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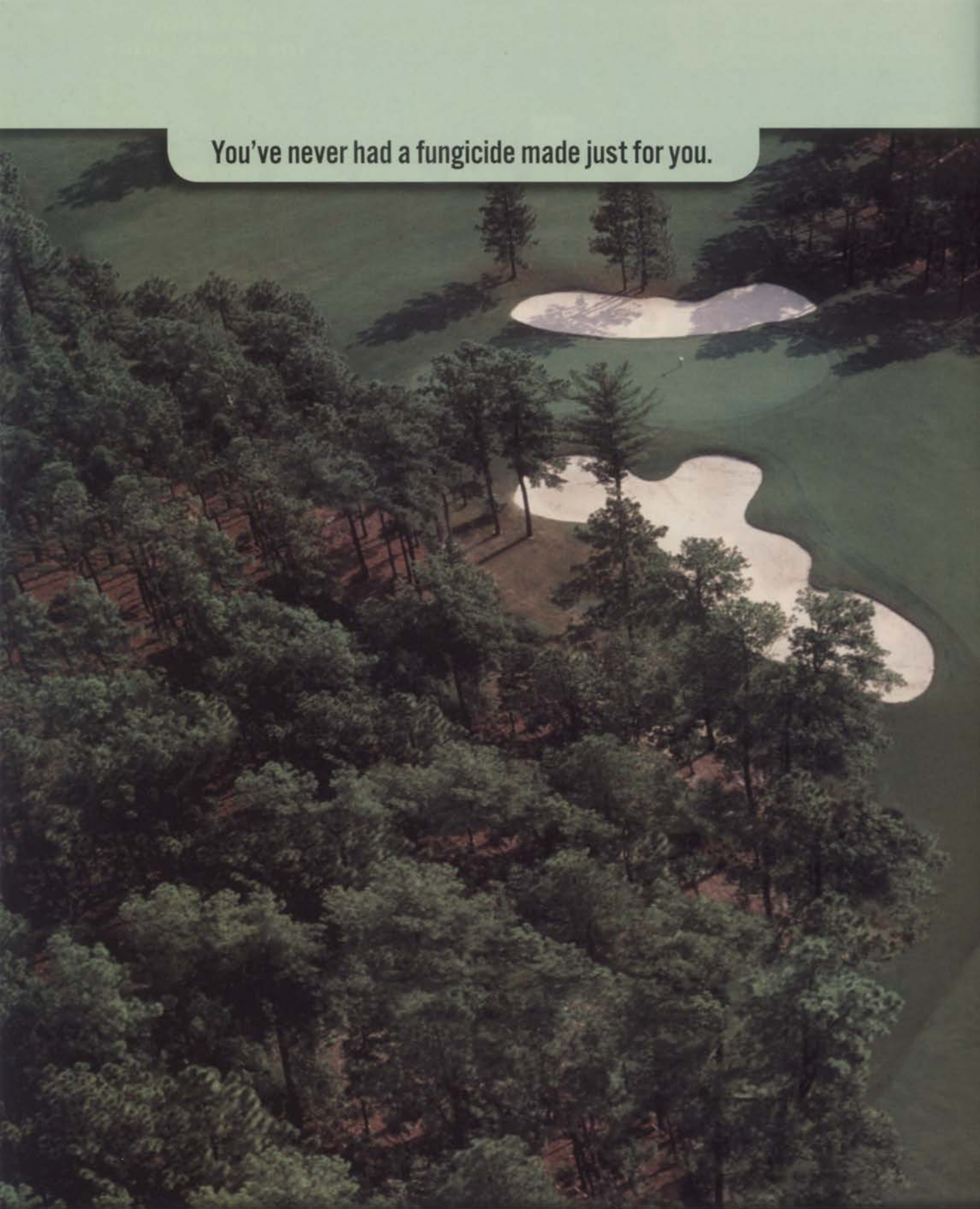
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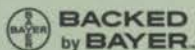
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BUSINESS

WHO'S WHO IN LM



Dr. Henry Wetzel shares 15 years of experience studying turfgrasses in this comprehensive roundup of turfgrass diseases and their management on page 56. Wetzel credits his interest in applied turfgrass disease research to Professor Emeritus Patricia Sanders and Michael Soika at The Pennsylvania State University. See, some of us don't forget.

Few people have advanced the profession of landscape contracting more than **Rod Bailey**. Fewer yet are more qualified to write this issue's cover article, "Navigate the Maze," beginning on page 24. This former landscape company owner and ALCA president tells what mentoring's all about.



Barbara Mulhern is ALCA's Safety Specialist and an agricultural/horticultural project consultant, as well as a freelance writer and frequent contributor to our pages. Put some zip into your safety training. Turn to page 28.

Jennifer Harsany, a graduate journalism student at Chicago's Northwestern University, got top grounds gurus to share their money-saving tips for keeping their grounds budget on track on page 78.



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Editorial staff

Editor-in-Chief	RON HALL / 440/891-2636 / rhall@advanstar.com
Managing Editor	STEPHANIE RICCA / 440/891-2623 / sricca@advanstar.com
On-Line Content Editor	LYNNE BRAKEMAN / 440/826-2869 / lbrakeman@advanstar.com
Senior Science Editor	KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D. / danneberger1@osu.edu
Group Editor	VERNON HENRY / 440/826-2829 / vhenry@advanstar.com
Corp. Creative Director	LISA LEHMAN / 440/891-2785 / llehman@advanstar.com
Art Director	CARRIE PARKHILL / 440/891-3101 / cparkhill@advanstar.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
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GEORGE VAN HAASTEREN	Dwight-Englewood School / Englewood, NJ
BRIAN VINCHESI	Irrigation Consulting / Peperell, MA

Business staff

Publisher	KEVIN STOLTMAN / 440/891-2772 / kstoltman@advanstar.com
Admin. Coordinator	MINDY MOCZULSKI / 440/891-2734 / mmoczulski@advanstar.com
Production Manager	JILL HOOD / 218/723-9129 / jhood@advanstar.com
Production Director	RHONDA SANDE / 218/723-9536 / rsande@advanstar.com
Circulation Manager	JESSICA BORGREN / 218/723-9356 / jborgren@advanstar.com
Asst. Circulation Manager	MELISSA FEIRO / 218/723-9431 / mfeiro@advanstar.com
Green Book Coordinator	CANDACE HAUSAUER / 218/723-9175 / chausauer@advanstar.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@advanstar.com
National Account Manager	GEORGE CASEY / 440/891-3146 Fax: 440/891-2675 gcasey@advanstar.com
Account Manager	MICHAEL HARRIS / 440/891-3118 Fax: 440/891-2675 mharris@advanstar.com
Account Executive	LESLIE MONTGOMERY / 440/891-3199 Fax: 440/826-2865 lmontgomery@advanstar.com
Classifieds	BRIAN OLESINSKI / 440/891-2694 Fax: 440/826-2865 bolesinski@advanstar.com

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Success a student at a time

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

If Tom Morgan were a baseball player he'd be in a rookie league. As an educator, however, he's Major League, a home run hitter. It's all a matter of numbers really.

Tom is the horticulture instructor at the Polaris Career Center. The modern, low-slung facility is located across the street from our magazine offices here in southwest Cleveland. Tom had 15 high school age youths in his program this school year. At least two of them will build

successful careers in the Green Industry. The enthusiasm in their voices is genuine. I see the light in their eyes. They can see themselves being successful.

One's a young lady who has already secured several scholarships to continue her formal education. The other, a young man, is already

out there laughing, learning and building a company on his own. There may be more students like them. I just didn't get a chance to meet or know them.

Two out of 15 — in baseball that's a batting average of .133, not so hot. But, any educator can tell you that if they can spark a genuine interest for learning in two out of 15 students, an interest that puts their students on a path to a rewarding career, that's pretty darn good.

Advice? We give it

But Tom knows he can't do it by himself. Several years ago he asked me to be an advisor to his program. I

joined a select group. It included local landscape and lawn care company owners, several grounds and park pros and a distributor's rep.

We meet several times during the school year. Tom takes his role as an educator seriously. He's a pro with real-life experience as a Green Industry business owner. At these gatherings Tom briefs us on his program, outlining his curriculum and seeking our input. He doesn't have to prod us to speak up. We're not bashful. Everybody speaks up about the program and its relevance to the "real world".

Make a difference

During Tom's four years at Polaris he's placed many students as interns with local companies. Some worked out well, some not so well, he admits. Even so, all can find employment at the end of their Polaris careers if that's the direction they want to go.

Our schools and our educators need all the help they can get, not just from parents but, in the case of career centers like Polaris, from us in the industry, too.

If you get a chance, check in with your local school and see how you can help. You'll get a lot more out of it than you realize. There's more than a good chance that you'll make a positive impact on a young person's career and life.

Contact Ron at 440/
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Tom Morgan, second from right, and his hopeful horticulture students at Polaris Career Center.

Check in at your local school...
and make a difference in a student's life



It's not enough for supervisors to make boards, spreadsheets and other tracking systems to try to force crews to work faster. They need to be the work-smart gurus of your team.



Numbers . . . but lots more

BY BRUCE WILSON

It's always disturbed me to see managers and owners managing production solely by the numbers. Numbers are good, but they're only part of the story. If over-managed, they become junk. For example, companies report expected hours instead of hours actually spent on the job. Worse yet, crews have been known to leave jobs before their work was completely or satisfactorily done so that they hit the numbers.

This doesn't translate into efficiency. It leads to inefficiencies because it can increase callbacks and negatively affect your service quality. Then you've got to throw labor at the project to get caught up and save the client, who now doesn't have the same level of trust in your services.

They identify inefficiencies

Numbers help determine where to find opportunities for efficiency improvements. In maintenance, any new job should be closely monitored to match performance to the estimate. If there's a significant difference in hours to estimated hours, you know it's time to take corrective action to get the job on track. Or, the problem may be an estimating problem. The sooner you know that, the sooner you can correct the problem for future bids.

My experience has been that once a crew figures out how to do a job within the expected hours, the job stays on budget. It becomes a habit. The crew knows where to start, how to sequence through the job and

how long it should take. It paces itself accordingly.

It requires a supervisor getting out in the field to watch the process and match it to the estimator's figures.

This industry, for the most part, is blessed with hard-working crews. They don't miss budgets due to lack of hard work. It's less common to find crew leaders who have instincts for efficiency or who take time to determine ways to work smarter, not harder.

The supervisor's role

Managing productivity is the responsibility of a front-line supervisor. Ultimately, this supervisor must pay for himself by improving productivity in the crews he manages. If he can't, you may be better off without a supervisor. To have both a supervisor and crews that can't perform efficiently is double jeopardy. Your supervisors should know this. They're accountable for teaching crews how to work smart and making sure they follow through with the plan.

It's not enough for supervisors to make boards, spreadsheets and other tracking systems to try to force crews to work faster. They must be the work-smart gurus of their teams. They must develop a management style that's equal parts nurturing, motivating and demanding. Tracking tools provide the data and guidance that they need to find and identify problem areas.

Owners and/or senior managers must train their supervisors and hold them accountable for their role in the process. And not just for tracking the numbers.

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

BUSINESS NEWS YOU CAN USE

Project Evergreen reaching out

NEW PRAGUE, MN — Project EverGreen is planning several high-visibility community service/public relations campaign initiatives this year. Its goal remains to promote to consumers the benefits of well-maintained lawns, landscapes and sports fields play in people's lives.

This year it's partnering with consumer cause-related programs America In Bloom, the Twin Cities Habitat for Hu-

manity (in Minnesota) and a soccer field renovation project in North Carolina. The Habitat for Humanity effort entails pro-

Industry-wide effort promoting maintained green spaces expands into community service

viding Green Industry services for several new homes. This will include laying fresh turfgrass sod, installing landscaping and possibly lawn maintenance, as well as providing first-time homeowners with information on properly maintaining their new

home's green spaces.

Other goals for 2005 include:

- ▶ Distributing articles to national, state and local media promoting the benefits of green spaces

- ▶ Developing a tag line to be used by Project EverGreen supporters at their businesses and on their product packaging and materials

- ▶ Providing professional service providers with new consumer pieces to distribute to their customers

- ▶ Surveying consumers, suppliers and end-user professionals to gauge attitudes and opinions about the Green Industry

For more information on Project EverGreen, contact Den Gardner at 877-758-4835 or visit www.projectevergreen.com.



Hustler 'Mows for Victory'

HESSTON, KS — Hustler Turf Equipment is driving a SuperZ lawnmower custom painted to resemble Richard Petty's #43 Dodge NASCAR race car across America to raise money for the Victory Junction Gang Camp. Petty himself joined the "Mow for Victory Tour" team at the Texas Motor Speedway April 15.

"I've done a lot of driving in my time," the winner of 200 NASCAR races told the crowd. "But I wouldn't even try driving a lawnmower across America!"

The tour started in February in Fontana, CA, and is covering 4,000 miles across the United States. The team finishes its fund raising journey May 28th at Victory Junction Gang Camp in Randleman, NC.

The camp is a year-round, racing-themed camp for 7- to 15-year olds with chronic or life-threatening illnesses who might not otherwise have a chance to go to summer camp. NASCAR driver Kyle Petty and his wife Pattie started the camp in 2000 in honor of their son Adam, who proposed the idea a few years earlier. Adam was killed in a racing accident in 2000. Victory Junction Gang Camp is a part of the network of Hole-in-the-Wall-Gang camps founded by actor Paul Newman in 1988.

For more photos and journal accounts from the road, visit www.mowforvictorytour.com.



▶ (l. to r.) Spike Hostetler, chase vehicle chief; NASCAR great Richard Petty; Lonnie Hamm, Hustler turf territory sales manager; Josh Schmidt, MFVT mower driver, and the Petty Super Z.



Do the math.

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Tuesday	7 :30		3:30	'	'	8
Wednesday	7 :30		3:30	'	'	8
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Employee Signature: *David B.* Total Hours: 42

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Employee Report

David Burns

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	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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Bayer's Armada registered for lawn care

MONTVALE, NJ —

Bayer Environmental Science's Armada 50WP, is a fungicide designed for residential and commercial lawn care. The company expects to make it available sometime this month.

State registrations are underway for Armada, which recently received its U.S. EPA approval. It is registered for turf, athletic fields and parks. Bayer plans to add ornamentals to the label soon.

"Our company spent a couple of years talking to customers in the professional lawn care market. They told us they were unhappy with their current fungicide options for two reasons: price and duration of action," said Mike Daly, director of marketing—Green Business for Bayer. "The cost-effective products they had been using were no longer labeled."

Armada combines two Bayer fungicides:



Mike Daly



Jim Fetter

Compass (a.i.: trifloxystrobin) and Bayleton (a.i.: triadimefon) to prevent and control 14 different turf diseases, including brown patch and dollar spot, on cool-season turfgrasses.

Daly said Bayer set out to develop a fungicide that could be both cost effective in a residential lawn care program and provide 30-plus day results.

Armada will come in two packages: a carton of eight 3-oz. water-soluble packets or a 9-oz. minidrum. It can be applied with backpack or tank sprayers and has good compatibility for tank mixing with foliar fertilizers or insecticides.

"We believe this may be the first turf fungicide developed strictly for the lawn care market, not for golf course superintendents," said Jim Fetter, manager—Lawn Care & Landscape Region. "You don't have to be a golf course to have golf course-quality turf"

CLIPPINGS

Davey breaks out grounds division

KENT, OH — The Davey Tree Expert Company reports that its Grounds Management (CGM) division has become its own stand-alone service line and is being renamed Commercial Landscape Services (CLS). George Gaumer was promoted to vice president and general manager and Dan Joy to vice president of CLS.

Luse, Hanson buy back Arteka

MINNEAPOLIS, MN — David Luse and Stewart Hanson purchased Arteka from ValleyCrest Landscape Development. Luse originally bought Arteka in 1990 and Hanson became its president in 1991. In 1998 they took it public, along with six other companies, as LandCare USA. ServiceMaster acquired the company in 1999 and sold it to ValleyCrest in 2001. Luse and Hanson also own Organicare, which franchises organic lawn, tree and shrub-care services.

Compass launches 'Driven By Results'

CHESAPEAKE CITY, MD — Compass System, Inc. will take its latest training program, "Driven By Results," across the country. The program covers leadership, first business steps, communication, advertising, training and more. For more information contact Rob Shauger at 302/324-1614 or visit www.compassystem.com.

Grounds Control Inc. gets big honor

PHOENIX, AZ — Grounds Control, Inc., was voted the number one landscape services company in Arizona by the *Arizona Business Magazine*. The honor is determined through a poll of the magazine's readers. Grounds Control is a subsidiary company of Sanitors, Inc.

BASF embraces "chemical" tag

BY LARRY AYLWARD / Contributing Editor

Hans W. Reiners makes no apology for the word "chemical" being used in his company's name.

"Let's face it: We're a chemical company," said Reiners, president of the BASF Group's Agricultural Products Division. "If nobody stands up for it ... well, we shouldn't be surprised if people say we don't need chemicals anymore."

Reiners spoke to members of the trade press recently at the North American headquarters of BASF Agricultural Products in Research Triangle Park, NC.

In his presentation titled, "Agricultural Products Strategy Confirms Technology Leadership," Reiners, who's based in Limburgerhof, Germany, talked exten-



Hans W. Reiners

sively about the company's focus on research and development. While he expects the herbicide market to decline by one percent to two percent annually in coming years, he said that doesn't mean new herbicides aren't required.

"We know there are some voices saying that in the field of herbicides all problems are solved and there is no need for new technology," Reiners says. "We do not believe that this is fully true. Therefore we watch the situation very carefully. We think the time will come when in some markets innovative solutions will be highly appreciated."



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In the Know

Phoenix takes off with post patents

VALDOSTA, GA — There's a new kid on the block supplying products to the Green and Aquatic Industries. Well, to be honest, Owen Towne, who has been a part of the Green Industry for the past 15-plus years, is admittedly not so new. But the company he heads is

Phoenix Environmental Care LLC, is dedicated to bringing "value-added, post-patent products" to market, says Towne, company president.

"We will market a variety of products to meet the needs of the Green and Aquatic Industries through unique, quality formulations," says Towne, formerly with Griffin LLC. Specialty Products Group.



Owen Towne

The company's initial product offerings include Vital fungicide and proprietary Phoenix brands of chlorothalnil, propiconazole, glyphosate and bifenthrin. The company will also offer a proprietary brand aquatic herbicide and algaecide as well as other significant aquatic products.

Rick Grant, a 16-year veteran of the T/O market, is the company's Director of Business Development. The Director of Marketing Services is Patti Niewoehner and Craig Smith, 15 years in the aquatics and vegetative management industry, was named Aquatic Business Manager. Like Towne, all were formerly with Griffin LLC.

Two great Bay area work places

SAN FRANCISCO — *The San Francisco* and *East Bay Business Times* recently selected Gachina Landscape Management and Gardener's Guild as being among the Top 100 Places to Work in the San Francisco Bay area. The selections were announced following a survey of readers.

Shemin Nurseries reaches big 50th

DANBURY, CT — Shemin Nurseries, Inc. is celebrating its 50th year in business. Founded by Emanuel "Manny" Shemin in 1955, the company now operates 30 landscape supply centers in the East and Midwest.

Total Landscape gets bigger digs

ST. LOUIS, MO — Total Landscape, Inc. relocated to a new, expanded facility at 5320 Lemay Ferry Road in south St. Louis County, MO.

Horizon joins PrimeraTurf

PHOENIX, AZ — Horizon, professional supplier of landscape and turf products, is a new member of PrimeraTurf, a purchasing cooperative for independently owned companies primarily engaged in distribution and resale of products in the Green Industry.

EPA OKs Monsanto weed control

ST. LOUIS — The US EPA recently registered Certainty turf herbicide from Monsanto Co. The product controls purple and yellow nutsedge, green kyllinga and other weeds. The product can be used in most warm-season turf grasses and is labeled for post-directed sprays around woody ornamentals.

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In the Know

People & companies

Polaris Industries appointed **Bennett Morgan** president and COO.



Steve Faber (above, left) is the branch manager for **Ruppert Nurseries'** new Atlanta Landscape Management branch, and **Ty Trent** (right) manager for the branch in Chantilly, VA.

Turf-Seed, Inc. appointed new members to its board of directors. **Bill Rose** is chairman, **Agostino Gaude** international director, **Crystal Fricker** marketing director, **Ed Rose** production director, **Cara Tuggle** forage and operations director and **Gordon Zielinski** secretary / treasurer and CEO.



Shindaiwa appointed **Jon Ferguson** (above, left) vice president of financial and management services, **Mike Nichols** (right) vice presi-

dent of marketing and business development, and **Tom Gile** supply chain manager. The company also promoted **Jay Larsen** to marketing manager, North America; **Laura Sorrentino-Howard** marketing manager, international, **Rod Harms** product development manager and **John Foster** global product manager.



