hitch lift capacity up 20% over A-Series.

For more information contact your local Caterpillar dealer or see Challenger at www.challenger.agco-corp.com / circle no. 279



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California Institute of Technology

2004 PGMS Grand Award Winner for University and College Grounds

Property at a glance

- Location:** Pasadena, CA
- Grounds Supervisor:** Milton M. Olander III
- Category:** University and College Grounds
- Total budget:** \$1,397,722
- Year site built:** 1891
- Acres of turf:** 23
- Acres of woody ornamentals:** 10
- Acres of display beds:** 15
- Total paved area:** 35 acres
- Total man-hours/week:** 1,200

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Coordinating work according to campus events needs and frequency — there are approximately 1,000 per year ranging from small to large events

Project checklist

- Completed in last two years:
- ▶ Design and landscape of new signature courtyard, as part of a new building construction
 - ▶ Renovation of natural ponds on campus

On the job

- ▶ 30 full-time staff, one licensed pesticide applicator

It's a good thing Milton Olander III has a sense of humor. Otherwise, he might have quit his job as grounds supervisor at the California Institute of Technology a long time ago due to all the student pranks. Imagine finding the Beckman Hall turf covered with Crisco just a few weeks before commencement.

It's obvious Olander takes it all in stride, given that he's been at Caltech for 22 years. He started as a section gardener, progressed to crew leader and now runs the whole show. He's currently taking courses at Mount San Antonio Junior College in nearby Walmouth in hopes of earning a degree in horticulture.

"I've always enjoyed working outdoors and the challenge of taking care of a large campus," Olander says.

It's not a huge campus — no more than 5,000 people bustle about at any one time. But 1,000 events per year take its toll on the grounds crew. Plus, there's 23 acres of turf to maintain (and repair when a car drives over it), 35 acres of paved area and the occasional incident of vandalism that is the grounds



Milton Olander III (left) oversees all grounds tasks, including resodding.



staff's responsibility to repair.

"I try to lead by example," says Olander. "We have a good program of cross training so that everybody is efficient at doing every task and operating every machine."

"I don't like being a desk jockey, but that's part of the job," Olander adds. "We have a new hire coming in here in a week, and what I'll tell him is, 'There's your way, and then there's the Caltech way.' Everyone needs to be on the same page."

Another part of the Caltech program — Olander and his crew practice and promote IPM on campus properties.

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

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Products

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No more moles

Bell Laboratories has come out with Talpirid, a mole bait that the company says is the only one that has been proven to work in both field and laboratory testing. In the past, mole baits were developed assuming that moles were similar to rats and mice, when in reality they're insectivores. Talpirid works as an antagonist to a mole's high energy demands and doesn't harm lawns, flowering plants, trees or shrubs. It's also designed to naturally degrade, leaving no buildup of active ingredient in the soil. Under normal conditions, this will happen in 14 days.

For more information contact Bell Laboratories at 866/237-4448 or www.bell-labs.com / circle no. 250

Tractor factor

Allmand's 8435 and 8435 HST compact utility tractors feature powerful diesel engines, two power train model options and mechanical 4WD. Powered by a 36-hp Mitsubishi S4L2 diesel engine, the 8435 features a synchro-shuttle shift transmission allowing easy forward and reverse operation. Multiple gear range selections on the 8435 are available to manage a



variety of implement applications. With the same engine, the 8435 HST features a hydrostatic transmission providing infinitely variable speed selection with simple foot-pedal control, completely eliminating the need for a clutch. Cruise control enables the operator to maintain a set speed for extended periods without foot-pedal pressure.

For more information contact Allmand at 800/562-1373 or www.allmand.com / circle no. 251

Sensitive but tough

Dixon Industries' new PRO Series Kodiak zero-turn mower comes with a choice of Honda 20-hp, Kawasaki 19-hp, Kohler 20-hp or Briggs & Stratton 21-hp Vanguard engines with large capacity canister air filters. The extra large one-gal. hydraulic drive system features Parker pumps and wheel motors. It's engineered with Dixon's EnviroSystem, which places special emphasis on operator ergonomics and comfort and provides for quiet operation, low vibration and a smooth ride. The mower also has a 50-in. welded Tunnel Force deck with Fusion high-lift blades, tungsten-carbide treated to stay sharper up to 200% longer.



