

FIRE & WATER DESIGNS > **NJ FERTILIZER LAW**
BETTER TRAIN YOUR SALES TEAM



Landscaping Management

*The preferred resource
for large contractors*

WE TAKE A LOOK AT THIS MISUNDERSTOOD

TURF

PLANT – FROM NEW VARIETIES TO HOW IT

ISSUE

CAN BE BETTER USED IN THE LANDSCAPE.

Don't Settle for Anything Less.



MADE IN

THE USA

WARNING: Our machines may cause more production, increased profits, weed free lawns and less down time.



L.T. Rich Products

Call us at: (877) 482-2040

www.zspray.com

CONTENTS

APRIL 2011
VOL. 50, ISSUE 4



52



DEPARTMENTS

- 6 News & Views**
Primal appeal
- 10 Progress**
Enriching the soil
BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI
- 12 Risk Management**
Avoid a liability crisis with E&O insurance.
BY CASEY PAYTON
- 40 A Cut Above**
James River Grounds Management, Glen Allen, VA
BY DAN JACOBS

52 LM Reports
Turf care; mowers; tree care; system solutions; spreaders

42 Add-on Biz
Paramount Landscape & Maintenance, Tempe, AZ, adds turf renovation.
BY CASEY PAYTON

60 My Biggest Mistake
Letting employee problems fester can create bigger headaches.
BY CASEY PAYTON

44 Lawn Care Pro
William Leuenberger
Chalet Nursery, Wilmette, IL
BY RON HALL

COLUMNS

5 First Cut
BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

14 The Hall Mark
BY RON HALL

38 Best Practices
BY BRUCE WILSON

50 The Benchmark
BY KEVIN KEHOE

46 Weed Watch
Large hop clover; dandelion

IN EVERY ISSUE

58 Classifieds **59 Resources**

ON THE COVER Photo by iStock International Inc.



FEATURES

16 Is turf misunderstood?

The industry struggles to prove turf's true potential in the landscape. BY NICOLE WISNIEWSKI

28 Seeds of change

Turfgrass developers are shifting the focus of their efforts to meet the industry's environmental challenges. BY RON HALL

34 Setting the tone?

As New Jersey passes the most restrictive fertilizer legislation to date, other states may be looking to follow suit. BY CASEY PAYTON

48 Project Portfolio

Using IPM to find the beautiful lawn beneath the weeds and the grubs.

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

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



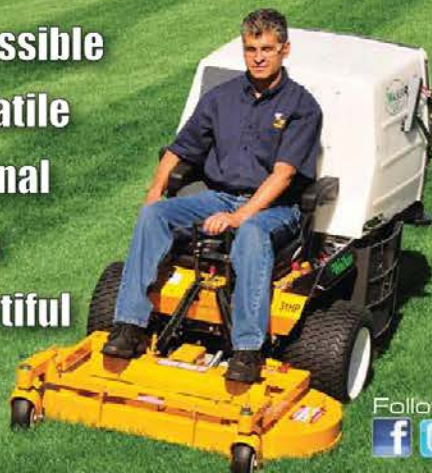
46

WALKER MOWERS

out front mowing

There is a Difference

- Accessible
- Versatile
- Original
- Agile
- Beautiful



Follow:
f t

get out front at the NEW
walkermowers.com

EarthWay

SPRAY-PRO

S25 Ground Driven
Push Sprayer

See the S25 demo videos
at www.earthway.com

Features include:

- 6.6 Gallon tank with inlet filter
- 13" Pneumatic stud type tires
- Epoxy powder coated heavy-duty "diamond" chassis
- High-speed ground driven pump
- Application volumes of 1+ gallon/1,000 sq. ft.
- Adjustable spray width and 3 spray tips

For information, call 1-800-294-0671 or visit
www.earthway.com to find a dealer.

Landscape Management

CLEVELAND HEADQUARTERS
600 SUPERIOR AVE. EAST SUITE 1100
CLEVELAND OH 44114 800/669-1668

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editorial Director Marty Whitford 216/706-3766 |
mwhitford@questex.com
Editor-at-Large Ron Hall 216/706-3739 | rhall@questex.com
Managing Editor Daniel G. Jacobs 216/706-3754 |
djacobs@questex.com
Technical Editor Pete Grasso 216/706-3775 |
pgrasso@questex.com
Contributing Editors Heather & Jamie Gooch 330/723-3539 |
hgooch@questex.com, jgooch@questex.com
Art Director Carrie Parkhill 216/706-3780 |
cparkhill@questex.com

ADVERTISING STAFF

Publisher Patrick Roberts
216/706-3736 Fax: 216/706-3712 | proberts@questex.com
Northern National Sales Manager Dave Huisman
732/493-4951 Fax: 732/493-4951 | dhuisman@questex.com
Southern National Sales Manager Jason DeSarle
216/706-3758 Fax: 216/706-3712 | jdesarle@questex.com
Business Development Manager Ric Abernethy
216/706-3723 Fax: 216/706-3712 | rabernethy@questex.com
Account Executive Classifieds Kelli Velasquez
216/706-3767 Fax: 216/706-3712 | kvelasquez@questex.com

BUSINESS STAFF

Vice President Kevin Stoltman 216/706-3740 |
kstoltman@questex.com
Administrative Coordinator Petra Turko 216/706-3768 |
pturko@questex.com
Production Manager Amber Terch 218/206-2129 |
Amber.terch@superiormediasolutions.net
Production Director Jamie Kleist 218/206-2107 |
Jamie.kleist@superiormediasolutions.net
Audience Development Manager Carol Hatcher
216/706-3785 | chatcher@questex.com

MARKETING/MAGAZINE SERVICES

Reprints landscapemanagement@theygsgroup.com |
800/290-5460 x100
Ilene Schwartz Circulation List Rental 216/371-1667
Customer Services Subscriber/Customer Service
landscapemanagement@halldata.com |
866/344-1315; 847/763-9594 if outside the U.S.
Paul Semple International Licensing
714/513-8614 Fax: 714/513-8845 | psemple@questex.com
For current single copy, back issues, or CD-ROM,
call 866/344-1315; 847/763-9594 if outside the U.S.

QUESTEX MEDIA CORPORATE OFFICERS

President & Chief Executive Officer Kerry C. Gumas
Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer Tom Caridi
Executive Vice President Antony D'Avino
Executive Vice President Gideon Dean



THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A BUSINESS OWNER?

We can help.
We start with you. We stay with you.

Our Franchise Support Team has over 260 years of combined commercial landscape industry experience to assist you with business and industry knowledge.



It's
MUCH MORE
than cutting grass.

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE

BECOME A
FRANCHISE OWNER WITH
U.S. LAWNS

**YOUR
SUCCESS**
is everything to
US



NATIONAL STRENGTH
LOCAL COMMITMENT

1-866-781-4875
franchise@uslawns.net
www.uslawns.com/franchise

MAILBOX



Solutions for stress

Once again, you wrote a great editorial on stress and overload ("Detach — It's Refreshing Every Time" in the February 2011 issue of *Landscape Management*). We are all stressed from time to time.

