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**Landscape Management**

**OUR MISSION:** *Landscape Management* — the leading information resource for lawn care, landscape maintenance, design/build and irrigation professionals — empowers Green Industry professionals to learn and grow from their peers and our exclusive business intelligence. Serving as the industry conscience, we not only report on but also help shape news, views, trends and solutions.

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**LM MARKET MATCH** We've made your life a little easier by supplying icons that direct you to stories targeting your core business.

**B** - Business, **D/B** - Design/Build, **I** - Irrigation, **LC** - Lawn Care, **M** - Maintenance



# 100

# 105

#### ON THE COVER

During a Feb. 11 raid, a Maricopa County (AZ) Sheriff's Office deputy arrests a suspected illegal immigrant working for landscaper Handyman Maintenance. Photo by: Joshua Lott/Getty Images

#### COMING IN MAY

*Landscape Management* spotlights "green" services that offer excellent revenue opportunities for landscape, lawn care and irrigation contractors. Learn easy-to-implement sustainable strategies designed to green your bottom line.

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**Gary Clark** - Vice President, Environmental Management Inc.; Dublin, OH



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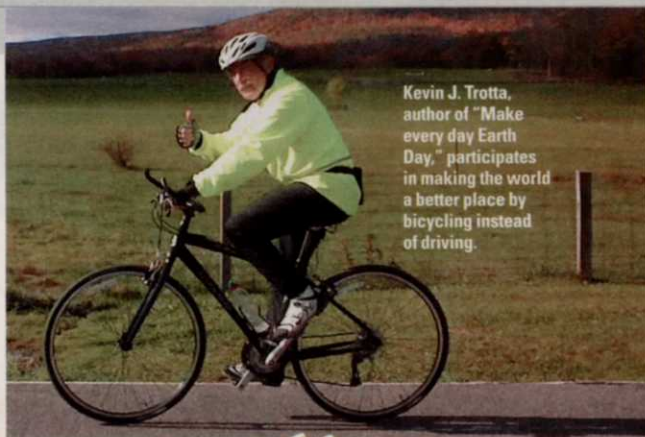
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INDUSTRY VOICE

## Make every day Earth Day

In life, as in sports, there are spectators and there are participants. As athletic turf professionals, we choose which role we play. Without question, the world would be a different and better place if more of us were players rather than onlookers.



Kevin J. Trotta, author of "Make every day Earth Day," participates in making the world a better place by bicycling instead of driving.

### WEB EXCLUSIVE

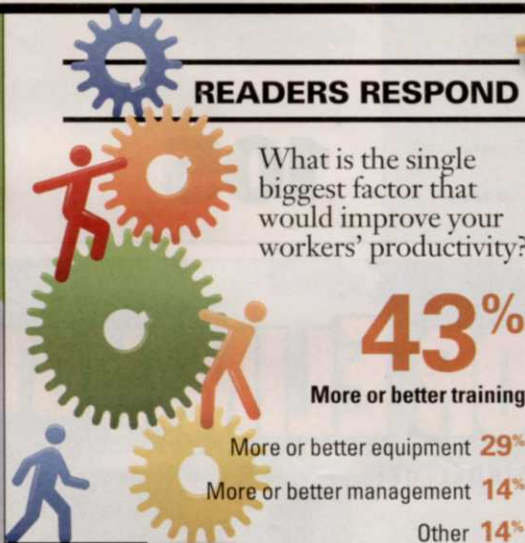
#### The 6 sins of greenwashing

Companies that promote eco-friendly services must deliver what they promise or risk being accused of "greenwashing."



### READERS RESPOND

What is the single biggest factor that would improve your workers' productivity?



» Next month's question: What's your education level?

Want to weigh in? Visit [www.landscapemanagement.net/survey](http://www.landscapemanagement.net/survey) to voice your opinion.

WWW

### DIGITAL VAULT

Select stories from our e-newsletters. Visit [www.landscapemanagement.net/newsletters](http://www.landscapemanagement.net/newsletters) to sign up or view.

#### LMdirect!

There will be a light at the end of this recessionary wormhole. It won't be bright, but it will shine stronger in some markets.

#### Athletic Turf News

When you get right down to it, as an expert baseball grounds manager, the two things you have to know about are water and dirt. And that's not just any dirt.

#### LD/B Solutions

Spring is in the air. It's time to remind consumers how valuable landscape design-build services are in their daily lives and communities.

#### Get Growing

Just in time for spring, the Missouri Botanical Garden identifies 13 new "Plants of Merit" for the Midwest in 2009.

LM Consulting Clubs

### ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

Explore recession-busting ideas with *Landscape Management's* seven inaugural **LM Consulting Clubs** — a brain trust of business coaches proven to help Green Industry contractors, industry suppliers and associations bolster everything from customer and employee relationships to revenues and margins to strategic planning and overall business valuations.

Visit the **LM Bookstore** and peruse our experts' offerings. Jeffrey Scott will teach you to increase your business with "The Referral Advantage," Harvey Goldglantz explains why "Marketing Matters" and Jim Paluch's trio of tales including "Five Important Things," "Leaving a Legacy" and "Growing Dreams" also are available.

**LM SEARCH** → Link to leading suppliers and their solutions at [www.landscapemanagement.net/search](http://www.landscapemanagement.net/search)

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## Is landscape licensing a good idea?

**O**ur society provides us with the wonderful opportunity to start a business — to run our own show, to be our own boss. We choose the profession we want to pursue, taking into consideration some professions are more difficult to master and to join than others.

Historically, the landscape profession has been one of the easiest to enter. In most locations, that remains true today. Slap a magnetic sign on the side of your pickup truck proclaiming yourself a landscaper, load up a mower and trimmer, and off you go, a landscaper. But you're hardly a professional.

Would you agree?

I don't want this to sound like I'm railing against the beginner or the small-time operator, because almost every successful landscape company owner I've met started out with little more than a willingness to work hard and the faith he or she could make a go of it in our industry.

The difference between those folks and the operators targeted by a landscaper licensing law under consideration in New Jersey (S-2302), however, is that these small-timers and beginners eventually got smart. There's no better way to put it. They acquired the proper insurances, became bonded, and they keep learning and improving both their business and technical skills.

Obviously, you can't legislate a person into doing the right thing. But most professions that can be legitimately referred to as professions have licensing laws. Some are good; some are probably not so good. The NJ licensing law, at least in the opinion of the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association (NJLCA), falls into the not-so-good category — at least as it's written.

The NJLCA polled its 500-plus member companies on the proposal this past winter and most of them did not like it. They believe it needs changes. Plus, there's always the difficult question of enforcement.

The NJ licensing law proposal would establish

a 15-member Landscape Professional License Review Board, including six landscape company professional members and two from the nursery industry. It would require, among other things, applicants acquire 90 hours of classroom instruction from an accredited educational institution and that they work in the landscape industry for four years before they can be considered for licensure. It also establishes a canon of ethics that nearly duplicates, it would seem, what the NJLCA members have already agreed to abide by.

The NJLCA offers this quick look at the pros and cons of landscape licensing.

### Pros:

- › Establishes industry best management practices.
- › Enhances expertise and promotes safety through ongoing professional education.
- › Increases professional responsibility.
- › Provides greater consumer protection.
- › Enhances public perception of the industry.
- › Identifies those committed to a greater level of responsibility and higher quality of work.
- › Replaces individual municipal licenses.
- › May protect our livelihoods from future restrictions of regulatory authorities.

### Cons:

- › Increases regulatory requirements and governmental involvement.
- › Increases professional costs, including initial fee and renewals.
- › Exposes contractors to new regulatory compliance requirements.
- › Exposes contractors to disciplinary action.
- › Encourages professionalism that will be involuntary only.
- › Provides no guarantee that non-licensed contractors would halt business.
- › May require more documentation on each job or project.

What do *you* think about landscape licensing?

# NEWS+VIEWS

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

## Davey celebrates a century of education and training

In 1909, 20 employees of The Davey Tree Expert Company arrived in Kent, OH, to study at the first Davey Institute of Tree Surgery.

In 2009, 47 Davey employees came to Kent from across North America to participate in the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences (DITS) — and to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company's premiere training program. This year's graduates join the nearly 3,000 Davey employees who have taken part in DITS training over the century.

The curriculum has evolved over the years, but the intent is still the same: make sure that Davey employees are the best trained in the business. The early students studied botany, entomology and related sciences, as well as accounting, English and business ethics. Current students dig deep



Proper care of tools was part of the early Davey Institute curriculum.

into the biological sciences, but also sharpen their skills in climbing and safety procedures, tree and plant care, disease diagnosis and management techniques.

Greg Ina, general manager of The Davey Institute, points to DITS and the

*continued on page 28*

## CLIPPINGS

### ECHO, Shindaiwa to merge

TOKYO — Yamabiko Corp., the recently formed parent company of Kioritz Corp. and Shindaiwa Corp., announced plans to merge the two companies and operate as Yamabiko. Initially, Yamabiko was created as a holding company to take advantage of management integration, sourcing, engineering, manufacturing and other efficiencies. The new plan is to expand the scope of the merger to include streamlining all functions. All Shindaiwa operations will be merged with ECHO, a subsidiary of Kioritz Corp., in Lake Zurich, IL.

### U.S. Lawns nears 200 franchises

ORLANDO, FL — U.S. Lawns added 10 new offices in January, bringing its number of franchised offices to 198 operating in more than 30 states throughout the country. "Our continued growth proves that our affordable franchise model is successful even in a difficult economy," said Paul Wolbert, vice president of U.S. Lawns.

## WORD ON THE STREET

How much more percentage-wise are you paying for employees' medical coverage than you were five years ago, and what are you doing to try to offset these soaring costs?



"We review our medical plan each year and research alternative solutions. We face 18% to 22% increases per renewal year, based upon the age and health conditions

of our group. Because of this, we contribute a maximum dollar amount for a single plan, with incremental contributions after five, 10 and 15 years of service. We offer additional contributions for spousal and family plans after five years of service, with incremental increases every five years with the company thereafter."

— **Robert Smart** (CSP, OCNT), president of Smart Scapes Landscaping and Mr. Yard Landscape Supply, both based in Olmsted Falls, OH



"We cover 50% of our year-round, full-time staff's health insurance premiums. Our healthcare costs are running about 2% of our gross revenue. Four years ago, they were 1%. We've

had to change our coverage twice in the past three years because of significant price increases. With the rising costs of healthcare coverage, as well as several other segments of our operations, we have been forced to slow down the growth plan for our benefits package. We had planned to add a new retirement plan to our package last year, but have had to defer that until 2010."


— **Fred Haskett**, U.S. Lawns, West St. Louis, MO  
haskettusl@peoplepc.com



"Our medical insurance expenses have increased a minimum of 12% per year each of the past five years. We have cut our company's contribution from 80% to 50% in

the past year, and have scaled back certain areas of medical plan coverage. We shop for and compare several medical plans each year to obtain the best coverage we can for the dollars we invest. And, as always, we openly discuss with our employees the medical coverage choices available so they are part of the decision-making process."

— **Richard Wilbert**, president of Boulder, CO-based Robert Howard Associates, rhainc@msn.com



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Hunter List Price  
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### Rain Bird® 1806 Sprays:

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Rain Bird List Price  
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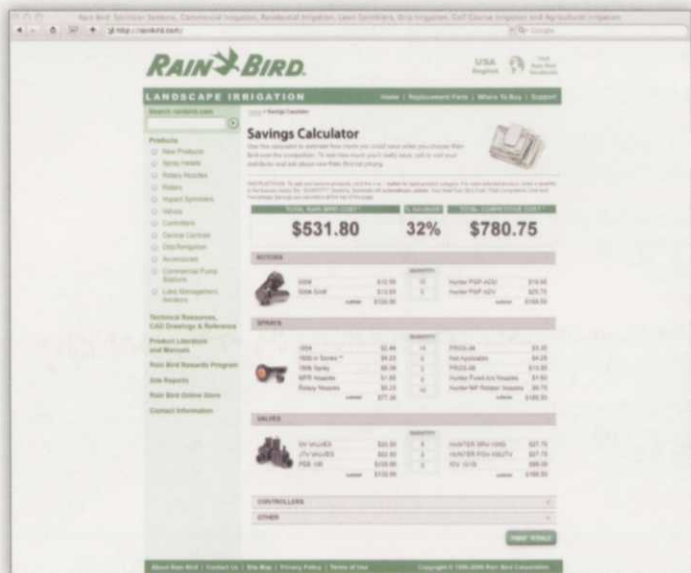
Hunter List Price  
**\$10<sup>50</sup>**

\* 45% savings based on U.S. Rain Bird® Rotary Nozzle list price and Hunter® MP2000 Rotators list price effective January 1, 2009.

\*\*Based on 2009 U.S. Rain Bird®, Hunter® and Netafim® List Pricing effective January 1, 2009.

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Just take a look at how much you could save on list price:

## Typical Residential Installation

Rain Bird Model	Qty	Rain Bird List	Total	Hunter Model	Qty	Hunter List	Total	Est. Savings
ESP-Modular	1	\$127.00	\$127.00	PC300i	1	\$162.00	\$162.00	\$35.00
Module Upgrade	1	\$50.00	\$50.00	Module Upgrade	2	\$47.00	\$94.00	\$44.00
5004 Rotor	10	\$12.00	\$120.00	PGP-ADJ	10	\$19.95	\$199.50	\$79.50
1804 Spray	10	\$2.48	\$24.80	PROS-04	10	\$3.35	\$33.50	\$8.70
DV Valve	7	\$22.50	\$157.50	SRV-100G	7	\$27.75	\$194.25	\$36.75
Rotary Nozzle	10	\$5.25	\$52.50	MP Rotator	10	\$9.75	\$97.50	\$45.00
<b>TOTAL \$531.80</b>				<b>TOTAL \$780.75</b>				<b>\$248.95</b>

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## Typical Commercial Installation

Rain Bird Model	Qty	Rain Bird List	Total	Hunter Model	Qty	Hunter List	Total	Est. Savings
ESPBXLX 120V	1	\$356.00	\$356.00	1CM800PL	1	\$379.00	\$379.00	\$23.00
Module Upgrade	1	\$129.00	\$129.00	Module Upgrade	1	\$140.00	\$140.00	\$11.00
5004 SAM Rotor	120	\$13.50	\$1,620.00	PGP-ADV	120	\$25.75	\$3,090.00	\$1,470.00
1806 Spray	40	\$9.39	\$375.60	PROS-06	40	\$10.50	\$420.00	\$44.40
PEB 100 Valve	16	\$103.00	\$1,648.00	KCV 101G	16	\$99.00	\$1,584.00	\$64.00
<b>TOTAL \$4,128.60</b>				<b>TOTAL \$5,613.00</b>				<b>\$1,304.40</b>

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\*Based on 2009 U.S. Rain Bird, Hunter and Netafim List Pricing effective January 1, 2009.



## CLIPPINGS

**Gehl celebrates 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

WEST BEND, WI — To commemorate its sesquicentennial, Gehl Co. "chromed-out" a Gehl model 7810E. The one-of-a-kind skid loader clocks in at 10,000 lbs. The Gehl Co.'s history began in 1859 in a blacksmith shop located at the westerly bend of the Milwaukee River in a small farming community. Since then, the company has been led by three generations of Gehl family members — and still operates in the same Midwestern town where it began 150 years ago.

**ANLA offers expanded industry resources**

WASHINGTON — The American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) has relaunched [www.ANLA.org](http://www.ANLA.org). "As technology, time and generational change diversify the way our members wish to network, learn and gain knowledge from ANLA, we knew that we needed to broaden the availability of ANLA's resources beyond our traditional base of face-to-face meetings," says Greg Schaan, Imperial Nurseries, Granby, CT.

**IA offers show details**

FALLS CHURCH, VA — The 2009 Irrigation Show, the annual trade show of the Irrigation Association, will be held Dec. 2-4 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio. The show offers irrigation professionals the opportunity to connect with industry peers and learn strategies and skills to improve their bottom line. Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, the show schedule will vary from years past. Education classes will run from Monday, Dec. 1, to Friday, Dec. 5. Certification exams will be offered from Tuesday, Dec. 2, through Saturday, Dec. 6.

# Drought update

## It's over.

OK, it's not exactly time to party, but the drought that has kept much of the Southeast drier than a vermouthless martini officially ended when three storms dropped 3 to 6 in. of rain from the Gulf Coast to the Florida Panhandle.

"Marked changes of improvement are noted on the heels of this drought-breaking rain, with removal of D1-D2 in Louisiana, D1 in southern Mississippi and Alabama, and D2 in northeastern Georgia and western North Carolina," according to the March 31 "National Drought Summary" from the National Drought Mitigation Center. (See chart at right for explanations of the drought designations.)

It is the first time since February 2007 that Alabama has been drought-free.

A portion of the Northeast corner of Georgia still suffers from below-normal stream flow and ground

water conditions. The severe drought area in upstate South Carolina remains, though it is smaller, according to the report.

"In addition, D0 was removed from all but extreme northern Louisiana, all of Mississippi, and all but a sliver of extreme east-central Alabama along with the Florida Panhandle, with the potential for more heavy rains over the next week," the report continued. The rest of Florida remains in drought conditions, as does deep Southern Texas.

For more on drought conditions, and to read the National Drought Summary visit: [www.drought.unl.edu](http://www.drought.unl.edu).

**Drought intensity categories**

**D0** ... Abnormally Dry — used for areas showing dryness but not yet in drought, or for areas recovering from drought.

**D1** ... Moderate Drought

**D2** ... Severe Drought

**D3** ... Extreme Drought

**D4** ... Exceptional Drought

**Drought or dryness types**

**A** ... Agricultural

**H** ... Hydrological

## Stens donates ambulance

**Jasper, IN** — It was the spring of 2008 when a vendor approached Stens with a request to donate an ambulance to Mercy & Sharing, an organization dedicated to helping feed, educate and medically care for children and widows in Haiti.

"The request was a bit of a surprise, to be honest," recalls Stens President Peter Ariens. "It's not often that we have vendors approach us for such specific donations."

Mark Salter, the Stens vendor who asked for the donation, has grown used to soliciting for such useful donations. Since his involvement in the Mercy & Sharing organization, he has taken the role of program director and has helped Founder Susie Krabacher foster the children of Haiti.

"I have been to Haiti and seen the dangerous and unhealthy conditions these children live in every day. It's truly heartwrenching," Salter admits.

"As a business owner, my hope is to always change lives in a positive way," says Ariens. "After hearing Mark's stories and getting to know the organization, it was nearly impossible to say no. Especially in this time of economic change, we feel it is particularly important to remember those less fortunate than us."



Mercy & Sharing's Mark Salter (right) thanks Stens President Peter Ariens.

# Bucking conventional wisdom

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

**W**ith the economy tanking and design/build among the harder hit segments of the Green Industry, it might seem an odd time to develop and promote those services, but that is just what one California company is doing.

Sierra Landscape Co., Palm Desert/San Diego, announced the formation of a full-service landscape design/build division. The company has engaged in a strategic partnership with RGA Landscape Architects Inc. of Palm Desert/San Diego.

"Today's competitive market demands developers and owners to have designs based on realistic budgets, shortened project timelines, clearer and earlier understanding of overall project costs," the company said announcing the partnership. "By organizing a collaborative approach, Sierra Landscape is filling a growing customer need that has never been available in the past."

LM spoke with Randy E. Mitchell, vice president of Sierra's new division, to find out what was behind the company's thinking.

Randy E. Mitchell

## **Q** Given the economy, is this really the time to be pushing/promoting design/build work?

We have found there are an increasing number of owners with major projects who are faced with serious budget challenges. We are able to minimize these problems very early in the design stage to maximize the outcome of the owner's budget. This process can only be accomplished when a team schooled in both design and construction are collaborating as a single unit and are key shareholders from the beginning.

## **Q** How does this change what Sierra Landscape was already offering in terms of design/build work?

Our core business has always been driven by our landscape construction and landscape maintenance services. What design/build does is enhance our offerings — and provide an ideal series of professional landscape services offered by one source, from the early conception of the design stage to long-term maintenance.

## **Q** Why RGA?

The two firms have successfully worked together for 29 years on a wide variety of projects, but as independent participants. Teaming our expertise and creating an informal alliance between both companies permits both RGA and Sierra Landscape to offer our customers the resources of both businesses under one contract.

## **Q** Is this more or less a referral system, where you push your design/build clients to them for their expertise and vice versa?

Both companies maintain very effective business development departments, which reach out to many regions of Southern California. All inquiries will be shared between the two companies, with Sierra Landscape handling the leadership and coordination of all potential work.

## **Q** Does this change your staffing in any way?

Very little staffing adjustments are required.

## CLIPPINGS

### Quali-Pro shows its 'passion'

RALEIGH, NC — Quali-Pro will award annual \$1,000 scholarships to college students through its newly created Passion for Turf Scholarship program. The program encourages and assists students who are interested in careers in the turfgrass industry. It will provide annual financial assistance to full-time college students who are studying in the turf sciences or related agronomy disciplines. Each participating university will be awarded two \$1,000 scholarships per year.

### Treker acquisition expands Ariens' UTV offerings

BRILLION, WI — Ariens Co. has acquired the Treker line of utility vehicles (UTVs), attachments and accessories from Land Pride, a Division of Great Plains Mfg. Inc. Ariens will continue to sell the UTVs through Land Pride retailers, as well as select power equipment retailers under the Gravely brand name. The Treker line includes two- and four-wheel drive UTVs. Multiple attachments and accessories are available for each mode. The UTV will also be sold through Gravely Turf retailers who serve the sports field management segment, according to Ariens.

### Bartlett Tree Experts opens new branches

STAMFORD, CT — As part of its continuing growth efforts, Bartlett Tree Experts has established new offices in two locations. Bartlett added these offices after the acquisition of Empire Tree and Turf in Augusta, GA, and Top Notch Treecare in Plymouth, MN. The company has nearly 100 offices providing scientific tree and shrub care to customers in 27 states, as well as Canada, Great Britain and Ireland.



# Think Green

“Green” turfgrasses are not something newly developed to save our planet. Environmentally friendly and ecologically sound fine and tall fescues have been underfoot all along. More and more conscientious homeowners, landscape contractors, parks managers and golf course superintendents are seeding and sodding their turf areas with Chewings and creeping red fine fescue for extremely low maintenance, shade tolerant lawns with low fertilization and water requirements. Or they’ve selected deep-rooted, drought- and wear-tolerant tall fescue for home lawns, athletic fields and parks where a great deal of activity takes place and maintenance could be an issue.

Planting fine and tall fescues is such a simple step that even the most “What can I do about the environment?” citizens can have a hand in saving our planet. The benefits are plentiful and obvious. A naturally green turf sward with greatly reduced nitrogen and maintenance requirement is refreshing to look at, play on, and performs like an air conditioner – reducing the global warming that’s being discussed so much. Healthy turf also collects airborne dust while stabilizing our soil, converts carbon dioxide into oxygen, reduces stress in humans, provides padding for kids’ elbows and knees, plus makes a statement that we’re all doing our part to help.



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Oregon Tall Fescue Commission  
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# Girard Environmental donates landscaping services

**Sanford, FL** — Girard Environmental Services — a full-service landscaping company based in Seminole County, FL — recently donated more than \$5,000 worth of landscaping services to Midway Safe Harbor Center, an after-school program in Sanford. The Girard team installed irrigation and stone pavers, and provided arbor and landscaping care to the community center's 10,000-sq.-ft. outdoor garden classroom.

"The landscaping infrastructure that Girard Environmental donated is priceless because it helps us maintain our garden project, which functions as a learning tool to help teach kids about horticulture," says Pat Cucci, executive director of the Midway Safe Harbor Center, which also serves as a 21st Century Community Learning Center in Seminole County.

Nearly 180 students work on Midway Safe Harbor Center's garden throughout the year — and grow everything from onions and corn to pineapples and red peppers.

"We are happy to help give Midway Safe Harbor Center's garden classroom a much-needed landscape facelift," says Alan Wing, vice president of operations at Girard Environmental Services. "Most of our employees live in Sanford, and we take great pride in this community."



Alan Wirtg helped coordinate the project with Pat Cucci (right).

## BELIEVE IT

OR NOT ...

### LAWSUIT ABUSE AWARENESS

Rick Popp, owner of Ozark Outdoors in Springfield, MO, is featured as part of the U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform's "I Am Lawsuit Abuse" national awareness campaign.

Popp's company sold a riding lawnmower to a customer who used it all spring and summer, then sued the firm to get his money back once the mowing season was over. To hear Popp's story, check out [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxegWf-FWWw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxegWf-FWWw).



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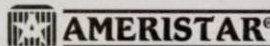
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## Catalpa Landscape donates services to Angel's House

Newnan, GA — Catalpa Landscape Management has signed on to donate full landscaping services to Angel's House, an emergency shelter for

children of Newnan and Coweta counties. The landscape company is volunteering a full year's worth of landscape maintenance services valued at



\$5,000 to the children's shelter.

