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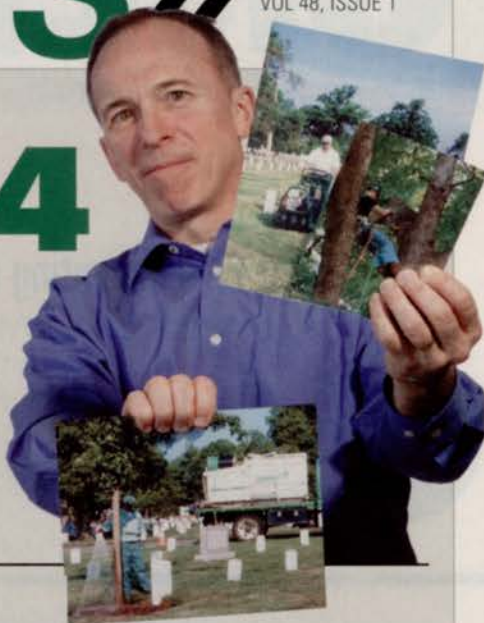
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The role of the accounting manager

The principles of the Wilson-Oyler Group, including Tom Oyler (right), explain the evolving role of the account manager to contractors as part of the firm's Success Series tour.

FROM THE FIELD



READERS RESPOND

How has the \$2.20-per-gallon average drop in gas prices over the past six months affected the fuel surcharge you added?



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Jeffrey Scott is a landscape-marketing consultant, business coach and author of “The Referral Guide” available at the LMBookstore at <http://shoPLandscapemanagement.net/>



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THE HALLMARK

RON HALL EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Contact Ron via e-mail at rhall@questex.com.

Tighten up now, before it's too late

What a dandy run we all had from 2002-2007. The U.S. economy hummed along, home construction boomed and credit, sweetened by temptingly low interest rates, flowed to anybody able to draw as much as a single warm breath. Who needed an ATM machine? The equity in our homes spit out cash for everything from pleasure boats to professionally designed and installed landscapes.

Many of you were as busy as you wanted to be, and you crammed as much production into your schedules as manpower and systems allowed.

Wasted time? Wasted materials? Yes, when you're running that fast and furious, details tend to fall through the cracks. Who's brave (or foolish) enough to attempt to change a tire when you're screaming along at 90 mph, right?

Even when things didn't go as smoothly (or profitably) as you would have liked on some jobs, you felt you could make it up on the next one. In most cases, you did. When the work was relatively easy to get and cash was flying in, you might have felt that you could afford to turn your head to a little sloppiness.

That won't cut it anymore.

Market conditions are nasty, the competitive

environment is getting bloodier and business casualties are mounting fast.

There's no reason for us to go into the sorry details of how our economy got into the mess we now find it in. It's history, so let's plow ahead and give ourselves a better chance of succeeding tomorrow and beyond.

That means streamlining our companies now — before we get into breakneck production. What we do in the next few weeks will be critical in preparing our companies for the scariest economic conditions we've yet faced.

Some of you might be going into 2009 confident that you will remain profitable. Others might be struggling to survive. It doesn't matter. Everyone's systems can be improved and made more efficient. Think back to this past season, and you'll agree with me.

Even when you were cranking out work like there was no tomorrow, didn't you sometimes feel like you needed too many last-minute fire drills to complete routine tasks? That too often it wasn't clear who was responsible for what in your company? That there was too much unnecessary duplication of effort?

Dissect your processes from start to finish. Break them into categories — sales, production, quality control, administration, etc. Huddle with key team members and analyze your systems one at a time, step-by-step. Look for wasted time, effort and materials. Be ruthless. Start with the small processes and work toward more complex ones. Small changes often result in big payoffs.

Once you've gone over a process or system, document the changes, communicate them to your employees, implement the changes, then monitor the improved processes to make sure they don't revert back to their inefficient ways. This is a continuous process. Once you start, don't stop.

And don't wait until the season gets hot and heavy. It will be almost impossible to make changes on the fly, and it will almost certainly be too late.

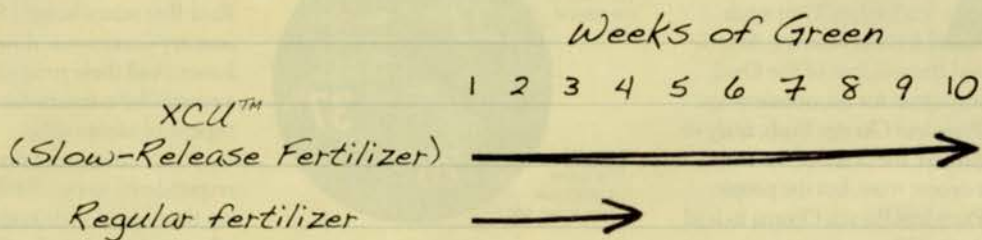
Some of you might be going into 2009 confident that you will remain profitable. Others might be struggling to survive. It doesn't matter. **Everyone's systems can be improved and made more efficient.**

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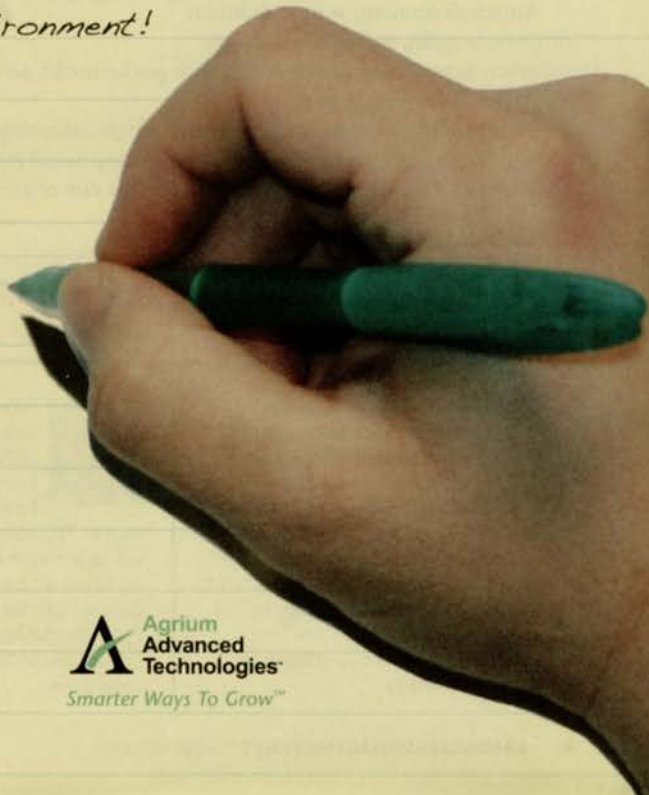


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Ask my distributor for a blend with at least 75% slow-release fertilizer. Insist on XCU!



NEWS+VIEWS

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

Obama election driven by economy

BY DAVID FRABOTTA

As the economic recession drags on, Americans are desperate for economic leadership. Ever since Herbert Hoover, Americans have used the resident of the Oval Office as a scapegoat for economic woes.

Former President George Bush, fairly or unfairly, might take the brunt of the criticism for our most-recent woes, but the people will look to President Barack Obama to lead us through the trouble.

Hoover, of course, had the unfortunate timing of taking the oath of office less than a year before the stock market crash of 1929. By 1933, stock prices were down 80% from their highs in 1929, which opened the door for a fiscally minded challenger. Franklin Roosevelt was an effective persuader and exhilarating speaker, who had the ability to reassure Americans the Great Depression would soon come an end.

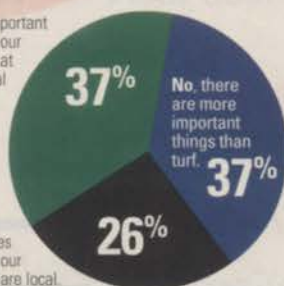
America's economy is in tumultuous times once again, and Green Industry members appear to have voted with their pocketbooks, according to our 2008 Election survey.

Housing foreclosures continue to send a frightening ripple through the banking sector, and jobs data is taking its toll on consumer confidence and spending. Though the rate of increase

Do turfgrass maintenance issues affect your federal voting preferences?

Yes, it's important to address our profession at the national level.

No, most of the issues that affect our profession are local.



What federal issues help dictate your candidate of choice? (please choose three answers)



in foreclosures has slowed in recent months, the overall number of foreclosures continues to climb.

The loss of manufacturing in many Rust Belt states helped fuel much of the country's economic downturn and job losses. And their struggling status has been a reason for concern for economists and superintendents alike.

So it's no wonder that three-quarters of respondents to our 2008 Election survey say they based their voting decisions on who would be best for the economy.

The economy was the most important federal issue for 74% of respondents, followed by national security (59%), taxes (56%) and military conflicts (43%).

Sixty-three percent of respondents said turfgrass maintenance issues do not influence their federal voting preferences, while 37% said it was important to address turfgrass maintenance issues, such as worker availability and chemical regulations, at the national level. Making up the 63% who do not vote on professional issues, 37% said there are more important things than turfgrass, and 26% said most turf maintenance issues are local.

FRABOTTA is a former Questex Media senior editor. He can be reached at info@landscapemanagement.net.

WORD ON THE STREET



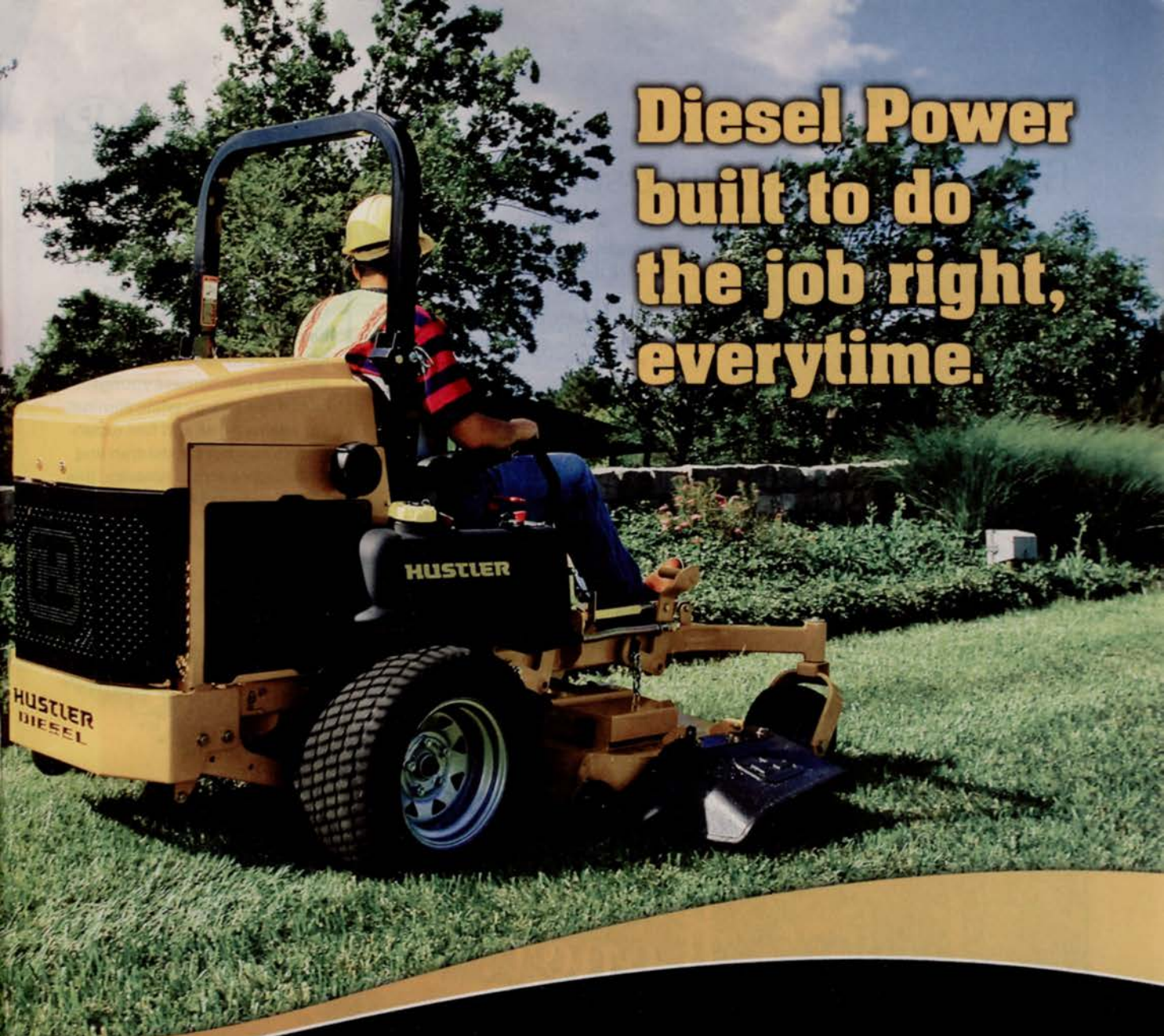
"Based on what I read and the opinions of the companies in my peer group and of a well-known oil executive in Denver I have a relationship with, we think gas will be sub-\$2 per gallon throughout 2009. We are keenly focused on reducing our fuel consumption by, among other tactics, efficiently routing of all of our work, re-evaluating the kind of equipment we use, and trying to travel during off-peak times."
— Tom Fochtman, co-owner and vice president for Denver-based CoCal Landscape