I have another solution to stress reduction that wasn't talked about and that looks at the solution to the problem that causes the stress. Problems without solutions are one of the big stress issues. I realize this sounds simple and few solutions are simple. Here is what I mean: I have watched a very successful businessman in Kansas City work his business for 25 years. I know him well because 30 years ago, we worked together in the restaurant business. He is the most focused individual I have ever met.

Let's call this

individual Bill. When Bill encounters a problem, he does not rest until he comes up with a solution. He has no fear of failure in his quest to find the solution. In the process of finding the solution, he decides if the solution is economically feasible. If part of the analysis is that it is too expensive, he abandons the project. This does not occur though until a lot of energy and intensity has been put forth.

Where am I going with this? Some major stress issues in this industry are staffing, managing money, marketing, and the agronomics of what we do. Solutions are available for each of these issues. The solution to almost every problem I encounter causes me to change in some way. As I watch others in our industry struggle, I find that they are often unwilling to change.

I have watched the trade magazines change over the years. I still like reading a hard copy. My favorite articles are still when you feature companies and give a thorough background on them. That is

one of the main ways I learn. Keep up the good work.

— **Larry Ryan**, *president, Ryan Lawn & Tree, Kansas City, MO*

Pricing pressure

I just finished reading your article "Sizing Up The Challenge" by industry consultant Kevin Kehoe in *Landscape Management* magazine (September 2010). I was struck by how similar my company is to the example you gave and how aligned my goals are to increasing my enterprise value with your example.

I agree that the old way of doing business is dead! We have never seen so much price pressure in 20 years of business!

— **Thomas M Wood, CLP**, *Wood Landscape Services, Hilliard, OH*



Looking for a great source of recurring revenue?



We've got an app for that!



We are actively seeking Landscaping Professionals to sell, install and service our innovative outdoor misting systems that effectively control mosquitoes and other annoying insects.

Great margins and recurring revenues!

1-866-485-7255
WWW.MISTAWAY.COM



BECOME A MISTAWAY DEALER TODAY!





The search for something *more*

Recently, my husband purchased a jacket from Moosejaw.com, an online extension of a chain of stores based in Detroit. He stumbled upon the site because it was listed as an approved vendor for The North Face apparel brand and price-matched other vendors.

What made him want to buy from this site was a “Mystery Gift” promotion they advertised. If you spent a certain amount, they sent you some surprise freebies customers were raving about.

His customer service experience from the moment he hit the “confirm your order” button, was extremely positive. It started with his order confirmation e-mail: “Way to go. You’ve won the best e-mail receipt we’ve sent out all day. We recommend either printing this receipt and framing it in your foyer or using it as a screensaver.”

Then his order arrived on time with a note: “If you are reading this note, you should be super happy. First, you received your order, reading is fun and getting something in the mail (even if you bought it yourself) has got to make the day better.”

Then, there was the mystery gift: more than \$100 worth of free merchandise in his specific size — Moosejaw-branded t-shirts, a sweatshirt, a flashlight and a keychain. It was a complete treat (and free advertising for the company). They even encourage customers to send in photos of themselves wearing the gear and promote those on their website.

The experience was so much fun we are still talking about it almost a month later. Revisiting their website, I came across their mission statement: “At Moosejaw, we want to make shopping as much fun as backpacking the Chilkoot trail, climbing in Yosemite, mountaineering in the Himalayas or playing red rover with the neighbors ...” Their current promotion tells customers for every one item they purchase their staff will dedicate one hour of their time to putting art back in Detroit schools.

The company takes a common, everyday experience like buying a jacket or shoes and turns it into

something fun customers can feel good about.

The company inspires emotions. And emotions cause reactions, points out Jim Kukral, a business marketing consultant. Reactions create word-of-mouth, and this brings revenue.

In the age of so many free marketing tools (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), what can you do to showcase your talents and create emotion in your customers so they tell more people about you? What can you do to take yourself a little less seriously but still provide content and education? “Everybody knows a lot about something,” Kukral says. “The problem many have is they devalue that knowledge.”

The outdoor spaces you create and maintain are meant to be lived in and enjoyed. Showcase your work, professionalism and personality via videos or blogs. Share customer experiences in their well-manicured spaces or recently completed installations.

If the idea of original writing and video scare you, Kukral says “don’t let your ego get in the way of promoting your business and making money.” No one is perfect and the amateur video will show customers you are real. “Videos that are too professional today make people feel like they are watching an advertisement,” he explains. To prove my point, I tried it, too. Check out *Landscape Management’s* YouTube page at YouTube.com/LandscapeMgmt and blog at LandscapeManagement.blogspot.com. Everything we’ve done on there is free education and only took our time and imagination.

Being a 13-year landscape industry veteran, I have collected a lot of knowledge that doesn’t always make it into *Landscape Management’s* pages. That’s why 27-year industry veteran Ron Hall started the LM blog in 2005. Responding to encouragement from him, I also started my own editor’s blog at MyBigGreenPen.com. This is the knowledge we have we can bring to you. It’s not always easy writing extra copy or turning a typical interview into a video, but it’s important, and it’s what we can do to bring *more* to our readers.

How can you bring *more* to your customers?

PRIMAL *appeal*



for their own outdoor rooms. According to the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), outdoor living areas are still quite desirable, though homeowners are getting a bit more selective about what they plan to include. For many, fire and water features still top the list.

So what's behind the popularity of the fire and water feature as one design? Perhaps we can attribute it to human nature, says Jim Lapides of ASLA. "I really think the appeal is a primal one," he says.



Fire dances on pool water and along its edge at Cleveland's Great Big Home & Garden Expo.

"While we don't rely on water features for drinking or fire pits for warmth and protection, I think there is a deep comfort they provide that's an essential part of human nature.

Combining fire and water acts as a perfect example of 'two plus two equals five.' You have the juxtaposition of fire and water in one place, plus the prehistoric appeal of those two elements."

Barry Morton, president and CEO of Ohio-based Morton's Landscape Development Co., the company responsible for the landscaping around the

continued on page 8

Fire and water give outdoor living spaces an edge.

BY CASEY PAYTON

At Cleveland's Great Big Home & Garden Expo, held in February, the model home's fire and water feature was a big hit. The combination of two elements that seem like they couldn't possibly go *together* is intriguing. And even if not incorporated as one feature, they are both elements that homeowners are requesting



[Powerful and packed full of resources.]

AT BELGARD, WE'RE DEDICATED to helping you succeed by providing the best business solutions and professional tools in the industry. Why? Because our success truly depends on yours.

Visit www.belgard.biz to learn more about our Contractor Resources designed to help you succeed.



and water elements aren't incorporated as one big feature, individually they're both quite popular for outdoor living areas. In fact, the ASLA's 2011 "Residential Trends Survey" found that fire pits and fireplaces were at the top of the trend list. Around 94% of respondents rated fire pits and fireplaces as "somewhat" or "very popular" for 2011. Decorative water elements such as ornamental pools, splash pools, waterfalls, grottos, water runnels or bubblers got about 85%.