"As a small business operator in Coweta County, Catalpa Landscape Management is always looking for ways to help out and give back to the local community," says Owner Rod Smith. "We think that supporting vital not-for-profit organizations in our area, such as Angel's House, is one way we can do that."

Angel's House provides children a comfortable place to stay and be nurtured and cared for until a permanent foster home can be found for them. It is supported with the help of corporations, foundations, churches, community groups and concerned individuals locally and throughout the state. In other words, it's not the kind of place that prefers to spend its limited funds on maintenance services.

"Our maintenance crew will visit Angel's House on a weekly basis," says Catalpa's new-business manager, Casey Child. "The shelter provides such a valuable service to the community, and we are extremely proud to help them in every way possible."

PHOTOS COURTESY: CATALPA LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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# Bobcat helps defend Fargo-Moorhead community from flooding

Residents of North Dakota, home of Bobcat Co., prepared for major flooding in the eastern part of the state and battled flood conditions in the west and

central areas in late March. Early on March 28, the Red River hit a record stage of 40.82 ft. Efforts then switched from fighting the flood to monitoring



Bobcat donated staff and equipment to aid in flood relief efforts.



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the river and returning the communities back to normal.

In response to the flood threat in the Fargo, ND, area, near the company's world headquarters, more than 100 Bobcat employees volunteered around the clock to help fill and place sandbags, build flood walls along the water's edges, provide meals and answer phones at the volunteer center. Bobcat's donation of more than 40 machines and 40 volunteer operators helped accelerate National Guard efforts to efficiently fill a portable floodwall system throughout the city. Management at Bobcat recognized the need for volunteers, especially operators, and encouraged all employees to leave their positions that week to help with the protection efforts.

Bismarck and Gwinner, ND — both homes to Bobcat factories — and their neighboring communities were hit with overland flooding, washed-out roads and near-blizzard conditions. Gwinner employees ramped up volunteer efforts to support neighboring communities, while other employees volunteered around Gwinner and in the Red River Valley, operating equipment, participating in sandbagging, and providing food and support to community members. In Bismarck, where the Missouri River had ice jams that led to unexpected flooding, employees offered assistance to community members and neighbors in sandbagging and evacuation efforts along the river.

Bobcat dealers around North Dakota stepped up to help their communities as well by supplying equipment and resources toward flood fighting. Another reason Bobcat equipment was highly visible in the Fargo-Moorhead areas was that many customers were both working and volunteering their time and equipment to help protect the communities.

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# Watering do's and don'ts for Dallas residents

The Dallas Water Utilities are taking their slogan "Save water — nothing can replace it" pretty seriously. The organization put out a list of do's and don'ts for those responsible for irrigating properties. Those violating the outdoor

watering guidelines can result in fines of \$250 to \$2,000 per incident. First offenses will be issued a warning. While the fines might only apply to residents of Dallas, the principles stress good water management no matter your locale.



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- › Hand water or use a soaker hose. They're permitted at any time.
- › Maintain your sprinkler system. Repair any broken, missing or misdirected sprinkler heads.
- › Install rain and freeze sensors on your sprinkler system.
- › Monitor your total water usage. If you use more than 15,000 gallons a month, you'll pay a surcharge on the amount above 15,000.



### Don't

- › Don't water during any form of precipitation.
- › Don't allow your sprinkler system to water driveways, sidewalks and streets.
- › Don't waste water by allowing runoff onto a street or other drainage area when you're watering.
- › Don't water your yard between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. between April 1 and October 31.



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# Reclaimed water use gains steam

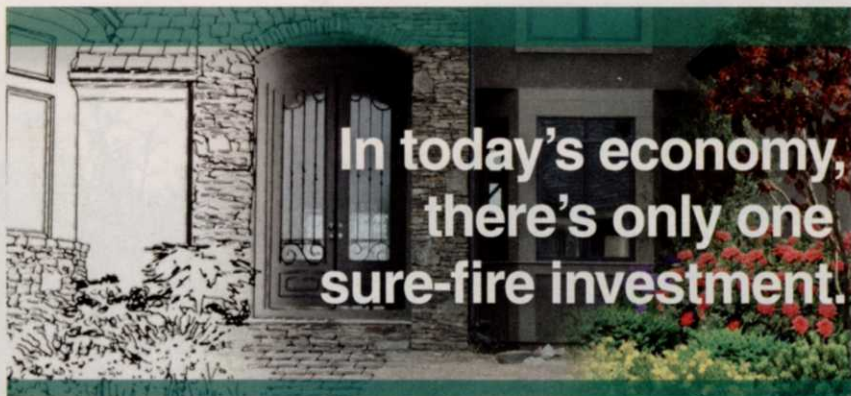
Whether they are motivated by drought conditions or environmental concern, many cities around the country are turning to reclaimed water. Treatment facilities create reclaimed water by taking wastewater (sewage), treating it to remove the solids and

impurities, and making it available for non-drinking purposes. A quick Internet news search provides a list of stories discussing the various cities — mostly across the South — that are using or exploring the possibility of using reclaimed water.

A recent story in the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* reports how residents of Southern California cities are “wasting 45 million gallons of usable water every day.” According to the article, the three treatment plants in the San Gabriel Valley process 87 million gallons a day, but only 42 million gallons are actually reused — enough for about 5,000 families a year. The goal is to increase that figure.

According to an article in *The Tampa Tribune*, Tampa city officials are considering giving away reclaimed water for lawn use to help ease the city’s drought problem: “They are contacting landscapers and utility contractors to determine whether it’s feasible to fill watering trucks with reclaimed water that, in turn, would be sprayed onto lawns.”

The *Naples Daily News* reported a change in a ruling that “discouraged homeowners from using reclaimed water to irrigate their lawns.” The ruling required those using reclaimed water to sign an agreement that held the city blameless if the reclaimed water damaged their landscaping.

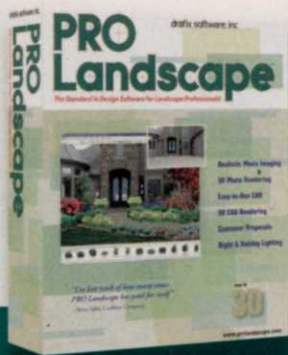


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## Entrepreneur wins KIOTI's 2008 success story contest

**Wendell, NC** — KIOTI Tractor named Richard Vega of Lake George, NY, the winner of the 2008 National Success Stories contest. Entrants were required to submit a KIOTI tractor serial number, the dealer name and date they purchased the tractor, a description of how they use their tractor and a photograph of themselves with the tractor. One winner was selected each month, with the monthly winners becoming eligible for the grand prize.

Vega uses his DK45SE HST tractor for a variety of tasks from landscaping, to tree cutting and hauling, to snow removal and lifting. To accomplish this diversity of tasks, he equipped the tractor with a number of implements, including a loader, landscape rake, blade and pallet forks.

A picture is worth a thousand words,” states Ron Parrish, KIOTI market development manager. “The photos sent with Vega’s entry really made it apparent how much work he has done with his tractor.”

As the national grand prize winner of this year-long contest, Vega received a \$1,500 gift card.

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**PEOPLE**  
ON THE MOVE

**Precision Laboratories** added **David Keating** to its Turf and Ornamental sales team. Keating assumes the role of district manager for the northeastern United States, where he is responsible for professional turf sales and customer relationship management.



**Charles Granger** joins **Austin Outdoor's** Business Development Department as business development manager – government services. Granger is responsible for focusing on developing relationships with city, county, state and federal government entities in the geographic areas served by the company in Florida.

**The ServiceMaster Co.** announced that **Stephen M. Donly** is the new president and chief operating officer of **TruGreen LawnCare**. Prior to joining TruGreen, Donly was president and chief executive officer of Enterprise Media Networks Inc., a San Diego-based technology company that specializes in cutting edge high-tech solutions for the entertainment and restaurant industries



**Phoenix Environmental Care** welcomes **Mike Layel** as national accounts manager. Layel is working to develop and implement sales and marketing programs.

**Gary Watschke** and **Phil Spitz** have been named territory managers for the Lawn & Garden sales team at **Syngenta Professional Products**. In their new positions, they work directly with golf course superintendents, lawn care operators and other turf professionals to help meet product and sales consultative support needs.

President and Chief Executive Officer **Douglas W. York** has announced a reorganization of **Ewing Irrigation Products'** executive board as part of a plan to prepare the company for continued growth and efficiency. As vice president of sustainability and conservation, newly appointed **Warren S. Gorowitz** will spearhead future sustainability and conservation initiatives both internally and externally for Ewing. The company says this reorganization will foster collaboration and improve Ewing's ability to serve internal departments, Green Industry professionals and industry partners.



**Stantec** recently hired **Keith Wilson** as Senior Landscape Architect. In his new role, Wilson, a former president of the California Sierra chapter of the **American Society of Landscape Architects**, provides project management and supports business development from Stantec's office in Sacramento, CA.

**John F. Brailsford, Jr.**, of Orangeburg, SC, assumed the presidency of the **Horticultural Research Institute** in January. Brailsford is the president of **Shady Grove Plantation and Nursery**, which was established by **John F. Brailsford, Sr.** in 1939.

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*continued from page 8*

other training programs as a distinguishing feature of the Davey Co.

"The Davey Co. recognized long ago the value of investing in our employees through extensive education and training opportunities," Ina says. "The DITS tradition is unique in our industry; we were proud to celebrate our 100-year anniversary this winter."

Early DITS students participated in a variety of intramural athletic activities, including tug of war.

RJ Laverne, manager of education and training, calls DITS a foremost example of the company's commitment to and investment in its employees.

"I think this group can make a positive difference in our company, in the profitability and the way we conduct business and the way we're honored within the industry," Laverne says. "There is great potential with this group to sustain us as a great company and take us into important places."

Although DITS was established 100

years ago, the program was interrupted by the Depression and World War II.

In 1946, DITS was re-established with a refresher course for employees returning from military service. The course's duration was reduced from three months to six weeks. In the early 1950s, the program was reduced to five weeks and renamed the Davey Institute of Tree Service.

In 1976, the program was condensed to four weeks and renamed the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences, as it is currently known.



PHOTO COURTESY: THE DAVEY TREE EXPERT CO.



Bruce Wilson



Tom Oyler

## LM's Best Practices Consulting Club

The Wilson-Oyler Group understands that sustainable profits and long-term growth evolve around four elements: financial performance, social architecture, market positioning and operational best practices.

Partners Bruce Wilson and Tom Oyler — industry brand names in their own right — work with you to build Best Practices that optimize systems, services and relationships. Wilson-Oyler helps you learn exactly what your customers want and what you want, and develop a customized operating model that satisfies both.

Wilson-Oyler's systems provide methods to help you expand from your current base toward a more balanced business with a "margin of excellence." The consultancy also helps you plan and implement training programs that focus on leadership development, core competencies and organizational productivity.

The company's mentoring program truly educates, motivates and inspires. Wilson-Oyler's unique, proven approach understands that the underlying attitude in positive performance is that people do best when they have a passion for what they do. It's not really "work" if your people love what they do. And if your people really love what they do, and they do it well, then your customers will love your work, too — and they will tell others! LM's Best Practices Consulting Club will help you find, develop and reward that passion, and build leaders at every level of your organization.

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for Less Money



# FERTILIZER 101

AGRONOMY GUIDE

# Plants Need Nourishment, Not Just Water.

It's no secret. Green, healthy turfgrass means happy customers. Pale, unhealthy turfgrass usually results in complaints and in the worst cases, lost customers. Many factors such as adequate moisture and pest management help to obtain healthy turf, but no single factor can influence the appearance of turf as much as nutrient management. Soils naturally provide some nutrients, but it's usually not enough, which is why you need to fertilize.

Fertilization has always been a basic and essential step in turfgrass management, but once you know that, where do you go? Which fertilizer is best? How much to apply? How often? Are there problems with using too much or too little fertilizer, or applying the wrong stuff?

These are basic but critical questions to ask, especially in a tight economy when any opportunity to save money can make a big difference. There are literally hundreds of fertilizers to choose from, but they all come from a few basic technologies. This "Fertilizer 101" *Smarter Ways To Grow™* guide was prepared by Agrium Advanced Technologies specifically to provide answers about choosing fertilizer products and best practices. At the same time, we hope to offer useful advice about making your business more efficient and helping to exceed customer expectations, which ultimately makes your business more profitable!

- 1 How Fertilizer Works.
- 2 Why Nitrogen is Important.
- 3 Not all Fertilizers are Created Equal.
- 4 What's the Difference?
- 5 Why Slow- and Controlled-Release Fertilizers Work So Well.
- 6 Protecting Our Environment.
- 7 Making the Right Fertilizer Choice.



# How Fertilizer Works.

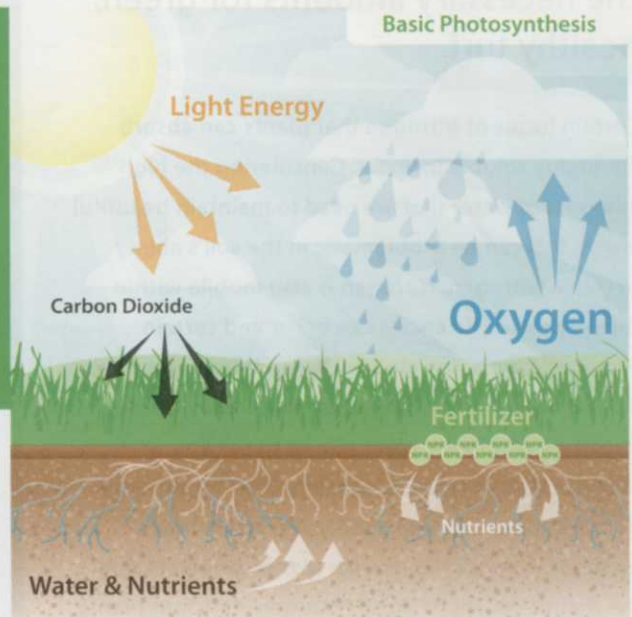
Fertilizers provide turfgrass with the necessary nutrients needed to maintain health and this in turn provides for beautiful green lawns that are easier to maintain. Plants are affected by what they're fed, just like humans. A person's proper health and growth depends on a steady, consistent, nutritious diet, not just a huge meal now and then. That's why it is best to make multiple applications of fertilizer throughout a growing season, or better yet, apply a long lasting, slow- or controlled-release product that delivers nutrients gradually to the plants for weeks or even months at a time.

Turfgrasses get nutrition by absorbing nutrients in the soil through their root systems. If the soil doesn't provide enough nutrients on its own, or if other plants have already depleted them, the turf will suffer. Therefore it's necessary to add fertilizer to supplement what the turf needs.



**Photosynthesis** - the process through which plants use sunlight to convert water, Carbon Dioxide and nutrients into carbohydrates for food, and then release Oxygen back into the air.

There are 17 chemical elements that have been identified as essential for plant growth, but certain ones are needed more than others. The key nutrients that plants need—also called the primary macronutrients—are Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K). They are commonly found in 50 lb. bags of fertilizer with different amounts of each. Plants use them along with the other required nutrients for photosynthesis.



# 2

## Why Nitrogen is Important.

Nitrogen is a vital part of every plant cell. Turfgrasses use Nitrogen in larger quantities than any other chemical element except for Carbon (C), Hydrogen (H), and Oxygen (O), which are supplied by air and water. Plants can obtain Nitrogen from organic matter already present in the soil through decomposition. However, soils don't contain sufficient amounts of Nitrogen to sustain turfgrass needs. Therefore, commercial fertilizers are applied to provide the necessary amounts for green, healthy turf.

Certain forms of Nitrogen that plants can absorb are highly soluble in water. Considering the high amounts of water that are used to maintain beautiful lawns, this can be problematic in the soil's ability to retain Nitrogen. Nitrogen is also mobile within the plant so deficiencies can occur and certain symptoms are associated with this. When soils have a deficiency, the Nitrogen that has already been absorbed within the plant moves to the younger shoots and leaves and is consumed at the expense of more mature shoots and leaves. When that happens, you get the familiar loss of green color in the mature leaves of those Nitrogen-deficient plants. By applying fertilizer, you can restore Nitrogen, improving the health and quality of the turf.

### The Difference Nitrogen Makes



#### GREEN, HEALTHY TURF.

Effective applications of Nitrogen will restore and maintain the darker green color that people want to see in their grass and landscape plants. Proper levels of Nitrogen will also promote dense turf, stress tolerance and overall quality of the lawn and landscape.



#### NUTRIENT-DEFICIENT TURF.

For turfgrass that's low in Nitrogen, the blades appear pale yellow to yellow-green. This condition is called chlorosis and is due to the reduction in chlorophyll production for which Nitrogen is required. Nitrogen shortages can also lead to thin turf that is vulnerable to weed outbreaks and certain fungal diseases.

# 3

## Not All Fertilizers are Created Equal.

### COMPARE THE BENEFITS OF DIFFERENT FERTILIZERS.

When you get right down to it, Nitrogen is essential, but that doesn't mean all fertilizers that contain Nitrogen are the same. There are big differences in how each fertilizer product delivers its Nitrogen, and how often and how much to apply.

Most traditional fertilizers are the common, soluble products that release nutrients quickly. They typically dump out Nitrogen after a good watering and then they are not available to the plant. So if that's what you're using, you'll have to make several more applications to keep that landscape green and healthy. On the other hand, slow- and controlled-release fertilizers deliver nutrients to the soil gradually and consistently to feed the plant over a longer period of time. So if you're using a slow- or controlled-release fertilizer, you'll make fewer applications to keep the turf green and healthy. Plus, research shows that certain slow- and controlled-release fertilizers allow you to apply less Nitrogen per year due to the extra efficiency of the consistent release and plant uptake.

In recent surveys, lawn care professionals across the country said they typically average four to six fertilizer applications per year at any given location. If you think about it, that eats up a lot of time, energy, labor and fuel for you. Now, think about how much better it would be if you could achieve green, healthy turf that would last for months with literally half the work.

## Organic Fertilizers vs. Slow- and Controlled-Release Fertilizers

# What's the

### ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

You probably get this question from customers because many people believe that organic or natural products are better for the environment. Some consumers think that if a product is naturally occurring it's organic, and a man-made product isn't. There's much more to it, though.

In chemistry, an organic compound is something containing Carbon combined with other elements such as Hydrogen, Oxygen, Nitrogen and Sulfur. Inorganic substances do not have both Carbon and Hydrogen. In fertilizers, the chemicals used are essentially organic since they have Carbon in them.

Organic fertilizers are generally thought to come from naturally produced sources such as blood meal, humates, composted manures, sewage sludge, etc. However, it takes a very large amount of these natural products to make a fertilizer with sufficient nutrients.

Consider this simple example: a 30-2-10 blend of a synthetic organic fertilizer versus an organic fertilizer with 6% Nitrogen. You have to apply five times as much of the organic fertilizer to get the same Nitrogen use rate. Organic fertilizers certainly serve an important function in disposing of waste products; however, one must also consider the carbon footprint that is left by having five times as many trucks hauling thousands of tons of fertilizer around the country.

### Organic Fertilizers

(Natural nutrients containing Carbon obtained directly from a plant or animal)

- Unpredictable release of Nitrogen
- Low Nitrogen content per ton (usually 2-10%)
- Unpleasant odor
- Blends with limited flexibility

### SLOW- AND CONTROLLED-RELEASE FERTILIZERS

Some materials occur naturally but can also be reproduced synthetically, including urea, one of the most widely used forms of Nitrogen. Urea fertilizers also contain Carbon, so they are classified as "synthetic organics." Controlled-release Nitrogen fertilizers are based on an advanced polymer-coated urea whereas slow-release Nitrogen fertilizers are based on sulfur-coated or polymer sulfur-coated urea, both are considered synthetic organics. Other slow-release fertilizers that react urea with other ingredients work a lot like natural organics, but provide much higher concentrations of Nitrogen. Their high Carbon to Nitrogen ratios provide increased microbial activity, which fortifies soils and reduces thatch buildup. In some ways, that's like the best of both worlds.

# Difference?

## Slow- and Controlled-Release Synthetic Organic Fertilizers

(Nutrients containing Carbon that are reproduced synthetically)

- Predictable release of Nitrogen
- High Nitrogen content per ton (up to 44%)
- No odor
- Blended for your region for maximum results

Slow- and controlled-release fertilizers can keep your customers' lawns looking their best while allowing you to make fewer applications. Effective slow- and controlled-release fertilizers deliver Nitrogen to the soil gradually and consistently to feed the plant roots steadily over a longer period of time. That gives you beautiful, healthy turf, and saves you a lot of time and money throughout the season.

Try this simple equation: if common, fast-release fertilizers provide only four weeks of nutrition, you need six applications to feed a lawn or landscape for a 24-week growing season. But if you have a longer-lasting fertilizer that will feed a landscape slowly and evenly over 10 weeks, then you achieve that same 24-week fertility effect with half the number of trips to the site. Think of all you could do for your customers with that extra time!

On the other hand, you might say, "Hey, wait, I get paid by the visit or per application." But you can turn this issue into a win-win. First, tell your customers about the unique advantages of a gradual, sustained nutrient delivery from slow- and controlled-release fertilizers. Explain how that gives their lawn and landscape optimal feeding for more consistent quality and appearance. Plus, there are also environmental benefits of adding less fertilizer. Then, just convince your customers to pay you for the results, not for the number of trips you make. Everybody comes out ahead.

Applying dependable slow- and controlled-release fertilizers is an easy way for you to be more efficient and save money. Remember that simply paying less for fertilizer is not a good long-term option to lower your costs. Using cheaper products or eliminating needed applications will only backfire in terms of reduced lawn quality and dissatisfied customers.

### Pounds of Fertilizer Product Needed to Cover 1,000 Square Feet.

Controlling your nutrient release means less Nitrogen needed per year.



Typical Slow- and Controlled-Release Fertilizer Blend



Typical Organic Fertilizer Blend

# Why Slow- and Controlled-Release Fertilizers Work So Well.

# 5

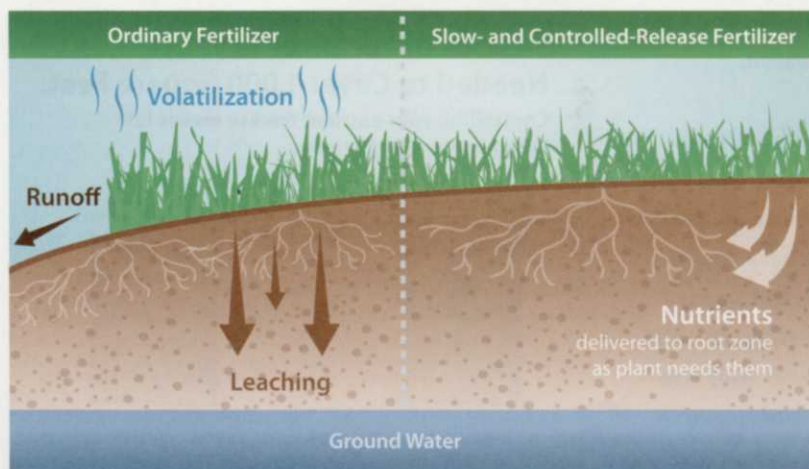
Now that you know the difference, you can see why slow- and controlled-release fertilizers are better.

Slow- and controlled-release fertilizers are granules or particles of balanced nutrients that may be encapsulated within a special coating or specifically formulated to depend on soil micro-organisms for release. Because of these unique fertilizer technologies, Nitrogen is gradually released to meet the turfgrass' demands. That provides a steady supply of nutrients into the soil over many weeks or months, with minimized chance of Nitrogen loss.

Industry-leading fertilizer suppliers such as Agrium Advanced Technologies are developing new and better choices in slow- and controlled-release fertilizers that promote "enhanced efficiency" fertilization. To help achieve optimum performance, our technology uses an exclusive, patented coating

process that enables the fertilizer nutrients to be activated by soil temperature, regardless of moisture levels. That assures gradual, consistent performance without the surge growth triggered by excess water, and it assures landscapes get nutrients when they need them. In short, "enhanced efficiency" fertilizers mean you can use less Nitrogen per year, save money, and get great results.

Plus, since slow- and controlled-release fertilizers deliver nutrients when the plant needs them, you reduce the risk of losing valuable nutrients, therefore reducing environmental impact. These technologies allow you to use less total nutrients per year and helps ensure you don't waste unnecessary money on fertilizer.



You can see what happens when ordinary fertilizers release Nitrogen too quickly. The Nitrogen can runoff the surface or leach through the soil profile both of which can contaminate ground water. The quickly released Nitrogen may also be lost to the atmosphere through volatilization.

On the other hand, slow- and controlled-release fertilizers effectively protect nutrients against environmental loss. Nutrients stay in the root zone and feed the plant at the root, which results in green, healthy turf.