Ron Huffman, AICP, ASLA, was named senior principal landscape architect at **MACTEC Engineering & Consulting**.

Redexim Charterhouse promoted **Paul Hollis** executive vice president of its North American operations, named Lawn & Golf Supply its Distributor of the Year, and honored **Malvese Equipment's** Craig Scheidler its Salesman of the Year, and **Wilfred MacDonald, Inc.** its Distributor Parts Department of the Year.

Novozymes hired **Todd Settle** as sales manager, **Robert Bauwens** as national account manager and **Mark Fields** as account manager for

Roots Plant Care. The company hired **John Hunt** as Northeast account sales manager, **Scott Inman** as field development specialist and **Lee West** as field development scientist for **Novozymes Biologicals**.



Florikan E.S.A. (Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture) promoted **John Donegan** to technical fertilizer sales manager.

Profile Products hired **Michael Chase** as manager of the company's Market Development Division, **Michael Schupp** as a regional sales manager covering Texas to Florida and **Rob Yoakum** as a technical support associate for the company's Soils Solutions team.

Irrigation Association President **David Zoldoske** was named vice chair of a California task force to improve the efficiency of water use in urban landscapes.

The **American Nursery and Landscape Association's** Director of Legislative Relations **John Meredith** and Director of Operations **Warren Quinn** recently earned certified association executive status.

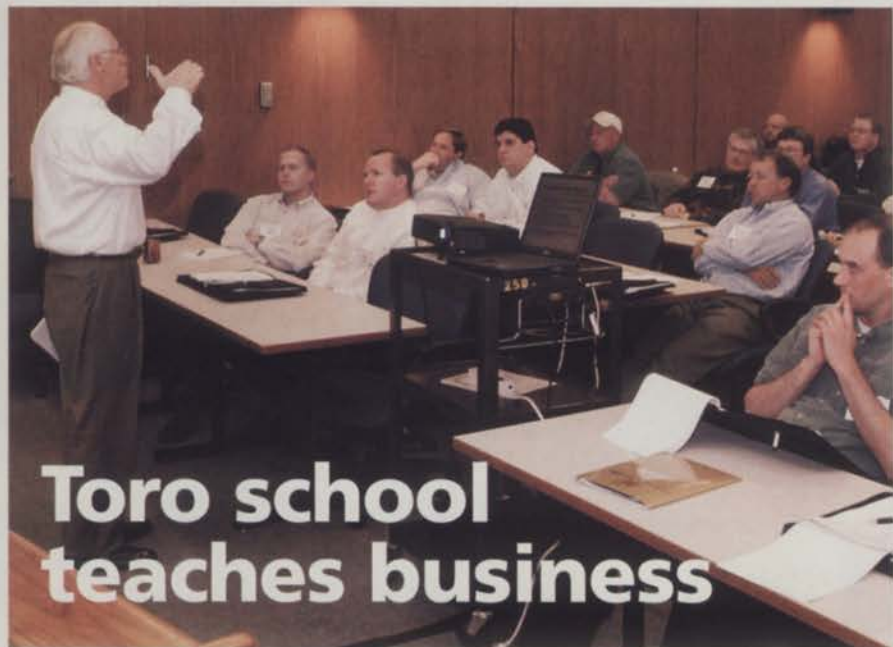
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Toro school teaches business

SOUTH BEND, IN — Toro Irrigation says its 4-day "business school" was so successful that it's planning another. It took place on the campus at Notre Dame University here and focused on business topics such as hiring, job estimating, cash flow, selling and marketing.

A select group of irrigation contractors attended. Their curriculum included classes titled "Understanding Prospects and Their Decision-making"; "Profitable Bidding Techniques"; "The Perils of Price Competition"; "How To Attract and Retain Good Employees"; and several other subjects.

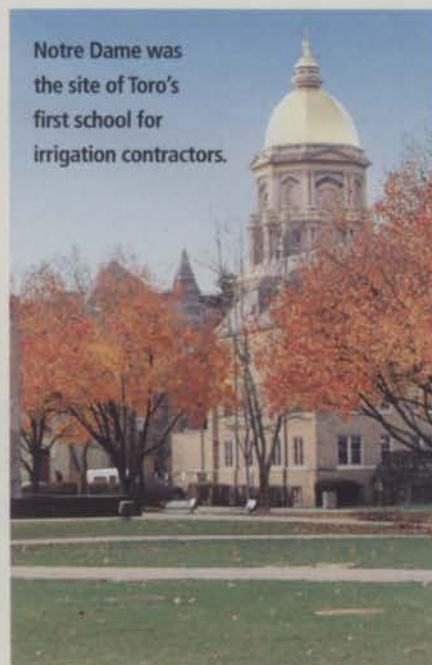
Notre Dame business professors and respected industry consultants led the sessions and conducted classes.

"It was a tremendous experience," said attendee Ken Scherer, President of Hillsborough Irrigation in Hillsborough, NJ. "I think everyone there felt that this was probably the best school of business they ever attended."

Added Doug Phillipp, president of Maxum Enterprises, Preston, CT. "The topics weren't about how to install sprinklers, but focused on owner and contractor issues. The end result was feeling you learned something about yourself."

Mike Ochoa, director of business development for Toro, said that Notre Dame was the perfect setting for hosting the School of Business. "With its great heritage as one of the country's top academic institutions, we wanted to immediately set the tone that this is a serious educational atmosphere." Through exclusive arrangements with Toro, Notre Dame was able to make available several of its leading business instructors to work with the irrigation contractors.

Tom Tootle, Toro's contractor development manager and coordinator of the event, said the feedback was so positive that "we're definitely going to do more of these." Watch for news from Toro about future School of Business events or if you're interested in attending, ask your Toro distributor, he says.



Notre Dame was the site of Toro's first school for irrigation contractors.



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Navigate



It's a lonely job to start and develop your own business. Many of us end up re-inventing the wheel while we wonder how other people learned how to start, finance, organize, sell, manage and grow their businesses. Keep in mind, it's not just new business owners who worry about these problems. It takes many small business owners several years to get established before they realize they could use a little help to jump to the next level.

So where can you turn for advice when the dollars are tight and you are looking for free or low-cost help?

The Internet and your local bookstore are good starting places; it's easy to find basic tools and tips for navigating the small business process.

But where do you go when you want Green Industry-specific business advice from someone who has successfully negotiated the process before?

Networking is an ideal solution. Developing relationships with mentors, advisory boards and others who have been in your shoes is the perfect low-cost investment with high yield for useful business help.

Mentors are everywhere

"If you're starting out with a new landscape, lawn care or interior business, someone else has already gone through it," says Judy McCloud, director of membership for the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). "Take advantage of that knowledge."

Mentorships can be formal or informal. If the perfect candidate doesn't spring to mind immediately, many state and national associations have established mentoring programs in place.

Consider PLANET's One-on-One program, which pairs experienced members with newer, less experienced protégés for one year. "These relationships are an owner speaking to an owner," McCloud explains. She has coordinated the program since its inception five years ago. New PLANET members (who might be in their first or even fifth year as a company) apply for the program in the spring and early summer. McCloud matches mentor and protégé by region of the country, then by volume. Mentors typically have companies with larger volumes. Then she matches pairs by specialty group so a new design/build company owner, for example, isn't paired with a mentor who concentrates on maintenance.

Some pairs set up a monthly conference call, some send weekly e-mails, some ask questions on a case-by-case basis and some visit each other, McCloud says. "It's a year-long relationship. A lot of new members have immediate questions, like, 'When do I hire people? When do I hire a supervisor? How do I price?'"

That was the case for Rick Leipold, owner of Green Horizon Landscape in Boalsburg, PA. His company was a few years old when he joined PLANET and got involved with the program. Sharing e-mails with his One-on-One mentor Mark Wagner, owner of Wagner's Landscape Co., Aston, PA, became an easy, effective way to bounce business ideas around.

Whether you're starting out or needing a push, resources and mentors can guide you in the right direction BY ROD BAILEY

THE **Maze**

On the shelf, on the Web

A quick Google search or trip to Barnes & Noble yields a truckload of small business resources. Here's a quick breakdown:

The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET): Visit this association site for information about the One-on-One mentoring program. Don't miss PLANET's extensive online bookstore to purchase materials on estimating, training, marketing and technical operations. The most popular resource here, according to PLANET's Judy McCloud, is Frank Ross' *Pricing for the Green Industry*. "It's never returned," she says. "We call it our bible."

● www.landcarenetwork.org

US Small Business Administration (SBA): This site gathers news and resources for small business owners. Don't miss information on SBA's resource partner, the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) mentoring program.

● www.sba.gov

● www.score.org

Green Industry Hub: This online resource for business and career development, sponsored by PLANET and *Landscape Management*, offers industry-specific technical, business and management online training. Don't miss the free course of the month.

● www.greenindustryhub.com

Troubleshooting tips

I recently spoke with an advisory board member regarding his experiences with the company he advised. He told me the most frustrating part about the relationship was that he was never sure whether he should speak up or not during their quarterly meetings.

He said he wished the company members he worked with would be more direct about what they expected from him and when his input was desired.

He also mentioned that unless they had a specific question on the table, it was difficult for him to spend the necessary time he really needed to become familiar enough with the company and its operations to know where and how he could be of the most help. He believes that mentors as well as advisory members should be invited to spend some time at the company to get to know it better.

Another associate of mine has successfully used multiple sources for input. He networks constantly, attends industry meetings and has established an e-mail list of mentors — people with larger but similar businesses throughout the industry. When he has a problem, he e-mails the situation and his questions to his list for input. He is also an active association member and contributes both on committees and as a mentor himself for people who have yet to go where he has been. — R.B.

"We talked about employee problems, customer relations and just general business," Leipold says. "It's always a good thing to get answers from someone who's been in business longer than you and is successful."

During the course of the year, McCloud sends mentors a newsletter with resources, tips and encouragement. Mentees get a professionally developed self-assessment form to help them prioritize their needs so they don't overwhelm their mentor.

The federal Small Business Association (SBA) also works in this arena through its partnership with the Service Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE) program, which was formed to provide free business assistance. SCORE has a local business match service, news and resources including business plan templates.

Try an advisory board

For additional sources of input and advice, form an advisory board for your business. This group might include your banker, attorney, CPA, insurance agent, a local industry consultant and even friends from non-competing businesses who are willing to

help. Meet quarterly for lunch, or for an afternoon or evening session to solicit guidance and input. Open with a presentation about your business and where you are with it, what kinds of problems and questions you have and what your financial situation is. Then ask for their input. Share as much information about your business as possible, including your business plan.

Give a little bit

And, above all, be serious about the relationship and recognize it as a two-way street. Mentors will appreciate your effort to follow up. Nothing cools interest in the relationship more than never hearing back about the results of their input. Look for ways you can help your helpers as well. If your mentor is a member of your industry association, he or she will look to you to participate and support that association. Do you do business with your advisory board members?

"I was surprised when we first started the [One-on-One program] to hear the mentors say they always learn something from the protégés," McCloud says. "Protégés are often

younger and have really good ideas, or are more technically savvy. It's energizing for mentors to have that relationship."

Once you begin developing relationship with mentors and advisors you realize that you are not alone and that there are many people who will take an interest in your success. Give it a try! **LM**

— *The author operated a successful landscape business in the State of Washington but now enjoys helping younger landscape pros. Reach him at rodalbailey@hotmail.com. Also, contributing was Managing Editor Stephanie Ricca at sricca@advanstar.com*



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Keith O'Dell, PROscape, Inc.



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Tom Heaviland, Heaviland Enterprises

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Safety training

— be imaginative

Be lively, have some fun, use check lists and keep your safety message fresh to reduce accidents

BY BARBARA MULHERN

A

At James Martin Associates in Vernon Hills, IL, a crew member "demonstrates" personal protective equipment (PPE) by putting his back brace on backward and wearing his safety glasses on the top of his head. The demonstration gets some laughs. It's followed by a discussion on the importance of wearing PPE correctly.

At James River Grounds Management in Glen Allen, VA, workers are pulled aside on pay day and asked what the company's most recent tailgate safety session was about and what they learned from it so management

can tell whether it was indeed held.

And at KIRA Inc. in Miami, videos of "Primitive Pete" and other cartoon characters are used to make safety meetings both interactive and fun.

These are just a few of the innovative safety ideas companies in our industry are using in their safety programs. The bottom line is to make safety interesting, interactive, effective and fun.

"Employees need to see that safety is not that same old routine where it is long and boring," says Marylou Ladaga, director of human resources at KIRA, a facilities management/maintenance company. "On the contrary, it can be fun and diverse, using tools that encompass cartoon videos, cash awards, fun foods, storytelling and much more. Safety awareness is a key element in our industry, and it can be made fun as long as we achieve our goal in obtaining an accident-free environment."

More innovative ideas

At James Martin Associates, Human Resource Associate Beth

McElroy says the message at the PPE training sessions described earlier "gets through because we make it funny and interactive, along with discussing the seriousness of not wearing PPE." Participants are also shown the right way to wear back braces, safety glasses and other personal protective equipment.

Among the other innovative ideas James Martin Associates has implemented are:

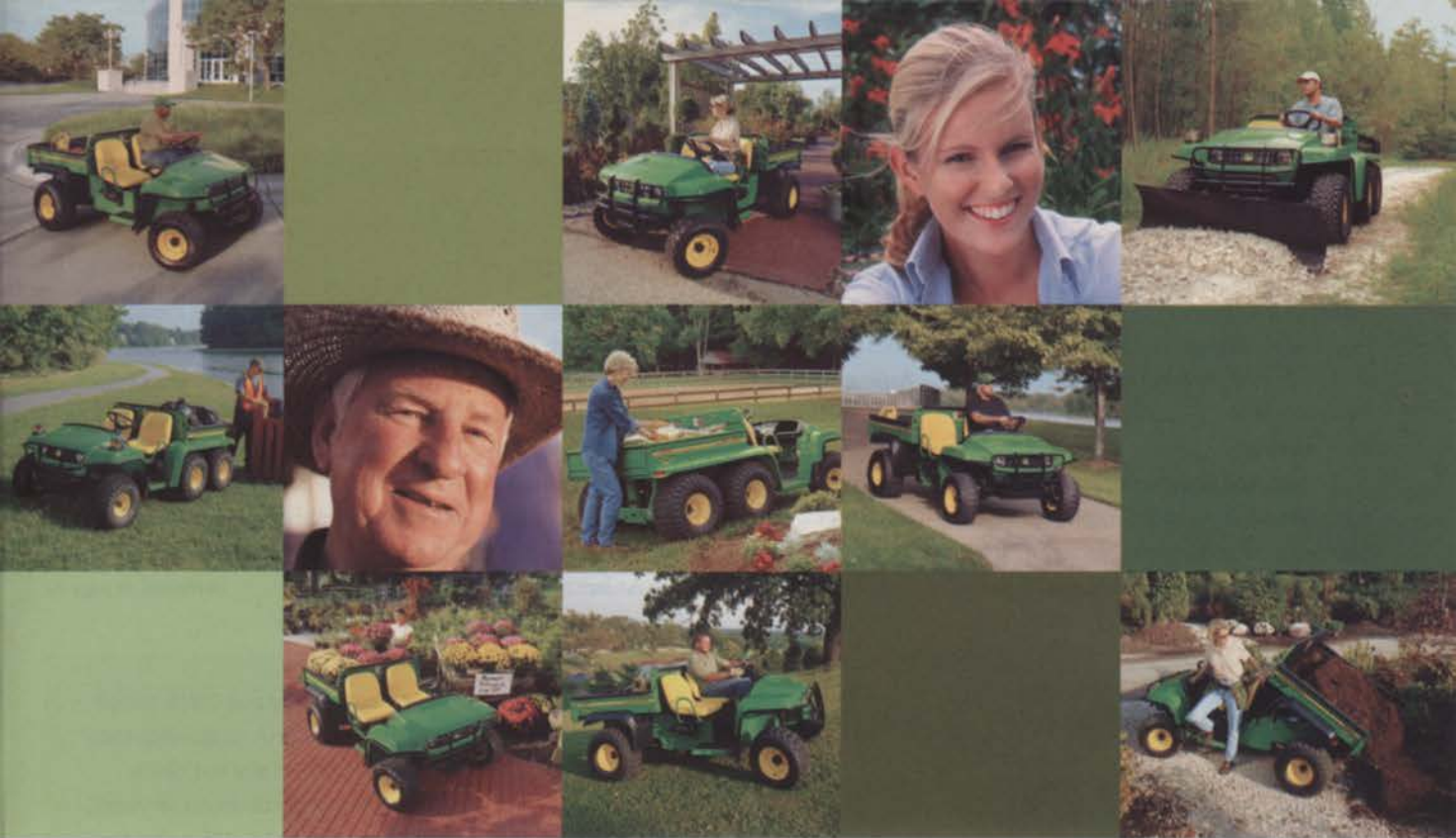
► **Paycheck stuffers:** Professional Land-care Network's (formerly ALCA's) Spanish and English Safety Faxes are included with every employee's paycheck every pay day. The back side of the paycheck stuffer includes James Martin Associates news.

► **Pay day vehicle inspection:** While vehicle inspection checks are conducted daily by drivers, on pay day an extra list of items is included, such as camera, cones and insurance card, that are "good to check for twice a month," McElroy says. Before employees get their paychecks, they check the vehicle with a supervisor to make sure

these extra items are in place. If they're missing—
continued on page 30



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ATV

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JOHN DEERE

continued from page 28

ing, they quickly get replaced.

Here are some other innovative safety ideas companies in our industry have implemented:

► **Quick and inexpensive ideas:** Supervisors and non-supervisory employees at Southwood Landscape & Nursery in Tulsa, OK, are encouraged to pass these on at

safety/tailgate meetings. Two examples from Landscape Manager Steve Welch and Assistant Landscape Manager Glen Rice were switching from an 80-lb. steel wheelbarrow to a 26-lb. heavy plastic wheelbarrow, and heating up the shanks of shovels and bending them into ergonomic positions for certain tasks like digging trees.

► **Vehicle kit inspections:** At James River

Grounds Management, Vice President Maria Candler says the company had a problem with missing items from vehicles such as fire extinguishers and first aid kits. "Now we require every driver to have a kit — a big yellow box — at all times. It has in it a fire extinguisher, an unopened first aid kit, emergency phone numbers, and cam-

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STARS entering the next level

The Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET) STARS Safe Company Program has moved into Phase 2, a phase designed to grow safe companies and assist them in taking safety to an even higher level.

The STARS (Safety Training Achieves Remarkable Success) program, launched in late 2003, already has more than 500 member companies that have taken a written pledge to implement strong safety programs and be mentors for "living safety" within the Green Industry. The program is open to all landscape, professional lawn care and related companies. There is no cost to join.

Phase 2 of STARS includes the following highlights:

★ Establishing a STARS Champions Advisory Council to be available for feedback on STARS issues and serve as a volunteer resource for other STARS members.

★ Collecting effective safety practices from all STARS members to be shared with others to help improve safety throughout the industry.

★ Collecting (confidential) injury/incident data to assist STARS member companies in reducing their injury/incident rates and loss ratios, which will result in greater profitability for these companies. STARS members will receive assistance in improving their numbers so STARS mem-

ber companies can be used as safety models for the entire industry.

New STARS champions

Five working company safety managers have been named to the new STARS Champions Advisory Council. They are: Laurie Bishop of The Bruce Co. (Middleton, WI), Elias Godinez of Pacific Landscape Management (Hillsboro, OR), Marylou Ladaga of KIRA Inc. (Miami, FL), Mari Medrano of CoCal Landscape (Denver, CO), and Jerry Schumacher of Vande Hey's Landscape Center (Appleton, WI).

"As a volunteer, this gives me an opportunity to network with other STARS members by sharing information and ideas that will enhance our safety practices," Ladaga says. "By networking with other STARS members, together we can establish structure, goals and objectives that will determine our balancing measures and best practices in performance management. Through our networking efforts, we can also establish programs where we can educate each other in how to obtain a successful accident-free prevention program."

In addition to receiving a comprehensive STARS Safety Resource Manual and a monthly safety newsletter, STARS members receive monthly e-mail/fax up-

dates on both safety and OSHA compliance issues. The OSHA compliance component is important due to OSHA's "Landscape and Horticultural Services" classification (OSHA SIC 078) being targeted by the federal agency as one of the top seven highest hazard industries in the United States. The monthly STARS e-mail/fax updates include checklists, sample policies, and sample forms on such issues as how to be prepared for an OSHA inspection.

STARS company members are required to sign a short pledge, which includes a commitment to conducting weekly safety awareness training; establishing an active safety committee; documenting, measuring and investigating each injury/incident; and complying with OSHA requirements.

For information on joining the STARS program and a copy of the pledge form, contact Ilene Manster in the PLANET office at 800/395-2522.

— BM



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Circle 119

continued from page 30

eras and forms for accident investigations. The box is inspected at every tailgate meeting. The supervisor has to sign on the tailgate sheet that he has checked it. If the first aid kit is opened and no incident report has been filed, it's a problem," she says.

