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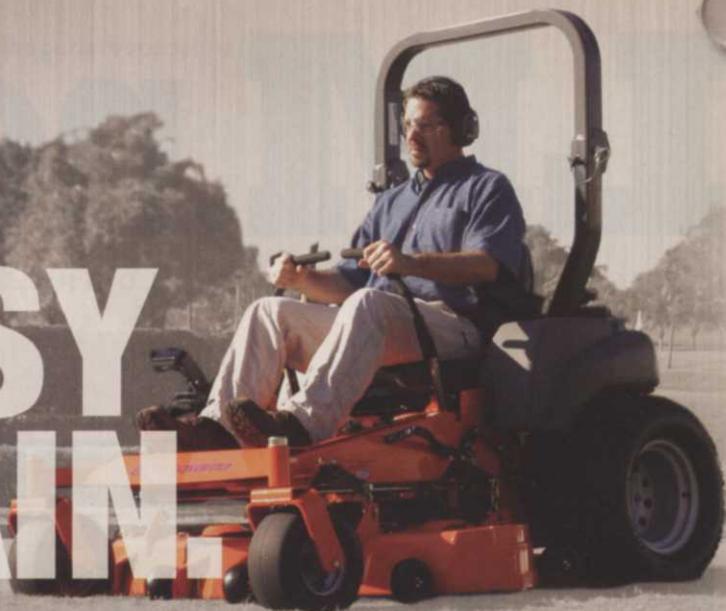
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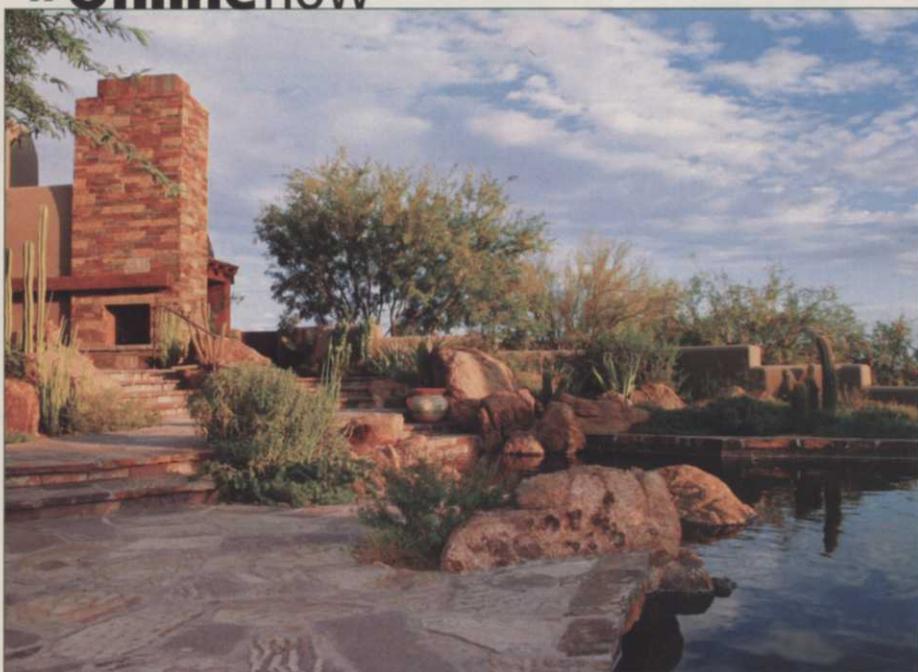
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»Overheard

"Standardization is your friend."

— **Mike Rorie**, president and owner of Cincinnati-based GroundMasters, to a packed educational session at the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation annual conference last month.

»Readers respond

Inspired by the amount of news we get on marketing initiatives, LM asked online readers, **how much does marketing matter to the success of your company?** Here's what you said:

- 31%** A lot. We spend a significant portion of our budget on marketing.
- 32%** A considerable amount. We believe in quality, not quantity.
- 21%** Not too much. We might take out a newspaper ad every now and then.
- 15%** Little to none. We've got other fish to fry.
- 1%** Marketing!? Whassat?

Want to weigh in? Our survey question changes every month and we publish the results here. Visit www.landscapemanagement.net to voice your opinion.

»Special issue

Landscape Management's annual Green Book directory of suppliers, distributors, associations, events and more is online now. Click on the cover image from our home page to access the listings all year.



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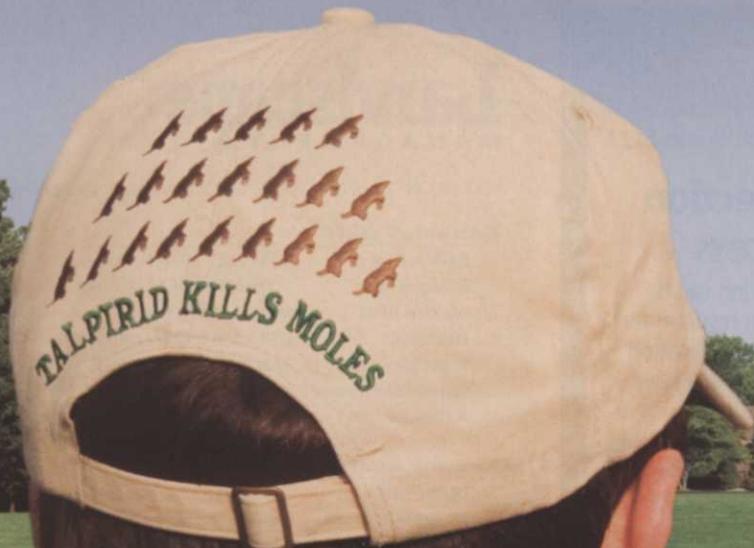
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Editorial staff

Editor in Chief	RON HALL / 216/706-3739 / rhall@questex.com
Managing Editor	STEPHANIE RICCA / 216/706-3754 / sricca@questex.com
Associate Editor	MIKE SEUFFERT / 216/706-3764 / mseuffert@questex.com
Web Editor	LYNNE BRAKEMAN / 216/706-3753 / lbrakeman@questex.com
Senior Science Editor	KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D. / danneberger1@osu.edu
Corp. Creative Director	LISA LEHMAN / 216/706-3732 / llehman@questex.com
Art Director	CARRIE PARKHILL / 216/706-3780 / cparkhill@questex.com

Reader advisory panel

DEBBY COLE	Greater Texas Landscapes / Austin, TX
WAYNE VOLZ	Wayne's Lawn Service, Inc. / Louisville, KY
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GEORGE VAN HAASTEREN	Dwight-Englewood School / Englewood, NJ
BRIAN VINCHESI	Irrigation Consulting / Pepperell, MA

Business staff

Publisher	KEVIN STOLTMAN / 216/706-3740 / kstoltman@questex.com
Admin. Coordinator	JEN OAKLIEF / 216/706-3751 / joaklief@questex.com
Production Manager	JILL HOOD / 218/279-8837 / jhood@questex.com
Production Director	RHONDA SANDE / 218/279-8821 / rsande@questex.com
Circulation Manager	JESSICA BORGREN / 218/279-8858 / jborgren@questex.com
Asst. Circulation Manager	LISA MILES / 218/279-8866 / lmiles@questex.com
Directory Production Mgr.	JAN LAULUNEN / 218/279-8843 / jlaulunen@questex.com

Advertising staff

Cleveland Headquarters	600 Superior Ave. E., Ste. 1100, Cleveland, OH 44114
Associate Publisher	PATRICK ROBERTS / 216/706-3736 Fax: 216/706-3712 proberts@questex.com
National Account Manager	GEORGE CASEY / 216/706-3752 Fax: 216/706-3712 george.casey@questex.com
Regional Account Manager	MICHAEL HARRIS / 216/706-3755 Fax: 216/706-3712 mharris@questex.com
Account Executive	LESLIE MONTGOMERY / 216/706-3756 Fax: 216/706-3712 lmontgomery@questex.com
Account Executive, Classifieds	BRIAN OLESINSKI / 216/706-3757 Fax: 216/706-3712 bolesinski@questex.com

Marketing/magazine services

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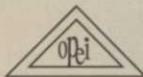
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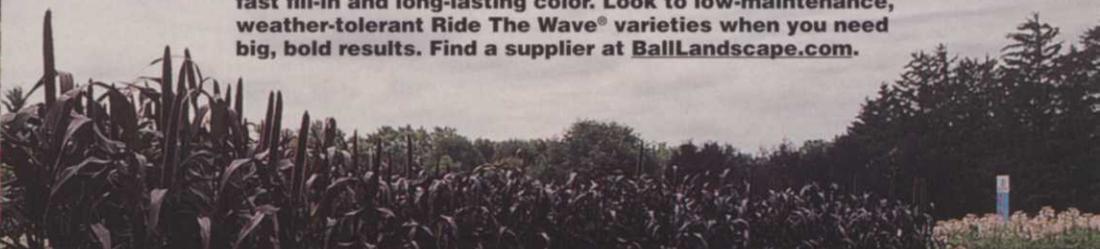


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Best of the best

BY STEPHANIE RICCA / Managing Editor

I love reading "Best of" articles — the kind that appear in magazines and newspapers every year about this time. Heck, I even like "Worst of" articles. Sometimes those give you the most honest information, like the one I read recently listing the "best and worst vending machine snacks of 2005." Of course in this case, their votes for "worst" turned out to be my votes for "best," so you can't trust these lists all the time.

So in the spirit of the new year I want to tell you about some of the "bests" we had at *Landscape Management* in 2005:

Best Trip: My favorite was PLANET's Student Career Days last March. I had just been hired on the magazine and I was sent to the trenches. What a non-stop, amazing event; it definitely tops my list. For a preview of this year's Student Career Days in Provo, Utah, turn to our In the Know section beginning on pg. 18.

Best Trade Show: I think all the editors at LM would pick the OPEI Expo. This is a well-organized show and the outdoor equipment area lets you get your hands dirty testing new machinery.

Best Event Food: Again, the honors go to Expo. Brats for breakfast in the Kohler tent, anyone? An extremely close second goes to the Project Evergreen dessert reception at the Green Industry Expo.

Best Industry Victory: H-2B. Because of your work on behalf of this program, a situation that could have been miserable became bearable. We have to work together to stay on top of the situation, especially this year. As we go to press, news updates on the H-

2B situation for 2006 hit my inbox almost every day. Bookmark www.landscapemanagement.net to stay current.

For more of our editor's picks, turn to this month's cover story, Super Six, on pg. 28. We predict the top product trends facing the Green Industry this year. Let us know if you agree or disagree.

Don't miss our new sections debuting this month. We corralled industry training expert (and a friend to many of you) Bill Hoopes to pen our new column, Training Room, on pg. 16. His conversational style and realistic training tips will definitely be worth clipping out and posting on the refrigerator.

Finally, check out Add-On Biz, a new department (this month on pg. 26) that highlights some additional business services you might not have considered until now. We've got a whole lineup planned for the rest of the year.

Happy new year!

Contact Stephanie
at 216/706-3754 or
e-mail sricca@questex.com



In the spirit of the new year, I want to tell you about some of the bests we had at Landscape Management this year.

You will always be better off hiring around values, ethics and potential than around current skill levels.



Build an A Team

BY BRUCE WILSON

It's January, and if you are like most business owners or managers you are excited about having a great year in 2006. It should be a good year for the industry, especially if you have a great team.

Good businesses have good years regardless of the business environment. For the most part it is because of the quality of the team they have assembled.

Sounds simple but the devil is in the details.

Building blocks

How do you ensure that you build an "A Team," when you have a hard time finding enough qualified people? The operative word here is "build."

Building is a process. You must start with good raw materials in the people you hire. When you interview to hire there is a tendency to settle in order to fill the position. You look for the ideal candidate but seldom find one. Think of these four tips in

your quest for A Team players:

First, it's much better to hire a person with great potential to fill a position and develop the person into that position, than to hire a person who might fill the position better today

but not be an A Team-level person in the future. You will always be better off hiring around values, ethics and potential than around current skill levels.

Second, hire with a talent mindset. Often when you interview for a position you run across people who do not fit the position, but do have talent. Whenever possible, try to bring these people aboard and get them into your organization.

Know where to look

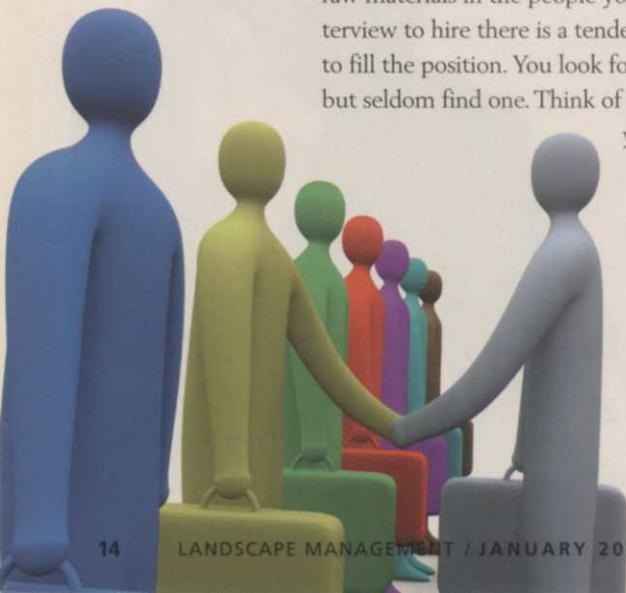
Third, always keep an eye out for talent, even when you do not have a specific need. If you hire when you see talent you will have people on your bench. You don't want to be in a position where you're forced to settle for someone just to fill a hole during a critical time of the season.

Keep in mind that the best people already have jobs. Your job ads most likely attract people who don't have jobs, and there might be a reason for that.

Fourth, build from within. You must develop a coaching and mentoring culture in your company. Build your A Team from good raw materials — people you know inside your organization who already support your company. If you do this you seldom need to go outside and roll the dice on an unknown.

Companies seldom think about investing \$10-20 thousand developing a person from within, but often end up paying a recruiter \$10-20 thousand to find a person who may or may not work out.

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





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What great trainers know

BY BILL HOOPES

Ever sit through a classroom training program at one of our Green Industry trade shows? In the old days it was slides. Today, it's Power Point presentations. Still boring, right? Truth is, the kind of training we do is typically required by a state or the federal government. So having fun with these [mostly technical] topics can be challenging.

Let's start the year by agreeing upon several important and timely points:

First, great trainers — those whose presentations create real “water cooler buzz” — have one thing in common: They work to fill the room with interested learners. They have learned that interested, involved learners retain and use more of the information presented.

It starts with recruiting

Wait a minute, you're thinking, I train the people we hire, right? I don't get a choice of who I train do I? That's exactly the point. If your company's owner or hiring manager doesn't screen candidates carefully and hire only those people who come to your company believing in your philosophies and willing to follow your procedures, training will never meet expectations. Training can only help willing learners.

Year after year, time-stressed Green Industry managers go through their spring training process as best as they can, often with little preparation and inadequate tools. Inevitably, we see a few disinterested new

hires yawning, heads down or staring out the window. Certainly, as trainers we owe employees challenging and participative training. But we cannot make a disinterested person interested.

Link training with hiring

Great trainers help management focus on candidate selection. There's no excuse for hiring “warm bodies” just to fill seats. To make training pay off, hire only those candidates who want to learn the business and will follow your procedures consistently.

And, once on board, know this: Training begins day one! Great trainers control every part of the early employment experience. Leave nothing to chance. Deliver training in small bites and reinforce it with on-the-job “ride along” coaching.

Great trainers know that success motivates everyone, and that new hire who is taught to succeed early is far less likely to quit.

Let's review:

► Great trainers impact the company hiring [recruiting/interviewing] process by helping ensure that new hires want “this job vs. a job.”

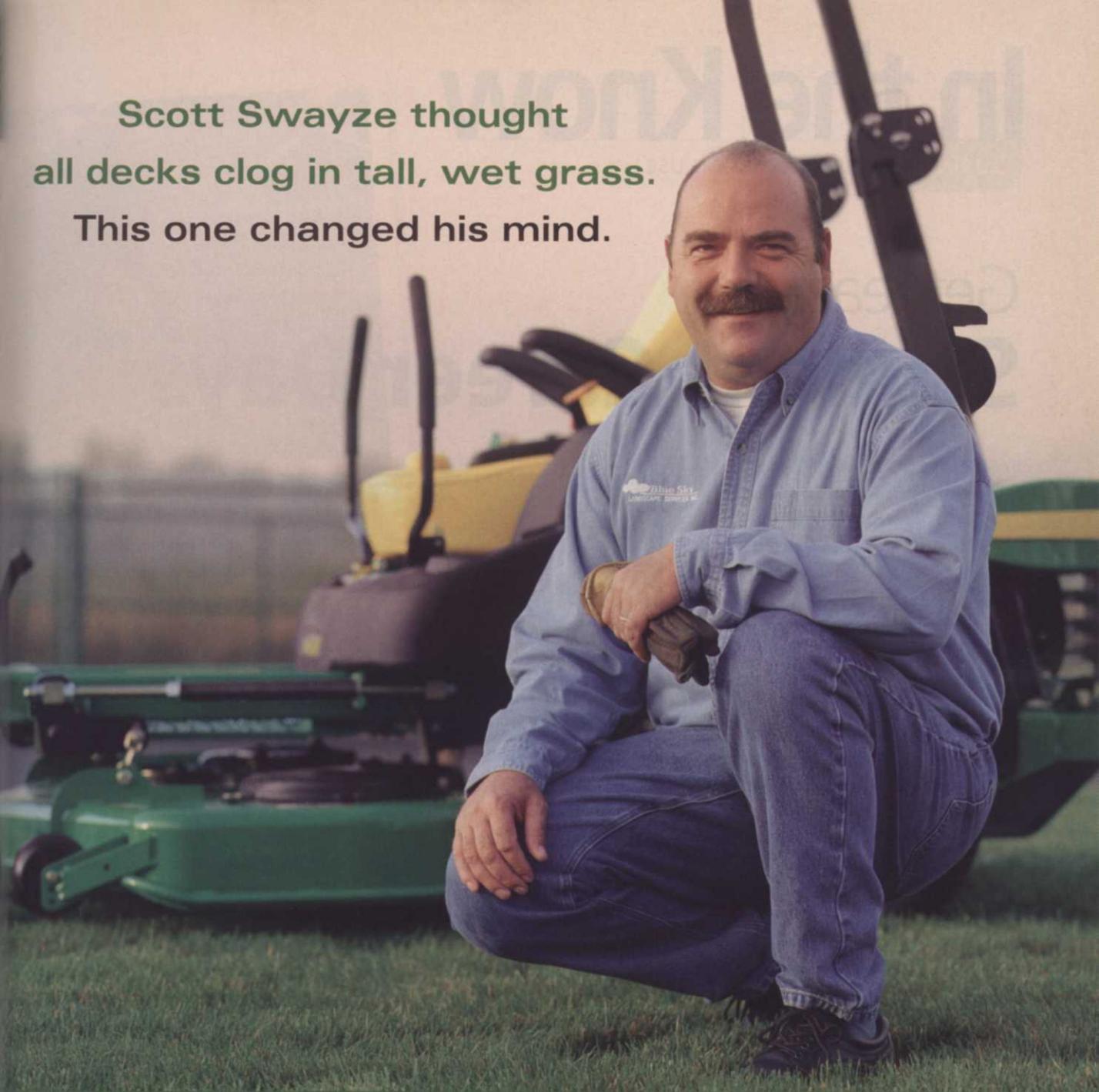
► Great trainers understand that training begins day one; they control the new hire's early experience completely.

► Great trainers ensure that each new hire gets support and experiences early success.

Think about the above three points. Now, right now, is the time to improve.

— *The author is founder of Grass Roots Training in Delaware, OH. Contact him at hoopes@columbus.rr.com.*

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In the Know

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Get ready for Student Career Days

BY STEPHANIE RICCA / MANAGING EDITOR

The countdown is starting to this year's Student Career Days sponsored by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) and held at Brigham Young University in Provo, UT, March 23-26.

The planning team at BYU has prepared all year for student teams from campuses nationwide to descend on Provo for four days of competition, networking and the anchor event — the industry's biggest job fair.

This year, the BYU team, headed by faculty co-chairs Greg Jolley and Phil Allen, has a special adrenaline-pumping kick-off event planned for the day before the event begins. All participants will receive free admission to Utah Olympic Park in Park City, Utah, host site to the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

"This is really exciting," Allen told *Landscape Management*. "They have zip lines and the Olympic bobsled track. It's a great opportunity for recruiting. I'm telling companies to send their best recruiters and they can spend a day up at



Park City and get to know some kids and establish some relationships."

Students, faculty, company recruiters and other SCD participants get the park exclusively that day, and the event includes zip lines and bobsled rides, in addition to lunch and access to the Alf Engen Ski Museum, a virtual reality ski theater where visitors can simulate ski runs down various Olympic courses.

In addition, participants will complete a two-hour service project in Park City that morning, in the spirit of PLANET's Renewal and Remembrance projects at national cemeteries during Legislative Days.