"We expect economic and market pressures to stabilize gas prices in 2009. This should reduce our fuel costs and help stabilize the prices for other oil-based commodities such as PVC piping and fertilizer. This certainly will be a welcome change from the wild swings we have seen the past few years. However, this does not take the pressure off. There are plenty of people chasing less work."
— Todd Williams, vice president of Littleton, CO-based American Civil Constructors



"Demand for fuel is down worldwide and will continue to be. Gas prices will continue to decrease in light of the current economic recession. Fuel represents 2% to 3% of our cost of goods sold, therefore, decreasing fuel prices could add a few percentage points to our bottom line. But it alone will not turn around the business. It will only lighten the burden and price wars going on in our industry."
— Joe Gonzalez, president and owner of Venice, FL-based ArtisTree Nursery Landscape Maintenance & Design



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Great American Cleanup sets record



Volunteers help reconstruct a park ravaged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Keep America Beautiful's Great American Cleanup campaign to clean-up and green-up communities in all 50 states, resulted in a record 48,000-plus gardens, green spaces and xeriscapes created in 2008.

"The impact of more than 48,000 gardens nationwide is wonderful to imagine," said Matthew M. McKenna, president and CEO of Keep America Beautiful Inc. "Every one of these public spaces could be providing a quiet place to reflect on nature, food for the community, a gateway for the neighborhood, an activity space for

kids, or even an offset to a community's carbon footprint. We are incredibly thankful to all the volunteers and partners who made this possible."

The movement to create gardens in 2008 involved public-private partnerships between businesses and governments at national, state and local levels. One such partnership involves The Scotts Miracle-Gro Co., which has provided 47 grants to Keep America Beautiful affiliates to support the creation and maintenance of green spaces and community gardens since 2005. This year, Scotts Miracle-Gro also supported a national campaign to educate consumers about the importance of conserving water.

"Green spaces and community gardens provide numerous benefits to our environment and neighborhoods, from protecting our water, to providing a place for relaxation and recreation," said Rich Shank, chief environmental officer for Scotts Miracle-Gro.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT ...

Child Labor ... 25 Years Ago

In 1984 the United States Patent and Trademark Office issued U.S. Patent No. 4,455,816 for the below-pictured Pedal-Operated Mower. Who needs H2-B visas when we can harness youngsters' boundless energy while eliminating engine noise and fuel expenditures? Luckily for children and landscapers across America, this invention pedaled nowhere fast.



PHOTO COURTESY: KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL; ILLUSTRATION COURTESY: UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



Photo Courtesy of Master Sgt. Jim Varhegyi, U.S. Air Force

Christmas Decor Congratulates Franchise Owner Phil Fogarty For His Achievement

All of us throughout the Christmas Decor organization offer our sincere congratulations to Phil Fogarty for receiving PLANET's Lifetime Leadership Award. Phil, we gratefully appreciate your service and dedication to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country who now rest at Arlington National Cemetery. Your philanthropic spirit is an inspiration to us all.



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MYBIGGESTMISTAKE

LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY » BY DANIEL G. JACOBS



Not doing the proper job costing meant leaving money on the table, or worse, doing work at a loss.

AFTER TWO YEARS in business, Ted Young, recognized the cost of earning a job at any cost.

"In the beginning you're so anxious or hungry to get business that you cut pricing to take it away from your competitors. It can come back to haunt you down the road if you don't do the proper job costing and make sure you're making money."

Reviewing every contract
"After year two we knew we were losing money."

Young spent the winter after his second year as an owner reviewing every contract. He had two choices: shed the non-profitable contracts or find ways to make the jobs profitable. Young used small increases and enhancements to start to bring the contracts in line. He also began using a software program to help the company more accurately track costs.

Detailed, profitable pricing
"Now that we're a bit more mature, every job has a price tag. We can tell

you how many hours it's going to take, how many men it will take, how much every item should cost and then give you detailed pricing."

The days of underpricing are long gone. If they weren't, Young's business might have been.

"If we had not made that change, this year would be very challenging. We probably would have been on the way out."

To share your biggest mistake, contact Dan Jacobs at djacobs@questex.com.

NAME/COMPANY:

Ted Young, director of operations, Pyramid Landscaping and Development

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FOUNDED: 2004

HEADQUARTERS:

Upper Marlboro, MD

2008 REVENUE: \$400,000

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Solemn salute

PLANET honors Phil Fogarty for organizing Renewal & Remembrance at Arlington National Cemetery — the Green Industry's annual service salute to America's military heroes and their families

WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE captured the essence of Renewal & Remembrance more than 100 years ago when the four-time British prime minister said, "Show me the manner in which a nation or community cares for its dead, and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals."

It is those same high ideals that rendered Phil Fogarty (typically a talkative, jolly lawn care company owner) speechless and tearful when he humbly accepted, on behalf of hundreds of volunteers and dozens of sponsors, the Lifetime Leadership Award for helping found and organize for 10 years the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET's) signature environmental enhancement project — Renewal & Remembrance at Arlington National and Historic Congressional cemeteries.

After 38 seconds at the podium during PLANET's Green Industry Conference Awards Banquet, moving his mouth to no avail, a surprised and shaken Fogarty finally uttered a precious few words (visit www.landscapemanagement.net to view the video of Fogarty's speech).

"When I think of Renewal & Remembrance, I think of all of the people who keep coming back, all of the volunteerism and gratitude this industry shares, and how it shows that the heart of this industry is in the right place all of the time," said Fogarty, president and owner of Cleveland-based Crowley's Vegetation Control and a Weed Man franchise owner and subfranchisor.

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

“Even though the event has changed and grown so much over the years, the really great thing is that everything important about Renewal & Remembrance has stayed the same — from the appreciation we feel to be there to the awe we feel when working in the cemetery plots — the weight of it all,” shared a leaky-eyed Fogarty. “And it’s that appreciation for what’s truly important in life that makes it so great to be in this business.”

Rooted in respect

Renewal & Remembrance’s roots reach back to 1993, when Fogarty was co-hosting “Root of the Matter,” a lawn-and-garden call-in show that aired on three Cleveland radio stations. Fogarty’s co-host, local tree care expert Lauren Lanphear, talked about how he and more than 400 other members of the then-called National

Arborist Association (now named the Tree Care Industry Association/TCIA) had just spent a national day of service sprucing up and protecting many of the more than 9,000 trees adorning the 630-acre Arlington National Cemetery.

“I said to Lauren, ‘PLCAA [The Professional Lawn Care Association of America] meets every year in D.C. for its Legislative Day. We should do something like this on the turf side,’” says Fogarty, noting the cemetery has 562 acres of turfgrass.

Fogarty asked Lanphear for the key contact at Arlington National Cemetery, and the rest is history. John C. Metzler Jr. (aka Jack), superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery since 1991, met with Fogarty and eventually agreed to allow PLANET’s predecessor association — PLCAA, which merged with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) in 2005 to form PLANET — to spend a day beautifying the hallowed grounds in Virginia.

Getting the green light from Metzler — who grew up on the grounds as the son of John C. Metzler Sr., a World War II sergeant and superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery from 1952-1972 — and putting all the pieces (professionals, equipment and materials) in place to launch Renewal & Remembrance took more than three years.

“To say that Phil was instrumental in initiating Renewal & Remembrance would be a real understatement,” says Erik Dihle, chief of grounds, burial operations and ceremonial support at Arlington National Cemetery. “Phil — with his boundless energy, warm way and desire to serve — was absolutely critical to getting this enhancement project going and growing, and to ensuring this shining example of public-private partnership will continue for decades to come.”

Rallying the troops

Renewal & Remembrance has come a long way from its humble beginnings in 1997, when about 30 Green Industry professionals and about 30 of their spouses and children volunteered to lime about 38 acres at Arlington National Cemetery.

In its second year, the annual enhancement project moved from February to July (along with the association’s annual Legislative Day), which allowed more aeration, turf renovation and sodding work and helped draw more volunteers. Not long after, Renewal & Remembrance expanded to include tree care, design/build work and weed control at Historic Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C., where 19 Senators and



Arlington National Cemetery dedicated a five-sided memorial to the 184 victims killed when terrorists seized control of American Airlines Flight 77 and flew the plane into the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

HIT CLOSE TO HOME

Erik Dihle, chief of grounds, burial operations and ceremonial support at Arlington National Cemetery, heard the roar of the plane rocketing by, 25 feet above his office. He figured it was a tributary “fly-by.” But seconds

later two earth-shaking booms — American Airlines Flight 77 striking the Pentagon and then its fuel tanks exploding — nearly knocked Dihle and his co-workers out of their chairs.

“We ran outside and after the massive cloud of smoke cleared a bit, we realized it was some kind of an attack,” somberly recalls Dihle, who that day lost a dear friend and carpool partner who worked at the Pentagon.

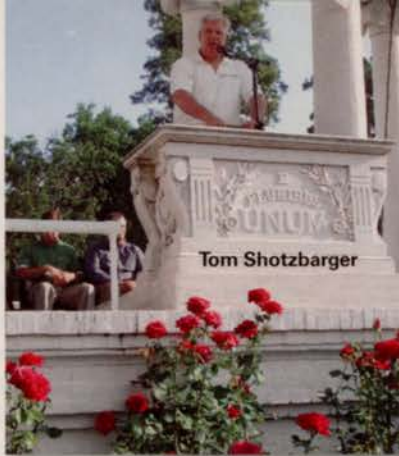
“Debris from the crash blew into several of our burial sections,” Dihle adds. “We closed the sections for two weeks so the FBI could conduct debris sweeps. I’ve worked here more than 25 years and have been deeply touched many days, but Sept. 11, 2001, really hit close to home.”

Tom Delaney, director of government affairs for the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), says the association’s annual Renewal & Remembrance enhancement work at the cemetery was more moving than usual in 2002.

“We put sod on some of the 60 or so graves stemming from that terrorist act,” Delaney says. “It was incredibly touching to see so many new tombstones, all with the same date of death, while cranes right across the street were still clearing away the wreckage at the Pentagon.” — MW

71 Representatives are buried. TCIA members helped PLANET expand tree care work in the mid-2000s, and design/build work at both cemeteries accelerated in 2005 when the lawn care and landscape associations united to form PLANET. Shortly thereafter, the Irrigation Association helped Renewal & Remembrance troubleshoot, redesign and rebuild irrigation systems on the hallowed grounds.

The volunteers really rallied over the years. In the past three years alone, nearly \$1 million in time and materials have been donated. Last year, more than 400 volunteers from 170 companies spanning 27 states (and about 80 of their spouses and children) joined forces to: spread 217,800 pounds of lime across 250 acres of turf at Arlington National Cemetery and 34,848 pounds of lime at Historic Congressional Cemetery; repair and install a number of irrigation systems; complete 819 landscape installations around Arlington National Cemetery's Visitor Center and



Tom Shotzbarger

TODAY WE WORK FOR THEM

"Today our efforts are for them — the military veterans and their families and friends. Brave men and women have sacrificed their lives. We sacrifice a day of effort to improve the beauty and health of this sacred resting place. Today is not about us. Today is for them.

Your state, the color of your shirt, the tractor you're riding, the spreader you're pushing, the shovel you're using — today these matter not.

Today is for them.

What really matters is that we offer our most-sincere efforts to honor the brave souls buried here.

Today is for them.

What matters is giving our time and talents.

Today is for them.

What matters is that we gratefully serve all who visit and all who abide on this hallowed site, Arlington National Cemetery.

Today we work for them."