► **Capturing attention:** At KIRA, capturing employees' attention and creating excitement over safety is critical, Ladaga says. Some of the techniques KIRA uses, she says, include: making storytelling part of safety presentations "where they can let loose their imaginations;" letting each field location conduct safety meetings in its own style. For example, one location might have the employees conduct the meetings and have food available for participants; and incorporating incentives to create excitement,

More great safety ideas

★ **Incident tracking:** Track, investigate and document ALL injuries/incidents, even if the person doesn't go to the doctor. Talk about them at safety meetings and share the number of incidents with the entire company on a quarterly basis.

★ **Taping vehicle hoods shut:** Put a small piece of invisible tape on the vehicle hood and another one on the oil cap so you can tell if the driver really inspected the vehicle or if the inspection forms were just filled out.

★ **Friendly competition:** Post the names of monthly winners of safety incentive prizes by department on the company bulletin boards to create some friendly competition.



★ **Printing on caps:** Print on caps worn by bilingual crew members the words "I speak Spanish" in both English and Spanish so workers with limited English language skills know who they can immediately go to with any safety-related (or other) questions.

★ **Dressing up:** Dress up a mannequin in safety garb (PPE, respirator, etc.) and use it during safety presentations to help make safety fun. — BM

ment, like movie passes and tickets to NASCAR races or amusement parks.

► **Stretches and leadership:** At Dennis' Seven Dees Landscaping in Portland, OR, 10-15 minute stretching exercises are part

of the entire company's routine every morning. "Usually, somebody different leads it. This teaches leadership as well as safety training," says Construction Manager

continued on page 34

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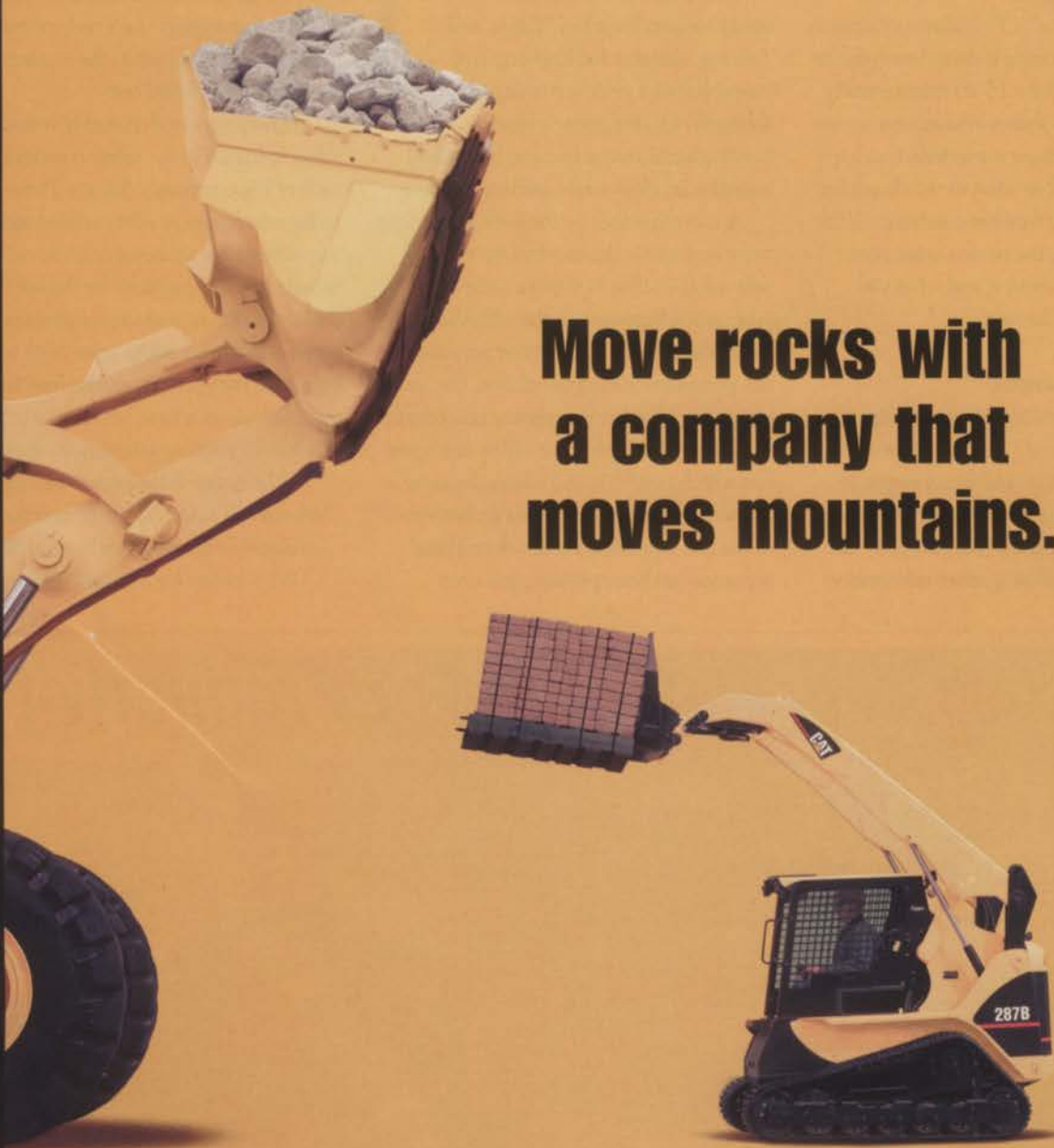
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continued from page 32

Nathan Dirksen. On Thursday mornings, as soon as the exercising is done, "everyone is pulled together for a 15-20 minute safety talk. Each group shares information within its department about something that happened that week or what to watch out for, such as changing weather conditions. With a safety incident, the person who went through it talks about it and what was learned from it," he says.

Emergency scenarios

One of the interesting safety techniques used at The Care of Trees, headquartered in Wheeling, IL, is the emergency response scenario. The safety coordinator in each of the company's districts (the company has 500-plus employees) receives information

on a "real-life" emergency that could happen from Field Safety and Training Manager Joe Engberg. Two examples are a vehicle running into the back of a chipper or a worker needing aerial rescue because he has had a serious accident while working in a tree.

A crew member — the only one in that crew aware that the incident isn't real — will call the office as if there were a real emergency. Someone in the office will be aware that it isn't real, but not necessarily the person answering the phone. The scenario tests whether emergency procedures are followed, whether the office can figure out which crew it is and where the crew is located, and whether persons on both ends of the call stay calm. Feedback on these scenarios has been positive, and even

though the person calling in knows that the "emergency" isn't real, everyone tends to get caught up in the excitement as the scenario is played out.

Engberg also sends monthly written safety scenarios to the safety coordinators in each of the company's districts. These describe other types of safety-related incidents that either have occurred or could occur and include specific questions for the safety coordinator to discuss with crew members. The answers to the questions come back to Engberg from each district, and he then sends out a follow-up review, which is talked about in subsequent safety meetings. **LJM**

— *The author is the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET) safety specialist and a freelance writer who lives in rural Belleville, WI. Contact her at bamu100@aol.com.*

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PBI/Gordon Corporation has been formulating products for over 50 years. And for the past 35 years we have specialized in product formulations for the professional turf and ornamental management industry. Our first specialized product formulation, Trimec® Herbicide, set the standard for broadleaf weed control for over 30 years. When Trimec went off patent it became the most copied broadleaf weed control label ever. And when the superior weed control provided by Trimec was surpassed, it was surpassed by another PBI/Gordon product, SpeedZone® Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf.

The reason that PBI/Gordon has been able to provide superior product formulations lies in the experience of its employee owners. Our employees bring 'real world' experience to their jobs, not just theoretical academic experience. We not only know how our products are formulated, we know how they work in the field. We test them and we use them.

We formulate our products with your needs in mind. Our GLP (Good Laboratory Practices) lab in Kansas City makes up potential formulations and tests them under laboratory conditions. These formulations are then turned over to our Research and Development team where they are put out at universities, at our Turf Research Center and with end-user cooperators. If they don't solve real-world problems, they go back to the lab.

Our 5 acre turf research center performs extensive testing for any turf discoloration and weed control, volatility and any other tests that our experienced staff feels we need to bring a product to market. We are constantly looking for and developing synergistic combinations to reduce the amount of chemical going into the environment without sacrificing product performance. Both our GLP lab and Turf Research Center are in demand to provide services for many other major chemical companies.

SpeedZone is an excellent example of our development efforts. Before it was introduced, we formulated and tested over 300 potential product formulations to assure that you would have a product that meets your broadleaf weed control challenges.



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From the Guiding Principles of the PBI/Gordon Corporation Mission Statement

And our product stewardship does not end with introducing a top quality product. We are happy to provide our expertise in any turf or ornamental care situation. In addition to our toll-free Technical Service phone line, we also provide an on-line Tech Advisor at WeedAlert.Com. The WeedAlert.Com web site is our non-commercial weed identification service with photos and germination timing alerts by geography. WeedAlert.Com also provides both chemical and cultural control recommendations for IPM practitioners. WeedAlert.Com was selected by Penn State University to be a part of their online Turf and Ornamental Weed Control course.

At PBI/Gordon, the Turf and Ornamental industry is not a sideline business, but our primary focus. We are proud to be a leader in this exciting industry. 🌱

MEET YOUR PBI/GORDON CORPORATION TURF CARE SPECIALISTS

MARK MILLER

Vice President, Professional and Agricultural Product

Sales: Mark has been with PBI/Gordon since 1989, starting in field sales and working his way up to Vice President of Sales in 2002. Mark worked his way up through the ranks during his 9 years at ChemLawn too. Starting as a lawn specialist and eventually becoming Branch Manager. Mark is a graduate of the University of Delaware where he received his BS in Agriculture in 1979. Mark knows PBI/Gordon products from inception to applying them on the ground. He understands your needs and insists that the products he sells are tested under real-world circumstances. This is one of the reasons why PBI/Gordon considers cooperator testing just as important as university testing.



DOUG OBERMANN

Turf & Ornamental Products Manager:

Doug started working at PBI/Gordon straight out of college. Doug was raised on a farm and knows how things grow. He taught Introduction to Agronomy and Introduction to Plant Science classes as a teaching assistant at Iowa State University where he earned his Masters in Agronomy. Doug earned his BS degrees in Agronomy and Ag Economics at the University of Missouri. He has been with PBI/Gordon for 17 years, starting with answering 800 line technical service calls coast-to-coast for five years. He has worked in Research and Development, as a field sales representative and is currently Product Manager for our Professional Turf and Ornamental Products. Doug is a Certified Professional Agronomist.



DAVE FEARIS

Product Manager, Non-regulated Products:

Dave really knows turf. Dave worked as a golf course superintendent for 30 years, first at the Country Club at Peoria and most recently at Blue Hills in the Kansas City area. Dave was President of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in 1999. An internationally requested speaker on turfgrass topics, Dave is a Certified Golf Course Superintendent and Vice President of the First Tee Chapter of Greater Kansas City. He earned his BS in Turfgrass Management at Purdue University.



GARY CUSTIS

Manager of Field Research and Technical Services:

Prior to coming to work at PBI/Gordon in 1991, Gary worked at ChemLawn for 15 years. In addition to managing product development research at PBI/Gordon, Gary provides Pesticide Recertification training for the states of Kansas and Missouri and teaches Turfgrass and Plant Problems classes at Johnson County Community College. Gary is a Certified Professional Agronomist and a nationally requested speaker on turfgrass topics. Gary received BS degrees in Agricultural Engineering and Plant Science at the University of Delaware and a Masters degree in Turfgrass Agronomy at Virginia Tech. Gary is working on his doctorate at Kansas State University. Gary's background adds a 'real world' approach to our product development research; when we evaluate a product idea, we weigh it against real world – your world – management problems.



EARL TRACY

Product Specialist: Talk about experience. Earl has seen it all. Currently Earl provides the live voice on our toll-free Technical Services. Last year Earl talked to over 3,000



contractor end-users, distributor sales representatives, university researchers and gardeners. Earl worked for over ten years for the Thompson-Hayward pesticide division before coming to PBI/Gordon in 1982. Earl is a Master Gardener and often answers questions for university researchers. Earl graduated from Louisiana State University. 🌱



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Tom DeBold

Turf pros can find units that aerate properties of almost every size.

Aeration a can't-miss add-on

Get your customers on an aeration program and watch your profits rise

BY GEORGE WITTERSCHEIN

Turf professionals seeking another profitable service to offer clients should consider turf aeration. That's the report we get from Green Industry professionals such as Kenny Dickey, founder and president of K&K Lawn Service Inc. of Burlington, NC. His 31-year-old

firm offers a full range of turf management services, including aerations, to a mostly upscale, residential clientele.

"About six or seven years ago, I got the brochure for an aerator, the AERA-vator," he recalls. "I took the brochure to a copy shop and had a whole bunch of them printed up for my clients and I haven't looked back since.

"We had no trouble selling turf aeration. Ninety to 95 percent of our customers went for it right away and still demand it," Dickey says.

Joyce Pelz also recommends turf aeration both for lawn quality and business profitability. She's the owner and operator of a NaturaLawn of America franchise in Stowe, OH. She works mostly in the Akron area of northeast Ohio. Pelz has operated the franchise since 2000 and now serves about 500 properties, most of them home lawns. She has a staff of three that includes herself.

"We give them a brochure (provided by the NaturaLawn of America corporate office) explaining our services for aeration and overseeding, and we also supply a price quote," she explains.

"The brochures by themselves typically don't produce a heavy response for us," she says. "We get a better response when our salesperson follows up by telephone. By now about 25% of our customer base purchases these additional services from us, some of them yearly or every other year."

Stress the benefits

A third turf aeration advocate is Dan Warehime, vice president for operations at Senske Lawn and Tree Services, a \$15 million firm headquartered in Washington state. The company, now more than 50 years old, serves mostly residential customers in the Intermountain West, including Idaho and Utah. Warehime reports.

Senske Lawn and Tree markets turf aeration by emphasizing the importance of the service for healthy, attractive lawns.

"Every price estimate we write for lawn care includes aeration," Warehime says. "Our assumption is that everybody needs it. That's because all soils tend to become compacted," he says. In order to breathe properly and develop root systems the lawns should be aerated annually. Therefore aeration is a basic part of the quality lawn care that we want to provide.



Aeration opens the soil to allow air, nutrients and water to better reach the roots of turfgrass plants.

"We have achieved about a 70 percent acceptance of turf aeration among our customers. And that's rising as time goes by," Warehime says. "We're talking the service up. If a customer does not take aeration initially as part of their package, our technicians will suggest it to them in person while working on the property."

"In addition, every year we do a fall promotion for those who do not have aeration as part of their service."

How they price it

Pelz prices aeration by a property's square footage and the type of terrain. Critical to the process is calculating the number of man-hours needed to perform the service.

Sense Lawn and Tree also subscribes to a keep-it-simple approach. "For customers on our program we generally quote the

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same price for aeration as we do for a lawn care application," Warehime reports. "That is often lower than what competitors are charging for aeration, and we accept our low price as part of our attempt to move to 100 percent penetration of our customer base with aeration services. So we feel it's in our interest to keep the pricing simple. It makes the customer's decision easier.

"For non-program people, we charge a multiple, one and a half of the regular cost of a lawn care application for aeration. And that lawn care application price in turn is based on square footage.

"Holding our prices down is not necessarily bad economics for us. With so many turf aeration customers on our list, we can do tight, cost-effective routing for example.

The philosophy has worked. Over the years Senske has had success educating its customer base about the value of turf aeration services.

"We had no problem selling turf aeration."

—Kenny Dickey

"Most everybody understands the value of aeration by now, and those who feel they can't afford it annually at least tend to take it every other year," Warehime reports.

Educated customers

A final factor in gaining consumer acceptance for turf aeration is this time-honored motto of service businesses: Customers who understand the value of a service are more likely to be willing to pay for it.

Joyce Pelz reports that Mother Nature can help her sell the service. "A customer whose lawn has been ruined by drought is more likely to appreciate the value of any service such as turf aeration, which might restore the turf to a more desirable state. Suddenly the dollars for aeration look like dollars well spent."

For resistant clients, Pelz has an interesting promotion strategy; she recommends balking customers try doing it themselves!

"I sometimes actually encourage do-it-yourself aeration. I advise them to rent an aerator from a local equipment rental store

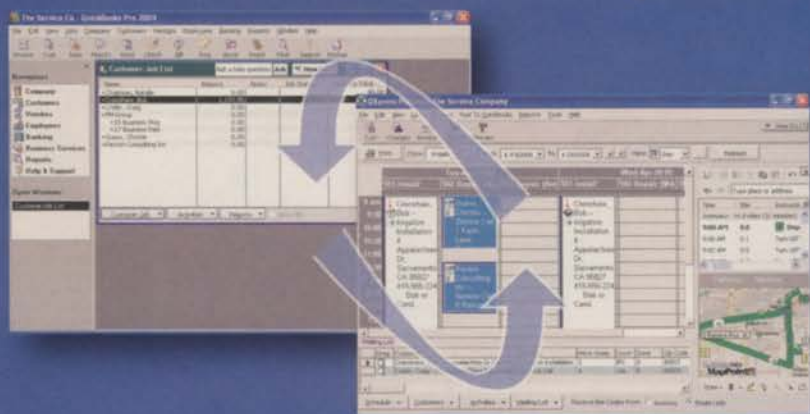
such as Sunbelt Rentals and aerate the yard using the instructions they receive from the renting vendor. Sometimes a group of neighbors will get together, which saves on costs.

"What we find is that frequently after



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Circle 122

doing a season of aeration themselves, the customer figures, 'I like my lawn aerated, but I really would rather have somebody else do the muscle work.' They get more of an appreciation for the value of our services, and our prices look more acceptable. At that point they very often will ask us to do the aeration for them starting the next year," Pelz says.

Aeration plus seeding

Pelz and Warehime also tie aeration and seeding together in their schedules.

"Ideally, we like to aerate and then seed immediately," says Pelz. "Our preferred timetable has us performing the service prior to Sept. 15, the recommended cutoff date for Ohio."

At Senske Lawn and Tree in the Intermountain West, Dan Warehime says, "We

"Every price estimate we write for lawn care includes aeration."

— Dan Warehime

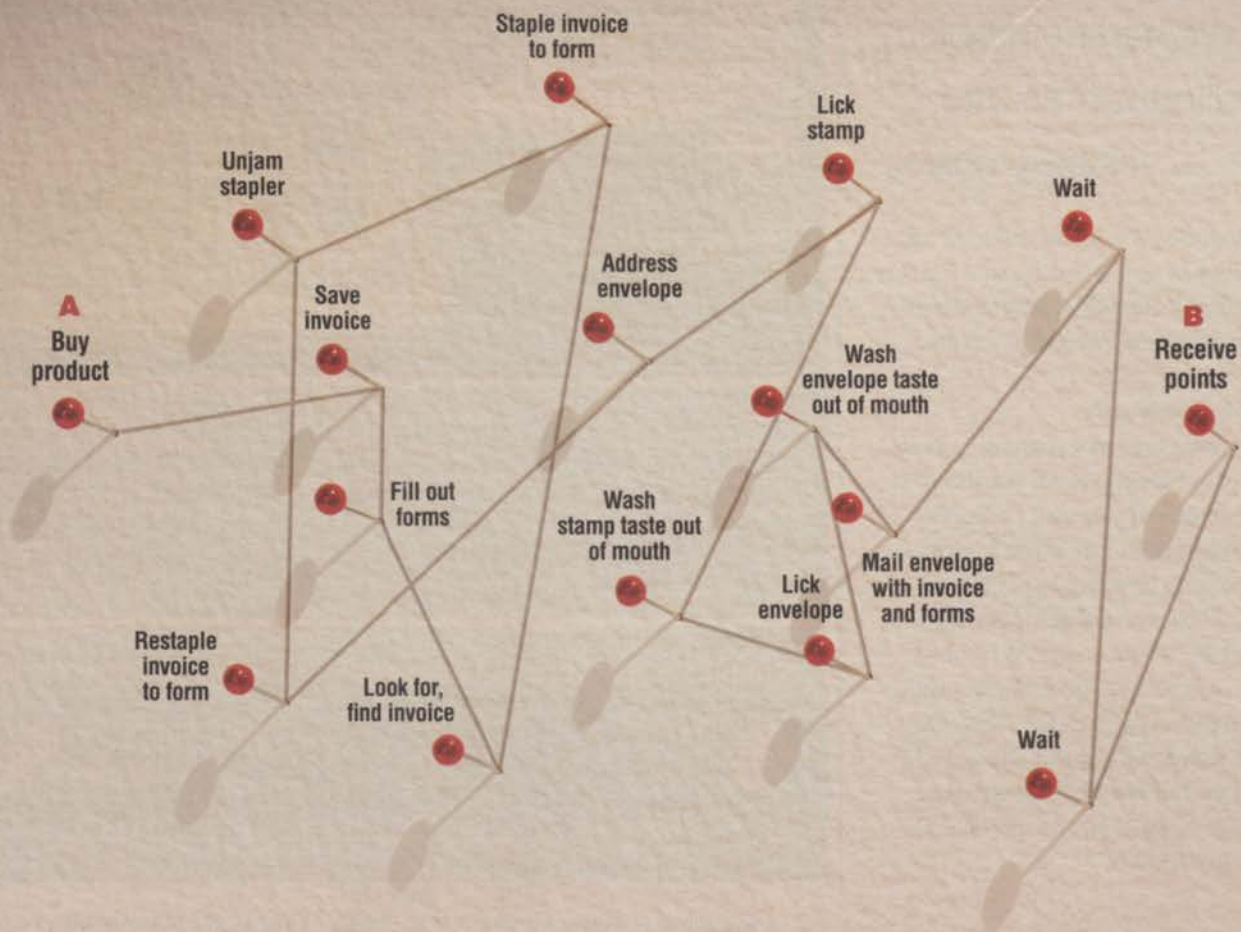
do a promotion in the fall that includes a mailing. Fall becomes a secondary peak aeration season for us.