"Our horticulture club has already been up there three times to do planting, pruning and slope restabilization in Park City," Allen said.

Over the course of the long weekend, students compete in 26 events including design/build/installation, arboriculture, mowing and sales. More than 100 companies from around the country exhibit

Students compete in events ranging from irrigation troubleshooting to plant identification.

at the job fair, often setting up interviews on the spot.

Most indoor events will take place at BYU's full-service conference center on campus. The university's established shuttle service will provide transportation to the other events, located just a short distance from the conference center.

"Because our university hosts so many conferences, all of the details are already worked out," Allen said. This year, America in Bloom recognized BYU as the best-landscaped university in the country.

"This will be our eighth year attending SCD," Allen said. "We're delighted to give back something to the industry that has given so much to our students."

For another special surprise, the student reception this year will take place in the air — courtesy of 18 hot-air balloons.

Industry participants are encouraged to register by Feb. 7. Student participant early bird registration deadline is Feb. 21.

The event's platinum sponsor is Stihl; gold sponsor is the Ariens Co.; silver sponsors are Caterpillar and Husqvarna; and bronze sponsors are The Brickman Group, Pavestone, John Deere Landscapes, MulchMule/Enviroscapes, Outside Unlimited, The Toro Co and Vermeer.

For more information visit www.studentcareerdays.org.

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WEEKLY TIMECARD

NAME: Bill Owen DATES: 13-17

	START	LUNCH	END	JOB CODES	JOB SITE/PROJECT	HOURS
Mon.	7:00	1/2	3:30		Davis	8
Tues.			3:30			8
Wed.			4:00			8 1/2
Thurs.			4:00			8 1/2
Fri.	▽	▽	4:00		▽	8 1/2

SIGNATURE: Bill Owen TOTAL HOURS: 41 1/2

GIVE THEM THE JOBCLOCK.

Employee Report

Bill Owen

Jobsite Name: **Davis Property** Date Range: **2/13/2006 through 2/17/2006**

Day	Start	End	Activity	Hours
Mon 2/13	7:08 AM	12:05 PM	Irrigation	4:57 hours
	12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Irrigation	2:41 hours 7:38 hours
Tue 2/14	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Irrigation	4:55 hours
	12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Irrigation	2:40 hours 7:35 hours
Wed 2/15	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Irrigation	4:50 hours
	12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Irrigation	3:03 hours 7:53 hours
Thu 2/16	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Planting	5:02 hours
	12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Planting	2:56 hours 7:58 hours
Fri 2/17	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Planting	4:54 hours
	12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Planting	2:55 hours 7:49 hours

Signature: Bill Owen Bill Owen

Employee total 38:53 hours

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In the Know

Pump up the jam

CLEVELAND — Start practicing your fist pumps. JP Horizons, a company dedicated to helping clients drive business performance, partnered with Ariens Gravely Stens to produce Leadership Jams in five cities this year. Led by the JP Horizons team of Jim Paluch and Bob Coulter, Leadership Jam appeals to businesses that want to inspire their leaders to work smarter. Interested companies are invited to attend any of the following Leadership Jams:

- Jan. 16-17 in Atlanta
- Jan. 26-27 in Baltimore
- Feb. 16-17 in Chicago
- Feb. 20-21 in Columbus, OH
- March 9-10 in Boston

Leadership Jam is a two-day event that puts managers, foremen and supervisors into a creative setting where they focus on personal development and leadership skills. Focus topics this year will center on the theme of "Working Smarter" and will include exercises showing how to delegate and maximize the efficiency of the team, how to develop an atmosphere for team performance, and how to create awareness of work in motion habits.

The two-day cost is \$585, which includes training materials, breakfast and lunch. For more information contact JP Horizons at 877/JPH-JAMS or visit www.jp horizons.com.

[CLIPPINGS]

Rain Bird and Irrisoft partner

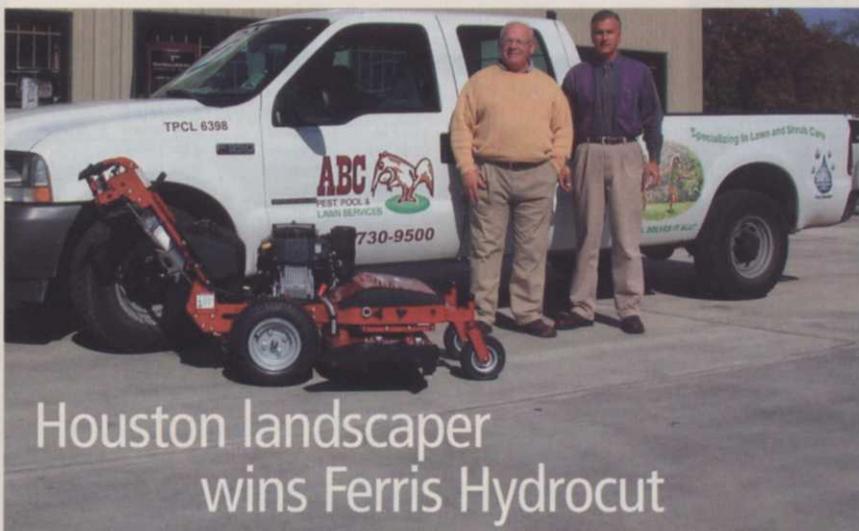
GLENDORA, CA — Rain Bird Corp. joined forces with Irrisoft, Inc., to develop weather-based solutions that will enable irrigation users to decrease water use. "Rain Bird has a longstanding relationship with Irrisoft and together we will be able to offer the market the most effective ET-based water-savings irrigation solutions," said Ron Wolfarth, director of Rain Bird's landscape irrigation division.

ACI acquires Great Dane

AUBURN, NE — Auburn Consolidated Industries, Inc. recently acquired Great Dane commercial mowing equipment assets from John Deere and will move the manufacturing of Great Dane products and the John Deere Quik-Trak product family to its Auburn, NE, facility. These products were previously manufactured at John Deere Turf Care near Raleigh, NC. An OEM since 1976 for companies such as Honda, Kubota, Case New Holland and John Deere, ACI also manufactures EverRide commercial lawnmowers.

This Cat's in 'charge'

NASHVILLE, TN — Caterpillar Inc. customers can now use the Cat AccessAccount, a single, revolving charge account that enables customers to pay for parts, service and rentals at any participating Caterpillar dealers throughout the United States. The account features flexible payment options lets customers see detailed information on all purchases and make payments online. Visit www.cataccessaccount.com.



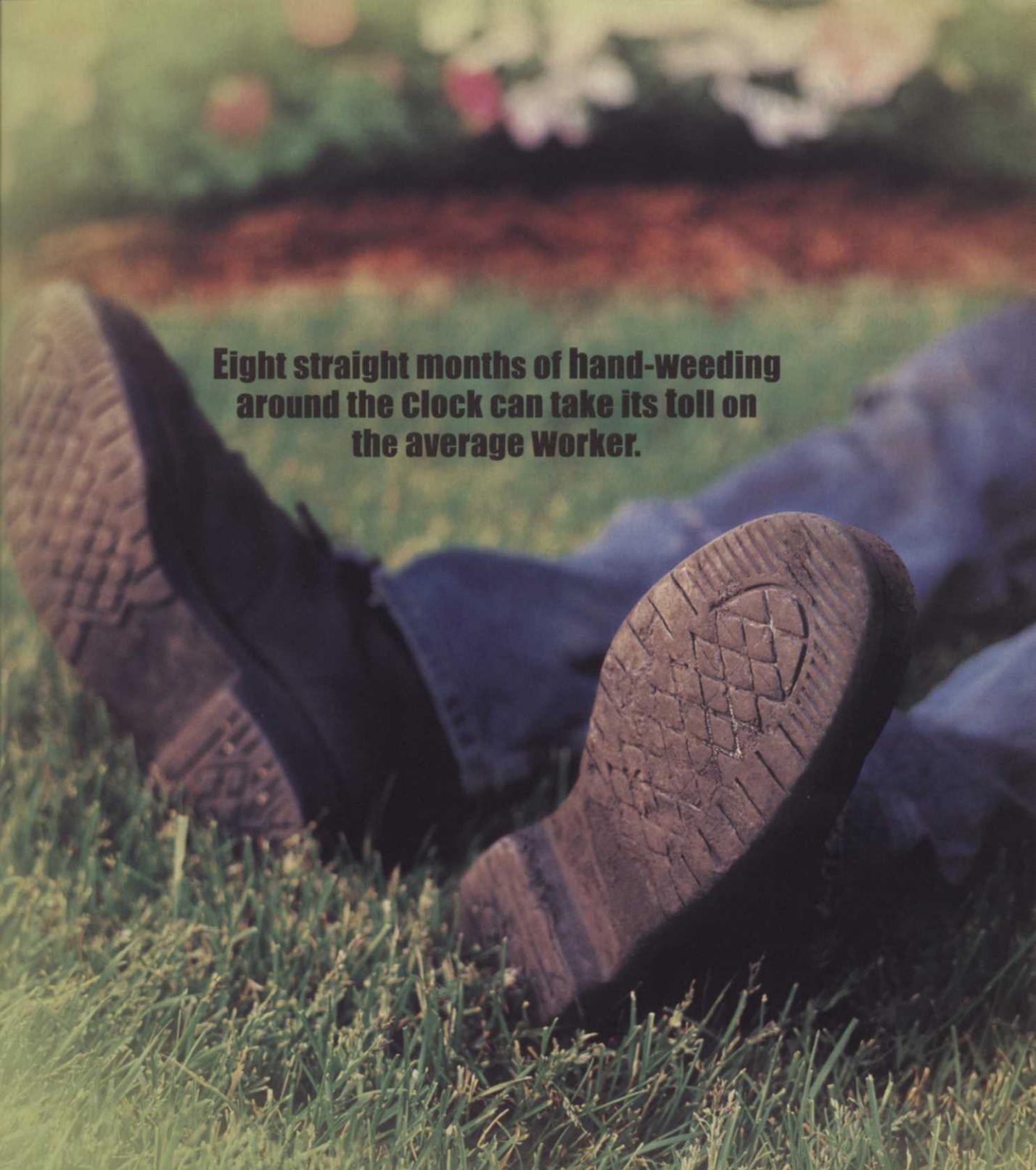
Houston landscaper wins Ferris Hydrocut

ORLANDO, FL — John Popinski of ABC Pest Pool & Lawn in Houston won a new Ferris HydroCut 36 at the Green Industry Expo held Nov. 3-5 in Orlando, FL.

The Ferris HydroCut 36 was introduced earlier this year and features integrated comfort controls (ICC), quick-adjust height-of-cut lever, hydrostatic transmission and a 13-hp V-twin Kawasaki engine with electric start.

"This is the first time I've been to the GIE show," Popinski said. "Our company just purchased two Ferris zero turns this year that we've been very impressed with. We visited the booth to see what else we might add to our fleet and were surprised with a nice addition."

John Trueman, owner of Pen Tex Equipment in Spring, Texas, presented Popinski with his new Ferris HydroCut walk-behind mower.



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New leaders for PGMS

ORLANDO, FL — The Professional Grounds Management Society announced the winners of its 33rd Annual Green Star Awards and installed its 2006 leadership team Nov. 5 in conjunction with the 2005 School of Grounds Management and Green Industry Exposition in Orlando, FL.



Ellen Newell takes the gavel as the 2006 president of PGMS.

Ellen Newell, CGM, assistant director of grounds services at Arizona State University, was elected and installed as the new PGMS volunteer president for 2006. Newell succeeds Chris Fay of University of North Carolina at Greensboro, as the chief elected officer of the 94-year-old green industry organization.

In addition, PGMS members elected Michael Mongon of Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT, as their president-elect. Greg Nichols of Bryn Mawr College in Bryn Mawr, PA, was elected vice

president and Gene Pouly, CGM, of the E.F. Pouly Company in Orrville, OH, was elected as treasurer.

George Van Haasteren of Dwight Englewood School in Englewood, NJ, and Eric Grammer, PGMS communications director, were honored as recipients of the PGMS President's Awards in recognition of their outstanding service and contributions to the Society.

Alex Shigo of the U.S. Forest Service was presented with the Society's Gold Medal, given each year to an individual or entity to recognize them for outstanding and long-term achievements

Outgoing PGMS President Chris Fay, left, and George Van Haasteren



and/or contributions to the Green Industry.

The PGMS also named its 2005 Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards recipients (see sidebar). 2005 Grand Award winners will be featured in future issues of *Landscape Management*.

PGMS names winners

The highlight of November's PGMS banquet at the Green Industry Expo in Orlando was the presentation of the organization's 2005 Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards.

Hospital or Institution:

Honor Award — San Joaquin Gardens

Industrial, Commercial Site or Office Park:

Honor Award — Gannett Company, Inc. Headquarters

Grand Award — Ortho McNeil Campus

Park, Recreation Area or Playground:

Honor Award — National Gallery of Art

Sculpture Garden

Honor Award — Forsyth County -

Tanglewood Park

Condominium or Apartment Complex:

Grand Award — Post Gateway Place

Grand Award — Post Spring

Hotel, Motel or Resort:

Honor Award — Renaissance Pinelsle Resort

Grand Award — Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Ctr.

Athletic or Professional Fields:

Honor Award — Tony Gwynn Stadium

Grand Award — Surprise Recreation Campus

Golf Courses:

Grand Award — Shadow Glen the Golf Course

University and College Grounds:

Honor Award — University of Tennessee at Martin

Honor Award — Occidental College

Grand Award — University of North Carolina

Grand Award — University of South Carolina

Urban University Grounds:

Grand Award — University of Cincinnati

Grand Award — Southern Methodist University

MORE INFO
www.pgms.org
Visit or call 410/223-2861 for more information on the Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards.

Gravely fan face-off

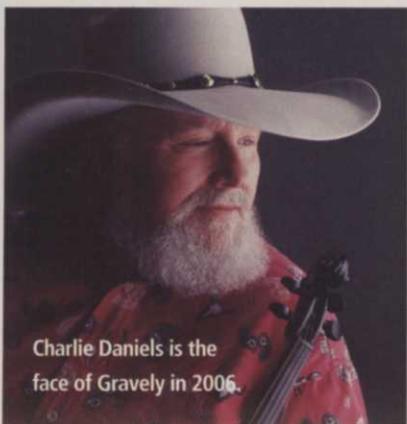
BRILLION, WI — Think you've got what it takes to hold the title of Gravely's Biggest Fan? Get ready, because the company launched a nationwide search to fill that title Jan. 1. Fans of the company's commercial lawn equipment have until March 31 to register online and vie to become the All-American Gravely Fan.

Log on to www.gravelycontest.com. Upload a photo of your equipment and come up with some creative responses to these questions:

- ▶ What is your biggest accomplishment with your Gravely?
- ▶ Why is Gravely a "Great American Brand"?
- ▶ What would you be willing to give up before you'd give up your Gravely?

Starting April 1, visitors to the site can vote for the top five entries. Winners receive Gravely prizes and a trip to the 2006 Gravely Mow In and the 2006 Ariens Dealer Summit, where the biggest fan will be announced.

The fan contest is a part of the company's year-long 90th anniversary celebration. Festivities began at the end of 2005 when the company named legendary country rocker Charlie Daniels as its spokesman for the anniversary year. Daniels is featured in company advertising this year, and dealers will have the opportunity to win concert tickets and



Charlie Daniels is the face of Gravely in 2006.

meet-and-greet events at their dealerships.

"Who better to help us communicate the heritage of this American-made brand," said Dan Ariens, company president. "We were drawn to Charlie Daniels because he has an incomparable



ability to tell the stories that capture the soul of America."

The Ariens Co. purchased Gravely in 1982. The company's founder, Benjamin Franklin Gravely, built the first motorized plow using a push plow and motorcycle parts in 1915.

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*Kevin Taylor, President
Taylor Lawn & Landscape MGMT*

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In the Know

People & companies

The **John Deere Worldwide Commercial & Consumer Equipment (C&CE) Division** appointed **Gregg Breningmeyer** to director, commercial segment marketing. Breningmeyer previously served the C&CE Division as territory manager, national account manager, marketing manager for commercial mowing and director of sales and marketing for golf and sports turf products.

North American Green President **Jim Niemeier** recently retired from the com-

pany. Executive Vice President **Tim Lancaster** stepped up to the role of president.



John (J.T.) Turner (above, left) will cover Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Kentucky as a lawn and landscape sales representative for **Bayer Environmental Science**. **Jason Kuhlemeier** (above, right) also joined Bayer as a marketing specialist.

Brady J. Surrena joined **Advan, LLC**, based in Roswell, GA, as Midwest area manager for the company's Turf and Ornamentals Division.

Gardeners' Guild Inc., a landscape contractor headquartered in San Rafael, CA, promoted **Jose Luis Hernandez Jr.** to field supervisor of the Enhancement Division.

Dave Ramsze has been appointed the new chief operating officer for **The Groundskeeper**, the Tucson, AZ-based landscape company.



Ramsze has been with **The Groundskeeper** for more than 25 years, most recently as vice president of operations and regional vice president of the Tucson market.

SOLO, Inc. named **David Longfield** as president of the Newport News, VA-based company. He succeeds **James Dunne** who retired in June.

Fred Montgomery, Steve Abler and **Dennis E. De-Sanctis** joined Syngenta Professional Products turf and ornamental team as sales representatives.

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Circle 119

H-2B cap met; program closed to new workers until April

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has received a sufficient number of petitions to reach the congressionally mandated 33,000 cap for H-2B workers for the first half of FY 2006.

Petitions for current and returning H-2B workers don't count against the bi-annual cap. Returning workers are exempt from cap limitations, and to achieve "returning worker" status, the employee must have counted against the H-2B numerical cap between Oct. 1, 2002, and Sept. 30, 2005.

Any worker not considered "returning"

is subject to the numerical limitations of the current fiscal year.

According to the USCIS, it will not reject petitions from employers who ask for a combination of returning workers and

new workers. Those petitioning employers will receive partial approvals for those people qualifying as returning workers.

For more information visit www.uscis.gov.

Missing from Green Book '06

LM's December directory issue omitted several key suppliers to the Green Industry. For more complete information on the following companies, please visit the online version of "Green Book '06" at www.landscapemanagement.net.

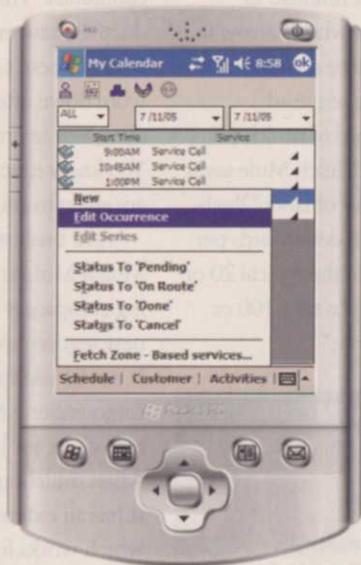
► Agrisel USA, Inc., extensive line of Green Industry chemical products: 715 Bittersweet Trail, Atlanta, GA 30350; Phone: 877/480-0880; www.agrisel.com.

► Bell Laboratories, Inc., TALPRID mole bait: 3699 Kinsman Blvd, Madison, WI 53704; Phone: 608/241-0202; www.belllabs.com.

► LESCO, landscape equipment, irrigation products, turfgrass seed, fertilizers, combo products, chemical pest controls: 1301 East 9th St., Suite 1300, Cleveland, OH 44114; Phone: 800/321-5325; www.lesco.com.

► PBI/Gordon Corp., extensive line of herbicides, fungicides, specialty products, plant nutrient supplements: 1217 West 12th St., Kansas City, MO 64101; Phone: 800/821-7925; www.pbigordon.com.

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Circle 120

Add-On Biz

BUSINESS

NEW REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES

Mulch blowing

► Tired of shoveling? The Mulch Mule can help, letting your business grow

BY MIKE SEUFFERT /
Associate Editor

About seven years ago, Todd Pugh, founder and CEO of Todd's Enviroscapes, Inc. in Louisville, OH, was listening to a presentation about improving profitability.

The speaker asked the business owners to find out what part of their business had the highest labor cost and the lowest profit margin. If the two were the same, it was time to get out of that business. For Pugh, the answer to both questions was mulching.

Dirty job

Nobody likes to mulch. Pugh knew that from personal experience, having been landscaping since he was 14 years old.

Come spring and summer, standing in the back of a pickup truck and shoveling out load after load of mulch, it is hot, sweaty, hard work. But it is one of those jobs that there's no getting around, even when it is high cost and low margin.

"We just needed to find a faster way to get the mulch into the wheelbarrow," Pugh

says. "We came up with the Mulch Mule." Designed by Pugh and Stephen Hoppel from Alliance, OH, the Mulch Mule is a labor-saving, productivity-increasing machine that will deliver a full load of mulch into a wheelbarrow in as little as three seconds, with no shoveling required.

"Every yard of mulch put through the Mulch Mule saves one man-hour of labor," Pugh says. "You can do 80 yards per day instead of the typical 20 or 30, and the jobs take 100 or 200% less time."