For more information contact Dixon at 800/264-6075 or www.dixon-ztr.com / circle no. 252

Go like a hydro

Havener Enterprises has added hydro commercial mowers to its Bradley mower line. Designed in conjunction with Hydro-Gear, Bradley hydro mowers utilize IZT wheel motor pumps technology that allow for a lower center of gravity. They're available with 36- or 48-in. decks and 15-hp or 18-hp Kohler engines. Commercial quality industry standard components like greaseable spindles, fabricated 7-gauge steel decks, and 9-spline couplers come standard. Grass catchers, mulch kits, one- and two-wheel sulkies, and swivel wheel sulkies are also available.

For more information contact Bradley Mowers at www.bradleymowers.com / circle no. 253

On track

HydroPoint Data Systems announces the introduction of the WeatherTRAK ET plus controller, which features fully integrated WeatherTRAK Scheduling Engine software that takes the guesswork out of irrigation programming. The Scheduling Engine automatically generates an accurate irrigation program for each station of a landscape based on user-entered parameters such as plant, soil, slope and sprinkler type. It also includes the WeatherTRAK ET Everywhere service, which delivers daily local weather-based ET updates via a two-way wireless communication network.

For more information contact HydroPoint at 800/362-8774 or www.hydropoint.com / circle no. 254

Dress it up

Millcreek introduces two new topdressers, the Turf Tiger Cubs, with 1.8 and 2.3 cu. yd. capacity. The new units feature the exclusive Saber Tooth beater, which provides a dramatic increase in application speed without compromising spreading precision. The beater allows application of material even if wet and clumpy, such as compost and topsoil mixtures with an application pattern up to 6-ft. wide, depending on material conditions. The Turf Tiger Cub Topdressers can apply light coverage, such as for lime or light topdressing, or heavy coverage, up to 1 in. in a single pass, for materials such as compost or other bulk turf materials. In addition, the machines apply infield mix for baseball and softball fields, disperse grass clippings at golf courses, apply wood chips for forest and park trails, install infill mixtures for synthetic turf installations, and spread a range of other bulk materials required for grounds maintenance purposes.

For more information contact Millcreek at 800/311-1323 or www.millcreekmfg.com / circle no. 255

continued on page 88

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Circle 160



Your Next Mower

Products

continued from page 86

Can you dig? ▶

Case has upgraded four of its CX compact excavators to be Tier 2 certified, increasing horsepower, hydraulic pressure and hydraulic flow at the same time. The upgraded Case CX27B, CX31B, CX36B and CX50B compact excavators now feature an overall 19% increase in engine horsepower, 15% increase in hydraulic flow and 14% increase in hydraulic horsepower. All models are equipped with a hydraulically controlled backfill blade for added machine stability and light dozing work. The newly designed backfill blade boils material in front of the blade, allowing for efficient backfilling. In addition, increased lift work range on the backfill blade improves trailer loading. The Case CX27B, CX31B, CX36B and CX50B models range from 5,666 to 10,383 lbs. (2,570 to 4,710 kg) and deliver



from 21.3 to 40.8 net hp (15.9 to 30.4 kW). The new models provide bucket digging forces up to 7,936 lbs. (3,600 kg) and maximum dig depths from 9 ft. 2 in. (2.79 m) to 11 ft. 9 in. (3.59 m).

For more information contact Case at www.casece.com / circle no. 256

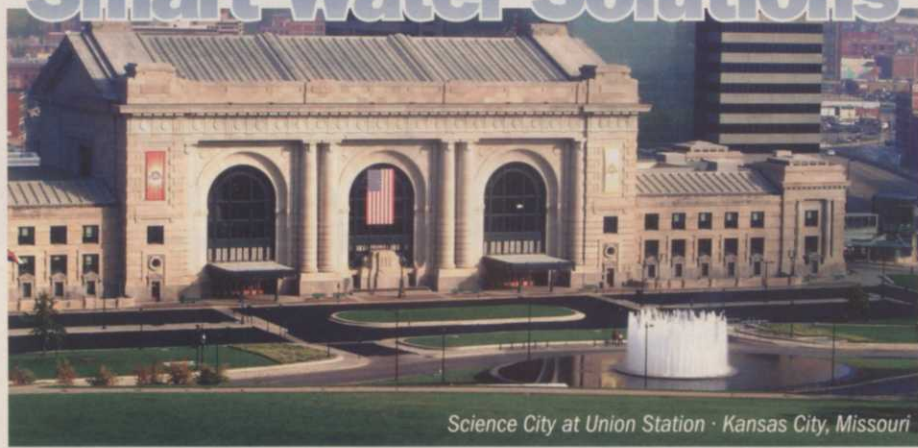
Savvy software

Intac International has released Wintac Green 2005, an enhanced version of their best-selling all-in-one program that integrates scheduling, routing, automatic billing, job tracking, estimating, purchasing, accounting and marketing. Suited for any size company, Wintac Green 2005 introduces a new, more intuitive interface, as well as a new multi-user networking engine that improves system performance and data security. Other significant enhancements include visual job costing, user-definable billing cycles, and a marketing profile feature that gives you the ability to generate precisely targeted mailings to your customers and prospects.

