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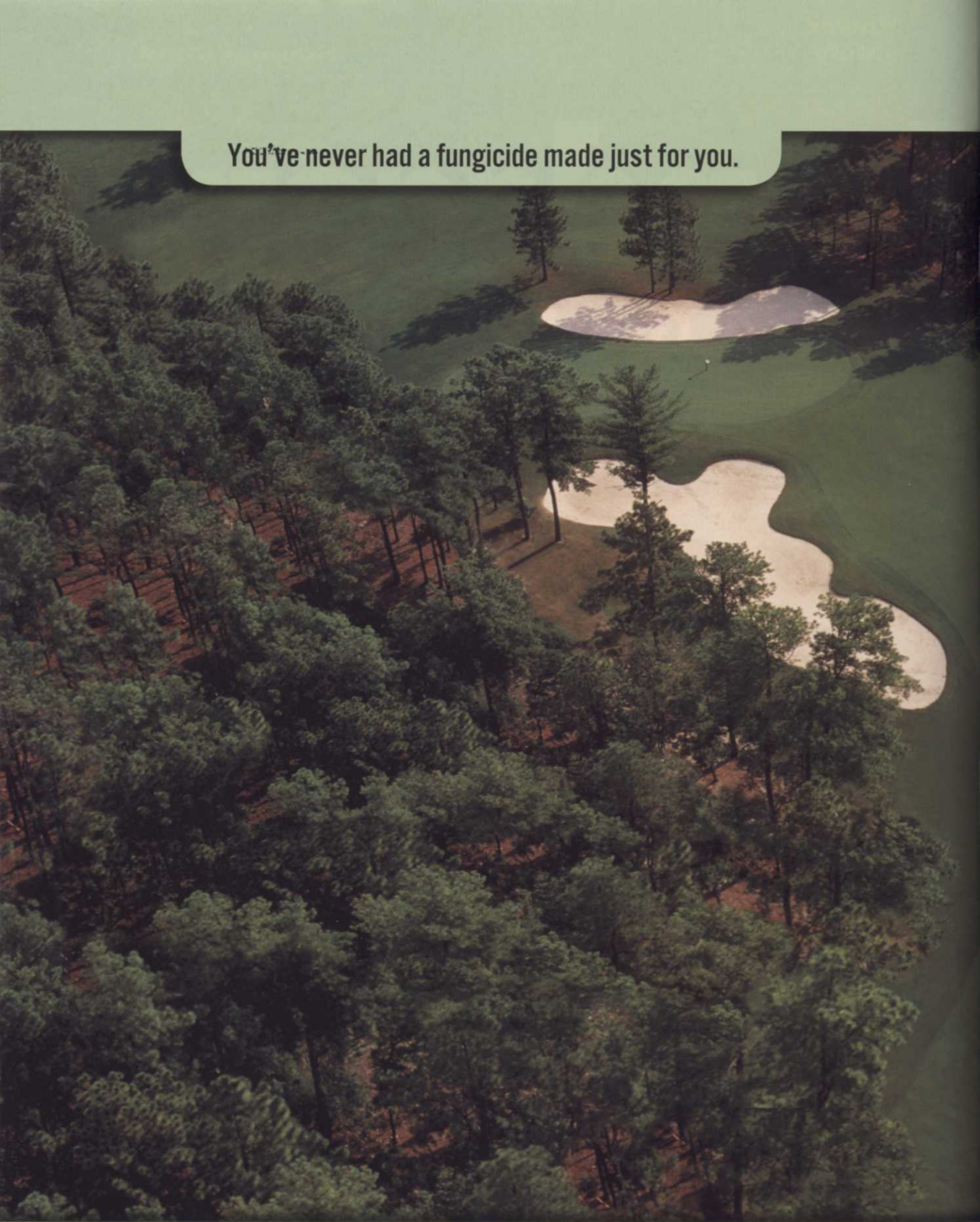
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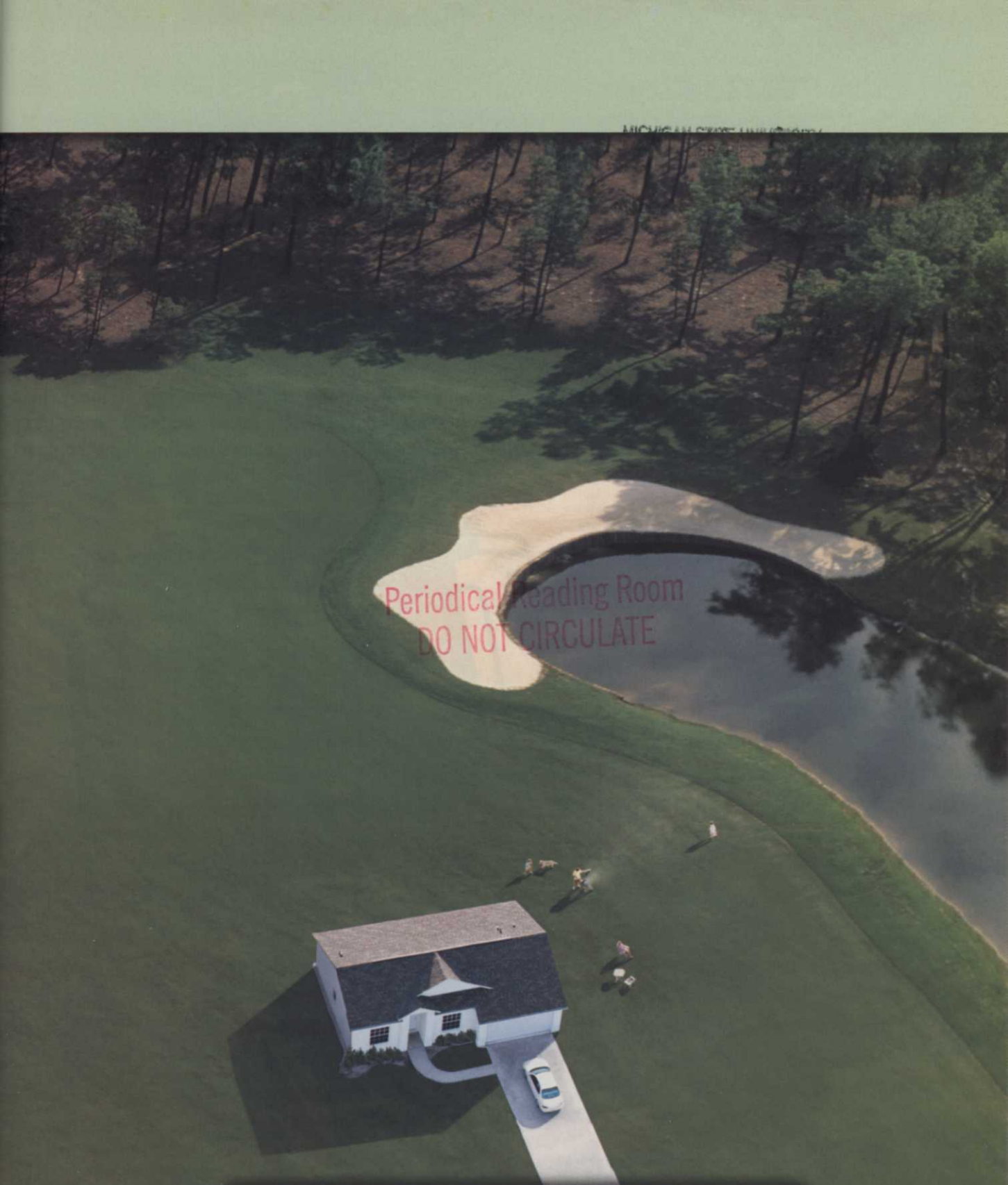
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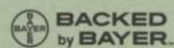


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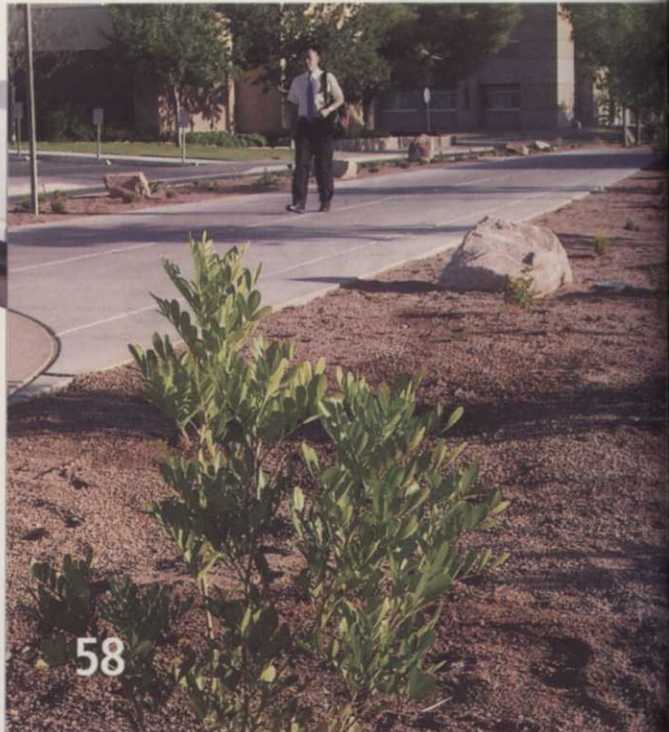
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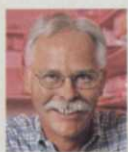
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Contributors

BUSINESS WHO'S WHO IN LM



Bastiaan "Bart" M. Drees is a professor, Regent's Fellow, and extension entomologist with Texas Cooperative Extension, the Texas A&M University system. Dr. Drees has developed and presented educational programs to promote the adoption of integrated pest management (IPM) in agricultural production systems and urban environments since 1980. From 1997-2003, he coordinated and directed the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project. In addition to conducting applied fire ant research, he develops and conducts educational programs for landscape design and maintenance IPM.

Tom Penning tells us about SWAT (Smart Water Application Technology) and how moisture sensors fit into it and their importance to landscape irrigation. His report is on page 50. Tom's irrigation experience includes both distribution and manufacturing in the agricultural and landscape markets. He is president of the Irrrometer Company, Riverside, CA.



Judy Guido travels the United States helping Green Industry contractors become better business people, especially in the areas of sales and marketing. A popular speaker at industry conferences, Guido tells you how to analyze the competition's strengths and weaknesses so that you can compete profitably. Turn to page 22 to find out what competitors don't want you to know.



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Editorial staff

Editor-in-Chief	RON HALL / 440/891-2636 / rhall@questex.com
Managing Editor	STEPHANIE RICCA / 440/891-2623 / sricca@questex.com
On-Line Content Editor	LYNNE BRAKEMAN / 440/826-2869 / lbrakeman@questex.com
Senior Section Editor	KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D. / danneberger1@osu.edu
Corp. Creative Director	LISA LEHMAN / 440/891-2785 / llehman@questex.com
Art Director	CARRIE PARKHILL / 440/891-3101 / cparkhill@questex.com

Reader advisory panel

DEBBY COLE	Greater Texas Landscapes / Austin, TX
JOHN GACHINA	Gachina Landscape Management / Menlo Park, CA
WALTER BONVELL	Xavier University / Cincinnati, OH
BILL HOOPES	Scotts Lawn Service / Marysville, OH
ROB SANTO	Garrick-Santo Landscape / Malden, MA
FRED HASKETT	US Lawns/ St. Louis, MO
LARRY IORII	Down to Earth Landscaping / Wilmington, DE
TODD GRAUS	Green Turf Lawncapes / Worland, WY
GARY LASCALEA	GroGreen / Plano, TX
MILTON HALLMAN III	Stewart Enterprises, Inc. / High Point, NC
JACK ROBERTSON	Jack Robertson Lawn Care / Springfield, IL
DR. BARRY TROUTMAN	ValleyCrest Companies / Sanford, FL
GEORGE VAN HAASTEREN	Dwight-Englewood School / Englewood, NJ
BRIAN VINCHESI	Irrigation Consulting / Pepperell, MA

Business staff

Publisher	KEVIN STOLTMAN / 440/891-2772 / kstolman@questex.com
Admin. Coordinator	MINDY MOCZULSKI / 440/891-2734 / mmoczulski@questex.com
Production Manager	JILL HOOD / 218/723-9129 / jhood@questex.com
Production Director	RHONDA SANDE / 218/723-9536 / rsande@questex.com
Circulation Manager	JESSICA BORGREN / 218/723-9356 / jborgren@questex.com
Asst. Circulation Manager	MELISSA FEIRO / 218/723-9431 / mfeiro@questex.com
Green Book Coordinator	CANDACE HAUSAUER / 218/723-9175 / chausauer@questex.com

Advertising staff

Cleveland Headquarters	7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130-3369
Associate Publisher	PATRICK ROBERTS / 440/891-2609 Fax: 440/891-2675 proberts@questex.com
National Account Manager	GEORGE CASEY / 440/891-3146 Fax: 440/891-2675 george.casey@questex.com
Account Manager	MICHAEL HARRIS / 440/891-3118 Fax: 440/891-2675 mharris@questex.com
Account Executive	LESLIE MONTGOMERY / 440/891-3199 Fax: 440/826-2865 lmontgomery@questex.com
Classifieds	BRIAN OLESINSKI / 440/891-2694 Fax: 440/826-2865 bolesinski@questex.com

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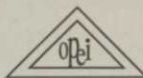
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OK geese, we give up

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

The geese have won. They strut about our property as haughty as Spanish grandees. When they acknowledge us at all, they do it with a mixture of suspicion and disdain. Bitterly we realize that they're invincible, unconquerable, forever.

They're *Branta canadensis*; we're mere humans, mortals. If anyone is leaving, they know it isn't them.

Sometime in the next couple of months we're leaving our beautiful 7-acre property in a pleasant Cleveland suburb for new offices. We've been producing *Landscape Management* from this attractive location for the past 23 years. A rolling landscape of primly cut turfgrass surrounds our building.

Nice. A person could get used to a place like this. We have. By next fall we'll be in new digs.

Sure, new is exciting. But it's natural to start thinking about all the things you're going to miss — like the great work environment that our 2-man grounds/maintenance team provides us. The dynamic duo of Tom Sprague and Kevin Icke is on our site just about every day mowing, aerating and keeping the place a showcase.

The battle is engaged

Most of all (I confess this with some guilt) I'm going to miss Tom's battles with the geese. Few people are as stubborn as Tom has been in attempting to rid our grounds of huge, messy squatters. Years into the battle, he's still fighting the good fight. And still losing.

Tom was younger and, he would admit, more naive when he began his campaign about 20 years ago by rounding up the geese and, with the necessary permits, trucking them to a lake 50 or 60 miles to the east.

They were back almost before the truck returned. (*Were they the same ones? How can you tell?*)

Tom, as patient as he is stubborn, doesn't give up so easily. If your first strategy doesn't succeed, try another.