"It's soothing to sit on your deck or patio and hear the sound of water," says Morton. "That's just a relaxing and soothing

sound people like to hear. At this year's home show we did some booth space and took a simple 6-ft. round tub with a 3-ft. granite boulder and drilled a hole through it. We ran a pipe through and let some water bubble up. It just had that nice sound, and people 'oohed and ahhed' and made quite a big deal over it, even though it was very simplistic. You can definitely do a simple water feature that's cost-effective and still get a great response."

Fire also seems to always draw a crowd. Everyone gravitates toward a fire pit or fireplace. So incorporating both will really enhance the outdoor space. "Personally I think the more innovative and creative designs visually combine fire and water, even if those specific features are physically separated," says Lapides. "It creates a powerful effect without necessarily calling too much attention to this very juxtaposed idea of fire and water."

Given their appeal to human nature, fire and water are likely to stay put on homeowners' radar. **LM**

Payton is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscape-related topics.

continued from page 6

Great Big Home Show's model home, says they did a fire and water element at last year's home show and recognized then that it was a crowd pleaser. "The fire and water together visually wows people," says Morton. "It may seem complex, but it doesn't have to be. It's just a gas line that bubbles out of the water and can be lit with fire."

Morton says it's certainly something other landscapers might consider offering and it's easier to install than they may realize. "The biggest challenge is making sure you run the gas lines properly, and I definitely recommend using a certified plumber," he advises. "You also want to make sure you have the proper shut-offs. It's definitely something that clients respond to and a popular feature."

And Lapides believes the trend will only continue to grow. "I think we'll see these designs being offered more frequently — especially among high-end clients," he says. "The interest is certainly growing. The question is how many will actually incorporate these designs in the current economic climate?"

The economy has definitely played a role in homeowners' scaling down their

“ PERSONALLY I THINK THE MORE INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE DESIGNS VISUALLY COMBINE FIRE AND WATER, EVEN IF THOSE SPECIFIC FEATURES ARE PHYSICALLY SEPARATED ”

— JIM LAPIDES, ASLA

outdoor living areas. But it seems many are still doing them — just not as elaborately. Instead of having all the bells and whistles, homeowners are picking and choosing what they want. Fortunately, the "wow factor" of combining fire and water can be achieved even with a simplistic design, says Morton. "It doesn't have to be a large feature," he continues. "It can be very simple and small and still get the impressive effect."

Enhancing the outdoors

With more products on the market that combine fire and water into one feature, such as fire sitting in a fountain, it's definitely becoming easier for landscape designers to offer. But even if the fire



With four-wheel steering,
it's easy to handle,
well, anything.



© 2011 Cub Cadet

On campus at The University of Akron.

THE TANK™ S ZERO-TURN RIDER. STEERING-WHEEL CONTROL MEETS DIESEL DURABILITY.

Where else can you find a zero-turn rider that delivers consistently remarkable results? With four-wheel steering and steering-wheel control through patented Synchro Steer® technology, you enjoy unparalleled stability on hills. Plus, a rugged 31.2 HP* Yanmar® diesel engine to easily handle the most vigorous workload. And an innovative Select Cut System™ for incredibly precise cutting. No wonder no one else can match it. Experience a Cub Cadet today to understand why it's a better choice.



Visit cubcadetcommercial.com/lm to find your nearest dealer and unbeatable factory financing, including 0%**



*as rated by engine manufacturer
**Not all buyers qualify. See dealer or cubcadet.com for details.
Cub Cadet Commercial products are intended for professional use.



cubcadetcommercial.com/lm



PROGRESS

Enriching the soil

Taking care of what lies beneath can make contractors' work on clients' properties more effective.



In 50 years, some things just don't change; in fact, they become even more crucial to the job than they were before.

As you look over the typical landscape of one of your clients and see the turf, shrubs and perennials directly in front of you, glancing up toward the trees and taking in the hardscapes, water features and even irrigation systems that come to life in the early hours, there is something on this site that should be high on your priority list to ensure all the other property aesthetics thrive.

This magic bullet is none other than the soil. A client's landscape is more than the plant materials visible on the property. What lies beneath the plants can boost the effectiveness of all the work landscape contractors do every day.

A June 1966 issue of *Weeds, Trees & Turf* focused a feature story on "Improving Soils," and many of those tips are still relevant today. Especially concerning the growth of turf, a rich soil can produce a thriving plant that requires fewer inputs.

As Roylyn L. Voss, a specialist in soil management from the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, wrote then, "improvement of soils for turf depends on early anticipation of problems and diagnosis of a condition before it starts."

In lawn soil pH tests, one of the most common problems found is low pH, otherwise known as acidic soils. For instance, in more than 24,000 lawn soil samples analyzed by the Virginia Tech laboratory in 1987, more than 51%

tested less than 6.0 pH. (The optimum pH level for turf is in the 6.0 to 7.0 range, according to John Street with The Ohio State University Extension, Columbus, OH.) More importantly, 28% of the samples tested less than 5.5 pH, a level at which the growth of turf can be adversely affected. The primary cause of acidic soils is the leaching of base nutrients from the soil, which tends to occur more frequently in areas of heavy rainfall or on heavily-irrigated turf, Street points out.

As soil "nutrients become less available, the lawn's color, vigor and ability to resist (or recover from) heat, drought or traffic stress will be reduced," Street explains. "Applications of enough lime to raise the soil pH above 6.0 can increase the availability of these nutrients, thus making it easier to maintain the quality and vigor of the lawn."

When applying lime to clients' lawns, landscape professionals should make sure they follow soil analysis recommendations.

Most soil test reports will indicate the lime requirement in pounds of pure calcium carbonate per acre or per 1,000 square feet, Street says. "Since most liming products are not likely to be pure calcium carbonate, calculate how much product to apply to the lawn," he explains. "To do this, find the number on the bag label, which is called the calcium carbonate equivalent; it will be stated as a percentage.

Next find the liming requirement stated in the soil test report."

Using these two numbers, Street recommends the following calculation: Liming requirement (from soil test) calcium carbonate equivalent = amount of product divided by acre (or 1,000 square feet).

