



Help set the record straight

S*martMoney* makes quite a living systematically tarnishing the reputations and threatening the livelihoods of all types of professionals. Its often-shoddy journalism produces a plethora of dirty laundry lists — “10 Things (fill in the blank) Won’t Tell You.”

Some of the magazine’s recent one-sided slams include “10 Things Your Contractor Won’t Tell You,” “10 Things Your Cable Company Won’t Tell You,” “10 Things Your Financial Planner Won’t Tell You,” “10 Things Your Lawyer Won’t Tell You,” “10 Things the IRS Won’t Tell You,” and even “10 Things Your iPod Won’t Tell You.”

SmartMoney’s lazy, cookie-cutter approach to investigative journalism recently smeared landscape and lawn care professionals with its dirty, broad brush. On July 31, *SmartMoney* published “10 Things Your Landscaper Won’t Tell You.” In his lopsided, so-called exposé, *SmartMoney* contributing editor Michael Kaplan claims landscapers think deep down inside but never say aloud:

1. “My sprays are real killers, all right.”
2. “Don’t expect a refund if your garden croaks.”
3. “I’m not qualified to do the job, but that won’t stop me.”
4. “My budget grows like a weed.”
5. “... but meanwhile, I’m reaping big savings.”
6. “All plants are not created equal.”
7. “I don’t always finish what I start.”
8. “What I’m doing won’t necessarily make your home more valuable.”
9. “My workers chug your beer when they should be mowing your lawn.”
10. “It’s my fault the neighbors hate you.”

Offended? I don’t blame you. If you’re not offended by all 10 counts, you might be guilty of a few of the charges. Please take five minutes to read the entire article at www.smartmoney.com/spending/for-the-home/10-Things-Your-Landscaper-Won't-Tell-You-12698/. Reread each of the 10 accusations flung by *SmartMoney* and take a hard look in the mirror. If the shoe fits ... *repair* it promptly.

Having met many of you, seen your incredible work and spoken with your customers, I know these allegations are untrue — for the most part. Sure, a few in the profession sometimes fall short of expectations or standards, but these people and instances are rare exceptions to the rule.

A few years ago, when I was managing editor of *Pest Management Professional*, *LM*’s sister publication, *SmartMoney* published the similarly sleazy “10 Things Your Exterminator Won’t Tell You.” We mobilized the industry and launched a counterattack.

Please join us in turning the spotlight 180 degrees, placing it squarely on *SmartMoney* and exposing its sensationalism masqueraded as journalism.

We cannot afford to sit quietly while others attack our reputations, professionalism and livelihoods. It’s tough enough out there. We really don’t need to add “complete lack of public trust” to our already-weighty business barriers.

DEFEND OUR PROFESSION

SmartMoney has assembled quite an arsenal of “10 Things (fill in the blank) Won’t Tell You” — so many, it’s in the process of publishing a book compiling such trash talk.

Let’s band together, e-mail these folks and set the record straight. We need *SmartMoney* to pull its slam on the Green Industry from its Web site and “10 Things ...” book manuscript. Please craft your “10 Things *SmartMoney* Won’t Tell You About Landscape Professionals” and e-mail it today to:

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