BY THE NUMBERS...

100
Yards of mulch per day the Mulch Mule can move

ZERO
Number of labor hours saved for every one yard of mulch

ONE
Number of lunch and smoke breaks taken by the Mulch Mule

5
Cu. yard capacity of trailer



Big benefits

Pugh says one of the biggest benefits of the Mulch Mule is that it is consistent, producing the same results no matter the conditions. "This sets the productivity rate every day," Pugh says. "It doesn't get tired and worn down after a day of shoveling, like an employee will. You know exactly what you are going to get done."

As a business add-on, the Mulch Mule is versatile, allowing companies to move into new segments of the market. It can be used as an enclosed cargo trailer with automatic tarp cover for bulk deliveries when mulching season is over. It has an extension conveyor which works for mulch delivery along roads or highways. In the fall, the Mulch Mule has a 24 hp vacuum attachment for leaf and debris clean-up.

It can also help smaller companies contract larger jobs. "A smaller company might want to bid a large condo complex. But they might be outbid by a larger company, or get scared away thinking they will bid too low and lose money," explains Pugh. "With the

Mulch Mule, your numbers are set. You have a set production cycle and can bid those larger jobs knowing exactly what you will get out of it."

Larger companies can use the Mulch Mule to offset the cost of a part-time employee, as well as increase safety and reduce injuries caused by extensive shoveling.

True story

Pugh has sold about 60 units of the Mulch Mule since he first took it public about five years ago, selling nearly 30 of those in 2005 alone. One went to Roger Myers, owner of American Beauty Landscape in Youngstown, OH.

"As our maintenance department has grown, we're going through a ton of mulch," Myers says. "The efficiency of the Mulch Mule has been fabulous for us. The only problem was at first, my guys were so amazed by it, they stood around watching the machine work. But it has been a great piece of equipment for us, and with the vacuum attachment, it's one we're using 10 or 11 months out of the year." **L.M.**



“Showoff”

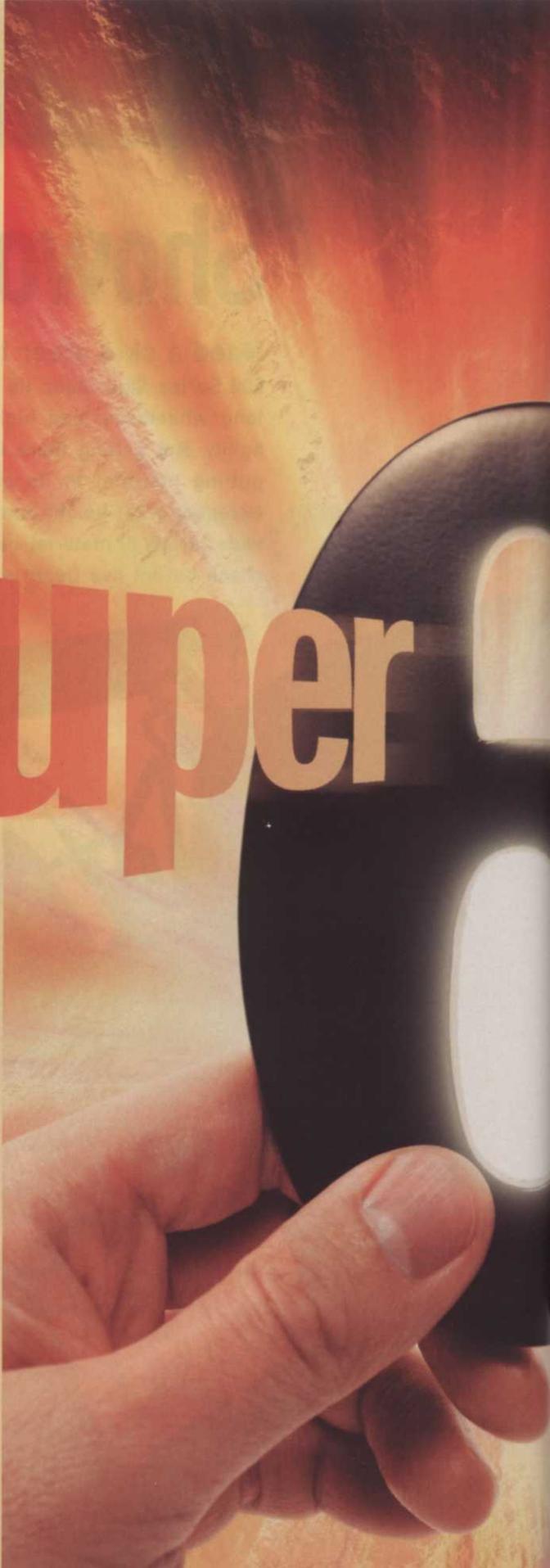
Need a skid steer that's not afraid to strut with your stuff? Get a new 300 Series Skid Steer. Its optimal 60/40-weight distribution, low center of gravity, long wheelbase, and high ground clearance deliver unsurpassed balance and agility. But getting there is only half the battle. Deere skid steers also excel at putting material in its place with a patented vertical-lift boom that delivers exceptional lift height and reach. And numerous Worksite Pro™ attachments put a wide variety of material-handling tasks easily within your grasp. Stop by today and check out all five Deere skid steers. We'll be glad to show you what they can do.



Our editors pick trends sure to be the Next Big Thing in 2006

BY LM STAFF

Super

A hand is shown holding a glowing, dark, spherical object with a bright white light emanating from its center. The background is a dramatic, fiery orange and red sky, suggesting a sunset or a powerful energy source. The overall mood is one of anticipation and discovery.

Business owners are constantly on that elusive search for the Next Big Thing. There's always something on the horizon, something that will make the job less labor-intensive, more productive and yes — more profitable. Is it a piece of equipment? A technology? Something so breathtakingly simple it's been under your nose the whole time?

Look no further. The editors of *Landscape Management* pick six trends we predict will change the way you do and manage your jobs in the near future. Some of these products and technologies are new; some have been around a while and are just now starting to catch on with landscape, lawn service and grounds operations.

Sure, new gadgets always have a "wow" factor, and it's good to be a trendsetter, but what sets the trends we identify here apart is their usefulness. We know you're after efficiency and profitability, but we also know you don't have the time or capital to try everything out there. So we're your eyes and ears on the road, at the shows and with the manufacturers.

These trends have a common thread: They're productivity all-stars that address the challenges you face today. Every single one either helps you cut down on manpower, or use that manpower more efficiently to accomplish several tasks at once. We've got mower technology and engineering trends, advancements in aerators, anti-theft devices, new fuel sources and yes, GPS (our No. 1 pick that we predict will change the way you do business big time).

We do mention some product names in our trend spotting, and we point you to their Web sites. If you know of others out there that fall into these categories, let us know.

GPS TRACKING

The future in home and property service businesses is GPS vehicle tracking. For a growing number of landscape/lawn service companies, that future is now.

David Pyron is serious about growing his 6-year-old company. His company, which recorded sales of \$750,000 last year, offers a range of maintenance, design, installation and construction services.

"I had no idea what I was getting into," he says half in jest. Even so, he's pushing his company to the next level. He's adding three or four service crews and trucks.

But, like all owner/operators, especially those who also serve as head salesman/installation coordinator, it's impossible for him to monitor the activities of his employees during the workday even though most of his company's service occurs in a tight 10-mile radius in and around Atlanta.

That was the main reason why he decided to purchase the TeleNavTrack GPS-based system. TeleNavTrack is bundled into his Nextel service and adds an extra \$9.99 per unit to his monthly phone bill.

"The reasons I signed up were, first, to monitor the locations of my crews," says Pyron. "Second, I think it will help us with our routing efficiency as we can monitor a cookie crumb trail through a maintenance crew's daily progress and point out any shortcuts to the foremen."

Pyron says he can now monitor his crews' whereabouts from any computer. You can even do it from your truck if you use a BlackBerry or a wireless laptop.

Another fleet management system that is finding favor with landscape/lawn service providers is a company called Navtrak, Inc., not to be confused with TeleNavTrack.

Regardless of concerns of "Big Brotherism" or employee mistrust or cost, the days of giving service crews their morning marching orders then turning them loose in company trucks are drawing to a close.

 **MORE INFO**
TeleNavTrack:
www.telenavtrack.net
Navtrak, Inc.:
www.navtrak.net

What GPS tracking can do

- ▶ Real-time service delivery and job time tracking. If jobs are taking less time than is scheduled for them, routing can be altered to fit more jobs into a given workday.
- ▶ Schedule adherence. Track vehicle start and stop times and compare them to time sheet information to verify work is being done for billed hours. If a customer calls for an unscheduled stop, you can locate, contact and route the nearest vehicle to their location.
- ▶ In the event of an emergency, such as a breakdown, accident or vehicle theft, knowing the precise location of your vehicle is critical.
- ▶ Knowing the location of your service crews at all times facilitates communication. Lost drivers can get immediate directions from the home or branch office.
- ▶ More efficient routing and scheduling means your vehicles will drive fewer miles. Better routing also means your company can complete more jobs or service more customers in a day. — R.H.

MULCHING OPTIONS

The mower news at this fall's shows was all about mulching. In the quest to help operators streamline the complete mowing process, several manufacturers are adding more sophisticated mulching options. Take for example John Deere's new Mulch-on-Demand deck, set for wide release as a factory-installed option on its 757 and 777 Z-Trak mowers.

"This deck is our distinguishing feature," Gilbert Pena, commercial segment strategy manager for John Deere, told us at the Green Industry Expo last November. The deck's moveable baffle system can block the discharge opening or separate each cutting chamber to ensure the clipping circulate, mulch and drop quickly. Operators can switch into mulch mode from the seat.

The time crews gain by not having to clean up clippings, Pena says, translates into additional detail work like pruning and weeding.

Similarly, Toro's new Turbo Force deck has additional mulching features for its mid-sized commercial walk-behinds. An adjustable discharge baffle lets the operator power through wet or tall grass in the open position, or disperse clippings better on dry turf.

Exmark showcased its new Triton deck for its Lazer Z series, which has adjustable, flow-control baffles. The company says this feature makes the mowers more efficient by optimizing airflow.

Why all the emphasis on mulching? Simple — it helps contractors do more jobs in one pass. Other manufacturers are jumping on this bandwagon, too.



 **MORE INFO**
John Deere:
www.deere.com
Toro:
www.toro.com
Exmark:
www.exmark.com

3 ALTERNATIVE FUEL SOURCES



By now we've all come to grips with higher gas prices. Sure, it's been a long time since we've filled up our cars for under \$2 per gallon, but at least we're not still waiting in mile-long lines at the gas station.

Smart business owners are still looking for ways to lower their fuel costs and many are turning to diesel for added fuel economy, power and performance. Manufacturers are replying in kind by offering diesel options on their popular lines of mowers, tractors and utility vehicles. Ferris Industries 5000Z series of full-sized zero-turn mowers comes with a 33-hp Caterpillar diesel engine. Toro put a 23-hp Kubota liquid-cooled diesel engine on its Z Master zero-turn mowers. Cub Cadet has added diesel options, including on its two new 4X4 utility vehicles. These

will be powered by a 20-hp Caterpillar diesel, a first for utility vehicles.

Dixie Chopper has gone one step further in the search for alternative fuels with its LP-3000, with a 30-hp, propane-powered Generac engine. The LP-3000 has all the power you'd expect in a gasoline or diesel engine, with a blade tip speed of 18,840 ft. per minute at 3,750 RPMs, 60- or 72-in. decks and speeds of up to 7.5 acres per hour.

"This mower allows a city to get brownie points with the EPA, and do something to improve the air quality," says Art Evans, Dixie Chopper founder and CEO.

"And for commercial guys, this gives a competitive edge in going for contracts with cities

or with environmentally conscious homeowners, along with saving money on fuel."

Evans says propane is less costly than regular gas or diesel, though the mower burns the fuel slightly faster. It makes up for that with a cleaner running engine, projected to last 2-3 times longer than a traditional engine. Two 7.8-gallon propane tanks provide enough fuel to run 8-10 hours between fill ups.

The LP-3000 is in production and should hit showroom floors by February. We were excited to see it in action at Expo in the fall, and we expect it will wow business owners looking for alternative fuels. Now we just need someone to build a commercially viable solar-powered mower.

MORE INFO

Toro:
www.toro.com

Ferris:
www.ferrisindustries.com

Cub Cadet:
www.cubcadet.com

Dixie Chopper:
www.dixiechopper.com

4 THEFT PREVENTION EQUIPMENT

Vehicle and large equipment theft is a huge problem for landscape contractors. Today's thieves are getting pretty darn sophisticated. Fortunately, manufacturers of big-ticket equipment like backhoes and skid steers are addressing the problem with a growing number of security features on their products. Consider these security enhancements along with other value-added features when making buying decisions. Many apply the smarts of GPS to theft prevention.

Consider this: Around midnight on Sept., 25, Brien Worrell, owner of Brien's Services, Inc., got news of a theft at his landscape business. Missing were two trucks and trailers loaded with equipment. He estimated the value of the loss at \$120,000.

He immediately activated his Teletrac FleetDirector vehicle location and fleet management system to begin locating the missing vehicles. The system provided real-time location information for the trucks and trailers, which was forwarded to police. Within 30 minutes, state police had recovered the two units. But the equipment was still missing.

Worrell then activated the FleetDirector vehicle history-reporting feature. It provided a map, with times, of where the two trucks had been since their theft. It showed a location where the



trucks had stopped briefly. When police checked it out they found Worrell's equipment and a lot of other stolen equipment.

Another product we ran across at this fall's trade shows, the Tattletale alarm, works via indoor and outdoor long-range, wireless sensors. The heart of the system is a portable base unit that can be programmed to as many as 16 wireless sensors located on anything. The sensors are effective up to 2,000 feet.

If somebody disturbs a vehicle or equipment protected by a sensor, the Tattletale base alarm shoots a data packet at the nearest cell tower in less than one second. The signal is received by Tattletale dispatch, which can alert the contractor's cell phone or local police.

Finally, check out Lock'em Magnum wheel locks. They're not high-tech, but they're inexpensive and easy to use. Manufactured by Rack'em Manufacturing, Inc., they secure tires from 12 to 20 ins.

continued on page 32

MORE INFO

Teletrac FleetDirector:
www.teletrac.net

Tattletale:
www.tattletalealarm.com

Rack'em Manufacturing:
www.rackemmfg.com

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continued from page 30

5 MOWER DESIGN & ENGINEERING

Two mower manufacturers grabbed our attention this past fall. Since we don't field test equipment ourselves, we can't endorse their products, but we feel their uniqueness makes them worthy of further investigation.

The Hybrid Z from Self-Guided Systems, Inc., is the new commercial laser-guided mower available this summer.

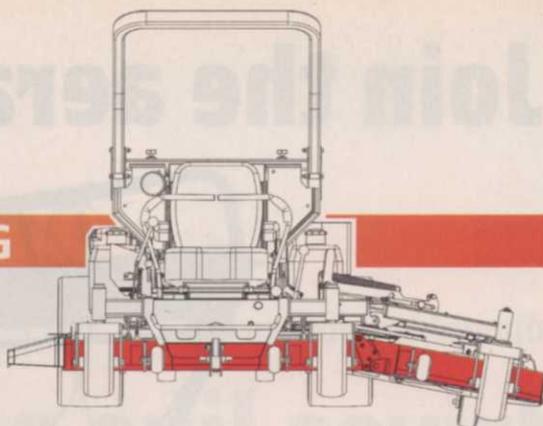
The "brain" of the 38-in.-cut unit is its patented laser navigation system. The rotating laser sends out a level line of laser sight. The beam hits reflectors that have been set up around the perimeter of a property (about four for a residential lawn). The mower triangulates position based on position and reflector location.

An operator "teaches" the Hybrid Z the lay of each property by walking the outside perimeter of the property, then the inside perimeter, which programs the mower to the location of trees, gardens

and others areas not to mow. Once the mower has "learned" the property, the operator selects the angle and height of the cut. The mower is ready to mow.

SGS President Paul Angott stresses to us that since the unit does not have belts or pulleys (brushless DC motors drive its three 13.75-in. blades), maintenance is confined to its 12-hp Kohler engine and blade sharpening. Angott says distribution is in place and the Hybrid Z will sell for \$3,995 plus \$8.50 an hour per mowing time, a pricing model like a cell phone.

A new line of commercial, rotary, zero-turn mowers from Lastec feature decks that articulate. The design has proven successful in golf course maintenance. Because the decks follow the contour of the ground they reduce scalping and offer a finer



cut on uneven or difficult-to-mow areas than rigid-deck mowers, Lastec founder and CEO Jeff Laskowski says.

Used for more than a decade in golf, why didn't Lastec market articulators to the commercial market until now? The price was too high, at least until this season, he says. He credits design enhancements and the belt drives that power the decks for their new affordability. The drives are efficient, power the decks at a fraction of the cost of other systems and are patented.

The company's new commercial units include the model 2861AD (61-in. cut), 2872AD (72-in. cut) and the 2886AD (86-in. cut).

MORE INFO

Hybrid Z:
www.selfguidedsystems.com

Lastec:
www.lastec.com

6 HIGH-TECH AERATION

Walking the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation show in December gave us a chance to look over impressive aeration equipment. We learned that there are a lot of ways to aerate turfgrass, and punching holes in the soil may not be the best way. Figure out what your fields need for aeration then get the right equipment to do the job.

The Earthquake Tremor Rotary Decompactor got a lot of attention. This pull-behind-tractor unit (three models available in working widths of 30 – 87 in.) fractures the soil with rotary blades, each of the six rows of blades offset from an adjacent row. As the blades on one row displace the soil in one direction, its neighboring row displaces it again. The unit is similar to the BLEC Groundbreaker and the Verti-Quake by Redexim Charterhouse.

Two other interesting units at the Ohio show were the new SISIS Aer-Aid System and the Linear Aerator manufactured by Earth & Turf Products.

The SISIS system, used in conjunction with the SISIS Javelin vertical-action aerator, is fitted with a compressor to inject air into the turfgrass rootzone. The Linear Aerator relies on slicing action to modify soil and improve water and nutrient absorption.

For sheer width, Ontario, Canada-based Bannerman has its Bat Wing Aerator, with a maximum width of 152 in. The tractor-drawn unit has right and left hydraulic wings with core or fracture tines.

Toro showed its new ProCore 648 that is an all-new design placing the wheels in front of the aeration head so operators can make many passes without running over cores or freshly aerated turf.

Down the aisle from some of these high-end units was the functional, low-cost AerWay Shattering unit. The manufacturer describes the action of the AerWay unit as "venting" the soil. It says that the unique angles and offsets of the shattertines crack and shatter compacted soil. **LJM**



MORE INFO

Earthquake Tremor:
www.prestigeor.com

BLEC:
www.blecusa.com

Redexim Charterhouse Verti-Quake:
www.redexim.com

SISIS:
www.sisis.com

Toro ProCore:
www.toro.com

Bannerman Bat Wing Aerator:
www.sportsturfmagic.com

Linear Aerator:
www.earthandturf.com

AerWay Advanced Aeration:
www.aerway.com

WHAT'S NEW?

Ever since its introduction in 2001, the Hustler Super Z™ has been setting the standard for commercial z-riders. Now, 5 years later, the Super Z for 2006 will send the competition back to the drawing board and contractors will be beating a path to their Hustler dealer like never before.