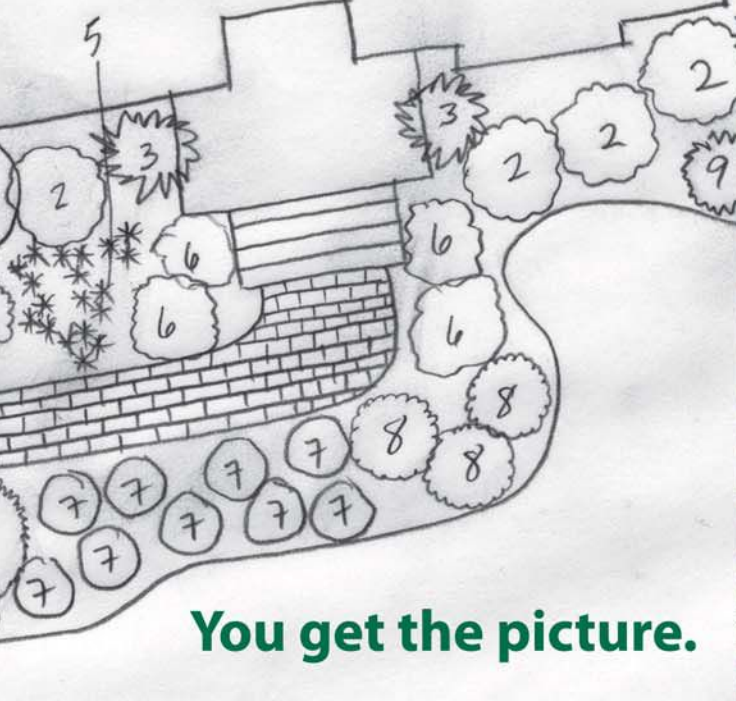
Lime can be applied at any time during the year, except for when the turf is wilted or frost-covered, Street points out. "The turf should be irrigated after application in order to wash any lime off of the turfgrass leaves," he adds.

"Lime should be applied only when soil testing indicates it is needed," Street emphasizes. "Yearly lime applications without making a soil test are strongly discouraged because alkaline or high pH conditions may develop."

Many landscape companies have bolstered their lawn care programs by incorporating soil analyses. While soil testing services themselves aren't likely to be large profit centers, they can help contractors acquire new customers who are impressed by a more scientific approach or retain current customers by taking the extra step necessary to keep their landscapes and lawns healthy.

Keeping soil rich can boost plant vigor and your company's reputation.





You get the picture.



Now they do.

*To win bids, customers need to visualize your design ideas.
With PRO Landscape, they can.*

Whether you are designing new installations or renovation projects, **PRO Landscape** has all the tools necessary to quickly create visual designs that will impress customers. **PRO Landscape** also lets you create accurate CAD drawings, customer-friendly proposals, night and holiday lighting designs, and 3D renderings. No wonder **PRO Landscape** is the easiest-to-use and most complete landscape design software available.

**Photo realistic imaging • Easy-to-use CAD • Night and holiday lighting
Complete customer proposals • True 3D photo and CAD renderings**

60-Day Money-Back Guarantee

Discover why **PRO Landscape** is the most popular design software for landscape professionals.

- » Visit prolandscape.com
- » Call (800) 231-8574
- » Email prolandscape@drafix.com

drafix software, inc.

PRO Landscape

The Standard in Design Software for Landscape Professionals!



Avoid a liability crisis with E&O insurance

EVEN WHEN A LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR HAS THE BEST INTENTIONS, MISTAKES SOMETIMES HAPPEN. ERRORS & OMISSIONS INSURANCE CAN HELP.

A LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR DESIGNS a patio across the whole back wall of a house, but the pitch is not correct. During the first spring rains, water flows up against the house and into the basement — a space the homeowner had just spent \$500,000 renovating. All of the new drywall, insulation and flooring needs to be replaced, along with damages to custom cabinets, furnishings and electrical equipment, as well as relocating the family during demolition, and of course re-pitching the patio. The cost comes in at more than \$250,000. It's enough to really damage a business. Fortunately for the landscaper, he had Errors & Omissions insurance (E&O).

That's just one real-life example of a recent E&O insurance claim, says John Hodapp, CPCU, Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits. E&O insurance is business liability insurance coverage for those who provide professional services. An error or omission, or a "mistake," which causes financial harm to another can occur on almost any transaction in any profession. This type of insurance helps protect a professional, an individual or a company from bearing the full cost of defense for lawsuits relating to such an error or omission, should a client hold them responsible for the errors or the failure of their design to comply with applicable building or zoning regulations. It's something Hodapp says landscape business owners should strongly consider.

"Landscapers typically buy general liability insurance, and that's certainly critical, but often they don't even know about E&O insurance," says Hodapp. "Professional liabil-

ity errors, such as design errors, are not covered under general liability insurance. But if a landscape designer or architect designs a deck or retaining wall and that design is faulty and fails, the claim would be covered under E&O. Another example might be selecting plants that are inappropriate. In a recent E&O claim, a landscape designer created a plan for a site that contained a septic system. The plans specified plants with particularly invasive roots that infiltrated the septic system and required the laterals to be replaced at a cost of \$5,000, which was covered by the insurance."

Tim Garland, president of Garland Alliance, Inc., in Milwaukee Wis., says his business used to be primarily residential, but today it's about 40% commercial/60% residential, and that's changed his priorities a bit. When he started doing more public projects through municipalities or commercial space, he decided it was time to get E&O insurance. "It's an investment to protect myself against any errors in the plans I draw up," he says. "For example, right now I'm doing a boardwalk project at a beach in Milwaukee, and it's open to anybody who wants to use that facility. Anytime you're working on a space that's open to the general public you're really putting yourself at risk and want to make sure you're completely covered."

Looking back, Garland says E&O would have been appropriate for many of his residential jobs as well. And since he serves as a general contractor and oversees projects he doesn't always complete himself, he says E&O is even more crucial. "Sometimes clients just pay me for the design work and then handle the rest," he says. "In that situation, it's especially critical that you have proper coverage because you have no control over the installation."

The exposure is almost always much bigger than the size of the job, Hodapp says. "It's not the cost of the job; it's the damage the job could potentially do," he says. "You may have a \$2,000 job that could result in a \$100,000 claim. No matter the job size, the bottom line is that you have to make sure you're fully covered."

Payton is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscape-related topics.



Is your business fully covered?

5 IMPORTANT E&O FACTS

1. Statistically, the greatest frequency of E&O claims result from water-related issues.
2. The second highest frequency of design claims involve subsidence issues, such as patios moving, retaining walls failing, and deck posts sinking.
3. More and more large commercial accounts and general contractors are requiring that their landscape companies carry an E&O policy to get the job.
4. Firms that employ certified Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD) are eligible for a 15% discount on E&O insurance.
5. E&O insurance is not that expensive. Simpler, more affordable policies are available today.

E&O SHOPPING TIPS

If you're shopping around for E&O insurance, keep in mind these key options, Hortica Insurance recommends:

- » The availability of \$1 million or \$2 million limits of liability
- » No self-insured retention (deductible) for most firms
- » Short-form industry specific applications
- » The ability to provide "prior acts" coverage for firms with prior E&O coverage
- » Premiums that are fully-inclusive of all taxes and fees

Does your insurance company think
“photosynthesis” is the latest
feature on a digital camera?



In a competitive business environment, you can't afford an insurance company that doesn't understand your business. Hortica has over 120 years experience in the horticultural industry. We provide specialized insurance solutions and loss control strategies that other companies don't deliver.

To learn how Hortica can help protect your business visit www.hortica-insurance.com or call 800-851-7740.


hortica
INSURANCE & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
To guide and provide



THE HALLMARK

RON HALL EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Ron has been in the Green Industry for 27 years. Contact him via e-mail at rhall@questex.com.