—Tom Shotzbarger, Renewal & Remembrance Project Coordinator, and GM of Lancaster, PA-based Tomlinson Bomberger Lawn Care & Landscape

PHOTO BY: MARTY WHITFORD



BEFORE



AFTER

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elsewhere; and cable 14 trees and outfit four more with lightning protection across both cemeteries.

"Phil's vibrant personality and persistently positive attitude are contagious," says Tom Shotzbarger, GM of Lancaster, PA-based Tomlinson Bomberger Lawn Care & Landscape, to whom Fogarty passed the Renewal & Remembrance Project Coordinator torch in 2007. "Renewal & Remembrance, thanks in large part to Phil's 10 years of leadership, not only has improved the health and appearance of Arlington National and Historic Congressional cemeteries, it has changed the lives of all who have volunteered."

In — not for — recognition

Last year, PLANET nabbed an Award of Excellence for Renewal & Remembrance from the American Society of Association Executives and the Center for Association Leadership.

"Renewal & Remembrance is the most significant project PLANET does each year," said PLANET President Jason Cupp. "The natural

beauty and quiet grace of Arlington National Cemetery make it a place we feel compelled to protect and take care of. This extremely worthwhile, meaningful gift to the American people demonstrates our honor and remembrance of America's veterans and leaders."

Home of the Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington National Cemetery is the final resting place of American military heroes from every war the United States has fought in, as well as of President John F. Kennedy and the crew of the 1986 space shuttle Challenger, to name just a few of the big draws for the more than 4 million tourists who visit the sacred site every year.

"Most people don't know what a true honor it is to work at Arlington National Cemetery — until they come for the first time," adds Jeff Bisker, president of Your Lawn of Ashville, OH, who has participated in Renewal & Remembrance the past several years. "Our industry is one of the fortunate few."

Dihle concurred.

PRAYERFUL WORK

Over the past 17 years, as an editor I've covered hundreds of events across a number of markets — from rubber and plastics, to hotels and resorts, to waste management and sustainability, to pest management and now lawn care/maintenance, irrigation and landscape design/build.

Before that, I served four years in the United States Navy. At age 23, as a second-class petty officer aboard the USS Schenectady LST-1185, I was part of the first wave of Operation Desert Shield — the beginning of the first Persian Gulf War.

In all my travels and professional experiences, including my first visit to Pearl Harbor aboard the USS Schenectady and my stint in the Gulf, I've never been so moved to prayerful work and tears as I was July 21, 2008, when I first had the distinct honor of participating in the Professional Landcare Network's

(PLANET's) 12th annual Renewal & Remembrance environmental enhancement project at Arlington National and Historic Congressional cemeteries.

Tom Shotzbarger (aka "Shotz"), PLANET's Renewal & Remembrance Project Coordinator and GM of Lancaster, PA-based Tomlinson Bomberger Lawn Care & Landscape, "had me at hello." I will never forget Shotz's "Today we work for them" speech (see sidebar on page 17) delivered that day to more than 400 professional volunteers and about 80 of their spouses and children, or the beautifully open and honest way this mountain of a man showed me and the rest of the Green Industry that it's OK to be brought to tears.

Walking Arlington National Cemetery is a life-changing spiritual journey every time I make it.

As I trudged the sacred ground's hillsides with PLANET members last year, I was awestruck by how many military heroes have served America the

Beautiful faithfully through three wars.

I also was graced with the gift of a new perspective on time — and on my longtime friend's battle with terminal brain cancer — when I came across the grave of one soldier's baby, "Born March 18, 1950; Died March 19, 1950." I prayed for that soldier and his precious child, and for my buddy, as I thought, "We must live today well, for none of us is promised tomorrow."

One wondrous tree captivated me by its warm, strong, bark-built arms embracing one of our fallen heroes.

And my spirits soared to Heaven after reading a neighboring tombstone: *Love Makes Memory Eternal.*



Green life embraces eternal life throughout Arlington National Cemetery.

PHOTO BY MARTY ITCHIO

"Phil's offer of assistance was completely genuine and heartfelt from the start, and PLANET's purity of intention hasn't wavered one bit over the years," Dible says.

Fogarty says Green Industry professionals recognize the freedom their families and businesses enjoy is far from free and have a strong and growing desire to give back to those who "gave the last full measure of devotion," as President Abraham Lincoln referred to it in his Gettysburg Address.

"Our industry absolutely refuses to forget the ultimate sacrifice these American heroes — our nation's great veterans and leaders — and their families have made on our behalf," Fogarty concludes.

The industry's service salute doesn't stop with Renewal & Remembrance.

"We're equally grateful to those helping protect our freedom at this very moment," Fogarty adds. "That's

Throughout my walk, I kept hearing the voice of veteran Mac McIlvried, vice president of TruGreen LandCare, who earlier reminded Renewal & Remembrance volunteers that while very admirable, our actions that day pale in comparison to the sacrifices of those buried at Arlington National Cemetery. John C. Metzler Jr. (aka Jack), superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery, drove home the point when he noted that more than 324,000 brave souls had been put to rest at the 630-acre site and 6,000 more military heroes join the ranks there each year.

During last year's Renewal & Remembrance, Arlington National Cemetery welcomed home to their final resting places 31 freedom fighters. Throughout the day, I heard the beat of brave hearts that have stopped: The sound of taps, three ceremonial gunshots and horse-drawn caissons carrying caskets adorned with our beautiful nation's flag while color guards marched in perfect step as loved ones — some young widows and their children — said their final goodbyes.

It's OK to cry. — MFV

why Project EverGreen launched GreenCare for Troops, which has more than 2,000 companies signed up to help more than 7,000 military families maintain their properties' green spaces.

"The key to all of this is that we do this *in* recognition — not *for* recognition," says Fogarty.

And that is why Fogarty stood at the podium at PLANET's awards banquet for 38 seconds in solemn silence. LM

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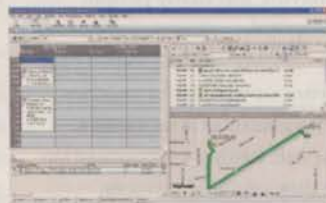


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WORKINGSMARTER

JIM PALUCH

The author is president of JP Horizons Inc. Visit www.jp horizons.com.

Identifying the seven deadly wastes

Waste is in your company. It's costing you a lot of money. If you look, you can find waste in almost every process — from the infamous getting out of the yard on time, to how many steps it takes to create a proposal to the time lost in following up on service orders.

Accepting the fact that waste even exists is the first step to driving out waste, allowing your team more time to add value to services and percentage points to your bottom line.

After you have accepted that waste is there and realize you do not need to be sick to get better, the next step is identifying the waste. What follows are the seven types of waste that can be found in almost any processes. When you name it, you can identify it and then you can eliminate it.

1. Overproduction — Something is done that doesn't need to be done, such as going to a site and cutting grass that doesn't need to be cut.

It also can be about delivering more quality on a project than needed or having too many people involved in creating a proposal.

2. Waiting — Employees standing around, looking for instruction from a supervisor or waiting for another employee to finish a job are common time wasters. Another is administrative staff waiting for information from salespersons before they can send invoices.

3. Transportation — The most obvious example is the truck traveling from one point to another; it's necessary, but it's still waste. Transportation

waste also can be moving equipment, paperwork or people from one point to another.

4. Extra processing — Why do we have two people doing a task that one person can do? This includes too much paperwork or reporting that isn't being used or information that isn't being shared.

5. Inventory — Whether it's too much or too little, battling inventory waste is a problem caused by a lack of discipline or standards to manage it. If you have an irrigation van, look in it and start adding up the potential dollars lost. That's waste, too.

6. Motion — Crawling over or around equipment to get to another piece of equipment is wasted effort. Watch someone loading or unloading a truck. Why do they load it this way?

7. Defects — Poor quality resulting in service calls, or machines breaking down, stopping production, or any other situation that causes rework or lost time. You don't have to put up with it.

Now that you have identified waste, motivate yourself to

eliminate it by estimating how much it is costing your company.

When I have clients do this exercise in a "Working Smarter Day" they realize that they can improve profits by driving out the waste they have identified. They also realize that sometimes the simplest and most common process can yield large gains when they take action to eliminate the waste.

As you and your team begin to identify waste, you might hear a common phrase that will always give it away. When you hear someone say, "I know we can't do *this* any faster. We have been doing it this way for years and we know that this is the fastest way to do it."

When you hear that, it's time to go work. You still have plenty of waste to identify.

MONTHLY CHALLENGE

Choose just one process and observe it, process map it, see how many of the seven types of waste you can identify, and then estimate the potential savings there would be annually if you were to drive the waste out of that one process.

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When you're in the market for a new compact tractor, consider the kinds of accounts where you'll be using it. You'll also want to think about:

- ▶ Horsepower;
- ▶ Traction and control;
- ▶ Automatic vs. manual transmission;
- ▶ Gas vs. diesel engine;
- ▶ Cutting blade size;
- ▶ Steering system;
- ▶ Lift capacity (when outfitted as a loader);
- ▶ Rollover protection and other safety features;
- ▶ Ergonomic design to reduce operator fatigue; and
- ▶ Attachments from snow plow blades to cup holders

↑ Cub Cadet Yanmar

The large chassis of the new Ex450 compact tractor from Cub Cadet Yanmar can accommodate a wide array of attachments, including a front loader with a universal quick-attach bucket, backhoe and three-point implements. Features include a 9x9 transmission, a four-cylinder, 45-hp diesel engine, and a lift capacity of more than 2,400 lbs. www.cubcadetyanmar.com or 877/CUB-5055

Allis-Chalmers

The Allis-Chalmers line has been reintroduced by Briggs & Stratton. The all-new AC130 series of tractors features a 14-in. turning radius, simple pedal operation, and a hydro-automatic transmission. The affordable series includes 42- and 46-in. cutting widths. www.allischalmerslawn.com

Husqvarna

All of Husqvarna's LS Series tractors with 46-in. or greater widths have welded, rein-

forced cutting decks with Air Induction mowing technology. The decks are easy to maintain with the built-in deck wash system, allowing users to simply connect the garden hose to wash the underside. For user comfort, the Husqvarna LS Series has a 15-in.-high back seat, ergonomically arranged controls and step-through design. www.usa.husqvarna.com or 800/HUSKY-62

Montana Tractors

Montana offers a wide range of compact and utility tractors with models ranging from 23 hp to 70 hp. Montana tractors are available in compact 4-wheel-drive models and utility models with a choice of 2- or four-wheel drive. The utility models offer a choice of open station with rollover protection system or wrap-around, high-visibility Big Sky Cab. Implements include front-end loaders, scrapers, pallet forks, rotary cutters, finish mowers, rear tillers, rear blades, yard rakes, box blades, post hole diggers, augers, spreaders, discs, dump trailers, wagons and backhoes. www.montanatractors.com or 800/872-1910

John Deere

The 3000 TWENTY Series offers four models ranging from 30 hp to 44 gross hp with Yanmar Tier II-compliant diesel engines and turbo-charged performance. The eHydro transmission provides superior speed selection and productivity with no clutching or shifting required. Deere's patented features such as LoadMatch, MotionMatch, SpeedMatch, the new performance tracking system. An automotive-style diagnostic control center, provides operator convenience. www.deere.com or 800/537-8233

Kiotti

Kiotti introduces the DK75 tractor, featuring a 75-hp, 268.5-cu.-in. turbo-charged diesel engine, mounted to a fully synchronized transmission with 12 gears. www.KIOTTI.com or 877/GO-KIOTTI

continued on page 24

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continued from page 22

Snapper

The GT600 subcompact garden tractor features a 27-hp diesel engine and four-wheel drive. The Briggs & Stratton 27-hp Vanguard diesel is a three-cylinder, fuel-injected engine that offers high torque, fuel economy and extended maintenance intervals. The tractor features a 54-in. deep-profile mower with anti-scalp rollers for a precision cut without scalping. www.snapper.com or 888/SNAPPER

New Holland

As part of New Holland's Lean and Mean series of economy tractors, the three-cylinder, 30-hp T1510 compact tractor can be customized with a choice of transmissions, two-wheel drive or front-wheel

drive axle and other features. The T1510 boasts several standard feature upgrades compared to the TC30 model it replaces, including a foldable ROPS (Roll Over Protective Structure) for height restrictions or special work, two-position extendable drawbar and a fender-mounted cup holder. www.newholland.com or 866/726-3396

Ventrac

The 4200VXD series of compact tractors enhances maneuverability and stability by conforming to the contour of the terrain. Operators can choose either gas or diesel, liquid-cooled engines ranging from 27-hp to a 31-hp TURBO Diesel. More than 30 attachments, designed with Ventrac's Minute Mount System, are available. www.ventrac.com or 866/VENTRAC