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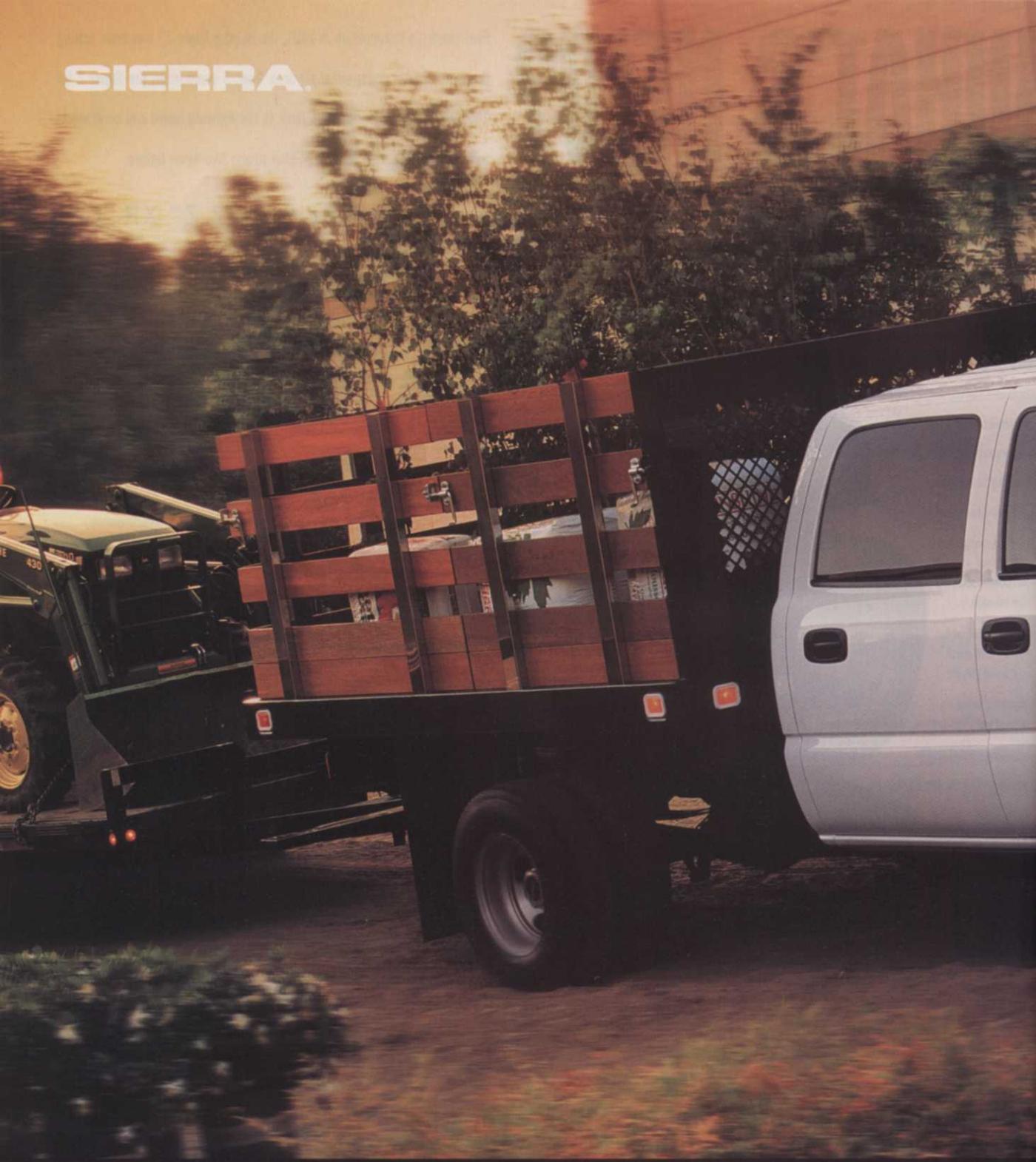
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Financial terms

Confusing markup with margin causes profit slippage

BY MICHAEL KAY

April 15th, or "Tax Day," is the day of the year that many business owners and contractors dread. Those with businesses and those who help others with their businesses understand it's no picnic writing large checks to Uncle Sam and his relatives. These professionals also understand that talking with accountants and/or tax preparers can be bewildering when strange-sounding names (i.e. "marginal tax rate" or "alternative minimum tax") and long lists of numbers render vacant stares and heads nodding in false comprehension.

But these terms and numbers are important to business owners who strive to make their year-end price margins close to their expectations. In this second of three articles that focus on helping contractors' businesses grow, we will take a look at some important financial numbers and iden-

tify how these numbers help contractors run more successful companies.

Markup and margin

A common concern among many business owners is typified by the following statement: "I price my jobs for a 10 percent profit but at the end of the year I'm lucky to see 3 percent." This statement is representative of a contractor or business owner who confuses price margin (profit)

with markup. To make your balance sheet tally at the end of the year, there are some basic financial keys you do need to become familiar with.

Markup is the price (or cost) times the percentage. A contractor or business owner estimates materials and labor for a job for \$1,000 and marks it up 10% for profit. The total price for the job would then be \$1,100.

Margin is calculated differ-

continued on page 38



** This article is the second in a series of bidding and estimating articles contributed by this author.*

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continued from page 36
 ently and defines how much profit a business owner will earn after materials, labor and overhead are deducted. Margin is calculated as net income divided by revenue. Take the contractor who sells a job for \$1,100 but wants (and will budget for) a 10% margin for profit. Using the former example, the contractor will divide the total costs for the job (\$1,000) by one minus the desired margin (10%). The calculation looks like this:

$$\$1000 / (1 - 0.10) = \$1,111.11$$

Once this calculation is done, however, the contractor sees he'll only be receiving a 9% margin. If this is done on all of the contractor's jobs throughout the year he will reduce his 10% margin to 9% at the end of year, all because of confusing markup with margin. In order to receive a 10% margin, the contractor will need to charge \$1,111.11 for the \$1,000 job.

In addition to confusion in markup and margin, there are other factors that may have brought that 10% margin down to 3% at the end of the year from the initial example. While there are several reasons for this, the following are often overlooked:

► Remember that big tax bill in April? That may be an indication that business own-

ers are not correctly accounting for tax liability during the year.

► Was significant debt paid off during the year because many jobs were secured and you're trying to be debt free? While that can be an admirable goal, business owners must remember to account for that during the year to know what effect it would have on the business by the end of the year.

► Speaking of that good year, were the business owner's best workers or supervisors given a bonus as a way to say thanks?

Profits explained

Businesses big and small use key financial information to help explain their current financial situations and to help point to specific areas in their businesses to find improvements. Many contractors assess their current and future financial security on financial ratios that can be

determined by working with an accountant or by purchasing accounting software that automatically calculates financial information. While there are several financial ratios contractors and business owners can use, two of the most widely used are explained below.

Gross profit (margin) is the difference between the cost of goods sold and the price and

** Watch for the final article in our bidding and estimating series on pricing services — how customer sales skills, understanding of the business' financial health, and correct estimation and job pricing affects success.*

is a function primarily of labor management (hours worked) and pricing/estimating accuracy. If a business owner's gross profits are below what are projected, there are usually two areas to examine. One, pricing is too low, which can mean a business owner's labor rates are not capturing all the costs or the business owner's estimating is inaccurate. Second, workers could be spending too many hours on or between jobs.

Contribution profit (margin)

is the difference between income and variable costs such as equipment management practices (i.e. purchase, repair, prevention). If this ratio is too low, either sales are below expectations or business owners are spending too much on, for example, equipment purchases or repairs.

Financial management is more than just simple (or not so simple) numbers. It is really about the story the numbers tell about how well business owners manage their businesses. Unless contractors have

enrolled in finance classes or spent a lot of time with an accountant (both of which are costly), it is sometimes difficult to make sense out of all the financial jargon.

However, help is out there. Classes in financial management that focus on the Green Industry are available. Many of these classes are listed on association and trade publication Web sites. The government can be of help, too. Local Small Business Administration offices usually sponsor workshops that can help contractors and business owners to understand some of these numbers, what they mean and how to calculate them.

Taking classes, purchasing financial software and speaking with an accountant are all ways to help business owners determine the financial health of their businesses. Like most of the population, many contractors dislike spending a lot of time with calculators in hand and would much rather be out on the job making money. However, the truth is that knowing the financial numbers of your business is just as important in making money as getting paid for your work. **LM**

— *The author is associate training program manager for Rain Bird Services Corp. and a facilitator for Rain Bird's Regional Improvement Training Camp (RITC) events held throughout the country. For more information visit www.rainbird.com.*

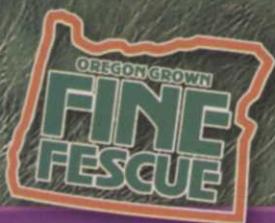
MORE INFO
www.landscape-management.net
 Click on Business Planner: Features in the navigation bar to find the first article in this series, "Pricing vs. estimating."

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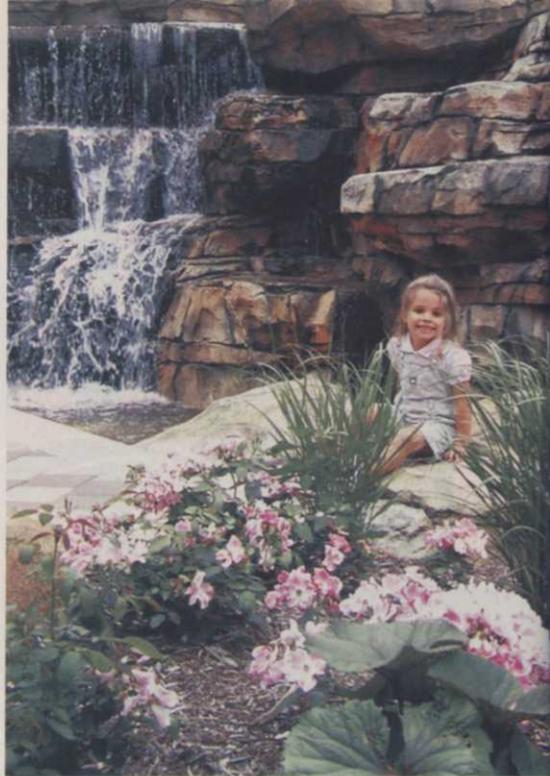
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The Hitchcock Design Group designed this therapeutic water garden, complete with a natural stone waterfall, for Edward Hospital in Naperville, IL.



Healing gardens— challenge yourself

Sensitive sites like hospitals and nursing homes are opportunities for profitable landscape design

BY MEGAN WAITKOFF

When Sharon Coates, vice president of Zaretsky & Associates, started designing a sensory garden for Mendon Ponds Park in Mendon, NY, she had more challenges to consider than what flowers a residential client thought would be complimentary to the new evergreens. The garden had to cater to visually impaired visitors.

Commissioned by a client who wanted to create a garden in memory of her daughter, the space needed to provide a complete sensual experience, from touch to smell. Coates and her team chose

plants with strong and pleasant fragrances, such as lavender and lemonthyme. Lambs ear was another plant they selected because of its special characteristics, in this case its fuzzy touch. They also designed wide stone pathways into the garden so that people in wheelchairs as well as casual walkers could enjoy more than 170 ft. of raised gardens in the 60-sq.-ft. space. Visitors learn about the garden from its brass plaques. They're strategically located throughout the property and written in both English and Braille.

"It was so moving to know that we created a garden that a whole population couldn't previously enjoy," Coates says. "It was an amazing project for us because as landscape designers, we're so visually oriented."

Zaretsky & Associates is one of a growing number of landscape design firms throughout the country that has expanded its business to create specialty gardens, in particular healing or sensory

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Your Daily
HOROSCOPE



ARIES (March 21 - April 19): A new friendship is blossoming. Take your time and really get to know this person. You will be pleasantly surprised what you find out.



TAURUS (April 20 - May 20): Money seems tighter than usual lately. But just remember, you have great fortune in other aspects of your life. Embrace your family and you will get through this.



GEMINI (May 21 - June 21): Your career is on the fast track. Now is not the time to slow down. Make the most of every available opportunity that your work presents to you.



CANCER (June 22 - July 22): Happiness is on its way. You've been through a lot and now it's your turn to shine. Be sure to take some time just for you. You truly deserve it!



LEO (July 23 - August 22): You are the center of attention. People rely on you not only for advice, but also for a good laugh. So keep it up, your fun spirit is contagious.



VIRGO (August 23 - September 22): It's time to take a stand. You should no longer remain on both sides of an issue. Instead, put your foot down and let others know exactly what you think.



LIBRA (September 23 - October 22): Love is in the air. Your relationship with the one you love will soon get even stronger. You are about to receive an even greater commitment.



SCORPIO (October 23 - November 21): It's time to let things go. The past is the past, and you should only be looking forward. "Forgive and forget" is the new motto you should live by.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 - December 21): Knowledge truly is power. It's time to use your brain to its full advantage. Seek out opportunities in the workplace to show off your capabilities. Expect rewards!



CAPRICORN (December 22 - January 19): Be sure to listen carefully. Your ears are your most effective form of communication. Others will appreciate your willingness to hear them out.



AQUARIUS (January 20 - February 18): It's time for a break. Use that vacation time you've been saving up for a spontaneous trip. It will re-energize your mind and body for the rest of the year.



PISCES (February 19 - March 20): Do you like surprises? There is a big one in your future. Be alert, because this is one surprise that is going to change your life for the better.

DON'T COUNT ON THIS.

continued from page 40

gardens, for commercial clients. Designing these gardens can be a way to attract new, different clients, create more revenue or fulfill a need to create a product with far-reaching benefits.

"They help so many patients, and the families and hospital administration and staff enjoy them as well," says Geoffrey Roehll, vice president of the Hitchcock Design Group, a company based in the Midwest that designs healing and enabling gardens for the healthcare field. "We live, breath and eat the healing garden philosophy."

Holistic approach

When the Hitchcock Design Group decided to offer specialty gardens as one of its services, Roehll first attended the horticultural therapy certification program at the School of the Chicago Botanic Garden. This is a program that covers all of the basics, from designing the gardens to estimating costs. Coates, who also was certified through the program, says it's a must for all landscape professionals looking to get into the business.

To gain inspiration for the gardens, companies can take multiple approaches. When designing a healing garden for a hospital, the design team with Kurisu International, a Portland-based firm that gets approximately half of its business from designing healing gardens for commercial clients, interviews the patients for which the garden will be designed to gain a sense of what experience they hope the garden will provide. The team also talks with the operations department at the hospital for information on potential



Kurisu International designed the garden shown here for the Morikami Museum in Delray Beach, FL. In Japanese tradition it incorporates all five senses. The Hitchcock Design Group created the spiritual healing garden (at left) for an Illinois hospital.



pedestrian traffic flow in and around the garden space.

"You may be building for a population instead of a person," says Koichi Kurisu, chief operating officer of Kurisu International. "You have to study that population and design for them."

Hitchcock's Roehll looks at the design from a pragmatic viewpoint. When designing cancer gardens, for example, the intended users are cancer patients who are undergoing chemotherapy and therefore photosensitive and sensitive to strong odors. The garden must be designed with multiple opportunities for heavy shading and with plants with no fragrance. Gardens for Alzheimer's patients also present a memory challenge. The design of the walkways can't be too circuitous, otherwise patients run the risk of getting lost. Visual clues should be implemented in

the landscape to help guide patients back to the entrance or a common point of reference.

Each firm approaches the logistical components of commercial projects differently. At Zaretsky & Associates, the company does the designing but it might contract out the construction work or hire specialists to work on a specific element of a garden, such as a waterfall. Hitchcock Design Group only provides the design and hires general contractors to do all of the construction. Members of the design team will oversee the project through completion, however.

In yet another approach, Kurisu International hires environmental scientists and horticultural therapists on a per-hour basis to review plans from the standpoint of a clinical setting or to make sure the design is the most helpful for the projected users.

Plan for challenges

A drawback to doing specialty gardens for commercial clients is the time involved, from design stages through completion. The gardens can take anywhere from three to six months, sometimes as long as a year, depending on the size of the space, the intricacies of the design and the ap-

continued on page 44

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continued from page 42

proval process of the commissioning foundation or committee. Smaller companies that want to maintain their residential clients may only be able to tackle one specialty garden per year.

Designers also have to cater to the vision of multiple people rather than the desires of a single homeowner. Kurisu says that companies have to keep three entities in mind when designing a healing garden for a hospital: the hospital foundation, administrative staff and potential users.

"There are more stakeholders and more consultants to consider," he says. "The project doesn't move unless there's a champion on the board who's pushing for it. And the person who pays you is not necessarily the one who will use it."

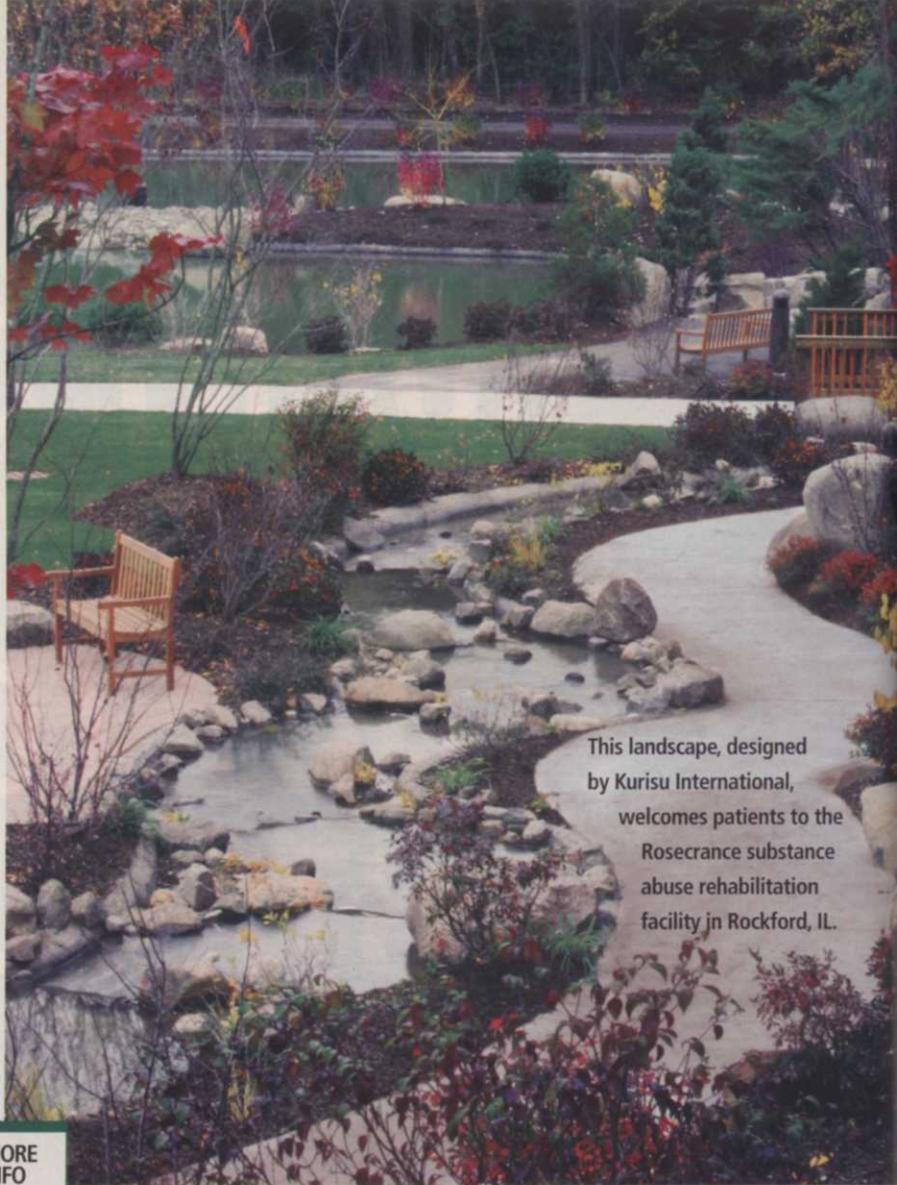
Bruce Zaretsky, president of Zaretsky & Associates, says he sometimes has to get his designs approved by 10 to 30 people. And every one of them might have a different vision for the space.

"There's always at least one more person in there who thinks they know more than you do," he says, half in jest.

Zaretsky also says payments can be a downfall, mentioning that for one project, his firm asked for a payment within 10 days and waited more than 90 before the check came through. The price of specialty gardens also differs for each company depending on the size of the space, the complexity of the design, the time involved and whether or not the company hires outside contractors, but Zaretsky says his gardens average at \$100,000.

Marketing matters

Before deciding what design to go with, how long the project will take and what, if any, additional help need to be hired, companies have to get the jobs. Each



This landscape, designed by Kurisu International, welcomes patients to the Rosecrance substance abuse rehabilitation facility in Rockford, IL.

MORE INFO
www.chicagobotanic.org/certificate/htcert/
 Find out more about the horticultural therapy certification program at the School of the Chicago Botanic Garden.

company should devise its own marketing strategies based on pre-established working relationships with potential clients, the demand for the service in the area and a targeted range of desired commercial clients.

Hitchcock Design Group began marketing specifically to the healthcare industry in 2000 — hospitals, rehabilitation centers and senior living facilities. Company representatives spoke at meetings for horticultural and medical associations and presented at local conferences. Roehll characterized his firm's marketing approach as "a full frontal attack on joining the right groups in the healthcare and senior living industries." The company also uses direct mailers and markets to architects who might incorporate specialty

gardens in their overall design plans. Kurisu International also has marketed its healing gardens to nonprofit organizations — museums, botanical societies and alcohol and drug treatment facilities. But its main clients are referred by word of mouth, as is the case for Zaretsky & Associates.

Whether interested companies actively market specialty gardens or cater to existing demand, offering the additional service will diversify a company's client base and separate it from competitors.

"If you're the only person on your block doing that, you can name your price," Zaretsky says. "It's basic supply and demand. If you create that niche, there will always be a market." **LM**

— *The author is a freelance writer based in Chicago. Contact her at megan.waitkoff@webcentrix.net.*



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1

1 Get smart

The Toro Co. Irrigation Division's new TIS-240, an Intelli-Sense "smart" water-saving controller, uses real-time meteorological and agronomic information to determine how much moisture a landscape needs for ideal plant growth. For the TIS-240, Toro partnered with HydroPoint, using its WeatherTRAK scheduling engine to receive daily local precipitation updates. Intelli-Sense compares the weather updates to benchmark data of site-specific attributes for each landscape setting to calculate the precise water requirements for each valve zone of the landscape. It then automatically makes adjustments to the irrigation schedule and activates sprinkler run cycles accordingly. A prototype of the TISE-240 was on display at the International Irrigation Show in Phoenix, and units will be available in 2006.