To the ends of the earth

"I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars." — WALT WHITMAN

It had to have been a strange sight for herdsmen in Inner Mongolia to see this imposingly large foreigner, with a round, sun-reddened face, climb from a Jeep, get down on his knees on the grassy meadow and probe the soil with his pocketknife.

"What on earth is he up to?" they surely puzzled as the big man extracted a clump of grass — in this case a hunk of bluegrass — from the earth. Holding it in his hands, he scrutinized it and passed it to his companions to examine.

The man, Dr. William "Bill" Meyer, is one of the world's leading turfgrass breeders. Since taking the post of director of turfgrass breeding for Cook College, Rutgers University in 1996, he's become somewhat of a world traveler. He and other turfgrass experts at Rutgers have launched a global search for new turfgrass germplasm. Well, actually it's new only in the sense that this "foreign" germplasm has yet to be incorporated into the turfgrasses we in North America are familiar with and appreciate. In reality, these specimens represent ancient germplasm; they've survived for millennia in their respective environments.

On this particular dusty, bone-jarring jaunt across the stark, wind-swept Asian steppes, which writer Allan Hoffman chronicled in the article "Sod Sleuths" in the Spring 2010 *Rutgers* magazine, Meyer, Dr. James White and a Chinese assistant seek survivors. They're searching for grasses with traits that have allowed them to remain vigorous under Mongolia's harsh conditions. They're

seeking turf that, since time forgotten, has battled droughts, periods of intense heat or cold, diseases, insects and grazers such as sheep, goats and the stout, pony-sized Mongolian horses that, like the grasses themselves, have remained unchanged since the rampages of Genghis Khan.

The specimens they dig from the rolling grazing lands and put in their cooler — the grasses that their experienced eyes tell them hold potential for making our lawn grasses more environment-friendly — will become candidates for further study, but merely candidates. Eventually, they — or some of the unique genetics of these same selections — may end up as a new cultivar, on a lawn that requires less water, fewer chemical inputs or can tolerate more traffic and still maintain its attractiveness.

Developing new improved cultivars is a lengthy and, to the layman, tedious process that takes a minimum of five years, with many dead ends and frustrations. Even so, Meyer and his Rutgers team of experts, working cooperatively with more than 20 private seed companies, continue to make incremental improvements to the cool-season grasses — the bluegrasses, ryegrasses and fescues — that the first European settlers brought with them and that we now use on our lawns, parks, sports fields and commercial properties.

Meyer and his colleagues are expanding upon the groundbreaking research initiated by Dr. C. Reed Funk almost a half-century ago. Funk's findings resulted in a series of remarkable achievements in turfgrass development, from the release of perennial ryegrass Manhattan in 1967 and the continuing improvement of the species, to the development of techniques for hybridizing bluegrass, to pioneering the development of turf-type tall fescue.

From the 1960s until today, the Rutgers program has led the world in developing cool-season grasses on lawns, parks, sports fields and golf courses. Now, its research team is traveling to the far ends of the world to keep the innovations coming.

Tougher than a 60-hour workweek.



You work hard. Day in, day out. And you need an engine that's going to work just as hard. That's why we build KOHLER® engines to consistently perform in the toughest conditions. They feature hydraulic valve lifters for optimum power and less maintenance and deliver lower fuel consumption as well as reduced emissions. Back all that up with a global network of trained and qualified service professionals and an industry-leading three-year warranty, and you have one seriously tough engine. But that shouldn't surprise you – we've been making engines tough for over 90 years.

*“To sit by a clear river on a warm day in early July
with the smell of cut grass in the air.”*

OSCAR-WINNING ACTRESS Helen Mirren describes her idea of perfect happiness in a *Vanity Fair* article last September.

The smell of freshly cut grass also made Neil Pasricha's bestselling *Book of Awesome*, listing the top 1,000 awesome things. Pasricha depicts this scent as “heavenly” and “one of the quintessential summertime memories” that reminds one of “twilight in the countryside, a football game about to start or a sunny Saturday morning.”

And this is just its smell. Don't get people started on describing walking barefoot in its cool stand as each blade tickles the toes.

Turf. Lawn. Grass. Green space. It's called

many things, but it usually brings about the same hopeful, nostalgic feelings. “In the gallery of national icons, lawn care is as all-American as baseball,” says Evan Ratliff in a *ReadyMade* article.

That could be the reason 71% of all U.S. households participate in some form of lawn care or gardening, the most popular being lawn care (48% of households), per the National Gardening Association. And 30% of all U.S. households hire at least one type of lawn and landscape service, spending \$53 billion annually. A Gallup Survey says 62% of all U.S. homeowners feel this investment in lawns and landscaping is as good as or better than other home improve-

Is turf MISUNDERST

The industry struggles to prove
turf's true potential in the landscape.

BY **NICOLE WISNIEWSKI** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ments with a recovery rate of 100% to 200%.

There are 80 million home lawns in the U.S., according to Scotts. And total U.S. turf is estimated at 46.5 million acres, The Lawn Institute reveals.

Turf is adored; cared for; played, walked and jumped on; and is used to stabilize and green landscapes. “Many people’s favorite childhood memories happened on turfgrass,” points out T. Kirk Hunter, executive director of Turfgrass Producers International, East Dundee, IL, “whether it was a family picnic, playing ball with friends at the park or scoring the winning point in a competitive sport.”

All these statistics leave many landscape

professionals wondering when turf started to become such a bull’s eye for hate. When did people start to view lawns as something to be removed in favor of “environmentally friendly landscaping,” as an article in the *Long Beach Gazette* described it? When did green space become environmentally *unfriendly*? When did 73% of Americans want to begin exploring reduced lawn environments, per the 2011 American Society of Landscape Architects Residential Trends Survey? When did sports fields become battlefields over green space that is synthetic vs. natural? Nearly every week, a new headline touts a “lawn-less landscape” or programs that reward homeowners for removing grass.

The problem, landscape professionals say, is “turfgrass is definitely misunderstood, unappreciated and under-valued,” Hunter says. “It’s the Rodney Dangerfield of landscape plants — it gets ‘no respect.’”

“In my mind, turf has never been understood,” adds Andy Smith, national accounts manager with Reinke Manufacturing Co., Deshler, NE, and former external affairs director for the Irrigation Association.

Why? “Because there is so much misinformation regarding natural turfgrass and because of the sometimes misleading media coverage on turfgrass-related issues,” Hunter says.

Therefore, turf’s benefits get forgotten. As Smith says, “we are lacking some serious metrics that show the true potential of turf as a useful tool in the environmental toolbox.” And, as Vic Gibeault, horticulturist and delegate to the University of California Riverside Turfgrass Research Advisory Committee, points out, “turf has a multifaceted story that we need to tell.”

Where it all began

Turf has a long history as a “natural surface that covered the plains long before people populated the Earth,” Hunter says.

Andrew Jackson Downing published one of the first U.S. landscaping books in 1841. As *The New Yorker* pointed out in “Turf War,” Downing’s *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* urged readers to improve themselves by improving their front yards.