↑ Mahindra USA

Mahindra USA's 2816 model boasts a 28-hp engine and lift capacity of 2,205 lbs. The three-cylinder tractor is ergonomically designed, counting a foldable rollover protection system (ROPS) and four-wheel-drive among its standard features. The 2816 is available in either gear or hydrostatic transmission to meet user needs. www.mahindrausa.com / 800-887-2286

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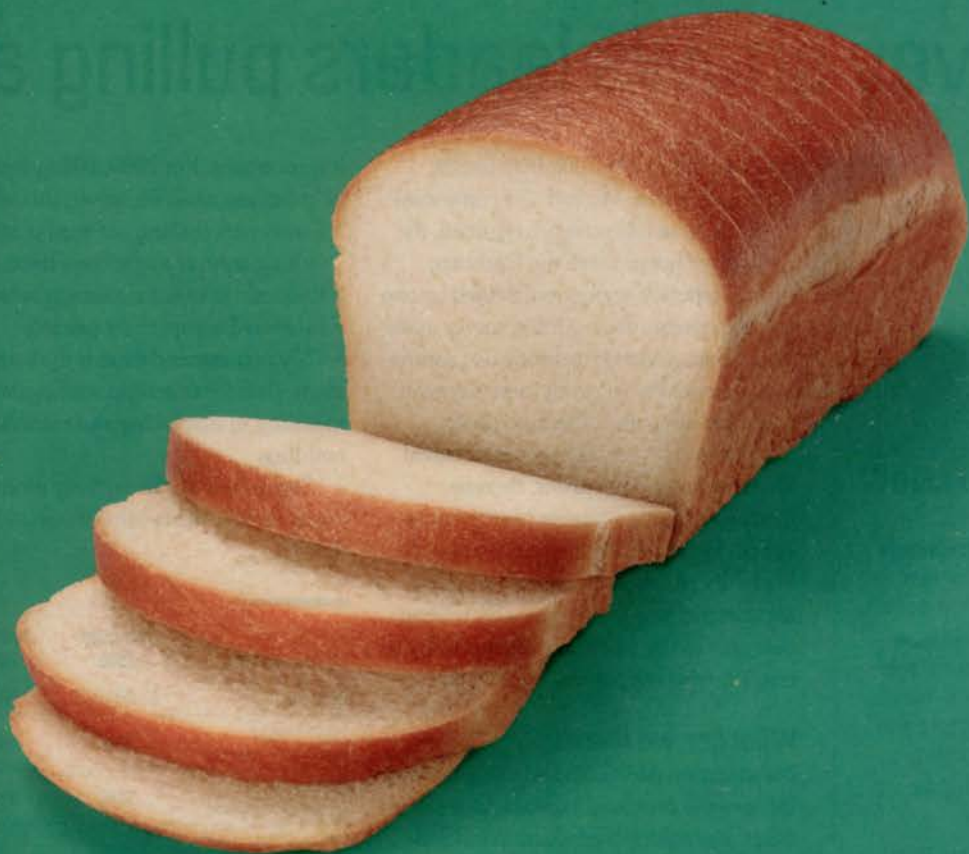
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PROVEN SOLUTIONS



THE BENCHMARK

KEVIN KEHOE

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

Survey shows leaders pulling away

The results of our 2008 Benchmark Survey are in. We had 154 companies respond to our survey. In general, the average net profit in the landscape construction segments declined by two to three percentage points since our last survey a few years ago. By contrast, grounds maintenance companies actually experienced a net profit improvement.

At the same time, the high profit companies in every segment maintained the same level of net profit, thereby increasing their advantage over the average performance level. The accompanying tables clearly show this. To simplify the comparisons, I am using a \$2 million company as the baseline and reporting the cost/expense as a percent of revenue.

What can we learn?

Construction (bid/build and design/build): Increases in overhead expenses more than offset very solid job production efficiencies for this group. For 2009, declining commodity prices will help reduce some overhead expenses (mainly fuel), but the

real challenge for this segment is revenues.

Given the economic slowdown and the increasing competitiveness for the fewer opportunities remaining, gross margins will be under a lot of pressure. This means that companies in this segment will need to review and update their estimating systems and tighten default production factors and material costs.

At the same time, I am recommending staff cutbacks for many of my clients to address potential revenue declines. This means owner-managers will need to be more involved than ever in day-to-day operations, and remaining overhead staff will need to wear more hats.

Grounds maintenance: Increased job production efficiencies for this group, combined with overhead expense controls, contributed to the net profit

improvement. For 2009, falling fuel prices will really help this segment. However, this will be offset by:

- › Customers seeking reduced contract budgets (asking contractors to save them money);
- › Reductions in enhancement sales; and
- › Increased competitive pricing.

My recommendation is the same for this segment: Reduce overhead staffing, while increasing spending in marketing and information system building.

Stay tuned. In the coming months, I will break down further the results of our 2008 Benchmark Survey.

TERMS TO KNOW

Gross margin percentage is gross profit dollars divided by revenue dollars.

Gross profit is revenue minus direct production labor payroll, job materials, subcontractors and job equipment rentals.

Overhead is all other expenses.

Net profit is gross profit minus overhead.

	Average 2005	Average 2008	High Profit 2008
Construction			
Revenue	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Gross margin <i>(as percent of revenue)</i>	33%	36%	45%
Overhead <i>(as percent of revenue)</i>	28%	33%	37%
Net profit <i>(as percent of revenue)</i>	\$100,000 5%	\$60,000 3%	\$160,000 8%

	Average 2005	Average 2008	High Profit 2008
Design/Build			
Revenue	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$1,000,000
Gross margin <i>(as percent of revenue)</i>	46%	46%	48%
Overhead <i>(as percent of revenue)</i>	39%	42%	34%
Net profit <i>(as percent of revenue)</i>	\$140,000 7%	\$80,000 4%	\$140,000 14%

	Average 2005	Average 2008	High Profit 2008
Maintenance			
Revenue	\$2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Gross margin <i>(as percent of revenue)</i>	52%	54%	56%
Overhead <i>(as percent of revenue)</i>	44%	44%	40%
Net profit <i>(as percent of revenue)</i>	\$160,000 8%	\$200,000 10%	\$280,000 14%

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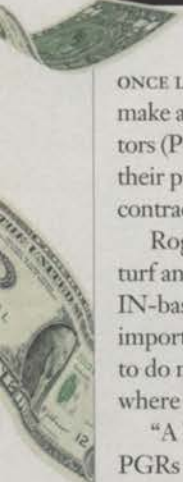
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One Tough Animal



MAKING PGRs PROFITABLE

Plant growth regulators are engineered to help contractors save labor and fuel. BY CURT HARLER



ONCE LANDSCAPERS REALIZE they can make a buck using plant growth regulators (PGRs), they will make them part of their programs. But the problem is many contractors don't understand PGRs.

Roger Storey, vice president of the turf and ornamental unit at Carmel, IN-based SePRO, stresses that it's important to see the value. "If you want to do more with the same crew, that's where PGRs can help," he says.

"A lot of landscapers are afraid of PGRs because they don't feel they have adequate knowledge about using them," says Laylah VanBibber, director of marketing at PBI Gordon, Kansas

City, MO. Many more landscapers use PGRs for ornamental treatments than for mowing, she says.

PBI Gordon finished a study of 584 landscapers early in December and found that just 7.1% use PGRs for mowing, most citing the cost of the product and uncertainty about use.

About two-thirds of those responding charge for their services on a per-mow basis. It's tough for them to justify a higher cost service to the customer when the customer sees fewer mowings.

But industry sources say, and studies show, that PGRs can more than pay for themselves with labor and fuel savings on the turf-maintenance side as well.

Stay manicured longer

Contract mowers have an easier time justifying PGRs. It's simple to cost-justify PGRs on hard-to-mow or dangerous areas. Steep hillsides or ditch banks are perfect for PGR use. The seedhead-suppression is good, too, especially on larger, more remote turf areas.

"Without raggedy seedheads sticking up, a far-away area will look trim for a longer time without additional mowing," VanBibber says.

Another key market is cemeteries or other places with a lot of trimming required. "PGRs are a great tool to spray around headstones to reduce trimming," says Dennis Shepard, Ph.D., a technical representative for Syngenta Professional Products.

Labor, equipment costs and clipping removal figure large in the PBI Gordon study. Travel to the job site does not.

Interestingly, 48% of contractors bag clippings. Reducing the number of clippings to remove is another place PGRs cut costs.

Twice as nice

Perhaps the newest product on the market is Legacy, a combination of Primo (trinexapac-ethyl + flurprimidol) and Cutless (flurprimidol). SePRO introduced it last May. Legacy is labeled for golf courses (not landscape use), although Storey says the company expects to expand the label.

Legacy acts two ways on the plant cycle, one early and one late. The result, research says, is enhanced suppression, better color and about a week's extra activity. In addition, Storey says the "rebound" effect noted with Primo alone is eliminated. Cutless works on the roots, Primo on the leaf.

Because PGRs slow down turf growth, lawn pros can realize significant savings in fuel costs, labor reduction and/or reallocation for other tasks. Plus, their mowing equipment will work more efficiently and last longer, says Shepard, adding that PGRs make even more economic sense where the lawn care pro has contracted for the mowing and landscape maintenance operation.

PGRs also can help lawn maintenance companies expand their customer bases. Cool-season turf species like tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass grow very fast in the spring, and it is a challenge to keep up with the mowing. PGRs can be used to manage the growth during the spring, and turf growth will slow as the temperatures warm.

"In the North, one or two applications will greatly reduce unsightly Poa annua seedheads in the spring," says Don Myers, product development manager for herbicides and PGRs with Bayer Environmental Science.

While Bayer's Proxy is known in turf-grass for seedhead suppression, the company has another product in the wings for use on trees and hedges. It has been registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but has not yet been

continued on page 30



Untreated lawn



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UFLEXX
STABILIZED NITROGEN FERTILIZER

MAKING PGRs PROFITABLE

continued from page 28

released. While it first will be targeted at the nursery business, the material likely will see use in the T&O area.

"I think it could be of value in a landscaping situation," Myers says. "If you didn't have to prune hedges and could get a more restrictive growth pattern with less labor, it would be worth considering."

Success in the South

Southern landscapers do a lot of ornamental trim work — sometimes twice a month. A PGR can cut the number of trips for a Southeastern landscaper by 30% to 50%, says Storey.

"Think of what you save in terms of labor, travel, fuel costs and new

Protecting our PGR tools

All eyes in the landscaping world continue to be on Ontario, Canada, where herbicide and pesticide use on landscapes has been severely curtailed.

"Ontario will have ratty lawns with dandelions," notes Bayer's Don Myers. "Will that be acceptable? If the public will not tolerate that look, then we will get push-back."

Perhaps of greater concern is the use of generic products, including plant growth regulators (PGRs).

"This is a great challenge for manufacturers," Myers says. "Short-term, landscapers will be happy with cheaper product — if it performs equally. In many cases, however, it will not."

Pests become resistant to older materials, he points out, plus "when you hamper the profits of basic manufacturers, you will have a negative effect on new chemical development." — C.H.



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opportunity to do other business," Storey says.

"Most LCOs want to slow turf growth to reduce mowing and clippings," says Shepard, noting several areas of the U.S. have limits on "green waste" going to landfills.

But because PGRs can be especially sensitive to the weather, geography and timing of application, some applicators simply are better at the art than others. How does one join the elite group?

Knowing the material's mode of action is one key to success. "It is important to know whether the PGR is taken up by the foliage or the roots," Shepard says.

PGR use in lawn care is not an area covered heavily in most states' license programs. "Go to the manufacturer," VanBibber recommends. "Co-workers in the industry are also good resources," Shepard adds.

"It's a good time for landscapers to try PRs as they need to cut labor and fuel expenses," VanBibber concludes. LHM

HARLER is a freelance writer who lives in Strongsville, OH. Contact him at curt@curtharler.com.



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Repair or remove weak links

There's a parking garage near work with a great "early bird" special. As long as you're in by 11 a.m., the fee is only \$4. Most early specials end at 8:30 a.m., so if I have a late appointment (or just roll out of bed later than I should), I can still park at a pretty reasonable rate.