# Protecting Our Environment.

6

In addition to not lasting very long—and causing you extra work—ordinary fast-release fertilizers are often very inefficient. When Nitrogen is delivered too quickly, the plants' roots can't take it all in, so those leftover nutrients have to go somewhere else.

That means fertilizer is subject to loss by leaching through the soil or volatilizing (escaping into the atmosphere), which is not good for the environment. A nutrient that leaves its intended application site becomes a pollutant. It's also a painful waste of money for that unused fertilizer to just go away without helping the turf or landscape.

Leaching generally receives the most attention. A nutrient leaches when it moves beyond the grass root system and is no longer available for plant absorption. Through leaching and surface runoff, Nitrate-Nitrogen and Phosphorus can contaminate ground water and create health hazards. Nitrate and Phosphorus in water bodies or wetlands can lead to algae "bloom" and other plant growth that deplete Oxygen in the water and reduce its ability to support life.

Increased concerns about fertilizer runoff and resulting risks of water contamination are prompting government officials to pay closer attention to the landscape industry. Many local and federal regulatory agencies (such as the Department of Natural Resources, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), municipal water companies, etc.) are considering new restrictions on fertilizer applications.

Agrium Advanced Technologies is committed to protecting and preserving our environment and we support the 4R system, a new science-based approach to best management practices. The 4R system calls for the Right Product, Right Rate, Right Time, and Right Place.

## 4R System

- Right Product
- Right Rate
- Right Time
- Right Place

By using dependable slow- and controlled-release fertilizers, you effectively deliver more nutrients to the intended plants while reducing nutrient losses. This can mean big savings in your fertilizer budget and increased profits. Better yet, fertilizers that pose less risk of runoff and pollution will give you a big selling differentiation with customers who appreciate those environmental advantages.

# 7

# Making the Right Fertilizer Choice.

Now that you know the difference between fertilizers, it's time to figure out how to go about selecting the right fertilizer. Most fertilizer distributors sell a large variety of fertilizer products. So, how do you know which one is best for you?

Well you need to know how to read the fertilizer label. Every fertilizer bag must clearly display a label with the brand, grade, guaranteed analysis, name and address of the fertilizer manufacturer/company, directions for use and net weight. Some bags contain additional information such as the size of the granules or size guide number (SGN).

### THE BRAND

The brand can be represented as an actual fertilizer brand like (XCU™, POLYON®, etc.) or as a batch number.

### SGN (SIZE GUIDE NUMBER)

Describes the size of the granules in millimeters times 100 (i.e. a 250 SGN is 2.5mm in average particle size).

### THE GUARANTEED ANALYSIS

This clearly states all nutrients that are being claimed and from which form they are derived (i.e. the percentage of Nitrogen derived from a polymer coated, sulfur coated urea).

### DIRECTIONS FOR USE

This information will tell you how to best use the product.

### NAME & ADDRESS OF FERTILIZER MANUFACTURER/COMPANY

This information will tell you where the product was produced and what manufacturer/company produced it.

### HOW TO CALCULATE HOW MUCH FERTILIZER YOU NEED.

If you wished to apply a rate of 1 pound of Nitrogen per 1,000 square feet, with this bag of fertilizer, you would need to apply 3.33 pounds of actual product (1.0 pound Nitrogen desired / 0.30 = 3.33). In doing so, you would be applying 0.07 pounds of Phosphate (3.33 x 2%) and 0.27 pounds of Potash (3.33 x 8%).



### THE GRADE

The grade is considered the three numbers boldly displayed on a fertilizer bag that represent the percentages of Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P) and Potassium (K).

### THE FIRST NUMBER

Represents Nitrogen. Therefore a fertilizer bag with a 30-2-8 on the label means it contains 30% Nitrogen.

### THE SECOND NUMBER

Represents Phosphorus expressed as Phosphate (P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>), which contains Oxygen.

### THE THIRD NUMBER

The third number represents Potassium expressed as Potash (K<sub>2</sub>O), which also contains Oxygen.

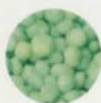


## BAG LABEL: THE GUARANTEED ANALYSIS IN DEPTH.

Let's take the example of a 30-2-8 fertilizer blend that claims 50% of Nitrogen is derived from polymer-coated, sulfur-coated urea. The product contains 30% total Nitrogen, but only 15% slow-release Nitrogen. That's why it's important to know what you are buying. Research shows that a fertilizer with 75%-100% slow- or controlled-release Nitrogen allows you to apply less total Nitrogen per year, thanks to its added efficiencies. It is also important to know the difference between polymer-coated,

sulfur-coated urea (PCSCU) and polymer-coated urea (PCU). They are not the same, PCU's are advanced technologies engineered to last longer than PCSCU's.

Phosphorus, like Nitrogen, is found in every plant cell and is a very important element in healthy turfgrass. Potassium ranks next to Nitrogen in its quantity within plants, and it supports many vital growth processes. Nitrogen is still the most important and required nutrient, and is usually the largest of the N-P-K numbers on a fertilizer label.



### XCU™ Slow-Release Fertilizer

Sulfur-coated urea (SCU) products have been around for decades, but XCU brings a major advancement in this coating technology. The patented process provides the highest Nitrogen content (43%), most durable, and longest lasting SCU on the market. As more XCU is specified in a blend, the added efficiency kicks in allowing you to reduce your Nitrogen rate to turf. A good rule of thumb is to look for a blend with at least 75% XCU.



### DURATION CR® Controlled-Release Fertilizer

Using the latest scientific achievements in controlled-release fertilizer technology, DURATION CR offers long-lasting, consistent Nitrogen release. Available in four longevities to best meet the needs for your climate and growing season, DURATION CR has been extensively tested and consistently stands out against the competition. In fact, new research trials indicate that one application of DURATION CR can provide six months of continuous green, healthy turf.



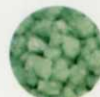
### POLYON® Controlled-Release Fertilizer

For years, top golf courses have relied on the famous POLYON® Controlled-Release Fertilizer to feed their turf effectively and consistently for months at a time. And those same advantages help keep lawns and landscapes healthy and beautiful. What most professionals don't know is that POLYON is very affordable in an annual fertilizer program. POLYON also gives you access to the company's exclusive POLYGRAPH® nutrient-prediction software, which customizes programs for your specific growing area.



### NITROFORM® Slow-Release Fertilizer

With over two-thirds of NITROFORM being water-insoluble Nitrogen (WIN), it effectively delivers organic feeding like no other fertilizer. NITROFORM supplies both Nitrogen and energy-rich Carbon to increase and sustain populations of beneficial micro-organisms in the soil.



### NUTRALENE® Slow-Release Fertilizer

NUTRALENE enriches your soil's microbiology, which helps to increase root growth and improve plant health. Because NUTRALENE's release is triggered by temperature and microbial activity in unison with plant demand, you're assured of highly efficient feeding.

## Make The Right Choice, And Make A Real Difference.

To remain competitive in the market and stay ahead of future environmental restrictions, many landscape/lawn care professionals will need to adjust their approaches to fertilizers and the time spent applying them. Fertilizers will always be a necessary and essential investment as well as a requirement of time. But when you can reduce those time commitments, your efficiency and profit potential will substantially increase.

For more information about Agrium Advanced Technologies and how our products can help your business, visit [www.agriumat.com](http://www.agriumat.com) or call 888.757.0072 for a distributor near you.



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# READY FOR A

Abel Arana clearly was not a fan of the immigration raid conducted at the Phoenix headquarters of Handyman Maintenance Inc. (HMI) in February. His son was one of 59 suspected undocumented HMI workers arrested in that shakedown by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.



# RAID?

BY **MARTY WHITFORD** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Federal agents and local law enforcement clamp down on landscape contractors who hire undocumented workers/illegal immigrants.

PHOENIX-BASED Handyman Maintenance Inc. (HMI) is no stranger to “the morning circus” — getting its landscaping crews ready for the day’s work, ensuring they have their paperwork and project details in hand, and the people, trucks, equipment and materials to do their jobs. But HMI’s morning circus got a lot crazier on Feb. 11. »

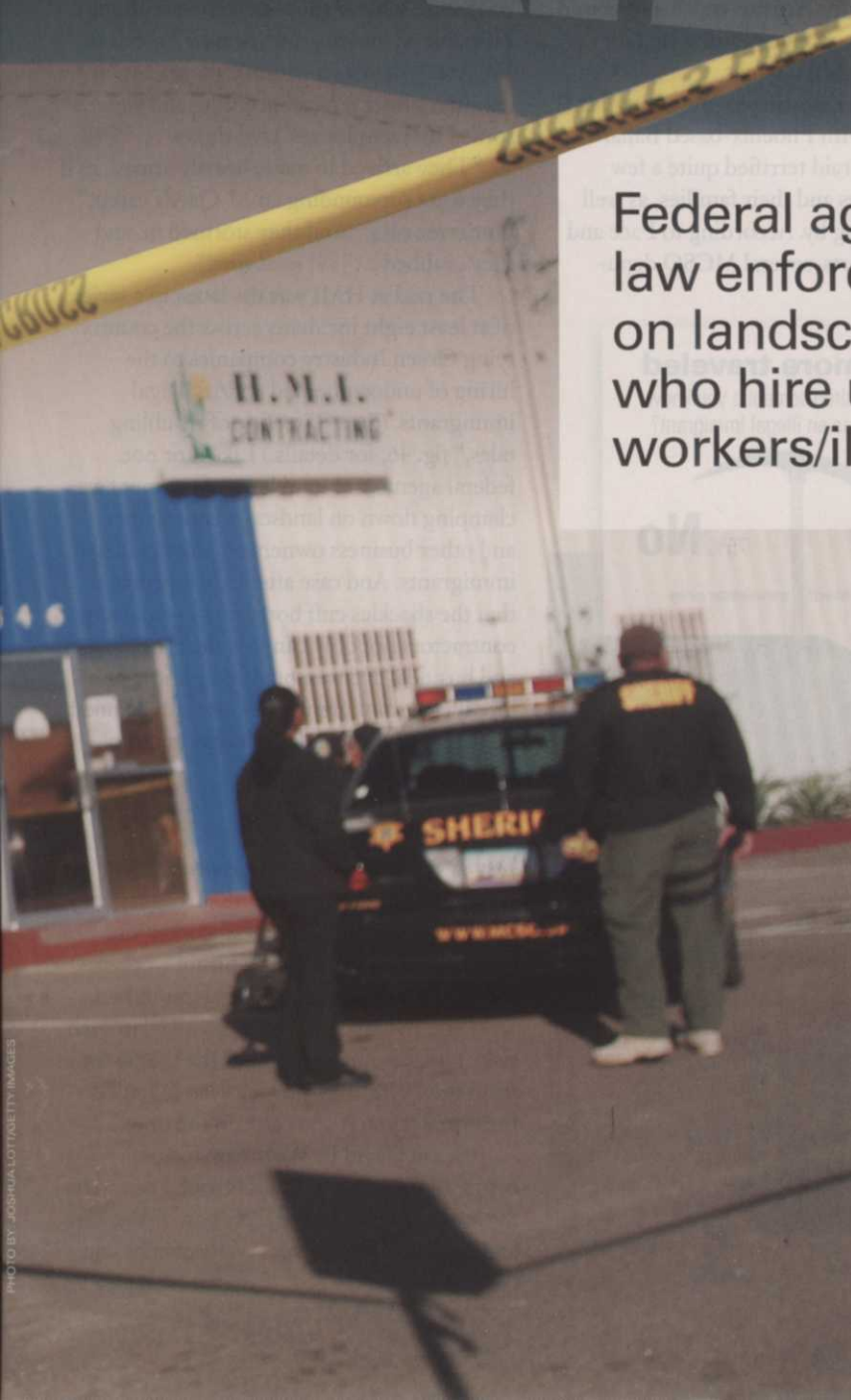


PHOTO BY JOSHUA LUTVALETTA IMAGES

Shortly before 6 a.m. that day, dozens of deputies from the Maricopa County (AZ) Sheriff's Office (MCSO) swarmed the site, executing search warrants in a raid aimed at apprehending suspected undocumented workers and/or illegal immigrants. What followed were several hours of questioning of more than 100 HMI employees ordered into single-file lines. The raid netted 59 workers suspected of violating immigration laws — 19 whom the MCSO turned over to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and another 40 currently residing in MCSO Sheriff Joe Arpaio's much-publicized Tent City. They're first awaiting trial for felony identity theft charges.

Julie Pace, an attorney representing HMI and a partner with Phoenix-based Ballard Spahr, says the raid terrified quite a few HMI employees and their families, as well as people passing by. According to Pace and local news reports, several MCSO depu-

ties drew their guns, slamming some HMI employees against cars and pushing others to the ground, questioning whether they had their documentation — proof they are U.S. citizens or authorized to work in the United States — on their persons.

"When we're going into a place with 109 people, with [more than 60] suspected felons, into an area where we don't know what's behind the door, I will use any method to make sure my people are safe and protected," Arpaio adamantly maintains.

However, Alfredo Gutierrez, former Arizona state senator (now an activist with the Hispanic advocacy group *Somos America/We Are America Coalition*), alleges MCSO deputies practice racial profiling and violated some HMI employees' civil rights.

"They arrived in mass, heavily armed, as if they were surrounding an Al-Qaeda camp," Gutierrez says. "And they stormed in, and they grabbed ... [59] gardeners!"

The raid at HMI was the latest in a series of at least eight incidents across the country tying Green Industry companies to the hiring of undocumented and/or illegal immigrants. (See "Timeline of troubling tales," pg. 46, for details.) Like it or not, federal agents and local law enforcement are clamping down on landscape contractors and other business owners employing illegal immigrants. And case after case is proving that the shackles cuff both ways — landscape contractors not only can lose their employees and business licenses, but if they knowingly hire illegal immigrants they also can be fined hundreds of thousands of dollars and serve several years in prison.

### Risky business

Just 8% of *Landscape Management* readers responding to a recent online survey say they participate in the H2-B guest worker visa program. Yet 25% admit to hiring workers they know or suspect are illegal immigrants.

If you're among the 25% involved in such risky business, just remember the theme song from the 1970s TV show *Baretta*: "Don't do the crime if you if you can't do the time."

Just ask David E. Wortman, former owner of Cloudburst Underground Sprinkler Systems, a Grand Island, NE-based lawn care and irrigation contractor. Well actually, you

*continued on page 46*

### Tunnel more traveled

Have you ever hired someone you knew or suspected was an illegal immigrant?

25% **Yes**

75% **No**

Source: March 2009 LMdirect! newsletter survey





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## Unauthorized U.S. residents by countries of origin (as of January 2007)



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics

*continued from page 44*

can't just pick up the phone and ask Wortman. He's sitting behind iron bars, doing 30 months for, among other things, knowingly hiring illegal immigrants.

But we can — and did — ask Bill Weinrich, Wortman's buddy from the seventh grade who worked for Cloudburst 1984-1998. Last June, Weinrich purchased much of Cloudburst's customer list and some of its equipment and vehicles, and formed BWJW Enterprises, which does business as Cloudburst Lawn & Sprinkler Co.

"It's tough to think that David's in prison and will be for at least two years," Weinrich says. "He's married and has two kids in college."

Surprisingly, Weinrich says the company hasn't lost any business due to the September 2007 raid by ICE and Wortman's subsequent conviction last December.

"All of Cloudburst's customers know what happened, but everyone's just concerned about David because he really was a good guy," Weinrich says. "David just got caught up in this labor thing — trying to mow 500 lawns a week and not being able to find good, legal, local help," Weinrich says.

How does *Weinrich* do it? He doesn't — at least not *all* of it. He focuses on the irrigation business.

"Cloudburst's lawn care equipment and customer base was sold to three or four local companies because I didn't want it, and not one of them could have handled the workload themselves — legally, that is," Weinrich adds.

### Hirer beware

Pace claims HMI "went above and beyond all applicable employment requirements," and used the federal government's E-Verify to confirm the employment eligibility of every worker it hired after Jan. 1, 2008 — the day she says it became legal for HMI to use the system.

Pace warns landscape contractors that while E-Verify can provide a necessary background check, it is not a silver screening bullet.

"Several of my corporate clients across the country have had new hires pass E-Verify,

*continued on page 48*

## TIMELINE OF TROUBLING TALES Following are eight incidents that Landscape Management uncovered involving undocumented and/or illegal immigrants and the Green Industry:

**Sept. 6, 2007** U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents raided Grand Island, NE-based Cloudburst Underground Sprinkler Systems (also dba Cloudburst Lawn & Sprinkler), which ironically had done landscape/maintenance work for the local government since 2002. During the raid, ICE arrested 19 Cloudburst employees on suspicion of violating immigration laws. One month later, then-owner David E. Wortman pleaded guilty to harboring at least 26 illegal aliens between October 2002 and September 2007 — hiring the individuals without requesting any identification or proof they were eligible to work lawfully in the United States. Wortman further admitted to cashing customer checks totaling \$437,632 in such a way as to avoid federal reporting requirements for cash transactions totaling \$10,000 or more. On 45 separate and consecutive occasions between September 2005 and May 2007, Wortman cashed groups of customer checks ranging from 22 to 108 checks in amounts totaling more than \$9,000 but less than \$10,000. He also was charged with failing to pay overtime to employees as required by federal law. On Dec. 10, 2008, Wortman was sentenced to 30 months in prison and ordered to forfeit \$236,729 to the federal government and pay an additional \$200,903 to the Department of Labor so it could reimburse current and former Cloudburst employees for their overtime.



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*continued from page 46*

only later to discover the individuals had beaten the system with counterfeit documents, names and/or Social Security Numbers," Pace says. "Identity theft is becoming increasingly common."

Pace has represented about 60 companies on employment compliance matters, including a dozen or so landscape contractors. Her

Convincing counterfeit documents bearing stolen Social Security Numbers and names place landscape contractors at increased risk.



firm has helped educate more than 2,500 people on employment requirements over the past two years, including speaking to Green Industry professionals at several Arizona Landscape Contractors Association meetings.

Labor-compliance legal assistance, according to Pace, typically costs \$1,500 to \$3,000 for a 20-employee company, and up to \$5,000 to \$8,000 for a landscape contractor employing more than 300 people. But Pace stresses that the potential costs of not having your business in order employment eligibility-wise — everything from losing your laborers, customers and business license to facing significant fines and prison time — demands landscape contractors' immediate attention.

"The landscaping industry has been subjected to an increasing number of employment inquiries and raids," Pace says. "ICE, the IRS, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Labor, state welfare and transportation departments, and local law enforcement are all getting in on the action.

"Employers beware: You better use E-Verify, have your I-9s in order, conduct training, and establish systems for immigration compliance and answering Social Security no-match letters and any number of other employment-related inquiries that are more and more likely to come your way every day," Pace adds.

While Arpaio adamantly denies allegations from some that MCSO practices racial profiling or any other unlawful activity, the sheriff did say that in addition to using

*continued on page 50*

PHOTOS COURTESY: U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (ICE)

**Sept. 24, 2007**

ICE raided three companies owned by Dean A. Hedges — Crestwood, KY-based Hedges Landscape Specialists, Exterior Designs and Performance Irrigation. One week later, Hedges pleaded guilty to knowingly employing at least 12 illegal immigrants. A former employee tipped off ICE, telling agents that under the direction of Hedges he/she was ordered to pay the illegal immigrants cash under the table. The informant claimed Hedges treated the illegal aliens as subclass workers, including paying them a flat rate regardless of the number of hours they worked each week.

**April 25, 2008**

ICE agents arrested 28 Mexican workers employed by Nash Gardens, a West El Paso, TX-based landscaping business and nursery. The U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted 25 of the workers for using false documents and/or Social Security Numbers (SSNs) for employment purposes. The other three workers faced administrative charges for violating immigration laws. Some entered the United States legally with visas but did not have federal authorization to work here.

**Aug. 27, 2008**

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) deputies raided Artistic Land Management in Mesa, AZ, and arrested 29 workers suspected of being in the country illegally, including 20 suspected of identity theft for using false SSNs and counterfeit documents. The workers' cases are pending trial. City government in neighboring Chandler, AZ, has since received bad press because Artistic had a \$1.4 million contract to provide landscaping and maintenance for its parks.

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PROVEN SOLUTIONS



Dubbed "America's toughest sheriff," Maricopa County (AZ) Sheriff Joe Arpaio says he's one of the few enforcing U.S. immigration laws.

E-Verify, business owners should not be afraid to use what he called "common sense."

"Let's say you have two job candidates," Arpaio says. "One guy's clothes seem to be made in Mexico, and the individual can't speak a lick of English. The other guy is wearing a dress shirt and tie and has red hair. I don't know. You tell me: Which one looks suspicious?"

### New united front

Some hold hope that the new Obama administration will slow down the brisk pace of worksite immigration raids.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi recently told a group of mostly Hispanic immigrants and their families that enforcement of existing U.S. immigration laws is "un-American" as currently practiced.

"Who in this country would not want to change a policy of kicking in doors in the middle of the night and sending parents away from their families?" Pelosi asked the gathering at St. Anthony's Church in San Francisco. "It must be stopped."

Meanwhile, a sizable coalition of organi-

zations recently united to fight these worksite immigration sweeps. The group essentially is requesting a moratorium until more effective employment verification tools and comprehensive immigration reform are in place. The 75 organizations — which include the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) and about 18 other Green Industry associations — allied themselves in late March to co-author the following letter to Janet Napolitano, new Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security:

*"Dear Secretary Napolitano: The business community calls on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to begin working with the employer community as well as with other interested parties in finding a reasonable and humanitarian solution to the issues surrounding worksite enforcement of immigration law. ... Also, there are strong legal arguments that the final rules on SSA's 'no-match' letters and the [Federal Acquisition Relations] Council's Basic Pilot plus mandate are illegal and, thus, were challenged in court.*

*The business community sees this as an opportunity*

*continued on page 52*

PHOTO BY: JOSHUA LOITGETTY IMAGES

## Sept. 2, 2008

ICE executed federal search warrants at The Sun Valley Group, one of California's major wholesale flower growers. ICE raided Sun Valley's headquarters in Arcata, CA, as well as the homes of several of its employees, taking 23 illegal alien workers from Mexico into custody on administrative immigration violations.

## Oct. 1, 2008

David Wayne Decker and his wife, Nancy Mintle Decker, of Stanton, TX — co-owners of a local landscaping business and nine-hole golf course — pleaded guilty to visa fraud conspiracy. The couple admitted to submitting a series of false Form I-129s to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The Deckers lied on the federal forms to illegally obtain about 420 guest worker visas for Mexican workers between 2003 and 2006. The owners of Deckers Farm Supply & Nursery and the Decker Golf Pro course admitted they had no intention of hiring the individuals they petitioned for when they filed their paperwork, and that the workers granted the H2-B visas actually worked for 10 other local companies. The Deckers accepted payments totaling more than \$150,000 from these neighboring employers as well as from the laborers themselves (another \$300 to \$1,000 in kickbacks per illegal immigrant). David Decker was sentenced to 30 months prison. His wife received three years' probation. The couple was ordered to pay \$150,000 in restitution. They each were facing up to five years in prison and another \$250,000 in fines.

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## Raids 'r us

Federal immigration agent worksite enforcement arrests

Fiscal year (ended Sept. 30)	Criminal arrests	Administrative arrests
FY02	25	485
FY03	72	445
FY04	160	685
FY05	176	1,116
FY06	716	3,667
FY07	863	4,077
FY08	1,101	5,173

Source: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ([www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov))



continued from page 50

nity to move forward with DHS to create positive solutions in the realm of employment verification rather than more misguided policies. ... The current I-9 system for checking work authorization is not perfect, but it is fast and has led to a workforce that is 95% work authorized. Business, labor, and civil rights groups worked with the past administration and the 110th Congress in trying to find a solution to address the issue of the remaining 5% to no avail. Furthermore, employment verification is only one aspect of our broken immigration system. Thus, permanent reform of our employment verification laws should occur in conjunction with comprehensive immigration reform."

Small and seasonal businesses also are teaming to win back H2-B's returning worker exemption (H2-R visas), which in fiscal 2006 and 2007 did not count against the cap of 66,000 H2-B guest worker visas permitted each year.