How about plastic but realistic-looking swans positioned in our ponds? (*Geese are supposed to fear swans. And they do . . . until they figure out they're fakes.*)

"Dead goose" decoys scattered on our grounds? Yeah, Tom tried that too. (*"See guys, this will happen to you if you land."*)

Special goose deterrent materials sprayed on the turfgrass? (*Yes, it worked for a while, but was too expensive to continue on our grounds budget.*)

Tom's latest and probably his final strategy here again focuses on our ponds. He has encircled our two ponds with a 12-inch-high chicken wire fence. Then he stretched strings back and forth just above the water surface. Not only doesn't he want the geese to walk into the pond, he doesn't want them flying in either.

They get the message. No more geese in the ponds.

But they haven't gone away either. There they are, tromping about in the grass beside the pond. And there's a dozen or more fuzzy young ones too.

This summer we'll be in new quarters and Tom's battles with the geese will be over.

I hope that honking we hear as we leave isn't laughter.

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



When the last article on goose control is written, this Canada goose will still be honking. You can bet on it.

Tom was younger and perhaps more naive when he began his campaign.

Company leaders should try to create a vision of what the market will look like two or three years in the future.



Fight price wars with strategy

BY BRUCE WILSON

One of the most common topics discussed in meetings with contractors is the aggressive pricing of large national companies in building their market share.

Competing contractors often claim this has had a negative effect on pricing. They ask me, "what can be done about it?" I tell them to start by recognizing that these companies aren't going into a market pricing work to lose money. As far as I know they are profitable companies.

The ostrich syndrome

Even so, some companies react with resentment of the larger companies. Somehow they feel that the activity will stop and the market will return to normal. It's unlikely this will happen. The companies that feel this way are resisting change.

Other companies react to the presence of a national or big regional player by trying to adapt to the change. They may price their work lower to compete and not lose business to the big boys, who have developed a strategy to grow their businesses in what they realize is a changing, consolidating marketplace.

The best practices involved in dealing with competition revolve around good strategy driven by customers. Most companies' leader are too

wrapped up in day-to-day fire fighting to develop strategy to position their company for ongoing success. Merely reacting to low pricing is not a strategy.

Keep looking ahead

Company leaders should try to create a vision of what the market will look like two or three years in the future. Who will be the best customers? What will the competition likely be doing? What will customers want? If larger companies are going after certain customers, those customers might not be the ones for you. Just because you had a value proposition that worked for a particular customer before, it doesn't mean that you do today.

You do not want to just keep up with competition and the market; instead think of "leap frog" ideas to jump ahead of the competition. It may mean finding a new ideal customer or changing the way you serve existing customers.

As you work your way through this busy season and planning for next year, set aside quality time to build a strategy that gets you out of the mode of reacting to other companies in your market. Focus on a strategy that fits your company to customers of the future.

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



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In the Know

BUSINESS

NEWS YOU CAN USE

ASIC toured two sites where hvac condensate is collected in tanks like these and used to irrigate the surrounding turf.

Irrigation from AIR CONDITIONING?

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

Some of the irrigation water you will use for your landscapes may come from what might seem an unlikely source — the condensate from heating, ventilation and air conditioning (hvac) systems. Properties in San Antonio, TX, are already collecting and reusing this water. They're significantly lowering the amount of potable water used in maintaining their landscapes.

Landscape Management magazine, in the company of more than 50 members of the American Society of Irrigation Consultants (ASIC), visited two San Antonio properties irrigated with these systems on May 17. While both systems are new, initial water savings

have been encouraging enough to spawn similar systems, ASIC members learned.

The second (and more interesting) of the two ASIC stops was at the San Antonio Development Services Center, located several miles from downtown. The property consists of new brick building with

adjacent parking lot. It is landscaped with small areas of turf and drought-resistant ornamentals and grasses and other water-conserving plants line the property near the street.

"We wanted this to be a showcase," said Landscape Architect Larry Clark. In the process he had to incorporate "a lot of things to make it green."

One of them is the condensate collection system for irrigation. The system is relatively simple, consisting of a low-volume pump to

Landscape Architect Larry Clark, microphone, and irrigation expert Alex Garza, say the water savings are significant.

move the hvac condensate (and, in some cases water from hvac system's chill towers) into three 5,000-gallon metal tanks behind the building. The water is then pumped from the tanks to irrigate the turf and other landscape plants.

Fail/safe measures

Sensors regulate the amount of water within the tanks, keeping the level from dropping too low or from overflowing, explained Clark. The key to the system is designing the right size tanks for the property and landscape.

When there isn't enough condensate to irrigate the landscape, potable water is used, added Alex Garza, the irrigation expert who assisted on the project.

He said the landscape requires the most irrigation (perhaps 60% of the year's total) in July. Because of the heat and humidity, this also coincides with the peak supply of hvac condensate.

"Even if we have to use a little potable water, we're perfectly happy with taking advantage of the condensate," added Garza. He said a similar water recovery system is being constructed for a 50-acre site in Dallas. It will contain three 30,000-gallon tanks to collect the condensate and the water from the system's cooling towers.

If you live in regions of the Sunbelt looking to reduce potable water use in landscape irrigation, don't be surprised to see or to be asked to maintain similar systems soon.



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Wed	↓	↓	4:00	↓	↓	8.5
Thurs	↓	↓	4:00	↓	↓	8.5
Fri	↓	↓	4:00	↓	↓	8.5

Employee Signature: Bill Kemp Total Hours: 41.5



REALITY?

Employee Report

Bill Kemp

Jobsite Name: Walby Property Date Range: 6/13/2005 through 6/17/2005

Day	Start	End	Activity	Hours
Mon 6/13	7:19 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:43 hours
	12:40 PM	3:39 PM	Irrigation	2:59 hours 7:42 hours
Tue 6/14	7:21 AM	12:06 PM	Irrigation	4:45 hours
	12:37 PM	3:42 PM	Irrigation	3:05 hours 7:50 hours
Wed 6/15	7:16 AM	12:04 PM	Irrigation	4:48 hours
	12:33 PM	3:44 PM	Irrigation	3:11 hours 7:59 hours
Thu 6/16	7:18 AM	12:25 PM	Planting	5:07 hours
	1:05 PM	3:42 PM	Planting	2:37 hours 7:44 hours
Fri 6/17	7:17 AM	11:50 AM	Planting	4:33 hours
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Happy ending for H-2B

WASHINGTON, DC — Companies hit by this year's early H-2B cap have the chance now to apply for additional much-needed seasonal employees.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) is accepting applications for H-2B workers seeking employment dates as early as immediately. The USCIS defines returning workers for both the remainder of 2005 and 2006, and estimates an additional 35,000 new people will be allowed to enter the country and work this year based on the number of return workers already here.

"We are very pleased to see USCIS work so expeditiously to ensure timely implementation of legislation that is so critical to the survival of landscape firms in today's marketplace," said John Meredith, director of legislative relations for The American

Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA).

Since January, when the H-2B cap for the year was reached in just a few days, both ANLA and the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) have

collaborated with a broad-based "H-2B Coalition" in lobbying Congress to get this relaxation of the H-2B cap enacted into law.

In early May, President Bush passed an appropriations bill including an amendment easing the cap on the number of H-2B visas granted in a year. This year, the cap was reached in January.

For additional *Landscape Management* H-2B coverage and a link to download the complete USCIS guidelines, visit www.landscapemanagement.net and click on the H-2B link on the home page.

An additional 35,000 people will be allowed to enter the country and work this year.

Syngenta and LESCO part company

GREENSBORO, NC

AND CLEVELAND — Syngenta Professional Products and LESCO will end their business relationship. After an as-yet-unspecified transition period, LESCO no longer will distribute the Syngenta product line. Both companies cite business differences as the reason for the split.

Say 'hola' to Spanish Ferris site

MUNNSVILLE, NY — Ferris Industries

launched a Spanish version of its Web site to communicate more effectively with all customers. Spanish product literature and showroom materials also are available at dealerships.

Court rules in FMC's favor

PHILADELPHIA — A US District Court issued a preliminary injunction in May against Control Solutions Inc., Pasadena, TX, in a dispute with FMC Corp. FMC filed suit in April, alleging that Control Solutions' Bifen I/T label infringed on FMC's TalstarOne multi-insecticide label copyright. The court ordered Control Solutions to stop manufacturing the label and making the product available.

Brickman expands into Michigan

GAITHERSBURG, MD — The Brickman Group acquired Troy, MI-based Lakewood Landscaping, a \$12 million commercial maintenance business with four branch offices in Michigan. Bob McGinness, former general manager of Lakewood Landscaping, heads up the new region.

CLIPPINGS

It's PGMS award time

BALTIMORE — Start sprucing up now in preparation for this year's 33rd annual Grounds Management Awards sponsored by the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS) and *Landscape Management*. The program salutes grounds superintendents responsible for maintaining a well-manicured landscape year round. This year the application process is simplified, since participants can submit digi-

tal photography instead of slides and photo prints.

Fifteen entry categories run the range from small site to urban university grounds, including everything in between from zoos to cemeteries to athletic fields. PGMS and *Landscape Management* present two classes of awards, Grand and Honor awards, in conjunction with GIE 2005 in Orlando this November.

Deadline for entry is August 5. For complete entry information contact PGMS at 800/609-PGMS or visit www.pgms.org/greenstarawards.htm.





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People & companies



Phoenix Environmental Care LLC named **Craig Smith**, formerly of Griffin LLC, as aquatic business manager.

Debra Holder joined **The Brickman Group** as director of industry relations. She recently retired as CEO of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA).

Nemetschek North America promoted **Sean Flaherty** to CEO. He succeeds company founder **Richard**

Diehl, who retired after 20 years with the company.

Prokoz named **Mohamed Rachadi** to its management team as marketing manager.

Eastern Land Management has a new leadership lineup: **Victor Palacios**, landscape maintenance; **Jonathan Trotter**, special projects/snow management; **Scott Pena**, turf & ornamentals; **Bruce Moore Jr.**, water management; and **Carole Caldwell**, office manager.

The **Tree Care Industry As-**

sociation elected **Tim Harris**, president of Buckley Tree Service, as chairman of its board of directors.



James Doyle was named president-Engine Business for the **Kohler Co.**

Aqua Control Inc. named **Warren Thoma & Associates** its new Midwestern representative.

PBI/Gordon Corp. hired two new territory sales represen-

tatives. **Sean Kearney** covers the Upper Midwest and **Bill Affinito** serves New England.

Arborwell, a California professional tree management and plant health care service provider, added **Andy LaVelle** to its executive team.



Peterson appointed **Garth Cook** the new area sales manager for the North America Central Region.

Syngenta Professional Products hired **Jason Whitecliffe** as turf and ornamental sales representative for Georgia and Alabama.



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One Tough Animal

In the Know

DC is the place to be in July

WASHINGTON, DC — This summer, take some time out to make your voice heard on Capitol Hill. Both the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) and the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) kick off legislative events here on Sun., July 17. Both organizations meet up for a joint issues briefing on Mon., July 18, to learn more about small business, H-2B, turfgrass and pesticide issues and legislation, then again for a Congressional reception Tuesday night with US House and Senate members.

The signature event of PLANET's legislative Day on the Hill is always the Renewal & Remembrance at Arlington National Cemetery and Congressional Cemetery, held this year on Monday morn-



The Color Guard formally begins the dedication ceremony at last year's Day on the Hill.

ing. Tuesday is reserved for meetings on the Hill with your state's lawmakers. On July 14 – 17, prior to Legislative Day, PLANET holds its Summer Leadership Meeting.

ANLA's One Green Industry conference also includes Capitol Hill visits and a packed Tuesday and Wednesday schedule of government officials and industry experts addressing Green Industry issues.

Both organizations urge participants to book Capitol Hill appointments early. PLANET has scheduling directions online at www.landcarenetwork.org. ANLA will book appointments for registrants. Register online at www.anla.org. Complete schedules and hotel information are available on each organization's Web site.

SCHEDULE HIGHLIGHTS

▶ PLANET 2005 Legislative Day On the Hill

SUNDAY, JULY 17

6 – 7 p.m.: Welcome and mentoring reception

MONDAY, JULY 18

7 a.m. – 1 p.m.: Renewal & Remembrance at Arlington National Cemetery and Congressional Cemetery

2:30 – 6 p.m.: Joint welcome session and issues briefings

6:30 p.m.: PLANET reception and dinner

TUESDAY, JULY 19

9 a.m. – 5 p.m.: Capitol Hill appointments

5:30 p.m.: Joint Congressional reception

▶ ANLA One Green Industry legislative conference

SUNDAY, JULY 17

5:30 p.m.: Horticultural Research Institute reception and ANLA membership dinner and awards evening at River Farm. Requires separate ticket.

MONDAY, JULY 18

9 – 11 a.m.: Green Industry new ideas session. Requires separate ticket.

2:30 – 6 p.m.: Joint welcome session and issues briefings

TUESDAY, JULY 19

Morning: Issues updates with representatives from OSHA, USDA and the Congressional Management Foundation

12 – 5 p.m.: US House of Representatives appointments

5:30 p.m.: Joint Congressional reception

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20

7:30 a.m.: Breakfast with Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH)

9 – 11 a.m.: Issues updates on pesticides and invasive plants

11:15 a.m.: Lunch with guest speaker Republican political strategist Mary Matalin

1 – 4 p.m.: US Senate appointments

4:30 p.m.: Wrap-up reception

Listings in bold are joint events

PA's Turfgrass Research Report available

STATE COLLEGE, PA — The Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council (PTC) has created a Resource Center as part of a redesign of the PTC Web site. Penn State's "2004 Turfgrass Research Report" now is available online at www.paturf.org. The annual report includes results of PTC-supported research on fungicide, herbicide and fertilizer evaluations, topdressing and athletic field studies.

Franchise fee reduced for vets

BURNSVILLE, MN — Jet-Black joined VetFran, a federal program that offers armed forces veterans a 25% discount off the standard Jet-Black franchise fee. The asphalt maintenance company has more than 100 locations across the United States.

Aqua Engineering grows

FT. COLLINS, CO — Aqua Engineering, Inc., based here, acquired the irrigation consulting firm of Terry J. Little, ASLA, ASIC, Dallas, TX. Since 1975 Aqua Engineering has specialized in providing irrigation engineering and master plans as well as pump and water feature mechanical design.

Davis Equipment acquires Sun Turf

JOHNSTON, IA — Davis Equipment Corp. acquired the assets of Sun Turf, Inc., St. Paul, MN, a regional supplier of professional grounds care equipment. The new company, Davis Sun Turf, serves customers in the North Central US. The company represents brands including Jacobsen Power Equipment, Husqvarna, The Andersons, Jacklin Seed, Smithco and others.

[CLIPPINGS]

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10 THINGS YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT YOUR COMPETITION



Follow this competitive analysis and you're on your way to becoming a top player in your market

BY JUDITH M. GUIDO

Competition is everywhere and it's relentless. It raises its ugly little head whether you're working the low or high end of your market.