"We mail a letter to every customer who did not get aeration in the past year. We recommend they take this service and that the fall is an excellent time to do it. We do the promotion in August, when lawns are kind of brown and dry, suggesting that aeration will help regenerate growth of the root system and repair lawns. That's good business, we believe.

"At the same time we also suggest overseeding. Fall aeration with fall overseeding is how we think of it. We offer it both ways, so you can buy just the aeration or an aeration with overseeding."

In practice, Warehime says, "we aerate first and then the seeding is done by the same person immediately afterwards. And then we suggest to the customer that they water heavily.

"Last fall was the first time that we offered the aeration plus overseeding, and we expect the offering to go over big this year because we've been having a drought out here in our region of the country. Lawns will be under-watered, hyper-compacted, and looking stressed. So aeration and aeration plus overseeding will be a major push for us through the late summer into fall," he says.



The gear

Both Pelz's and Warehime's companies use Turfco TurnAer aerators. In North Carolina, K&K uses two 60-in. front-mount AERATORS (from First Products Inc.) behind a John Deere 4310 compact tractor. But, there are many different sizes and types of turf aerators and slicers available.

"The majority of our fleet of aerators consists of walk-behind units that we transport in pickup trucks" Warehime says. "We also have tow-behind aerators for larger areas." Since a "fresher" operator is more productive, Senske has been adding stand-on platforms behind their TurnAer units.

How they aerate

Pelz use double pass aeration, with each pass at 90 degrees to the other. "This process pulls more plugs from the turf to

Shake, rattle and roll

"It takes a lickin' and keeps on tickin'." If you're old enough to remember this advertising jingle for Timex watches, maybe you'll appreciate this one we made up for turf aerators — "They take a muggin' but keep on pluggin'."

Sorry.

Turf aerators get shaken and rattled as they pound holes into hardened earth. No wonder that ruggedness and dependability are foremost on buyers' minds. But even the best designed and constructed aerators need ongoing maintenance.

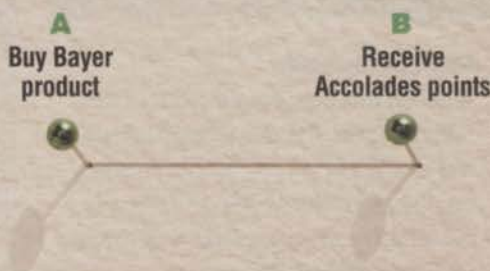
All units come with maintenance instructions. They're there for a reason. Follow them. Pay special attention to lubricating chains and sprockets and tightening bolts and belts. Depending on the unit, its age and the type of use it's getting, this may have to be done several times a day.

Also, it's probably a good idea to equip operators with extra tines and the tools to replace them. Generally, a set of high-quality tines will last a season. If an aeration unit is properly maintained, even if it gets a lot of use, it should give at least three to five years of dependable service, says turf pros.

help with nutrient uptake, to increase air and water penetration and to reduce soil compaction," she says. "We then make another pass over the lawn with a seed spreader to get new seeds into the ground. This will rejuvenate the lawn and establish

a thicker turf to choke out weeds and prevent further germination.

"After that, we will often drag the surface with a chain and pole and then follow that with raking to break up the cores. This way, the customer doesn't have those



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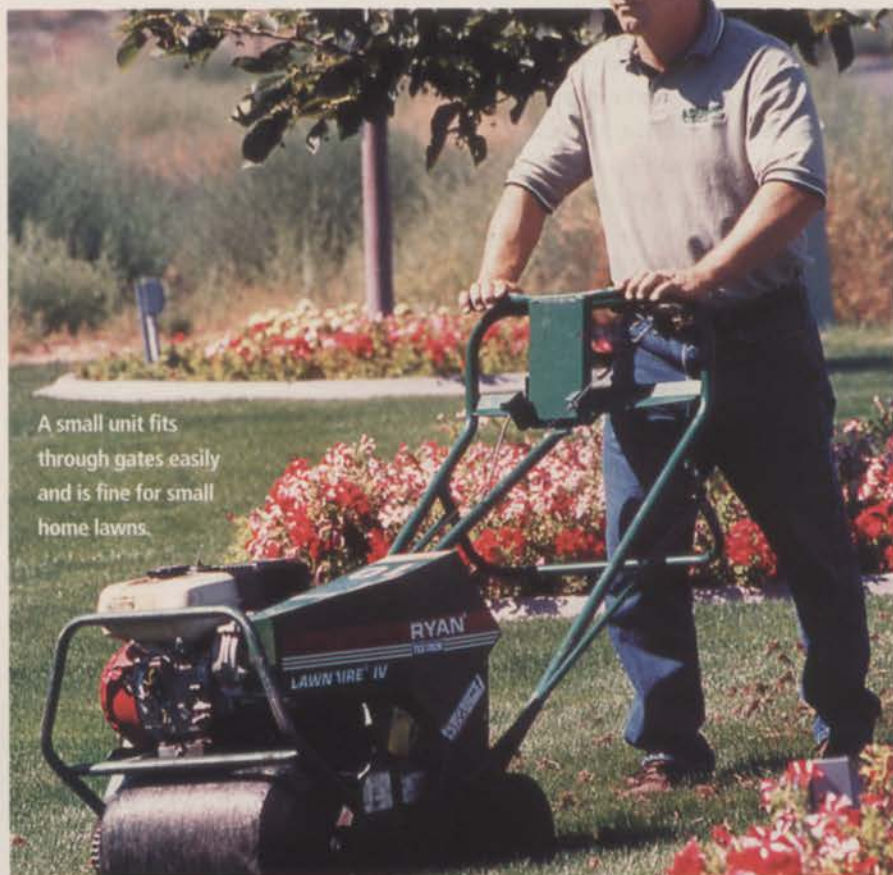
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A small unit fits through gates easily and is fine for small home lawns.

plugs all over the lawn for six weeks. It's a great procedure for producing quality, customer-pleasing lawns, and doing it safely, and with less chemicals for weed control," she says.

Rough spots – literally

But it's not always a snap. "Sometimes an extremely hilly lawn segment cannot be aerated with our equipment, and we have to decline to aerate those areas," Pelz says. "That means it may become a challenge to grow healthy grass on those slopes."

For Warehime in the Spokane area, the terrain challenge is often manmade. "We do have a problem with isolated pieces of turf that you have to go downstairs to get to, such as on a terraced property. We've generally learned that we can't do those because we have to send two people out to carry the machine down to the lower level, and they are very heavy machines."

Great turf booster

NaturaLawn's Pelz recommends turf aeration as a service turf management companies should add as a way of accomplishing two things: "Aeration really does promote beautiful, healthy lawns, and it's also healthy for your profit line," she says.

Senske's Warehime also says he "recommends aeration as a money-making service for a turf management firm, provided you do it right. And with the new generation of aerators out there, most professionals should be able to do just that."

"There are no downsides to aeration that I can think of. "I like it so much better than plugging," K&K's Dickey concludes. He recommends turf aeration as a good profit-making add-on for turf contractors, recalling that aeration began making money for him right away when he switched to it six years ago. "I brought in the machines and haven't looked back." **LM**

Fert-coated sand improves density

Grounds managers who regularly aerate and overseed worn sports fields should be encouraged by some new research from The Ohio State University.

Turfgrass expert Dr. Karl Danneberger wanted to determine if backfilling coring holes with a fertilizer-coated sand (in this case Nitamin Coated Sand) versus traditional sand would enhance core hole recovery.

Although he conducted the study on a three-year-old bentgrass fairway established on native soil and mowed at a half inch, his findings suggest that similar positive results can be expected on well-maintained grounds or sports fields.

On Aug. 10, 2004, plant growth regulator treatments were applied to the turf at different rates. Three days later, the OSU research team set up 3-ft. by 6-ft. turf plots in a randomized block design and aerified them with 5/8-in. tines. After aeration, the team removed cores and allowed the plot to settle and dry for three days. Then the core holes were filled with either Nitamin Coated Sand or traditional sand.


He reported that applying the coated sand at a rate of 1.5 lbs. per 30 sq. ft. provided better color and density than traditional sand applied at the same rate. The lower rate of coated sand applied 3/4 lbs. per 30 sq. ft. "also performed comparatively well," he notes.

The coated sand, which is glued to the sand particle so it binds to the soil and stays there, is manufactured by and distributed through the Sports Turf division of Fairmount Minerals (www.fairmountminerals.com.)

—The author is a freelance writer who lives and works in Mendham, NJ. Contact him at Grbwitt@patmedia.net.

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2 Mole money, mole money

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3 Split that brick

If you're doing a lot of brick or paver work, check out the simple and inexpensive Brick Buster from Bon Tool Co. The unit is portable, affordable and dependable to provide fast and cost-effective on-the-job cutting of masonry products. Bricks and pavers can be cut at any angle with the 10-in.-wide cutting blade. A removable pin quickly and easily adjusts the height to one of three positions. Finer adjustments can be made with an adjustment screw. A splitter table is sold separately. Other tools offered in Bon Tool's line of paver handlers include other splitters, a slab mover, sand and base rakes, curb tongs, extracting tongs and an alignment bar.

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4 The Jetsons' mower

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Example of shoots from Cutless Granular treated plant (left) and untreated plant (right).



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- www.commercialpower.com or
- www.briggsandstratton.com.

For example, let's say a customer wanted a manual for a Briggs & Stratton Commercial Power Vanguard V-Twin 31HP Air-Cooled BIG BLOCK engine. The first step would be to locate and write down the model, type and code numbers from the engine. Then go to the Commercial Power Web site and click on the service and support tab, followed by the owners' manual and/or illustrated parts list. Or, visit the Briggs & Stratton Web site as the home page has a link that will take you directly to the manual section. Fill in the engine numbers and you will have the most current engine manual in just a few seconds. If you do not have the engine numbers, scroll through the list to find the engine manual you're looking for. After locating the manual, simply print a copy from the PDF file.

Information in the owners' manual includes: safety and warning issues, engine specifications, starting and stopping procedures, warranty statement, fuel and oil requirements and maintenance information. The illustrated parts list contains the Briggs & Stratton part number specific for each part of the engine.

Both Web sites also have a service center and dealer locator. Use the service and support tab on the Commercial Power Web site for the dealer locator or use the service center locator on the Briggs & Stratton Web site home page. Enter your city or postal code and the mileage search radius. You will get area service center locations, as well as details regarding if they specialize in any specific engine lines.

Locating this much-needed information is quick and easy, thanks to the Internet.



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

From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Hydraulic oil is the life blood of the drive system. Change it and keep your equipment healthy.



Hey, keep it clean

BY HARRY SMITH

S-h-h-h, be quiet. Do not disturb. Let sleeping dogs lie. No, I am not referring to tiptoeing around a large grizzly bear. I'm referring to the attitude a lot of otherwise knowledgeable technicians have about hydraulic systems. I hear cries of anguish from distributors and manufacturers on this subject.

"The unit had 1,000 hours on it and still had the original hydraulic oil and filters," says one.

"The hydraulic filter was so rusted it disintegrated when we tried to remove it," says another.

Amazing but too often true.

Time for a change?

Hydraulic oil wears out just like engine oil. It gets loaded with dirt, metal particles, water and sludge. A technician that would not dream of allowing engine oil to go 1,000 hours before he changed it will ignore the hydraulic system. Hydraulic oil also must keep the system components cool. If it's loaded with contaminants it cannot cool efficiently. Water occurs naturally in hydraulic systems due to the rain-forest effect of daily heating and overnight cooling. The system has to be vented to the atmosphere, and if the humidity is

high, then water droplets form in the top of the reservoir due to the cool, moist air being sucked in through the vent. This will occur to a lesser extent even in areas with low humidity — even Arizona has a "monsoon season."

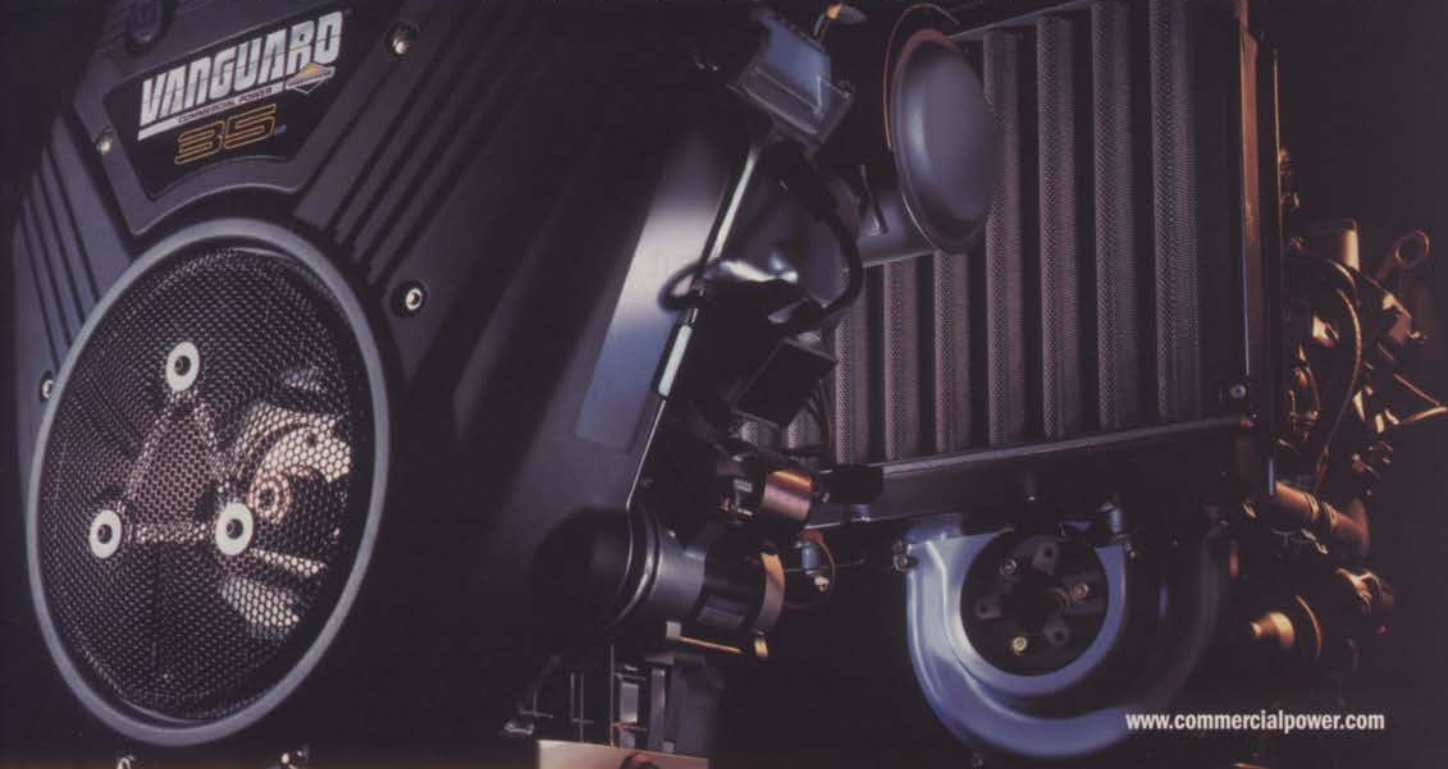
Read it or weep

How can you prevent damage to a system that may cost more to repair than an exploded engine? Yes, read both the operator's and service manuals. What's the recommended change interval? Is there an early initial change interval on a new piece of equipment? Do it. As the new system breaks in, dirt, small pieces of seals, paint and other foreign material gets into the hydraulic oil. Changing the oil and filter removes these materials. Follow the recommend hour intervals, or even accelerate the change intervals if the machine is in severe service. If you do not have an hour meter, get one. Lithium battery-powered stick-on meters are available that turn on in the presence of an ignition signal (Briggs & Stratton is one supplier for these). The unit doesn't even have to have a cranking battery.

No excuses. The hydraulic oil is the life blood of the drive system. Change it and keep your equipment healthy.

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

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I'm always on the lookout for the latest and greatest. Send me an e-mail with your favorite new technologies.



Tech tools you can afford

BY TYLER WHITAKER

Technology guys get all types of questions. I get my fair share. The one I get most is, "What technology would you recommend?" Here are some tips that you can use in your business today.

Some great values are out there for low-cost computers now. In the last couple of years, computer hardware has increased in functionality faster than the software can take advantage of it. These advancements have dropped prices for typical office computers. You can buy \$600 computers that can handle all of your basic needs. Consider buying the service and support plan, especially for employees who are in remote or home offices and have little computer experience. It's good insurance.

Here are some minimum requirements to get you started:

- ▶ Pentium 4
- ▶ 512 MB RAM
- ▶ 40 GB hard drive
- ▶ DVD / CD
- ▶ 10/100 network card
- ▶ 17-in. monitor (desktop)
- ▶ Window XP Professional
- ▶ Service / support agreement

Wireless access port

Buying a wireless access port will let your wireless-enabled laptop connect anywhere within range of the access port. Just plug it into your existing network and you can take your laptop and work anywhere in the office. There's a lot of confusion about which protocol to use.

You will want 802.11g, which features backward compatibility and has a maximum bandwidth of 54 Mbps (roughly 5 times the speed of most local area networks and more than 960 times the speed of dialup).

High-speed Internet

In the past, Internet connections came in two flavors, 28.8 or 56k. Today's options include digital subscriber line (DSL), cable modems and broadband connections to name a few. These connections are 20 to 60 times the speed of regular dialup.

Internet faxing

Did you know that you can now rent a fax number on the Internet? All you need is an Internet connection and the ability to e-mail. Faxes come in on a number assigned to you by the hosting company and you can view and print them from anywhere. To send a fax, just e-mail the document to the server with the fax number as part of the e-mail address.

USB flash drive

One of my favorite gadgets is the Universal Serial Bus (USB) flash drive. It's basically a memory stick with a USB connector on one end. You can store up to 1 gigabyte of information. These are great for moving large files between work and home, or for taking presentations to your customer's office.

I'm always on the lookout for the latest and greatest. Send me an e-mail describing your favorite new technologies and gadgets.

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

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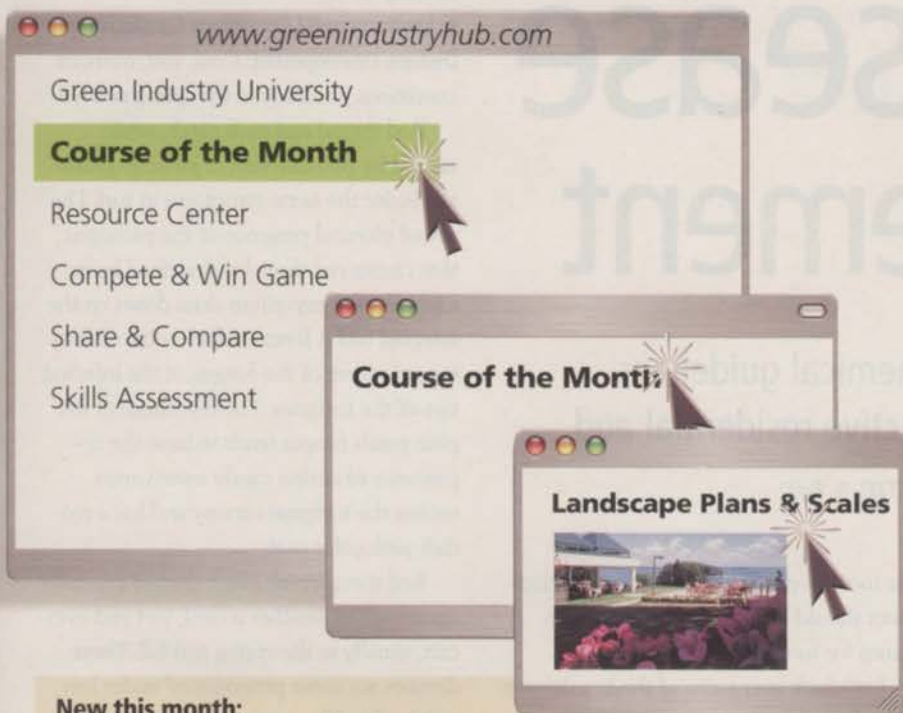
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- Estimating from landscape plans
- Useful calculations
- Sample problems

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This course shows how to specify in detail for product selection, planting techniques, maintenance requirements, soil preparation, excavation and more.