The one drawback is on event nights. When there is a concert downtown or a Cleveland Cavaliers or Indians game, the garage wants you to clear out by 5:30 p.m. (or they start tacking on an extra fee). Usually that's not a problem, but every so often my dedication to this magazine (just in case the boss is reading this) keeps me here late. A couple months ago, I left work about 5:15 p.m. for the short walk to the garage, hopped in my car and threaded my way down the sloped parking decks to the pay booth. It was about 5:28 p.m. and there were several cars queued up waiting to sit in even longer lines on the streets heading out of downtown. Four minutes ticked by before I could pull up to pay for my nightly freedom. I handed

the young woman a \$5 bill. She said thanks and raised the zebra-striped barrier barring my exodus.

I asked for my change, and she said the fee had risen a buck because it was now past 5:30 p.m. I explained (with a little annoyance in my voice) that I was trying to get out before the deadline, but because they weren't able to process cars fast enough, the deadline passed. It was their fault, not mine.

I was about ready to forego the dollar when the attendant leaned out of her booth spoke over my head to the co-worker in the next booth, ranting about "one more customer showing her disrespect..." At that moment the dollar became about principle. I shifted the car into park and sat there until she called over her supervisor. After my brief explanation, he reached into his pocket, handed me a dollar and I was on my way.

I used to park in that garage fairly regularly. In the past two months, I've only parked there twice. I found another early bird special that is only slightly more expensive, but they don't charge a late fee, even on game nights.

Losing one customer in a garage that holds hundreds of vehicles is not going to bankrupt the company that owns the garage. It might never go beyond that supervisor. But that low-level front line employee soured me — and many of the co-workers to whom I've told the story — on the garage.

I can't imagine I was the first customer to complain that it was slow service that pushed me past the 5:30 p.m. deadline. Imagine the good will it would have created if the company had given the employee the ability to forego the extra dollar for five or 10 minutes. Heck, imagine if they'd given her a little customer service training — taught her to smile, listen to complaints and empowered her to take immediate action to make it right.

Every company is only as likeable as its front-line employees. If you don't know how to interact effectively with customers, your next communication with that client might be about why they're now giving their business to your competitor.

If you don't know how to **interact effectively with customers**, your next communication with that client might be about why they're now **giving their business to your competitor**.

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Sam Farison

In 1971, brothers **Sam Farison** and Dan Farison created Farison Lawn Care with the goal of delivering the best residential lawn care possible. The company grew and established itself as the premiere lawn care company in the Louisville, KY, area. In 1995, after word spread about improvements Farison made to a local high school sports field, it started a lucrative new service.

How did your company's sports field maintenance division come about? We got started as an athletic booster, helping out at the school that I attended, Eastern High School. We did that field, and other schools started asking us to do work. The athletic director there knew everybody and he kept giving our name out — and it took off from there.

We offer a regular maintenance program for athletic fields. It's neat to be the only one in town that does something like this. We're not used to that in the lawn care business.

As you know, synthetic turf is the rage in sports fields these days. Will you be getting into that business? For some schools that's the only good option, given the amount of use their fields get. Few schools have the luxury of game fields and practice fields for every sport. But we're not going into the carpet laying business. Most of that work is subsurface construction — and while we do some field construc-

tion, we're not interested in installing synthetic turf fields. We feel there will continue to be a need for what we're doing.

Farison Lawn Care has been a recognized brand in the Louisville market for more than 35 years. Tell us how it started. My brother Dan and I were basically kids, and we were looking for ways to make money on the side, so we started mowing lawns. When FIFRA (the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, which was put under U.S. EPA oversight in 1972) came along, we were among the first people in Kentucky to get pesticide licenses.

In the late 1970s we quit mowing and concentrated on lawn care. We were the mavericks at the time because we started out as a granular company and

always put down product as granular. Now, of course, that's common.

How has the business changed since the two of you began the company? We have better products with lower levels of active ingredients. That includes fungicides, herbicides and insecticides. The evolution has been positive and environmentally friendly.

What do you see as the biggest challenges for the industry? The slowing economy and rising costs. Also the uncertainty of costs like fuel jumping up and down are making it hard to plan.

Planning for the future seems to be getting more difficult, but I'm still optimistic that consumers need and want lawn care. We'll be out there doing our own thing, which is delivering a quality lawn care program.

AT A GLANCE

COMPANY: Farison Lawn Care, Louisville, KY

FOUNDED: 1971

NUMBER OF OUTLETS: 1

EMPLOYEES: 21

EDUCATION/CERTIFICATIONS: Sam holds a bachelor's of science degree in plant sciences from Western Kentucky University; Dan attended the University of Kentucky

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT: Sam served as a board member of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, three terms on the board of directors of the Kentucky Turfgrass Council (two terms as president, and was on the board of directors of the Green Industry Expo (one term as president)

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

FAMILY: Sam's two daughters, Jessica and Kylie, and Dan's son, Parker, work in the business.

WEB SITE: farison.com

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A ZERO-TURN FOR THE WORSE

The economy has made people cautious, but lower fuel prices and new technology give manufacturers hope for the zero-radius turn mower this year. BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

IT WOULDN'T BE a surprise if landscape contractors' children never learned (or at least were discouraged from singing) "Rain, rain go away; come again another day."

A sinking economy and rising fuel prices influence the way a lot of contractors run their businesses, but the single biggest factor might be the weather.

"You can give me a slow or poor economy and give me a lot of rain, and our industry is going to do all right," says Roy Dust, product specialist with Briggs & Stratton Yard Power Products Group - Commercial Division. "Give me the best economy you can, but if it's not raining, none of us are going to do squat."

The irony, of course, is that contractors can't control the weather; so they make decisions based on those other two factors. And when it comes to zero-radius turn mowers, there are several things to consider heading into 2009.

The economy

"We're all bracing for a tough year," says Gilbert Peña, commercial segment strategy manager for John Deere. "Contractors, though, are optimistic the economic trend might not affect them. They have a strong feeling we can make it through this thing."

One way to do that is to hang on to a mower a little bit longer.

"The majority of the commercial customers tend to do a higher amount

of maintenance on their mowers, rather than replace them," Dust says. "It's become more important to look at cost of operation, return on investment and productivity. The fewer people they can do more with, the lower their overhead, the lower their personnel issues."

Briggs & Stratton, which owns the Ferris brand, hopes contractors will do that with the Evolution, a compact zero-radius turn mower introduced late last year.

"Contractors needed the faster ground speed that a stand-on or a

smaller zero-turn rider provides them than an intermediate walk-behind with a sully does," Dust explains. "It's premature to say we're going to revolutionize the market. It is as compact as a stand-on, yet it is a dedicated ride-on with a very ergonomically correct and comfortable position to be in."

Doing more, more efficiently is a universal mantra.

"It looks like manufacturers are trying to take costs out and find ways to produce them for less money and really put good technology in zero-turn mowers, but keep them inexpensive," says Tim Cromley, sales and marketing manager for Walker Manufacturing.

Walker's zero-turn mowers employ electronic fuel injection (EFI) systems.

"The payoff is a proven technology," Cromley says. "We've continued to develop electronic fuel injections as an improved method for clean air and fuel efficiency."



New zero-turn mowers are more efficient and compact than previous generation models.

→ Wright Stander ZK



↑ Toro's Z Master G3

→ FERRIS
Propane Powered
IS 3100ZP



→ Grasshopper
FrontMount 735BT



Exmark Manufacturing, which introduced its Next Lazer Z at GIE+EXPO last year, also offers an EFI solution.

"We currently have EFI engines that meet the needs of some green-compliant definitions," says Dan Dorn, product sales manager. "It will be imperative that all contractors manage their money and their debt-to-asset ratio, and how they structure their business."

Alternative fuels

When gasoline prices rise as they did last summer, many contractors begin

looking at alternatives. Propane still seems the most viable, but that might change over the next decade.

Hustler Turf Equipment recently introduced the first all electric zero-turn riding mower. The battery-driven Hustler Zeon holds a charge for up to 80 minutes.

"If you imagine our industry five years, 10 years from now, what kind of run times can we get from a 100% electric machine?" muses Adam Mullet, director of marketing for Hustler Turf Equipment. "That's what we see as the long, long-term goal."

Batteries are an emerging technology, but right now they're not quite capable of delivering a day's worth of cutting.

"It's in its infancy," Dust says of all-battery powered mower technology, "but I think with the incoming (Obama) administration, and with the trend that has been started, it's on a much more accelerated course than it was (last year)."

Still, there's no substitute for a little rain. **L.M.**



↓ Walker's MT31L mower with electronic fuel injection

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BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

The author is a partner with the Wilson-Oyler Group consultancy. Visit www.wilson-oyler.com.

Want *profitable* growth? Find the missing link between sales, operations

Growth is important to most business owners, but *profitable* growth is even more important. Profitable growth is possible when you link sales and operations.

The linking of sales and operations must be a company-wide discipline. Often, sales and operations departments exist in separate silos within a company. The sales department's core objective is to sell *new* work; the operations department's core objective is to execute the work and maintain client relationships. A common misconception is that sales departments *sell* work and operations departments *perform* work.

How do you link sales and operations, and what are you trying to accomplish?

Profit's the goal

To grow profitably, companies need to:

- › Sell projects that operations can produce profitably;

- › Bring in business that improves your operation's density model, thereby reducing travel;
- › Land new projects that lead to profitable enhancement work,
- › Sell to customers who have multiple properties meeting the above criteria;
- › Operate efficiently to maintain a competitive edge;
- › Engineer operations to meet customer types and project types being sold; and
- › Leverage service lines (maintenance, irrigation service, tree care, plant health care) and cross sell.

Cautions to heed

To grow profitably, companies must resist the temptation to:

- › Take only the low-hanging fruit (easy sales);
- › Match low prices;
- › Drive sales by referrals, which is easy but not necessarily profitably linked to operations; and
- › Grow solely for the sake of growth.

Back to basics

Organizationally, companies must:

- › Align sales to operations and vice versa;
- › Strategically plan growth;
- › Strategically build operations;
- › Foster communication opportunities that keep sales and operations aligned; and
- › Relentlessly control overhead costs to maintain their competitive edge.

Owners, by nature, have either an operational or a sales focus. They build their companies around their personal strengths, at least initially. Eventually, to succeed, they must link sales and operations.

Keep the concept of linking sales and operations at the forefront of planning and strategy sessions for this to remain part of the company culture. It's not easy, but the payoff in *profitable* growth is worth the effort and discipline.

The sales department's core objective is to sell *new* work; the operations department's core objective is to execute the work and maintain client relationships.

A common misconception is that sales departments *sell* work and operations departments *perform* work.

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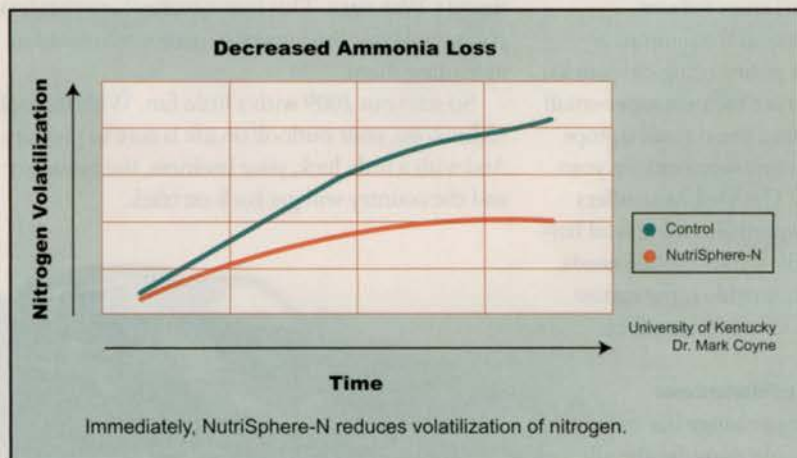


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INFOTECH

TYLER WHITAKER

The author is a freelance technologist. Contact him at 801/592-2810 or visit www.tylerwhitaker.com.

2009 technology buying guide



Let's face it: For many, 2008 was a tough year. Talk of recession, bailouts, financial meltdowns and endless election coverage has left us a little sober and in dire need of some fun. So with Christmas over and a new year ahead, it's time to get yourself the gifts you *really* wanted for Christmas. I've collected a list of my favorite technology to help brighten your New Year.

T-Mobile G1 (Google) Phone | www.t-mobileg1.com
Looking for a new phone for the coming year? Check out the new phones running the Google Android mobile operating system. This next-gen mobile platform integrates all of your favorite Google software and search functionality into a state-of-the-art user experience.