H.R. Bill 1934, which if passed would reinstate H2-B's returning worker exemption, takes this position:

*"This provision expired in 2007, and small and seasonal businesses across the country are now facing a labor shortage due to the temporary nature of these jobs and the unavailability of United States workers who are willing or able to consider these temporary seasonal positions. ... The Congress must take every step to preserve American jobs, and without immediate relief, many small and seasonal businesses could be forced out of business, thereby costing additional American jobs."*

The Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act of 2009 (S. 388) also seeks to reinstate H2-B's returning worker exemption.

continued on page 54

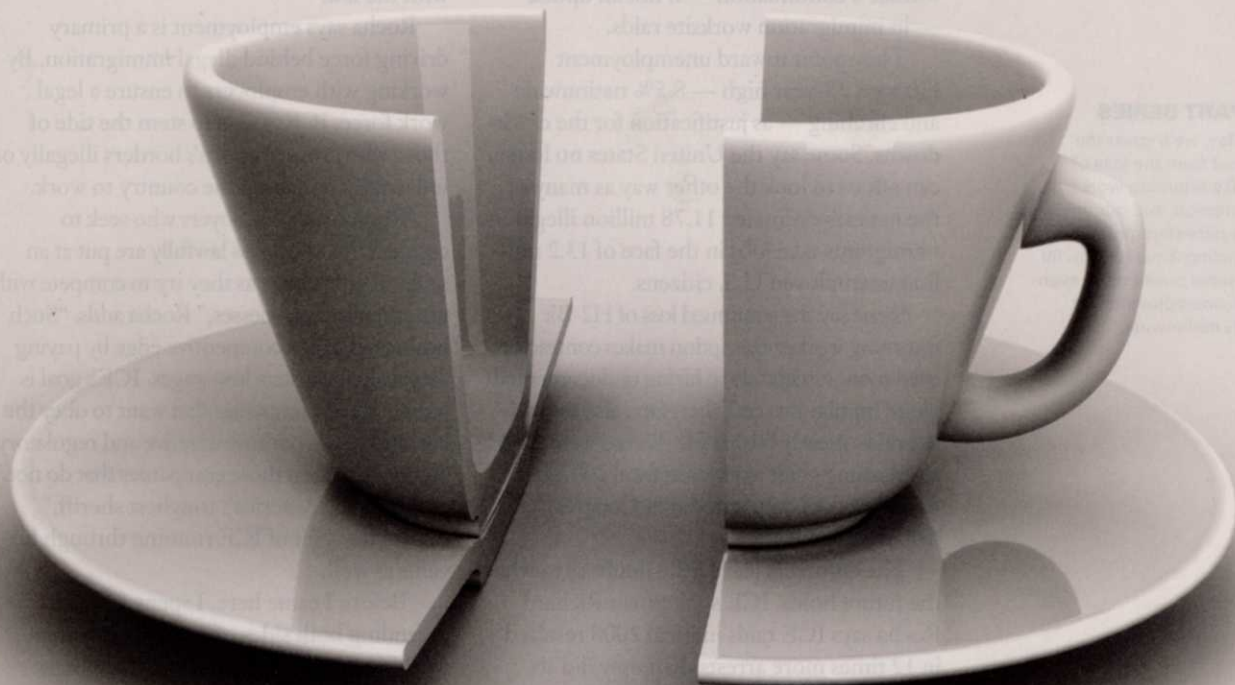
Nov. 28, 2008

Bensalem, PA, police reported that an intoxicated, revengeful illegal immigrant working for Green Tree Landscaping struck and killed a local bartender with one of the company's Ford F-150s. Just a few minutes prior to the homicide, the victim had refused to serve alcohol to the illegal alien, saying he had had enough, and then had escorted him out of the establishment after he argued loudly with staff and patrons. Unlawfully living in the United States the past six years, the Ecuadorian shortly thereafter pinned the bar employee, then standing just outside the bar's door, between the building and the F-150. The local landscaping company maintained the illegal immigrant who had no driver's license was not authorized to use the company vehicle.

Feb. 11, 2009

In another raid of an Arizona landscaping business, MCSO arrested 59 employees of Phoenix-based Handyman Maintenance Inc. (HMI), under suspicion they are undocumented and/or illegal immigrants. Sheriff Arpaio said MCSO turned over 19 HMI workers to ICE and the remaining 40 are awaiting trial for felony identity theft charges. This raid stemmed from a four-month investigation following a tip last October from a former HMI employee. — MW

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continued from page 52

## Not backing down

Pace and other industry insiders say they foresee a continuation — if not an uptick — in immigration worksite raids.

They point toward unemployment hitting a 25-year high — 8.5% nationwide and climbing — as justification for the crack-downs. Some say the United States no longer can afford to look the other way as many of the nation's estimated 11.78 million illegal immigrants take jobs in the face of 13.2 million unemployed U.S. citizens.

Some say the continued loss of H2-B's returning worker exemption makes contractors even more susceptible to hiring undocumented/illegal immigrants and, therefore, also to worksite raids. Nearly 70,000 H2-R visas were issued to returning guest workers in fiscal 2007, but that labor pool evaporated after Congress let that exception lapse.

The enforcers leave little doubt as to what the future holds. ICE spokesman Richard Rocha says ICE raids in fiscal 2008 resulted in 12 times more arrests than they did six years earlier (6,274 combined criminal and administrative arrests versus 510).

### 2-PART SERIES

In May, we'll cover the fallout from the loss of H2-B's returning worker exemption, and our industry's persistent problems attracting Americans to fill seasonal positions — even with unemployment at 8.5% nationwide.

“ICE targets all criminal activity and employers who hire unauthorized workers,” Rocha says. “No industry, regardless of size, location or type is immune from complying with the law.”

Rocha says employment is a primary driving force behind illegal immigration. By working with employers to ensure a legal work force, ICE is able to stem the tide of those who cross America's borders illegally or unlawfully remain in the country to work.

“Responsible employers who seek to conduct their business lawfully are put at an unfair disadvantage as they try to compete with unscrupulous businesses,” Rocha adds. “Such businesses gain a competitive edge by paying illegal alien workers low wages. ICE's goal is to help those companies that want to obey the law, and to use our investigative and regulatory authority to stop those companies that do not.”

Dubbed “America's toughest sheriff,” Arpaio has a bit of ICE running through his veins as well.

“Before I came here, I spent 12 years defending both sides of America's borders, working for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency in Phoenix, San Antonio and Mexico City,” Arpaio says. “Do you think I'm gonna back down just because we have a new administration and the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors — which by the way is one of HMI's biggest clients — is having the U.S. Justice Department investigate our Office and now is threatening to withhold \$1.4 million in funding? No way.”

MCSO has about 160 officers trained to enforce federal immigration laws and over the past two years has apprehended about 25,000 illegal immigrants, including hundreds from at least 16 worksite raids, Arpaio notes.

“I've been in law enforcement 48 years,” Arpaio concludes. “Things have changed quite a bit, but right is still right, and wrong is still wrong.”

But Pace says there are degrees of culpability.

“I would prefer that we focus these raids on the companies that aren't paying worker's compensation, that aren't paying unemployment, that are paying cash under the table, are not using E-Verify and are not completing I-9s (federal Employment Eligibility Verification forms),” Pace adds. “There are a lot of them still out there, and I think it's a better use of our resources.” **LM**

## E-Verify: A dozen subscribing states

Twelve states require the use of E-Verify for public and/or private employers, nine through legislation and three through executive orders. One state, Illinois, enacted legislation to limit the use of E-Verify until the database accuracy is improved and also created privacy and antidiscrimination protections. At least one state, Tennessee, encourages its use by providing a safe harbor from state penalties for employers enrolled in E-Verify.







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## WORKINGSMARTER

JIM PALUCH

The author is president of JP Horizons Inc. Visit [www.jphorizons.com](http://www.jphorizons.com).

# Continually create new standards

**O**ne foundational tool in the world of companies practicing Lean management is called a *Standard Work*. That is the name given to a written procedure illustrating the current steps to complete a task or operation.

Keep in mind that I used the words “current steps” in this explanation. You may be thinking you already have this issue under control because you have a procedures manual — a 2-in.-thick, three-ring binder packed full of all of the procedures at your company. I would like to illustrate the differences between your binder of procedures and a Standard Work.

### MONTHLY CHALLENGE

Select a key process for which you may already have a procedure written. Give it to the crew with the instructions, “Try this process, and then come back with ideas on how you think you can improve upon it.”

### Standards change

Far too many times, I have watched franchise organizations treat their procedures manual as though the contents were carved into two stone tablets sent down from on high. By contrast, the best franchises use their procedures manuals as guides and foundation documents, allowing

their franchisees to suggest changes that improve their contents.

Recently, I came across a company that locked some of their managers in a room off and on for a year and paid an expensive consultant to help them write out exactly how every process in the company was done. They then took their perceived masterpiece and put it on the company intranet for everyone to worship and follow — or else. The result? A frustrated management team, because the company’s employees would not go to the intranet and use it.

### What’s wrong

First off, procedures cannot be written in a room from memory, because memories are inaccurate.

Secondly, when we tell the team, “Here are the great procedures we wrote for you to follow,” we’re actually sending them a different message. It seems as though we’re telling them: “We don’t believe you’re smart enough to think for yourselves, so the smart people in the company got together and wrote all of this up, just for you.”

My favorite procedures manual story is one of a landscape contractor who hired a \$50,000 employee just to follow him around and capture in writing all of the company’s procedures — from pushing papers in the office to setting the base timbers on a wall — and he was going to tell her what to write. It did not occur to me at the time, but think about the ego this person must have had. Did they get it done? Yes! Did anyone use it? No! Final result: a bruised ego.

### A better way

Now I know these examples are extreme, and chances are the binder you have is at least looked at in the spring when the new employees come around. I hope you will now connect with the essence of a Standard Work and why companies that work smarter value this tool.

Remember the words “current steps” used earlier? The main function of the Standard Work is to be a guide that allows employees to continually improve upon what they are doing, and then documenting it with the expectations that it will be improved yet again in the future. It is this expectation of continuous improvement that makes Lean so effective. When you begin to dust off the procedures manual and challenge your team with improving key processes, you are on your way to working smarter.

More than 250 Green Industry companies have participated in JP Horizons’ Working Smarter Training Challenge (WSTC), typically saving tens of thousands of dollars annually. To learn whether your organization qualifies to participate in the WSTC, visit [www.jphorizons.com](http://www.jphorizons.com) today.

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# THE BENCHMARK

KEVIN KEHOE

The author is the owner-manager of Kehoe & Co. Contact him at kkehoe@earthlink.net.

## Get high profits with design/build

*Part two of a multi-part series.*

**L**et's look at the design/build segment's results of the 2008 Benchmark Survey to identify the reasons for higher profits in design/build firms.

High-profit design/build firms use selling systems and lower labor rates to generate a better bottom line. They are more effective in their "front-end" systems (sales, estimating and design).

High-profit firms are also more consistent at selling a premium price while producing construction plans that reduce wasted labor and materials. Fewer labor hours translate into fewer equipment hours and expenses (see chart).

In a \$2-million firm, average-profit firms achieve about 5% net profit before taxes, while the high-profit firms net about 12%. The high-profit firms achieve a gross margin 4% higher than the average firm in the survey. If we assume each firm installs the same job and has the same costs, the high-profit firms get a differential of 8%. This doesn't necessarily mean they always *sell* the job at an 8% higher price, they might also *design* the job in a way that is more efficient to install. This accounts for the \$80,000 difference in gross profits.

### Less overhead

In addition, high-profit firms also have a \$60,000 cost advantage in their overhead expenses. Because they use less labor to install the same amount of revenue, they incur lower indirect labor expenses and lower equipment costs.

The bottom line is that high-profit companies turn the same revenue, with better selling and design processes. They have focused on lead generation, rapid design and estimating to reduce turnaround time to the customer. In addition, they produce phased material lists, production plans and labor budgets that assist project managers in bringing jobs in slightly under labor budgets.

### Recommendations

#### 1. Streamline your sales and estimating processes.

Make them faster.

#### 2. Make your production hand-off more robust.

Provide labor budgets and material lists by job phase. Provide material lists in a purchasing format. For example: Nobody buys 25 sq. yds. or 25 cu. ft. of anything; they buy rolls, bags or truckloads of material.

#### 3. Implement an effective pre-construction process.

The goal here is to allow the sales rep to go back to selling, instead of managing every job.

	Average	High Profit
Revenues	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Gross margin	\$920,000 46%	\$1,000,000 50%
Overhead	\$820,000 41%	\$760,000 38%
Net profit	\$100,000 5%	\$240,000 12%

#### Assume

Average Hourly Wage	\$13	\$13
Materials Cost	28%	26%

#### Result

Materials	\$560,000	\$520,000
Labor	\$520,000	\$480,000
Equipment	16.7%	14.5%
Equipment expense	\$334,000	\$290,000
Insurance	5%	4.2%
Insurance expense	\$100,000	\$84,000
Labor hours	40,000	36,923
Price/cost return	\$1.85	\$2.00
Gross profit difference	\$80,000	
Overhead difference	\$60,000	
Total cost difference	\$140,000	

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## Adopt some aphorisms to live by

**D**on't run with scissors. Stand up straight. Make sure you wear clean underwear. Call if you're going to be late.

From the time we are born, we become inculcated with mom-isms. Somehow it's not considered brainwashing when it's from a parent. Moms and dads repeat these words, ad infinitum, because of their love and concern for us. Some we vow never to repeat to our own children — "because I said so" or "because I'm your father, that's why" or "as long as you live in my house ..." — but we inevitably hear those words flow from our mouths anyway.

As we age, those phrases etch themselves in our brains. I don't think I've ever run with scissors, and I regularly catch myself slouching and force myself to sit up straighter.

From birth, we're exposed to others' words of wisdom. Those that strike a chord with us, we tend to adopt. Over the years, I've come across several that resonate just right. Here are a few:

▶ **The days are long; the years are short.** I overheard this in a conversation while sitting in an airport. It so aptly describes life as a parent. And it seems to be truer the older I get.

▶ **The only way out is through.** This one comes from my father (at least, that's where I first heard

it). Sometimes we face difficult tasks and wish they would just go away, but they don't. Get started and plow through to the end.

▶ **There is no gravity; Earth sucks.** OK, this is not so much an aphorism as a funny line that my sister had on a sign outside her college dorm room. But it does remind me to not take things too seriously *in this life* when they aren't going well.

▶ **Believe nothing you hear, and only half of what you see.** Perhaps this line from Mark Twain isn't something I should share because I make my living as a writer. Still, it reminds me to think critically about the information with which I'm presented, to consider the source and make value judgments about its validity.

▶ **That which does not destroy us makes us stronger.** Another good line — this one from Friedrich Nietzsche — about how to struggle through difficult times.

▶ **I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.** A little self-indulgent, I'll admit. As a fellow writer, Douglas Adams clearly understood the fleeting nature of publishing.

▶ **Imagination is more important than knowledge.** I probably could write an entire column on the quotes of Albert Einstein, but this one is particularly important to me. It suggests the most valuable tool we can have is a life-long curiosity and love for learning.

▶ **Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.** Another from dear old "Al." Anyone who has read even a little bit about quantum mechanics knows there is far more in this world that we don't understand than we do. And there is simply too much that happens that simply can't be explained by science.

I'm curious what words of wisdom you choose to live by. Please e-mail me your favorite sayings, who shared them with you and what significance they have for you, and I might use them in a future column.

And Mom, don't worry. When I left the house this morning, my underwear was clean.

**From the time we are born, we become inculcated with mom-isms.** Somehow it's not considered brainwashing when it's from a parent.





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# THE GRAYING OF SPRAYING

An aging workforce and an increased focus on turf quality have inspired manufacturers to make application equipment lighter and more nimble.

BY CURT HARLER

AS THE LABOR force changes and fuel costs rise, sprayer and spreader weight becomes important. No longer will a company's full-time workers put up with wrestling heavy, awkward equipment around a customer's lawn.

That is especially true with application equipment. Fifteen years ago, workers were expected to tame a 600- or 700-lb. spreader loaded with 100 lbs. of material — and be happy to push it up and down day after day. When they finished that chore, they had to drag a 1.25-in. hose around to the customer's back yard and finish up with spraying. Is it any wonder that even the kids quit the job?

"This business is out of its teenage years and into senior workers," says Bob Brophy, director of lawn products for Minneapolis-based Turfco. "You can't expect to give workers heavy, cumbersome equipment and have them stick with the job day after day."

He says his company's goal is to produce equipment that is easy on workers' bodies but still provides precise, profitable application of material: "You have to remove the hard labor part of the job."

In addition to older workers, more women are in the lawn care workforce — and they typically are not anxious to wrestle with machines that weigh several times what they do.

"It used to be machinery could be heavy and hard to handle and it didn't matter," Brophy says. "Young guys would work with it all day. Now, you've got to build machinery that full-time workers can handle."

On the other hand, a landscaper can't compromise with either equipment ruggedness or the end results.

"The level of maintenance required of professional turf care at office complexes and high-end apartments keeps ris-



Turfco sees ergonomics as an important factor in machine design.

ing," notes Bill Kenney, vice president of SmithCo, Philadelphia. "The demand for sharper appearance is increasing. To do that, you've got to take the big, heavy stuff off the ground."

## A gentler generation

That means landscapers should be concerned about getting machinery that is light on its feet. A golf course, for example, has the luxury of waiting to make its applications for a couple of days after a heavy rain. By contrast, lawn care professionals (LCPs) have schedules, and it is important a service be performed on schedule so the truck can be in another neighborhood the next day. Yet that sprayer can't leave behind rows of tire tracks in an otherwise nice lawn.

That is the reason why many manufacturers today build machines with large pneumatic tires. "Our edict to our engineers was to design a machine that would be under 20 psi — fully loaded," Brophy says. That is barely tiptoeing, when one considers that a 200-lb. worker will have a heel-imprint impact on a lawn of about 100 psi.

A machine that might have tipped the scales at 600 lbs. two decades ago today weighs under 500 lbs. "But the important thing is not how much a machine weighs; it's what its

**"YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE THE BIG, HEAVY STUFF OFF THE GROUND."**

— BILL KENNEY, SMITHCO

**"YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO GIVE WORKERS HEAVY, CUMBERSOME EQUIPMENT AND HAVE THEM STICK WITH THE JOB DAY AFTER DAY."**

—BOB BROPHY, TURFCO

footprint is on the ground," Brophy maintains. "The key is to keep the footprint light and to have enough rubber on the ground.

"With a 20-psi footprint, you can even go out when it's raining and do what you have to do," he adds.

SmithCo has a unit that has a 7-psi footprint — it can roll on a golf green, so it certainly will not hurt the appearance of the typical lawn.

"Bigger is better with tires," Kenney says. He notes that it is imperative to have enough tread on the unit so it is safe and controllable when moving downhill over wet grass. "You can't sacrifice controllability," he emphasizes.

With controllability comes maneuverability. Self-propelled units are more maneuverable than tractor-driven ones. Not only do they weigh substantially less as they move across the turf, but they can scoot around trees and readily follow the contours of flowerbeds and other landscape features. "That is a really big deal," Kenney says.

David Herd, president of Herd Seeders, Logansport, IN, actually likes his units heavy and builds them almost entirely of metal. His spreaders often are used to spread fire ant control and other sand-based materials. Even if they are used for seed-

ing, he says one of the biggest problems with seeding is getting good seed-to-soil contact. A seeder with a bit of heft will press the seed into the ground nicely.

Herd seeders are typically mounted on an all-terrain vehicles (ATV) or similar units, so the backache factor is eliminated.

**Down the road**

Is there a trade-off in quality with the lighter applicators? Manufacturers uniformly say there's not.

"There have been enough advances in plastics, fiberglass and stronger alloys that we can make a lighter-weight machine with the same service life that we had years ago," Brophy says.

But not everyone is entirely sold on plastics. "The only plastic on our units is the fan," says Herd. And the fan only went plastic two years ago when aluminum prices jumped and a local supplier proved he could provide a quality mold.

The base on Herd units is cast iron, and the hoppers are galvanized sheet. "The reason is strength," Herd says. "A landscaper can bolt this onto an ATV or pickup and the hopper will stay attached." He says he does not like plastic hoppers because they can only be attached so tight to a casting: "With galvanized steel, we can put a lot of torque on it."

Kenney sees SmithCo's main savings in weight coming from reducing the size of the unit's primary mover or power plant. He has no doubts about the quality of the construction of today's sprayers.

"It's all industrial-grade materials — the electronics, the hydraulics, the tanks," he says. "There are no exotic materials in our bodies or tanks. It doesn't require that."

However, instead of putting a 30-hp tractor out on a lawn, SmithCo puts a 10-hp spray unit on the lawn. The result is a lighter vehicle — and a lighter footprint on the grass.

There are other cases to be made for toughness, as well. Herd notes that material sloshes around inside the hopper and that causes motion. "Where the screw goes through the plastic, it will get chewed up," Herd says. "A galvanized hopper might look like the wrath — dents and dings — but it will work."

Herd says he "couldn't buy a dinner" with the profits he makes from replacement hoppers. And most of those sales, he says, are to landscapers who rolled a unit or backed into it with a truck.

A tough product will pay off in the long term. Manufacturers agree that the labor issue as a part of applicator design criteria is not going away anytime soon. The result is that lighter weight spray equipment will send equipment to market that is gentler on workers and allows landscapers to be more gentle with the turf, as well. LM



At left, the heft of Herd Seeder units are considered an advantage.

Below, today's SmithCo units feature a lighter footprint.



HARLER is a freelance writer who lives in Strongsville, OH. Contact him at [curt@curtharler.com](mailto:curt@curtharler.com).

# LAWNCAREPRO

LM'S OPERATOR OF THE MONTH » BY RON HALL



**Darrel Nail** takes care of the details. "He's a systems guy and thrives on staying abreast of what's the newest and the best," Gary LaScalea, the founder/owner of GroGreen Lawn Care, says of his vice president. "We're opposites in many respects, and I'm convinced that's why we've been successful." Nail shares what he learned from LaScalea to help him run a successful operation.

**What led you into a career in lawn care?** While I was in high school in Mississippi, I was a member of the FFA and worked for a local hay farmer. I worked for the Smith family for three years and really liked the farming. After graduating, I moved back to Tucson, AZ, and attended school. I moved to Dallas in 1982 and worked in fast food management, working 60 to 70 hours a week for not very much pay. In the spring of 1984, I applied for and got a job as a lawn care specialist with ChemLawn. I enjoyed being outside, seeing the results of treatments, talking with customers and educating them about turf care. I fell in love with the industry.

**How and when did you join up with GroGreen and its owner, Gary LaScalea?** In 1986, Gary LaScalea transferred to our ChemLawn branch as branch manager. As the company began to change, Gary took me under his wing, and I worked various management positions supporting his role as branch and regional manager. Even though we both went in different

directions for a short while, Gary and I stayed in touch. Jumping forward to October 1996, Gary, who had started GroGreen, his own company, a year earlier, asked me to help him implement his new software and computer system. That winter, we converted his customer base to the new software. In January 1997, he asked if I wanted to come and work with him. I sold my small mowing business and went back into lawn care.

**Describe how your relationship with the company has changed.**

Throughout my career with GroGreen, Gary and I have been very involved with the operation of the business. The first couple of years we spent most of our time out spraying lawns and returning to the office, usually to find a bunch of curled up faxes that had fallen to the floor. As the company grew, our roles matured — more employees,

more trucks, more training. Today, I oversee all company operations, training, customer service, employee relations and employee motivation. I also keep pushing for continuous improvement.

**What do you like most about your job? What do you find most challenging?** I get great satisfaction watching employees grow in their positions. I enjoy being part of a fast-paced, growing company, and helping it grow. The most challenging aspect of my job is staffing, especially the job of making decisions that affect employees and their families. That can be difficult.

**In light of the economy, what kind of a spring is GroGreen having?** We are having a good spring. The weather has been nice and we're doing better than last year. Last spring it warmed up; then got cold, and it took a long time for

## AT A GLANCE

**COMPANY:** GroGreen Lawn Care, Plano, TX

**FOUNDED:** 1995

**PRINCIPALS:** Gary LaScalea, founder and owner; Darrel Nail, vice president and general manager

**NUMBER OF OUTLETS:** 2

**EMPLOYEES:** 30

**SERVICES OFFERED:** lawn care, tree and shrub care, pest control, aeration, grub control, fire ant control

**BUSINESS OUTLOOK:** "Regardless of competition or pricing issues, we're not going to backpedal on the quality of products or services."

**FAMILY:** Darrel is married to Debra; three children, Melissa, Rachael and Anthony; and two grandchildren, Anthony and Aiden

**HOBBIES:** trout fishing and riding his Harley-Davidson Ultra Classic

**WEB SITE:** [www.grogreen.com](http://www.grogreen.com)

the grass to green up. I have a theory on lawn care and the economy: When the economy is depressed, people still want lawn care because it isn't a very big expense compared to other things they do to keep their properties looking nice.

THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF MY JOB IS STAFFING, ESPECIALLY THE NECESSARY JOB OF MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS."



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A John Deere debris bucket makes quick work of cleaning up the heavier stuff winter left in the landscape.

**BASE**  
Landscape Management

Spring cleaning begins when the snow melts. It's amazing the variety of dreck contractors find when the weather warms. But an array of tools makes the job easier and more efficient.

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

JEFF HILE HAS picked up leaves, pinecones, soda cans, beer bottles, cigarettes, paper, plastic and small rodents.

OK, the inventor of the LawnShark doesn't claim to, advise (or advertise) picking up small rodents, but in talking to him one gets the feeling that if a creature didn't beat a hasty retreat, it would meet a gruesome fate when the debris-clearing device passed overhead.