But, Mr. or Ms. Green Industry Business Owner, what do you really know about your competition? Sure you're aware of competitors' names and some of the services they offer, but what else? Do you recognize the competitive issues that

give your market its unique personality? Do you understand how these issues affect your company? Have you developed and are you working a plan to give your company competitive advantages in your marketplace?

Even though there might be more of it than you'd like, competition isn't bad. It drives us to continually improve every aspect of our businesses, products and services. And, you guessed it —

OUTSMART THE COMPETITION

Building a better selling position in your market requires an understanding of two concepts that can be of immense value to you — business intelligence and competitor intelligence.

Business intelligence is the information you collect and use that gives you a competitive edge. For instance, your research may tell you that a certain (and perhaps profitable) segment of your market would pay a premium to receive organic lawn care. This research could come from client surveys/interviews or a more general market study.

Networking within related but separate industries and/or service organizations is another excellent way to build your business intelligence. The more business contacts you make, whether they're in the Green Industry or not, the more you will learn. For example, you may learn from a particular developer that he or she is planning a huge housing project, allowing you to build a relationship and deliver a proposal before competitors even learn about it. You can't collect too much data about your market. Your level of your organization's business intelligence will grow as you dig ever deeper into your market and what makes it tick.

Competitor intelligence, on the other hand, is more specific. This is data you collect on a particular competitor or group of competitors. Some common but vital types of information include competitors' pricing, terms and length of their contracts, any special services they offer, warranty and callback policies. Competitor intelligence (CI) is a key link between your marketing and sales efforts. Again, it would be impossible to collect too much information on key competitors.

But how do you go about increasing your competitor intelligence?

In a phrase, learn as much as you can about your chief competitors. Examine their marketing pieces. Determine their unit prices. Investigate (as much as you can, anyway) their safety records, their training practices, any special skills their employees possess and their financial situations. You will surprise yourself about the amount of information that you can learn about your competition.

The Internet is an excellent tool to increase your competitive intelligence. It can be your gateway to public records, for example, informing you of lawsuits brought by vendors or bids offered by competitors to public contracts. Many counties and towns will post the information online and provide pricing, timelines, key personnel, vendors and some financial data on the company. Entire contracts are often posted.

But, in almost all cases, it's your team's daily interaction with clients and prospects that provides the best feedback in building your CI.

As your team members develop these relationships, clients and prospects often discuss freely what the competition is saying about their service, products, personnel, direction, problems and pricing. Take this information back to the office and share it with key sales, management and operational team members.

Finally, if you miss out on a job, it's a great opportunity to gather CI, since customers often feel badly that they didn't give you the job. Take advantage of this opportunity to ask why the competition won the contract. How did you compare with the competition?

Competitive intelligence isn't merely a strategic exercise. It yields rich, timely and tactical information critical to your sales and marketing efforts. It's a potent tool to open more profitable business relationships.

— JG

competition is only going to grow.

Consider that the United States has at least 68,000 registered Green Industry service companies. Because of the low barriers of entry to landscape contracting (usually all that is needed is a business license) it's generally believed there are at least another 30% that aren't registered. Some industry veterans feel even that might be conservative.

With so many companies offering services for hire, how do you begin to understand the depth of the competition?

Start at the most basic level; realize that a competitor is any organization that offers the same, similar or substitutable products or services in the geographic business area where you do business. Indeed, you probably have different competitors for the different products and services you deliver. For example, if you're a full-service company that provides tree services, that segment of your business may compete directly with tree care specialists who only perform those jobs. The same holds true of lawn care, lighting, design, irrigation services or holiday decorating.

Here are the 10 things you must do to get a handle on your competition. Your ultimate goal is to get them to begin copying and chasing you as the market leader. Not the other way around.

1 Analyze your competitors. Start with ones that compete most directly against your services or products, but don't neglect the others. Can you match or exceed their resources or capacity to serve the market? Be realistic. If they can provide a specialty product or service that you can't, investigate why and whether it would be advantageous to add this product or service. How about your main competitors' pricing?

2 Examine the the most competitive operations in your market. If your company is not in this category, how

do you respond? A common tactic is to copy strategies used by the market leaders, but that doesn't provide a competitive advantage. It doesn't separate the "me-too" from the market leader in customers' eyes. It brings no added value to the market.

3 Determine if and how competitors add value that customers are willing to pay for. Can the value be defined in terms of quality of service? Rapid service delivery? Customer convenience? Choice of payment plans or extended credit terms? More comprehensive service offerings? A broader network of contacts?

4 Identify the specific customer groups that your competitors target. Likely you're chasing the same customer

base. Obviously, you all want long-term customers with ongoing profit potential, and you'll battle long and hard for these. In your competitive industry you'll have to make tough decisions about matching or exceeding competitors' claims or offers to land or keep them. And how you will identify and target other potential client groups.

5 Determine competitors' pricing and their financial stability. This requires homework but it's worth the effort. This knowledge allows you to make reasonable assumptions about their cash flow situations and their purchasing, service, routing or mark up advantages. Discounts for pre-pays can be a big deal in some markets. Do they bill on a straight-line month or by work completed?

6 Build your knowledge of their service provider/supplier relationships. Is your competition better positioned with suppliers? This could include receiving co-marketing dollars, getting extended terms, receiving on-site material deliveries and acquiring customers from supplier referrals.

7 Try to project competitors' future moves. It just makes good business sense to track those services and customers your competition will be targeting next season, or even several years from now. Keep in mind that competitors may increase their market presence by buying other companies. Or they may become the target of a bigger firm that sees your market as a great opportunity.

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Circle 118

8 Determine how much better than the competition you must be to win customers. Develop a position in the market that customers perceive as significantly superior to competitors. It could focus, for example, on a pricing advantage (usually resulting from efficiencies), responsiveness, product/service quality or some other area that the most profitable customers in your market perceive to be valuable. (It would be unlikely — make that almost impossible — to hold a market-leading position in all of the above.) In other words, you can't afford to have your services viewed as commodities. Train your personnel to recite your main value statements then practice them every day.

9 Keep your radar alert for new companies, service offerings, trends or shifts in your market. Do you have a process in place to gauge the market's receptiveness to these new providers or services? Markets change, and market leaders realize they must adapt and change as well.

10 Finally, put yourself in your customers' place. Ask yourself, and be brutally honest, if and why

they should want your services over the others in your market. Unless you're convinced that your company is the unquestioned best choice, you still have work to do, maybe lots of work, before your company is the market player you want it to be.

In fact, even if you're the king of your market and your competitors are copying what you do, never get complacent. The competition never rests. **LJM**

— The author is principal of Guido & Associates, a learning organization that helps green companies grow their people and profits. Contact her at 818/800-0135, judy@guidoassoc.com or www.guidoassoc.com.

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14 common-sense tips for

MOWER SAFETY

- 7** Do not mow under conditions when traction or stability is questionable.
- 8** Understand how the mower operates and hang on to all safety manuals.
- 9** Prepare the machine before use. Take available measures to increase stability, steering and traction. Make sure that the mower is in neutral before starting it.

After taking pre-work precautions, follow these additional common-sense guidelines for safety while mowing:

- 10** NEVER take passengers on mowing equipment, and always look behind the mower before backing up.
- 11** Remember how to mow safely on sloped or uneven ground. With a riding mower, mow up and down the slope. With a walk-behind mower, mow across the face of the slope. Mow slowly enough to be able to see and react to hazards in the path. NEVER try to stabilize a riding mower by putting your foot on the ground.

- 12** NEVER make adjustments to any mechanism of the equipment while the mower is running.
- 13** Practice safe dismounting. Disengage the PTO, engage the brake, and stop the engine and all parts before getting off the mower. Employees should be trained on precautions to take when dismounting the mower.
- 14** Disengage the PTO to stop the mower blade whenever you drive between mowing jobs, cross a road, path or sidewalk, or when the mower is not in use.

By properly maintaining your equipment, by following all required OSHA standards, and by ensuring that your employees use these common sense safety guidelines, you will reduce your risk of injury substantially. Have a safe summer of mowing! **LM**

— The author is client services manager with *TechnTrain*. Contact her at 800/852-8314.

The company offers a *Nursery and Landscape Federal OSHA Compliance Manual*.

Pull this out and pass it on to avoid costly safety errors

BY SHANNON DECAMP

Lawnmowers are a key component of the landscaping industry. Unfortunately, they are also a main source of accidents and injuries. While many of these are minor accidents that involve burns or bruises, the more severe ones can result in the loss of a limb or even a life. Common causes for these accidents include driving too fast, mowing on uneven ground, using a mower that has not been mechanically maintained, and pushing a mower beyond safe limits. Fortunately, most hazards can be avoided by taking common-sense precautions. Remember that it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that employees are safe on the job.

Take precautions to ensure the safety of your employees before starting the job:

1 Make sure that your workers have the correct equipment for the job at hand. If an area is too sloped, or the ground is too uneven to operate the mower safely, use a weed eater or push mower instead.

2 Understand the throwing capabilities of the equipment, and make sure that the area is clear of anything that the mower might fling.

3 Do NOT permit removal of any equipment shields and guards that are installed on the equipment.

4 Determine that the mower is in sound mechanical condition on an ongoing basis.

5 Wear the proper clothing and protective equipment. This includes heavy-duty shoes, long pants and sleeves, safety glasses with impact-resistant lenses and hearing protection. Avoid loose clothing and jewelry that could get caught in the machinery.

6 Always fill the tank BEFORE starting the job, outside, in an open area, away from cigarettes or other heat sources. NEVER refuel a hot motor.

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Circle 121

Innovations

TECHNOLOGY HOT NEW PRODUCTS

4



1

2

3

1 Move it right

For tricky elevations when a laser just won't cut it, Caterpillar's new AccuGrade GPS grade control system is designed to help operators move material correctly the first time. The factory-installed system is integrated into tractor controls, allowing the user to use GPS for complex designs, then switch to laser for flat, consistent slopes. AccuGrade uses a dual combined receiver and antenna system, which collects positioning data from satellites and an off-board GPS base station. The AccuGrade calculates the position of the blade relative to the design plan with centimeter-level accuracy. The operator sees the results on an in-cab display in several formats.

For more information contact Caterpillar at 309/675-1000 or visit www.CatAccuGrade.com / circle no. 250

2 Split personality

It's a rake, it's a broom — it's Quickie Manufacturing Corp.'s 2-in-1 landscaper's push broom, a heavy-duty push broom with an aluminum rake on the opposite side of the head. Designed for spreading, sweeping or raking mulch, leaves and debris, the broom has an 18-in. solid hardwood block with stiff poly fibers on one side and a rust-proof aluminum rake on the other mounted with four connectors. The landscaper's push broom has a 60-in. hardwood handle and is the ideal dual tool for flower beds, driveways, walkways, patios and landscape stones, according to the company.

For more information contact Quickie Manufacturing Corp. at 800/257-5751 or visit www.quickie.com / circle no. 251

3 Need a trim?

Cutting large areas of grass is usually a two-person or two-trip job, involving one pass with the riding mower and another with the trimmer. 4M's new string trimmer attachment is designed to make mowing a one-trip job. The trimmer attaches to the body of almost any brand of riding mower. The operator uses a foot pedal to activate the trimmer and extend or retract it for a close cut around obstacles. Feed more line as needed and tilt the head to any angle, all from the seat of the mower. The 4M string trimmer attachment is available in three models: one hydraulic version that delivers 3 hp and 8,500 rpm, and two electronic versions.

For more information contact 4M at 866/623-8264 or visit www.4mtrimmers.com / circle no. 252

4 Spray it, don't say it

The new low-profile Toro Workman 200 gallon (757 liter) sprayer provides precise applications of herbicides, fungicides, pesticides or fertilizers. With the easy Toro on/off system, your Workman 3000 or 4000 series utility vehicle is quickly transformed into a highly productive sprayer. The heavy duty Toro Workman converts in minutes, so you can tow, haul and spray in any given hour. An optional high-flow hydraulics kit is available for additional power to run the sprayer and all other attachments. The sprayer joins the line of Workman attachments including the Topdresser 1800, debris blower, Vicon spreader, Rahn infield groomer, vertical lift and others.

For more information contact The Toro Co. at 800/348-2424 or visit www.toro.com / circle no. 253



Brown Patch Program Can Boost Your Bottom Line

Identify New Revenue Opportunities and Increase Your Service Offering With Heritage® Fungicide

Looking for new ways to increase your service offering and positively impact your bottom line? Incorporating a brown patch control program with Heritage fungicide from Syngenta Professional Products can do just that. A Heritage brown patch program offers you an opportunity to capitalize on an existing problem that few of your customers recognize, while increasing your service fees—boosting your bottom line.

With the active ingredient azoxystrobin, Heritage is a fungicide with a novel mode of action that consistently provides exceptional disease control and improves overall turf quality. Heritage controls a broad spectrum of diseases, including brown patch, and also offers:

- Curative activity against certain diseases, after infection occurs
- Long-lasting, broad-spectrum preventative disease management
- Control of the six toughest turf diseases

Additional Syngenta resources available to you when implementing a Heritage brown patch program include pest outlooks and the 30-year disease mapping features on GreenCast® (www.greencastonline.com). Utilize GreenCast to help you sell the Heritage brown patch program by determining when brown patch is most prevalent in your area and when to make Heritage applications.

For more information about how to increase your service offering—and bottom line—with a brown patch control program that incorporates Heritage fungicide, contact your local Syngenta representative at 1-866-SYNGENTA (796-4368).



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How to Spot Brown Patch

The symptoms of brown patch can vary depending on the grass cultivar, soil, climatic and atmospheric



conditions, as well as intensity of the turfgrass management. Brown patch typically causes

rings or patches of blighted turfgrass that measure 5 inches to more than 10 feet in diameter. It also causes leaf spots and "smoke rings"—thin, brown borders around the diseased patches that appear most frequently in the early morning. After the leaves die in the blighted area, new leaves can emerge from the surviving crowns. On wide-bladed species, leaf lesions develop with tan centers and dark brown to black margins.

Brown patch favors high humidity as well as temperatures of over 85 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and over 60 degrees Fahrenheit at night. Brown patch can be quite active at cool temperatures on warm-season grasses in the spring and fall. It also occurs in areas that experience more than 10 hours a day of foliar wetness for several consecutive days.

Brown patch infestation is more severe when the turf is cut to a height less than the optimum for the turfgrass being grown.