T-Mobile is the first carrier to support the Google phone with its G1 offering. It's packed with all the features you have come to expect: high-speed 3G, Wi-Fi, touch screen, full keyboard and a 3.2-megapixel camera. Look for more carriers and handsets to be available in for 2009.

Dell Inspiron Mini 12 Laptop | www.dell.com
Now there's no need lug around that laptop, or learn to type on your smart phone using chopsticks. The latest trends in laptops are the new super-small "netbooks." At less than 3 lbs., these small laptops are the perfect replacement for your day planner. The Dell Mini offers plenty of storage (80 GB), speed (1.6 GHz) and battery power (six hours) for all of your mobile needs. The only thing you need to provide is the excuse for working poolside, instead of in your office.

2009 Tesla Roadster | www.teslamotors.com
If all the recent talk of climate change has really dampened your spirits, you might consider the all-electric 2009 Tesla Roadster. This two-seat, rear-wheel-drive sports car will take you from 0 to 60 mph in under 4 seconds. With a top speed of

125 mph, you can put your cares far behind you.

The best part is the guilt-free, 248-hp, 375-volt AC induction air-cooled electric motor that powers the car. A 3.5-hour charge will get you a range of 220 miles.

This is the kind of car that should have "Congressional bailout dollars" written all over it.



Eye-Fi Wi-Fi SD Memory Cards | www.eye.fi

Spend a little less time wrangling your digital photos this year with a Wi-Fi enabled secure digital (SD) memory card from Eye-Fi. If you're like me, then you love taking digital pictures. I've found

that taking them is the fun part, but uploading them to my home computer is another story.

These standard 2- and 4-GB SD cards work just like your existing cards. They also have a built-in Wi-Fi chip that can connect to your home wireless access point or the Internet. Imagine taking pictures and having them automatically uploaded to your home computer or one of 20+ online photo-sharing Web sites. This is one technology that lets you spend your time making memories instead of uploading them.

So start out 2009 with a little fun. With the right technology, your outlook on life is sure to pick up. And with a little luck, your business, the economy and the country will get back on track.



BY THE NUMBERS

DATA BYTES FOR THOUGHT

Small business is BIG business

There are 27.2 million small businesses in the United States:

- » They employ about half of the country's private-sector work force.
- » They include 52% home-based businesses.
- » They represent 99.7% of all employer firms.
- » They generate a majority of the innovations that come from United States companies.

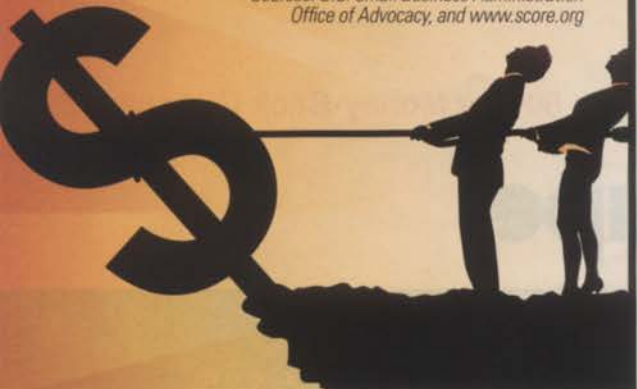


Source: U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, September 2008

SMALL-BUSINESS SURVIVAL RATES

- » In 2007, there were 637,100 new businesses, 560,300 business closures and 28,322 bankruptcies.
- » Two-thirds of new employer firms survive at least two years.
- » Approximately 44% survive at least four years.
- » About 31% survive at least seven years.

Sources: U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, and www.score.org

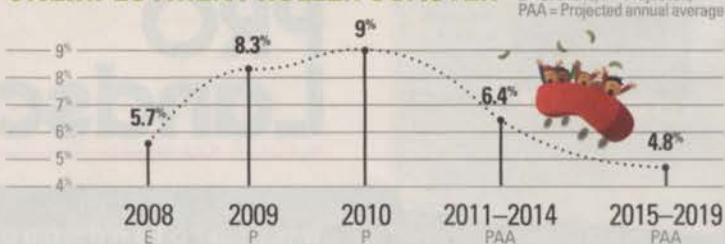


BizBuySell.com's landscape business transactions

	Second quarter 2008	Third quarter 2008
Number of transactions	35	20
Median sales price	\$270,000	\$201,500
Average sale price-to-asking price ratio	0.90	0.92
Average annual revenue-to-sale price multiple	0.69	0.62
Median annual revenue	\$478,399	\$303,986
Average cashflow-to-sale price multiple	2.02	1.47
Median cashflow	\$135,000	\$106,759

Source: www.bizbuysell.com

UNEMPLOYMENT ROLLER COASTER



Source: U.S. Congressional Budget Office

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Pack trial preview

PLANT BREEDERS REVEAL WHAT'S IN THE PIPELINE FOR LANDSCAPERS BY BRIDGET WHITE

EVERY YEAR, plant breeders host a huge coming out party. They all join together to set individual open houses over a week-long period. Collectively known as the Spring California Pack Trials, these events are an opportunity for breeders and marketers to show their customers (distributors, growers, retailers and landscapers) what their company is about, how to use their products and, more importantly, what new varieties they have to offer.

Plants displayed at Pack Trials will generally become available to the landscape trade in 2010 or 2011, so this event is a great opportunity to see what's on the horizon, learn culture tips and gets tons of planting ideas.

Below is a sample of what you will find at the Pack Trials that are scheduled from March 28 through April 5, 2009. For a complete listing of exhibiting companies, dates and locations, go to the National Garden Bureau's website (www.ngb.org).

American Takii

American Takii is featuring a theme of "Coming Together" to promote the blending of Sahin and Global Flowers into Takii & Company, Ltd. With the new brand will come a major display

change for the 2009 Pack Trials, now featuring a substantial landscaped area with multiple vignettes instead of row trials. The goal is to provide ideas on how to integrate annuals, perennials and vegetables as well as to show the habit and garden performance.

Of particular interest to landscapers is the addition of two new colors to its Pansy F1 Nature series, Frosty Blue and Yellow with Blotch. Nature is a hybrid between pansy and viola genetics combining the best attributes of both. The flower size may be small, about 1-1/2 inches, but the color show is huge, they virtually cover themselves in flowers. They maintain a neat habit, which is great for commercial landscapes.

Sahin will feature many perennials and grasses suited for landscape applications. Agastache Rose Mint, which has a fresh, mint scent, is excellent for landscape use. It branches very well and is extremely long flowering, beginning in March and continuing through to the first frost.



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Flower Carpet® 'AMBER' is the 3rd of the Next Generation of Flower Carpet roses and a complete breakthrough in color for groundcover roses. This Next Generation breeding provided, among other attributes, improved disease resistance along with heat and humidity tolerance. Earlier Next Generation® releases include Flower Carpet 'Scarlet' in 2007 and Flower Carpet 'Pink Supreme' in 2008. For more information on this and other Anthony Tesselaar Plants, go to www.tesselaar.com.

Grasses have become mainstays for landscapers. *Carex flagellifera* Auburn is a copper bronze-colored sedge. It has an upright habit when young and gracefully arches when mature.

Ball Horticultural Company

Ball's themes this year will focus on what the company calls "retail holdability" and "reboundability," both with direct correlation to landscape performance.

Ball will be displaying numerous new series at this year's event. Among the varieties with the greatest interest for landscapers include Sun Spun Petunias and Breathless Euphorbia. Sun Spun Petunias require less water and handle lower temperatures for season-long impact. Ball shaped and early-spring flowering, this series is great for corporate plantings. Breathless Euphorbia can be compared to Euphorbia Diamond Frost. It is extremely low maintenance and uses little water when established. It is a demonstrated performer in planters, beds and mixed containers. Other featured series include Titan Vince, the industry's first hybrid vinca, and Taishan Marigold, a dwarf African with stronger stems.

Continuing on a long tradition of hosting landscapers during Pack Trials, Ball will have guided tours tailored to the needs of landscapers as well as a brochure featuring top-performing annuals and perennials for landscape use.

Bodger Seeds

Visitors to Bodger Seeds and Bodger Botanicals will find the company's usual displays of both seed and vegetative items but with a bit of a twist. This year, the focus will shift to showcasing products in different forms to illustrate versatility. From 4-inch pots to hanging baskets, combinations to in-ground beds, visitors will get to see just how many ways they can use these plants. Particularly interesting will be typically potted items displayed in-ground

to highlight landscape potential.

Two new items for Pack Trials 2009 are Ipomoea Sweet Caroline Quill Light Green and Sweet Caroline Quill Purple. Like the rest of the Sweet Carolines, these "sweet potato vines" are more reserved in habit than Marguerite and Blackie. Quills have very finely dissected foliage and add a texture to the Ipomoea class that has not been previously seen.

Ernst Benary of America

Avoiding overall themes in favor of spotlighting the genetics themselves, Benary's display will be emphasizing FastraX perennials (annualized perennials) and a new pansy series (developed for field performance). Both products have broad-based landscape performance and promote user success, saving time and money.

Benary will also have several new annual varieties that will be of interest to landscapers. The most exciting is the new Rudbeckia Denver Daisy. To celebrate the city's 150th celebration, the Denver Daisy was selected to be a symbol of "greening" and beautification of the city. Thousands of plants were planted around the city of Denver, and more than 2 million seeds were given out in packets to schoolchildren, at the local banks, etc.

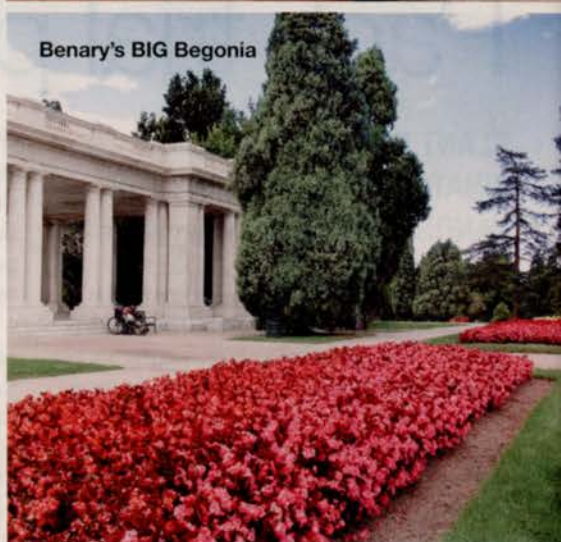
There will also be a lot of emphasis on the BIG Begonia series that was introduced last year. This series has huge potential for the landscape market, and the company is receiving lots of interest for all colors.

Goldsmith Seeds

With a theme of "Color 365," the Pack Trial displays at Goldsmith Seeds will show attendees how to extend the traditional



Ball's Breathless Euphorbia



Benary's BIG Begonia

window of sales and make money during off-peak times. Goldsmith will provide education and handouts to landscapers, and plans to emphasize varieties that are easy-care for maximum profitability.

For spring, think Aromas Snapdragons. One of three new series, it is bred for early-season performance and perfect to brighten up early spring beds. Well-branched plants produce numerous strong stems that resist lodging in the landscape.

For summer, Big Kiss Gazania is a heat lover that has super-sized plants and flowers that do very well in the landscape. It can take water stress without signs of being affected and comes in two interesting two-toned colors.

continued on page 46



CONARD-PYLE VARIETY FOCUS: DRIFT® ROSES

From the company that brought you The Knock Out® Family of Roses comes a revolutionary family of hardy groundcover roses. Drift® Roses are virtually maintenance-free with great resistance to rust, powdery mildew and black spot. They have tons of flowers from spring to early frost with very attractive foliage. Their naturally dwarf, true groundcover size is perfect for small gardens and combination planters. Drift Roses® complement any garden in any landscape.

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continued from page 44

Mammoth Pansy is specifically bred for fall. This pansy is bigger, better and stronger. It is stretch resistant under warm conditions and has a robust landscape performance with large, flat flowers that offer maximum visual impact.

Proven Winners/Spring Meadow

Featuring extensive gardens, trials and displays that showcase both new and old varieties, Proven Winners is planning extensive opportunities for landscapers. Among the events already planned for landscapers are a spacing trial to demonstrate that Proven Winners plants cover more square footage than older forms, a landscape day hosted by EuroAmerican Propagators and printed information on which varieties are best for the landscaper.

In addition to the annual, perennials and grasses displayed by Proven Winners, Spring Meadow will displaying the varieties in its Proven Winners ColorChoice line. Spring Meadow's philosophy is easy-care plant material that does not need dead-heading, is vigorous in the landscape, and has wide adaptability and performance.