Anyone new to making landscape plans will find this course useful because it explains how to estimate quantities such as amounts of concrete, sod, plants, piping, edging and other materials used in landscapes.

A series of typical calculations for linear measurements, areas, irregular shapes and volume are explained and serve as useful reference for experienced designers and those new to it.

To make sure you have understood the concepts, a review test of several sample calculation problems reinforces the presentations.

As a manager, you can assign *Landscape Plans & Scales* to all appropriate employees who also have Premium subscriber access and also monitor their progress as they learn.



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Turf disease management

Follow these cultural and chemical guidelines for healthier and more attractive residential and commercial lawns

BY HENRY WETZEL III, PH.D.

Turfgrass diseases can be difficult to manage. The pathogens (most are fungi) are microscopic and generally present in all soils. Almost all turfgrasses to some degree are susceptible to pathogens. Conducive environmental conditions allow pathogen colonization and reproduction to occur on a susceptible turfgrass, then disease symptoms develop.

Environmental conditions vary from year to year. This makes it difficult to decide which fungicides to include in your pest management plan. Fungicides don't provide the longevity of control of, for example, a pre-emergence crabgrass material that is, in many cases, applied once and provides several months of control. Plant pathogenic fungal populations, under the right conditions, have a much greater reproduction potential when compared to the weed seed banks within the soil. Some fungicides have as little as five to seven days of residual activity, whereas others can provide protection up to 28 days.

This presents the challenge of working fungicide programs into the traditional lawn care "rounds" system. Even so, clients demanding high quality lawns throughout

the months conducive to disease development should be willing to pay the premium for fungicide applications.

Let's look over some of the key diseases of both cool- and warm-season turfgrasses, key symptoms to scout for, and cultural and chemical recommendations to minimize disease damage to lawn grasses.

RED THREAD / PINK PATCH

► **Pathogens:** *Laetisaria fuciformis* and *Limonomyces roseipellis*

► **Primary Hosts:** Perennial ryegrass,

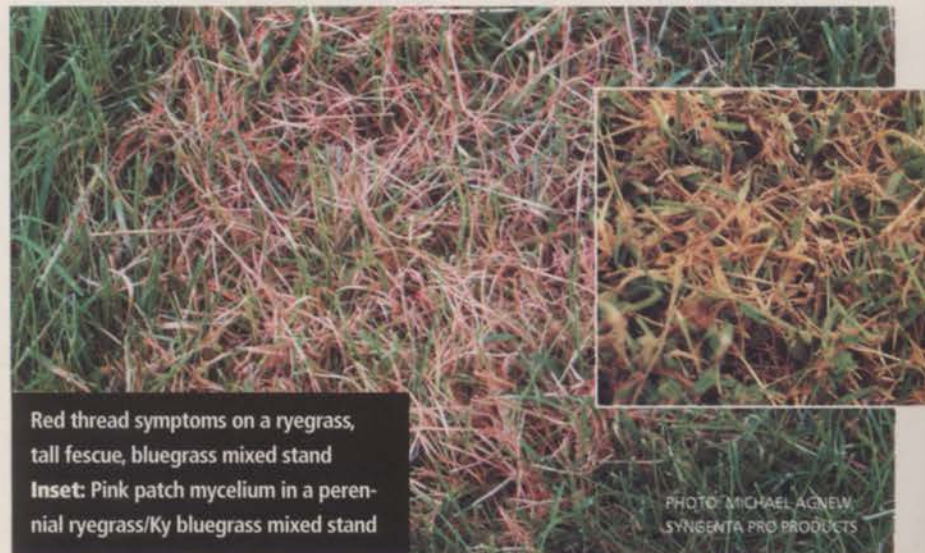
Kentucky bluegrass, creeping red fescue and tall fescue

► **Environmental Conditions Conducive to Disease Development:** Cool, wet, overcast conditions primarily in the spring and fall.

Red thread and pink patch, while caused by two different organisms, generally incite the same symptoms in turf. The actual physical presence of the pathogen that causes red thread is described by its name. As the mycelium dries down on the infected turf it forms red sclerotia, or resting structures of the fungus, at the infected tips of the turfgrass. The mycelium of the pink patch fungus tends to have the appearance of cotton candy intertwined within the turfgrass canopy and has a reddish pink color to it.

Red thread/pink patch disease generally occurs when weather is cool, wet and overcast, usually in the spring and fall. These diseases are more pronounced under low soil fertility. The application of a balanced fertilizer can greatly reduce disease severity. However, these diseases can also be troublesome in soils managed under moderate to high soil fertility. In that case, if environmental conditions persist, one to two fungicide applications should minimize the severity of the diseases.

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Red thread symptoms on a ryegrass, tall fescue, bluegrass mixed stand
Inset: Pink patch mycelium in a perennial ryegrass/Ky bluegrass mixed stand

PHOTO: MICHAEL AGNEW,
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THE SCIENCE OF COMMON SENSE.

FUNGICIDE CLASS/ GROUP CODE ¹	COMMON NAME	TRADE NAME(S) ²	TURF DISEASES CONTROLLED
Quinone Outside Inhibitors (QOI's); Group 11	azoxystrobin	Heritage, Heritage TL	BP ³ , FR, GLS, LP, LS/MO, NRS, PB, RT/PP, Rusts, SDS, SP
	pyraclostrobin	Insignia ⁴	BP, FR, GLS, LS/MO, PB, RT/PP, Rust, SP
	trifloxystrobin	Compass	BP, GLS, LS/MO, RT/PP, Rust, SP
Sterol Biosynthesis Inhibitors (SBI's); Group 3	fenarimol	Rubigan	BP, DS, NRS, RT/PP, SUS, SP
	myclobutanil	Eagle, Immunox, Lawn Disease Granules	BP, DS, LP, LS/MO, NRS, RT/PP, Rusts, SDS, SP
	propiconazole	Banner MAXX, Propiconazole Pro, Quali-Pro, Propiconazole 14.3, Spectator, Tenacity	BP, DS, GLS, LP, LS/MO, NRS, RT/PP, Rust, SDS, SP
	triadimefon	Bayleton, Bayer Fungus Control for Lawns	BP, DS, GLS, LP, RT/PP, rust, SP
Polyoxins; Group 19	polyoxin D	Endorse	BP, LP, LS/MO, RT/PP
Benzanilide; Group 7	flutolanil	ProStar	BP, FR, LP, RT/PP
Benzimidazole; Group 1	thiophanate methyl	Cledarys 3336, Quali-Pro TM 4.5, Scott's Lawn Fungus Control, SysTec 1998, Tee-Off, T-Storm	BP, DS, GLS, LP, LS/MO, NRS, RT/PP, Rusts, SDS, SP
EBDC; Group Y	mancozeb	Fore, Dithane, Pentathlon, Protect	BP, DS, GLS, LS/MO, PB, RT/PP, Rusts
Phenylpyrrole; Group 12	fludioxonil	Medallion	BP, GLS, LS/MO, SP
Carbamate; Group X	propamocarb hydrochloride	Banol	PB, PDO
Phenylamides; Group 4	mefanoxazm	Sudue MAXX, Mefanoxam 2	PB, PDO
Phosphonate; Group Y	fosetyl-Al	Aliette, Chipco Signature, Prodigy	PB, PDO
	phosphorus acid	Alude, Magellan	PB, PDO

¹ Fungicides within a class share a common biochemical mode of action and cross-resistance potential. Good fungicide resistance management practices suggest rotating products among the different fungicide classes, not within a class. Group codes have been designated by the Fungicide Resistance Action Committee (FRAC) and will be posted on the front page of all U.S. EPA registered fungicide labels to easily tell applicators the similarities among fungicides within the same group as it pertains to fungicide resistance.

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³ Abbreviations for turf diseases: BP (brown patch), DS (dollar spot), FR (fairy ring), GLS (gray leaf spot), LP (large patch), LS/MO (leaf spot/melting-out), NRS (necrotic ring spot), PB (Pythium blight), PDO (Pythium damping off), RT/PP (red thread/pink patch), SDS (spring dead spot), SP (summer patch).

⁴ Insignia is not registered for use on commercial or residential lawns in CA.

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DOLLAR SPOT

► **Pathogen:** *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa*

► **Primary Hosts:** All cool- and warm-season turfgrass species

► **Environmental Conditions Conducive to Disease**

Development: warm days and cool nights primarily in the late spring through early fall.

Under close mowing conditions the disease lives up to its name. Small spots, the size of a quarter to a silver dollar, develop that will coalesce and cause damage to larger areas especially in lawn grasses that require a higher cut. Once spots coalesce, the distinct symptom on the leaf blade is an hourglass lesion. The center is bleached and the borders tan. Foliar mycelium can be observed on these lesions in the early morning hours following a shower or heavy dew on the turfgrass.

Ky bluegrass leaves with dollar spot lesions



Daytime temperatures is the upper 70s to low 80s F, and evening temperatures in the low to mid 60s F favor dollar spot disease development.

Disease epidemics develop with wet soil conditions and lingering dew. Irrigate between 4 and 8 a.m. to knock nutrients off of the leaf surface. Positive pressure forms in the root system and moves small amounts of nutrients up through the xylem vessels. Removing these nutrients off the leaves with irrigation takes energy from the fungus and slows its colonization rate. On warm-season turfgrasses the disease is primarily active when the host isn't actively growing. This may be when grass is just beginning to grow after winter dormancy, or as the grass prepares for dormancy, or when growth slows as it approaches winter. On cool-season grasses the disease can persist all summer.

Research suggests that dollar spot is generally more severe under low soil nitrogen. However, even under moderate to high soil nitrogen, this disease can be problematic. The SBIs and benzimidazoles are the best fungicides for disease control. Both classes of fungicides perform best if applied before disease symptoms appear. Rotation between these two classes delays the development of resistant strains of *S. homoeocarpa*.

BROWN PATCH

- ▶ **Pathogen:** *Rhizoctonia solani*
- ▶ **Primary Hosts:** Perennial ryegrass, tall fescue
- ▶ **Environmental Conditions Conducive to Disease Development:** Warm days and cool nights primarily early summer through early fall.

Patches generally occur in the size of a softball up

to two feet in diameter. During the early morning under high humidity, the disease may reveal foliar mycelium in a circular patch. The mycelium may take on a grayish cast around the border of the patch. This is called a smoke ring. Close inspection of the

leaves may show tan, water-soaked lesions that are irregular in shape. The lesions tend to have a chocolate brown border. Over-time the patches will coalesce into large areas of blighted turf.

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Circle 159

evening temperatures consistently reach into the mid to upper 60s F and day highs are in the mid to upper 80s F and there's shower activity. Again, schedule irrigation for early morning. Wet the root zone but avoid keeping the thatch/foilage wet very long. Apply most of the fertilizer in the fall, limiting spring applications to green up, and light applications of 0.25 to 0.5 lb. N per 1,000 sq. ft. every two to four weeks during the summer. This will help turfgrass recover from brown patch epidemics. Consider using fungicides preventively in areas with historically high brown patch pressure. The two classes of fungicides that are the strongest on brown patch are the Qols and the benzimidazole (ProStar). Two to four fungicide applications may be necessary to maintain high quality turf when managing brown patch disease in the Mid-Atlantic

and Southeast.

Considerable progress has been made in selecting tall fescue varieties with improved tolerance to *R. solani*. Dr. Melodee Fraser, Director of Research – East for Pure Seed Testing, Inc., evaluates and selects tall fescue progeny screened under conditions conducive to brown patch disease development. Her test plots are located in Rolesville, NC. Recent variety introductions from her program include Tar Heel, Wolfpack and Endeavor.

LARGE PATCH

- ▶ **Pathogen:** *Rhizoctonia solani* AG2-2LP
- ▶ **Primary Hosts:** bermudagrass, zoysiagrass, centipedegrass and St. Augustinegrass
- ▶ **Environmental Conditions Conducive to Disease Development:** High soil moisture



Brown patch in tall fescue. Excellent picture of symptoms, aerial mycelium and its common "smoke ring"

content as turf slows down in growth or enters dormancy in the fall through mid spring or until the turf resumes optimal growth.

Large patch is restricted to warm-season grasses including bermudagrass, zoysiagrass, centipedegrass and St. Augustinegrass. This is a disease primarily of the stolons and lower leaf sheaths. It tends to occur in the same area year after year. Patches can be several feet to yards in diameter and generally visible in the spring. Infected turf will have a yellowish-orange cast to it at the outer edge of the patch. Sometimes, you

continued on page 62



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can pull the youngest leaf tissue very easily out of the leaf sheaths. Generally, the leaf sheaths closest to the stolons of the plant will appear water soaked.

Bermudagrass is least affected by large patch disease. Once conditions are optimum for disease growth in the spring, the plant can rapidly outgrow the pathogen. However, the disease may persist for several months on other warm-season turf species since they don't grow as vigorously as bermudagrass. Poor soil drainage, excessive shade and too much water-soluble nitrogen toward the end of the growing season enhance large patch. Don't over-irrigate in the fall, winter and early spring when the turfgrass isn't actively growing.

Large patch is perennial in nature. In cases where you can't correct soil moisture or sunlight duration, the use of fungicides may be warranted when maintaining zoysiagrass, centipedegrass or St. Augustinegrass. Once symptoms appear in the spring, fungicides tend to perform poorly as a curative. Generally, fungicides perform best if applied preventively in the early fall. One to two applications on a 28-day application interval of either the QoI (Heritage or Heritage TL) or the benzimidazole (ProStar) most effectively manage large patch.



The green plot is "Gray Star" and the brown plot is "Applaud" perennial ryegrasses. This is to demonstrate that plant host resistance is being found to manage gray leaf spot disease.

GRAY LEAF SPOT

► **Pathogen:**

Pyricularia grisea

► **Primary Hosts:**

Perennial ryegrass, tall fescue and St. Augustinegrass

► **Environmental Conditions Conducive to Disease Development:**

In perennial ryegrass and tall fescue, this disease is one of the last to be seen in lawns (mid-July through early October). It's more severe following long periods of drought stress. In St. Augustinegrass, the disease is most active in late spring through mid summer following high humidity and rainfall. Newly sodded or sprigged areas are most susceptible.

Brown or gray leaf spots with a yellow halo around them signal the early stages of the disease. This is especially true of tall fescue and St. Augustinegrass. In perennial ryegrass stands, leaves may have a twisted, water-soaked or velvety appearance in the morning. In perennial ryegrass, large areas of turf will appear to be wilting even under good soil moisture conditions. Under the right environmental conditions turf will die in a matter of days. This fungus

Large patch symptoms in common centipedegrass

can produce large quantities of airborne inoculum in the forms of spores, which is why lawn devastation can occur so quickly.

Mid to late summer into the early fall provide conditions most conducive for the disease in ryegrass and tall fescue. Gray leaf spot is most active in St. Augustine in late spring through mid summer.

It's believed that the cycling of wetting and drying the turfgrass canopy (making conditions favorable for spore production and dispersal) can enhance the severity of the disease. Irrigate deeply and infrequently. Avoid significant amounts of water-soluble nitrogen during these times; the fungus thrives under lush, high nitrogen fertility.

Fungicides may be necessary during the first year for the establishment of St. Augustinegrass lawns from sprigs or sod since nitrogen and water requirements will be higher, creating conditions conducive for disease development. In perennial ryegrass and tall fescue, brown patch may be present at the same time as gray leaf spot. Consider a preventive fungicide program for managing gray leaf spot as well as brown patch. The QoI and benzimidazole fungicide classes are the best on gray leaf spot.

The fungus that causes gray leaf spot, *Pyricularia grisea*, has developed resistance to the QoI fungicide class in some locations. When using the QoI fungicides in a preventive spray program rotate with thiophanate methyl, propiconazole, triadimefon, fludioxonil or mancozeb. **LM**

— The author is a plant pathologist with Syngenta at its Vero Beach, FL, Research Center. Contact him at henry.wetzel@syngenta.com.

LM
WebLink
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For more advice from Dr. Henry Wetzel on turf selection for disease control and integrating disease control into your programs, visit www.landscapemanagement.net

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SNOW & ICE GUIDE



INSIDE

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Editorial staff

Editor-in-Chief	RON HALL / 440/891-2636 / rhall@advanstar.com
Managing Editor	STEPHANIE RICCA / 440/891-2623 / sricca@advanstar.com
On-Line Content Editor	LYNNE BRAKEMAN / 440/826-2869 / lbrakeman@advanstar.com
Senior Science Editor	KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D. / danneberger1@osu.edu
Group Editor	VERNON HENRY / 440/826-2829 / vhenry@advanstar.com
Corp. Creative Director	LISA LEHMAN / 440/891-2785 / llehman@advanstar.com
Art Director	CARRIE PARKHILL / 440/891-3101 / cparkhill@advanstar.com

Reader advisory panel

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Business staff

Publisher	KEVIN STOLTMAN / 440/891-2772 / kstoltman@advanstar.com
Admin. Coordinator	MINDY MOCZULSKI / 440/891-2734 / mmoczulski@advanstar.com
Production Manager	JILL HOOD / 218/723-9129 / jhood@advanstar.com
Production Director	RHONDA SANDE / 218/723-9536 / rsande@advanstar.com
Circulation Manager	JESSICA BORGREN / 218/723-9356 / jborgren@advanstar.com
Asst. Circulation Manager	MELISSA FEIRO / 218/723-9431 / mfeiro@advanstar.com
Green Book Coordinator	CANDACE HAUSAUER / 218/723-9175 / chausauer@advanstar.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@advanstar.com
National Account Manager	GEORGE CASEY / 440/891-3146 Fax: 440/891-2675 gcasey@advanstar.com
Account Manager	MICHAEL HARRIS / 440/891-3118 Fax: 440/891-2675 mharris@advanstar.com
Account Executive	LESLIE MONTGOMERY / 440/891-3199 Fax: 440/826-2865 lmontgomery@advanstar.com
Classifieds	BRIAN OLESINSKI / 440/891-2694 Fax: 440/826-2865 bolesinski@advanstar.com

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Mid-spring slam **job**

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

Low pressure squatted over Lake Erie's western basin and spun curtains of wet snow as far southeast as the Appalachians. Heavy snow. Bough-busting snow. Heart attack-shoveling snow.

It's April 24th for crying out loud.

Enough. Enough. Enough.

Six inches of the white stuff flatten the tulips and silence the nesting killdeer in my backyard. We're lucky. Further east, the storm checkerboards the Cleveland suburbs with 10, 12 and a few reporting as much as 16 inches of snow. Winter's last capricious trick — coming as it does a mere week after blue skies and 80 F. temperatures — seems a fitting finale to a snow season that began with an equally dramatic Christmas Eve storm.

Our mid-spring storm reminds us of one of the big challenges of being a landscape professional who also provides snow services. Or, visa versa, of being a snow pro who does landscaping. Snow and ice don't wait for anybody's convenience. Early-fall or mid-spring events can swoop down upon us when we're ramping to full landscape production. This can be a huge disruption to our schedules and it can strain our workers.

But the cash it can generate is sweet indeed.

How efficiently can you shift from full-bore mowing or installation to snow and ice management when you get slammed with a freaky out-of-season event? Do you have systems in place, checklists and procedures for breaking down your equipment and getting it into action? How about your workers? Your subs?

The other key to profiting from the out-of-season storm is pricing. Many experienced snow pros hedge their bets with a combination of seasonal contracts, with monthly charges whether there's an event or not (your clients should view it as insurance), and pay-per-occurrence customers, usually at a higher rate.

Beyond that, smart snow pros spell out exactly what's expected of their services and, of course, any price adjustments for unusually heavy or wet snows. We're talking contracts here. **LM**

Beware these hidden costs

BY RON HALL / Editor-in-Chief

The most difficult challenge to providing commercial snow and ice management services isn't the work. More often than not, it's earning a reasonable profit for performing this difficult and necessary work.

Even so, many experienced contractors make good money at it. The difference between them and operators that don't enjoy 25% or higher net snow profits is that successful contractors recognize and manage costs, many of them lurking in the shadows, associated with these services.

Let's start with obvious expenses — payroll, equipment payments and insurance to name a few. These are easy to figure. But there are other costs, profit destroyers. And landscape company owner Chris James, even after two decades in the business, still battles them just like you do.