"It has gone in so many different direc-

tions in what people really want to pick up with it," says Hile, director of sales for Lawn-Shark USA. "There are some people who want to pick up chicken manure and straw. You can thatch your lawn with it."

Debris management covers a wide range of activities, from spring cleaning and leaf pickup in the fall to clearing trees and branches from construction sites. And while there are scores of things to clear away,

*continued on page 70*

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## CLEARING DEBRIS



**COMING SOON**  
Check out the July issue of **LM Reports**, which will focus on handheld equipment.



The LawnShark (top) can thatch lawns, pick up leaves and clear debris from parking lots.

The Toro Co. offers a number of handheld blowers, but also manufactures tow-behind units, like the Pro Force blower pictured here.

*continued from page 68*

there seems to be nearly as many machines and attachments to do the job.

### Handheld equipment

Blowers and vacuums are the stalwarts of the handheld debris management category. A variety of companies offer handheld and backpack blowers and vacuums.

Shindaiwa recently introduced two new gas powered blowers, a two-cycle model (EB802) and a hybrid two-cycle/four-cycle model (EB8520). Both come with a newly engineered backpack that increases operator comfort and efficiency, says Paul Wheatcraft, director of marketing for Shindaiwa, which recently became a division of Japan-based Yamabiko Corp.

Shindaiwa engineers teamed with a university to do a study exploring how users wear

the backpacks to figure out where the pressure points are on the body. The result was an ergonomic, easy-to-use system, Wheatcraft says.

“Our new model is actually a little heavier than the previous one,” he notes. “Put on the previous one and then put on the (new model). You swear it weighs less because of the way it distributes the weight.”

There is a quiet mode switch on both units that is set to limit the throttle, keeping the decibel level below 65 dB.

“If you’re out in the open where noise is not an issue, you can (use) maximum power,” Wheatcraft explains. “But if you’re operating in an area where you need to restrict (noise), just flip the switch. You don’t have to have your ‘quiet’ blower and your ‘powerful’ blower — you just have the one machine.”

### Power to the pros

The Toro Co. offers four models of corded electric blowers and blower/vacuum/mulchers.

“On the cordless end, nobody’s really been able to solve the problem of weight versus power on a blower,” notes Matt Medden, Toro’s marketing manager for handheld equipment. “Blowers typically require a decent amount of power to move air. It takes a lot of power to move those fans.”

Toro claims to have the most powerful blower available, but it depends on what you’re measuring.

“The market has tended — at least in the last five or six years — to compete on miles per hour, but it’s the combination of miles per hour and airflow that really matters,” Medden says. “We claim, on the upper end of our products, that we have the most powerful blower, gas or electric.”

Another blower may offer more air speed, Medden says, but they can’t produce the same “air horsepower,” to use Toro’s term.

And because they’re electric, Toro’s models tend to be less expensive and quieter than their gas-powered counterparts, he says.

### Bigger debris

The LawnShark, like its elder competitor the Billy Goat, can be used on a variety of surfaces and in far more ways than simply leaf pickup. Hile recalls responding to a contractor who

*continued on page 72*



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## CLEARING DEBRIS

Skid steers from Bobcat and other companies offer many debris-clearing possibilities — thanks to the many attachments that are available.



*continued from page 70*

commented the machine wasn't worth it because it could only be used a couple of months during the year.

Hile countered that he could start early in the spring to dethatch lawns, work into the summer picking up parking lot contracts and then in fall picking up leaves. "You're going from April to November," he says. "You can use that machine nine months out of the year, which is much more than you can use your lawn mower."

For those without dedicated debris management equipment, there are a number of attachments for tractors, skid steers, loaders and compact utility equip-

ment that can do just about any job.

"We have some 80 different attachments for our skid steer and our compact track loaders that make the machines able to go from one task to another," says Bryan Zent, marketing manager for Bobcat Co.

For branches and small trees, contractors can use grapples and other types of buckets. They can then deposit them into a wood chipper for disposal.

"We have angle brooms, different types of brushes and a water kit that can be attached so you can prevent dust being created as you sweep things up, which is important in some jurisdictions where they're sensitive about air quality

issues," Zent says.

John Deere also offers a number of attachments to make the cleanup process more efficient. And like Bobcat, the tools can be swapped among machines quickly and easily. A four-in-one bucket and grapples can be used to easily move large debris from a site. The attachments fit on a variety of John Deere machines.

"Contractors who have skid steers and compact utility tractors can go back and forth between these buckets," says Laura Alvrado, a product manager with John Deere.

Deere also recently updated its material collection system, which now has a better flow system for more efficient pickup of grass and leaves. The material collection system attaches to the company's mid-mount mowers.

Both Deere and Bobcat offer attachable brooms for quick sweeping of sites. Users can clean sidewalks of debris — or even snow in the winter.

In other words, the season doesn't matter. Whether you're picking up leaves in the fall, moving snow in winter or gathering branches, bushes and small trees for construction work in the spring and summer, there is a tool for every task. **LM**



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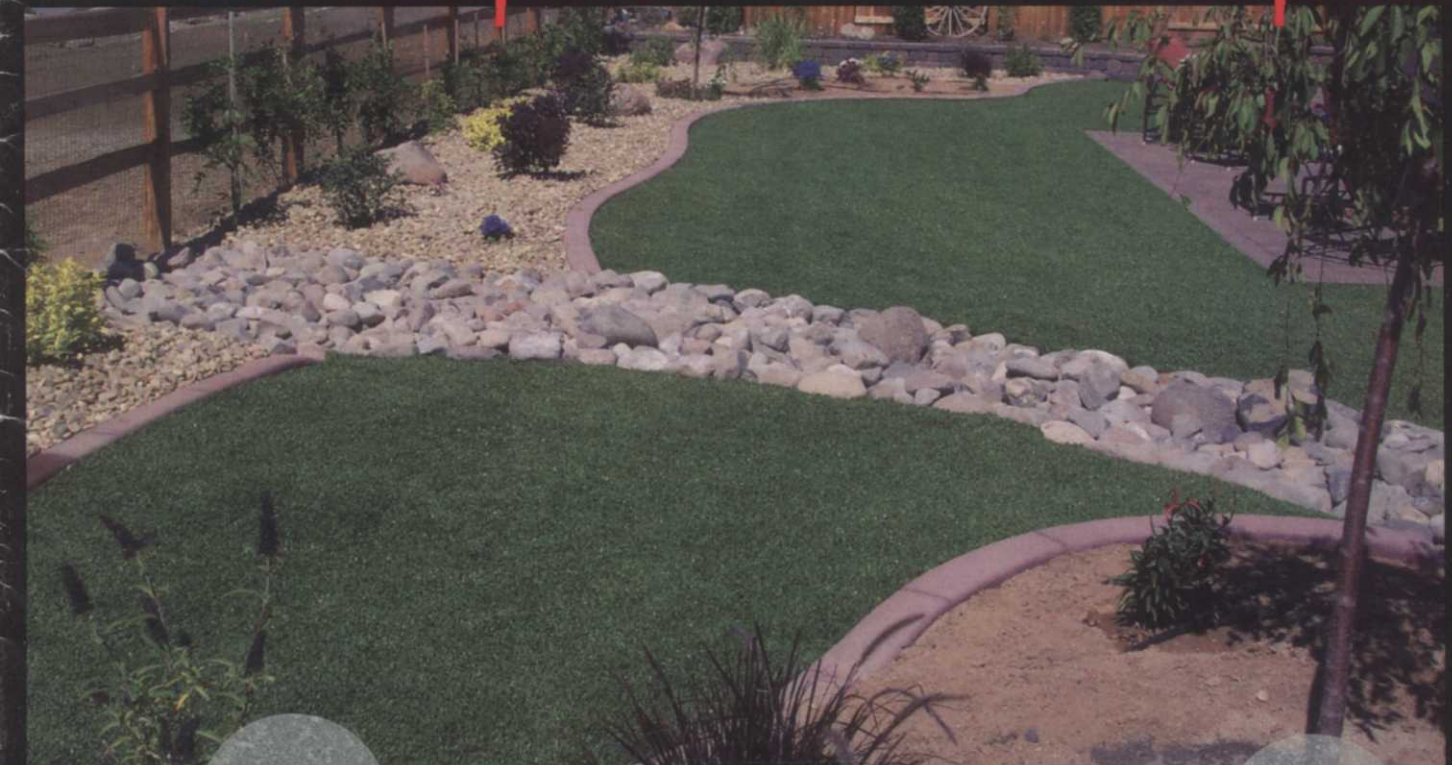
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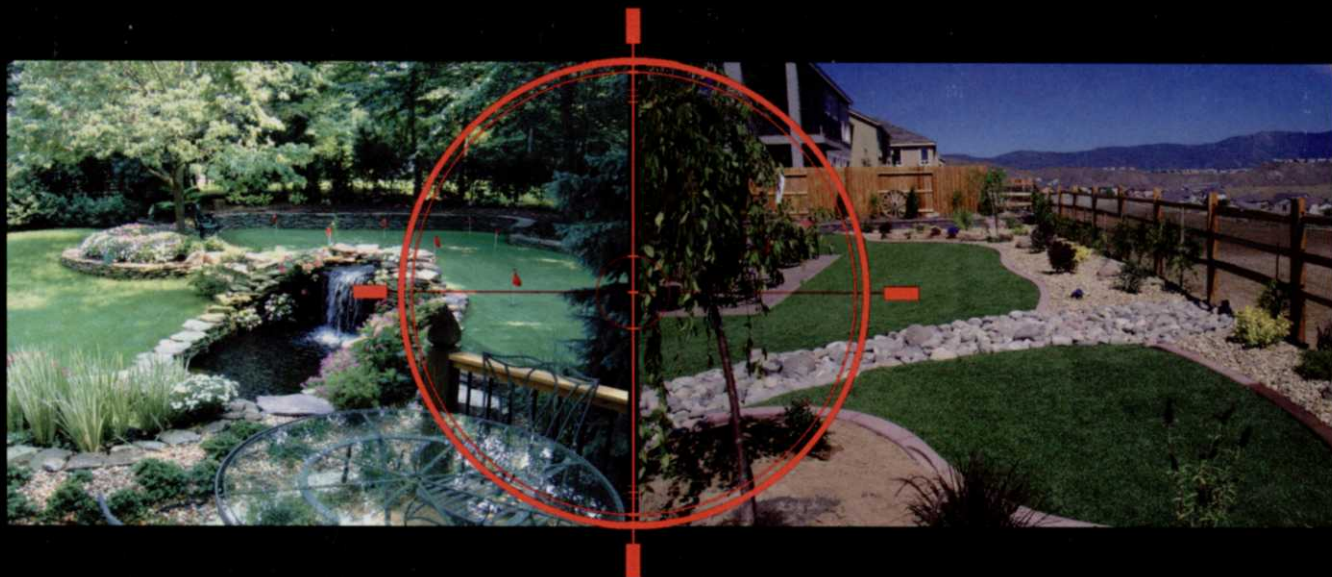
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**GOLFscapes LAWNscapes**

**THE COVER:**

A putting green with stacked stone retaining wall and a impressive water feature was installed by Campbell Ferrarar in Alexander, Virginia.  
 A synthetic lawn with an innovative waterwise landscape installed by Tee Time Greens in Sparks, Nevada

**CASH FLOW PROBLEMS ELIMINATED**



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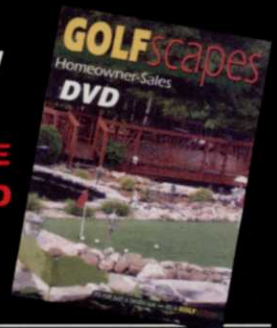
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[www.allprogreens.com/training](http://www.allprogreens.com/training)

**1-800-334-9005**



# FREE ONLINE TRAINING

This online advanced training seminar will teach you how to generate a **TWO NEW PROFIT CENTERS, TWO REVENUE STREAMS, & TWO CUSTOMER BASES** for your landscaping business by utilizing **EXISTING EQUIPMENT AND EMPLOYEES.**

Go online now to **CAPITALIZE** on the \$50 Billion a year Golf Industry that is directly tied to the Lawn & Landscape Industry. Learn how to take this simple & straightforward **ADD-ON SERVICE** and **UP-SELL** your other products and services.

**Contractors agree that the time spent with the online training is very worthwhile when compared with a single "call back" from a bad installation.**

## What You Learn From This FREE Online Advanced Training Presentation:

- Step-By-Step Advanced Installation
- Job Estimation
- Six (6) New Marketing Programs
  - 1) 90 Days No Payments
  - 2) Build A Green Day
  - 3) 19<sup>th</sup> Hole Mixer
  - 4) Co-op Advertising
  - 5) Replicated Website
  - 6) Weekly Email Updates

- The Synthetic Turf Industry
- Your Display Green
- The Design Consultation
- RDS Custom Power Broom
- Killer Closings
- Why All Pro Greens

## Benefits of This FREE Seminar:

- ✓ ELIMINATION of Cash Flow Problems
- ✓ A New Profit Center - Up To 60%
- ✓ A New Revenue Stream
- ✓ A New Customer Base
- ✓ Utilize Existing Equipment & Employees
- ✓ A Simple & Easy Add-On Service
- ✓ Up Sell Current Products & Services
- ✓ Year Round Installations
- ✓ 80% Labor Reduction
- ✓ Buy Manufacturer Direct
- ✓ Carry NO Inventory



## BENEFITS

- For every Build A Green Day, you will sell 2 more greens. Each golf buddy providing the free labor is a potential sale for a turn-key install, Build A Green Day or other landscape/hardscape work. From just one Build A Green Day, you have the ability to generate at least 12 leads.
- It only takes one person to supervise the job. This means the rest of your crew can be busy on other projects.
- You have the ability to eliminate local competition. There is no way that another company can compete with you at \$6.50 per sq ft – that is their cost.
- You can directly communicate the benefits of a green.

# BUILD A GREEN DAY

**Our program allows your customers that do not want a turn key installation for \$10.00 - \$15.00 per sq. ft. an opportunity to get a professionally installed green for half the price.**

## STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL BUILD A GREEN DAY

Your customer pays \$5.00 per square foot for the putting green kit.

Your customer pays an additional \$1.50 per square foot to have you as a Independent Contractor supervising the installation. You will NOT do the installation, but will oversee the job so the installation is done correctly.

Set a date and a time with your customer for the Build A Green Day. Have them invite their golf

buddies to provide the free labor for the installation 1 week prior – this will make for a fast and easy install.

Give your customer a materials list and have them purchase and/or rent everything needed for the installation. All materials need to be on site two days prior to the project.

Remind your customer to provide lunch for their friend's efforts.

You will start the install in the morning and they will be practicing their short game by the afternoon.

## EXAMPLE

You will be able to save your clients thousands by purchasing a self-install kit. Thus allowing you to reach another huge untapped market that could never afford a turn-key installation. You make over \$1,300 for supervising the job.

**EX: HOW A BUILD A GREEN DAY EARNS INCOME:**

Retail Sales — based on \$2.15 per sq. ft — (\$5.00 retail - \$2.85 wholesale = \$2.15 per sq ft commission)

**EXAMPLE:**

12'x30' = 368 sq. ft. x \$2.15 = \$791.20  
Overseeing an installation — You get paid \$1.50 a sq. ft. to oversee an install.

**EXAMPLE:**

12'x30' = 368sq. ft. x 1.50 = \$552.00

Combine the retail sales commission of a 12' x 30' green and overseeing an installation for a Build a Green Day and you have earned \$1,343.20 for 1 day of supervision.

## 90 DAYS NO PAYMENTS & INTEREST WORKS GREAT WITH THIS PROGRAM

Before



During



After



**YOUR SALES**

\$500,000

\$400,000

\$300,000

\$200,000


\$100,000

**YEAR**

2007 2008

# 19TH HOLE MIXER

## 2009



The 19th Hole Mixers are preplanned network parties that are an effective way to gain additional exposure for your company and increase sales. Why would a customer get involved in a 19th Hole Mixer? The answer is simple. They get excited about showing off and bragging about their new green to their golf buddies.

**JEFF CREECH**

**OF IMAGINEERS**

**75+ attendees**

**Expects to sell**

**20 to 25 jobs this year**

**ROBERT PINEAU**

**OF COUNTY LANDSCAPE PRODUCTS**

**40+ attendees**

**Sold 7**

**installs from this event**

### **STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL 19TH HOLE MIXER:**

Once the green is installed ask your customer if they would like to show off their new golf training aid to their buddies. This will give them an idea of a guest list.

Golfers love to show off their new accessories! Let your customer know that this is not only a way to entertain their friends and family, but also lets others tryout their green.

Set a time and a date for the mixer and send out invitations at least 1 week prior to the event.

Attend the mixer and demonstrate the benefits of the green.

Just like the Build a Green Day – You have the opportunity to get to know the guest and begin qualifying potential sales leads. This will generate more Build a Green Days, more turn key installations and more landscaping/hardscaping sales.



# YOUR MODEL DISPLAY



BEFORE



**With a profit margin of 60% that's \$54,000.00 in profit made by using existing equipment and employees!**

Customers crave simplicity but are flooded with sales people and companies with the "best" product. You must convince your customers that your company provides a hassle-free and truly unique product that is of the best quality. A Display Green or lawn built with precision and detail makes a great first impression and strengthens your reputation as the trustworthy leader in your market.

To sell All Pro products the only requirement is to install a single display. Do it now and reap the benefits! Either build your own or approach a customer with a discount deal in exchange for use of their green or lawn as your Display Green.

DURING



## INSTALLING A DISPLAY HELPS YOU IN MANY WAYS.

- A lawn or green display is a great sales tool
- The install process helps you to believe in the product
- A simple and easy add-on service to increase revenues
- Use existing equipment & employees year round

The investment pays for itself – sell one green or lawn to breakeven or .... Install one for an existing customer at cost and have no out of pocket expense.

If building your own display isn't an option- approach a customer with this proposition: an installation at cost on his/her property with permission to use it as a display. With one job you have a display and a customer referral!

AFTER



**EXAMPLE: Dave Matz of Atlanta Landscape Group invested \$645 in a 12x18 green. In just 4 months he sold \$90,000 of putting greens. With a profit margin of 60% that's \$54,000 in profit made by using equipment and employees he already had.**

Contractors "go the extra mile" to create spectacular displays – See our new Golfscapes or Lawnsapes Pictoral magazines. Fringe, sand traps, lighting, patios, retaining walls, water gardens, and traditional landscape plants demonstrate the variety of options offered for customers if shown on the display. They also let the customer know these "extras" are available to them while creating additional revenue & profit margins for you.

# LAWNscapes

**All Pro Industries will offer a solid addition to your commercial and residential projects. We manufacture professional synthetic grass turf.**

**SYNTHETIC GRASS** is one of the most efficient and effective solutions to the drought affecting much of the United States. Completely eliminating the need for watering – synthetic grass offers a green, lifelike landscape all year round with no dead spots, weeds, mowing, irrigation, or chemicals – it's virtually maintenance-free.

All Pro offers synthetic grass as a leading environmental solution to the increasingly serious drought conditions. Environmentally conscious architects, developers, builders, and contractors are already responding by offering synthetic grass – be on the cutting edge of these changes and **"GO GREEN – GO SYNTHETIC GRASS IN YOUR NEXT PROJECT."**

## **NEW SYNTHETIC LAWN INSTALL ONLINE TRAINING VIDEO**

This NEW Step-By-Step Training video shows the installation of 1000 sq. ft. of lawn turf that was installed at an O'Charley's Restaurant.

The 15 minute video includes:

- Step-By-Step Installation
- Estimating The Job
- Natural Sod VS. Synthetic Turf Cost Comparison
- How To Market & Sell The Product

[www.allprogreens.com/lawns](http://www.allprogreens.com/lawns)

**Increase Sales, Maximize Profits,  
and Give your customers a beautiful  
and maintenance free lawn!**



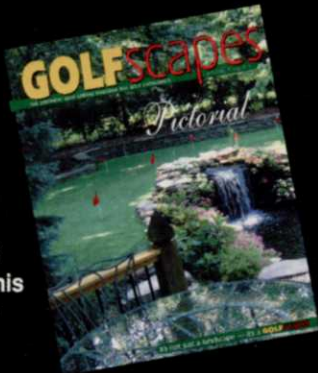
# A MARKETING ARSENAL TO EXPLODE YOUR BUSINESS

Take advantage of the many marketing tools we have available to you. We've done all the research and hard work developing attractive and educational materials so you don't have to. Tried and true, these tools are extremely effective in helping you sell our products. Our goal is to help you work smarter...not harder. Use these tools to your advantage.

## Pictorial Magazine

A 32-page full-color magazine gives you the power of 150 pictures. The best way to sell a husband on a golf green is by showing his wife the many beautiful landscape options she can have around the green. Contractors tell us that this is the most effective sales tool they have.

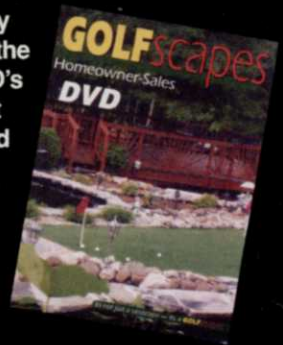
**\$2.50 each**



## Installation, Homeowner and Homeowner Sales DVD's

Getting the customer emotionally involved is important in closing the sale; so we developed three DVD's for you. These DVD's are great at generating customer interest and excitement in owning a green in their own backyard.

Customers interested in a turn-key installation by you will want to watch the **Sales DVD**.



Train your crew and yourself with the **Contractor Installation DVD**.

Do-it-yourselfers or Build A Green Day clients need a **Homeowner Installation DVD**. **\$2.50 each**

## Sales Brochure

Our newly updated quad-fold brochure ignites the imagination. It displays over 20 possible green shapes and designs. This tool helps you sell customers on larger greens by reinforcing the value of a well landscaped yard.

**\$30.00 per 100**



## Postcards

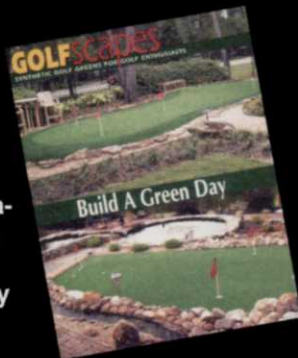
Postcards are a great follow up tool for prospective customers. Sending one postcard every week for five weeks after you give an estimate is an excellent way to get called back. The postcards reinforce the advantages of a synthetic green and keep it fresh on your customers' minds. **\$20.00 per 100**



## Build A Green Day Brochures

This valuable brochure will appeal to the customers that can't afford a turn-key installation. Educate your customers about the Build A Green program and explain how they can have a green for a very reasonable price using this beautiful full-color brochure. You may save a day's work, but you won't lose a day's pay.

**\$30.00 per 100**



## Artificial Lawn Turf Brochure

This full-color tri-fold brochure, complete with alluring pictures, shows customers the beauty of our low maintenance, water wise artificial lawn turf. It also explains the many benefits of All Pro baby friendly, pet approved and environmentally friendly turf.

**\$30.00 per 50**



## Replicated Websites

A great sales tool designed to educate and inform your customers.

These websites are carbon copies of our corporate website. Your site will be personalized with all your contact information. **\$36.00 per month**



Enter All Pro Industries

# PHOTO CONTEST



**\$10,000.00** in cash prizes

Enter photos of your prize-winning golf green or lawn installations. Simply choose a category below that best demonstrates the type of green(s) or lawns you have installed.

## CATEGORIES:

1. **BEST STAND-ALONE GREEN** – an installation of a green only
2. **BEST GREEN WITH A BORDER** – an installation including a retaining wall, concrete wall, fringe, patio, walkway, etc.
3. **BEST LANDSCAPED GREEN** – an installation with added landscape: plants, bushes, trees, flower garden, mounds, rock garden, etc.
4. **BEST GREEN WITH A WATER FEATURE** – an installation with an added water feature: waterfall, water garden, pond, water hazard, creek, etc.
5. **BEST LAWN** – an installation residential or commercial use.
6. **BEST LAWN OR GREEN TRANSFORMATION INSTALLATION** – an installation where the most dramatic change occurred from before, during, to after.

**Prizes for each category will be awarded as follows:**

- 1st Prize \$800.00
- 2nd Prize \$400.00
- 3rd Prize \$200.00
- 5 Runner-ups \$50.00 each

## RULES / GUIDELINES:

- Pick a category(s) to enter
- ALL photos must be mailed or emailed to us
- Size of photo must be a minimum of 4 x 6
- Emailed photos must have a resolution of at least 2048 pixels by 1536 pixels or 300 dpi. Email photos to [allpro2265@yahoo.com](mailto:allpro2265@yahoo.com).
- All photos MUST have name, address, phone #, and size of green on the back or in the email.
- Take photos at the time of day when no shadows appear, best time is usually when sky is overcast. Also take photos from many angles.
- One green or lawn can only be entered once but submit as many in as many categories as you'd like (can't enter the same one twice)
- **DEADLINE** for entries is **DECEMBER 1, 2009**

### Disclaimer:

All photos become the exclusive property of All Pro Industries Inc. We reserve the right to use the photos and testimonials prior to the announcement of the winners and anytime after for sales, marketing, and publishing purposes. Purchase not necessary, void in some states.