Under the theme "Color Your World," Spring Meadow will introduce the first true miniature buddleia, Blue Chip, which reblooms and reaches a maximum width and height of 30 in. It works in container gardens, perennial borders and mass plantings. Also new this year is a new series of reblooming hydrangea called Let's Dance. This series includes the first-ever new-wood blooming lace cap as well as a reblooming mophead with good fall color.

Jackson & Perkins/Suntory

Presented at the Jackson & Perkins Research facility, Suntory's displays for the 2009 Pack Trials will deviate substantially from themes that have been shown in the past. The main emphasis of the displays will be to show how well Suntory varieties

perform in landscape design, as well as in production settings. The plants will be set up in actual growing conditions for landscape purposes, not in a pot buried under bark. The landscape design will incorporate the most prolific Suntory varieties that are, and can be, used in the landscape under most North American conditions.

Marietta Bidens is one of the featured plants that is primarily for landscape and potted container use, not hanging baskets as are other bidens series. This series is very floriferous, tough and durable and can be used as a replacement for plants like marigold.

Significantly underused in landscape design, Nierembergia is available from Suntory in the Summer Splash series. Suntory Nierembergia are outstanding for landscape design, with a semi-mounding habit, durability and continuous flowering. Other featured varieties include multiple new colors in existing series such as Tapien and Temari Verbena, Astoria Phlox, Surdiva Scaevola, Million Bells Calibrachoa and Surfinia Petunias.

Syngenta Flowers

In a display that focuses on all four seasons, Syngenta Flowers' 2009 Pack Trials will show visitors how to increase profits throughout the year instead of just the spring. Featuring displays that are applicable for growers, retailers and landscapers, this year's event will highlight integrated ideas to drive revenue and profitability.

Among many existing, improved and new varieties, Syngenta is showcasing two varieties with exceptional potential for the landscape market.

The Lantana Bandana series offers a



Goldsmith's Mammoth Pansy



Spring Meadow hydrangea



Suntory Nierembergia

unique approach to this landscape staple. It has a mounding habit with extra large flowers that look great in the landscape and mass plantings. With its outstanding color and exceptional heat tolerance, Bandana will bloom all season long. New colors this season include White and Lemon Zest.

An interspecific begonia hybrid that performs well in both sun and shade, Begonia Braveheart is the ideal versatile workhorse for the landscape market. Newly available in Rose Bicolor, Braveheart has exceptional vigor and flower power that fills beds quickly with eye-catching results. 🌿

Bridget White is a freelance writer based in New Orleans, Louisiana. She can be reached at white_bridget@bellsouth.net.



BENARY VARIETY FOCUS: BEGONIA BIG

The new Begonia BIG series offers a large, spreading habit (12- to 15-in. spread) that allows landscapers to use half the number of plants, saving time and money. Large (2- to 3-in.) flowers cover BIG begonias, creating masses of color from full sun to full shade locations. At 15- to 18-in., BIG begonias are more vigorous and showy than traditional wax begonias. Their versatility and vigor in even the most challenging landscapes makes them a must have for any landscape.



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Bloom boom

Kalmia latifolia Firecracker, from Dick Jaynes and Briggs Nursery, explodes with red colored buds that open white, then to light pink. This easy-care, leaf spot-resistant mountain laurel is ideal for gardens up to Zone 5 — and, if protected, it works great in Zone 4. With a mature height of 3-x-2 ft. in 10 years, the Firecracker is a compact plant that is great for foundational plantings or to complement broadleaf evergreens. In addition, because mountain laurel are "off-limits" to deer, it's ideal for woodland settings. It blooms from late spring to early summer and is best in full sun in a cool, moist, well-drained, acidic soil. It also performs well in partial shade. For more information, visit www.briggsnursery.com.

2009 All-America Selections winner

As this year's recipient of the AAS Cool Season Bedding Plant award, the Viola F1 "Rain Blue and Purple" variety creates a spreading pool of cool blue colors. This cold- and heat-tolerant "Johnny Jump-Up" plant will bloom in the South during fall and winter, and in the North in the spring and summer. The 1.5-in. blooms change color from purple and white to purple and blue as they mature. The plants spread 10 to 14 in. in the landscape or container, and feature a trailing habit for hanging baskets or patio urns.

For more information, visit www.aaswinners.com.



Olympic gold

During the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, PanAmerican Seed's Taishan Marigold stood out among the more than 200 million plants that were used in landscape beds throughout the city, and continually thrived throughout the high humidity and extraordinary heat of the summer months. Available in 2010 to the trade, the African marigold variety is available in gold, yellow, orange and mixture. It offers strong branching and delivers high-impact color. For more information, visit panamseed.com.



Light breeze

As part of Novalis' Plants that Work by Color brand for 2009, Diascia Breezee is a softly hued twin spur ideal for mixed containers and window boxes. It can also serve as an excellent border plant in a sunny spot. It blooms best when night temperatures are cooler, and is at its peak in early spring to early summer and again in autumn. Colors in the series include Appleblossom and Apricot (pictured). For more information, visit www.novalis.com.

Ebony excellence

Wayside Gardens' new Aquilegia "Black Barlow" greets spring with violet-black, tiny dahlia-like blooms that continue to impress for three months or more in Zones 3 through 8. Bred specially for cutting, this shade perennial's long-stemmed flowers reseed generously to increase garden beauty every year. This vigorous plant reaches up to 3.5 ft. in bloom, and about 18 in. wide. For more information, visit www.waysidegardens.com.



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Coconuts are the most universal and widely distributed palm tree in the world. Although used mainly for food, fiber, and construction in other countries, the coconut has become a symbol of the tropics for homeowners and developers everywhere. Although the tree is typically very cold-sensitive, surviving through the winter only in tropical or sub-tropical climates, it has been used seasonally in temperate climates for years. Planted for the summer, coconuts can add an instant tropical look to any home or business for very little cost.



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ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

WITH AN AVERAGE 265 days of sunshine a year, it's no wonder these homeowners wanted an outdoor space to enjoy their Carson City, NV, home. But with summer temperatures averaging near 90° F., a livable space meant incorporating mature trees with a new back yard.

Outdoor Environments of Nevada got an unexpected assist when the homeowners decided to renovate the residence.

An extension took the home deeper into the back yard and, essentially, eliminated the existing landscaping, says Sara Anderson, owner of the 5-year-old, Reno-based firm.

The project was completed in two phases, beginning with the back yard, which was basically dug up during the addition to the home.

"They ripped all of the grass out of the back yard," Anderson says. "There

After a home renovation destroyed the Russell residence yard, Outdoor Environments went to work and earned two awards for redesigning and rebuilding the front and back yards.

was a lot of construction and demolition. There's also a dry creek that runs through there. We installed grass that flowed in and over the dry creek. We wove the grass and the beds through the dry creek."

The company also installed lighting in many of the 30- to 35-ft. trees providing shade in both the front and back of the home.

The work earned the company the Nevada Landscape Association's (NLA's) 2008 President's Trophy. The

Outdoor Environments saved the mature trees in this construction-disturbed backyard (right) and added a patio and turfgrass (above).

more than \$100,000 project, which covered about an acre also earned Outdoor Environments the NLA's lighting award.

But it wasn't easy. Construction of the





AWARD WINNER

home addition wreaked havoc on a lot more than just the grass.

"The back yard took us a month because we had to build small walls, design drainage and the patio, and run all-new irrigation," Anderson says. "It was time-consuming. It's easier to start from scratch. When you're trying to redo stuff it's more time-consuming."

Outdoor Environments installed a large water feature in the back yard. Eight employees worked on the project — the back yard in the fall of 2007 and the front yard in the winter of 2008.

In addition to grass, Outdoor Environments installed irrigation systems in the front and back of the property (Carson City gets more snow, 22 in. per year, than rain, 12 in.). One difficulty was meshing what remained on the grounds with the homeowner's desire for a livable space in the back yard.

"The back part of the property was planted, but it wasn't utilized," Anderson says. "We used the shade so in the heat of the summer the client has a nice, cool patio area. We used the (existing) orchard with boulders and herbal plantings. But there's also patio area with full sun."

continued on page 54

This dry creek bed gave the Reno, NV-based landscape company an attractive landscape feature, which delighted the homeowners.



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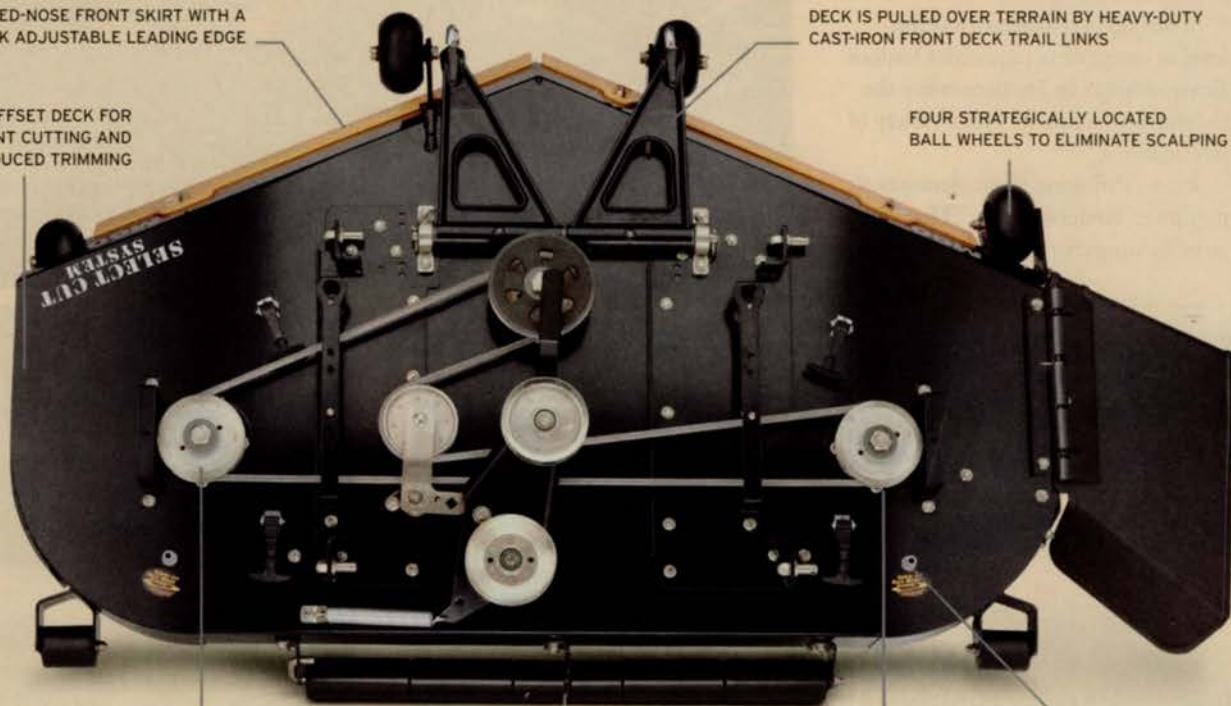
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SEED STEMS SUCH AS BAHIA AND DANDELIONS

The front edge is up so that seed stems and grass blades rebound into the cutting edge for a cleaner, even cut.



AWARD WINNER

continued from page 52

The biggest challenge was the level of integration required. Outdoor Environments had to harmonize the existing environment with a variety of new features.

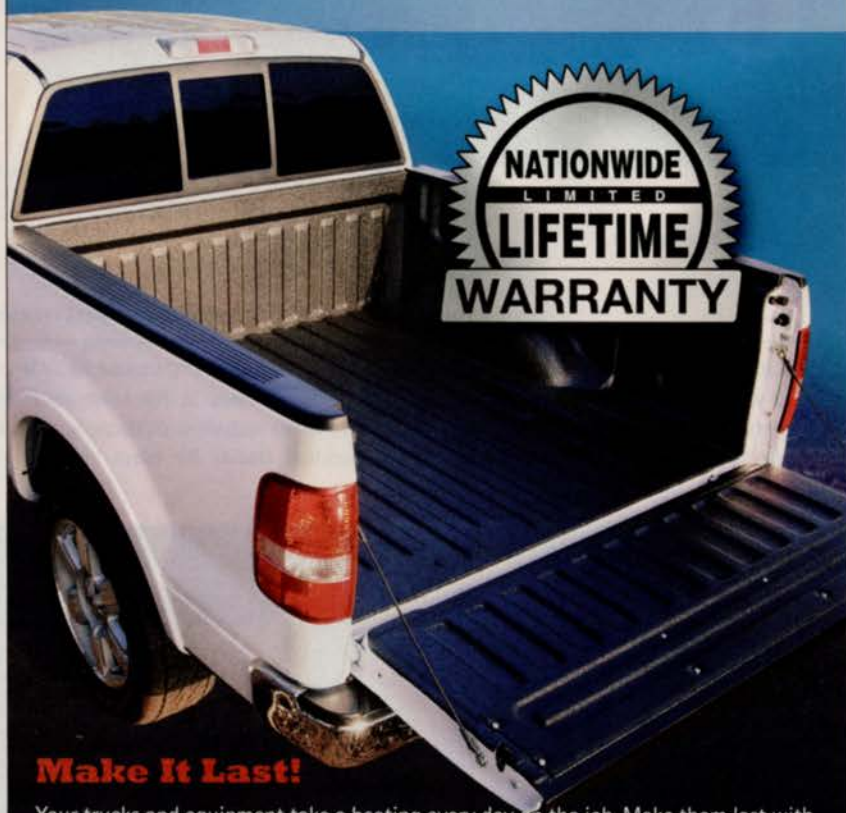
"It was bringing those elements all together," Anderson says. "They have large existing trees, 30 ft. to 35 ft. tall.