For more information contact Intac International at 800/724-7899 or www.intacinternational.com / circle no. 257

continued on page 90

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Products

continued from page 88

Big push ▶

Earth & Turf Products, LLC, announces its Model 24D TruFlow, a push-type topdresser for dry, flowable materials, featuring: 3 cu. ft. capacity, 8-in. diameter dispersal drum, 24-in. wide spreading pattern, adjustable front gate opening, simple 4-wheel design, 4.80/4.00-8 drive tires and 4.00-6 transport tires.

For more information contact Earth & Turf at 888/693-2638 / circle no. 258



Seed the future

Turf-Seed is targeting spring 2005 to release the industry's first commercially available seeded variety

of seashore paspalum. Seashore paspalum, which has high tolerance to both heat and salt, has long been seen as a viable alter-

native to bermudagrass. Now, the ability to seed with Sea Spray will make seashore paspalum more affordable, easier and quicker to establish. Professional turf managers can irrigate Sea Spray with pure sea water. The recom-

mended seeding rate is 1 lb. per 1,000 sq. ft. Its dual root system of rhizomes and stolons along with its high turf density and quick repair ability make it well suited to golf course greens, tees and fairways as well as sports turf.

For more information contact Turf-Seed at 800/247-6910 or www.turf-seed.com / circle no. 259

Aerate great

Toro's HydroJect 3010, a high velocity water injection system used for aeration, ensures that play on sports fields won't be disrupted. The HydroJect aerates the turf with a high velocity water injection system that penetrates down to as much as eight inches with clean, evenly spaced holes, leaving sports fields ready for immediate action. With added versatility and flexibility, this new HydroJect is easy to use and promises enhanced durability and power due to a Kohler 27-hp engine. It

offers four spacing control settings ranging from 1.5, 3.0, 4.5 and 6 in. Depending on spacing and speed, an experienced operator can aerate up to 26,000 sq. ft./hr.

For more information contact Toro at 800/803-8676 or www.toro.com / circle no. 260

Ride and aerate

Schiller-Pfeiffer, Inc., manufacturer of Little Wonder, Mantis and Classen branded landscaping, gardening and turf care equipment, presents a completely new concept in aerating with the Classen SA-25 Stand-Aer. This ride-on unit provides total aerating control with ease of operation, increased productivity and no operator fatigue. With a 24-in. operational turning radius (zero-turning radius when tines aren't in use), this hydrostatically tine and tire driven aerator offers an operational and transport speed of up to 4.7 mph. That translates into over 50,000 sq. ft. per hour. The core depth is controlled hydrostatically up to 3 in., and the 36 tines offer a hole pattern of 4.06 x 7 in. and an aerating width of 24.375 in.

For more information contact Little Wonder at 877/596-6337 or www.littlewonder.com / circle no. 261





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Company	Page #
AGCO	80
Allmand	76, 86
Arvesta Corporation	24
Barringer & Barringer Lndscp	22
Bayer Environmental Science	24
Bell Laboratories	86
Bobcat Company	22, 76
Boxer	22
Branson Tractors	76
CNA Insurance	34, 36
Case	88
Challenger	80
Cole Landscape	21
Cub Cadet Commercial	79
The Davey Tree Expert Company	34
Dennis' Seven Dees Lndscp.	32, 36
DeSantis Landscapes	56
Ditch Witch	74
Dixon Industries	86
Dow AgroSciences	17
Earth & Turf Products	90
Echo	58
Efco	58
Encore Manufacturing	17
Exakttime	24