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To make valve adjustments, either on a gasoline or OHV-type diesel engines, follow these simple steps:

1. Always make adjustments on a cold engine.
2. On gasoline engine, remove valve cover, gasket and spark plug. On diesel engine, remove valve cover and gasket. Disconnect electrical connection from fuel shut-off solenoid on the fuel injection pump.
3. Position piston at Top Dead Center (TDC) compression. If engine is buried in a piece of equipment and marks aren't visible, rotate flywheel by hand in the normal operating direction and watch for exhaust valve to close and intake valve to open on one cylinder. When both valves are simultaneously moving, mark a straight line joining engine crankcase and flywheel or a crankshaft pulley. Rotate crankshaft one full revolution until marks realign. (If your engine has a compression release mechanism, continue to rotate flywheel until piston has dropped down 1/4 in. past TDC on power stroke. Insert a Phillips screwdriver in sparkplug hole on a gasoline engine to measure piston moving down.)
4. Consult engine manual to determine correct valve clearance specification.
5. Insert feeler gauge, with proper clearance spec, between rocker arm and valve stem. Adjust tightening mechanism on rocker arm. After tightening mechanism to proper torque, recheck clearance. Perform adjustment on the other valve.
6. With multiple cylinders, rotate crankshaft slowly until another set of valves close and open. Make another line like before, but mark it differently to avoid confusion. Rotate crankshaft one full revolution again and adjust for compression release if needed. Set the valve clearance and follow same procedure for additional cylinders.
7. Check or replace valve cover gasket for proper sealing. Install valve cover and torque the retainers to the proper setting. Reinstall spark plug and wire or reconnect fuel shut off solenoid.



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

From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY WASTE CONTROL

I once saw a supervisor load a rake, a bag of seed and a bag of fertilizer into his personal pickup truck at the end of the day.



Drip, drip — you lose

BY HARRY SMITH

You have a leak. It's cash flowing out of your company ... in small drips. What's causing these leaks? Let's look at three possibilities: 1. Shrinkage (a.k.a., theft) 2. Waste 3. Inefficiency.

Let's start with your hand tools — your pruners, rakes, shovels and other small hand tools, and your expendables like trimmer line. What is it? Theft? Waste? Or is it plain old sloppiness and inefficiency?

Or maybe it's all three. It's very possible you have three problems instead of one.

Theft is always a problem. I once saw a supervisor load a rake, a bag of seed and a bag of fertilizer into his personal pickup truck at the end of the day. This was done in full view of the crew.

All the lectures, ethics training and admonitions about not stealing from the company can't touch the unspoken statement this supervisor made. Behavior that's modeled gets copied. This also holds true for the quiet, tacit acceptance of theft by supervisory personnel. You must fix this problem. It will only grow and your losses will increase as time goes on.

Waste is another matter, especially of fuel, oil, trimmer line and other expendables. If you do not control this inventory

to some extent and convince your employees of the value of these items then they will be wasted.

Compare different crews' uses of expendables; it might surprise you. Build incentives into conservation of expendables. These expendables are recognized as valuable in and of themselves. Employees also view them as a source of potential reward if they are conserved.

Finally, sloppy inventory control in the shop and on the service trucks will produce a heavy flow of losses.

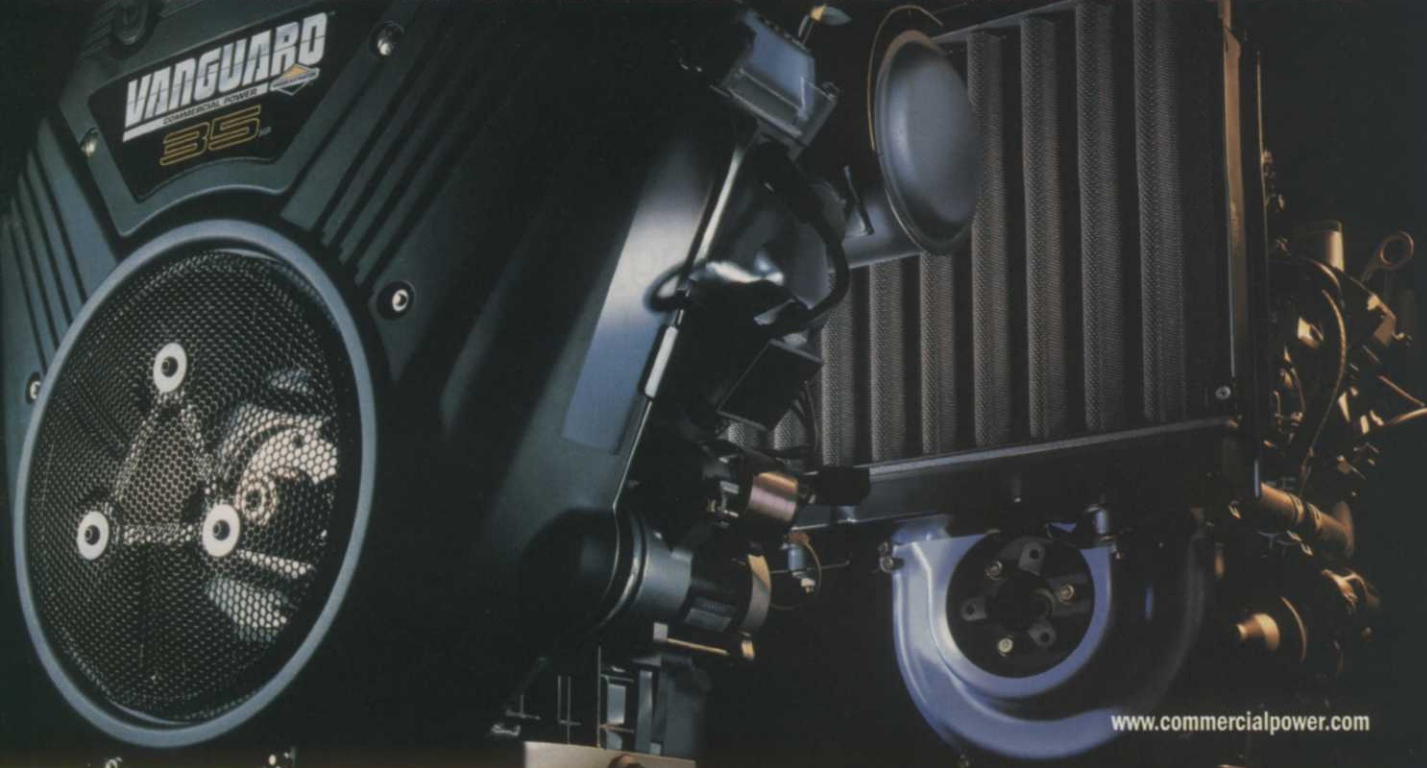
You cannot control all losses because it costs too much. A \$900 a month employee dedicated to preventing \$90 worth of monthly losses doesn't make sense, but consider other ways to control inventory.

If each tool has a dedicated storage spot on the truck and in the shop then inventory is quick and painless. Just look. Is there an open hole? Aha! There is a hole where the rake belongs. Where is that rake? If all the trucks are set up the same way with an eyeball inventory system then the perennial problem of leaving tools on the job site is greatly relieved.

Take care of these small leaks. If they're allowed to continue they will become a flood, a flood of money leaving your operation.

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

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We think technology can automate everything we do, but we fail to recognize the benefits of streamlining our workflows.



Why offices need systems

BY TYLER WHITAKER

Landscaping is labor intensive. Metrics like production rates and job density determine each job's profitability. Likewise, the efficiency of our office operations has impact on our bottom line. Would you agree that if we can improve the workflow in our office we can also increase our profitability?

Business Process Engineering, a concept familiar in manufacturing, defines each step of the process from raw materials to the sold finished goods. Why is a "computer guy" interested in this process? The answer: Automating a simple process costs less than automating a cumbersome or broken process.

Systems for offices too

Let's recognize that our office people and systems are really a series of assembly lines that produces sales orders, invoices and hopefully bank deposits. Customer information in the form of a contract or work order comes in one end and route sheets and work tickets come out the other. Once the work is completed we feed these completed route sheets and work tickets into the assembly line that produces customer invoices. We then process our customer payments into bank deposits. Producing these "products" efficiently puts money in our pockets. That's why we must identify the fastest and easiest way to complete these processes.

Step back and take a fresh look at what's going on. Be objective and look at the whole picture without becoming mired in the details. Consider what's best for the company independent of the people involved.

When we try to find a place for specific individuals, we open ourselves up to inefficiencies.

Smooth the flow

Look for bottlenecks where key people are doing too much process resulting in longer processing times. Can you have these more expensive people work on the hardest or most detailed parts of the business and move the more mundane work to your least cost resources?

Look for steps of the process that can be reordered or run in parallel. Can you eliminate steps?

Once you rework the process, you're ready to identify the steps to automate with the help of technology. Put steps with high transaction volumes or long repetitive actions at the top of the list — data entry of work tickets, sales orders, etc.

Include other team members

Can you deploy handheld units to your crew leaders and account managers to remove several hours a day of data entry? Other top priority areas include remedial tasks such as validating, reconciling and reporting.

Too often we think technology can automate everything we do, but we fail to recognize the benefits of streamlining our workflows first. Define the optimal workflow, then you will be able to leverage technology to automate the work.

If we do this we will improve and speed our office processes, resulting in a more robust bottom line. The concept of Business Process Engineering is as valid in the service industry as it is in manufacturing.

— Tyler Whitaker is chief technology officer for the Symbiot Business Group. Contact him at 801/733-6900 or

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gating work to others is a sign of control, power and authority."

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It's not easy bein' *green*

BY JESSICA SHARP

This lawn care operator keeps Northern Virginia green naturally

Northern Virginia, home to a host of government officials because of its proximity to Washington, DC, is also home to a population of homeowners interested in maintaining their lawns naturally. Enter Bern Bonifant. Bonifant, a former employee of the US Census Bureau, is now the vice president of Natural Lawns in Fairfax, VA, the original "natural" lawn care company in the area.

Why natural? Bonifant's answer is simple: "Because we handle these products all day, every day." Simple answer, but

not always a simple way to run a lawn care business.

To begin, all of Bonifant's programs have been designed to protect the water table and the Chesapeake Bay estuary in which his customers live. The goal of each program is to enhance and protect the surrounding environment while also lowering the overall use of pesticides. This is achieved by incorporating as many "natural" products as possible into its program.

"We soon found that there is a real demand for that kind of service in this area," Bonifant says. "We always do what we can to accommodate our customers and many of them are

interested in low use of pesticides, while still maintaining the appearance of their lawns. As you may imagine, that isn't always such an easy thing to do.

"Basically, we want to have as low an impact on the environment as possible," says Bonifant. "We use low rate granular controls in the spring and fall, and as a result, most weeds will not germinate and grow. Thus, over time, spraying for weeds and the amount of weed control used is reduced."

Crabgrass capital

Unfortunately for Bonifant, Natural Lawns also happens to be located in the center of what the University of Maryland likes to refer to as the 'crabgrass belt.'

Crabgrass, one of the most prevalent grassy weeds, thrives in full sunlight and high temperatures. A summer annual,

◀ Bern Bonifant treats this horse boarding and training farm located in Lucketts, VA.

crabgrass has a life span of less than one season, but in that time drops many seeds, which will germinate and grow the following year.

"A lot of people who live in Northern Virginia are originally from cooler climates with different growing seasons, so they see grass they're not used to and think something is wrong," Bonifant says. "It's not long before we get a call to come check it out."

Tough to defeat

"We know if a client has crabgrass one year, they're almost definitely going to have it the next, which is why our basic program includes six treatments per year," he says. "We start with lime in late winter and early spring, a crabgrass pre-emergent and two light fertilizer treatments in spring. Summer is primarily spent monitoring the yard and treating any issues that may occur. Then in the fall we spread two heavy applications of fertilizer."

Because Natural Lawns likes to apply the least amount of chemicals possible, most of the products Bonifant uses contain low levels of active ingredient. When it comes to treating grasses, like crabgrass, a post-emergent herbicide is a reasonable solution. It only needs to be applied as needed, not broadcast like a pre-emergent.

continued on page 38



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"Because of where we're located, it's unsuitable for us to use a rather mild pre-emergent such as corn glutamate, which contains very high levels of natural nitrogen, because the rates would have to be so extraordinarily high," says Bonifant. "For this reason we've started using Acclaim Extra from Bayer Environmental Science. It works great, and we only need to apply small amounts of it as a post-emergent treatment, so we are able to stay true to our environmental philosophy."

Acclaim Extra, with its water-based formula, controls annual and perennial grasses in turf. A systematic herbicide that works in a single treatment, it is



Bern Bonifant

a post-emergence herbicide that controls crabgrass and goosegrass in a wide range of growth stages, from spikes to 5-tillers.

Winds of change

As most lawn care operators know, the lawn care business changes as frequently as the seasons. New grasses, insects and diseases constantly keep lawn care professionals on their toes. Bonifant's area is no exception.

"We've had to modify our standard program recently due to the introduction of an invasive weed called Japanese siltgrass or Japanese siltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*)," he says. "This grass is extremely invasive

and prefers low light. It crowds out other grasses and is attributed to exterminating about half a dozen small critters."

Luckily, the solution was a familiar one. "The only product we have found that really takes care of it is Acclaim Extra," Bonifant says. "Although we've been using Acclaim since its introduction to the market 18 years ago for crabgrass, we've found it's really the best thing for this new grass, and we use it one or more times a year in our standard program," he says.

Adding shrub care

Aside from the ability to control these tough Northern Virginia grasses, Bonifant knows that his customers are looking for reliable people who have a record of low use of pesticides when it comes to maintaining their landscape. This is one of the reasons his company

started offering shrub care to its customers.

"By adding a shrub program to our list of services, we have the ability to really solidify a customer," says Bonifant. "We also like to offer our customers cultural practices that they can do on their own to help maintain their lawns in between our visits, like making sure they remove leaves as soon as they fall."

In fact, Bonifant gives all of his customers a checklist at each visit where he can indicate what they need to work on before his next visit. Such items as "need mowing," "grass cut too short," "dog droppings" or "double cut" appear in what Bonifant likes to refer to as his "report card."

"I don't know what my customers do in their spare time, but I like to imagine them having a couple of beers on their patio and comparing report cards," Bonifant chuckles.



This backyard, located in Falls Church, VA, is another property treated by Natural Lawns, Inc.