A new irrigation system in the front and back yards helps keep the turfgrass green and growing — that and Reno's average 265 days of sunshine a year.



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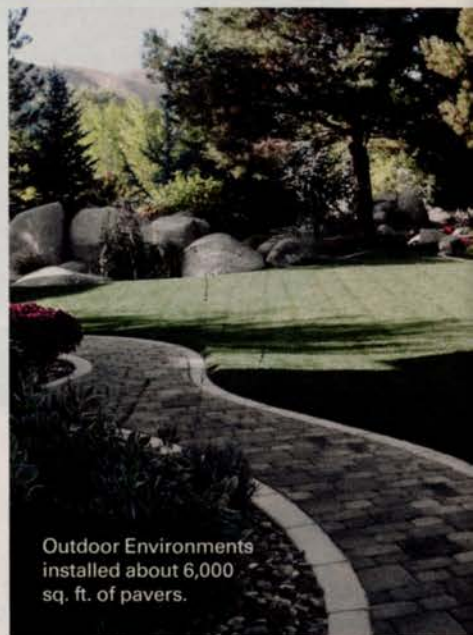
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Outdoor Environments installed about 6,000 sq. ft. of pavers.

It was utilizing all the things that were there and incorporating new plant materials, grass areas and patio areas, while making the yard function in a different way."

Included in the many elements in this project was the installation of a new driveway, which Anderson subcontracted. That part of the project entailed ripping out asphalt and installing 6,000 sq. ft. of pavers.

"The driveway took us three to four weeks," Anderson says.

While the back yard required the bulk of the changes, Outdoor Environments also addressed the front yard.

"We put in new sprinklers in the front," Anderson says. "There were only two planters that we changed out there. The rest of it we left remaining.

"We only changed out the things that really needed to be taken out and replaced." LM



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PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

Extreme yard makeover

THE MISSION

The long-neglected landscape of an Atlanta Arts & Crafts property gets spruced up with a new pool and some special extras.

“What an opportunity to work with such a dynamic piece of property, wonderful clients, and beautiful pieces of architecture,” enthuses Adam Huber, who designed and led this installation project. He is a landscape architect with Roswell, GA-based Ed Castro Landscape, and worked on the project with colleague Melda Sertkaya.

The home’s new owners had decided that their overgrown landscape was in “desperate need” of a new strategy, Huber says. To that end, the project focused on simple, clean lines and contrasting areas.

A pool, several outdoor terraces and a new overflow parking area were installed, as were a front meadow with a grass paver system and a play lawn. Lighting was also added.

Stepping stone paths with gravel in between link the pedestrian circulation throughout the property. A side yard terrace provides a transition area and blends well with the natural woodland feel throughout, while masses of plantings add a colorful foreground to the distant pool setting.

Although the challenges on this project were relatively few, proper drainage was an issue along the frontage of the property. This was handled by installing a dry creek bed. As an extra measure, the adjacent overflow parking area has a gravel base with special soils, creating an eco-friendly grass paver area.

The clients were pleased with the transformation. “This outdoor environment will be enjoyed for many years to come,” Huber adds.



THE WORK



1 | STONE PATIO. The front of the home now features a large Norway spruce and an inviting stone terrace, comprised of a large piece of bluestone set on mortar pads with low ground cover between.

2 | FROM DEAD SPACE TO COOL POOL. An overgrown and unusable area next to the existing "Little House" (see inset) lent itself to a potential pool location. The contrasting colors in the pool area now have a dramatic effect. Note the low-to-ground seating boulders brought into the terrace.

3 | MAKING THE GRADE. Granite walls that match existing materials on site were constructed to level the pool terrace area. Before, there was a distinct difference in grade.

4 | KEEPING DRY. A dry creek bed was created to handle a wet area on the property, while the grass paver system serves as overflow guest parking. Drainage was the main challenge with this project.

5 | OVERFLOW PARKING. An area next to the garage was reclaimed to serve as an additional pervious parking area, with a granite wall added. Now the homeowners can do more entertaining without having to worry about guest parking.



Ed Castro Landscape offers design, construction, maintenance and horticultural services for the Greater Atlanta market. Founded in 1992, the company has more than 85 employees and focuses on high-end residential — although its team works with a wide variety of clients and budgets. This project was a Merit Winner in the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET's) 39th annual Environmental Improvement Awards program and Grand Award winner for the 2008 MALTA (Metro Atlanta Landscape & Turf Association) Professional Landscape Awards. For more information, visit www.landcarenetwork.com.

PROBLEMSOLVER

LANDSCAPE TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS » BY H. BRUCE HELLERICK

PROBLEM

Many property owners want to hide their garbage dumpsters, electrical boxes and other infrastructure features from plain sight. There is a right way and a wrong way to provide attractive screening without drawing undue attention to these areas. Unnatural spacing between ornamental plantings is a common issue.



SOLUTION

Most times doing nothing around these features is the best answer. Doing nothing allows the eye to pass over the feature. Far too many times, contractors add a single line of plants around the outside of the structure. Such a display of neatly pruned or sheared shrubs only serves to draw your eye toward the very feature you are trying to de-emphasize.

A better approach is to install three to five plants in a more naturalized planting scheme. This has the desired effect of allowing the eyes to pass over and through the area. Planting this way makes a necessary but undesirable feature blend with the surrounding landscape.

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.

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IA RE-ENERGIZES WITH NEW LOGO, TAGLINE

The recent 2008 Irrigation Show was jammed with events and products to address growing concern over water issues. BY **RON HALL** EDITOR-AT-LARGE

AS CONCERNS OVER water issues, especially landscape irrigation, accelerates the Irrigation Association (IA) is stepping up its efforts to meet these concerns.

The IA, during its recent 2008 Irrigation Show in Anaheim, CA, unveiled a new logo and tagline — “Smart practices. Sustainable solutions” — which is the most visible signal of the IA’s mission and its members’ commitment to efficient water management.

The scuttling of the previous logo and tagline after 30 years also points to the IA’s growing focus on the Green Industry.

This was reinforced by the larger presence of landscape- and golf-focused suppliers over agricultural irrigation suppliers at the trade show, which attracted 340 exhibiting companies.

The new logo design, with its stylized green leaf and the blue drop, emphasizes the growing cooperation between the living plant industry and water agencies for water management best practices.

“As we expand our efforts to promote efficient irrigation and the importance of working with irrigation experts, we need a brand that helps policymakers, consumers and those outside the irrigation industry understand who we are and what we’re about,” said incoming IA President Stephen W. Smith, CEO of Aqua Engineering in Fort Collins, CO.

The IA’s new officers and board members (and the industry in general) face a number of water-related issues and pro-

grams during 2009, which was reflected in the brutally full schedule of educational sessions, committee and strategy meetings at the conference. More than 500 attendees attended educational sessions and certification exams.

Making WaterSense

One of the larger presences at the conference was the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) WaterSense program. Its broad goal, which it promotes by attracting partners and labeling water-efficient products, is to save water and protect the environment.

In the three years since its launch, the program has attracted hundreds of “partners” — contractors, water agencies, governmental bodies and supplier companies. Landscape professionals can become WaterSense partners when they’re certified through one of four IA certification programs.

During the IA’s business meeting, the EPA recognized Timothy Malooly, as its WaterSense Irrigation Partner of the Year. Malooly is president of Irrigation Consultants as well as Control and Irrigation by Design, two related irrigation

The WaterSense Irrigation Partner of the Year, Tim Malooly, left, is congratulated by Wayne Nastri, U.S. EPA Region 9 Administrator.

firms in Plymouth, MN. His companies designed and installed the water-efficient irrigation system for the first residential project to receive Platinum certification from the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program.

Grower issues

Also during the 2008 show, the IA held its second annual Grower Forum, attracting nearly 100 industry professionals. A panel of five water and environmental experts discussed water reliability challenges facing California’s farmers, the role of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in the water supply for the state’s growing population as well as the need for efficient water use by all sectors, and new water storage and conveyance.

The Forum was co-hosted by the California Agricultural Irrigation Association and sponsored by John Deere Water Technologies.

For expanded coverage of the IA’s 2008 Irrigation Show, visit www.landscapemanagement.net. LM



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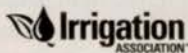
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Thanks for *LM's* birthday makeover

Landscape Management is in a class of its own — serving as “The Preferred Resource for Growing Businesses” for 48 years and counting. And as the Green Industry’s elder information statesman, *Landscape Management* isn’t afraid to show a little gray. Case in point: Check out the column mugshots of our editors and you’ll see that our gray hairs are matched only by our lack of hair.

At *Landscape Management*, though, it’s “Age *with* (not *before*) beauty.”

No, I’m not about to unveil *LM's* version of a firemen’s calendar, featuring Ron Hall, Dan Jacobs and myself defiling otherwise-beautiful landscapes.

I’m merely pointing out that with each *Landscape Management* print edition, newsletter, podcast and event comes 48 *legitimate* years of publishing and tradeshow experience. Our editorial team’s collective 100-plus years of journalism experience — including one-third of that serving the Green Industry — is another unmatched thing of beauty.

While some lawn and landscape magazines’ staff mastheads have amounted to little more than a revolving door, Ron Hall has faithfully served as our print publication’s patriarch and one of our industry’s top advocates for a quarter-century.

Equally important as our unparalleled stability and maturity, *Landscape Management* has always realized that progress requires change — the right changes made at the right time by the right people. That’s why we decided to update our print edition’s line-up of award-winning content and to freshen up our always-captivating design style, starting with this January 2009 issue.

LM's 48th birthday makeover was truly customer engineered — thanks to a series of research studies, internal and external editorial audits, and comprehensive focus groups conducted over the past year. By now (the last editorial page of our first redesign issue), you no doubt have given the turbocharged *LM* 2009 a good test drive. Please call or email me to tell me what you think.

Following are just a few of the myriad redesign upgrades we’ve implemented thanks to loyal readers like you teaming with our experienced, award-winning editors and talented Art Director, Carrie Parkhill:

▶ **Reader Advisory Panel** — Underlining our continuous commitment to receiving, and acting quickly on, customer feedback, we rotated our Reader Advisory Panel members to ensure we’re tapping the wisdom of different movers and shakers from each key business segment.

▶ **Table of Contents** — Our new Contents page underlines *Landscape Management's* more-flexible flow (departments/columns/features format) and incorporates *LM's* Market Match icons directing readers to features targeting their respective core businesses (lawn care, maintenance, design/build, irrigation and business topics) so each reader can spend more time diving into the information that matters most to him/her.

▶ **News + Views** — Recognizing the extensive time demands of our readers’ work, this section comprises more quick-hitting bulletins on Green Industry events, trends and tips. It also features our new “Word on the Street” quotables from industry insiders on the hot topic of the month and factoids such as our new “Believe it or Not” nuggets.

▶ **My Biggest Mistake** — Managing Editor Dan Jacobs taps his vast industry contacts and freely shares their biggest business lessons learned the hard way.

▶ **Livescapes** — A new bimonthly special section covering color trends and tips.

The list of customer-engineered upgrades goes on and on. And as always, more redesign twists — to both our print and digital media platforms — will be revealed in the coming months, so please stay tuned.

Everyone knows that with age comes wisdom. After reading this redesigned issue, we hope you also now see that beauty need not be compromised in the aging process — that nip-and-tuck makeovers aren’t just for Hollywood’s 40-somethings.

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