**Winners will be announced and contacted by December 20th, 2009. Winning photos will be featured on our web site. Get snapping and get those photos into All Pro Putting Industries Photo Contest today!**



# CUT YOUR LABOR CUT YOUR COST

## INCREASE YOUR PROFITS



Anyone that has ever installed a synthetic turf surface knows that sweeping in the infill is the most labor intensive part of the job.

Our revolutionary RDS (Rotational Delivery System) Custom Power Broom incorporates a custom rigid brush, custom gear control, custom caster wheel attachment and debris guard to reduce your labor of sweeping in the infill by 80%.

80% Labor Reduction Rate = Increase in Per Job Profit

Pays for itself in a SINGLE 24 X 30 job.

## MINIMIZE YOUR LABOR. MAXIMIZE YOUR PROFITS.

An Atlanta contractor saved two full days of labor using our innovative product thus increasing his job profit significantly.

## HOW DOES THE RDS WORK?

The RDS uses a custom rigid bristle wound in a spiral pattern to evenly and quickly distribute the infill while blossoming the synthetic turf fiber.

The custom gear slows the RPM's of the brush to allow the infill to be swept into our dense synthetic turf instead of being knocked out with standard power brooms.

The debris guard knocks any additional infill back into the synthetic surface.

The custom caster wheel allows the operator to cover almost 4 feet of surface in one pass and walk the broom instead of carrying it.

Our unique combination of the 2-cycle engine, custom rigid bristle brush, custom gear control, custom caster wheel and debris guard saves you time, money, and increases your per job profit.

Build A Green Days provide an excellent opportunity for the RDS Power Broom. In these cases a full day job can be cut in half, ensuring an increase in profit.

**SIMPLE. EASY. QUICK.** Assembly completed in MINUTES. Online step by step instruction provided to assemble and operate your new RDS Custom Power Broom.





# BEFORE AND AFTER



## Golf Green Kit

1 - 12.25' x 30' golf green =	368 sq. ft. @ \$2.85 per sq. ft.	\$1,047.38
1 - 12.25' x 15' golf green =	184 sq. ft. @ \$2.85 per sq. ft.	523.69
1 - 12.25' x 5' Fringe =	61 sq. ft. @ \$3.30 per sq. ft.	202.13
5 Flags/Poles @ 24.00 ea.		120.00
5 Cups @ 8.75 ea.		43.75
5 Cup Sleeves @ \$10.00 ea.		50.00
1 Quart Adhesive/Seam Tape @ \$15.00 ea.		15.00
Freight - Estimated		233.00
<b>Golf Green Kit Total</b>		<b>\$2,234.95</b>



Stone Base ( 10 tons) @ \$20.00 per ton	200.00
Coal Slag or Copper Slag Infill	
(34 - 100 lb bags @ \$12.00 ea.)	408.00
Geo Textile Under layment (12 x 60)	30.00
Plate Compactor Rental (1 day)	60.00
Labor (3 men for 1 1/2 days)	
@ \$25.00 per man hour	900.00
Misc	200.00
<b>Additional Materials Costs</b>	<b>\$1,798.00</b>

## Selling Price

Golf Green (613 sq.ft. @ \$13.50 per sq. ft.)	\$8,275.50
Actual Cost (\$6.58 per sq.ft.)	4,032.95
<b>JOB PROFIT - (\$6.63 per sq.ft.) or 50%</b>	<b>\$4,062.55</b>



## Lawn Turf Kit

One 12.25 x 35 =	429 sq. ft. @ 3.30 per sq. ft.	\$1,415.70
One 12.25 x 45 =	564 sq. ft. @ 3.30 per sq. ft.	1,861.20
Freight Estimated		256.84
<b>Lawn Turf Kit Total</b>		<b>\$3,533.74</b>

Stone Base ( 16 tons)	
@ \$15.00 per ton	240.00
Infill - Sand (55 100lb bags)	
@ 5.00 each	275.00
Plate Compactor & Sod Cutter Rental (1 day)	120.00
Labor 3 men	
@ 20.00 per man hour (1 day) - 8 hrs each	720.00
Misc: Weed Barrier, Nails, Blades, Edging, Etc.	250.00
<b>Additional Materials Costs</b>	<b>\$1,290.00</b>

Selling Price (993 sq. ft. @ \$8.50 per sq. ft.)	\$8,440.50
Actual Cost (\$4.85 per sq.ft.)	4,823.74
<b>Job Profit (\$3.64 per sq. ft.)</b>	<b>\$3,616.76</b>



# CO-OP ADVERTISING

Our new Co-op Advertising Program allows you to reach a wider range of clients, increase company awareness, and generate new leads and sales in your area. You will also have the opportunity to earn product credit, called **GREENBACKS**, for up to half of the advertising dollars that you spend!

"The Co-op Advertising Program has been a Huge PLUS for us. We received over \$2000 in product credits for our advertising efforts."

Dewayne Gallatin – One Putt

## HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

- Promote and advertise synthetic golf greens and synthetic lawns in your area.
- Turn in a copy of your advertising receipt and a copy of the ad with the publication via newspaper, magazine, radio, television, trade shows, etc. to All Pro within 30 days.
- The portion of the ad that promotes golf greens will be eligible for **GREENBACKS**.
- You earn product credits for up to 50% of your advertising dollars spent promoting greens. All Pro will credit your account up to \$500 per month in **GREENBACKS**.
- Product credits include putting green turf, fringe turf, lawn turf, cups, flags, pictorial magazines, brochures, DVD's, postcards, etc.
- Redeem your **GREENBACKS** within 12 months – Use it or Lose it.
- Product credit can't exceed 50% of a single purchase of All Pro products.
- A minimum of 10% of product credit is applied to marketing material only – Pictorials, brochures, DVD's, postcards, etc.
- When calling to place an order, you will be updated on the **GREENBACKS** you have accumulated.

[www.allprogreens.com/training](http://www.allprogreens.com/training)

### DISTRIBUTION CENTERS:

#### Pondsaway

2800 B. South Rodeo Gulch Road  
Soquel, CA. 95073  
800-353-4957

#### Bedford Glen Garden Center

43 Bedford Glen Road  
Bedford, OH. 44146  
866-864-7619

#### All Pro Industries Inc.

306 Joy Street  
Ft. Oglethorpe, GA 30742  
800-334-9005



# It's time to revisit customer service

**M**arket conditions are tough by any standard. Customers are taking a hard look at budgets; competitors are looking for new work to grow — and they are looking at taking your accounts. The last thing you need this year is a customer service glitch. We both know that could open a door you do not want opened.

I think the economic conditions call for a close examination of your own company behaviors relative to managing the customer relationship. There are some tendencies that could become destructive if not managed.

## Manage cost, but don't overmanage

Customers are looking at cost, so you may not be getting as many enhancements as usual. Most companies are looking at *managing* costs. There is a fine line here. Yes, you need to eliminate waste and perhaps even cut back on hours, eliminate overtime or freeze pay.

All these things, done with balance, are good. In doing so, you are looking internally, not externally, at your customer. If customers are inadvertently victimized by any of your actions, however, you pay double. Beware of any mixed messages you send to employees in this regard, as they may think that the internal cost reduction is the only important thing.

## Manage your weak links

All companies have some weak links — be it among the crews, account managers, supervisors or managers. Now is the time to catch them before they fail. If you recognize the weak links, they must be watched and propped up like never before.

You may gain some satisfaction out of blaming them for failure, but it is failure just the same. Don't let them harm a client relationship, not now and preferably not ever. Proactively manage the weak so as not to let them let you down.

## Emphasize the basics

Customers for the most part are not horticulturists; however, they know a weed when they see one. They also can see stress or brown spots in an irrigated lawn. They pay for flower displays and know when they do or do not look good.

Do not let a slip-up in the basics tarnish your relationship or let a competitor in the door. An obvious service glitch now may be all it takes to set in motion a contract review or bid process. Or worse yet, a competitor may use one as a way to get a foot in the door. Stress the basics with your team. Do not let them fail.

## Be proactive

This becomes a cliché, but clients refer to it all the time. Every property needs an extra set of eyes. Account managers sometimes miss the obvious because they see the property too often. More than ever, you as owners and senior managers need to be touching jobs and customers, looking for the early warning signs. Be hyper-observant and hyper-vigilant.

There is nothing new here, just a heightened level of importance in a takeaway market.

---

**Beware of any mixed messages you send to employees ... as they may think that the internal cost reduction is the only important thing.**



# LANDSCAPING GOES TO THE

# DOGS

Environmentally friendly landscaping is part and parcel of today's 'green' animal shelter

BY **DEBRA J. WHITE**

NORTH AMERICAN ANIMAL shelters are going green. Besides solar powered buildings with double-paned windows and occupancy sensors to control lighting, animal shelters incorporate eco-friendly landscaping as part of their green vision to save unwanted animals — and the environment.

Since the Tompkins County SPCA opened in Ithaca, NY, in 2004, the first to earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, additional shelters have fol-

lowed in places as far reaching as Texas, California, Rhode Island and Manitoba, Canada. At press time, green shelters are under construction in Michigan, while others are in the planning stages.

Environmental laws and consumer preference for green shelters will increase demand for eco-friendly landscaping. For example, the Virginia Beach SPCA recently won a grant to launch a series of green projects. Among them are a storm water management program and the capture and use of animal waste to benefit landscaping.

## **Vegetative roofing**

The Robert Potter League for Animals opened in Middletown, RI, in November 2008, and counts vegetative roofing

among its many green features. Located on wetlands, Potter is close to Bailey Brook, which feeds into a drinking water supply.

“Storm water runoff picks up toxic waste as it drains into our sewer system and into ponds, brooks and eventually the ocean,” notes Pat Heller, Potter’s director of development. “Vegetative roofing cuts down on water pollution.”

Apex Green Roofs of Somerville, MA, planted an assortment of lavenders, alliums, sedums and grasses known for their tolerance to wind, heat and drought. Once the 3,000 plants are in full bloom, they will insulate Potter, limit storm water runoff, reduce the heat island effect and improve air quality.

Green roofing lowers summer

temperature, thus cutting energy costs. That's important to non-profits like Potter.

### Water management

The Humane Society in Silicon Valley, CA, is opening its new, green facility this spring. Landscaping features include bioswales to capture and cleanse rainwater, according to Laura Fulda, the group's vice president for marketing and communications.

"Bioswales will reduce the energy needed to clean water supplies," says Fulda. Landscapers added native plants such as vine maple, meadow onion and yerba mansa that grow well in California's low rain climate.

Jaci Nichols, development director for Ann Arbor, MI's Humane Society of Huron Valley, says landscaping plays a major role in their green shelter currently under construction. The shelter will collaborate with the University of Michigan's Matthaei Botanical Garden adjacent to the site to protect and restore native landscape and habitat.

"Currently, the site has no storm water management system," says Nichols. That's a concern, she adds, because Michigan gets ample rainfall and snow. "The new site meets all regulatory require-

### WHAT IS LEED?

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a rating from the US Green Building Council. It uses a point-based system that rewards buildings for water efficiency, energy, atmosphere and other green innovations. LEED Version 3 is being rolled out by the USGBC on April 27. Visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org) for more information.

ments, and will implement best management practices to lessen potential damage to the creek, wetland and ponds nearby."

Nichols says the shelter is working with the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner to apply infiltration standards in the design of the retention basins. Other eco-friendly landscaping designs include vegetated bioswales, rain gardens and use of native plants to manage soil erosion and storm water runoff.

### Going green

Although no national sources compile data on green animal shelters, zoos or animal sanctuaries, architects like Lucinda Schlaffer of ARQ in San

Francisco say they often receive calls from shelter managers asking about green design. Going green, Schlaffer says, requires a commitment not only of time and money, but dedication to eco-friendly principles.

Switchboards are busy at architecture firms like ARQ and others that design animal shelters. Experts agree going green is the best way to reverse climate change, stop overflowing landfills and combat pollution. These days, shelters will almost always include eco-friendly landscaping in their plans from the start, Schlaffer says.

Heller agrees: "Constructing a building with a social conscience fits into our mission of making a difference and enriching lives for both people and animals." *L.M.*

*WHITE is a Phoenix-based freelance writer who specializes in animal shelter topics. Contact her at [whitedebraj@yahoo.com](mailto:whitedebraj@yahoo.com).*

PHOTOS BY: THE POTTER LEAGUE FOR ANIMALS (OPPOSITE); ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.



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## INFOTECH

TYLER WHITAKER

The author is a freelance technologist. Contact him at 801/592-2810 or visit [www.tylerwhitaker.com](http://www.tylerwhitaker.com).

# Be productive with online services

**R**ecessions, depressions and the economy are clearly the big issues being discussed around the water cooler. With all the talk about bailouts and stimulus plans, I figure the only workable solution for the small business is to increase productivity and more fully respond to ever-changing customer needs. This month, I've collected a couple of online services to help lighten your workload.

### Microsoft Mesh | [www.mesh.com](http://www.mesh.com)

Good business ideas come in the strangest places, and having the time to work on them all is always a challenge. When I got my first laptop, I thought I had this problem solved. Then I realized the critical files I needed were on my desktop computer at work. Does this sound familiar?

You need Microsoft Mesh. It's a simple utility that syncs your critical business files among your home, desktop and laptop computers. It even stores them in a secure location on the Internet for easy access when you are away from the computers you normally use. With Mesh, you don't need to worry about the physical location of your files. It allows you to work wherever you are.

As an added bonus, Mesh lets you take remote

control of your machines. Need to run a special program that is only available on your work machine? No problem, just connect remotely and work as easily as if you were in the office. And best of all, it's free for the first 5GB.

### UserVoice | [www.uservoice.com](http://www.uservoice.com)

Even the newest MBA graduate will tell you that the secret to a successful business lies in your understanding of the needs of your customers. Gaining that valuable insight has never been easier: UserVoice delivers a new online experience for your customers to provide instant feedback, suggest improvements to your business, and vote on new business ideas that would help them the most.

There are several benefits from this service that I find compelling:

- ▶ **The price tag just can't be beat.** They have a free offering to get started.
- ▶ **There is no software to install.** To get started, all you need to do is provide a feedback link on your Web site. They do the rest.
- ▶ **It's easy to use.** Your customers will love having the ability to be heard, and will become more invested in your success, having made suggestions.
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# ENGLISH SENSIBILITIES

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS, MANAGING EDITOR

With miniature donkeys watching their every move, the crew of Hoffman Landscapes gave cohesion to a colorful property.

IT WAS AN odd jumble of styles. The property included a sprawling old farmhouse, a tobacco barn, an old rodeo arena — complete with bleachers and lights — and several outbuildings dotting five acres. Remodeling had given the place a Greek revival influence, but the current owner wanted the landscaping to match her native English sensibility.

The task of pulling that together fell to Brian Cossari, ASLA, a landscape architect with Hoffman Landscapes, Wilton, CT.

## The setting

“They had the idea of creating this elegant atmosphere in a farm environment,” Cossari says. “It was to match the rustic character of the property, but still bring some of the English influence to it — without using (English) boxwood. Imagine that, an English garden without boxwood. She hated the smell of it.”

The company did use arborvitae and inkberry shrubs, along with more than 20 other species of plants

and trees (see list, page 96). Cossari had crews install a number of statues and urns, which workers change out seasonally. The arborvitae were used to provide a privacy screen between the pool and one of the nearby buildings. Colorful perennials and ornamental grasses were used to hide a boulder retaining wall and reflect the client’s love for English gardens.

The live materials were pretty standard, Cossari says. With such a unique setting, there was no need to go for an exotic look.

“The evening light there is just amazing as it reflects off those barns,” he says. “The (tobacco) barn was a focal point, for sure. The idea is that it would be an entertaining area for large parties, which these people would often do. Weekenders would stay at



the house, and they'd party for days on end, literally. That was the center point of the swimming pool. You could step down into this barn for a casual, yet elegant party."

The barn posed a challenge for the designer. Down an often icy, steep slope

from the home during Connecticut winters, Cossari had to figure out how to create access from the home without completely leveling the ground. Adding to the challenge: At the time the design was done, the family was caring for a number of miniature donkeys.

"Every day, a couple times a day, the homeowner had to access the barn to tend to the miniature donkeys that were in there," Cossari says. "The way the site was graded — all winter long, it was a sheet of ice. The solution needed to grant the client access without necessarily paving a road between the two buildings."

Cossari designed a serpentine path for the client to take, integrating it into the symmetry of the design. He then addressed drainage with some surface drains and proper pitch.

### A swimming solution

The focal point of the project was a pool that Hoffman Landscapes decided to place beside the barn.

"We wanted it to feel like it was pretty well anchored," Cossari says. "We picked a median point of the hillside to put the swimming pool, and then worked around that."

Changing the grade, though, created a new challenge.

"We needed to come up with a way to level the area to accommodate the swimming pool, but still keep access to the barn," Cossari says. "There was a hay door up on the second story of the barn, and they still needed to get the tractor to it."

Hoffman crews had to install retaining walls both on the uphill and downhill sides.

"One was more rustic and camouflaged with plant material," Cossari

---

**Opposite.** A pergola over the dining table at one end of the pool will eventually become a cool shady spot as Japanese wisteria vines create a green roof.

**Top.** The large tobacco barn provided the perfect backdrop for a new pool. Eventually, the family plans to install slide doors in the barn, in which it will host parties.

**Bottom.** Dry stacked and battered stone walls fit naturally with the farm in the background.





AWARD WINNER



**Clockwise from top left.** Between the pool and the guest cottage, the tall arborvitae hedge provides a privacy screen while the colorful perennials and ornamental grasses gently hide the boulder retaining wall and reflect the client's love for English gardens.

Garden nooks bursting with color and texture provide cut flowers for the lady of the house.

Stone walls and granite slab steps were set in place prior to the excavation for the pool.

## THE PLANTINGS

Quantity	Common Name	Size
8	American Boxwood	30 in. - 36 in. ht.
30	American Boxwood	18 in. - 24 in. ht.
10	Tickseed	1 gal.
9	Purple Cone Flower	1 gal.
4	Limelight Hydrangea	18 in. - 24 in. ht.
6	Inkberry	24 in - 30 in.
12	Big Blue Liriope	1 gal.
14	Catmint	1 gal.
6	Dwarf Fountain Grass	2 gal.
6	Russian Sage	2 gal.
6	Moss Phlox	1 gal.
6	Japanese Andromeda	30 in. - 36 in. ht.
6	Fairy Rose	2 gal.
12	Rudbeckia Var.	1 gal.
6	Stonecrop Var.	1 gal.
11	Emerald Arborvitae	7 ft. - 8 ft. ht.
25	Creeping Thyme	3.5 qt.
6	Koreanspice Viburnum	36 in. - 42 in. ht.
2	Japanese Wisteria	2 in diameter
2	Butterfly Bush	5 gal.
3	Flowering Crabapple	3 in diameter
6	Rudbeckia Var.	1 gal.
1	Humus soil	1 cu. yd.

says. "The other one was used to stand out, keeping in mind future phases of the property."

The crews also installed several 12-ft.-wide granite slabs leading down to the pool. The granite and fieldstone used for the retaining walls are native to the region.

Cossari says he was challenged by some of the existing sites on the property. There was an old rodeo arena the family didn't necessarily want to get rid of, but they didn't want to stare at it, either.

"We put in the pergola structure, then we enclosed the dining terrace underneath it with a hedge," Cossari says. "Initially, it was intended to be a clipped beech hedge, but at the time of the project, we couldn't find the right beech trees to make it happen. We went with privet."

In all, the project cost about \$200,000, Cossari says. The work earned the company a Grand designation from PLANET's 2008 Environmental Improvement Awards. LM

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# PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

*Upcycled elegance*

## THE MISSION

A quarter-acre property transforms into an English garden oasis — all while “upcycling,” or incorporating existing elements in new ways and spaces.

Barry Block, owner and principal designer of East Moriches, NY-based Barry Block Landscape Design & Contracting, was brought in to enhance and expand upon the builder’s “landscape package” at a newly constructed post-modern home in nearby Amagansett. In fact, construction was still being completed as he began his work.

The classic Hamptons-style home was a weekend retreat for the New York City-based clients. With a budget less than \$50,000, Block was ready to design around their must-haves.

“Our clients wanted to screen out unwanted views from all four sides of the property, create an outside room that would reflect back into the living spaces within the home, and provide year-round interest, with the main focus on summer seasonal color — which is when the house would be used the most,” he explains. “In addition, our clients desired ornamental grasses, hydrangeas and boxwoods, as well as an English garden style theme.”

To soften the home’s exterior and tie in all the fixed features on the site — driveway, pool house and retaining walls — Block used a plant palette dominated by lavender, pink, blue and white. Railroad tie retaining walls were constructed along the entire back and sides of the property to maintain the grade.

While the original landscape package had to be completely redone and/or transplanted, Block notes that all the material was salvaged and put to good use.

“In the end,” he concludes, “the final results far exceeded everyone’s expectations.”





## THE WORK

**1 | ROOMS WITH A VIEW.** A simple, yet refined style was crucial for the overall design because both the dining room and living room have a picturesque view of the patio, pool and landscape beyond. Four pairs of large French doors expand the entire length of the back, creating a “wall” of windows that open directly onto the back porch and extend the living space outdoors.

**2 | THE FRONT LINES.** To create a sense of entry, Block placed 2x2-ft. thermal bluestone pavers set with lawn joints in a linear grid, helping to soften the front walk and make the lawn feel more expansive.

**3 | IN THE BEGINNING.** “Working with the clients, the builder and their budgets early on helped to create the groundwork for its completion,” notes Block.

**4 | HYDRANGEA ALLEY.** “Tardiva Standards” and “Annabelle” line the south side of the property, situated under neighboring shady white pine trees.

**5 | THE BACK LINES, TOO.** The pavers are repeated in the rear yard to enhance the sense of openness. “Plus, the grid pattern offers better circulation as one flows through the space, while keeping it from feeling overly designed,” Block adds.

**6 | ATTENTION TO DETAIL.** Mimicking the house’s architecture, the pool house hides the pool equipment and acts as both a storage shed and a changing room. To highlight its craftsmanship and details, Block installed climbing clematis vines, low perennial plantings and ornamental grasses around the foundation.

*With degrees in landscape architecture and ornamental horticulture from Syracuse University, Barry Block has more than 20 years of experience and expertise. This particular property garnered him a 2008 Gold Award in the Long Island Landscape and Nursery Association’s Environmental Enhancement Award program. For more information, visit [www.barryblock.com](http://www.barryblock.com).*

# THE JOY(STICK) OF SKID LOADERS

Joystick controls are just one of the many new available technologies in today's skid steer loaders.

BY CURT HARLER

IF THERE IS one machine that everyone likes to operate, it is the skid steer loader. It's just fun to zip around, carrying loads, doing the work of four people at a time. Some technology improvements are making skid steers even more fun — and practical — for landscapers.

## Oh, joy

Joystick controls are increasingly popular on all kinds of loaders. The new control system on the Vermeer line of mini skid steers, for example, includes two ergonomically designed joysticks that control transport and boom bucket motion. The ground drive is controlled by a single joystick, giving the operator a smooth range of motion while minimizing back pressure from the hydrostatic system. The units have no need for a steering wheel or dual levers to control movement.

John Deere, Bobcat and Caterpillar all are moving to electrohydraulic joystick controls.

"Electrohydraulics, as opposed to pilot or mechanical joysticks, allow us to expand the use of the joystick via programming with circuit boards or wiring harnesses," explains Gregg Zupancic, product marketing manager for John Deere skid steers and track loaders in Moline, IL.

The electrohydraulic joystick soon will be able to automate many of the repetitive functions on a loader. For example, the machine will have a memory that will return a fork to a certain height for moving pallets. It will also allow the bucket and boom to be pro-

*continued on page 102*



Gehl's newest vertical-lift model, the V270, hit the market in February.

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## SKID LOADERS

*continued from page 100*

grammed to drop to a certain level for scooping mulch.

Joysticks also have ergonomic value: "Because controls are operated while holding on to the handgrip bar, operators maintain balance and can operate any of the machine functions at any time," says Jon Kuyers, utility product segment manager for Vermeer, Pella, IA. He notes that some competitive units cannot drive and operate multiple functions without removing their hands from the levers or bar.

"Joysticks minimize fatigue and decrease the effort needed to operate equipment," says Kelly Moore, Gehl's product manager for skid loaders in West Bend, WI. "Effort required on the hand, arm and wrist is minimal. Whether you are running one hour or 10 hours, the dollars spent at the outset give a long-term payback in easier operation."