To achieve this feat, Downing told readers to group trees in clusters, mix forms and colors with enough variety to “keep alive the interest of the spectator and awaken further curiosity,” and essential to any perfect garden, he said, was an expanse of “grass mown into a softness like velvet. No expenditure in ornamental gardening is productive of so much beauty as that incurred in producing a well-kept lawn.”

Downing’s suggestions inspired others, who continued spreading his message. Calvert Vaux, Downing’s protégé,





“There’s a realization that incorporating nature into the places where we live, work and play has a profound impact on our well-being”

— WILLIAM SULLIVAN, PH.D., who studies how regular exposure to green spaces helps people function better.

and Frederick Law Olmsted designed New York’s Central Park with broad lawns, and this continued to influence countless suburbs, *The New Yorker* explained. According to Ted Steinberg, author of the book *American Green: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn*, “with the start of suburban development in the late 1800s, the idea of surrounding a house with turf began to make real headway,” he said in a 2005 *New York Times* article. “But it was not until after World War II that the suburban lawn rose to dominance.”

It was Abraham Levitt, whose family pioneered the idea of the affordable, cookie-cutter housing found in today’s suburbs, who had “the foresight to realize that by intelligent landscaping the normal depreciation of our houses could be offset,” as said in a 1952 *Fortune* magazine article.

As lawns spread, well-manicured ones were seen as reflections of their owners. “A fine carpet of green grass stamps the inhabitants as good neighbors, as desirable citizens,” Levitt wrote in the late 1800s — even then Levittowners agreed to mow their lawns once a week between April 15th and November 15th. And still today, people tend to equate unkempt lawns with what Ratliff described as “laziness, indolence or domestic discord.” He quoted Lee Coltman, an anthropologist at the University of California at Los Angeles who studies suburban lawn attitudes, as saying, “There is a sense that not only should neighbors care for their lawns, but if a neighbor isn’t

caring for his lawn, there’s something wrong with him.”

So a lush lawn became an American ideal.

Back in its earlier days in 17th century Europe, turf was also recognized as a sign of wealth, but today it is a low cost, low maintenance option. “Turf isn’t a luxury item,” Smith says. “It’s just a basic element of any functional landscape.”

The inputs

Some say the American lawn started making enemies when some people became obsessed with its care. In a May 2010 *Men’s Health* article “Could Your Lawn Be Lethal?” Steinberg says, “there’s nothing wrong with a lawn. I have a lawn. But there is something wrong with the ‘perfect’ lawn.”

This obsession is described in the form of inputs. Like any plant or living thing, turf requires water and care. But industry professionals say the level of care required does not need to reach obsessive levels and is not environmentally threatening, especially considering turf’s many benefits.

The problem then centers on misinformation and assumption, industry veterans say.

“The visible drawbacks associated with lawns, such as images of over-watering lawns on hot summer days in arid climates or obvious exces-

continued on page 22

Is turf the
**“Right plant,
wrong place?”**
Find out on
page 20.



ZD SERIES

Business grows. Quality pays.

The quality reputation of Kubota's professional turf equipment comes from our efficient Kubota-designed and manufactured machines, featuring Kubota-built engines. And quality pays when you need flexible, high-performance equipment for commercial jobs big or small — including mowing, landscaping, hauling and all-around productivity. Kubota's professional turf equipment is an ideal choice for your commercial fleet — thanks to outstanding reliability, power and quality.

Visit your local Kubota Dealer to view our commercial line of diesel and gasoline zero-turn mowers, compact track loaders, tractors, utility vehicles and more. You'll see that quality pays.



Financing available to qualified customers through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A.
For product and dealer information, call 1-888-4-KUBOTA, ext. 403
or go to www.kubota.com. Optional equipment may be shown.



©Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2011



RTV1140CPX



SVL75

**RECOMMENDED BY
DO-IT-YOURSELF
EXPERTS.**

**AUTOLITE® SMALL ENGINE
SPARK PLUGS.**

Autolite® Xtreme Sport®
For most powersports
engines from motorcycles
to snowmobiles to
motorboats. Iridium-enhanced
.6mm finewire design
provides up to 26% quicker
starts than standard plugs.



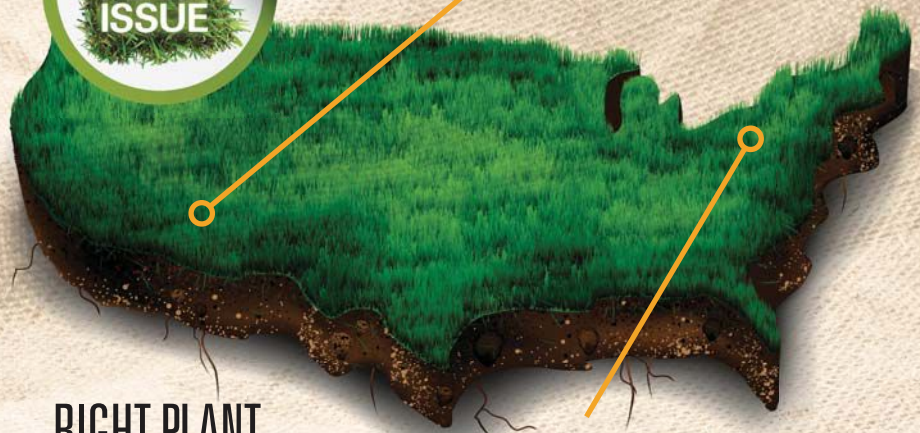
Autolite® Xtreme Start®
For most outdoor power
equipment. Iridium-
enhanced .6mm finewire
design provides up
to 26% quicker starts
than standard plugs.

Autolite® Small Engine
For most small engines
from mowers to
motorcycles. Engineered to
meet OE specifications,
these plugs help provide
quick, consistent starts.



Autolite®
Move up.

© 2011 Honeywell International Inc. Printed in the U.S.A.



In a desert climate, like parts of Arizona, 100% turf doesn't make sense.

Northeast U.S. states are well-suited for lawns.

RIGHT PLANT, WRONG PLACE?

Location is one of the most important factors concerning proper turf use and care.

"The Northeast is one of the ... regions in the country that is actually well-suited to lawns," The New Yorker reports in "Turf War."

But "if you live in a desert climate, like parts of Arizona, for example, 100% turf doesn't make sense," explains Gina Zirkle, a scientist and environmental stewardship expert with The Scotts Miracle-Gro Co., based in Marysville, OH. "When looking at precipitation and temperature maps of the U.S., most areas of the country can support turfgrass growth with minimal inputs. In other areas of the country with high temperatures and little precipitation, other green plants and groundcovers adaptable to those conditions may be a better choice."

As a result, when it comes to legislators attempting to limit inputs, such as water, location also needs to factor into the equation. "You can't nationalize regional viewpoints," points out Andy Smith, national accounts manager with Reinke Manufacturing Co., Deshler, NE, and former external affairs director for the Irrigation Association.