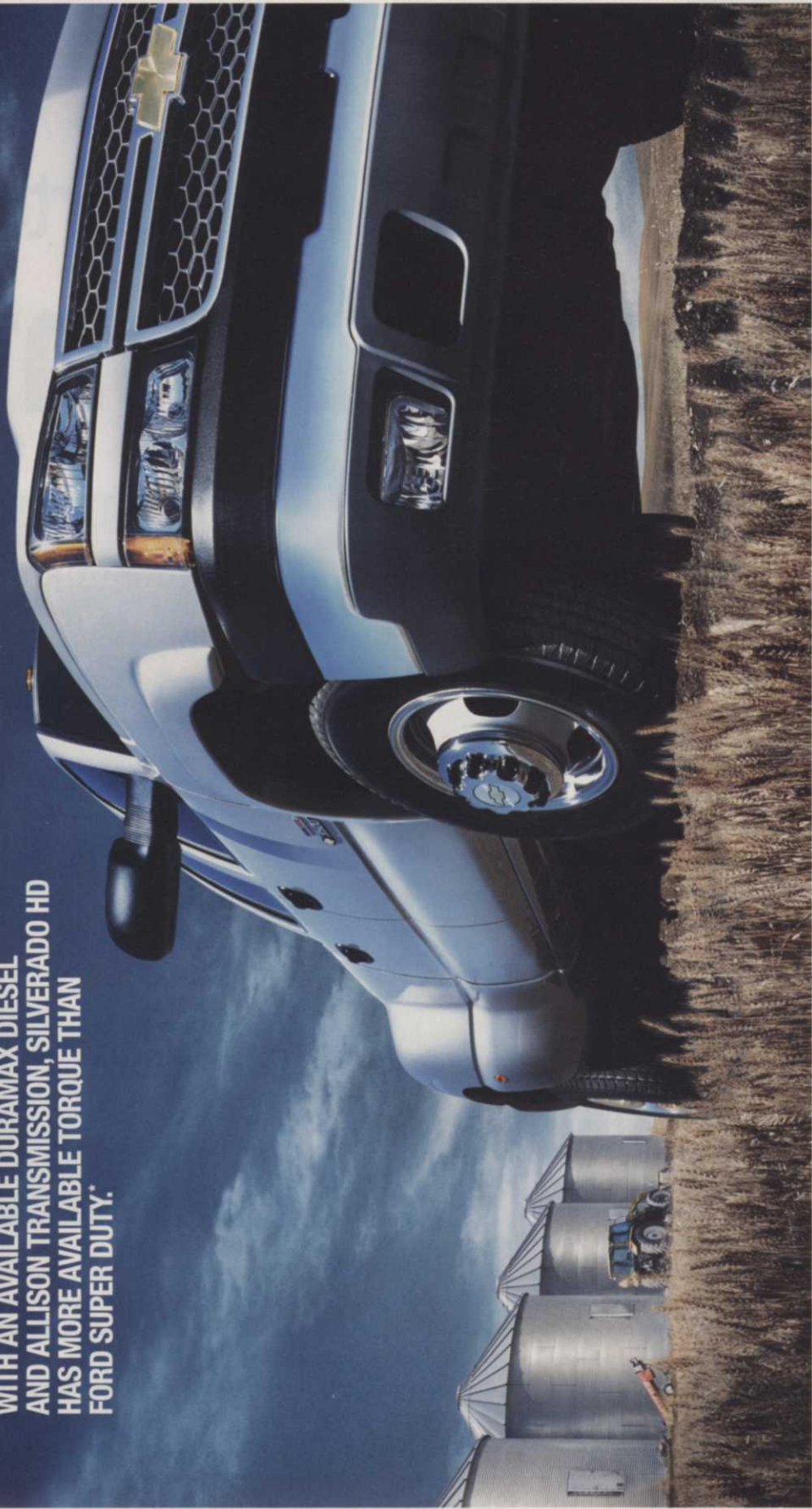
As far as growing his business, Bonifant's philosophy never wavers. "We always try to use products that are specifically low-dose," says Bonifant. "From surveys we've seen of what goes out on lawns throughout the country, we figure we're putting down about five to seven percent of the chemical products that the average lawn care company uses. That's what our customers want, and that's how we aim to grow the business."

Despite the challenges his geographic location sets forth, Bonifant continues to increase his customer base by never wavering from a philosophy that has brought him to where he is today, naturally. **LM**

— The author is an account executive with Tierney Communications. Contact her at 215/790-4412 or jsharp@tierneyagency.com.

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New directions in imported fire ant control

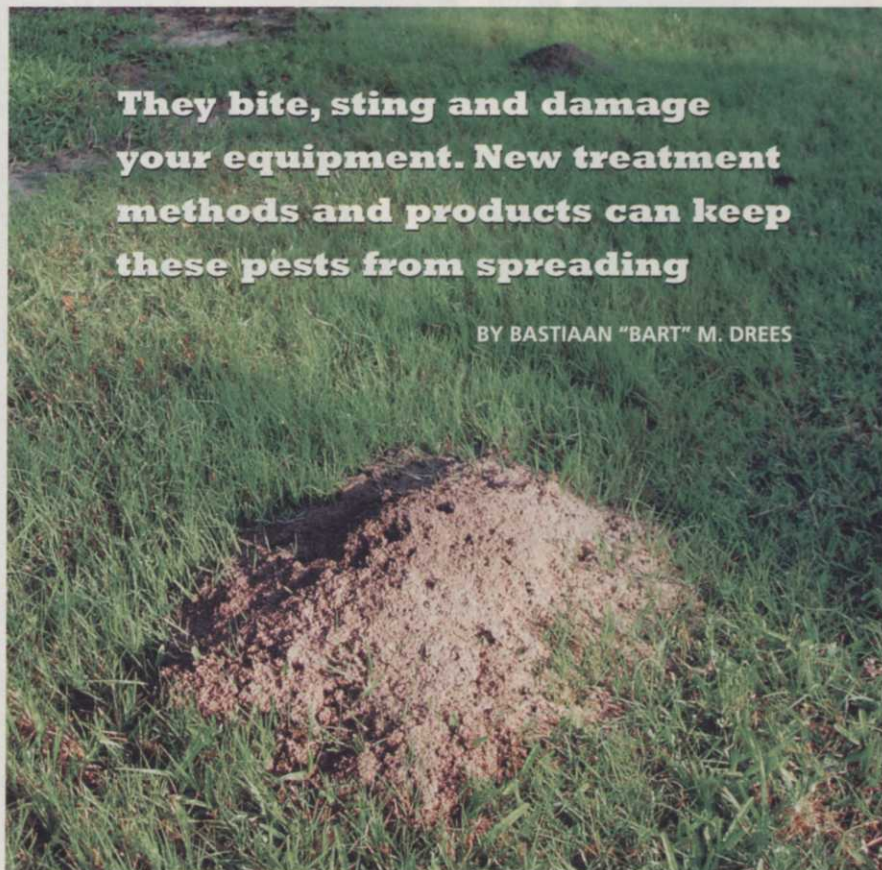
The threat remains: imported fire ants, including the red imported fire ant, *Solenopsis invicta*; the black imported fire ant, *S. richteri*; and their hybrid, are firmly established in the southeastern

United States and Caribbean islands. More recent incursions of *S. invicta* have been detected in New Mexico, California, Australia, Taiwan, China and elsewhere. Landscapers in areas near infested lands should be on the lookout as fire ants continue to spread to new areas through natural mating flights or transport by man via high-risk articles like sod, nursery stock and soil-moving equipment. If you detect these species, notify your regulatory agencies immediately.

Costs of damage

In the landscape, fire ant damage results in great costs. In Texas alone, this cost is estimated at \$1.2 billion annually. Ants build tall mud nests or mounds that are unsightly and that can dull mower blades when struck. Colonies and foraging worker ants move into electrical utilities causing inconvenient and costly equipment failures. Cost of control attempts range up to hundreds of dollars per acre and account for about half the economic impact in urban areas. New products and treatment methods are being developed and introduced to improve control of these pest ants (see sidebars).

The biggest threat from fire ants is their



They bite, sting and damage your equipment. New treatment methods and products can keep these pests from spreading

BY BASTIAAN "BART" M. DREES

ability to bite and sting. Their venom can cause serious medical problems for people or pets. Thus, anyone managing a landscape potentially becomes entangled in lawsuits after maintenance personnel or visitors are stung. Around nursing homes, multiple stinging incidents of bed-ridden patients invariably result in close examination of treatment records of commercial operators contracted to provide services in and outside

these facilities. Settlements can exceed millions of dollars. This threat alone can economically justify effective control programs.

Evolving management

Management practices for imported fire ants have been established for some time. However, products and application methods continue to change and evolve. Avail-

continued on page 42

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able products and other selected integrated pest management (IPM) tactics can be used to develop cost-effective, environmentally sound programs designed to achieve the goals set by clientele or landscape managers.

Although spot eradication programs

have recently been initiated in California and Australia, most programs focus on suppressing populations to achievable levels and maintaining control. In the southeastern U.S., where eradication is not an option, re-invasion from adjacent untreated areas results in only temporary suppression. Maintaining control requires periodic re-

application of insecticides. The advantage of treating larger landscape areas, such as entire communities, neighborhoods or parks, is that re-invasion is minimized from surrounding areas, thereby improving control and reducing cost.

Efforts to achieve biological control

continued on page 45

ADVANCES IN BAIT TECHNOLOGY

1 Initial, "rescue treatment," or "curative" control: This occurs when a sports event or concert is planned within the next few days or weeks.

- A new bait formulation containing indoxacarb, called Advion, can eliminate fire ant activity in 3 to 7 days when broadcast applied. In contrast, hydramethylnon baits (AmdroPro, Probait and others) work within days to a week when used as a mound treatment, but require 3 to 6 weeks to achieve maximum control when broadcast applied. Other relatively fast-acting bait products contain spinosad or fipronil, but results from broadcast application have been less consistent.

- Most conventional ant bait products cost about \$10 to \$15 per pound and are applied at 1 to 1.5 lbs./acre.

2 Maintenance treatment programs: In projects conducted in Texas, interest in participation wanes once control has been achieved and the ants are "gone." Plan annual, semi-annual or quarterly scheduled treatments in advance, or re-apply based on re-appearance of ant mounds or foraging ants on food lures like hot dogs or potato chips.

- Bait products decompose in the environment within days or weeks, so that residual control from fast-acting products is dependent on re-invasion pressure and size of the treated area.

- Many bait-formulated products,

such as those containing insect growth regulator (IGR) ingredients (fenoxycarb or Award, methoprene or Extinguish, and pyriproxyfen or Distance) or products that work similar to them (abamectin or Ascend), reduce mound numbers slowly over about 2 to 6 months with a spring versus fall broadcast-applied treatment, respectively. Ants present at time of treatment contain the ingredient and maintain suppression of colonies by feeding it to other colony members, thereby preventing development of more worker ants that results in long-term residual suppression. These are best suited to a maintenance program because suppression is maintained for months.

3 "Hopper blends": This practice began with users mixing fast-acting baits such as hydramethylnon with long-lasting IGR products and applying them at half rate of each product, thereby not increasing cost. It is now supported by manufacturers as directed on labels for both AmdroPro and Extinguish.

- The bait product Extinguish Plus offers the best of both rescue and maintenance treatments in a single product. Containing a blend of hydramethylnon and methoprene, this product performs faster than an IGR product applied alone. Any surviving ants are suppressed with the IGR component.

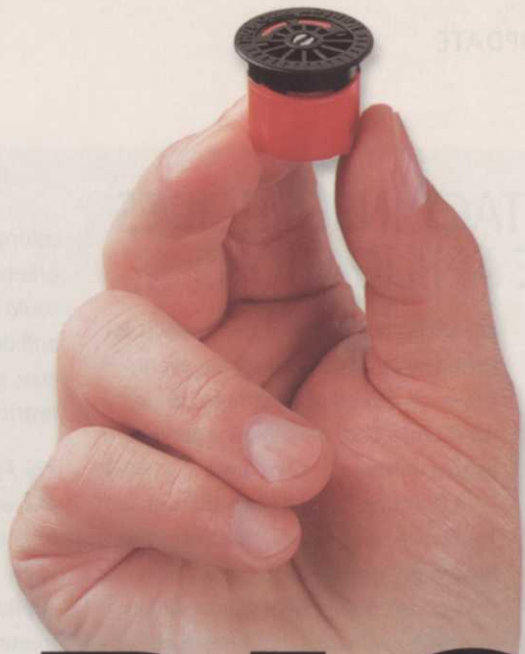
4 Application methods: In large landscapes, these bait products must be applied using proper equipment. Most are conventional bait formulations and are applied at 1 to 1.2 lbs product per acre. Handheld spreaders or "belly bumpers" are useful for small areas. Vehicle-mounted equipment is limited.

Only vehicle-mounted applicators like the GT-77 model Herd Seeder is designed to make applications accurately.

Recent modifications that incorporate a side shoot and leaf blower allow for faster treatment to one or the other side of the vehicle for large-scale applications.

Some manufacturers are beginning to formulate products on different carriers or in concentrations requiring more volume of product than conventional baits applied. Some of these formulations are attractive to a broader spectrum of pest ants. In addition, some products are being formulated with fertilizer.





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ADVANCES IN CONTACT INSECTICIDES USED FOR SURFACE APPLICATIONS

1 Conventional and new treatment options: With the disappearance of diazinon and chlorpyrifos (Dursban) and other ingredients from use in urban landscapes, choices for ingredients have changed:

■ Pyrethroid surface treatments with liquid or granular products containing ingredients including bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, cypermethrin, deltamethrin, es-fenvalerate, lambda-cyhalothrin and permethrin are fast acting and eliminate surface ant activity. However, generally they do not eliminate entire colonies initially unless applied so that all ants are contacted with the ingredient, like by

drenching mounds or if treatment is followed by a soil-saturating rain event. However, effects of treatment can last for months and re-invasion is prevented as ants entering treated areas are killed.

■ Granular fipronil products such as TopChoice have proven to be effective for season-long control. Colony elimination occurs slowly, over 4 or so weeks after the application has been watered in. However, colonies, even below the treated surface appear to be eliminated, presumably as foraging worker ants working treated soil become contaminated and bring back the slow-acting, non-repellent toxicant to affect other

colony members. Cost of treatment is greater than for other materials, but could be justified because of the level and duration of control achieved. However, as with other insecticides there are restrictions for use near water.

2 Application technology: Conventional equipment for application of liquid or granular pesticides can be used to apply contact insecticides. Most granular applications require irrigation following treatment as directed.

LESCO has developed a riding spreader to help apply granular products that may be useful for treating moderately sized areas like golf courses.

Some contact insecticides are or will be available formulated with fertilizer.

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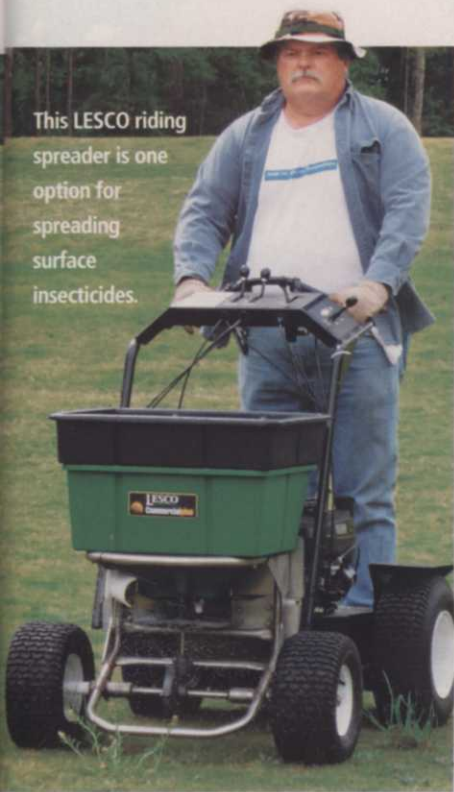

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This LESCO riding spreader is one option for spreading surface insecticides.



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and integrate biological and chemical control are ongoing. Several species of parasitic flies (including *Pseudacteon tricuspis* and *P. curvatis*, of the fly or Diptera family Phoridae called "phorid flies") and the fire ant disease, Thelohania, have been released and established throughout the Southeast. However, these agents will not likely provide the near-absolute elimination of fire ants required in some commercial landscapes.