James bought his landscape company, Chris James Landscaping, in 1981. He's been providing commercial snow services almost for as long. His headquarters are in Midland Park, NJ, about 25 miles northwest of New York City, and his market area typically gets 25 to 30 inches of snow annually.

James counts on his snow services to

New Jersey landscape/snow pro reveals where your winter profits might be melting away

provide more than just cash flow. He counts on it to help fuel his company's overall growth too.

He provides most of its snow services with his own employees. About half of them work year-round and do winter landscape chores when conditions permit. James admits the price he charges for his snow services are near the top of the price range for his area. But, considering the costs associated with the work and the high quality snow and ice service he provides, they're justified, he says.

James is conservative when it comes to projecting his company's annual snow income — about 75% of a "normal" winter's snow revenue. Unpredictability is the main reason.

Weather, labor, equipment

James can easily tick off a dozen variables in offering snow services. But, just like the landscape business, they fall into three main categories — weather, labor and the use of mechanized equipment — big, expensive equipment.

It's the equipment piece of the snow puzzle that often gives contractors their bitterest business lessons. They learn that

the price tag on that new truck or loader is just the start. Then begins the expenses resulting from vehicle and equipment operations, cleaning, maintenance, repair and replacement. The ongoing, never-get-out-of-your-face costs.

Watch out for these

For starters, says James, if you're using pickup trucks in your snow work, you'll almost certainly have to buy 4-wheel-drive trucks, adding several thousand dollars to each vehicle's initial purchase price. Count on fuel costs for plowing snow to be almost double what you can expect from your landscape work as well.

"If you're in the landscape business and you're spending \$1,500 or \$2,000 a year maintaining your equipment, when you get in the snow business you might as well double that figure," he adds.

James explains that some equipment costs are fixed. "About the same amount of equipment is used whether you have a good or bad winter," he says. "If I use a plow 12 to 15 times a winter and a guy in south Jersey uses the same type of plow three times, it still costs both of us the

continued on page s4

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continued from page s2
same amount of money to buy it."

However, many equipment expenses aren't fixed. That's where contractors can enter the danger zone.

"I typically find that for every hour

that we push, plow and melt snow, we'll have another hour of what I call general conditions. This is cleanup, setup, prep time and repair work," says James. "You have to build that time into your price.

"In a normal winter, for example, you

might have 1,000 labor hours of actually pushing snow, shoveling it and salting it. You'll also have close to 1,000 hours of general condition time. Obviously this ratio goes down the more it snows. If you have three or four days of snow in a row, you're going to have more billable hours and less hours going toward general condition," he continues.

There are so many more variables when it comes to snow.

"If it snows on Monday, you're not going to wash the truck on Tuesday if you're going to use it again on Wednesday. But when there's no snow forecast for a week, we typically clean it all up, powerwash it, grease and oil it and get it ready and then it sits there."

But, the overriding variable in providing snow services is the unpredictability of winter weather.

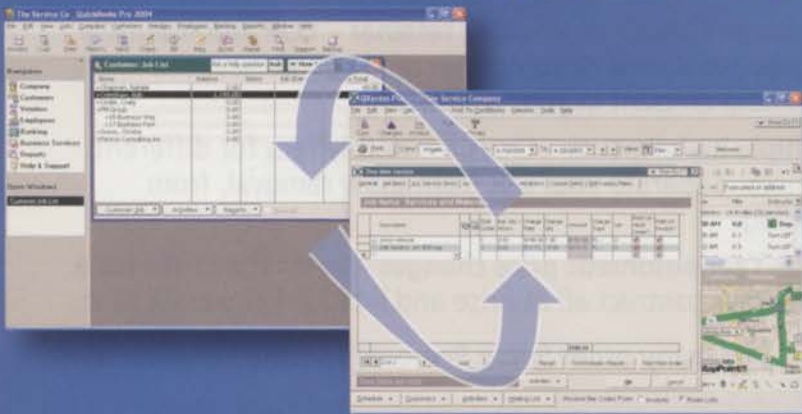
"It's not like grounds maintenance where we say that we're going to have 28 to 30 mowings per season, and we'll also do spring and fall cleanups and some prunings," says James. "With maintenance I can pretty much look at our existing clients and estimate how many new ones we will get and add a certain percentage – say 10%, 15% or 20% – for growth, and be within a few percentage points by the end of the year," says James. "There are so many more variables when it comes to snow."

Providing snow and ice management services is one of the most valuable services you can provide your clients. It allows their businesses to open. It allows homeowner clients to get to work. Before putting a price on delivering productivity, accessibility and safety for your clients, make sure you understand its many uncertainties and costs. **LJM**



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Train for teamwork

A fall rundown of snow removal equipment, policies and procedures keeps operations running smooth when winter hits

Maintenance people typically feel a keen obligation to the traveling public. They have a kind of esprit de corps that comes only with training and experience.

Proper training for snowfighting is vital. It provides the know-how to get the job done and encouragement to perform in a way that brings praise rather than discredit to your organization.

Many snow and ice removal organizations conduct training courses in the early fall to ensure that:

- ▶ Equipment operators fully understand how to operate and maintain plows, spreaders, loaders and other equipment used for winter maintenance.
- ▶ All employees are thoroughly familiar with their responsibilities.
- ▶ All employees receive a full review of snow removal schedules, snow routes and personnel and equipment assigned.
- ▶ Dry runs are made over areas to be covered during actual snowfighting operations.
- ▶ All employees understand how salt works in snow and ice so they know

how, when and in what amounts it should be applied.

The underlying theme of all training sessions should be the Sensible Salting concept, which includes:

- ▶ Proper covered storage
- ▶ Good maintenance of storage areas
- ▶ Good equipment maintenance and knowledge of equipment
- ▶ Proper spreader calibration
- ▶ Proper salt application
- ▶ Concern for the environment as well as the public's safety

Why have a fall training meeting?

A session on snow and ice removal well ahead of winter gives your team a chance to discuss plans with the people expected to carry them out. This meeting is a refresher course on snowfighting tactics for experienced employees and an introduction to winter maintenance techniques for new personnel.

This meeting gives management a chance to formally review the previous winter's operation with operators and

continued on page 58

Suggested program outline for fall training sessions

The Salt Institute in Alexandria, VA, offers the following program outline of topics to cover in fall snowfighting training sessions. If your employees are up-to-date on equipment, procedures and safety, they won't miss a beat when the white stuff starts coming down.

The importance of coordination

- Know your plowing and spreading routes

- Effective radio communication
- The storm warning system
- Working with police, public agencies and the media

Equipment operation and maintenance

- Plows
- Spreaders and their controls
- Loaders
- Emergency repair and refueling stations

continued on page 58

AN OPEN LETTER

To the Snow and Ice Professional:

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From the time Pro-Tech entered into the Snow and Ice industry, we realized that we would have the greatest connection to the true professionals in the industry. They would be best able to relate to our company, its ideals and way of doing business.

Integrity has been the benchmark of our business plan and regardless of the nature of our competitors, business challenges or economic environment we stand above by proving that in the end the professional always wins. It is with this in mind that we continue to focus our business and have come to realize that Pro-Tech's customers represent these same ideals.

A snow and ice professional is one who can call themselves an expert in their business and has the knowledge to back that claim. A professional approaches their customer with a combination of honesty and confidence, knowing they will deliver quality for a fair price. The professional never apologizes for what they charge whether the most expensive or the least, because there is never a doubt as to whether value is being delivered. Innovations, striving to be better and to grow the business for the right reasons are constants in the mind of a professional.

Pro-Tech believes that our quest to do business with the professional in the industry is a long term approach. It will endure because our customers will also be there with us in the long run. There are many who talk the talk of a professional but much less can walk the walk. Pro-Tech chooses to do business with the true professional and we hope that the true professional will continue to choose Pro-Tech.

Respectfully,

Michael P. Weagley
Michael P. Weagley
President

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continued from page s6
supervising personnel. Use it to determine what may have gone wrong last winter, then make corrections.

Promote a free exchange of ideas at the fall meeting. Encourage all person-

nel to speak up. New ideas and better tactics can come out of this session. **LWM**

— Reprinted with permission from the Salt Institute, Alexandria, VA. For more information call 703/549-4648 or visit www.saltinstitute.org.

The underlying theme of all training sessions should be the Sensible Salting concept.

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■ Preventive maintenance

Application procedures

- How salt works
- How and when to salt
- Application rates
- Special storm conditions
- Deicing problems (bridges, elevated curves, ramps, intersections)
- When to re-apply salt

Review of winter maintenance policy

- Snow emergency routes
- Parking ordinances
- Procedures for helping motorists

On-the-job safety

- Safety equipment
- Safety practices

Discussion, questions and answers

To ensure that your department is ready for winter, consider having superintendents or foremen complete a checklist showing their progress in pre-winter preparation.

The Transportation Association of Canada has produced a useful Synthesis of best practices in training, a Salt SMART training program and a train-the-trainer guide on how to best use the materials. All are available free on the TAC Web site, www.tac-atc.ca/.

Review winter maintenance operations in the spring to provide time to update the equipment, plans and policies, and translate timely observations and suggestions into effective improvements.

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Plowing "by the book"

Pre-planning allows you to create visual instructions and reminders that reduce accidents and impress clients

BY WAYNE VOLZ

Nobody's memory is perfect. People forget things, and when the snow is flying and conditions are difficult, our drivers' minds are occupied with taking care of business. That's why it's a good idea to create "snow books" and have one in each of your snow trucks.

This book shows the accounts that each driver will be servicing. It contains personal contacts (including cell numbers), special hours of operation if applicable and pictures of all your properties. Don't get fancy. Keep it simple.

First things first

It should contain your customers' wishes based on these questions:

- ▶ Do you need access 24/7 during snow & ice events?
- ▶ Are you open Monday through Friday only?
- ▶ Do you have weekend hours?
- ▶ Are you open holidays?
- ▶ Any special instructions?

Take pictures of any obstacles, speed bumps or other potential hazards. Keep the pictures in alphabetical order in the book so the driver can access it quickly. The book provides specific information about each location, including its layout.

A different view

Many times when you look at a property at one time of the year and return to plow the snow months later it's easy to forget particular hazards. Once you get a heavy snowfall, much of the property starts looking the same. You have no idea where things are located under the drifts. Pictures will help you plow your properties without fear of damaging something you cannot see. Property repairs are costly.

Certain locations will require more site preparation than others. This includes locating drains, recognizing hazards and installing markers as needed. The following are some specific sites and suggestions:

- ▶ **Driveways:** Mark them at the end near the road and approximately every 50 feet unless there is a change in the direction of the area to be plowed closer to that.

▶ **Subdivisions, patio homes, condos:** Mark the entrances at the edges of the road. You may also want to use these markers on the curbs of any courts or islands within the areas to be plowed. This will give you a guide to use in the event of a deep snow.

▶ **Parking lots, malls and similar areas:** Mark any areas that may seem confusing when they get six or more inches of snow. This amount of snow will cover most curbs and parking stoppers.

In all these situations the costs associated with the markers and the time necessary to properly mark the hazards will save your company time and money in the future.

Take the time necessary to provide this service for your customers. This procedure will not only eliminate your potential for an accident but will also save you the time and money associated with the downtime of those accidents.

Your company will appear (and be) more professional, thus enhancing your company's image and perceived value.

Create "snow books" and have one in each of your snow trucks.

One final point. Use this book as a selling tool with customers. It shows them that you're a professional and that you have concern for their individual property and its unique features. **LM**

— The author operates Wayne's Lawn Service, Inc., Louisville, KY, and has 26 years in lawn care and with snow services. Through his Profits Unlimited division, he offers a range of profit-building publications plus consulting services. Visit www.profitsareus.com.

New products



Mini but mighty

Here's a mini tailgate spreader from Boss that needs little to no physical effort to attach/detach whether the spreader is full or empty, reports the company. The Boss Snowplow SmartHitch 1100 Mini Tailgate Spreader is designed to apply dry, free-flowing materials such as salt and other de-icers on driveways, parking lots and roads.

For more information contact Boss at 906/776-3511 or www.bossplow.com

Clear the way

Avalanche improved the positioning of its side braces to provide greater resistance to buckling and eliminate the likelihood of trapping snow on its snowplow line. The Steel Trip Edge plows clear icy, hard-packed snow



and the reversible steel edge enables the operator to clear the area to the bare pavement. Recently Avalanche added Push Plates to the receiver of every applicable model in order to prevent the bucket edge from scraping the channel support while providing load distribution.

For more information contact Avalanche at 800/232-6950 or www.avalancheplow.com



Here's the scoop

The concave shape of the Hiniker Scoop Plow provides greater capacity, less spillage, and faster, more efficient plowing, according to the company. The plow's 20-degree fixed-

angle outer ends help capture snow when clearing lots and parking areas. It angles left and right for conventional plowing applications and is available in 8-ft. and 9-ft. lengths.

For more information contact Hiniker at 507/625-6621 or www.hiniker.com

Snow scheduling software

According to Alocet, QXpress is the scheduling software of choice for snow removal companies using QuickBooks. It is an add-on that turns your accounting package into industry-specific management software by



adding scheduling, job costing and invoicing capabilities without having to learn a new system. A free demonstration is available on the company's Web site.

For more information contact Alocet at 877/529-6659 or www.qxpress.com

Snow/ice crystals au naturelle

FreezGard magnesium chloride crystals from North American Salt quickly attract moisture and turn into a solution that actually does the melting, according to the company. The product's hygroscopic nature has the ability to melt ice down to minus 25° F. It is safe for the environment and is available in 50-lb. poly bags and 2,000-lb tote bags.



For more information contact North American Salt at 913/344-9100 or www.nasalt.com

Attack plan

Fisher's XBlade snowplows combine an X-Bracing design with a corrosion-resistant 12-gauge polished 304 stainless steel moldboard



and powder-coated steel structure. The Xtreme blade curl and 10-in. moldboard overhang promotes snow rolling and "foiling" action, reports the company. It has a 75-degree attack angle for ice breaking and scraping. Blades are available in 7½ -ft., 8-ft., 8½ -ft., and 9-ft. lengths.

For more information contact Fisher at 207/701-4200 or www.fisherplows.com



Where others dare not go

The Ariens 1336 DLE Sno-Thro features a 13-hp Tecumseh OHV Snow King engine and a 12-volt key start standard. A 36-in. clearing width, six forward and two reverse speeds, and a remote deflector control the 1336. Additional qualities include an improved cast iron gear case, new halogen headlight, new quick turn chute rotation and a new remote locking differential.

For more information contact Ariens at 800/472-8359 or www.ariens.com

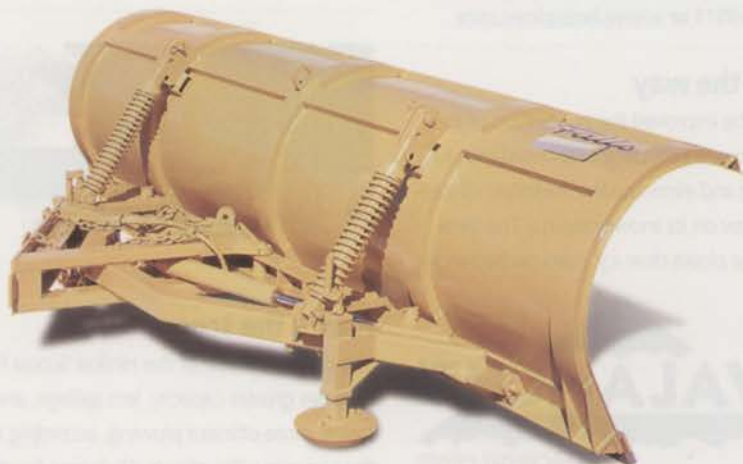
Earning its wings

Blizzard's Speedwing Model 860 has a blade height of 31 in. and a blade cutting edge of 1/2 in. x 6 in. for making quick work of snow



removal. Engineered to fit ¾- and 1-ton trucks, the blade width measures 8 ft. 6 in. and the prow width at full angle is 7 ft.

For more information contact Blizzard at 888/680-8600 or www.blizzardplows.com



Track crews, save money

CLIP software from Sensible Software provides routing, scheduling, estimating and job costing capabilities to save contractors time



and money. The program contains contact management software with all of your customer information and history of services rendered since installing the software. Track crews and time spent on each job/location for analyzing strengths and weaknesses in the service sector. It also produces employee efficiency reports and revenue tracking reports showing the profitability of each job and of each customer.

For more information contact Sensible Software at 800/635-8485 or www.clip.com

Plowing capability ▼

Available in rigid or trip-blade units, the Falls Power Reversible Plow from Little Falls can be used at all operating speeds. They are recommended for clearing airports, highways, city streets and rural roads. The reversible plow can be mounted on trucks, motor graders and wheel loaders.

For more information contact Little Falls at 800/772-PLOW or www.fallsplovs.com



For smaller operations

Here's the Micro Pro 375 tailgate spreader from SnowEx, a division of TrynEx International. It is specifically developed for snow and ice control for smaller contractors and features a heavy-duty material flow gate, maximum torque transmission and low-maintenance engineering, the company reports. The spreader is designed for maintaining roads, parking lots, driveways and recreational paths with a 10-ft. control cable. An optional 20-ft. cable is available.

For more information contact TrynEx at 800/725-8377.

Power plus ▶

Available in 7½ -ft., 8-ft., 8½ -ft., and 9-ft.

blades, the Pro Plus from Western Plows has optional plow wings that add 30% carrying capacity and reduce trail-off, according to the company. There also is an optional back drag edge that is designed to clear snow from tight areas. Nose plate stress is prevented with the 1-in. pivot bolt.

For more information contact Western at 414/354-2310 or www.westernplows.com



Snow be gone!

Designed for high-volume snow removal, Strongbox from Degelman provides double skin construction with extra blade depth and internal reinforcement for structural support. The high volume side plates with patented cone gussets keep wear and tear to a minimum, and a high density rubber cutting edge offers flexibility to clear snow, slush, ice and water without damaging the pavement, reports the company.

For more information contact Degelman at 306/543-4447 or www.degelman.com



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The revolutionary finger-tip controlled Vee Pro bed-mount spreader. Designed for short beds and standard pickup boxes. With a hopper constructed entirely of heavy-duty polyethylene.

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586-756-6555
Patents Pending

SnowEx
LEADERS IN ICE CONTROL

SNOW & ICE GUIDE

Deep snow? No problem

Available in 6-ft. to 8-ft. moldboard widths the Snowman pull plow is designed to eliminate back dragging and turnaround time, according to the manufacturer. The exclusive high lift works well in deep snow and the patented spring trip protects the vehicle and plow while in operation. Another feature is



the 1450-lb. hydraulic pump pressure that helps scrape cleaner.

For more information contact Snowman at 888/766-6267 or

www.snowmansnowplow.com

Walkin' the walk ▲

Orbit Radiant Heating has a new series of control panels for its snow and ice melting systems for use on parking lots, steps, drive-ways, walkways, handicap ramps and patios. The RSMCK series provides up to 200 Amps of power for use with pavement snow and ice sensors on most ground surfaces, including concrete, brick, pavers or asphalt.

For more information contact Orbit at

215/453-9228 or www.orbitmfg.com



Keep it dry

Cover-All Building Systems manufactures clear-span, membrane-covered frame structures including The Legend series, available in widths of 18 ft. to 82 ft. This series is pre-engineered to meet structural requirements for the National Building Codes in Canada and all four model building codes in the United States, reports the company. The polyolefin characteristic of the DuraWeave membrane is inert to corrosive environments, such as composting and salt storage, and the recyclable membrane is not biodegradable. The Gator-shield coating is part of a triple-coated anti-corrosion barrier. The galvanized steel-frame

continued on page s16

Building Storage Solutions With Cover-All



Like Rob, thousands of customers world-wide have discovered why Cover-All® is the building of choice. Why a Cover-All® building? Because the clear-span space is ideal for a multitude of applications. Because Cover-All® buildings can be expanded or relocated to suit changing needs. Because Cover-All® buildings can be installed in less time than traditional buildings to get you up and running fast. Because Cover-All® buildings are right for any job.

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Client: Rob Buchanan, Senior Geo-Scientist

Project Details: Nearly 500,000 square feet of Cover-All buildings for salt sheds and equipment warehouses.

Customer Comments: "The buildings are superior to our old wood storage buildings because we can dump twice as much salt directly inside and away from the moisture."

Rob Buchanan - BC Ministry of Transport



Legend® Series: 18' - 82' wide



TITAN® Series: 30' - 160' wide

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For the ultimate in professional performance, it's the Hiniker Trip-Edge plow. A horizontal-truss frame and laser-cut vertical support

ribs offer incredible strength,

while a heavy-duty poly

moldboard offers

durability, good

looks and low-friction

flow. A high clearance split

trip-edge provides excellent

protection and "no pinch" return.