For more information contact Toro at 800/664-4740 or visit www.toro.com/irrigation/ circle no. 250

2



2 Vandal-proof

In addition to its 12-in. pop-up height and optional side inlet, the key benefits of the Rain Bird 5512 Rotor include vandal resistance and ease of use. The rotor includes Memory Arc, which returns the rotor automatically to its original arc setting after it has been tampered with, and a non-strippable drive mechanism that prevents damage if vandals tamper with the rotor head. The 5512 Rotor also contains a brass shaft that reinforces the nozzle turret-to-riser connection and helps the rotor withstand side impacts. In addition, the 5512 Rotor offers continuous full- and part-circle operation in the same head as well as independent left/right arc adjustment. The rotor uses Rain Curtain nozzles, which provide even distribution, close-in watering and larger water droplets for enhanced wind resistance.

For more information contact Rain Bird at 800/724-6247 or visit www.rainbird.com/ circle no. 251

3



4



3 In the flow

The ACC Controller from Hunter Industries offers real-time flow monitoring, enabling users to customize their irrigation system controller in the field for optimal results. The ACC eliminates water waste and damage from broken sprinklers and pipes through real-time flow monitoring. Six fully independent programs and four custom manual programs add programming flexibility, with a non-volatile 100-year memory. ACC has two programmable pump starts/master valve outputs by station for managing multiple water sources. The "no water" window programming allows users to define hours when no watering is allowed, which overrides any user-set programs for that time frame, and accommodates local water restrictions. The ACC's adaptable modular design expands from 12 to 42 stations.

For more information contact Hunter at 760/744-5240 or visit www.hunterindustries.com/ circle no. 252

4 Plowing through

Vermeer Manufacturing Co. has developed a multi-blade vibratory plow attachment for its LM42 and LM25 tractors to install Netafim Techline CV or Techline dripperline in the ground. With minimal damage to the ground surface, the plow attachment can simultaneously pull multiple rows of the water-conserving dripperline in turfgrass or gardens. The plow attachment comes as Vermeer and Netafim Irrigation, Inc. announced an alliance that aligns both companies' products to better serve the subsurface irrigation industry. Under the agreement, Netafim Irrigation will develop and market underground drip irrigation products that can be installed using Vermeer equipment with vibratory plow attachments. Netafim products use up to 70% less water than conventional above ground irrigation systems.

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The



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Simple Electric Maintenance

Electrical system repairs on equipment are typically hard to troubleshoot. Problems are difficult to spot and often a technician needs to use an electrical multi-meter to isolate them. However, most electrical problems can be reduced with simple annual maintenance.

First, the battery. If you store the equipment over the winter, remove the battery. Clean the battery and cable terminals with a solution of baking soda and water, making sure that none of the solution enters the battery cells. Then fill the cells with distilled water and SLOWLY charge it. The battery will have a longer service life when it is charged at a 2-amp trickle rate for several hours, rather than a high amperage rate charge. Finally, coat the battery terminals with die-electric grease to prevent corrosion. If you use the equipment during winter, it is still important to clean the terminals, check the water level in the cells and coat the connections with die-electric grease. ALWAYS take safety precautions. Don't lay tools on top of the battery since they could contact both terminals and create a high-amperage short.

All electrical circuits have a designed resistance that consumes the voltage to perform the work. However, corrosion or a bad connection creates additional resistance that can prevent the electrical system from doing its job. Every year you should remove the negative battery cable from the equipment side and clean the cable end and the connecting point on the equipment. If the equipment has been painted, remove any paint on the connection surface to expose bare metal, or use a star washer between the cable and equipment that will bite into the paint for a good ground path. Check that all wired connections are secure, and that there are no pinched wires. Interlock circuits also need attention. Replace any switch that is not functioning. As a rule, replace any switch that has .5 Ohms or greater resistance.



By Mark Nelson,
Master Instructor,
Briggs & Stratton Customer Education

From the Shop

TECHNOLOGY NUTS AND BOLTS

Stock a selection of bolts, nuts and washers from a reputable supplier.



Keep it together

BY HARRY SMITH

One of my students brought me a puzzle. It was just a broken bolt but it got my attention. He was curious about why the bolt broke. It was an engine-mounting bolt on a small leaf shredder. A close inspection and a few questions later we surmised that the bolt had spent a while loose before it broke. The other three engine mounting bolts were loose and fretted when he checked them. This scenario reminded me of the things we take for granted on our equipment. We expect bolts to stay tight. We often over- or under-tighten bolts and do not consider the consequences. This is a costly oversight. So here is a short recap and some reminders about fasteners.

Pay attention to specs

Bolts and nuts have several specifications. The obvious ones are length and diameter. They also have thread pitch, the number of threads per inch or millimeter. The mysterious final factor is strength. Bolts, nuts and other threaded fasteners have a specified grade. Fasteners are graded from the peanut butter-soft grade 1 right on up to grade 8 and beyond. Equipment manu-

facturers now use grade 5 and higher fasteners on their products. In some locations where additional strength is required they may use grade 8. Once upon a time most hardware stores sold only grade 1, 2 or 3 fasteners. Substituting a lower grade fastener for a grade 5 is not wise.

Stock a selection of bolts, nuts and washers from a reputable supplier. Lawson Products, Wurth Service Supply, McMaster-Carr and Fastenal are just a few of the hundreds of companies that can supply you. Reputable suppliers will not offer you less than grade 5 bolts.

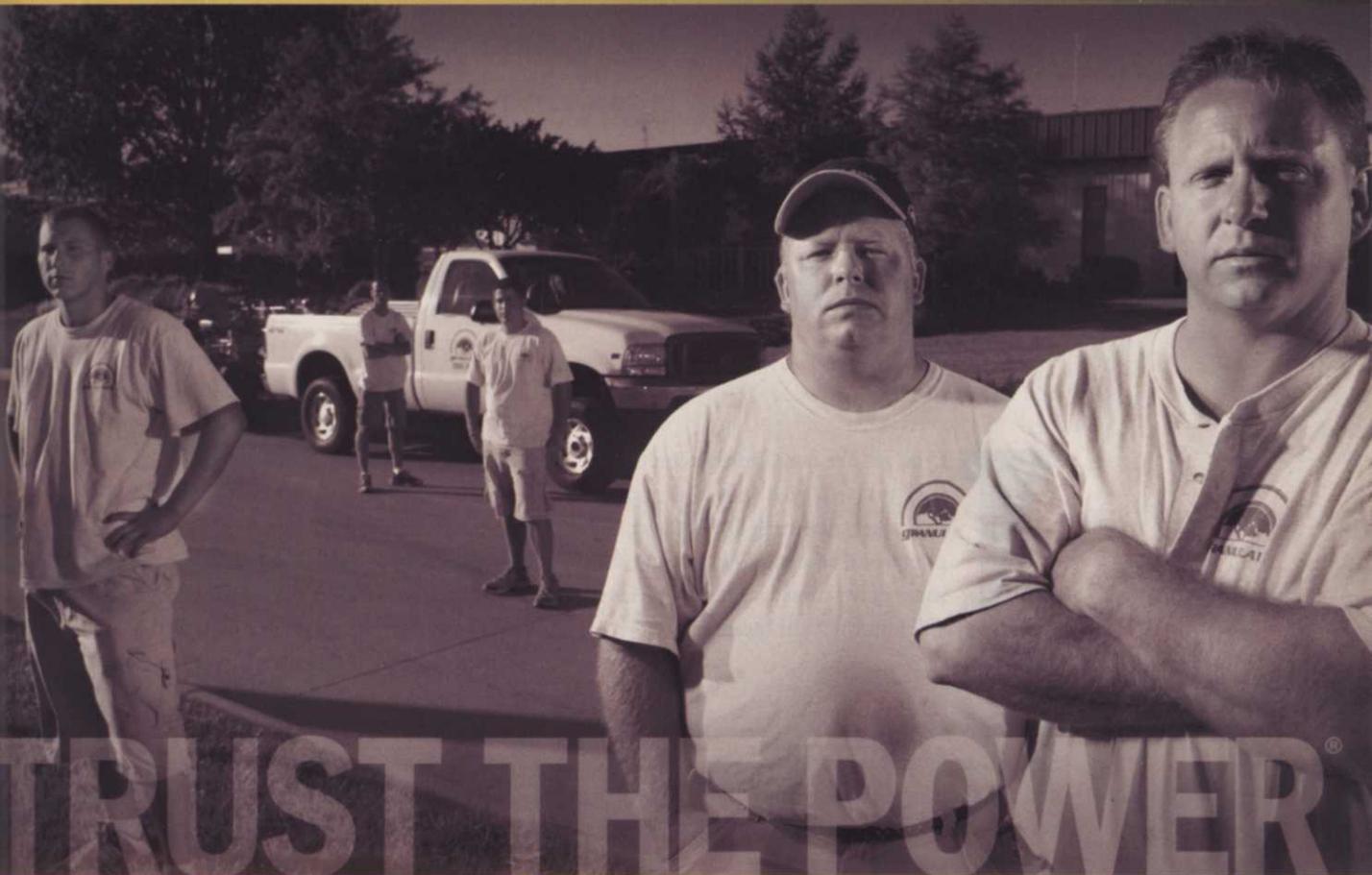
Torque tips

What about torque? First buy two good torque wrenches. But one in inch pounds to about 150 and one in foot pounds to about 150. Click or micrometer type wrenches are easiest to use. Use your service manual to reference the proper torque. Torque is not listed for all fasteners but most wrenches come with a generic guide.

Check critical fasteners on a regular basis. Lug nuts, engine mounting bolts, blade bolts, steering and control-related fasteners are some critical items. Read your service manual. Tighten up for safety and peace of mind.

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

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34-36 HP are projected gross HP ratings for the 993cc vertical shaft engine models.
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Cool technology can be fun, but technology that has the power to change your business is where the fun really starts.



Have a tech-filled New Year

BY TYLER WHITAKER

If you are like me, Christmas isn't over until you've played with some gadgets. It might be a new mini DVD player, cell phone or iPod nano. This month I share some of my most recent discoveries that will improve your business life.

Skype (www.skype.com)

Skype is an Internet-based phone service that lets you talk with anyone at a fraction of the cost of your normal long distance. It uses Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) to send your conversation over the Internet, and in doing so, avoid costly long-distance charges. It's great for calling between branch offices and headquarters, or to employees in home offices. There is one catch: Make sure you test the solution thoroughly before you have customers use it. Traditional VoIP is prone to high latency and choppy sound. Skype has made great improvements, but it's still not as good as a regular phone line. You'll need a high-speed Internet connection, a headset or handset (available at Radio Shack), and your computer.

GPS and Mologogo (www.mologogo.com)

I've talked with a lot of business owners who are interested in GPS tracking of employees and vehicles. Most want to squeak more productivity out of routes and jobs. I think GPS solutions can do just that and more. But the biggest inhibitor is usually the cost. The good news is that the costs are coming down.

New laws require wireless companies to provide the location of 911 callers. This has created a new class of GPS-enabled phones. With services like Mologogo and a support phone (BlackBerry, Nextel, Boost), you can test-drive this technology inexpensively. While this service is still in development and lacks wide phone and feature support, I see a trend that I like — having the ability to test out the basic features of a technology before you make a large investment.

Google Earth (earth.google.com)

Have you ever wished for a bird's-eye view of your job sites? Google's free service provides good-quality images from satellites and other sources. With a paid subscription you can access higher resolution images and more features. The images aren't real time, but they can help with planning and estimating.

Sprint multimedia phones (www.sprint.com)

The latest cell phone gadget to catch my eye is the new camcorder functionality on Sprint's new multimedia phones. You can shoot 30-second videos and e-mail them to anyone on the Internet. This is a great way to get a second set of eyes on the job site.

Cool technology can be fun, but technology that has the power to change your business is where the fun really starts. If your favorite new product or technology wasn't listed here, drop me an e-mail. I would love to hear what's working well for your company or customers.

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

twhitaker@symbiot.biz

→ For more information on the GPS trend, turn to page 28.

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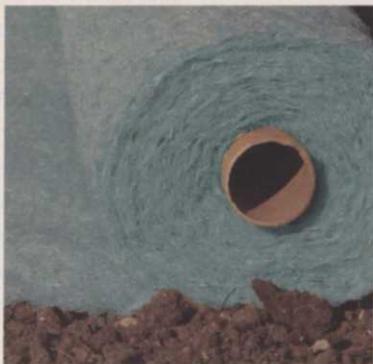
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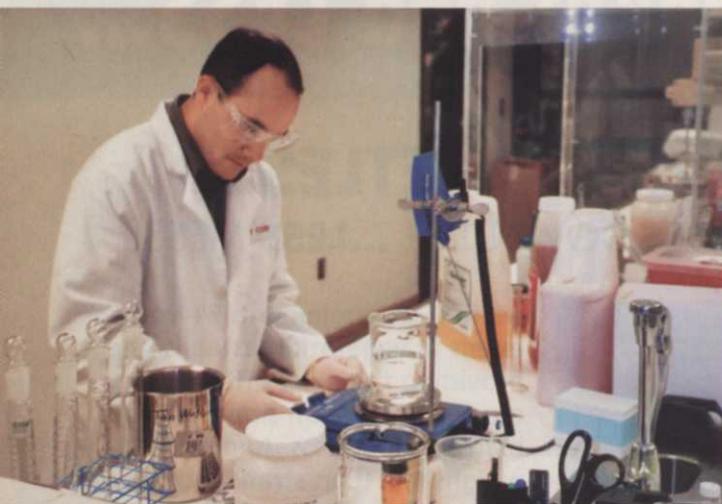
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Patent #'s 5,484,501; 5,330,828; and Patent Pending

Why formulation matters

Investigate the total package of your chemical product choice, not just the active ingredient BY RON HALL/ EDITOR IN CHIEF



Syngenta formulation scientist Dr. Randy Cush at work

Trends to watch

Kathy Kalmowitz, BASF technical representative, offers the following formulation trends to watch:

- ▶ Increased emphasis on human safety and environmental stewardship
- ▶ Continued movement away from solvents, especially those with strong odors
- ▶ Premixes or combinations of actives to increase product activity across like organisms (Generally, the newer actives are more target specific.)
- ▶ More use of adjuvants so users do not have to consider them
- ▶ More granular products

Is it possible to view a successful turf or ornamental chemical product in the same light as a championship football team? First, let's equate the active ingredient (A.I.) of a successful T&O chemical with the quarterback, the key player of any football team. Before either of them, the A.I. or the quarterback, becomes a valuable "player," it is subject to years of development, not to mention an investment of more than \$100 million (Evidence: Payton Manning's contract). Just as the quarterback guides a winning team by working efficiently with the other 10 offensive players, an A.I. provides effective biological action only as part of a formulation.

In other words, the formulation is the A.I. in combination with "players" like solvents, adjuvants and boosters, granules, powders or fillers. It's that combination that

increases plant health or provides pest management.

"The active ingredient by itself would be pretty useless. The formulation allows the A.I. to be in a useful form for the end user," says Dr. Randy Cush, senior formulation chemist for Syngenta.

In addition to being biologically effective, a formulation for a lawn care application, for example, might also include characteristics such as:

- ease of mixing and ease of use,
- a good safety profile, including minimizing impacts on the environment,
- reduced or lack of odor,
- an acceptably long shelf life; and
- ease of storage and handling.

Formulation investment

Manufacturers invest heavily to identify, develop and test each new molecule breakthrough. This includes guiding

continued on page 54

This turf crew never takes time off.



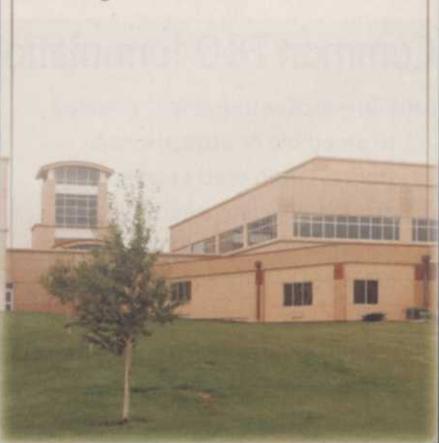
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Circle 130



continued from page 52
it through regulatory channels and distribution. A crucial step in this long process is developing the formulation.

"It takes anywhere from 12 months up to 36 or 40 months, with a straightforward scenario, to develop that final end-use product," explains Cush. "There are an infinite number of possibilities to work on."

Typically when a manufacturer develops promising new chemistry it continues to add to and refine formulations using that A.I. In this way it broadens its uses and increases its value to end users and to the manufacturer.

One example is imidacloprid (Merit), the popular insecticide from Bayer Environmental Science. It's available and has been widely used for almost a decade in several formulations. In 2004 formulators working on a tight dead-

line launched Allectus, a new insecticide, containing the actives imidacloprid and FMC's bifenthrin (Talstar). Allectus is now available as a granular, a liquid and, most recently, impregnated onto fertilizer.

Art and science

Formulation is the "art" that enhances the science of product development. Indeed, formulators can (and often do) breathe new vitality into established chemistry.

A ready example is Pendulum AquaCap pre-emergent herbicide. BASF worked almost a decade to perfect this proprietary microencapsulated pendimethalin product. The solvent-free capsule formulation of the pre-emergent product offer more consistent results, easier mixing and reduced odor, says BASF.

"We do have a couple additional ones we are actively

working on but these are under patent review presently. They go across our specialty businesses for applications," says Kathie Kalmowitz, BASF technical representative.

Similarly, Syngenta Professional Products continues to broaden the utility of its MAXX formulation, a technology that allows it to manufacture several popular chemical products as a clear, easy-to-mix microemulsion. The company offers two fungicides (Banner MAXX and Subdue MAXX) and a plant growth regulator (Primo MAXX) in this formulation. Expect other products in similar formulations. A new fungicide, Headway, using the actives of Heritage and Banner as a microemulsion is expected to enter the market sometime this year.

"It's a high-quality formulation. While all microemul-

sion formulations are slightly different, they have the same characteristics," says Syngenta's Dr. Dave Ross.

Formulation takes on equal significance to suppliers that rely on off-patent chemistry for their T&O offerings.

"With so many actives coming off patent it's a very exciting time at PBI/Gordon given that formulation is our expertise," says the company's Laylah VanBibber. In this case, it means adding value to the actives and not producing generic clones of existing product.

"With formulation you can bring additional value to a product," adds Owen Towne, president of Phoenix Environmental Care, LLC. "The value is not necessarily in the active ingredient. People who buy products strictly on A.I.'s and cost strictly on cost are short-changing themselves, the industry and the market." **LM**

Common T&O formulations

Baits (B) —Active ingredient is added to an edible or attractive substance. Often used to control ground-dwelling insects.

Dry flowables/water dispersible granules (DF, WDG) — Ease of handling and reducing the hazards from blowing dusts during mixing are two advantages. These form a suspension in and require less agitation than wettable powders.

Emulsifiable concentrates (EC or E) — Liquid formulations with A.I.'s insoluble in water. The addition of an emulsifier allows the pesticide

to mix with water.

Flowables (F) — Produced in solid or semi-solid form and are often ground into powder and suspended in liquid.