Research efforts to establish biological control need continued support in hopes of offering relief from fire ants in agricultural and wildlife areas where chemical control options are not feasible or cost effective. In landscapes, success will possibly reduce the frequency of chemical treatments needed to maintain control.

Chemical approaches

Cost and labor required varies greatly, depending on the product and approach chosen. Selection of products may also be influenced by regulations such as the IPM in Schools regulations in Texas and some other states, or product availability in areas

like California where the ants are a new occurrence. The chemical approaches most commonly recognized are:

1) The "two-step method," which relies on one to three applications of a broadcast-applied fire ant bait product annually, fol-

lowed by individual mound treatments used only to eliminate nuisance ant mounds.

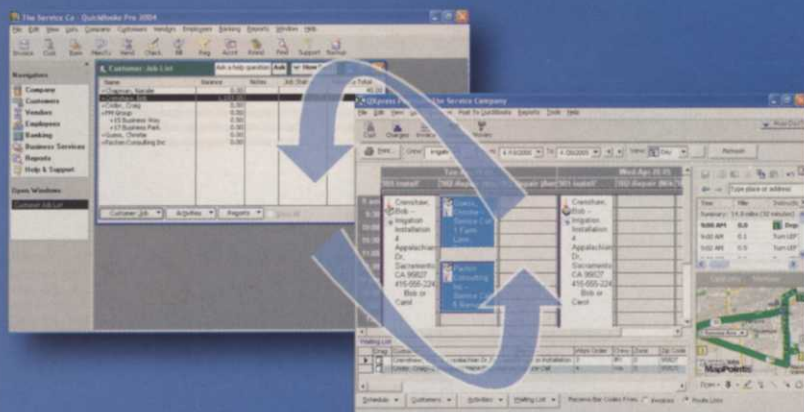
2) Individual ant mound treatments only, using products that are formulated as

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continued from page 45

baits, dusts, liquids or granules that must be watered in after application, an approach most suitable where there are just a few (less than 20) fire ant mounds per acre and where there is a concern about preserving native or competitor ant species.

3) The "ant elimination method" uses a surface application of a liquid or granular contact insecticide to provide a long-lasting period of residual control, killing ants that walk on the treated surface for weeks to months following treatment, with or without a prior broadcast bait application.

In theory, a fourth approach is to do nothing and take advantage of the good things fire ants do in the landscape such as till the soil and prey on other arthropods like ticks, chiggers, caterpillars, flea larvae, chinch bugs, cockroach egg cases and other pests.

However, the best IPM program for a larger landscape likely uses a mix of the approaches described above based on the level of control needed in different areas. Making a map of the grounds and discussing control needs and budgets with clientele is a good

Fire ants do not have problems moving in or out of any structure.

beginning to developing a program approach. For example, in a golf course, maximum control is required where the probability of people contacting ants is greatest, requiring the "ant elimination method,"



Fire ants can cause lots of problems with electrical boxes.

whereas other areas can benefit from the 80% to 90% suppression offered by the two-step method. This targeted approach can reduce cost and insecticide use.

Individual ant mound treatments are likely to be of limited use in large commercial landscapes because they are costly, labor intensive and generally use a lot of insecticide. Landscapers are encouraged to constantly try newer products to see how they perform as possible new additions to their programs.

In and around structures and electrical utilities, maximum control is desired, not only of fire ants, but of other pest ants and insects. Coordinate landscape IPM activities in these areas with those providing indoor pest control, because fire ants do not have problems moving in or out of any structure. Specialty products like outdoor and indoor barrier treatments and bait stations can be helpful in these areas. Address any "ant highways" into structures provided by overhanging vegetation or electrical lines.

Find more information on the searchable site, <http://fireant.tamu.edu>. For an up-to-date listing of available fire ant control products and prices, see www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0175-A/ for a fact sheet by Dr. K. Flanders of Alabama Cooperative Extension. **LM**

— The author is a professor and extension entomologist at Texas A&M University.

Contact him at 979/845-7026 or b-drees@tamu.edu.

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WHY sensors MAKE sense

Measuring soil moisture allows contractors to boost their irrigation services ... and reputation

BY TOM PENNING

The newest buzzword in the landscape irrigation marketplace these days is the advent of "SWAT." This is the effort underway by a group of urban water districts from across the country and The Irrigation Association. SWAT stands for Smart Water Application Technology, and its objective is to achieve water conservation in urban areas by using existing and new product technology in landscape irrigation systems.

The SWAT Task Force is developing the methods by which these technologies will be tested, in order for users to evaluate the pros and cons of the various SWAT products to be offered by the industry. Such efforts will help assure users that the products meet certain standards of functionality. It may come to pass that such products will be eligible for cash rebates from the water districts, similar to the rebates from gas and electric utilities for

purchasing energy efficient home appliances.

The initial two approaches to SWAT technology deal with scheduling using either:

- 1) ET controllers/time clocks, or
- 2) Soil moisture sensor controls

The term "ET" refers to evapo-transpiration, which is a measure of the water requirement of a landscaped area. It uses a mathematical equation to produce a model of ET, and uses this calculated model to automatically adjust the irrigation events produced by the controller/time clock. Some of these ET controllers also use soil moisture sensors as an added precaution.

How they work

Soil moisture sensor controls use sensors placed in the soil of the landscaped area to measure the soil moisture status. Functioning somewhat like a thermostat does for a home heating or air conditioning system, sensors interface with the controller/time

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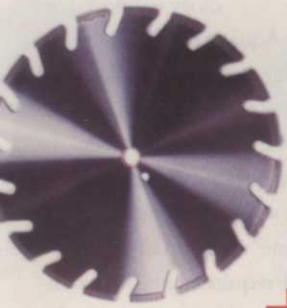
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continued from page 50

clock (usually any standard 24 VAC type), and either permit or prevent programmed irrigation cycles based on the actual need for water.

Because they automatically and continuously sense the soil moisture status, they effectively adjust the controller/time clock for any changes in the weather, including rainfall events. These systems, like the thermostat in your home, can be adjusted for varying levels of desired soil moisture (wetter or dryer), depending on the plant material, soil type, and other individual site conditions or micro-climates. Such adjustability is important, since there can be major differences from site to site in terms of these variables.

Sensor history

One of the first soil moisture sensor control systems was introduced in the 1960s by the Irrometer Company of Riverside, CA. Since the 1920s, manually read soil moisture sensors have been used in agriculture. Eight decades of research and commercial use have proven the value of this approach to scheduling irrigation to meet the need for water.

The bottom line is that when irrigation is applied at the proper time (when to irrigate), and in the proper amount (how much to apply), the result is healthy plant material and turf, better use of fertilizer and chemicals, and fewer pests and diseases.

In addition, the many studies on moisture sensors done over the years have shown that this technology usually results in substantial savings in water use, with average savings of 24% below the theoretical requirement (DeOreo, W.B., P. Lander, R.J. Qualls, J. Scott. 1997. Project Report: Evaluation of Reliability and Cost Effectiveness of

Soil Moisture Sensors in Extended Field Use. City of Boulder, Office of Water Conservation, Boulder, CO. December 1997).

What's in it for you?

Soil moisture sensor control systems present opportunities for landscape contractors. In some areas, the building permit process is eased if efficient water management is used. In others, the landscaper can use soil moisture control systems as an upgrade for competitive advantage based on providing the most modern, environmentally friendly technology — basically, offering something that the competition isn't.

In the case of landscape maintenance contractors, the use of soil moisture sensor control systems can become the basis for offering water management services to their clientele.

Most soil moisture sensor control systems will work with any standard controller/time clock (24 VAC), and can be retrofitted to existing systems and controllers. The beauty of these systems is that once they're installed and fine tuned, the contractor need not spend any time reprogram-

ming the controller/time clocks for seasonal changes. This means that the water management service requires little labor while producing significant water savings.

In most typical residential settings, the simplest approach is to use one sensor location sited in the turfgrass area (the biggest water user). The turf area becomes the control point, which means the shrubs, ground cover and trees (much lower water users) get watered every time the turf is watered. To compensate for this, the valves that irrigate the lower water using plant materials are programmed for much less operating

Moisture sensor use pays for itself by reducing water use and lowering labor costs.



time (less than 50% of that allowed for the turf). This is the methodology employed in the study done by Aquacraft, Inc. for the City of Boulder, CO, referenced earlier.

Soil moisture controls use sensors placed in the soil to measure the soil moisture status.

If you want greater control, like the ability to control the turf valves separately from the shrub and ground cover valves, you can have two sensor locations — one for each "hydrozone" or group of valves with similar water requirements. An example of the cost involved comes from the Irrometer Company for the use of their Watermark Electronic Module (WEM) System, where the contractor cost for the sensors and the electronic interface to the controller is about \$200. Installation labor will add some additional cost, but total cost is often recovered quickly by the water and labor savings realized.

Soil moisture sensor control systems have been around for a long time and have a proven track record. Besides the many improvements making the products more reliable, low in maintenance and high in user friendliness, many manufacturers offer effective design guides (including CAD detail drawings), irrigation scheduling software and water management record keeping and reporting systems. All of these can provide for the highest level of professional presentations by the landscape contractor community. **LMI**

— *The author is president of Irrometer Co., Inc., Riverside, CA. Contact him at tomp@irrometer.com.*



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REAL ANSWERS TO REAL CHALLENGES



BY CARL WILLIAMS

After several years of mowing lawns as a youth in Mequon, WI, Brian Deppisch realized that with just a few more clients he could make a pretty good living in the landscaping business. In 1993 he founded Deppisch Maintenance. He committed himself to providing exceptional service. His plan was to compete against bigger firms by pleasing customers.

The problem: lack of reliable help

As Deppisch grew his company he found it tough to find employees willing to work as hard as he did to please clients. Deppisch purchased landscape equipment to reduce his dependence on labor. But it had to deliver quality results, too.

The solution: multi-tasking mowers

Deppisch decided upon mowing equipment that would accept a range of attachments. He purchased two Grasshopper Model 722D2 mowers. He's never regretted opting for labor-saving equipment over labor. Most of the help he now uses is seasonal and part time, making it easier to match jobs with particular person's abilities and strong points, he says.

For maximum productivity, he's equipped each of his Grasshopper units with a PowerVac collection system. He also bought a turbine blower and a bed shaper. Either implement can quickly and easily trade places with the mower's 61-inch cutting deck. He also bought a de-

thatcher that can be mounted in front of the mowing unit.

"Almost a fanatic." That's how Deppisch explains himself when it comes to leaving a perfectly manicured cut.

"With our customer base 40% commercial and 60% residential, we provide almost every landscaping service except tree trimming," he says. "Our customers are flattered when visitors compliment the appearance of their home or business and enthusiastically share our name with friends. This generates 'word of mouth' advertising that has generated the majority of our new business growth."

Cutting perfectly sculpted flowerbeds with the bed shaper implement is another way Deppisch Maintenance delivers quality service. The

bed shaper adds another esthetically pleasing nuance to the company's delivery of a manicured appearance, and the deep cut around a garden delivers the practical benefit of preventing grass roots from entering into the garden mulch.

He says he's especially pleased with the utility of the turbine blower. "Given that my biggest challenge is finding workers who are as committed to quality service as I am, the turbine blower helps me solve that problem by cutting the number of employees I need," he explains.

"There is no question that investing a little more up-front in a high-quality grounds maintenance system with the versatility of interchangeable implements has significantly added to our bottom line," Deppisch says. "In this business, it's all about dependability."

To maximize his mowers' dependability and worry-free operation, Deppisch follows factory-recommended maintenance schedules and also trades in one of his two mowers for a new model every year. "Trading for a new mower each year not only guarantees that I receive the highest trade-in value," he says, "but it has the added benefit of giving us the very latest upgrades and new features that come every year. Those improvements inevitably make the work easier and more profitable. **LM**

— Contact the author at tornado11@cox.net

Utility vehicles

BY CURT HARLER



Buying tips

- ▶ Decide whether it will be a people mover, tool cart or material mover
- ▶ Size the unit to the job
- ▶ Look for a versatile unit – one that handles attachments or tool boxes
- ▶ Removable tops make hauling chips or clippings easier
- ▶ Larger units have dumping beds
- ▶ Hilly locales require more hp

Kawasaki ▲

The Kawasaki Mule 610 is a 4x4 utility vehicle that can fit into the bed of a full-size pickup. Has 400-lb. bed capacity, 1,100-lb. towing with optional hitch. With a 401-cc single-cylinder engine, continuously variable transmission, dual-mode differential and sealed brakes, it can go up to 25 mph. Has independent front and swing-frame rear suspension.

For more information contact Kawasaki at 800/538-1447 or www.kawasaki.com / circle no. 254

Agri-Fab, Inc.

New Cat-1, 3-point hitch, 52-in. disc cultivator is ideal for breaking up dirt clods and tilling soil for seedbed preparation and chemical incorporation. The 45-0356 features twelve 11-in. disks, a weight tray and disc angle adjustment from 0 to 20 degrees. The company also features its 45-0359 Grader Blade/Box Scraper for light landscaping, driveway maintenance or snow removal. It has four scarifier teeth and a

weight tray capable of handling 160 lbs. The company's 45-0353 3-point trailer is required for both products.

For more information contact Agri-Fab at 217/728-8388 or www.agri-fab.com / circle no. 255

Arbortech

The new Arbortech Landscape Tree Vehicle (LTV) is built for landscapers and tree trimmers alike. Side compartment storage and a front compartment with through-shelf offers secure storage of tools while the dumping feature, with a removable chip cap, meets the needs of tree trimmers. Unit features lock bolt construction to provide unbeatable strength, eliminate rust-causing welding and grinding, and promote a corrosion-free, long-lasting product.

For more information contact Arbortech at 330/264-4266 or www.arbortech.cc / circle no. 256

Polaris

The Polaris Ranger has a 1,500-lb. payload and 1,500-lb. towing capacity. Its top road speed is 40 mph. It offers on-demand, true all-wheel drive. Ranger is available either as a 6x6, 4x4 or 2x4 model. The 6x6 claims to be the largest capacity and highest traction utility vehicle ever built. Pallet-sized cargo box has multiple tie-down points and mounting holes that accept a variety of accessories. Available with a cab.