Available in Conventional Plow, C-Plow

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HEAVY-DUTY STEEL PLOWS

HIGH-PERFORMANCE TRIP-EDGE PLOWS

SNOW & ICE GUIDE

continued from page s14

is fabricated by CWB certified welders and meets the AWS D1.1 standards, says the Cover-All company.

For more information contact Cover-All at 800/268-3768 or call 1-800-268-3768 or www.coverall.net



Customize melting process ▶

FECO presents the Snow Dragon, a state-of-the-art custom snow melter that melts snow from 1 cu. yd. to 6 cu. yd. per minute and eliminates the security and environmental problems associated with other snow melting equipment and products, reports the company. It's available in three sizes, both stationary and mobile, in order to accommodate all users.

For more information contact FECO at 216/531-1599 or www.fecoweb.com

◀ Snow no more

Sno-Way has a 29 Trip-Edge Series snowplow that's 29 in. tall with a 10-in. base trip clearance, four high-load compression springs, the Shock Killer System, and a Stain-



less Steel base. It's available in three different widths and with steel, polycarbonate or stainless steel blade skins. The company also offers its patented Down Pressure System, Wireless Remote Controls and Back Drag Blade as additional options.

For more information contact Sno-Way at 262/673-7200 or www.snoway.com

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Solutions Center

TECHNOLOGY

REAL ANSWERS TO REAL CHALLENGES

Online marketing boosts leads

BY GEOFF KULESA

While consumers have traditionally turned to the Yellow Pages to find landscape contractors, the use of these types of print directories is projected to decrease by approximately 20% over the next four years, says The Kelsey Group, a Princeton, NJ-based market research and consulting firm

In contrast, the Internet is quickly becoming a primary tool for consumers looking for residential contractors. A recent survey by The Kelsey Group and Bizrate.com reveals that 61% of consumers feel the quality of online information is better than that of offline sources, including the print directories.

As more consumers turn to the Internet for local business information, online marketing has become increasingly important for landscaping businesses.

The Problem: wasted dollars

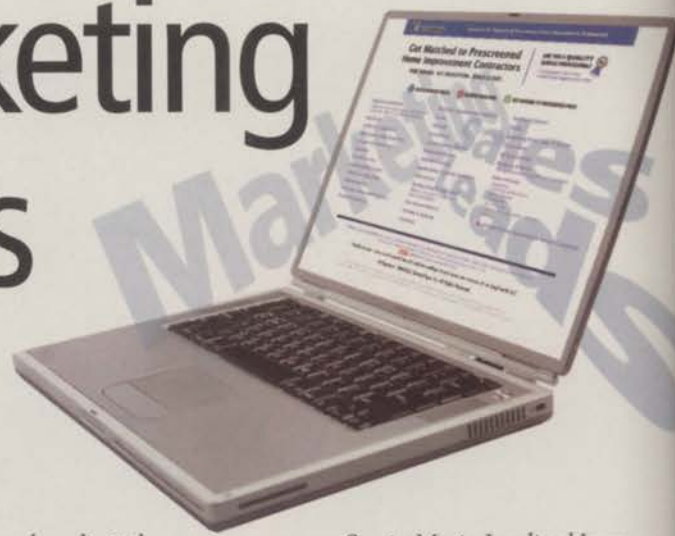
Indeed, many residential contractors are questioning the results they get from print direc-

tory advertising. "While contractors are the ninth largest Yellow Page spenders, their results don't even rank within the top 150," claims Adams Hudson of Hudson, Ink.

Like most residential landscapers, Scott Fairman, Scott Turf Company, Charlotte, NC; and Philip Sarros, The Sarros Company, Cumming, GA, invested their advertising dollars in the print media, fliers, direct mailers and seasonal newspaper promotions. However, these traditional methods of advertising were not producing a strong return on their investment.

The Solution: targeted online marketing

Sarros and Fairman sought a more cost-effective, targeted method of advertising that would result in a better return on investment. They investigated online marketing. However, the reality is that the landscaping business is local and the Internet is not. Creating a personal Web site and purchasing localized keywords through search engines are two techniques to use as part of an online marketing strategy. These options require technical expertise



and can limit the number of consumers who find a particular Web site since limited keywords can be purchased.

Like 5,000 other landscapers and lawn care professionals, Sarros and Fairman turned to ServiceMagic, Inc., an online lead generating service. Consumers use this online service in an effort to limit the time and stress associated with finding residential contractors since the service prescreens its members for state licensing and insurance. Company owners like this since they know they are competing for business only with other professional, licensed businesses.

"My skepticism ended when I received five leads the first day I joined," Sarros says. "The online leads I receive have helped grow my business more than 75%, add another three-man crew and three large pieces of new equipment."

"I thought my other advertising methods were bringing in new business but after joining

ServiceMagic, I realized I was wasting money and canceled all other advertising," says Fairman. "I now realize a third of my customers would rather go online than call contractors out of the Yellow Pages and wait for follow-up calls."

By providing residential landscapers with only those leads that match their work type and geographic preference, online lead generation services match businesses with interested consumers they may not reach with their other marketing initiatives. As a result, owners are able to tap a new client base and have access to a steady flow of their most preferred jobs, enabling them to spend less time and effort prospecting, qualifying and chasing down leads. Instead they have potential jobs come to them. **LM**

—The author is a vice president with ServiceMagic, Inc., an online lead generation service.

For more information visit www.servicemagic.com.



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Sprayers & spreaders



BY CURT HARLER

Buying tips

- ▶ Is it easy to calibrate spray or spread pattern?
- ▶ Wide mouths are easier to fill.
- ▶ This is one place where lots of agitation is good.
- ▶ Check ease of cleanup.
- ▶ Is it easy to change settings?
- ▶ Ascertain the uniformity of spread pattern.
- ▶ Does the unit throw material under trees and shrubs?
- ▶ Check the ergonomics.

Smithco ▲

The Smithco Spray Star 1000 low-profile sprayer offers exclusive hydrostatic drive that eliminates problems of mechanical drive problems, delivering power throughout every speed range. Turning radius allows maneuverability around tight areas. Precise controls for spray application rates plus hydraulic power steering and choice of computerized or manual spray. For more information contact Smithco at 877/833-7648 or www.smithco.com / circle no. 254

BEFCO

Choose 5 models of Hop fertilizer spreaders, all with 47-ft. spread. Smaller 203 model has adjustable ejector spoon to center spread. Larger 209 and 212 have adjustable spreading fins. Turbo-Hop operates with 20- to 60-hp tractors. For more information contact BEFCO at 800/334-6617 or www.befco.com / circle no. 255

Agrimetal

Models are available with an 11-hp or 13-hp Honda gas engine with electric start and 25 ft. of discharge hose; a 20-hp gas engine with 33-ft. hose; or a 3-pt. hitch, pto-version suitable for tractors with 20 or 25 horsepower. Optional deflector, allowing 1-person operation, is available. For more information contact Agrimetal at 919/365-5111 or www.agrimetal.com / circle no. 256

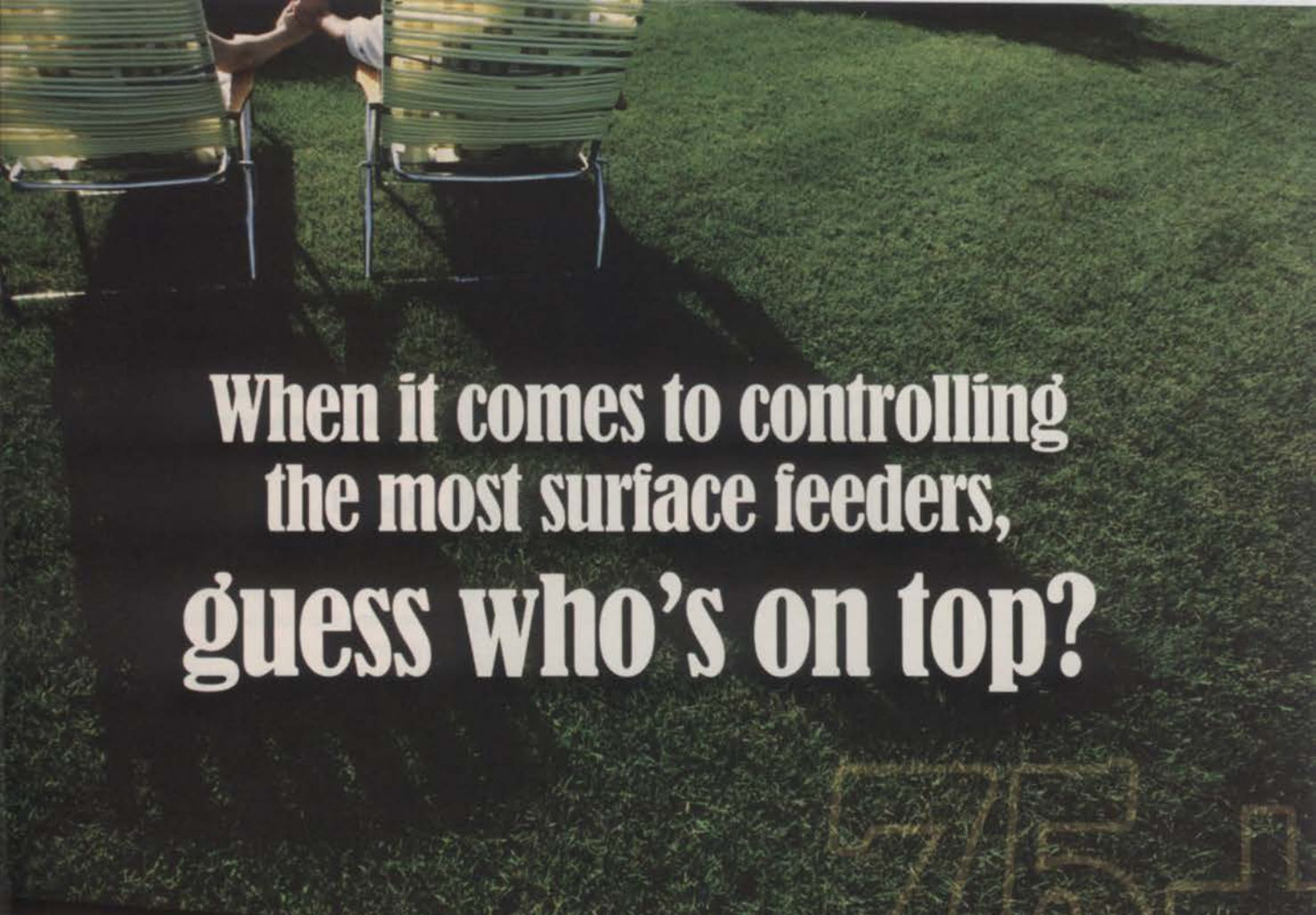
Gregson Clark

The Hy-Lander features a mechanical metering system that meters the fertilizer to the impeller based on ground speed. Regardless of ground speed the correct fertilizer rate is maintained. Powered by Honda 13-hp motor with electric start and 18 amp charging system. For more information contact Gregson-Clark at 800/706-9530 or www.gregsonclark.com / circle no. 257

Agri-Fab

Agri-Fab's 45-0286 is a 45-gallon, 12-volt towable sprayer, featuring a 3-gpm, 12-volt electric pump and quick connect electrical hookup. Its spring-loaded break-away booms spray 160 in. from fine mist to 25-ft. stream. Comes with 15-ft. hose. For more information contact Agri-Fab at 217/728-8388 or www.agri-fab.com / circle no. 258

continued on page 70



When it comes to controlling the most surface feeders, guess who's on top?

Talstar® insecticides. Tough broad-spectrum control of tough surface feeders.

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Talstar insecticides are tough on cutworms, webworms, mole crickets and black turfgrass ataenius. In fact, in field trials* Talstar insecticides out-performed DeltaGard® G and Scimitar® for control of annual bluegrass weevils and black turfgrass ataenius, in some cases, even at lower concentrations.

But Talstar insecticides don't stop at surface feeders. They control over 75 different pests, including all species of ants targeted by LCOs, knocking them out and keeping them out.

Unlike TopChoice®, Talstar insecticides are available in a flowable formulation and your choice of two granular formulations.

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

* Trials conducted by Dr. Steve Alm, University of Rhode Island, 2001; by Dr. Dave Shetlar, Ohio State University, 1999; and by Dr. Dave Shetlar and Dr. Harry Niemczyk, Ohio State University, 1997.

Scimitar is a trademark of Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc. DeltaGard and TopChoice are trademarks of Bayer AG.



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Talstar®

INSECTICIDES





continued from page 68

John Deere

The ProGator Top Dresser features a seamless conveyor belt and a capacity of 19 cubic feet. Its wide stance gives it excellent stability. Available in 23.5-hp diesel and 26-hp gas versions, it comes with a 5-speed, synchronized transmission. The HD300 Sprayer attachment for use with the ProGator Utility Vehicle has an impact-resistant 300-gal. polyethylene spray tank for fewer refills and extended use. Jet agitation ensures tank solution is well mixed.

For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.deere.com / circle no. 259

Gandy

Spike n' Seed Seeder overseeds and aerates in a single pass. Unit has 1220 replaceable steel spikes that give 693 vents per square yard. Hopper is 42 in. wide and can handle 100-125 lbs. of seed. It seeds a 44-in. width.

For more information contact Gandy at 800/443-2476 or www.gandy.net / circle no. 260

Earth & Turf

Model 24D TruFlow push-type topdresser is designed for dry, flowable materials. It offers 3 cu. ft. capacity and a 24-in. wide spreading pattern. There is an 8-in. diameter dispersal drum with adjustable front gate opening. The four-wheel design has 4.80/4.00-8 drive tires and

4.00-6 transport tires.

For more information contact Earth & Turf at 888/693-2638 or www.earthandturf.com / circle no. 261

Andersons

The AccuPro-2000 rotary spreader has 13-in. Turf Saver 2 pneumatic wheels for an easier push. Made with new, thicker-walled, stainless steel frame, it gives an 8-12 foot swath. Front and back lift handles make loading easy. Standard port shut-off control. Tuff-foam grips for comfort.

For more information contact The Andersons at 800/225-2639 or www.andersonsgolfproducts.com / circle no. 262

Blec

The Blec Multi-Seeder has a multi-spike roll that punches a network of holes in the ground surface, ideal for accepting seed. Hole depth is controlled by the rear smooth roll and top link. Comes in working widths from 40-96 in. Unit is powered by tractor pto.

For more information contact Blec at 888/325-BLEC or www.blec.co.uk / circle no. 263

Wikco

Model 800 Spreader is a tow-behind, granular material spreader designed to spread fertilizer, sand, salt, seed, lime and similar materials. Unit has an internal drag chain, not a spinning wire agitator, to break up material and help drag the

material to the opening. It features a 9-cu.-ft., non-rust poly hopper; pneumatic tires on 8-in. rims, and heavy duty steel frame construction.

For more information contact Wikco at 866/464-8893 or www.wikco.com / circle no. 264

Broyhill

Single seat SpraMate features an 18-hp Kohler V-twin OHV air-cooled gas engine. Unit has 5-speed heavy-duty transmission, full suspension front and rear. Comes in 160-gallon or 210-gallon sizes.

For more information contact Broyhill at 800/228-1003 or www.broyhill.com / circle no. 265

Dakota

The 440 Turf Tender allows one operator to topdress, fertilize and move a variety of materials from the seat of any 40-hp tractor. Unit has 4.2-yd. capacity hopper coated with polyurethane paint. Dual hydraulic drive has both forward and reverse.

For more information contact Dakota at 800/477-8415 or www.dakotapeat.com / circle no. 266

EarthWay

The EarthWay Products line of Ev-N-Spread private label spreaders now has two new features. The Ev-N-Spread Professional Shut-Off System has eight position independent adjustments for the right and left side throwing ports. The new Ev-N-Spread Control Center allows the operator to balance the spread pattern for the left and right side throwing ports and control the rate with the spring-close handle.

For more information contact EarthWay Products at 574/848-7491 or www.earthway.com / circle no. 267

Jrco, Inc.

The Zero-Turn Sprayer uses an existing mower as a turf application vehicle. This 30-gal. sprayer quickly attaches to most mowers with clevis pins. The Jrco Electric Broadcast Spreader fits commercial riding and walk-behind mowers as well as utility vehicles. Features include a molded hopper base with improved stainless steel gate controls, fan and vibrating agitator. A

large polyethylene hopper holds 120 lbs. supported by a stainless steel frame. Model 503 has a foot-operated gate for mid-mount ZTRs while model 504 has a push-pull cable for walk-behinds and utility vehicles.

For more information contact Jrco, Inc. at 800/966-8442 or www.jrcoinc.com / circle no. 268

Echo

The Echo MS-40 is a heavy-duty 4-gal. backpack sprayer with piston pump designed for extended spraying. 16-in. brass wand, hose rated at 300 psi. High-density poly tank with UV inhibitors has check valve that prevents leaks if tipped. Long-life spray pistol with brass shutoff pin and double O-rings.

For more information contact Echo at 800/432-ECHO or www.echo-usa.com / circle no. 269

Landpride

Featuring an all-steel frame, frontal splash plate and three available hopper sizes, Land Pride broadcast spreaders fit most uses. The 14-gauge hopper is manufactured using a spin process for one-piece construction. Delivery is adjustable to spread on the left, right or full width of 54 ft. Application rates range from 44 lbs. to 890 lbs. per acre, and hopper capacities keep filling and clean out to a minimum.

For more information contact Landpride at 785/823-3276 or www.landpride.com / circle no. 270

SP Systems

SP-1 is a 4-gallon sprayer designed for safety with a patented diaphragm pump to protect the technician from leaks. It is capable of two million strokes without a leak. The pump handle folds against the side of the sprayer for stor-



age. The unit operates at 15-50 psi, maximum 70 psi. Features include a 20-in. brass wand, 300-psi rated hose, adjustable brass nozzle, 6-in. mouth with built-in strainer and check valve. For more information contact SP Systems at 800/457-3440 or www.spsystemsllc.com / circle no. 271

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Circle 134

LM Reports

T.I.P.

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For more information contact T.I.P. at 715/592-4650 or www.tipinc.net / circle no. 272

Master Manufacturing

The Turf Choice TC1080-003 sprayer has a 55-gal. polyethylene tank. The unit is powered by a Hypro-4 roller pump. The frame is sized for Cat 1 tractors. A 10-ft. folding boom is included. Options include a spray gun and 25 ft. of hose or a 4-nozzle, 14-ft. boom with flood nozzles on 40-in. spacings.

For more information contact Master Manufacturing at 712/258-0108 / circle no. 273



LESCO

This 200-gal. compact spray system's side-saddle mounting slips easily into the bed of a pick-up truck. The 200-gal. tank has a 16-in. fill well, a leak-proof lid and strainer with a clear strainer bowl and a 30-mesh stainless steel screen. The company's High-Wheel, stainless steel spreader with 80-lb. hopper capacity features new functionality; improved balance; longer, adjustable, ergonomic handles with improved grips; numerical rate guide; frame and

bearing house stiffeners.

For more information contact LESCO at 800/321-5325 or www.lesco.com / circle no. 274

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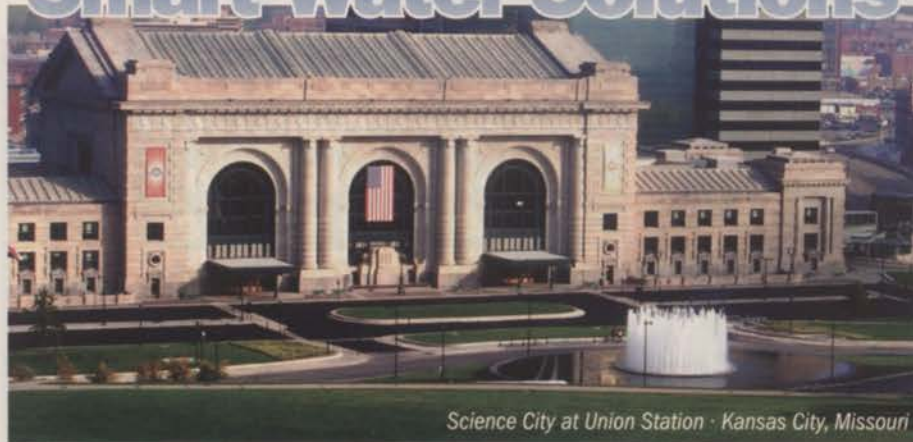
Mighty Mac power sprayers come in five models ranging from 14 to 50-gal. tanks. The big PS 350T-10 is a 50-gal. trailer unit powered by a 5.5-hp B&S Intek engine. Hypro twin-piston pump delivers 10 gpm at 300 psi. Pressure relief valve and stainless inline strainer included.

For more information contact MacKissic at 800/348-1117 or www.mackissic.com / circle no. 275

Shindaiwa

The SP150 is an ergonomically designed 1-gal. hand-held sprayer, bringing the Shindaiwa line to a complete family of five manual sprayers

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ranging from 1-gal. to the 5-gal. SP518 back-pack sprayer. UV protected polyethylene tank offers superior resistance to corrosion and the harmful rays of the sun. Pump handle doubles as carrying handle and there is a large, independent filler opening.