F.A. Bartlett Tree Care Co.	17
FMC Corp.	24
GIE Media	16
Gardeners' Guild	26
Gary S. Goldman & Assoc.	40
Havener Enterprises	86
Hillenmeyer Landscape Svcs	17
Honda	60
Hunter Industries	15, 17, 46
Husqvarna	58
HydroPoint Data Systems	86
Intact International	88
JP Horizons	42
John Deere	14, 16, 58, 76
Kaylor Landscape	42
Kehoe & Co.	44
Kubota	79
Kujawa Enterprises	16
Landscape Images Ltd.	17
Lebanon Seaboard Company	71
LESCO	16
Lifestyle Landscaping	17
Little Wonder	60
Long	74
Lowes	10
Maruyama	60

Massey Ferguson	78
Middleton Lawn & Pest Control	72
Millcreek	86
New Holland	78
Nextel	24
Outdoor Service Specialist	21
Pine Ridge Landscaping	24
Power Trac	80
RSV	22
Rain Bird	17, 46
Rain Master	46
Redxim Charterhouse	17, 78
RedMax	60
Russo Lawn & Landscape	24
Schiller-Pfeiffer	15, 90
Scotts	15
Shindaiwa	17, 58
Simplicity	79
Smithfield Gardens	22
Symbiot	12, 21, 50
Tanaka	60
Terratrak	76
Thompson's Landscaping	54
The Toro Company	21, 46, 90
Turf-Seed	90
USI Northern California	26
Ventrac	79
Vermeer	21
Walker	74
Wilson-Oyler Group	12

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Events

RESOURCES

WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

February

15 Green Industry Day on the Hill / Madison, WI; Sponsored by the Wisconsin Landscape Federation; 414/529-4705

16 15th Annual Nevada Landscape Association Trade Show & Conference / Reno, NV; 800/645-9794; www.nevadanla.com

16-18 Middle Atlantic Hardscaping Trade Show / Atlantic City, NJ; 800/444-3679; www.ephenry.com

20-22 WLF Convention / Kohler, WI; Sponsored by the Wisconsin Landscape Federation; 414/529-4705

22-23 Connecticut Grounds Keepers Association Turf Conference & Trade Show / Hartford, CT; 203/699-9912

22-24 Hardscape Expo & Conference / St. Charles, IL; 847/277-0244; www.hardscapeexpo.com

23-May 11 Arborists' & Tree Workers' Certification Preparation Course / Brea, CA; 949/454-2409

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25 Illinois Landscape Contractors Association's Excellence in Landscape Awards / Oak Brook, IL; 630/472-2851; www.ilca.net

28 Southeast Regional Conference / Tarrytown, NY; Sponsored by the New York State Turfgrass Association; 800/873-8873

28-3 Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference / Monroeville, PA; 814/355-1912

March

1-3 Western Pennsylvania Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show / Monroeville, PA; 814/238-2402; www.paturf.org

2-3 Michigan Green Industry Trade Show / Novi, MI; 248/646-4992

3 New Jersey Landscape 2005 / Secaucus, NJ; 201/664-6310; www.njlca.org

7 Western Regional Conference / Buffalo, NY; Sponsored by the New York State Turfgrass Association; 800/873-8873

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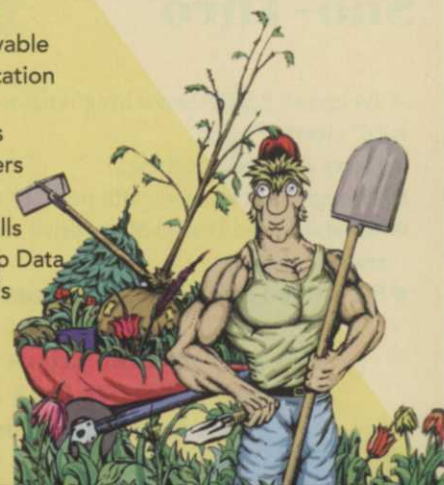
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\$210 billion Estimated value of biotech crops in 2014

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SOURCE: U.S. FOOD AND TRADE POLICY ANALYST STUDY

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DID YOUR ORGANIZATION DO LAST YEAR?



SOURCE: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY 2004

Most affordable housing markets:

Lima, OH
Cumberland, MD
Mansfield, OH



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The least affordable housing market in the third quarter was the metro area encompassing Santa Barbara/Santa Maria/Lompoc, CA, where less than 5% of homes sold were affordable to families earning the median household income of \$64,700. The median sale price of a home there was \$447,000. The top 10 least affordable housing markets were located in California.

SOURCE: NAHB/WELLS FARGO HOUSING OPPORTUNITY INDEX 3RD QUARTER 2004



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