Typically, the upgrade to a joystick is about \$2,000 because of the more sophisticated controls and complexity of the controllers.

### Other ergonomics

Perry, OK-based Ditch Witch has "pilot-operated ground drive controls." They provide highly responsive steer-



John Deere unveiled the new CT 313 compact track loader in February.

ing with little or no vibration feedback, which increases operator comfort.

"Our foot pedal-operated auxiliary feature allows for hands-free operation of the auxiliary controls," says Matt Collins, Ditch Witch Compact Utility product manager.

Gehl's machines offer quiet cabs with noise levels — "operator ear levels" — from 85 dB down to 82 dB, depending on model. The cabs have AM/FM radio with weather band to allow weather tracking. The systems even allow the operator to plug an iPod or satellite radio into the speakers.

The Hydraloc safety system ensures that an operator is safely in the seat

before moving or operating the machine. In addition, those seats — which will be available on the new V270 machine coming out this spring — have deluxe suspension, with adjustments for operator size and weight, and extra cushioning.

### Sipping fuel

While fuel costs have decreased, many observers believe the lull is only temporary until either the economy shows signs of consistent improvement or another technology is developed.

A move to joysticks allows



The Ditch Witch SK650 keeps operator vibration to a minimum.





The handgrip controls on this Vermeer S400TX offers operator ergonomics.

John Deere to put most of its models' operations at the fingertip level. This frees up the floor area for a fuel-saving foot throttle, Zupancic explains. The lever throttle can be set in the 30% to 50% range. When the operator needs more speed, simply pushing the foot throttle gives the speed boost. But the moment the operator lifts his foot, the fuel consumption goes back to a minimal level.

"This also reduces the outside noise levels," Zupancic points out.

Gehl's Moore agrees that foot throttles make operation more efficient. "You use the foot control when you need more power or speed, backing off to go slower," he explains. "When it is not engaged, you're not using diesel."

Another move taken by some manufacturers is electronic fuel injection instead of the mechanical injection seen on many loaders. Deere is looking in this direction to give the right fuel burn for turning vs. straight-line driving, for example. Of course, good maintenance will help keep the unit running correctly.

"Contractors should make sure their mini skid steer is in peak operating condition, as this will help efficiency,"

says Kuyers. He adds that the most consistent method of saving on fuel costs is having a clearly laid out job plan that minimizes wasted travel and operation.

"Extra trips require extra fuel, and having a Lean methodology for working on the jobsite will help most contractors increase productivity while reducing costs," he says.

Another option is to know whether your diesel engine can use B20 to reduce cost. Some biodiesel blends may be less expensive than regular diesel, depending on your local market.

"Of course, fuel efficiency and fuel prices play a large part in ownership, but other factors like labor costs and downtime can be equally important," notes Collins. Using a mini skid steer can reduce labor hours and allow contractors to work more efficiently on the jobsite, therefore generating more revenue."

Collins adds that adopting a preventive maintenance program is another way for contractors to reduce downtime, making them more efficient — although users should always refer to the operator's manual for specific information and factory recommendations. Major maintenance checks would include:

► **Engine-related maintenance.** This includes filters, engine oil, coolant and fuel quality.

► **Track and undercarriage.** Keep it clean, and replace worn sprockets and bushings.

► **Operator controls.** Keep them maintained by using them correctly.

"By maximizing fuel efficiency on the jobsite, annual fuel consumption will be reduced — saving money no matter what fuel and diesel prices are," Collins says.

## Equipment costs

"Machinery costs will begin to stabilize and commodity prices — steel, copper, fuel — should become less volatile in the near-term," Kuyers says. While steel has decreased from its high point in 2008, he notes that some of the input materials have not decreased to their previous amounts, thus causing an increase in overall prices.

Moore agrees. "We had a huge surge in component costs last summer and fall. Steel had some big increases. Things have leveled out, but we still have a way to go."

Moore sees prices stabilizing. "Maybe, after a while, we'll see some more decreases in equipment costs," he adds.

"Over the years, we have seen an increase in component costs on equipment, but with the changes in our current environment, pricing has started to level out," agrees Collins.

Zupancic says Deere took its increases in November 2008 and that he does not foresee any further increase in the near future.

"You might see a 1% increase for the new features we are talking about," he adds. "But the return on that up-front cost will save the owner a lot of money from more efficient operation over the life of the machine. It's worth paying the bit extra up front to get the return over the longer term." *LM*

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June issue.

HARLER is a freelance writer who lives in Strongsville, OH. Contact him at [curt@curtharler.com](mailto:curt@curtharler.com).

# PROBLEMSOLVER

LANDSCAPE TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS » BY H. BRUCE HELLERICK

## PROBLEM

Rolling Stones lead singer Mick Jagger once said, "Anything worth doing is worth overdoing." While that may be true for rock music, it doesn't hold for landscapes. As professionals, we need to create more interest and excitement in the landscape. Many contractors use various tulip and viola combinations to create great-looking beds, but sometimes the execution is a bit too enthusiastic. Here, the entire bed is filled with pansies and tulips. How do you accommodate the client's desire for both violas and tulips without creating too busy a scene?



## SOLUTION

Contractors often get carried away planting too many bulbs to make a spectacular display — and forget that it's the violas that really provide the long-term color presentation. By simply planting fewer bulbs with wider spacing, however, you allow each type of flower to be spectacular instead of competing with one another.

In this case, we removed about 24 extra bulbs along the front and sides of the bed that did not need to be planted, which also helps the bottom line: 24 bulbs times 20 cents per bulb is \$4.80; multiplied by 100 beds is \$480. You save money and keep your client very happy.



Every day you see horticultural problems. Sometimes the solution is obvious, but others are much more difficult to solve. Brickman Group Senior Horticulture Specialist H. Bruce Hellerick tackles these issues each month in Problem Solver. He can be reached at [Hellerick@BrickmanGroup.com](mailto:Hellerick@BrickmanGroup.com).

# A FRESH LOOK AT FERTIGATION

It's time for contractors to take another look at the economic and environmental benefits of supplying nutrients to living landscapes.

BY **RON HALL** EDITOR-AT-LARGE

FERTIGATION, THE PRACTICE of supplying nutrients to plants through irrigation, is going mainstream with landscape maintenance contractors. Economic, environmental and aesthetic considerations are converging to put it in the property maintenance spotlight.

The higher costs of labor, granular fertilizers and, in many regions of the country, irrigation water, are prompting contractors to investigate fertigation. They're following the path that many golf course superintendents and institutional grounds managers took a generation earlier, finding fertigation to be a more efficient way to create healthy, attractive landscapes.

"Until recently, landscape maintenance contractors hadn't recognized the huge potential of fertigation for their businesses," says Michael Chaplinsky, Turf Feeding Systems, Houston. "It's getting their attention now that everybody in the industry is looking to address landscape quality issues while reducing inputs — in particular fertilizers and pesticides. Contractors are looking for ways to increase efficiency, too. I'm getting more calls every day from large landscape maintenance companies and irrigators."

## Labor saver

Chaplinsky, whose company has been supplying fertigation equipment worldwide for more than 20 years, says simple economics — the rise in the cost of dry fertilizer and the cost of labor

required to apply it — is one of several drivers for the newfound interest in the practice of delivering nutrients to turfgrass with irrigation water. Contractors maintaining sizable properties can save considerable expense and get better results by "fertigating" the common areas (a streetscape in an HOA, for example) and freeing up manpower for the smaller areas of a property that require more intensive maintenance.

"It's a huge labor saver for the

contractor, especially on large commercial properties," adds Darin A. Brasch, national sales manager for EZ Flo, a Sewickley, PA-based fertigation equipment supplier. "For example, it was taking a company in San Diego four days using seven employees to feed one commercial property. One employee can feed 20 properties in a single day with fertigation. Basically, he just travels to the sites and fills the tanks."

## Better water

Another consideration is environmental as well as economic: the growing concern over the availability, quality and cost of fresh water. All three factors are addressed by fertigation, say proponents of the practice.



Bob Knapp and Nadja Galadram see the benefits of fertigation.

“Everybody is talking about water conservation, but I think the conversation should focus on water efficiency, on improving the efficiency of water,” says Chaplinsky.

He maintains that with fertigation, using tiny, regular doses of NPK fertilizer mixed with humates and other organic products in the irrigation water promotes healthier, more stress-resistant landscape plants, including turfgrass. Plants that grow in soils with beneficial microbes fostered by fertigation require less water and fewer chemical inputs to survive stresses and still remain attractive, he says.

Nadja Galadram, owner of Let's Grow Soil Lab, Yelm, WA, has seen the results, and agrees. Acting as an eco-consultant and working with grounds professional Bob Knapp at the State Farm DuPont (WA) Operations Center site, Galadram has seen steady improvement in the biological activity of the soil there since instituting a more holistic approach to maintenance several years ago. Her strategy includes using fertigation to supply plants with nutrients, microbial inoculants and organic substances that she has used to increase food crop health in eco-agriculture.

“This February I did eco-soil tests there,” says Galadram of the 13.5 acres of turfgrass at the site. “I took 6-in. soil samples under the turf and found about three earthworms in every spot. Using a variety of strategies, we’ve improved what was a dead soil, and we’ve seen its cation exchange capacity (CEC) go up, up, up over five years. Soil particles can now hold onto and use those nutrients that roots and soil microbes need the most.”

“Plants will only take in what they need, when they need it,” adds EZ Flo’s Brasch. “This is a very efficient way to fertilize plants, whether they’re trees, flowerbeds or turfgrass.”

### A better way

Proponents agree that fertigation is an especially efficient way to get nutrients to plants and build plant root mass because the relatively tiny amounts of

## BENEFITS OF FERTIGATION

► **Water conservation:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says that more than 50% of water used to irrigate landscapes is wasted, and provides no benefit whatsoever to landscapes. Micro-fertilization applied properly through fertigation, using micro amounts of fertilizer in combination with proven organic additives, promote root growth and strength. A deeper, denser root system uses water and nutrients more efficiently.

► **Reduced labor expenses:** Light feeding through fertigation will control plant growth rate, and the injection rate can be adjusted down to keep the growth rate to a minimum while maintaining rich plant color. This will allow mowing intervals to be set as far apart as possible, and prevent the necessity of hauling off excessive cuttings, which can be costly.

► **Improved turf quality:** Light and continual feeding improves the health and appearance of the landscape while avoiding surge growth. Why would anyone, especially a maintenance contractor, want the grass to grow so rapidly that they have to mow more than once a week, especially in the spring when it’s difficult to keep up with the work? In addition to labor cost, think of the extra clippings — not to mention the emissions from the maintenance equipment when over-fertilized lawns grow too fast.

► **Reduced pesticide use:** A healthy landscape is more resistant to disease, insects and weeds. This is possible through fertigation. The best way to force weeds out is by having thick, healthy turfgrass. Insects and disease attack plants that are succulent or stressed. Keeping plants healthy in their optimum growth with thick cell walls also minimizes sources of stress.

► **Reduced non-point-source pollution (NPSP):** Studies have shown that plants never get to use much of the granular fertilizer applied to landscapes, and this is especially true when consumers fertilize their own properties. Property owners often do not read fertilizer labels, and when they do, they tend to put down too much — reasoning that if a little bit is good, more is better. Some unused fertilizer leaches through the soil. Fertilizer that ends up on sidewalks or driveways is eventually washed from the property by rain and ends up in streams, ponds and lakes. Applying small — in some cases, micro — amounts of fertilizer with irrigation greatly reduces the likelihood of NPSP.

fertilizer and organic products applied with irrigation is absorbed by the plants’ leaves, stems and roots. Because so little is applied at a time, there’s little chance for build-up of nitrate salts in the soil or for fertilizer runoff and non-point-source pollution, adds Brasch.

Converting a sprinkler irrigation system into a fertigation system is relatively easy and fairly inexpensive. Experienced irrigators should have no problem retrofitting most systems, which entails installing liquid fertilizer tanks into the main irrigation lines, and an injector

pump into the irrigation control panel. A backflow check valve keeps nutrients out of the drinking water supply. The injector pump, which can be calibrated depending on the specific fertilizer used, monitors the rate of flow of irrigation water. Fertilizers can be applied separately or combined for a specific blend.

But, in the end, property owners aren’t as interested in technology as they are upon results, a beautiful property.

“Most people don’t want an irrigation system. All they really want are green plants,” says Chaplinsky. **LMM**

Fertigation cuts down on labor and water use.





# ROCK REVIVAL

Creative Waters' James McPhail rescues a back yard from a subpar water feature and turns it once again into a thing of beauty.

BY SOL LIEBERMAN

GORDON HANKS' BACKYARD water feature was like a stubborn black fly on a birthday cake. The mess of cracked concrete and outdated stones on the hillside didn't fit with Hanks' masterful garden (right), which included a Japanese maple, a memorial rose garden and meticulous formal planting that left not a pruning or placement to whimsy. Hanks — a self-proclaimed perfectionist — retired in May, which gave him more time to edge and deadhead while sneering at the stone albatross.

And it wasn't just aesthetics that sowed discontent. The water feature leaked, too. The pond wouldn't stay full, and Hanks' groomed French drains weren't doing enough to prevent parts of his lawn, which were attracting mosquitoes, from drowning.

"Ecologically, it wasn't very sound," said Hanks of the 15-year-old feature — which cost \$10,000, not including money spent in upkeep. It had to go.



BEFORE

So early last summer, Hanks called James "Jimmy Mac" McPhail, owner and operator of Creative Waters of Draper, UT, for a water feature redo at his 1.3-acre property in Little Cottonwood Creek Valley, a picturesque Salt Lake City community nestled among the Wasatch Mountains. McPhail, who was cruising through his 20<sup>th</sup> season of installing features ranging from \$5,000 for a simple waterfall to \$300,000 for a grand commercial feature, was glad to take the Hanks job. After an assessment of the 85-by-65-ft. area, Hanks and McPhail came to terms on the project. And after \$112,000, six weeks and 1,000 hours of labor, Hanks had a new feature that more than met with his approval.

## A job well done

Other than a few days battling the elements, the project went off without a hitch for McPhail's 4-person crew.

"It's absolutely beautiful," says Hanks. "It looks like it has been here forever."

McPhail installed two Tuscan waterfalls on the hillside, cascading a casual 55 ft. until coming together for the final 30

PHOTOS COURTESY: CREATIVE WATERS

## ROCK REVIVAL



**Top.** The Creative Waters crew starts the project with careful excavation.

**Right.** Each rock was hand-placed to avoid tearing the liner. **Left.** The rock staircase was built with spaces for the client to customize with his own plantings.

ft. toward the lower lake, which is large and hourglass-shaped. The upper ponds — 9 in. deep — do a nice job reflecting the nearby ponderosa pines. A walkway flanks the lake, and a cantilevered rock stretches out from the walkway so Hanks' grandchildren can reach out and touch the waterfall.

Big boulders and cleverly placed small stones are peppered throughout, and a 4-ft., powdercoated Tuscan iron arched bridge is the finishing touch.

McPhail is good at his job. At 6 ft. 5 in. and 250 lbs., he looks the part of a rock mover, too. But McPhail is more of a "rock whisperer" — a careful artist who shapes stubborn tonnage into stone sensations.

Much of his artistry is instinctual. When he and Hanks met to discuss the project for the first time, Hanks said to McPhail, "Give me an idea of what you're going to do." McPhail responded, "I really can't. To give a specific drawing is impossible." This freethinking process allows McPhail to adjust on the fly if he sees something he doesn't like, and it has helped him to build a healthy business.

### Quality first

McPhail's business is also helped by other contractors. Because there is no license for water feature installation, many clients get stuck with shoddy work that would never pass muster for a Creative Waters job. "At least 35% of my work is tear-out and reduce," he says.

McPhail says some landscapers use quick fixes, like a track hoe with a thumb to pick up rocks and drop them down on

the liner, which pinches and often tears it so owners have to refill the water constantly. To him, this is a cardinal sin.

"Water feature 101: Don't drop the rock," says McPhail, who hand-places his stones from a strap to avoid punctures and leakage. Done his way, he says, water loss is limited to evaporation — which amounts to 0.25 in. per day at the most, plus ancillary splash.

But to McPhail, it's more than just about laying stones. It's a step-by-step process in which you must be willing to pivot and deviate from your original plan. And it all starts with the prep excavation.

"It looks like something you'd find in Egypt. The earth is staircased out," he says of the beginning stages of a water feature. Once the fall section is planned, he often coats the floors with sand to cover any sharp protrusions. Then it's on to the liners — three layers that also act as corrosive barriers and protect against ground squirrels and mice that may try to nest.

First, he lays an 8-oz. geotextile fabric, followed by a 45-mm rubber liner, and then a second layer of geotextile. Then he gets to setting the stones.

"Twist 'em, turn 'em, rotate 'em, chisel 'em," McPhail says. He points out that he used surface stone like quartz and hardened sandstone of different colors — never limestone — on the Hanks feature. He also left planting spaces, so Hanks could personalize his new feature after all the "heavy lifting" was done.

Now that Hanks has a backyard water feature that complements his world-class garden, he can settle in to sculpt and prune in peace. If tweaks are needed, McPhail will be willing, but surprised. Unless it's for coffee, McPhail says clients rarely call and ask, "When are you coming back?" **LM**

LIEBERMAN is a freelance writer based in Pismo Beach, CA. Contact him at [solomonlieberman@gmail.com](mailto:solomonlieberman@gmail.com).

Be responsible and make sure your crews aren't digging their own graves.

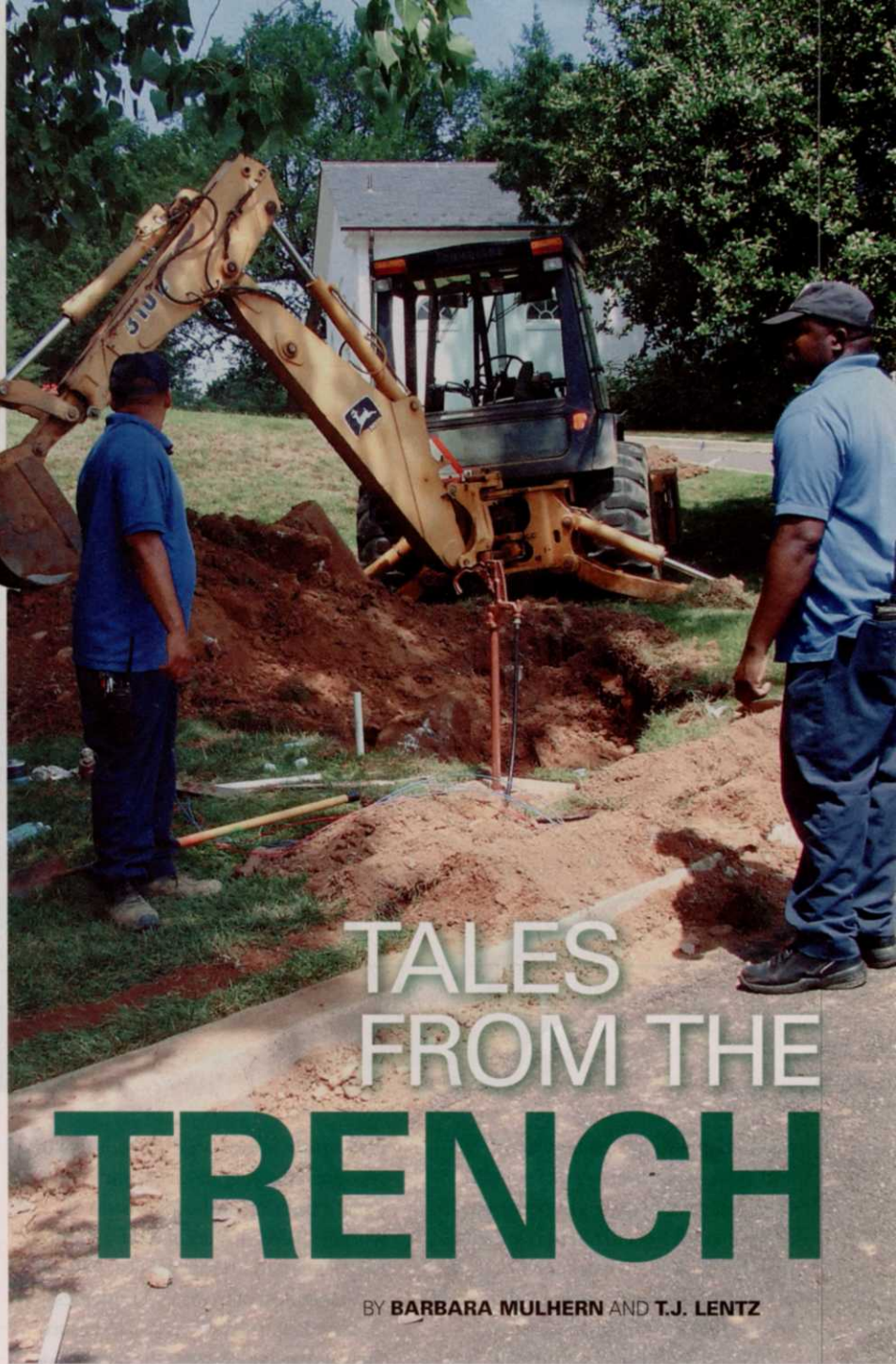
IN GREENWICH, CT, a 59-year-old groundskeeper installing a drainage pipe in a trench at a country club died after a portion of the trench collapsed. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) inspectors found that the walls of the 6-ft.-deep trench had not been shored, sloped or otherwise protected against collapse. The country club paid \$20,250 for seven violations of OSHA standards.

In Reno, NV, a 20-year-old man and his 39-year-old co-worker died following the collapse of a 12-ft.-deep trench at a golf course. OSHA investigators found a number of safety violations, including lack of a protective system to prevent a cave-in, inadequate means of access or egress, failure by the employer to require head protection, and failure to adequately train employees in the recognition of hazards. Among those the 39-year-old worker left behind were three children, ages 12 to 15.

These deaths are among the many that occur each year in trenching and excavation cave-ins throughout the United States. Landscape contractors and grounds maintenance employers whose workers are engaged in trenching and excavation activities must ensure proper training and safety precautions are in place.

### Industry at risk

The landscape services industry is a high hazard industry. A single traumatic injury or death can put a small company out of business. According to a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) fact sheet, titled "Fatal Injuries Among Landscape



# TALES FROM THE TRENCH

BY BARBARA MULHERN AND T.J. LENTZ

Services Workers" (NIOSH Publication No. 2008-144), workers in the landscape services industry make up less than 1% of the total U.S. workforce — yet they experience approximately 3.5% of all of the occupational fatalities.

In addition to potential OSHA investigations and legal fees, a traumatic injury or fatality will result in increased insurance premiums; downtime; lost management and administrative time; the need to recruit, train and replace workers; poor employee

morale; and even the potential loss of good customers.

### Trenching hazards

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data show that 271 workers died in trenching or excavation cave-ins from 2000 through 2006. (See "Deaths from Trenching or Excavation Cave-ins," next page.) A review of multiple national databases by NIOSH researchers found that trenching and excavation hazards during construction activities



TRENCH

### DEATHS FROM TRENCHING OR EXCAVATION CAVE-INS



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

resulted in 488 deaths between 1992 and 2000 — an average of 54 fatalities each year. Sixty-eight percent of those fatalities occurred in companies with fewer than 50 workers. Forty-six percent of the deaths occurred in small companies with 10 or fewer workers.

The NIOSH research also showed that 19% of these workers who died were Hispanic — a fast-growing worker population in the landscape industry. In June 2008, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) published a report noting that between 1992 and 2006, 11,303 Hispanic workers in the United States died from job-related injuries. The death rate for Hispanic workers was consistently higher than the rate for all U.S. workers. An editorial note in the report stated that factors contributing to higher numbers of work-related deaths among Hispanic workers include

inadequate knowledge and control of recognized safety hazards, and inadequate training and supervision of workers, often exacerbated by different languages and literacy levels.

Regardless of workers' ethnicities and primary language, it's critical to ensure they understand the specific hazards involved in trenching and excavation work. In a publication titled "Excavations," Oregon-OSHA (OR-OSHA) notes that a cave-in can trap a worker within seconds, and kill the person within minutes. Two cubic yards of soil may weigh 4,000 to 6,000 lbs., and a person who is buried will suffocate in less than three minutes, OR-OSHA says. *Note: The weight of the soil around the person is usually the cause of the suffocation, because the pressure from the soil against the chest prevents the lungs from expanding for breathing.*

Yet cave-ins aren't the only hazards

workers involved in trenching and excavation face. Among the other hazards are:

- › Electrical hazards from overhead or underground power lines.
- › Contact with underground natural gas lines or other utility lines. Be sure to call 811 before you dig. Each state has different rules and regulations governing digging, some stricter than others. 811 will connect you directly to your local one-call center. For more information on your state's notification requirements, visit [www.call811.com/state-specific.aspx](http://www.call811.com/state-specific.aspx).
- › Falling hazards.
- › Wet conditions.
- › Hazardous atmospheres (heat and cold stress, stinging or biting animals and insects, and poisonous plants). Refer to the NIOSH Safety and Health Web Topic Page for Outdoor Worker Hazards.
- › Confined space issues.