For more information contact Polaris at 800/POLARIS or www.polarisindustries.com / circle no. 257

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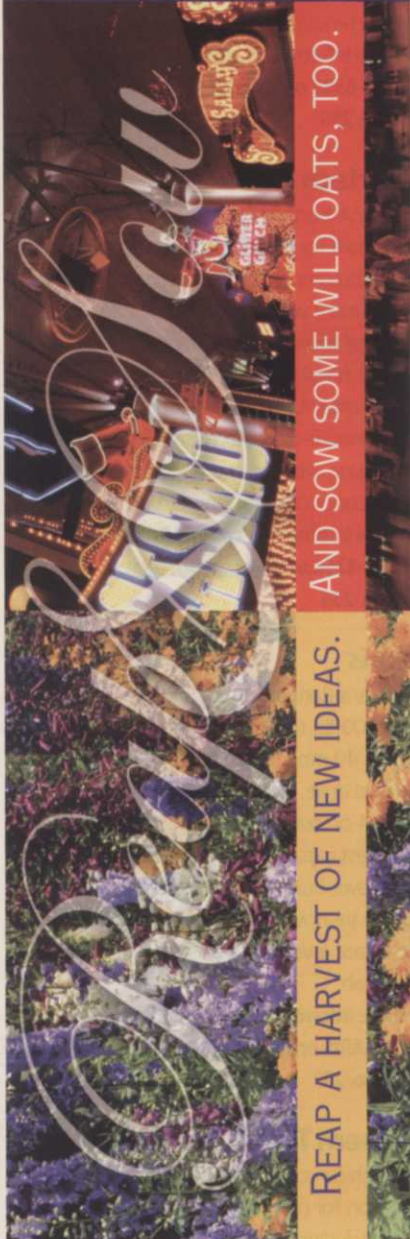
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LM Reports

Ranger, Kawasaki Mule and others. Elastic cord along entire bottom gives snug fit. Available for units with or without roll bars.

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IHI

The IC-30-2 Crawler Carrier has a maximum payload of 5,511 lbs. Its bed holds 1.6 cubic yards, heaped. Available from Compact Excavator Sales, it runs on tracks so ground pressure is just 7.7 psi, fully loaded. Unit runs at 6.8 mph, powered by a 46-hp Kubota diesel and has a 2-speed manual hydrostatic transmission.

For more information contact IHI at 800/538-1447 or www.ihcompactexcavator.com / circle no. 259

Bobcat ▼

IntelliTrak drive system on the 4x4 Bobcat 2200 makes it the only vehicle in its class equipped with automatic locking differentials that engage immediately when a wheel loses traction. It is available with either a 20-hp Honda gas or 20-hp Kubota diesel engine. All-terrain tires are standard, with mud tires also available on both models. Vehicle has a 1,200-lb. vehicle load capacity and comes standard with an 800-lb. cargo box capacity with 33-in. loading height. 1,100-lb. cargo box and electric box dump are available as options.

For more information contact Bobcat at 888/922-TURF or www.bobcat.com / circle no. 260



Toro ▲

The Toro Mid-Duty Workman 2100 has up to 1,650 lbs. total capacity. Powered by a 16-hp Briggs & Stratton engine, it sits on the exclusive Active In-Frame Suspension. The redesigned Heavy Duty model's rugged, long bed design has up to 2,725 lbs. of capacity. Both models provide good operator comfort, easily accessible controls, more value and a cutting edge design.

For more information contact Toro at 800/344-8676 or www.toro.com / circle no. 261

Koyker

The Raptor 1000M and 4000M both feature 16-hp, 4-cycle B&S gas engines. The 4000 has shift-on-the-go 4WD. Each offers 14.6 cubic ft. capacity and 1,000-lb. payload. The 1000 has fully independent, transverse leaf spring suspension while the 4000 has McPherson-type struts.

For more information contact Koyker at 800/456-1107 or www.koykermfg.com / circle no. 262

John Deere

Four new models include the Gator TS, Gator TX, Gator TX Turf and Gator TH 6x4. The Gator TX Turf, with its quiet foot pedal operation, turf-friendly tires and increased comfort, meets the needs of turf care pros. It is



equipped with a new 13-hp, 401-cc Kawasaki FJ400 engine, all-wheel suspension and all-wheel hydraulic disc brakes. Pedal-start design allows for the convenient start/stop use typical of turf care usage. All-wheel suspension, 3-

in.-longer wheelbase, 44-in.-long cargo box with a 600-lb. capacity and an overall 1,000-lb. payload/towing capacity.

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



It's all about people

Buying a utility vehicle is a lot like buying a tractor. Size is important and at times, more is better.

"Really, it depends on the user's business," says Tim Koch, manager for the Toro utility vehicle business. "But I'd err on the high end."

Buyers who expect to need 500 lbs. of hauling capacity probably will need at least that. If they expect to use a couple of attachments, they'll probably end up using more.

"The big difference between a utility vehicle and a tractor is that a utility vehicle is made to transport humans, too," Koch says.

In the Northeast, if the unit is large enough, it is easy to add a rotary snow broom to remove snow. Almost all utilities can handle sprayers and materials spreading.

Landscapers typically trailer equipment. Most utility vehicles are made for trailering with tie-downs, hitches and other safety equipment.

Koch says that most manufacturers' utility vehicles are built on a heavy duty chassis, with solid hydraulics on the larger ones. "Even if you're handling a ton of dirt or stone, a utility vehicle is as tough as a tractor."

But the tractor is specifically built for work, not hauling people. "If you are looking at a blend of jobs, a utility vehicle is the better choice," he says.



Land Pride

Treker Series units are available in narrow or wide stance. They have capacity for two full-sized passengers with a total 950 lbs. (NT model) or 1,300 lbs. payload (ST model) in the dumping box. Powered by a 20-hp Honda engine. Smaller 4200ATR has 13-hp engine and limited cargo space.

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Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas

2004 PGMS Grand Award Winner for Urban University Grounds

Property at a glance

- Location:** Las Vegas
- Grounds Supervisor:** Robert Lynn, facilities supervisor
- Category:** Urban University Grounds
- Total budget:** \$1,500,000
- Year site built:** 1957
- Acres of turf:** 74
- Acres of woody ornamentals:** 14
- Acres of display beds:** 4
- Total paved area:** 150 acres
- Total man-hours/week:** 2,000+

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Hot climate
- ▶ Water and irrigation
- ▶ Landlocked location

Project checklist

- Completed in last two years:
- ▶ Participated in city-mandated conversion to desert landscaping
 - ▶ Completed numerous landscape renovations
 - ▶ Added landscaping to new buildings

On the job

- ▶ 49 full-time staff, one seasonal worker, 20 licensed pesticide applicators

Las Vegas — the city that never sleeps. Glittering casinos and giant hotels may dominate a big part of the skyline here, but the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, is a showcase for thriving desert landscaping.

Las Vegas is located at Nevada's southern tip, in a desert valley surrounded by mountains bordering California's Mojave Desert. With daytime high temperatures exceeding 100 degrees from mid-May to mid-September followed by sub-freezing morning lows lasting for a few days most winters, growing conditions give Facility Supervisor Robert Lynn and his team a consistent challenge.

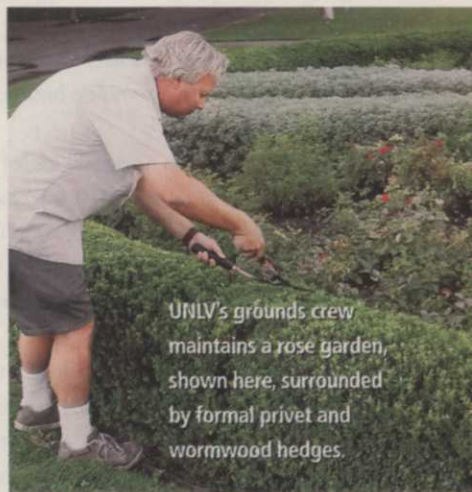
Rainfall averages about four inches annually, and the water used to irrigate landscapes is alkaline, with high levels of soluble salts. To combat nearly year-round drought conditions, the state requires cities and public institutions, including UNLV, to have drought response plans in place.

Lynn and his team have risen to the challenge, converting more turf to xeriscapes every year. In a climate like this turf reduction is a constant goal to save both precious water and irrigation dollars.

University enrollment exceeds 27,000

students, and the landscape team of 49 full-time, year-round employees maintains turf, ornamentals, display beds, athletic fields and an artificial turf football practice field.

The 337-acre campus is an established arboretum, and the university grounds are often referred to as the "Emerald in the Desert." A two-acre xeric garden, created in 1988, contains more than 70 species of plants from arid regions around the world, including red yuccas and desert birds of paradise. The arboretum campus and xeric garden attract tours, gardening clubs and special events year-round.

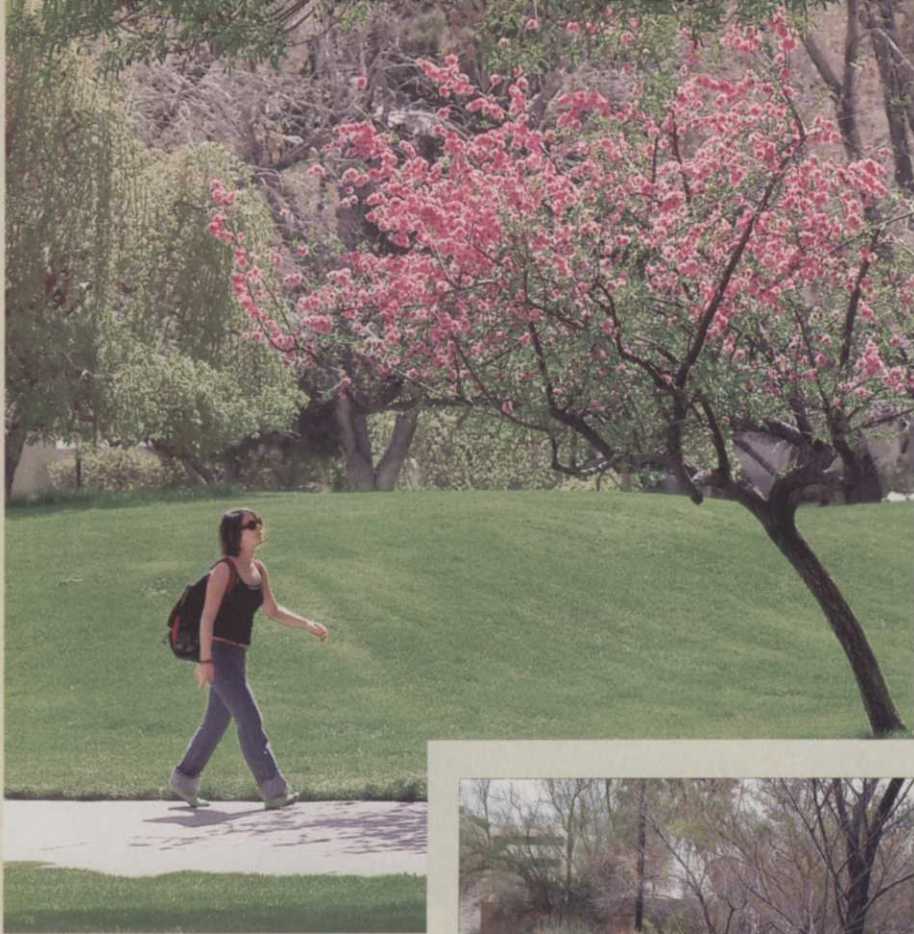


UNLV's grounds crew maintains a rose garden, shown here, surrounded by formal privet and wormwood hedges.

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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UNLV students and visitors enjoy the variety of hot-weather plants, flowers and trees around the campus, including Wilson's agave (right) and Eastern redbud (below). The landscape team maintains 74 acres of turf, 14 acres of ornamentals and 4 acres of display beds.





Chicago-area jewel



Chris Paisley, above, turned a neglected athletic field into a source of community pride.

It's a balmy summer-like May afternoon and memories of the recent nasty Chicagoland winter are fading fast. Chris Paisley, CLT, is midway through another hefty workday, prepping the community pool for the summer before returning to his office to work through his crew's payroll. He's got lots more to do before the day is done, but life is good.

"I love the challenge. Every day is different," says Paisley, 29,

Chris Paisley relies upon professional advice, materials to turn an intensively used youth sports field into an award-winning gem

BY GREG MCCONNELL

supervisor at River Trails Park in Mt. Prospect, IL. "It's fun."

It's a position he's held the past five years, and like most successful fixed-site grounds supervisors, he's becoming a master juggler. He credits his previous experiences as an intern at Lake Bracken Golf Course, and

especially with Mariani Landscape in Lake Bluff, IL, with preparing him for the often-herctic world of parks supervision. It's a big responsibility for Paisley, who holds an associate's degree in horticulture from Illinois Central College.

continued on page 62



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continued from page 60

He's in charge of maintaining several hundred acres including five schools, eight parks and even a swimming pool. But it's been his work on 2.8 acres of busy turfgrass that's earned him special recognition from his peers. The Illinois Sports Turf Manager's Association honored Paisley and his staff with its "Field and Facility of the Year" award.

"My background was in horticulture but I didn't know I would really get into sports turf as much as I did," he says.

When he began his park supervisory career five years ago he inherited a host of mainte-

nance and management responsibilities — buildings, grounds, you name it — but one popular 2.8-acre site within the park in particular needed lots of help.

The combination soccer pitch and a softball outfield sustained incredibly heavy use for almost nine months of the year. The field hosts 270 scheduled games of soccer, softball and football, plus four months of sports camps annually.

"It kind of sounds odd, but it (the athletic field) didn't receive any special attention," Paisley notes. "It was cut with a wide-area mower and had a low fertility level."

continued on page 64

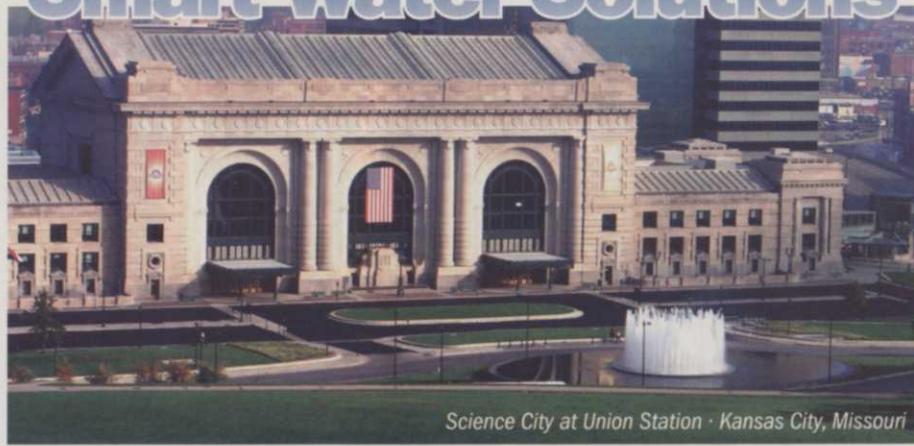
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MESA is an acronym for Meth Ex Sulfate of Ammonia, a relatively new source of nitrogen patented by LebanonTurf. This slow-release nitrogen provides a controlled, steady feeding over eight to 10 weeks. In contrast, quick-release nitrogen can be used up or leached away in as little as a few days. Heavy rains or frequent irrigation can move the soluble nitrogen beyond the root zone or wash it away, says Ray Buckwalter, agronomist and marketing manager at LebanonTurf.

Sulfur-coated urea (SCU) is better than straight soluble products, but it's subject to catastrophic release.