For more information contact Shindaiwa at 800/521-7733 or www.shindaiwa.com / circle no. 276



Permagreen

The ride-on Magnum spreader seeder is powered by a Honda 6.5-hp horizontal shaft engine with wet clutch. Offers 150-lb. PermaGreen hopper with LESCO-style mechanism and a 12-gal. spray tank with 2-gpm pump and two Hydro Ultra low drift nozzles.

For more information contact Permagreen at 800/346-2001 or www.permagreen.com / circle no. 277

PSB

The PrizeLAWN MPR1 commercial broadcast sprayer has a 1.3-cu.-ft. hopper riding on 10-in. pneumatic tires. Gears are set for normal walking speed of 2.5 mph. Rate control has positive lock mechanism.

For more information contact PSB at 614/ 228-5781 or www.psbcompany.com / circle no. 278

Turfco

The Turfco Mete-R-Matic XL tow-type top dresser offers increased hopper capacity of 2.25 cubic yards and carries a maximum load of 6,000 pounds. Its belt design and ground drive system ensure even materials distribution regardless of moisture content or vehicle speed.

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For more information contact Spraying Systems Co. at 406/388-3120 or www.teejet.com/ circle no. 280

Solo

The 475 is a 4-gal. diaphragm pump backpack unit. Provides 60-psi pressure with 22-in. fiberglass spray wand. Units come with adjustable, flat spray, hollow cone and jet stream nozzles. Felt padded polyester straps and built in filter screen included.

For more information contact Solo at 757/245-4228 or www.solousa.com/ circle no. 281

Mill Creek

Turf Tiger spreads wet or dry sand/peat, compost or infield mixes evenly over a 12-foot swath. The Saber Tooth attachment is standard equipment, applying a



consistent, uniform pattern from eight to 12 feet. Spinner attachment is ideal for applying light applications.

For more information contact Mill Creek at 800/311-1323 or www.millcreekmfg.com/ circle no. 282

Ryan

The Ryan Mataway overseeder can be adjusted to provide the proper flow for all types of common grass seed, including buffalo grass. The patented two-in. spacing of the Mataway overseeder makes it possible to overseed with one pass. Operator can adjust the depth of the seed delivery to ensure maximum germination.

For more information contact Ryan at 888/922-8873 or www.textron.com/ circle no. 283

Spreadex

The LG 575 mid-size granular spreader is designed for spreading seed, fertilizer and control products. Standard with a variable-speed controller, the spreader's material flow gate calibrates and controls flow. The LG 575 comes standard with a 2-in. receiver hitch mount. The model holds up to 350 lbs. of dry free-flowing granular material.

For more information contact TrynEx International at 800/725-8377 / circle no. 284

Toro

The Toro Topdresser 2500 is a self-contained, all-wheel drive unit towed by a Toro Workman or other utility vehicle. The unit's spread width is 60 in. with a 25-cu.-ft. capacity and an 8 mph top-dressing speed. The all-wheel drive



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Snowex

The VeePro Range spreader mounts to a utility vehicle. Independent auger feed and spinner system provides variable spread width from the in-cab control unit. Connects directly to vehicle electronics without belts or chains.

Two-year warranty.

For more information contact Snowex at

800/725-8377 or www.snowex.com /

circle no. 286

Spyker

Spyker Model 88 pro series has stainless steel one piece welded frame with five-eighths-in.



solid stainless steel axle and 13x5-in. pneumatic tires. A poly hopper with a 110-lb. capacity, enclosed metal gears, and a patented split-shaft design allow for easy calibration.

For more information contact Spyker at

800/972-6130 or www.spyker.com /

circle no. 287



Herd

The 2240 spreader is designed for 3-pt. hitch Cat. 2 tractors. It has standard hydraulic remote control. The 14-gauge steel hopper has 2440 lb. capacity. The unit comes equipped with a heavy-duty independent stand and carrying frame. Heavy cast iron gearbox is standard for 540 rpm, special order for 1,000 rpm. Rotating agitator and heavy-duty aluminum fan with replaceable steel blades. Spreads 3 to 1,000 lbs. per acre.

For more information contact Herd at 574/753-6311 or info@herdseeder.com / circle no. 288

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Post Harbour Place

2004 PGMS Grand Award Winner for Condominiums

Property at a glance

- Location:** Tampa, FL
- Grounds Supervisor:** Allen Kelly, regional gardener
- Category:** Condominium
- Total budget:** \$177,740
- Year site built:** 1999
- Acres of turf:** 0.4
- Acres of woody ornamentals:** 4
- Acres of display beds:** 0.3
- Total paved area:** 7 acres
- Total man-hours/week:** 48

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Low-volume irrigation
- ▶ Constant pruning of year-round plant and tree growth
- ▶ Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Project checklist

- Completed in last two years:
- ▶ Established dry creek beds to route water to existing drainwork
 - ▶ Completed in-house palm pruning
 - ▶ Devised a rigid fertilization program

On the job

- ▶ 2 full-time staff, one seasonal worker, one licensed pesticide applicator

Talk about coming home to a nice place. Residents of Tampa, FL's, Post Harbour Place Apartment Homes can relax after work in the tropical oasis surrounding the complex located on the outskirts of the city. Florida's year-round growing season keeps the two-man team busy, shifting constantly from floriculture maintenance to grounds maintenance. Post Harbour Place's serene courtyards feature 72 display pots, and the more than 500 palms require constant bud drenching, pruning and fertilizing.

Residents, visitors and potential homeowners are treated to rotating color palettes and plant selections. Regional gardener Allen Kelly chooses plants to complement the Southwestern-style architecture, and different textures and bloom seasons soften the pavings and walls. Highlights include red salvia, coleus, Queen palms and magnolias.

Thoughtful details for residents abound, like bottle brush to ward off the morning sun and palms to add privacy and



Allen Kelly, above, and his crew maintain more than 500 palms around the property.

screen ground-level windows.

Water is a challenge, Kelly says. The city has water restrictions once a week so the crew is creative with drought-tolerant plants. Four water features, including a secluded pool, add variety to the landscape.

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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The landscape staff at Tampa, FL's, Post Harbour Place apartments is challenged to create rotating color beds and provide water year round. The complex's proximity to the water and downtown make it highly visible.





Don't break the bank

BY JENNIFER HARSANY

Having sufficient funds to maintain the grounds for a public or private institution is a huge challenge. You may have more control over your budget than you realize. You may not have to settle for a simple increase to match inflation rates, or worse, suffer a budget cut. Consider these tips to protect your funds and get the most out of them. Treat your budget preparation as a year-long project, so the next proposal goes smoother and provides more of what you need.

Before setting the budget

Keep a few tips in mind before the budget is set:

8 great tips to get more funds when you get to budget time

1 Write everything down:

Keeping good records sounds like a given, but this may be the most important practice for preparing a thorough proposal. If you record how much you've had to pay to maintain a vehicle, for example, use this to justify your request to purchase a newer, more reliable vehicle. Do a line-by-line budget so you know what projects are requiring more funds.

2 Listen to your employees:

Because the bulk of your budget is probably designated for employee wages, remember to pay more attention to this

line item than you do to your wing mower.

Ken Kushner, director of operations at the Anderson Park District in Cincinnati, recognizes that his employees are his most important assets. He requires that they maintain good records of their turf care, landscaping, mulch and equipment maintenance. "In one way or another, they're all doing something with the budget," he says. If employees are involved in the budget process, they're more likely to make insightful suggestions to improve the budget and on how to make the most of it.

3 Know where prices are heading:

Although you might anticipate that your budget grows by a few percentage points each year to keep up with inflation, con-

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sider the price of your equipment, mulch and fertilizer.

George Eckhardt, assistant director of facilities services at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, says his grounds supervisor is always communicating with suppliers. "Always rely on your suppliers and ask them what they predict prices will do," he says. Rather than just looking at the entire budget pool, break it into categories by each material and show how much the prices of each category will change, then build your budget proposal around those figures rather than just anticipating inflation.

4 Work up the chain of command: When it comes to getting your message across about what you need to do your job properly, don't stop at telling just one person.

"There's a chain of people that I deal with. If I don't get anywhere with one, I go to a different one," says David Tiffany, grounds manager at the Niskayuna Central School District in Niskayuna, NY. If Tiffany notices that the football fields will need extra turf care in the next year, he goes to the athletic field director. Remember that strength in numbers will also strengthen your argument to get adequate funds when you need them.

And, after Make the most out of a set budget with these tips:

5 Use hidden resources: Be creative when it comes to making improvements to



George Eckhardt



David Tiffany

your grounds. The concrete baseball dugouts at the Niskayuna Central School District were deteriorating, posing a safety risk to the students. Because Tiffany looked beyond his budget, he managed to get \$2,000 from the booster club to fund the project. He also employed the skills of school technology students to draw up plans and build one of the two new dugouts. Tiffany saved resources, and the students benefited from the new dugouts and gained a sense of ownership.

6 Make the most of used equipment: Every grounds manager wants the latest and best equipment he can buy, but the budget may not allow it. Kushner says that if a budget crunch forces you to purchase a piece of used equipment, keep detailed records on its maintenance. When it comes time to propose your next budget and you want to request funds to buy new equipment, your boss will want to know how much it will cost, why it costs that much and what the life expectancy will be. If the numbers show that used equipment isn't always the best deal in the long run, you may be able to sway the budget in your favor.

7 Share price breaks: You aren't the only grounds manager looking for a bargain in your area. Some local parks and schools might be willing to share equipment and expenses.

Because the Niskayuna schools are close to the highway department and town recreation department,

Tiffany shares field marking equipment with them. He also gets a break on his fertilizer prices by coordinating with these departments by scheduling a fertilizer company to do all the grounds at a discounted bulk rate.

8 Purchase, but do not accept delivery early: In the past 21 years that Eckhardt has been at Colorado College, he has always ended the year under budget. If his grounds manager

has leftover funds, Eckhardt encourages him to make a purchase on bulk fertilizer, for example, but not accept the delivery until necessary. Not only does the bulk purchase cut costs, it frees up funds for the next year, making unanticipated projects easier to handle.

By making an effort to maintain your records and use your resources creatively, you'll be better prepared to save your budget the next time it's on the chopping block. **LM**

— Contact the author at 703/946-5620 or

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The maps are easily cross-referenced to printed Rand McNally *Street Guides* and *The Thomas Guide* books for select major cities. These books are the standard in street-level mapping and routing with many businesses. Printed with fade-resistant UV inks and durable lamination, the wall maps are available in three sizes — small (24 X 30 in.), medium (32 X 40 in.) and large (46 X 60 in.).

For more information contact Rand McNally at 800/333-0136 or visit

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sionals can use to close more sales. Included with each video is a multiple-choice test to document your training. Once the test is successfully completed, forward a copy to Bayer to become a TopChoice certified applicator and have your company listed on the consumer Web site www.nofireants.com. To receive a free TopChoice fire ant control video, contact your local authorized Bayer distributor.

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The new Hitch Spotter's magnetic base attaches to the vehicle's tongue. As you back up, just watch your rearview mirror to line up your tow vehicle with the item being towed for easy hitching the first try. The telescoping aluminum tube is height adjustable, making it suitable for almost all types of trailers and most tow vehicles, while the large, flat glass mirror ensures an undistorted image.

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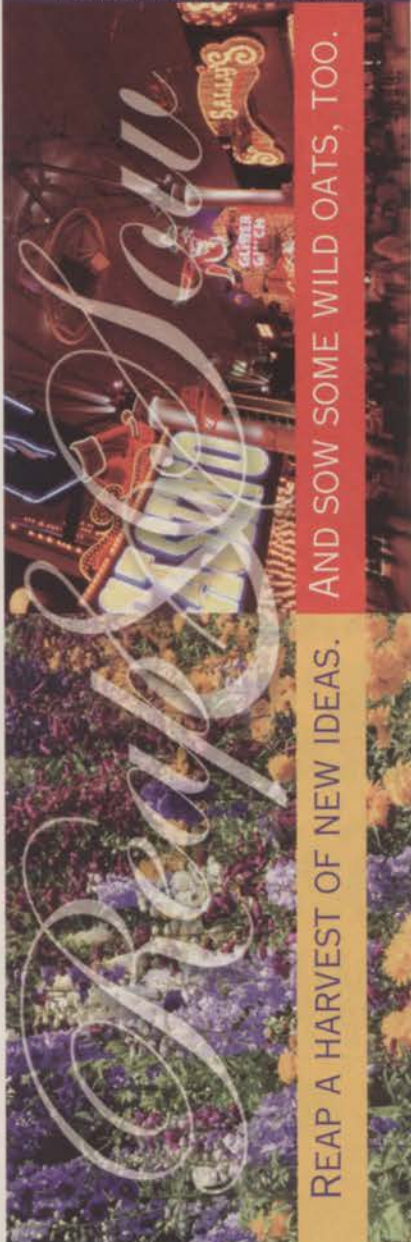
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continued from page 82



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Sibling rivalry ▶

The compact deck of Wright Manufacturing's new 52-in. Sentar Sport is a little bigger than its 36-in. sibling, but it is as agile, the company says. Sentar Sport 52 works sitting down or standing up, and it cuts bigger swaths. Cut height can be adjusted rapidly and easily from the driver's seat or standing platform. Operator Balance Control (OBC) lets you shift your weight instantly as terrain changes. The seat position behind the engine is one of the Sentar Sport's safety features. In an emergency, or to move debris, step off the platform and the mower stops immediately.

For more information contact Wright Manufacturing at 301/360-9810 or visit www.wrightmfg.com / circle no. 295

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Evergreen Outdoor's Model B102 12-volt uplight is solid brass and features a trim, contemporary profile with a 5 1/2-in. shroud and a 2 3/8-in. diameter. The fixture is offered in a choice of finishes: antique brass, antique bronze, antique green and verde. Model B102 includes an oversized non-corrosive ground stake, a MR-16 20-watt Osram Sylvania bulb, long leads and connectors.

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15-18 ANLA Retail Roadshow /

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21 Cornell Field Day / Ithaca, NY;

607/255-1792; www.hort.cornell.edu/instruction/short/cornellturf.htm

22 UMass Turf Research Field

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27 PACE Turfgrass Research

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July

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Leadership Meeting /
Washington, D.C.; 800/395-2522;
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ARE WE GROWING OR NOT?

Commercial lawn service increased for **46 percent** of companies, while 46.5 percent said their business remained the same, not counting acquisitions. Nationwide, **7.4 percent** of the **commercial turf care** companies said their **business declined** in 2004. The biggest decline in commercial business was in the **West region** where **15.6 percent** said their business decreased last year.

SOURCE: SPECIALTY PRODUCTS CONSULTANTS, LLC

RITZY HOUSING BY ZIP CODES

The housing bubble — what housing bubble? Home prices keep going up and up on the East and West Coasts. Here's a look at some of the hottest markets by zip code:

Community	Zip Code	Median Price	5-Yr Price Change
Lawrence, MA	01841	226,000	121.10%
Rialto, CA	92376	\$270,000	191.90%
Vallejo, CA	94590	\$361,000	149.00%
Miami, FL	33137	\$265,000	171.30%
Beach Haven, NJ	08008	687,500	146.00%
Brigantine, NJ	08203	\$358,500	149.50%
Gaithersburg, MD	20877	\$329,000	127.40%

SOURCE: SARAH MAX,
CNN/MONEY SENIOR STAFF WRITER



8 GREAT GARDENS

Looking for planting inspiration for that special client? You'll get great ideas for plant material at any of these eight "must visit" gardens identified by Rosemary Black in a recent issue of Readers Digest.

- 1 Desert Botanical Garden**, Phoenix, 145 acres with more than 20,000 desert plants as well as a variety of interactive exhibits.
- 2 Harry P. Leu Gardens**, Orlando, FL, 50 acres with the largest camellia collection in the South. Tropical Stream Garden. Leu House Museum.
- 3 Anderson Japanese Gardens**, Rockford, IL, 8-acre site is set up like a 13th-century "pond strolling" garden.
- 4 Missouri Botanical Garden**, St. Louis, with its Climatron conservatory and its half-acre geodesic-domed greenhouse. Established in 1859, a National Historic Landmark and also a leader in botanical research.
- 5 New York Botanical Garden**, New York, 250 acres featuring the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden with its 2,700 rose plants and a 40-acre forest.
- 6 Longwood Gardens**, near Philadelphia, 1,050 acres of meadows, woodlands, manicured gardens filled with seasonal flowers.
- 7 Brookgreen Gardens**, Myrtle Beach, SC, situated in the middle of a 9,100-acre nature preserve. World's largest outdoor figurative sculpture garden.
- 8 Dumbarton Oaks Garden**, Washington, DC, Originally a private garden. Features 10 acres of formal gardens and a rose garden with nearly 1,000 roses.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT (ISSN 0894-1254) is published monthly by Advanstar Communications, Inc., 131 W. First St., Duluth, MN 55802-2065. **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: R-124213133R1001. Publications Mail Agreement Number 40017597. Printed in the U.S.A.



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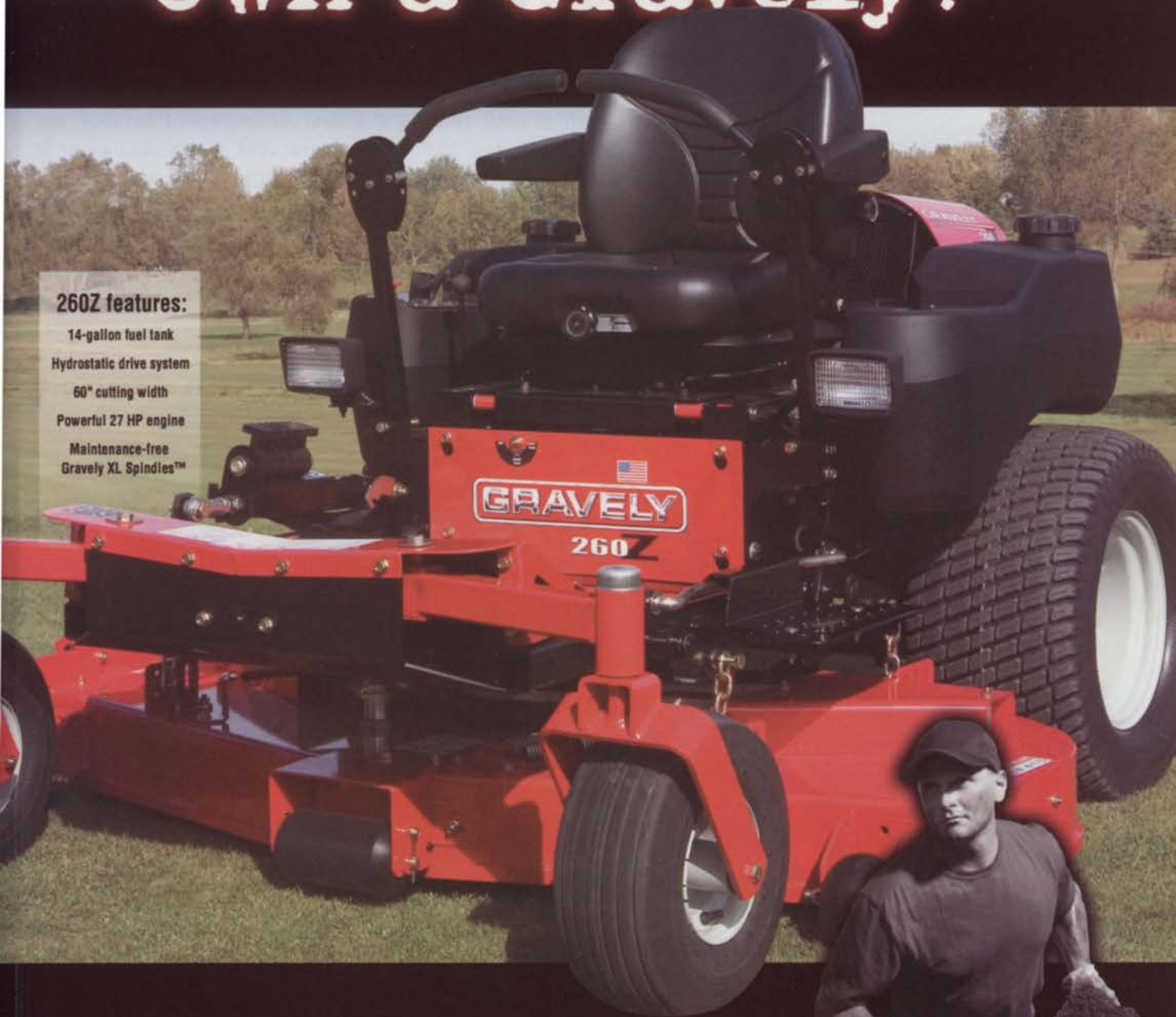
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