## BE PROACTIVE

What follow are some important steps to take to help protect your workers from serious injury or death in trenching/excavation activities:

› **Plan ahead.** Make sure all equipment is in good condition, that all utilities have been marked before digging, and that all electricity, gas and water pipes in the trench have been shut off.

› **Ensure that a protective system such as sloping, benching, shoring or shielding is in place.** The type of system used will depend on such factors as the excavation depth and width, the soil type, water content, nature of the work and any nearby activities that could increase the risk of a cave-in. Depths of more than 5 ft. require protective measures.

› **Designate a "competent person" to oversee all activities.** This person should have a greater level of training and experience than other workers. The competent person must be in the work area, must ensure that appropriate safety measures are in place before anyone enters the trench, and must act promptly to correct any problems.

› **Conduct daily inspections and document findings.**

› **Ensure an adequate means of entry and exit.** A ladder or other means must be no farther away than 25 ft. from any worker.

› **Keep heavy equipment and spoils at least 2 ft. from the edge of the excavation.**

› **Provide and require workers to wear hard hats and to use other appropriate safety equipment.**

› **Train all workers in a language and manner they understand.** Ensure that they are aware of all potential hazards and that they comprehend safe trenching and excavation work practices. Develop a checklist for employees as a quick and easy reminder. Follow up training with a test that can be administered orally for workers who cannot read or write. Reminder: When training your employees, be sure to take into account language issues, literacy level issues and cultural issues that could prohibit an understanding of your safety messages.

› **Know that some sites require tabulated data.** For this, you must enlist the assistance of a registered engineer and maintain documentation on site during construction.

Adherence to this guidance and following safe work practices during trenching and excavation activities can mean the difference between leaving the worksite safely to enjoy another day above ground ... or not.

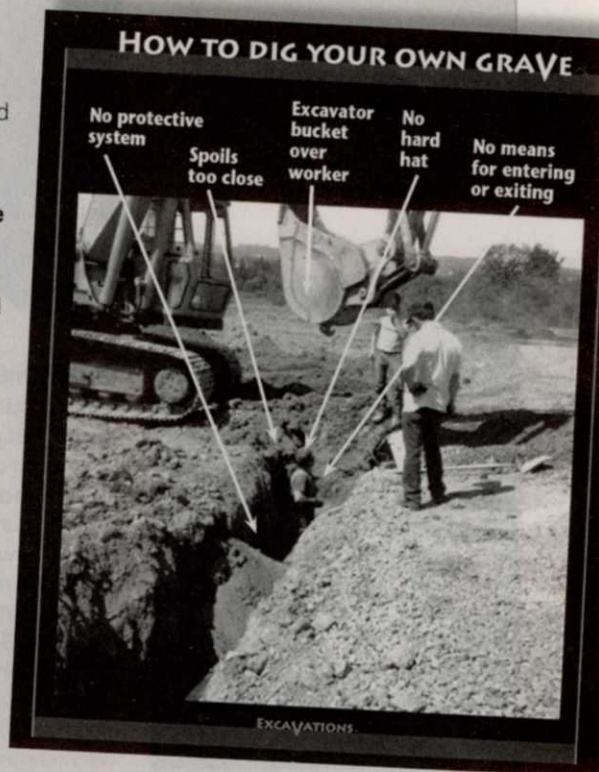
A crew well-versed in trench safety can keep your business from becoming a statistic.

› **Heavy equipment/machinery hazards.** Exhaust fumes from nearby equipment can cause exposures to carbon monoxide and create hazardous atmospheres depriving workers of oxygen.

› **Ergonomic injuries** resulting from manual material handling.

Landscape contractors involved in construction activities, such as digging trenches, are subject to OSHA's construction standards. For more information on federal OSHA construction standards regulating this type of work, visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov), then refer to these standards: 29 CFR 1926.650, 29 CFR 1926.651 and 29 CFR 1926.652. L.M.

MULHERN is a Belleville, WI-based agricultural/horticultural project consultant and freelance writer. LENTZ is a lead health scientist with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.



# PRODUCTS

TOOLS OF THE TRADE » FOR MORE INFO, GO TO [WWW.LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET/SEARCH](http://WWW.LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET/SEARCH)



## Tough tires

Goodyear's 900-series commercial truck tires feature Armor Max Technology. They're the first commercial light truck tires in the industry to meet the new regulations set forth under the federal Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability and Documentation Act. For landscape contractors, these tires offer advanced compounds and construction that enhance toughness; reinforced shoulders and steel sidewalls that deliver long casing life and retreadability; and application-specific tread compounds that provide long original tread life and enhanced performance. [www.goodyear.com/truck/technology/armormax.html](http://www.goodyear.com/truck/technology/armormax.html)

## Geese deterrent

Bird-B-Gone Mist is an advanced fogging system that releases a grape-scented mist into the air to deter geese from large open spaces. The unit distributes methyl anthranilate, a grape extract proven to be effective in repelling pest geese. Geese do not like the scent of the extract and will take flight from the area being treated, according to the company. The Bird-B-Gone Mist fogging unit has an LCD touch screen for programming. From the control unit, users can attach up to 32 misters, controlling each one individually. Spray units can be set to go off simultaneously or at alternating times. The control panel will keep track of liquid levels, and will notify users when to refill the units. [www.birdbgone.com](http://www.birdbgone.com) or 800/392-6915

## Hydrostatic transmission

The Allmand TLB-425 ESL heavy-duty compact tractor loader backhoe features a servo-controlled hydrostatic transmission and a 25-hp Kubota D1105 diesel engine. It features oversized polished pins with replaceable composite bearings and urethane lip seals in all working joints. The unit's industrial-class backhoe delivers a 4,611-lb. digging force and reaches up to a 9.5-ft. digging depth. Dual cylinder, 180° hydraulic cushioned swing allows precise work in tight areas. [www.allmand.com](http://www.allmand.com) or 800/562-1373



**PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**  
BACKHOES & TRENCHERS

## Eco-friendly pots

The first plantable, 6-in. Rice Hull NetPot is the newest addition to complement the six other sizes of Rice Hull and two other NetPot sizes (7cm and 9cm) that are available from Ball Horticultural Co. and Summit Plastic Co. The new plantable unit is composed of renewable resources made of sustainable, natural plant fibers that degrade in the soil over time. Summit produces PLA filling trays to fit the 6-in. Rice Hull NetPot. PLA is also made from renewable materials and is both biodegradable and compostable. [www.summitplastic.com](http://www.summitplastic.com) or 800/814-3496



## Grub control

The granular formulation of DuPont Acelepryn insecticide has been registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). With just one early application of Acelepryn, turf professionals can control 10 key turf-damaging white grub species plus surface-feeding insects such as cutworms, webworms, annual bluegrass weevils and billbugs, according to the company. The formulation features a low impact on non-target organisms such as beneficial arthropods as well as bees, birds, fish and mammals, and has the lowest water solubility of any white grub control product. Its active ingredient, DuPont Calteryx, is a new class of chemistry inspired by a natural substance found in the bark of trees and shrubs of the genus *Ryania*. [www.proproducts.dupont.com/acelepryn](http://www.proproducts.dupont.com/acelepryn) or 888/6 DUPONT

## More power

John Deere has added a new PowerTech E 6068 Tier 3 engine to its 710J Backhoe, improving both emissions compliance and power. The new models feature net horsepower of 126 hp, compared to the 123 hp on the Tier 2 engines, along with a host of other improvements, including higher injection pressures, variable timing and precise control of fuel injection. The 710J's dig depth reaches up to 22 ft., 4 in. when extended. Servicing is all done on the same side and accessed from the ground — no tools are necessary to open and tilt the hood, which can be tilted to 90°. In addition, exterior upgrades to the 710J include an extended grill frame that comes standard and a side louver that improves airflow to the engine. [www.johndeere.com](http://www.johndeere.com) or 309/765-8000

PRODUCT  
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## Basket filter

Rain Bird's new Pressure-Regulating (PR) Quick-Check Basket Filter combines pressure regulation and filtration into one compact unit for enhanced reliability and faster installation. Available separately or fully integrated into Rain Bird's 1 and 1.5 high-flow commercial control zone kits, the filter features a 200 mesh (75 micron) stainless-steel filter element that protects drip irrigation components from debris, while its built-in 40-psi pressure regulator ensures that the system receives optimum water pressure. By integrating filtration and pressure regulation into one product, users can save both time and labor. [www.rainbird.com/drip](http://www.rainbird.com/drip) or 800/RAINBIRD.

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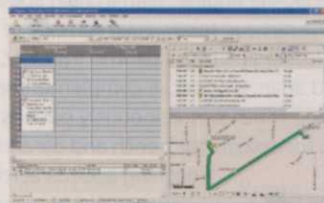


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## Light the night

The new Orbit/Evergreen FG Series of durable 12-volt well lights features five adjustable tilting lamp models. The varied cover styles direct the light source, including full view, louvered, round hood, square hood or a vandal-resistant criss-cross cover. Each fixture measures 4.75-in. wide and has a depth of 4.5 in. Models are available in black or bronze, and are constructed from injection-molded PBT composite for longer-lasting outdoor performance. A new adjustable lamp bracket allows the user to tilt the lamp + 25° for direct illumination of the garden subject. FG fixtures also include a 20-watt MR16 lamp. [www.orbitelectric.com](http://www.orbitelectric.com) or 800-90-ORBIT

## Timber thinning

The new Fecon Bio-Harvester simultaneously fells, chips and collects small-diameter woody biomass. It can be mounted to the Fecon FTX440, a 440-hp, forestry guarded, crawler tractor; or to a large, high-horsepower PTO tractor. The FTX440 is also capable of towing and powering an agricultural dump wagon to collect material. Material is chipped using Fecon Bull Hog chipper knives or carbide tools, then augured to a material processing fan and blown into a collection unit. It can discharge from the rear or the side, enabling a variety of collection units. <http://site.bio-harvester.com> or 800/528-3113



**PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**  
BACKHOES & TRENCHERS

## Ride-on trencher

The new Boxer 118 Dedicated Trencher is Compact Power's first ride-on, dedicated trencher. It offers an 18-hp, air-cooled Kohler Command Pro gasoline engine, with a chain speed of 280 ft. per minute. The dirt cup tooth chain is made of high-carbon steel with frosted carbide tips. The trencher, available in both 24- and 36-in. lengths, is complemented by a standard discharge auger, which simultaneously pushes the dirt away — allowing for a clean-cut trench and consistent trenching speeds across a variety of soils. [www.boxerequipment.com](http://www.boxerequipment.com) or 800/476-9673



## Compact performance

Standard Hamilton Co. introduces the Compact Dump-Pro for light-duty pickup trucks with 6-ft. beds. Like the popular full-size Dump-Pro, this 282-lb. insert features a steel-reinforced, industrial-weight, non-rusting polyethylene dump body and winch-driven drive system that requires no expensive hydraulics to operate. Its lighter weight and removable features save fuel. The unit features a 60° dumping angle, so everything that goes in, comes out. When the job is done, simply release the clamping system, disconnect the power with the removable connector, remove a single bolt and slide the unit out to get your pickup truck back. [www.dump-pro.com](http://www.dump-pro.com) or 866/4 DUMP-PRO

## Colorful mulch

Joining the Select, Mulch Magic and Starburst colorant lines also offered by Colorbiotics, Impact colorant produces color-enhanced mulch to a level that meets expectations with less investment in raw material. The new hybrid coating was created through process optimization and advanced technology to provide a high value product. Compared to non-colored mulch products that usually turn gray or white after just a few weeks, Impact remains vibrant for a longer period of time. And once the color dries, it will not wash off or leach into soil. Available in red, ruby red and black, Impact is also specially formulated to be nontoxic to plants and animals. [www.colorbiotics.com](http://www.colorbiotics.com) or 888/663-6980

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### New paver sizes

Redland Brick introduces its Tuscan Collection Genuine Clay Pavers, the first-ever wood-molded genuine clay paver series to be available in 6-by-6-in. and 6-by-9 in. sizes. The innovative oversized molded clay pavers combine the rich color and durability of a genuine clay brick with the industry sizes that provide versatility in installation, according to the company. The new sizes allow for more sophisticated paving bonds and patterns. The new collection is currently machine-molded at the Rocky Ridge plant, making the pavers a perfect complement for Rocky Ridge face brick, and also compatible with most brick structures. The pavers are currently available in four popular Rocky Ridge colors: King William, Rustique, Cumberland and Bayshore, with additional colors to be announced later this year. [www.redlandbrick.com](http://www.redlandbrick.com) or 301/223-7700

### Waterproof connectors

King Innovation's UL 1838 compliant DryConn brand connectors include DryConn Black/White, Black/Gray, Black/Blue, King 4, King 5, King 6, King 9, and DBSR Medium with strain relief. Each of these connectors is UL 486D listed, and while they are rated for 600V, they also feature proven performance for low-voltage, waterproof splice protection and direct bury, according to the company. They can keep splices dry and ensure a waterproofed lighting system. Wire range for the entire line covers No. 6 down to No. 22 AWG. Connectors are also available in both bags and canisters, which allows for easy access to multiple size connectors throughout an installation.

[www.kinginnovation.com](http://www.kinginnovation.com)  
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SprinkLites are color-changing indoor/outdoor lights that, when connected to water, function as sprinklers. They can be connected to an irrigation system or mounted to tree posts, poles or umbrellas (using slots in the base) to create a light show. SprinkLites can also be used as illuminated misters to cool the air in the heat of summer. Connecting them to a recirculation pump creates a fountain arrangement with colorful water-spitting sculptures. Choose from six faux crystal sculptured accent lights in the shape of butterflies, dragonflies and hummingbirds. [www.sprinklites.com](http://www.sprinklites.com) or 877/718-2477

## Turf stress detection

TurfSpy, the new turf stress detection glasses from Underhill International, block out the green spectrum reflected from chlorophyll in healthy vegetation. Stress conditions, such as disease, drought, pests or poor nutrition, are revealed with glowing colors (red, coral, pink) and can be detected two to 10 days before they are visible to the unaided eye. The ANSI-approved, shatterproof safety glasses have a new wrap-around lens for more effective viewing, and an adjustable earpiece for comfortable wear while mowing. [www.underhill.us](http://www.underhill.us) or 866/863-3744

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The Switch-N-Go Detachable Truck Body System turns your truck into one of your most valuable, hard-working employees. Its ability to lay the body flat on the ground and detach from the truck allows for the safe and efficient use of multiple bodies on one chassis. With a low loading angle, dirt or mulch can be lifted from ground level and onto the truck at the push of a button. Choose from dump, platform, storage, drop box, specialty and chipper bodies. [www.switchngo.com](http://www.switchngo.com) or 888/311-0867



**PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**  
BACKHOES & TRENCHERS

## Rock and roll

The Ditch Witch organization introduces the HT300, a heavy-duty, 300-hp rock trencher. Capable of trenching up to 10 ft. deep and 36 in. wide in the most extreme jobsite conditions, the steel-tracked HT300 features a sturdy undercarriage designed to withstand the rigors of rock-laden jobsites, and trencher stabilizers that automatically adjust to terrain changes to isolate vibration in rock and other harsh conditions. [www.ditchwitch.com](http://www.ditchwitch.com) or 800/654-6481

## Refillable microinjection

New Liquid Loadables are one-liter bottles of J.J. Mauget Co.'s insecticides, fungicides, antibiotics, fertilizers and micronutrients that tree care experts can use to refill their preferred injection system, allowing them to pair their tools with tree care chemistry. Current offerings include Imicide, Stemix Plus and Inject-A-Min Manganese, with Fungisol, Arbor-Fos, Abacide 2 and Tebuject 16 pending EPA approval. Mycoject Ultra antibiotic will be available in September 2009. [www.mauget.com](http://www.mauget.com) or 800/TREES Rx





### Three-in-one

Cub Cadet Commercial's new 3-in-1 XP Stand-On Spreader/Sprayer offers productivity and flexibility for granular, liquid and spot-spray applications. The unit can hold 10 gal. of liquid in two separate 5-gal. tanks that can be used independent of each other, giving operators the ability to apply two different types of liquid material through the spot spray wand, or by using the boomless sprayer nozzles that have an effective spray width of 9 ft. The hopper has a capacity of 125 lbs. for dry material spreading. Other features include a premium electric start, 6-hp Kawasaki engine with charging system; a hydrostatic, variable speed drive; and a one-year commercial warranty. Retro kits are available for Lesco HP or Cub Cadet Commercial XP units. [www.cubcadetcommercial.com](http://www.cubcadetcommercial.com) or 877/835-7841



### Water saver

Convert your sprinkler heads into a water-saving drip irrigation system in landscape shrub areas with Antelco's Drip Mate Sprinkler Conversion Kit, which includes a nine-outlet pressure regulating micro manifold, nine Shrubber 360 spikes (adjustable flow) and 100 ft. of tubing. Materials are UV-stabilized for long life. [Antelco.com](http://Antelco.com) or 800/869-7597



### High style, little space

Integrating a compact design with high photometric performance and style in street lighting, Schreder Lighting USA introduces Hestia luminaires with the Sealsafe Optical System. The optics feature a one-piece, anodized, brightened and hydroformed aluminum reflector permanently sealed on a tempered glass sag lens. A high-pressure die-cast aluminum lamp access mechanism protects the interior of the optical system, providing long-lasting photometric performance.

[www.schreder.com](http://www.schreder.com) or 847/621-5100

### Increased warranty

The construction equipment division of Yanmar North America has increased the warranty to three years or 3,000 hours on its line of excavators, loaders and backhoes. This warranty covers all elements of the machinery, although it does not cover normal maintenance procedures or wear items such as tires and brakes. [www.yanmar.com](http://www.yanmar.com) or 770/877-7570

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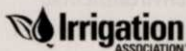
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## It's time to pony up and Buck It Up

**“W**e have to invest in ourselves before we can expect others to even think about investing in us.”

This gem came compliments of the wise widow of my longtime buddy Adam Gaspar. On Sept. 30, 2008, Adam lost his 10-month battle with cancer. Ever since, his wife, Ann, has been juggling the parenting of six children solo while serving as a part-time nurse. And, oh yeah, in her “spare time” she’s been working to help keep Adam’s business vision — GFI Consulting, a small Cleveland-area information technology management provider — alive and on the grow.

Words spoken from the heart speak directly to the heart. That’s why Ann’s words stick with me today. One hard look in the mirror, and I think we all can admit we can do a better job investing in ourselves, our businesses and our wonderful Green Industry.

Lucky for us in this down economy, ponying up to support our industry — and, in turn, ourselves — just got a lot cheaper. In fact, thanks to a new program offered by Project EverGreen, we actually can *save money* while giving back to our industry, businesses and the communities we serve. Sound too good to be true? Well it is — true, that is.

Project EverGreen’s recently launched GreenBack PayBack program allows contractors to contribute \$1,000 (either all upfront or \$50 per month for 20 months) to further the non-profit organization’s cause — promoting the myriad environmental, economic and lifestyle benefits of *properly managed* green spaces. By participating in this gas-and-groceries voucher program, you can recoup your entire investment and then some.

All you have to do is sign up today for GreenBack PayBack and show a little brand loyalty. Program participants select one of several major grocery-store chain partners and spend \$100 per month with that brand. Mail in the month’s grocery receipts totaling at least \$100 from that chain and, in return, you receive a free \$25 gift card from the chain shortly thereafter. The program works the same way for fuel purchases.

Do the math. That’s a \$25 gift card for groceries and a \$25 gift card for gas — and you can use these for your next month’s purchases — times 20 months. That totals \$1,000 in gift cards coming right back to you.

And, because Project EverGreen is a non-profit, your \$1,000 contribution via this program is tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Join the GreenBack PayBack army and help Project EverGreen, our industry and your business, and add up to a few hundred greenbacks to your bottom line over the next 20 months. Spread the good word: Every one of your co-workers, suppliers, customers, parents, siblings, neighbors, friends — you name them — is eligible for GreenBack PayBack. The program costs Project EverGreen less than \$100 per participant. The organization hopes to net a minimum of \$80,000 this year from GreenBack PayBack. All *we* need is about 90 participants. I’m in; 89 to go to hit goal.

Before I log off my sometimes-trustworthy Hal 3000 computer, this former U.S. Navy sailor has one more request. Since you, and your colleagues and friends, will be adding a few hundred bucks to your bottom lines by joining the GreenBack PayBack program, can you please give a few bucks back to the good folks protecting our great nation?

Project EverGreen also recently launched Buck It Up For Our Military Families. This new program is an extension of Project EverGreen’s widely successful GreenCare For Troops initiative, which provides free lawn care and landscaping services to military families whose breadwinners are serving overseas. During the past three years, GreenCare For Troops has helped approximately 7,700 military families through a national network of 2,100 volunteers.

Buck It Up hopes to generate \$250,000 to start a national scholarship program for military family members seeking careers in the horticultural field and to help fund GreenCare For Troops.

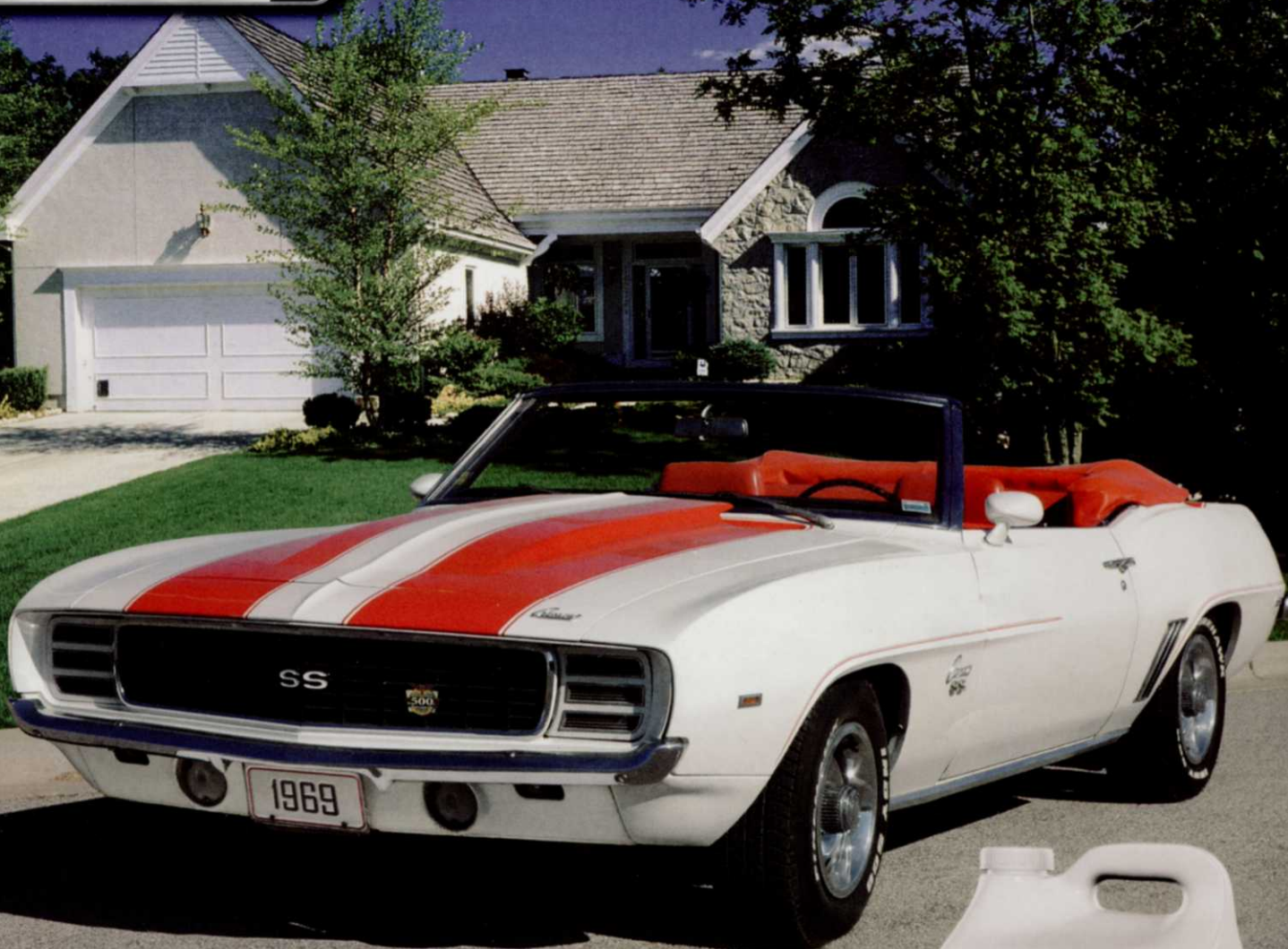
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