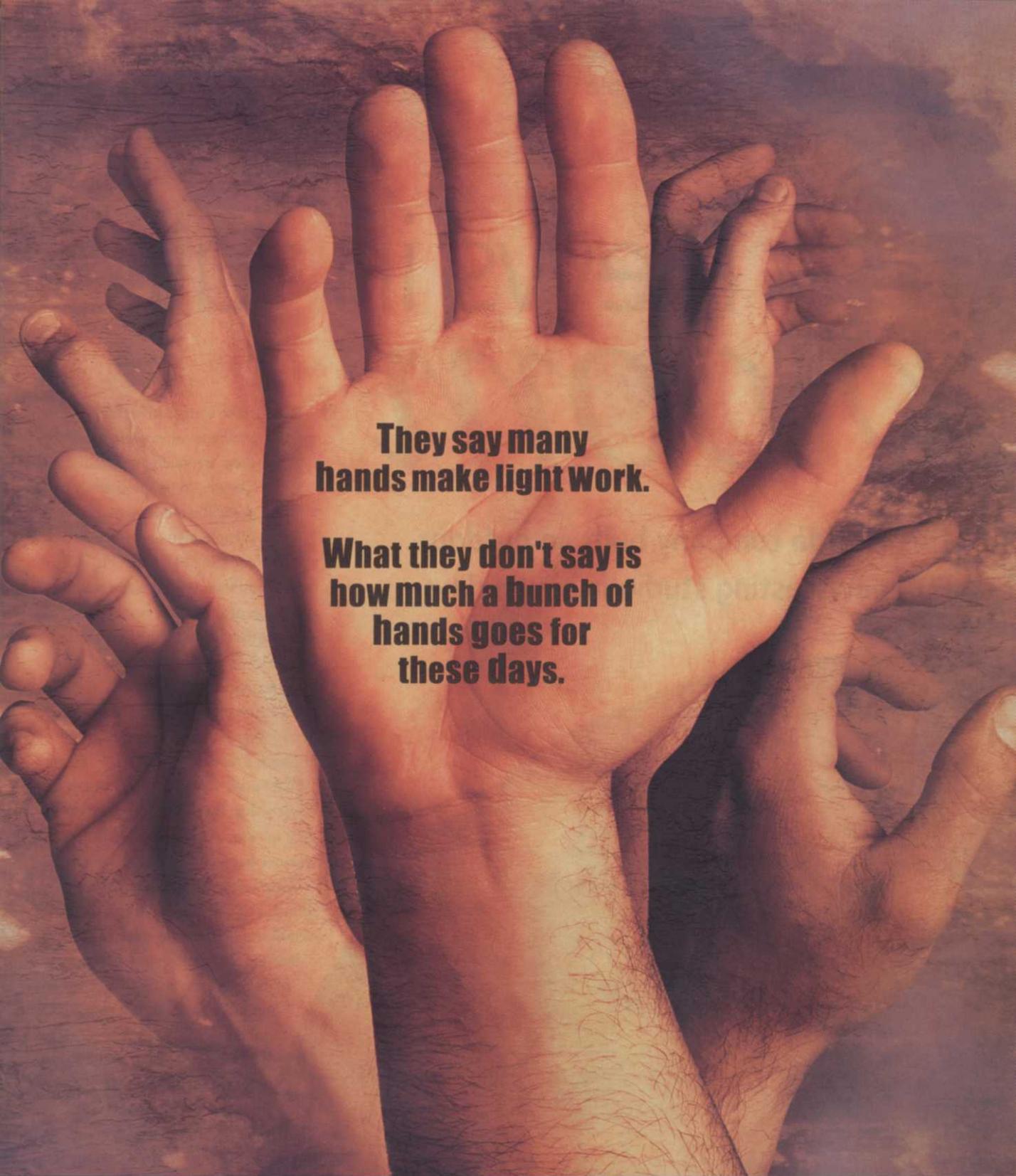
Granules (G) — Dry formulations mixed onto particles of clay, corncob or manufactured granules. Most of the chemical remains attached to the granule until it contacts moisture. Their heavy weight makes them unlikely to drift.

Microencapsulated (ME) — Pesticides impregnated into tiny, slow-release poly beads and mixed into a liquid.

Regarded as safer to humans than other liquids and may have longer residual life.

Soluble powders or liquids (SP, L) — Formulations that go into true solution when mixed with water. Generally do not require agitation after mixing. Relatively few pesticides are water-soluble.

Wettable powders (WP) — Formulated on a dry particle and contain ingredients that allow the particles to mix with water to form a suspension. Agitation required to prevent settling in the spray tank.



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News in full bloom

This Florida company built an outdoor FOX newscasting studio in seven days

BY DOREEN OVERSTREET

FOX 35's new outdoor broadcast studio in Lake Mary, FL, is the first in central Florida.

FOX 35

In the competitive market of local television news, many stations are "taking it outside." They're doing this literally by designing outdoor studios to complement and enhance newscasts. In Lake Mary, FL, FOX's network affiliate WOFL wanted to take advantage of the state's year-round favorable weather by being the first Central Florida news station to have its own open-air studio.

"Central Florida is a lifestyle-driven market," says Rick Snyder, vice president of creative services for WOFL FOX 35. "What better way to connect with our viewers than by telling a story outdoors with informative cooking, gardening and weather segments?"

Good idea ... but not as easy as it sounds. FOX 35 needed the studio designed and built in one week to meet the deadline that corresponded to the close of its fiscal year. So Snyder called on Sanford-based Girard Environmental Services.

Transforming the studio's backyard

Girard was charged with transforming a 200- by 80-ft. space, located in WOFL's backyard, into an outside studio. The shady triangular-shaped area consisted of a retention pond, pine trees and overgrown grass surrounded by a fence.

continued on page 58

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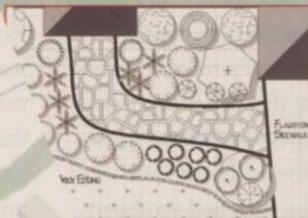


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continued from page 56

"The space offered a wide variety of ideas for transforming the unsightly retention area into a functional landscape backdrop," says Nick Boehme, Girard's director of business development, who served as the project liaison. "Using our creative landscape ideas and developing a clear vision, we listened and worked closely with WOFL executives to make sure their outdoor studio was everything they wanted."

Girard assembled a 15-member team for the project, which included a project manager, a design team, and an irrigation and landscape crew. First, the team cleaned out most of the existing landscape and removed three 90-ft. pine trees in order to provide a clear view of the studio's backdrop.

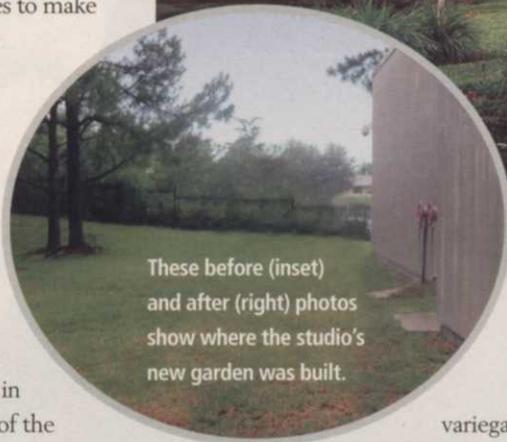
The team used seven 80-ft. existing pine trees and reconstructed the entire irrigation system. The unkempt retention pond area also was transformed into an integral part of the outdoor studio.

All of the old overgrown bahiagrass and weeds were removed around the pond banks and surrounding areas and replaced with new St. Augustine sod and colorful shrubs, perennials and annuals. The Girard team also showed WOFL executives pictures of different foliage and indigenous plants and gave recommendations based on optimum visual appeal and upkeep.

"Our team had a vision of how we wanted the outdoor studio to look from a production standpoint, and the landscaping was essential in accommodating this vision," Snyder says.

Camera-ready

For the studio's backdrop, Girard included plants including Hawaiian Ti,



These before (inset) and after (right) photos show where the studio's new garden was built.

variegated ginger, and Mexican petunias – and installed ornamental grasses like paspalum grass, red fountain grass and purple love grass.

"Ornamental grasses have a whispering effect, and it was important that the grass blew in the wind for visual appeal," says Richard Fife II, division manager of construction services for Girard, who handled the project's design/build process.

The site became even more colorful and eye appealing after the team strategically planted loropetalum 'plum,' gardenia radicans and four different varieties of azaleas. Amidst the color and shrubbery Girard also planted large trees including magnolias, weeping willows, oak leaf hollies, bald cypress and single-trunk crape myrtles to help frame the backdrop.

"We decided to use a lot of plants with red and dark accents to complement the colors in our logo," Snyder says.

WOFL's production team was an integral part of making sure the uncovered studio would be "camera ready." For the

backdrop, the FOX 35 logo sign was placed between two pine trees along the pond slope. A camera was even panned around the environment to show the design/build team where to place the foliage for optimum frame shots.

"This was unlike any other landscaping project from the standpoint that everything we did had to be both aesthetically appealing and work with a panoramic view," Fife says.

The WOFL team also wanted to be able to use the outdoor studio during Florida's hurricane season to cover severe weather events. Three weeping willow trees, which have light, wispy branches that blow in the wind, were placed in the background to accurately portray real-time weather conditions.

To enclose the studio from viewers and create an additional sound buffer, Girard installed a 5-ft. podocarpus screen hedge to separate the adjacent office building along the existing black aluminum fence.

A 120-sq.-ft. vegetable garden was also created with a meandering flagstone pathway for the news team's outdoor garden-

continued on page 60

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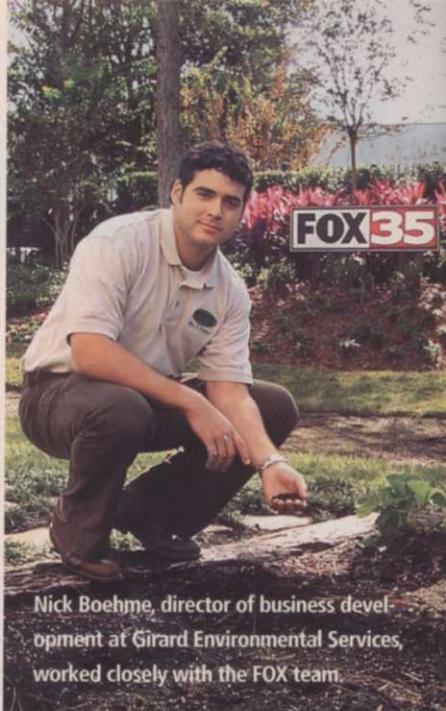
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continued from page 58

ing segments. WOFL partnered with the Seminole County Agriculture Extension Unit, which currently maintains the garden and grows fruits and vegetables suitable to Florida's weather throughout the year.

Water, traffic challenges

One of the main challenges with the outdoor studio was managing the run-off water that poured down from the rooftop to the project site. The standing water posed a problem because the water



Nick Boehme, director of business development at Girard Environmental Services, worked closely with the FOX team.

would most likely erode the new landscaping. Girard strategically situated more than four tons of decorative river rocks in order to form a drainage bed so the water would channel into the retention pond.

Another challenge was the studio's location along busy Interstate 4. An 8-foot podocarpus hedge was installed to serve as a landscape buffer to provide a pleasant backdrop for the newscasts. Also, because of the shade from the pine trees, the team had to choose shade-tolerant plants that were able to grow with partial sun.

A killer deadline

Girard met WOFL's 7-day deadline within the budget and made sure the studio was visually appealing and worked with all the camera shots.

"This project's success was due to constant and clear communication with the client," says Boehme. "During the 7-day job, our team constantly met with WOFL to make sure we were exceeding their expectations. Open communication, high-quality plant material and excellent, fast workmanship were essential to meeting the tight deadline."

FOX 35's outdoor newscasts will be "in full bloom" the first quarter of 2006. **LM**

— The author is with Costa DeVault in Winter Park, FL. Contact her at 407/657-4818 or

DoreenOverstreet@CostaDeVault.com.

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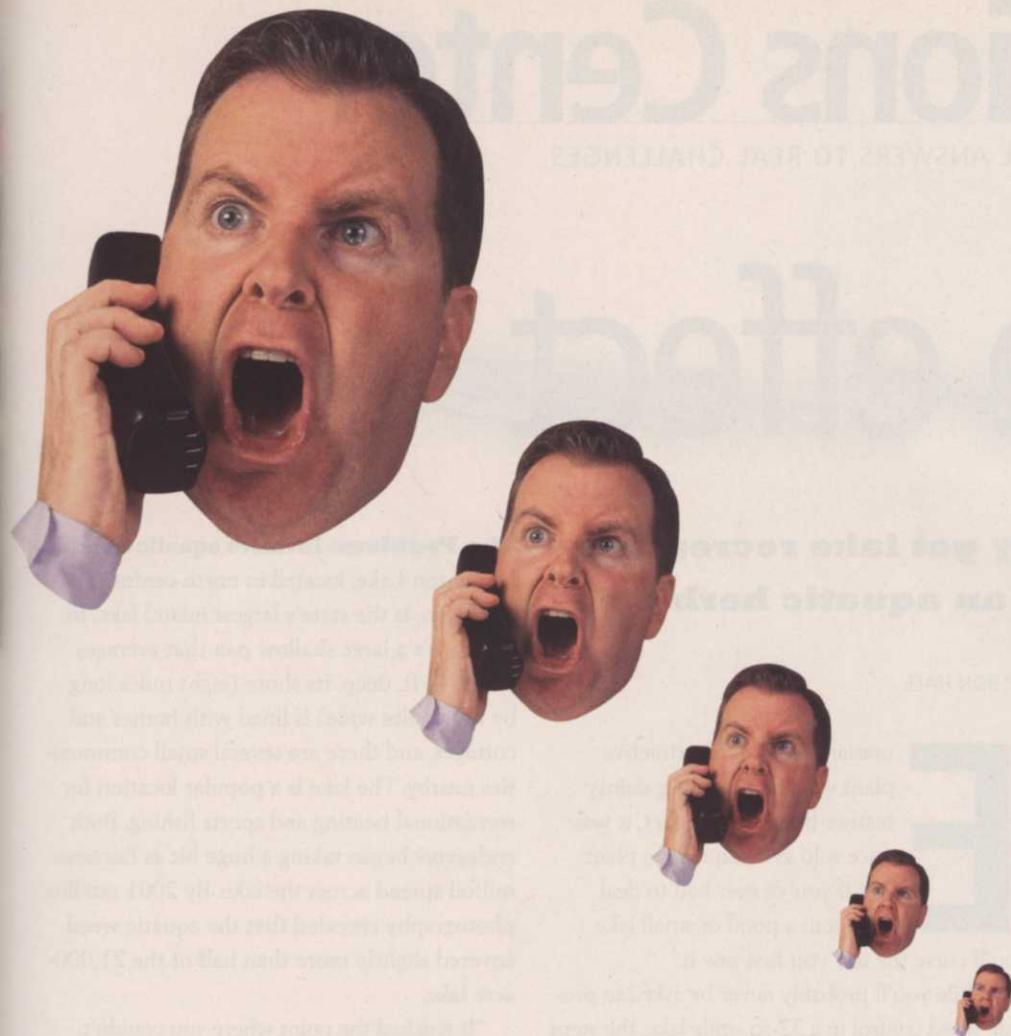
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REAL ANSWERS TO REAL CHALLENGES

Lake effect

This community got lake recreation back thanks to an aquatic herbicide

BY RON HALL

Eurasian milfoil is an attractive plant with its spreading, dainty feather-like leaves. In fact, it was once sold as an aquarium plant. But if you've ever had to deal with it in a pond or small lake you'll curse the day you first saw it.

While you'll probably never be asked to provide weed control in a 32-sq.-mile lake, the steps that the Houghton Lake (MI) Improvement Board (HLIB) took to solve a severe milfoil problem may be helpful to you nevertheless.

James R. Deamud, chairman of the HLIB, told the story of his group's success in treating Eurasian milfoil at the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) Conference in September in Lake Las Vegas, NV.

The Problem: Invasive aquatic weed Houghton Lake, located in north central Michigan, is the state's largest inland lake. In reality, it's a large shallow pan that averages just 8-12 ft. deep. Its shore (eight miles long by four miles wide) is lined with homes and cottages, and there are several small communities nearby. The lake is a popular location for recreational boating and sports fishing. Both endeavors began taking a huge hit as Eurasian milfoil spread across the lake. By 2001 satellite photography revealed that the aquatic weed covered slightly more than half of the 21,000-acre lake.

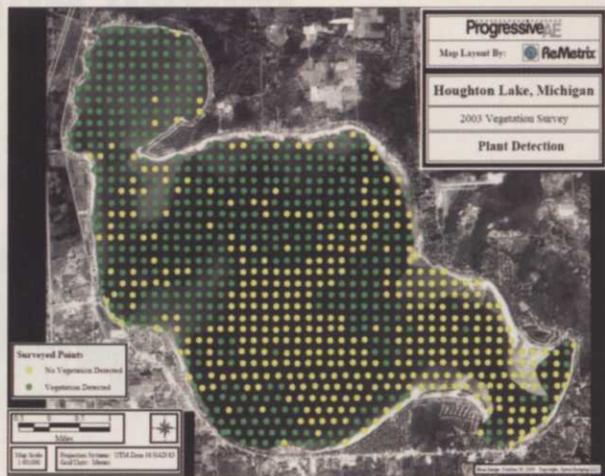
"It reached the point where you couldn't boat in the lake," said Deamud, a former chemist at Ford Motor Company who, in a second career, has practiced law in Houghton Lake for the past 30 years. "We had people go out in their boats and get stuck in the middle of the lake. It was starting to affect property values."

Deamud admitted that the HLIB, the ad hoc committee that was formed in 1999 to address the weed problem, spent several months "flopping around like a fish out of water," before it made any progress.

The Solution: Aquatic herbicide

One of the first positive steps it took was to secure funding to bring in a group of experts to discuss possible solutions. The goal was to find a way to control the milfoil but not destroy the lake's native plants or animals.

They discussed bio-controls (the milfoil weevil), mechanical harvesting (cost prohibitive because of the size of



the lake) and chemical controls. Eventually the group decided on the chemical approach. Beamud says many local residents initially opposed using herbicides on the lake. However, when the options were presented to them they agreed to give it a try.

In February 2002, the HLIB applied for a permit to apply the aquatic herbicide Sonar (a. i. fluridone) to the lake to control the Eurasian milfoil.

On May 15, 2002, Mark Mongin, from SePRO, headed a team of aquatic plant management experts and biologists that treated the lake with Sonar, a systemic aquatic herbicide from SePRO. Mongin is business manager for the Carmel, IN-based supplier. He served as project manager for the application that was made with application boats equipped with the latest in GPS and computer-aided navigation and herbicide injection systems. After a month of careful monitoring, the workers made a second application.

During the summer the Eurasian milfoil disappeared. By Sept. 30, 2002, the HLIB deemed the treatments a success. The weed had been controlled but the native plants remained and there was no observable effect upon the fishery, said Deamud.

The HLIB raised the funds (\$1.5 million for the initial research and treatments) through a special taxing authority. Each of the 5,200 property owners adjoining the lake paid a portion of the cost of the lake cleanup. To date they have contributed about \$3 million to maintain the lake's beauty and utility.

In spite of dramatically improved lake conditions, the HLIB continues to manage the milfoil problem. It regularly monitors the lake, and has targeted 14 sites for additional treatment this year, either with the milfoil weevil that invades

the stalks of the plant or with 2,4-D, said Deamud.

"Today Houghton Lake is open water again," he added evidently pleased. **LM**



Applicators pinpointed areas of the lake to treat with GPS technology.



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Engines

BY CURT HARLER



Buying tips

- ▶ Look for easy-start options.
- ▶ Standardize on one brand as much as possible.
- ▶ Check for EPA Tier II and III compliance.
- ▶ Oil coolers help performance.
- ▶ On rebuilds, look for compliance with manufacturer's specs.
- ▶ Engine weight is an important factor.
- ▶ Check out the filtering system – both air and fluids.

Briggs & Stratton ▲

This fall B&S introduced the first vertical shaft engine for small tillers and cultivators. The Fource micro-engine is a 1.2-hp, 4-cycle engine that requires no mixing of gas and oil. At the same time, the company introduced its ReadyStart hassle-free starting system. The technology automatically delivers the right mix of fuel and air to the carburetor, eliminating the need for manual priming and choking. The company's Commercial Power Division adds two new Vanguard V-Twin vertical shaft Big Block engines to its lineup. Both the 895 and 993-cc air-cooled models have an

advanced debris management system incorporated in the air-cooling system. Vanguard V-Twins are also available for application requiring liquid-cooled power. These are manufactured by DBS, a B&S Commercial Power joint venture with Daihatsu.

For more information contact Briggs & Stratton at 414/259-5333 or www.briggsandstratton.com / circle no. 254

Caterpillar

Remanufactured engines for backhoes meet OEM specs and are backed up by same-as-new warranties. They also meet the most stringent emission standards. Plus, there is the added bonus of reusing what would have become waste. The Reman 3054 engine for backhoe loaders, for example, is offered in nine arrangements, with turbocharged and naturally aspirated configurations. Four are Tier I compliant. Cat gives full core refunds for fully assembled cylinder blocks that are not visibly cracked, broken or welded and have no excessive rust, corrosion or pitting. Engines not meeting those criteria, or with internal failure, receive damaged core refunds.

For more information contact Caterpillar at 309/578-6298 or www.cat.com / circle no. 255

Cummins

Cummins B Series engines for skid steer loaders, chippers and other similar equipment include three different models: the four-cylinder B3.9 and B4.5 plus the 6-cylinder B5.9. Ratings range from 80-173 hp, with varying combinations of turbo charging, natural aspiration and charge air cooling for optimal performance. The B Series is designed to mini-

continued on page 69

Software for success

CLIP Software stays cutting-edge to keep its customers in the know – and in the green

Since its introduction to the green industry in 1988, **CLIP Software** has seen its share of firsts. **CLIP** was the first industry program of its time and the first service program to use Windows handhelds, Windows CE devices, Web site transfers, mapping, cell phones, GPS, field synchronizing, virtual private networking, and more.

"We are self-driven to use all available tools to help our customers become successful," says Dave Tucker, co-founder and president of the company.