"Natural turfgrass is a plant and therefore any 'one size fits all' approach by regulators is not feasible," adds T. Kirk Hunter, executive director of Turfgrass Producers International, East Dundee, IL. "With many spe-

cies of turfgrass and varying climates around the country, programs like the EPA's 'Water Sense,' which mandates a limit of 40% turfgrass in a home lawn, don't make any sense. This is supposed to work for a lawn in Phoenix and Seattle, where the annual precipitation between the two locations varies from a mere 8 in. in Phoenix to 36 in. in Seattle."

Instead, they should be "providing a reasonable allocation for landscape water use and creating a pricing structure around it to make it fair for everybody," Smith suggests.

"There are times, places and situations where particular types of turfgrass and turf management practices may not be appropriate," explains Ranajit Sahu, a Southern California-based university professor, in his report *Think Before You Remove Your Lawn — The Benefits of Turfgrass*. "But getting rid of all turfgrasses everywhere is not the answer.

"Optimization starts with proper selection of turfgrasses suitable for specific climate regions and includes proper and appropriate cultural practices for turf maintenance, including optimized watering and cuttings management, sparing pesticide use and judicious use of technology," he continues. "This requires careful consideration and weighing of the site and case-specific values of turfgrass, both positive and negative." — NW



RECOMMENDED BY THE NEIGHBOR WHO KNOWS HOW TO FIX ANYTHING WITH AN ENGINE.

Start mowers, chain saws, and other outdoor power equipment up to 26% faster than standard spark plugs. Move up to Autolite® Xtreme Start™ spark plugs. Their advanced .6mm finewire design enhances ignitability and fuel combustion to help engines start quickly and consistently in any season. Learn about Xtreme Start™ and all Autolite® electrical parts at autolite.com.

Autolite®
Move up.



continued from page 18

sive fertilizer use, often drive knee-jerk, generalized, negative reactions to all lawns as being nothing more than ‘water-wasting, pesticide-addicted, fertilizer-dependent, landfill-clogging, energy-consuming insults to mankind and the environment,’” says Ranajit Sahu in his report *Think Before You Remove Your Lawn — The Benefits of Turfgrass*. “The push to remove grass areas can be short-sighted since this action often relies on erroneously based data, preconceived perceptions and emotion, which have no place in thoughtful policy making.”

Hunter agrees. “There is a disconnect between science and the world we live in today,” he says. “Environmental extremists who only look at one piece of the puzzle think getting rid of turfgrass will save water and save the planet. So mulch, pavement or some other impervious surface must be better because you don’t have to water it. If that were true, how do we recharge our aquifers and reduce water runoff from heavy rain?”

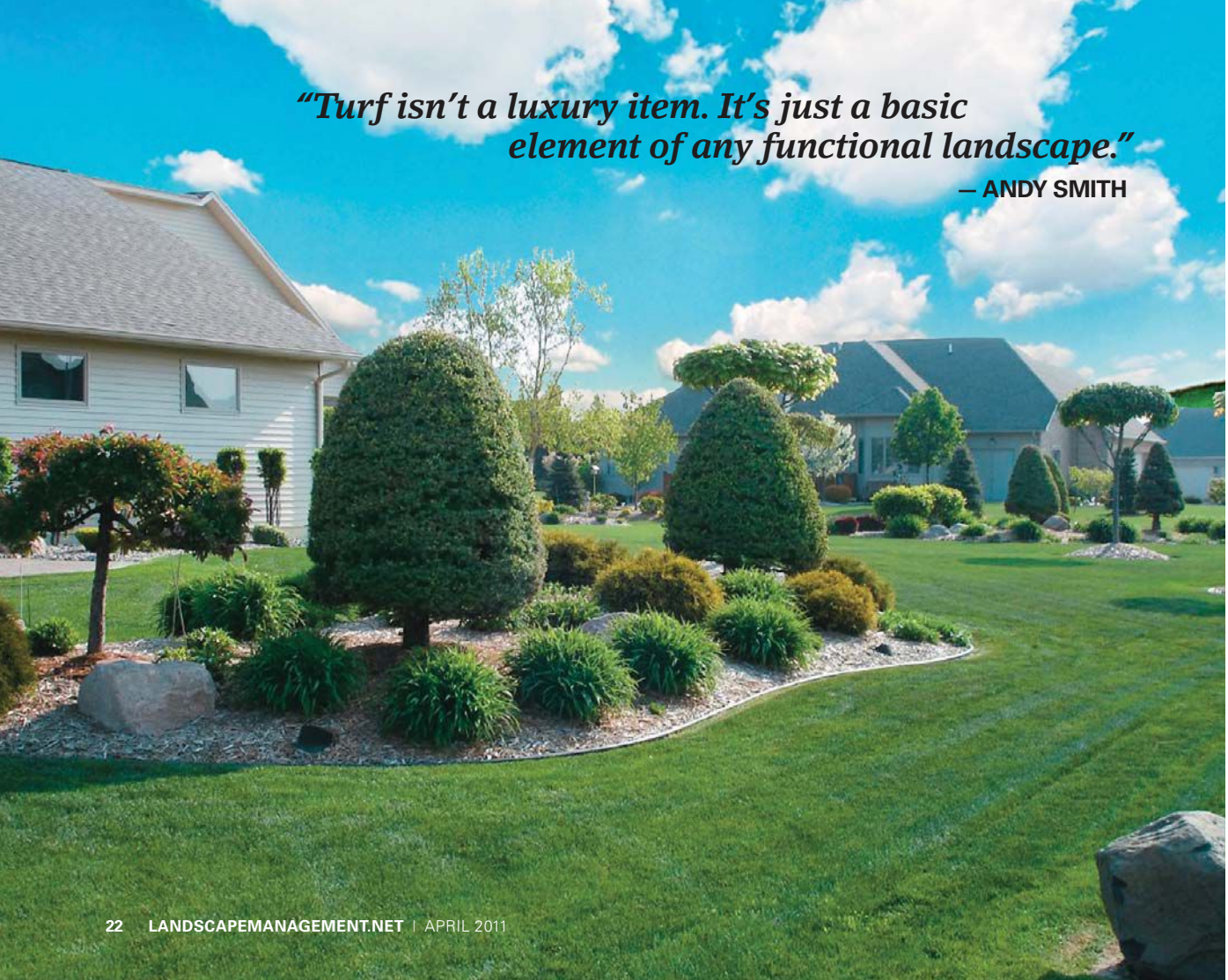
In fact, water is a good place to start. The EPA estimates the average family of four can use 400 gallons of water every day,

and approximately 30% of that water is used outdoors. More than half of that 30% is used to water lawns and gardens, and of that, The Saving Water Partnership says half is defined as effective landscape watering while the other half is wasted as a result of overwatering, improper irrigation system design, evaporation and wind. Nationwide, landscape irrigation is estimated to account for almost one-third of all residential water use, totaling more than 7 billion gallons per day.

The question many people cannot answer is: How much water does a specific landscape need? As referenced in a July 2010 *Landscape Management* article, Larry Cammarata, green management consultant for Brickman, a 687 million company with headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD, says outdoor overwatering can be controlled by looking at the relationship between plants, soil and water. “By fixing the plant location and soil, you can reduce the supplement water that plant needs considerably.” Proper plant placement, based on that plant’s needs, is the key. “I’m seeing the right plants being used, but not always in the right place or right soil.”