"The way MESA works is that it's actually broken down in the soil by microbes," Buckwalter says. "When there's good soil moisture and temperatures, the microbes are more active and they break the nitrogen down and release it in a form that can be used by the plant. Conversely, when it's too hot, too dry or too cold, you don't get as much release. The nitrogen is still there, but it's not in a form that's water soluble so it can't be leached and washed into the environment."

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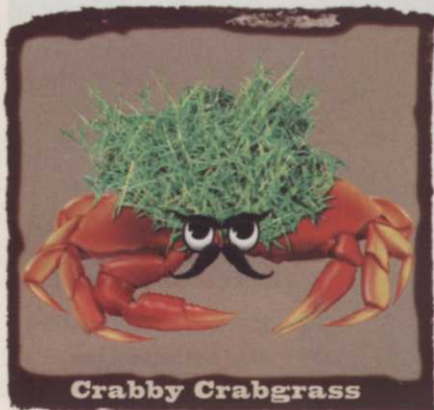
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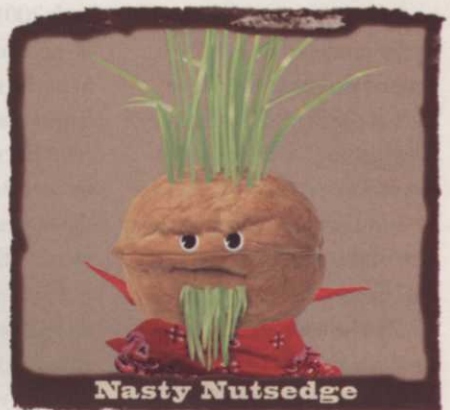
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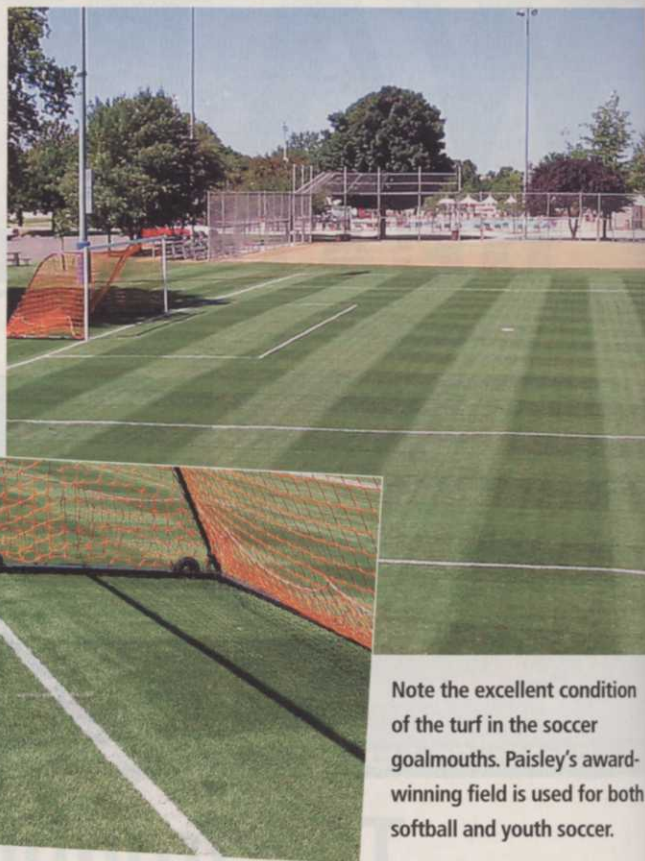
Initially, Paisley followed suit, but he wasn't satisfied with the results. "The recovery period wasn't fast enough and I wanted the residents to have a better product," he says. "I wanted people to be able to look at the field, see what they were getting for their tax dollars and be proud of it," he says.

Within a year of taking over care of the field he began making changes.

First he addressed the cultural practices by regularly aerating the turf using an Aerway with 8-in. shatter tines and pulling cores once a year with a

rented John Deere 1500 unit with 3/8-in. hollow tines. The irrigation upgrade included dividing the field into five zones and installing a Toro system with 2001 series heads. Feeling he needed a better cut on the fields, he switched the large rotary mower to a John Deere reel mower. But perhaps the biggest improvement to the field's appearance and playability resulted from a strong working relationship with Kelly Schroeder at

continued on page 66



Note the excellent condition of the turf in the soccer goalmouths. Paisley's award-winning field is used for both softball and youth soccer.

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Circle 138

Paisley's program

March

- Spring cleanup to remove all debris
- Drag field to stand up grass
- Apply 0-0-50 fertilizer to achieve 1 lb. K/1,000 sq. ft.

April

- Aerify to depth of 6 in. with shatter tines
- Fertilize with Andersons 16-25-12 Poly S starter fertilizer to achieve 1/2 lb. P/1,000 sq. ft.
- Stripe soccer field and paint logo
- Monitor daily soil temperatures
- Cut field at 1 1/4-in., one or two times weekly
- Take cores for soil test

May

- Fertilize with 25-2-5 (50% MESA) by LebanonTurf to achieve 1.25-lb. N/1,000 sq. ft.
- Mow field at 1.25 in. three times per week

June

- Inspect daily for insect/disease problems
- Aerify to depth of 6-in. with shatter tines
- Spot-spray weeds as needed
- Apply Mach 2 preventive grub control

July

- Fertilize with 25-2-5 (50% MESA) to achieve 1.25 lb. N/1,000 sq. ft.
- Inspect daily for pest problems
- Aerify to depth of 6 in. with shatter tines
- Raise mowing height to 1.5 in.
- Mow 3-4 times a week

August

- Aerify to depth of 6 in. with shatter tines
- Inspect daily for pest problems
- Mow 3-4 times per week as needed

September

- Core aerify with 3/4-in. hollow tines, chop cores, drag field
- Fertilize with Andersons 16-25-12 Poly S starter fertilizer to achieve 1 lb. P/1,000 sq. ft.
- Spike seed with Serene Kentucky bluegrass, 3 lbs./1,000 sq. ft.
- Lower height of cut to 1.25 in.
- Mow 2-3 times per week as needed

October

- Apply 0-0-50 fertilizer to achieve 1 lb. K/1,000 sq. ft.

November

- Winterize irrigation system



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Tom Heaviland, Heaviland Enterprises

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continued from page 64

Chicago-area distributor Arthur Clesen, Inc.

Paisley partnered with Schroeder to improve the fertility program for the field. Visiting the site, she suggested that he try LebanonTurf ProScape fertilizer with MESA

nitrogen (see sidebar on pg. 62). She admitted it might cost a little more but it could save in the long run by reducing the number of applications, thus reducing labor expenses and equipment use and wear. Paisley got the go-ahead to make the switch to the slow-re-



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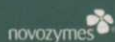
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Budget sheet for '04

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fertilizer and pesticides . . .	\$700
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Seed	\$200
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Irrigation repairs	\$100
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Athletic paint	\$300
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Labor	\$3,100
	(one full-time worker at 166.5 hours, one part-time worker at 18.5 hours)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Machine rentals	\$400

TOTAL \$4,800

Note: Numbers represent the maintenance of the softball outfield in addition to the soccer field, total area of turf maintained is 2.8 acres.

lease 25-2-5 product, and the results were so convincing that the park district quickly realized the savings and has authorized him to expand the program to other fields.

The turfgrass improved dramatically, he reports. Even the goalmouths, which are perennial problem wear areas, began holding up better. Even more pleasing to him, the changes he made in the field maintenance program resulted in even more savings because he did not need as much repair and over-seeding.

Paisley says the budget for the 2.8-acre sports field is \$4,800 annually, \$3,100 of that total going toward the 185 labor hours required to maintain it. The next-largest expense is \$700 for fertilizer and control products, a relatively small price to pay for quality turfgrass, he believes.

"I didn't start by having in mind a field that I could submit for an award," Paisley says. "My main goal was just to provide a safe athletic surface that the community could be proud of."

Paisley advises people considering upgrading their management programs by using higher-grade materials, especially fertilizers, to go for it. Start by finding a knowledgeable expert and considering their recommendations.

"If you don't have a specialist that you work with, certainly try to find one and build a good relationship with them," Paisley advises. **LM**

— The author is a freelance writer based in Palatine, IL. Contact him at 847/934-5572 or gjmc90@yahoo.com.



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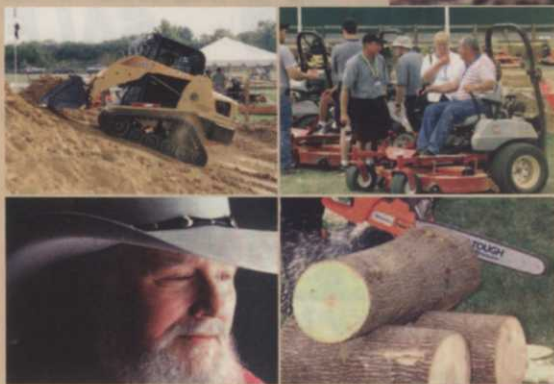
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LM Sales Staff

Kevin Stoltman

Publisher
7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130
Phone: 440/891-2772, Fax: 440/891-2675
E-mail: kstoltman@questex.com

George Casey

National Account Manager
7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130
Phone: 440/891-3146, Fax: 440/891-2675
E-mail: gcasey@questex.com

Leslie Montgomery

Account Executive
7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130
Phone: 440/891-3199, Fax: 440/826-2865
E-mail: lmontgomery@questex.com

Pat Roberts

Associate Publisher
7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130
Phone: 440/891-2609, Fax: 440/891-2675
E-mail: proberts@questex.com

Michael Harris

Regional Manager
7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130
Phone: 440/891-3118, Fax: 440/826-2865
E-mail: mharris@questex.com

Brian Olesinski

Classified, Account Executive
7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130
Phone: 800/225-4569 x2694,
Fax: 440/826-2865
E-mail: bolesinski@questex.com

June

21 Cornell Field Day / Ithaca, NY; Sponsored by Cornell University; 607/255-1792; www.hort.cornell.edu/instruction/short/cornellturf.htm

22 UMass Turf Research Field Day / South Deerfield, MA; Sponsored by UMass Extension; www.umassturf.org/education/annual_events/field-day.html

23-25 Super Floral Show / Houston, TX; Sponsored by Super Floral Show; 617/728-0300; www.superfloralshow.com

27 PACE Turfgrass Research Seminar / San Diego, CA; Sponsored by PACE Turfgrass Research Institute; 619/482-8820; www.paceturf.org

July

14-17 PLANET 2005 Summer Leadership Meeting / Washington, DC; Sponsored by Professional Landcare Network; 800/395-2522; www.landcarenetwork.org

16-18 ANLA Legislative Conference and Annual Meeting / Washington, DC; Sponsored by American Nursery & Landscape Association; 202/789-2900; www.anla.org

17-19 PLANET Legislative Day on the Hill and Renewal & Remembrance at Arlington National Cemetery / Washington, DC; Sponsored by Professional Landcare Network; 800/395-2522; www.landcarenetwork.org

19-22 OPA Summer Conference / Brampton, Ontario, Canada; Sponsored by Ontario Parks Association; 866/560-7783; www.opassoc.on.ca

26-28 Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show (PANTS) / Fort Washington, PA; Sponsored by Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association; 717/238-1673; www.pantshow.com

27-30 CLCA Summer Family Extravaganza / Squaw Creek, CA; Sponsored by California Landscape Contractors Association; 927/830-2780; www.clca.org

August

3-4 INLA Road Show / Des Moines, IA; Sponsored by Iowa Nursery & Landscape Association; 816/233-1481; www.iowanla.org

4 Rutgers Golf and Fine Turf Research Field Day / North Brunswick, NJ; Sponsored by New Jersey Turfgrass Association; 215/775-NJTA; www.njturf-grass.org/fieldday.html

6-10 ISA Annual Conference and Trade Show / Nashville, TN; Sponsored by International Society of Arboriculture; 888/472-8733; www.isa-arbor.com

10 Turf Field Day and Demo Day / Raleigh, NC; Sponsored by Turfgrass Council of North Carolina; 910/ 695-1333; www.ncturfgrass.org

11-13 SNA 2005 / Atlanta, GA; Sponsored by Southern Nursery Association; 770/953-3311; www.sna.org



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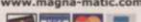
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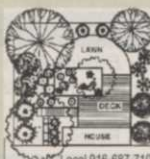
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Statistics

RESOURCES

INDUSTRY TRENDS BY THE NUMBERS

LAWN CARE IN NEW YORK STATE

Number of companies 1,950

Number of service accounts 649,350

Total turf acres maintained 278,850

New turf acres established 21,450

Full-time employees 5,850

Part-time employees 7,800

Total payroll \$154 million

Value of turf equipment owned \$126.4 million



SOURCE: 2003 NEW YORK TURFGRASS SURVEY (WWW.NASS.USDA.GOV/NY; CLICK ON SPECIAL SURVEYS)

LOOK IT UP

Americans reference the "landscape contractors" heading in the Yellow Pages more than 71.5 million times per year, according to research released by the Yellow Pages Association in partnership with the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). This ranks the heading 35th out of more than 4,000 headings.

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT UP

Slightly more than two thirds of landcare companies say they're adding to their payrolls for the 2005 season. More than a third of them are increasing their work force by 6% or more.

increase work force

▲ 1-5% 31.4%
▲ 6-10% 19.7%
▲ 11% > 16.6%

Total 67.7%

no change
24.7%

Based on 421 responses

decrease work force

▼ 11% > 1.2%
▼ 6-10% 1.9%
▼ 1-5% 4.5%

Total 7.6%

SOURCE: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT 2005 MPI BENCHMARK SURVEY

MOWER SALES LEAD THE CHARGE

The sale of lawn mowers, spurred by the popularity of zero-radius turn units, will continue to lead the growth of the US lawn & garden equipment the remainder of this decade. Here are projected sales in millions of dollars.

	1999	2004	2009
Lawn mowers	3280	3490	4060
Turf & grounds equipment	1130	1900	2310
Garden tractors & rotary tillers	750	885	1050
Trimmers & edgers	670	710	820
Other	2060	2215	2490

SOURCE: THE FREEDONIA GROUP. WWW.FREEDONIA.COM



LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT (ISSN 0894-1254) is published monthly by Questex Media Group, Inc., 275 Grove St., Suite 2-130, Newton, MA 02466. **Subscription rates:** one year, \$46, two years \$67 in the United States & Possessions; \$76 for one year, \$113 for two years in Canada and Mexico; all other countries \$148 for one year, \$220 for two years. For airmail delivery, include an additional \$70 per order annually. Single copies (pre-paid only): \$8 in the United States; \$10 in Canada and Mexico; \$15 all other countries. Back issues, if available: \$16 in the U.S.; \$20 in Canada and Mexico; \$30 all other countries. Add \$6.50 per order for shipping and handling. **Periodicals postage paid** at Duluth, MN 55806 and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send address changes to Landscape Management, P.O. Box 6198, Duluth, MN 55806-6198. Canadian G.S.T. number: 840 033 278 RT0001. Publications Mail Agreement Number 40017597. Printed in the U.S.A.

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