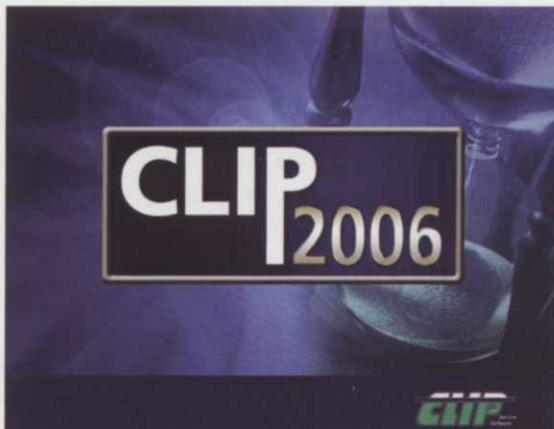
Tucker knows his customers well, because he helped create the first version of **CLIP** specifically for a lawn maintenance company. The **CLIP** program's success and ease of use convinced him to bring **CLIP** to the rest of the green industry. **Today, over 50,000 users**

from more than 10,000 companies in 50 different service industries are using CLIP.

CLIP Software consistently adds to **CLIP's** state-of-the-art routing, scheduling and billing capabilities to make the software even more specific to each industry. The latest modules include tools for landscape construction, snow plowing, and pavement maintenance companies.

"Our project module is one of the best-kept secrets in the green industry," adds Tucker. "Not many people know that with **CLIP's** project module, they can quickly estimate, bid, and manage the job from beginning to end."

Tucker jokes that it is hard for him and his team to sleep at times because they never stop thinking about ways to improve **CLIP**. "We



pioneered job costing, revenue tracking, beach management, knowledge sharing, and many other practices that our customers implemented in their businesses long before their competition thought of it," he explains, noting that many of these features came from informal conversations at the annual **CLIP Users Conference**.

CLIP Software continues to focus on business with its Business by **CLIP** educational seminar series. During

2005, **CLIP Software** also simplified **CLIP** training by creating online tutorials, training CDs, and classes that can be viewed throughout the world.

"We want to help our customers be the most successful companies in their fields," Tucker concludes. "Each company defines success a bit differently, but whatever the definition, they need to control their company to attain this success. **CLIP Software** can help them with their goals." **CLIP**

Case Study**ULS remembers its small-firm roots**

Steve Wheatcroft co-founded ULS Maintenance & Landscaping in Calgary, Alberta, Canada in 1989. Back then, it was known as University Lawn Services — the acronym remains the same, but ULS' scope of service has widened considerably. Today, Wheatcroft and co-founder Ross Rayment oversee a firm that boasts about 50 full-time staffers and an additional 75 seasonal employees.

AT A GLANCE**ULS Maintenance & Landscaping**

www.ulslandscaping.com

Founded in 1989 as a three-man company, ULS has grown to a \$7 million firm with 40 crews and a new, 20,000-square-foot facility in Calgary.

ULS has used *CLIP Software* since 2000, and Wheatcroft firmly believes *CLIP* has helped his business become more efficient and profitable. He is such a firm believer that he has attended every annual *CLIP Users Conference* since 2000, and has even presented seminars and participating in the expert panels.

Wheatcroft says his only regret is not implement the *CLIP* program sooner because *CLIP's* database reports would have helped during ULS' rapid growth. "We worked so hard to be where we are today, and this would have made it a lot easier.

"Small companies look at equipment and balk at price," he concludes. "We used to be like that. But if the investment can take away headaches and bring profit, it practically pays for itself." •

(To see a virtual tour of ULS Maintenance & Landscaping Co., visit www.clip.com)



ULS President Steve Wheatcroft finds that an efficient computer system for his business frees him to pursue other interests, such as lake trout fishing.

Case Study**Floralandscape streamlines to the bottom line**

Doug Bettinger, the president and founder of Floralandscape in Toledo, Ohio, has been

AT A GLANCE**Floralandscape**

www.floralandscape.com

Founded in 1979 as a one-man company, Floralandscape has grown to 25 full-time employees and seven divisions, including fertilizer/chemical application; irrigation; snow removal; tree trimming, removal and care; and landscape architecture consulting.



using *CLIP Software* since 1997. His company had a piecemealed program before purchasing *CLIP*; but it barely added to Floralandscape's efficiency. While Bettinger admits that the old program was better than handwritten invoices, it still required a lot of manual data entry.

"*CLIP* was able to pull it together into reports of specific jobs that could be posted with times and men on the job," he says.

"We use it faithfully for billing, routing, and scheduling."

Bettinger believes *CLIP's* biggest benefit for Floralandscape is that it increases efficiency on each job. Instead of increasing price across the board, for example, Bettinger pulls up the rate of return on individual projects. He increases the accounts that have low profit margins, but

keeps the accounts with healthy profit margins the same. Bettinger believes this would be a nearly impossible task without the *CLIP* software program.

"When you do a price increase, you run the risk of losing customers because of it," he explains. "If you only raise the ones you need to, any underperforming accounts you lose are still moving your company in a more profitable direction."

The *CLIP* program also helps Bettinger and his team up-sell services to existing and inactive customers: "The contact information already in our database is certainly of a higher value than any mailing list we could purchase, because we've already had contact with them," he concludes. •

(To find out more about strategically increasing your prices, visit www.clip.com)

Are you a KnowItAll?

The **KnowItAll** program is **CLIP Software's** newest breakthrough software; a completely new way to store, share, manage, and disseminating information. This patent-pending program is for anyone with a computer: from the single user at home to a multi-billion-dollar corporation. If your office is filled with sticky notes, scattered papers, random searches, or unending questions, you're a perfect candidate for **KnowItAll**.

CLIP Software originally created **KnowItAll** to manage its own load of unending questions, lost documents, forgotten passwords, and training needs. When the **KnowItAll** program increased **CLIP Software's** productivity within the first year, they knew that it would work for any company. The **KnowItAll** program will connect you with your passwords, vendors, and other important information. To find your long-lost documents, just type in a keyword and the article will appear, linked to the original document. Training can go down from three weeks to three minutes, which makes your employees more efficient. **KnowItAll** has been proven to increase your profits while decreasing labor costs.

To learn more about **KnowItAll** or other **CLIP** products, call 800-635-8485 or visit www.clip.com.

Product *Line-up*

CLIP2006: Further enhances the capabilities of the No. 1 accounting program, QuickBooks, by adding routing, scheduling and revenue tracking. All of your billing and business functions remain in QuickBooks.

CLIP2006 50: As a scaled-down version of **CLIP2006**, this product is perfect for the contractor with 50 properties or fewer than nine crews.

CLIP2006 Classic: This version of **CLIP2006** does all routing, scheduling, revenue tracking and billing for the medium to large contractor. **CLIP2006 Classic** is preferred for the company looking to systematize its operations for greater efficiency.

CLIP2006 Pro: This version is one step above **CLIP2006**. **CLIP2006 Pro** works directly with QuickBooks as well as having the expandability of **CLIP2006 Pro Visual**. It links with Microsoft Word, Excel and MapPoint.

CLIP Laser Wand: Print your route sheets with bar codes for each job, identifying the job for the Laser Wand. When the route sheets come back to you, you simply scan each bar code for each job that was done. **CLIP** automatically records the job as done.

CLIP Remote Data Collector: This advanced way of tracking your jobs and employees, maximizes your job costing information and minimizes the time spent entering information into **CLIP**.

CLIP eRouter software: Loads this software on any Windows CE handheld device or Palm Pilot to become your paperless route sheets. This allows crews to record information in the field and automatically downloads information back at the office. It records actual mileage, travel times, and start and stop times, as well as foreman and crew information.

CLIP QBLink: This module was created to summarize and transfer accounting information directly into QuickBooks Pro.

QBLink will open up account numbers in all financial transactions in **CLIP**. When money is involved, there are fields that specify which accounts should be credited and debited. When exporting this information, **CLIP** totals all transactions by GL number, which can then be imported directly into the QuickBooks chart of accounts.

CLIP CLinker: This module allows you to produce additional accounts receivable reports in **CLIP**. This will provide you with more detailed information that may be useful for ongoing assessments of your profitability, or for tax purposes. Financial information from **CLIP** can be imported into SBT's General Ledger, eliminating the need for manually re-entering the data into SBT.

CLIP Pro Project Module: This module tracks materials, sub-contractors, markups, labor, labor burden, parts, guarantees and other factors that will take a few days to complete. This module will show you exactly what portion of a project has been completed and what remains to be completed. The project module also links to Pro Landscape. This allows you to import an existing inventory list directly into Project's inventory list.

CLIP Pro Special Invoices: This module provides a means of tracking payments applied to specific invoice numbers. It was developed at the request of **CLIP** users who service large commercial accounts requiring "true invoicing." With the addition of Special Invoices to the **CLIP Pro** Family, you may choose a Balance Forward or Open Invoice system for each client. This flexibility permits you to choose only those clients who require "true invoicing" and to continue using the Balance Forward system for all others.

Case Study

For Hurst, knowledge is power

Evan Saylor, president of Hurst Landscaping in Richland, Pa., knew the value of *CLIP Software* right away. Having used the *CLIP* program at a previous job, he decided to implement *CLIP* into his business immediately. Today, Hurst Landscaping has 18 one-man crews covering southeastern Pennsylvania.

Saylor believes that many landscapers simply are not equipped to understand

their ledger sheets and how to take their business to the next level. This, he says, is where *CLIP* comes in.

"Most landscapers aren't lawyers or accountants — *CLIP* helps educate them on what they need to know to make better decisions," he explains. "A lot of LCOs don't know their costs, bids, or labor burden. They just guess at it and hope that it works out. *CLIP*'s project module helps you set up information for each individual item so that you can figure out true costs."

The annual *CLIP Users Conference* is extremely beneficial, Saylor says, because of the sense of community: "Everyone is so open about how they use *CLIP* in their business. Beyond the daily program, you learn so much at the end of the day, just getting together and talking."

Saylor's advice to lawn professionals

looking to implement or upgrade a software program is to keep an open mind. "A lot of people try to making software fit into their existing ways, when their existing ways may not be the most efficient."

Saylor adds that there's a difference between being open to change and compromising fundamental values, but it could be time to take a hard look at some of the "way we've always done it" routines.

"I've talked to owners who worry because their invoices don't look like the ones they used to send," he says. "Do you ever call to complain when your charge card bill looks different when they redesign it? I doubt it, and I doubt your customers will call you, either. Keep an open mind and meet in the middle." •

(*CLIP Software* offers onsite training, consulting, and management enhancement)

AT A GLANCE



Hurst Landscaping

www.hurstlandscaping.com

Owner Evan Saylor bought a one-man stump-grinding business from a friend's father and within 10 years turned it into a \$1.5 million landscaping firm.

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continued from page 64

mize downtime for maintenance.

For more information contact Cummins at 800/343-7357 or visit www.cummins.com / circle no. 256



John Deere ▲

The John Deere 4000 TWENTY Series Compact Tractors are powered by the company's PowerTech 4-cylinder turbocharged diesel engine, rated at 43 to 58 engine hp, depending on model. The increased torque of the PowerTech provides more power to get tough jobs done, the company says. The Unit is direct-injected for better cold-weather starting. Common rail fuel system provides more uniform fuel delivery. Engine oil cooler provides more efficient heat rejection and the 75-amp alternator yields additional electrical capacity for accessories.

Also at John Deere, RemanSelect Engines are remanufactured to exact John Deere standards. Unlike rebuilt engines that are only taken down to the point of failure, each RemanSelect engine core is completely disassembled, cleaned and inspected. All parts must pass rigorous quality standards. RemanSelect "basic" engines include the short-block and cylinder-head assembly with valve cover, oil pump, oil cooler, water pump and front cover.

For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or www.deere.com / circle no. 257

Honda

The new GX35 mini 4-stroke engine will replace the GX31 as Honda's most powerful

engine for hand-held applications. The 35.8-cc GX35 is based on the company's 360-degree-inclinable mini 4-stroke technology in the GX25. It has 22% more power output; 15% reduction in overall size; 8% weight reduction; 32% better power to weight ratio; and 43% more power per cc of displacement. Its oil-immersed timing belt and overhead-cam (OHC) architecture makes it possible to incorporate the valve train into the oil reservoir. This results in a substantial reduction in size and weight over the GX31, making it comparable to a competitive 2-stroke engine in those areas.

For more information contact Honda at 800/426-7701 or www.honda.com / circle no. 258

Kubota Engine America

Kubota's Super Mini Series engine models D902 and Z602 meet EPA Tier II requirements with increased power and low noise



and vibration, the company says. These models share basic configurations with their predecessors and have increased bore and stroke. Water pump capacity is increased to enhance temperature regulation around the pistons and both models feature a new cooling water channel between the bores.

For more information contact Kubota Engine America at www.kubotaengine.com / circle no. 259

Kawasaki

The new FH770D is an overhead V-valve 2-cylinder engine. This 764-cc (46.6 cu. in.) engine has an 8.1:1 compression ratio. It features pressurized lubrication, electronic spark ignition, automatic compression release, a dual-element air cleaner and a rotating grass screen. The unit has a target power of 23.5 hp. It features a twin-barrel, internally vented carburetor with fuel shut-off solenoid and an oil cooler. The similar FH741D has a target 22.5 hp.

For more information contact Kawasaki at 949/460-5687 or www.buykawpower.com / circle no. 260

Why landscapers must know engines

There are at least two good reasons for landscapers to think about motors and engines, as well as other features, when they buy equipment.

First, having most of your company's equipment built around a standard engine brand simplifies training and maintenance. It is a lot easier to troubleshoot and maintain a product once your mechanic is familiar with a company's line of motors and engines. The little nuances and tricks-of-the-trade make it easier to keep abreast of maintenance.

Second, it saves you money. Every filter and plug, every gasket and rebuild kit costs money. Eventually, every part probably will get used. The question is how many parts you want to stock — either on the truck or in the shop. Twenty bucks here and eight bucks there, multiplied across all of the powered equipment on your trailers, adds up. That investment just sits there until you need it.

While it is better to have the equipment at hand than to have to run out every time a replacement is needed, it is also more cost efficient to stock parts for one line of equipment.

Keep in mind that many companies produce engines under a variety of names. Kohler, for example, produces 4-cycle engines — ranging from 4 to 31 hp — under the brand names Courage, Aegis, Command PRO, Command and Magnum. — C.H.



Iveco Motors of North America ▲

Iveco's NEF series diesel engines have power outputs from 99 hp to 235 hp to meet the needs of any irrigation pump application. Their design allows a long oil change interval, resulting in lower maintenance costs, the company says, and NEF series engines meet current EPA emission regulations. Models come in 4- and 6-cylinder configurations. For more information contact Iveco Motors of North America at 630/260-4226 or visit www.ivecomotors.com / circle no. 261

Yanmar

The L-series engines from Yanmar are available in sizes from 3.4 to 10 hp. These are single-cylinder, air-cooled and direct-injected. All L-V series are EPA and CARB exhaust emission compliant units. Each has multiple PTO shaft options, electric and/or recoil start. They are counter-balanced. The L48V, for example, has 219 cc total displacement and produces 4.2 hp at 3600 rpm.

For more information contact Yanmar at 800/365-7260 www.yanmar.com / circle no. 262

Case IH

Case remanufactured engines begin with a core that is completely disassembled and after cleaning, all components go through a rigorous inspection process to verify specifications. Gaskets, seals, soft plugs, sleeves, pistons,

rings, bearings, bushings, fuel tubing and camshafts are replaced with new Case parts every time. Major components such as block, head, crankshaft and rods are machined to meet OEM specifications. Those that cannot meet OEM specifications are scrapped and replaced with parts that meet specifications. Engines then are re-assembled under assembly line conditions and factory tested against the same criteria as new engines.

For more information contact Case IH Construction at 262/636-6011 or www.casece.com / circle no. 263

Kohler

Kohler's latest are the new 30-hp twin-cylinder Command PRO vertical (CV750) and horizontal-shaft (CH750) models. The 747-cc, air-cooled, overhead-valve engine has a 2-barrel carburetor for stronger performance and a new high-flow fan that provides improved thermal management to keep oil temperatures cool. Heavy-duty air cleaners come standard, reducing maintenance needs and improving operation in dirty and dusty environments. Both the vertical- and horizontal-shaft engines are engineered from the same platform as the company's earlier Command technology.

For more information contact Kohler at 800/544-2444 or www.kohlerengines.com / circle no. 264

Tecumseh

Three engine families, 7-25 hp, are available for all riding mowers. The Formula line is for light-to-medium duty; Enduro XL line has features that extend engine life; and the Sterling family is built to the highest performance standards. The Sterling 18-25 hp V-Twin vertical shaft engines



are built for tough use. A line of 3.5-7 hp engines for walk-behinds also is available. The newest is a 195-cc OHV engine with auto-style paper air filter and aluminized muffler for longer life.

For more information contact Tecumseh at 800/558-5402 or www.tecumsehpower.com / circle no. 265



Tanaka ▲

The PureFire, Tanaka's 2-stroke engine, meets CARB Tier II standards. It produces ultra-low emissions without the need for special or additional internal moving parts. During the intake/compression stroke, the optimized scavenging system within the cylinder and crankcase walls increases atomization of the fuel-air mixture, resulting in more efficient combustion. Company says its 2-stroke line is usually smaller in size and up to 30% lighter than compact 4-cycle engines with the same power rating.

For more information contact Tanaka at 888/4TANAKA or www.tanaka-usa.com / circle no. 266

Isuzu

The 37.2 hp Isuzu 3CD1D is a 3-cylinder, 4-cycle, in-line, OHV, water-cooled engine. This 1.5-liter engine has a 19:1 compression ratio and a 7.1 quart oil capacity and 2.1 quart coolant capacity. It generates 72.2 pounds torque at 1200 rpm.

For more information contact Isuzu at 800/726-8870 or www.isuzuengines.com / circle no. 267

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Property at a glance

Location: Austin, TX

Grounds Supervisor: John Burns

Category: University and College Grounds

Total budget: \$1.975 million

Year site built: 1883

Acres of turf: 125

Acres of woody ornamentals: 31

Acres of display beds: 19,000 sq. ft.

Total man-hours/week: 2,720

Maintenance challenges

- ▶ Maintenance of hills and slopes
- ▶ Maintenance of campus trees
- ▶ Litter and trash removal

Project checklist

Completed in last two years:

- ▶ Renovated the landscape in many areas on campus including new and renovated buildings, parking facilities and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library overlook area
- ▶ Landscape enhancements to campus perimeters

On the job

- ▶ 68 full-time staff, nine seasonal workers, three licensed pesticide applicators

The University of Texas at Austin

2004 PGMS Grand Award Winner for University Grounds

The old idiom is true: everything is bigger in Texas. For the University of Texas at Austin, that includes landscaping jobs.

The University began in 1883 on 40 acres with one building and 221 students. Today the campus is bigger than many cities. There are 160 buildings covering 425 acres, and a population of 71,000 students, faculty and staff.

Grounds superintendent John Burns and his staff oversee 125 acres of turf, with 49 miles of edging, 31 acres in shrub, perennial, and ground cover beds, and 19,000 sq. ft in annual beds, along with satellite areas such as Dobie Paisano Ranch, Brackenridge Field Lab, Lake Austin Center and Nike Missile Base.

"We want visitors on campus to be greeted by a well-maintained landscape with clean beds, manicured turf and accents of color in prominent locations," Burns says. "Most people don't notice the small details like beds that are free of weeds, or turf that is neatly manicured. But if someone visits the campus, we want them to leave saying that it sure was neat and clean."

Many special events are held on campus each year including symposiums, student welcome parties, the Forty Acre Fest, commencement ceremonies, touring Broadway shows and Longhorns' football games that draw 100,000 visitors.

Simple maintenance tasks are hard to accomplish when the sidewalks are filled with students, Burns says. The wear and tear requires yearly renovations of the turf in some areas. Irrigation is challenging due to hills, slopes, rocky shallow soils, and frequent dry spells.

"The campus urban forest is one of our greatest assets. Made up of live oak trees, it offers a cool respite from the blistering heat of Texas," Burns says. "Along with the shade and beauty comes maintenance concerns for the health of the trees and the safety of visitors. They must be continually monitored for dead limbs, weak branches and decay."



Editors' note: *Landscape Management* was the exclusive sponsor of the 2005 Professional Grounds Management Awards for outstanding management of residential, commercial and institutional landscape. Winners are recognized at the annual meeting of the Professional Grounds Management Society in November. To learn more about the annual awards program contact PGMS at: 720 Light St., Baltimore, MD 21230 • Phone: 410/223-2861 • Web site: www.pgms.org



Litter and trash removal is one of the most time-consuming tasks for Burns' crew, but they've been helped by several student groups that volunteer weekly in an "Adopt-an-Acre" anti-littering program.



The landscaping at UT Austin boasts color, neatly trimmed zoysia-grass and mature oak trees throughout the campus.



Products

RESOURCES TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Self-cleaning, water-powered filter

The new Amiad TAF-750H is a fully automatic, self-cleaning irrigation filter requiring no external power. The hydraulic motor is powered by water pressure in the main line and used to rotate the self-cleaning "suction scanner" mechanism. A battery-operated control box powers an electronic pressure differential switch (PDS) to initiate the short, 16-second cleaning cycle. The service flow of filtered water is continuous during the cleaning cycle. For remote locations where electric power is not available, the TAF-750H is ideal for removing suspended solids from an irrigation system needing flow rates up to 220 gpm, the company says. The TAF-750E has an electric motor to rotate the "suction scanner" cleaning mechanism. Both TAF models come with 2-in. or 3-in. inlets and outlets and are corrosion resistant.

For more information contact Amiad at 800/969-4055 ext. 218 or visit www.amiad.com / circle no. 269



How low can you go?

Wright Manufacturing's new mid-mount, zero turn radius mower has an engine mounted nearly three inches lower than traditional mid-mounts, which lowers the mower's center of gravity improving balance and safety. The hydro drive pulley is mounted on the bottom of the engine drive shaft, which allows the hydro pumps to be mounted six ins. lower than most mid-mounts. The rear wheel motors can be moved fore and aft through three different settings, keeping the proper weight balance with collection systems. The zero-turn mower can be powered by a 21-, 23- or 25- hp engine, with a choice of 48-, 52- or 61-in. deck width.

For more information contact Wright at 301/360-9810 or visit www.wrightmfg.com / circle no. 268



leather uppers. All LawnGrips shoes are made with a steel toe for additional safety. They are available in men's and women's whole and half sizes with a hook and loop closure system.

For more information contact LawnGrips at 219/617-1522 or visit www.lawngrips.com / circle no. 270

Easy-to-handle herbicide

Surflan WDG specialty herbicide from United Phosphorus, Inc. (UPI) is the first water-dispersible granular oryzalin herbicide available on the market, the company says. For use by nurseries, golf courses, and turf and ornamental operations, Surflan WDG provides control of more than 50 annual grasses and small-seeded broadleaf weeds and is safe to use on more than 400 ornamentals. Surflan WDG is easily dispersed when mixed and stays in solution well. Available in 12-lb. bags, Surflan WDG's uniform spherical granules offer higher flowability for easy pouring and measuring.

For more information contact UPI at 800/247-1557 or visit www.upi-usa.com / circle no. 271

Take out the trash (water)

Suitable for handling water with small solids and light debris, Subaru Robin semi-trash



pumps offer a heavy-duty overhead-valve gasoline engine, a large-volume discharge opening and dependable performance. Subaru's semi-trash pumps come in 2-in. or 3-in. models and provide a delivery volume of 153 and 246 gallons per minute, respectively. The pump and engine are built as an integrated unit for maximum performance and dependability. A rugged, long-lasting strainer is standard and protects pump components from large solids, while the hole diameter helps prevent large debris from entering the suction hose. The semi-trash pumps offer a low-tone muffler and a sound-suppressing air cleaner for quiet operation and meet EPA/CARB emission standards through 2007.

For more information contact Subaru Robin at 630/350-8200 or visit www.robin.subaru.com / circle no. 272



Put on your mowing shoes

LawnGrips footwear is specifically designed for traction, safety and comfort while mowing the lawn. The tread of the outsole was originally developed for soccer shoes to support pushing, turning and stopping while easily shedding grass clippings and dirt. Additional performance features include a composite insole board with polyurethane midsole for comfort and support, and waterproof, stain-resistant

Narrow K-Rain nozzles

K-Rain Manufacturing Corp. Narrow Profile Pop-Up Sprays ("NPS") and Nozzles were built with the contractor in mind. Available in 2-in. and 4-in. models, contractors can easily retrofit existing systems, and the co-molded wiper seal ensures reliable performance. KVF adjustable nozzles have a female thread configuration to fit NPS spray bodies. KVF's spray pattern results in matched precipitation throughout the coverage area. Extra long filters reduce the necessity of cleanings. A stainless steel retraction spring ensures riser retraction in all soil conditions.

For more information contact K-Rain at 561/746-6077 or visit www.krain.com / circle no. 273



Not so loud

The NoiseBuster Electronic Noise Canceling Earmuff from Pro Tech Communications, Inc. provides protection from a wider range of noise frequencies, particularly the low-frequency noise generated by engines, motors and fans that is prevalent in many industrial settings. The passive component of the NoiseBuster ENC Earmuff has a competitive Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) of 26dB when worn over the head. The NoiseBuster's audio input feature allows users of lawnmowers and power tools to listen to music while working. The NoiseBuster ENC Earmuff is powered with one AA battery that provides 65 hours of use.

For more information contact Pro Tech at 843/665-8077 or visit www.noisebuster.net / circle no. 274

RedMax handheld blower/vacuum

The HBZ2600 handheld blower is powered by RedMax's 25.4-cc Strato-Charged engine,



eliminating the need for a catalytic converter. The HBZ2600 develops a maximum air speed of 114 mph and maximum air volume of 395 CFM. The noise level of the 8.4-lbs. unit is just 69 dB(A). Accessories for the new blower include a jet nozzle or a flat duck bill nozzle and a vacuum kit. RedMax's Strato-Charged engine uses about 35% less fuel than the company's regular 2-cycle engines, and meets clean air standards by introducing fresh air into the engine between the exhaust gases and the fresh charge of air/fuel mix.

For more information contact RedMax at 800/291-8251 ext. 214 or visit www.redmax.com / circle no. 275



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Products

In SYNC

SYNC from Precision Laboratories, Inc. is an activator adjuvant specifically designed for the turf industry to enhance the performance and lengthen the disease control of systemic and contact fungicides, at reduced spray carrier volumes. SYNC's adjuvant technology is comprised of a 2-part surfactant system with a pH buffer for optimized fungicide uptake and increased fungicide performance. With SYNC, turf health can be improved in water volumes as low as one gallon of water per 1,000 sq. ft., the company says.

For more information contact Precision Laboratories at 800/323-6280 or visit www.precisionlab.com/sync / circle no. 276

Air it out

The 2006 model of the John Deere Aercore 800 aerator features a belt-drive coring system, a mechanical transmission and an electro-hydraulic lift / lower system to improve quality, productivity and reduce the risk of hy-

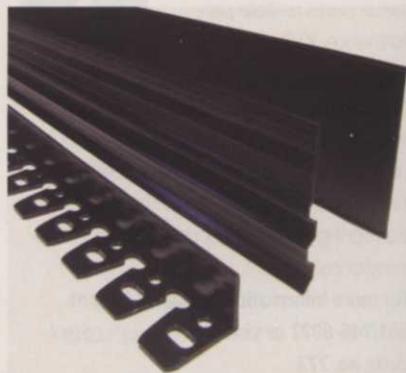


draulic leaks on playing surfaces. The Aercore 800's Flexi-Link coring system increases productivity by absorbing the forward motion of the aerator, keeping the tines perpendicular to the turf while the machine is moving. The belt-driven aerator provides quiet operation and low maintenance. The Aercore 800 uses a mechanical transmission and a 31.5-in. coring width. The mechanical transmission provides four aerating speeds as well as a separate transport speed. To minimize running over cores from the previous aerification pass, the Aercore 800 features standard drive tire core deflectors.

For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or visit www.deere.com / circle no. 277

Oly-Ola has the edge

Oly-Ola Edgings, Inc.'s Super-Edg, Slim-Edg and Bulldog-Edg provide landscape contractors with safe alternatives to metal, wood and concrete edgings. There are no sharp edges, and they are easy to install and more economical than metal. Made with either recycled black vinyl or polyethylene, they separate turf from flowerbeds or landscape areas that contain mulches, stone, bark or other materials in beds. They provide a barrier against weeds at



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the base of fences and minimize the need for hand trimming. Oly-Ola's flexible construction allows designers to create eye-catching landscape logos and patterns.

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envista e-landscaping software is a fully integrated, Web-based management system designed specifically for landscapers. envista contains several integrated modules, including estimating, sales tracking, scheduling/routing, customer service, profitability analysis and administration. All information is accessed via the Internet, so employees can have access to real-time information from any location.

For more information contact envista at 866/641-6459 or visit www.envista.com / circle no. 279



Small stakes

The Berkshire Earthwings T tree staking system is now available in four sizes: #2C for trees up to 2-in. caliper, #3C for trees up to 3-in. caliper, #5C for trees up to 5-in. caliper and #10C for trees up to 10-in. caliper. The newest, the #2C, was designed as an economical way to stake large plantings of small trees. Like the other three sizes, the #2C is made of steel with a pre-attached galvanized cable. Earthwings stakes install in three steps: drive anchor, pull to lock in place, attach to

tree. They can be used for trees planted in sandy soil or in windy locations.

For more information contact Berkshire at 413/229-7919 or visit www.berkshireearthwings.com / circle no. 280

Toro mower accessories

Toro's new line of mower accessories, including utility bags, Cap Flaps and zero turn riding covers offers operators added comfort, convenience and protection for lawn care operators and their equipment. Toro utility bags are available for most walk-behind and riding mowers and can hold trash, tools, keys and cell phones. The lightweight bags are constructed of heavy-duty mesh fabric to keep contents secure, visible and within reach. The Toro Cap Flap clips to the back of any baseball-style cap to shield an operator's neck and ears from the sun. The zero turn rider cover shields the mower from the elements. The rider cover is made from a waterproof and tear-resistant 600 denier polyester fabric. It can be used for overnight cover



for mowers stored outside or for longer-term protection during winter storage.

For more information contact The Toro Company at 800/348-2424 or visit www.toro.com/professional / circle no. 281

On the fence

The new 2 by 8-in. fence bracket from L.B. Plastics, Inc. quickly attaches to existing structures such as home exteriors and stops the need for an end fencepost that could be difficult to add, especially when dealing with concrete patios. The fence stringers are easily mounted in the brackets and attached directly to exterior walls. The bracket makes in-

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Products



stallation easy and adds versatility when attaching Sheerline fences to existing patio, residential, ranch or pool areas. The bracket can also be used in privacy fence applications where fence sections need to be installed along a slope.

For more information call L.B. Plastics at 800/752-7739 or visit www.lbplastics.com / circle no. 282

Dimex EdgePro paver restraints

Dimex added two new products to its EdgePro Paver Restraint product line: EdgePro Low

Profile and EdgePro MAX. Low Profile and MAX are engineered with the L-shape profile and horizontal tab design of EdgePro Paver Restraint, while offering paver installers a variety of height options. EdgePro Low Profile features a 1.25-in. vertical wall height that makes it ideal for thinner paving applications, including 40 mm wet cast pavers and flagstone. Low Profile can also be used with standard 60mm concrete or clay pavers for installers that prefer more of an exposed edge to the outside course of pavers. EdgePro MAX is designed with a 2.75-in. vertical wall height for 80 mm concrete or clay pavers. MAX features a sturdy profile that supports large paver jobs, including driveways and commercial installations.

For more information contact Dimex at 800/334-3776 or visit www.edgepro.com / circle no. 283

The LEIT trilogy

The LEIT Link System includes three new products: the new LEIT Link radio-remote handset, LEMA 1600HE solenoid and the latest LEIT XRC irrigation controller. The LEIT Link handset is a



user-friendly, handheld, two-way radio communication device. The LEIT Link handset can perform manual runs, test valves, install programs, adjust budgets, review controller status and activate programs from up to 800 ft. away. The DIG LEMA 1600HE is a water-

tight, two-way magnetic solenoid actuator. The LEMA 1600HE enables the LEIT irrigation controllers to operate most brand name valves using DC power at a distance of up to 4,500 ft. using 14 AWG wire. The LEIT XRC is the most advanced controller in DIG's LEIT series of irrigation controllers. The LEIT XRC series uses two-way radio communication with the LEIT Link radio remote handset. This allows the LEIT Link handset user to review, test and manage a LEIT XRC from a distance of up to 800 feet.

For more information contact Dig at 760/727-0914 or visit www.digcorp.com / circle no. 284

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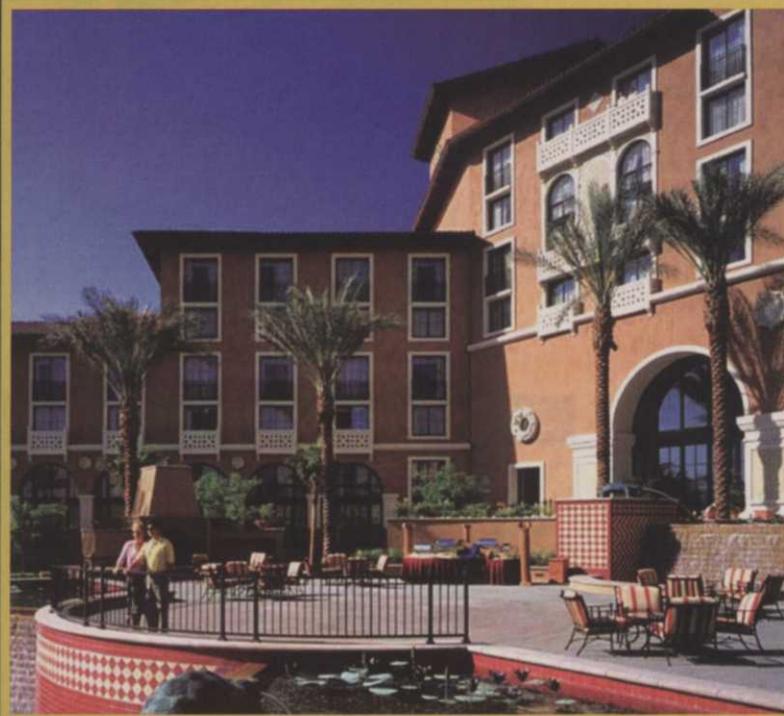
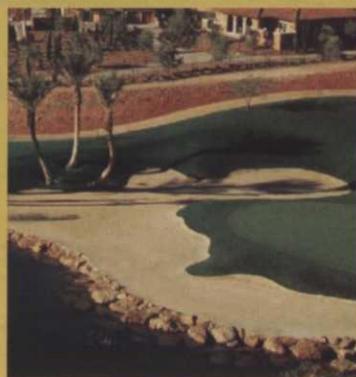
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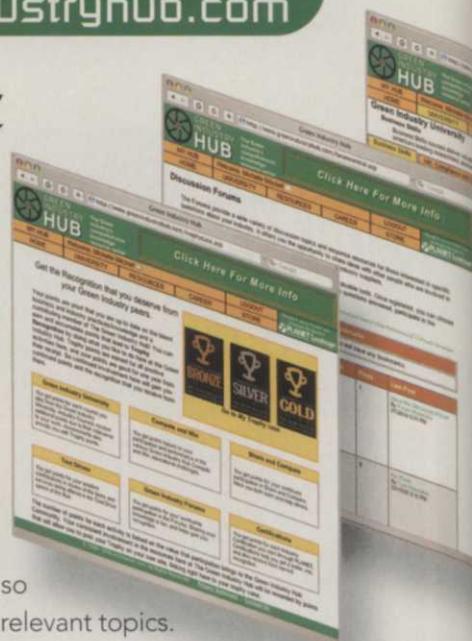
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Events

RESOURCES WHAT, WHEN & WHERE

February

5-8 Turfgrass Short Course and Sports Turf Short Course

/ Blacksburg, VA; Sponsored by Virginia Turfgrass Council; 757/464-1004; www.thevtc.org

1-4 ANLA Management Clinic

/ Louisville, KY; Sponsored by American Nursery & Landscape Association; 202/789-2900; www.anla.org

1 NYSTA Lobby Day

/ Albany, NY; Sponsored by New York State Turfgrass Association; 800/873-8873; www.nysta.org

2-5 PLANET Executive Forum

/ Henderson, NV; Sponsored by Professional Landcare Network; 800/395-2522; www.landcarenetwork.org

2-4 Marty Grunder's Boot Camp 2006

/ Lexington, Ky; Sponsored by Marty Grunder; 866/GRUNDER; www.martygrunder.com

13-18 TPI Midwinter Conference

/ Savannah, Georgia; Sponsored by Turfgrass Producers International; 800/405-8873; www.turfgrasssod.org

13-16 IN-IL Turfgrass Short Course

/ Indianapolis, IN; Sponsored by Midwest Regional Turf Foundation; 765/494-8039; www.agry.purdue.edu/turf/

14 Nevada Landscape Association Trade Show & Conference

/ Reno, NV; Sponsored by Nevada Landscape Association; 775/673-0404; www.nevadanla.com

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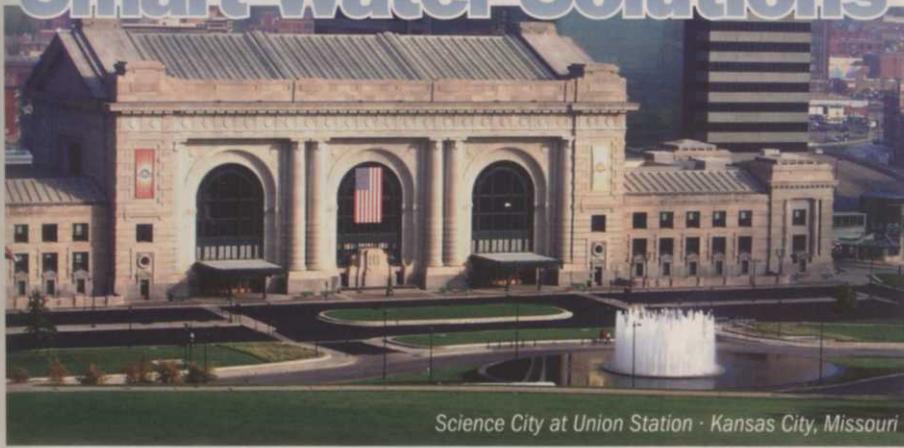
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- Achieving quarterly and annual sales quotas.
 - Accurately forecasting sales.
- Meet with new and existing clients to fulfill needs regarding landscape construction and maintenance.
- Work with an established framework of existing sales processes and continue to work with sales systems to strengthen them.
 - Estimate "take offs" of designs.

Experience with Excel and Act is preferred. Please send resumes, cover letters and salary requirements to:

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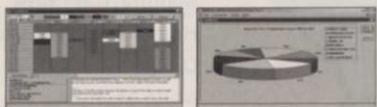


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Statistics

RESOURCES INDUSTRY TRENDS BY THE NUMBERS

LOWER 48'S SNOWIEST CITIES

Michigan boasts of having four of the 15 snowiest cities in the United States, New York three. While Valdez, AK, gets an average of more than 300 inches a year, we're talking just the "lower 48" and not Alaska or Hawaii.

City	Avg. Annual Snowfall
Blue Canyon, CA	240.3
Marquette, MI	141
Sault Ste. Marie, MI	117.4
Syracuse, NY	115.6
Caribou, ME	111.6
Mount Shasta, CA	104.9
Lander, WY	100.4
Flagstaff, AZ	100.3
Sexton Summit, OR	97.8
Muskegon, MI	96.1
Buffalo, NY	93.6
Rochester, NY	92.3
Erie, PA	88.8
Alpena, MI	84.6
Binghamton, NY	84.2

SOURCE: USATODAY.COM/WEATHER

DEALERS HAVE IT

More than 80% of *Landscape Management* readers who responded to a recent survey from us say they primarily purchase capital equipment through dealers. Here's how they ranked the rest:

	Percent
Dealers	81.5%
Distributors	34.8%
Used-equipment markets	25.6%
Manufacturers direct	17.5%
Manufacturer reps	12.6%
Home center/big box retailers	10.2%
Online	10.2%
None of these	0.2%

SOURCE: 2005 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKING SURVEY

HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS KEEP RISING

Health insurance premiums increased an average of 9.2% in 2005, down from 11.2% average in 2004. The 2005 increase ended four consecutive years of double-digit increases, but the rate of growth is still more than three times the growth in workers' earnings (2.7%).

SOURCE: THE KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION (WWW.KFF.ORG).
"THE 2005 EMPLOYER HEALTH BENEFITS SURVEY"

GROUNDS WORKERS AT A GLANCE

Grounds maintenance workers held about 1.5 million jobs in 2004. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:

1/3

Are employed in companies providing landscaping services to buildings and dwellings.

1 out of 4

Are self-employed, providing landscape maintenance directly to customers on a contract basis.

1.5 million

The number of grounds maintenance workers that held a job in 2004.

1 out of 7

Grounds workers that worked part time.

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT (ISSN 0894-1254) is published monthly (12 issues per year) by Questex Media Group, Inc., 275 Grove St., Suite 2-130, Newton, MA 02466. **Subscription rates:** one year, \$46, two years \$67 in the United States & Possessions; \$76 for one year, \$113 for two years in Canada and Mexico; all other countries \$148 for one year, \$220 for two years. For airmail delivery, include an additional \$70 per order annually. Single copies (pre-paid only): \$8 in the United States; \$10 in Canada and Mexico; \$15 all other countries. Back issues, if available: \$16 in the U.S.; \$20 in Canada and Mexico; \$30 all other countries. Add \$6.50 per order for shipping and handling. **Periodicals postage paid** at Duluth, MN 55806 and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send address changes to *Landscape Management*, P.O. Box 5057, Brentwood, TN 37024-5057. Canadian G.S.T. number: 840 033 278 RT0001. Publications Mail Agreement Number 40017597. Printed in the U.S.A.



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