Today, “people begin with the assumption that everyone

continued on page 24



“Turf isn’t a luxury item. It’s just a basic element of any functional landscape.”

— ANDY SMITH

ssgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrass
rassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgra
ssgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrass
rassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgra
ssgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrass
rassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgra
ssgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrass
rassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgra
ssgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrass
rassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgra
ssgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrass
rassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgra
ssgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrass
rassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgra
ssgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrass
rassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgra
ssgrassgrassgrassgrassgrassgrass



Isn't it about time your grass choked out the weeds?

Introducing the only residential herbicide you can apply at seeding to stop nimblewill, bentgrass, and crabgrass from day one.

tenacityherbicide.com



©2011 Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC., 410 Swing Road, Greensboro, NC 27409. **Important: Always read and follow label instructions before buying or using this product. The label contains important conditions of sale, including limitations of remedy and warranty. Tenacity® is not currently registered for use in all states. Please check with your state or local extension service prior to buying or using this product.** Tenacity® and the Syngenta logo are registered trademarks of a Syngenta Group Company.



continued from page 22

overwaters,” Smith says. And since turf is very visible, it gets targeted. But if people eliminate turf, there’s no proof they’ll save water, he explains. “People treat watering turf like a linear relationship where we use it at the top end and then it dumps at the bottom,” he says. “But water on turf doesn’t work that way. It’s cyclical. If I apply water to my grass, it transpires into the atmosphere and comes back down in the form of rainfall, as long as I don’t overapply it or create runoff or leaching. And plants purify this water as it transpires and turns into pure, clean vapor. If I apply water to concrete, however, it just runs off. We should be looking at turf as a tool instead of painting an ugly picture of it.”

The solution industry professionals suggest is better educating their crews and consumers on proper plant and water use, discouraging overapplication and alerting people to areas that need renovated to use water more efficiently, and even capture and hold that water for extended and future use. Since landscapes don’t require drinking water, there are also possibilities when it comes to using gray or recycled water.

Other inputs that are regularly criticized with regard to turf are pesticides and fertilizers.

For instance, “Could Your Lawn Be Lethal?” quotes the EPA, stating “Americans apply 100 million pounds of fungicides, herbicides and insecticides a year to their lawns.” The information that is missing from this figure, says Gina Zirkle, a scientist and environmental stewardship expert with The Scotts Miracle-Gro Co., Marysville, OH, is it includes both the home and garden category, which covers pesticides used on lawns, gardens, landscape beds, indoors and on pets. So, is the lawn really using 100 million pounds? Home and garden totals only 11% of the amount of pesticides used in the U.S., according to the EPA’s Pesticide Industry Sales and Usage Report. Approximately 76% — or 722 million lbs. — is used in agriculture and 13% — or 114 million lbs. — is used in industry/government.

“I’m in a hotel sleeping on sheet that may have been treated with a chemical to kill bedbugs,” Smith points out, “yet grass is the easy and visible target.”

And, “turfgrass is not the only plant in the landscape that needs inputs,” Hunter says, pointing out this is a big reason removing turf from the landscape is not the best solution for reducing overall inputs.

One lawn care professional in Smith’s region started customizing his service to limit inputs. Instead of offering the same five-application lawn care program to each property, he studies each specific site, conducts a soil test and recommends a program to fit that property. “And my place looks fabulous and the contractor is making more margins

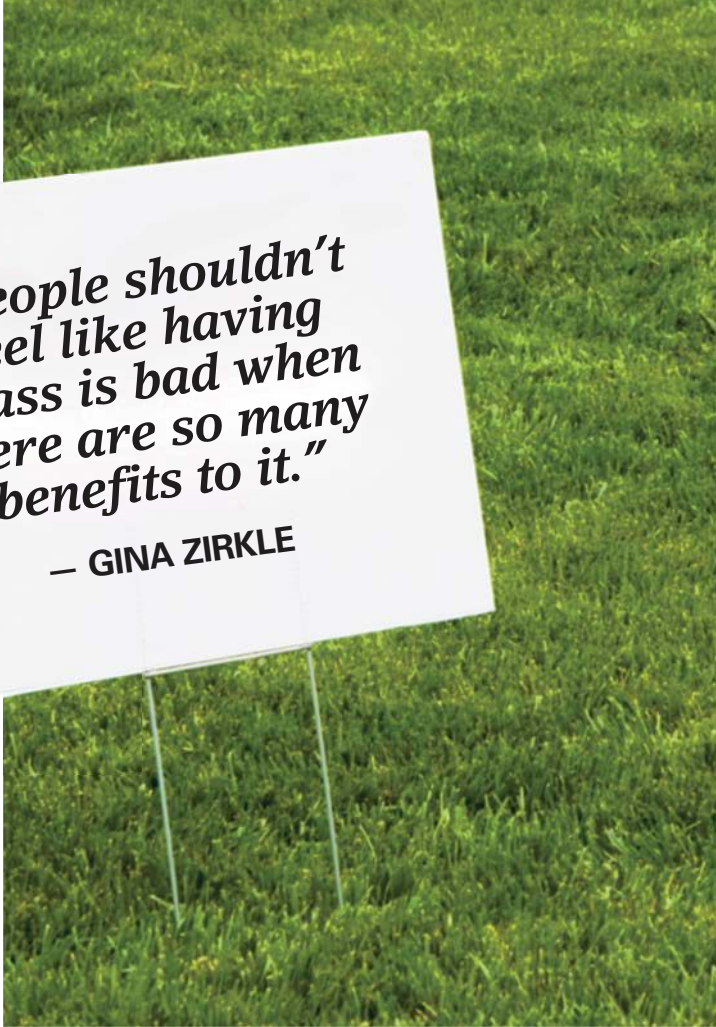
“Turfgrass is definitely and under-valued. It’s the Rodney — it gets ‘no respect.’”

and doing a better job for his customers,” Smith says.

Similar to challenges with water, industry professionals say education and proper use solves the problem. With fertilizer, this means ensuring the application stays on target, placing any misplaced granules back on the target, knowing the correct square footage to apply the correct amount, and properly calibrating spreaders for different sites, says Tom Delaney, PLANET’s government affairs director.

Ultimately, saying we should eliminate turf is like saying “because a 757 flies into the World Trade Center, we should ban all 757s,” Smith says. “It’s not the plane’s fault. It’s the same with turf. It’s not the plant’s fault, but the people who are misusing it and using the incorrect amount of inputs.”

Sahu feels the same way, saying: “Just as no one would suggest the proper response to a headache is removal of one’s head, the proper strategy in minimizing drawbacks due to turfgrass is optimization, not elimination.”



“People shouldn’t feel like having grass is bad when there are so many benefits to it.”

— GINA ZIRKLE

misunderstood, unappreciated Dangerfield of landscape plants

— T. KIRK HUNTER

The benefits – seen & unseen

Before judging turf on just its inputs, many industry professionals say one must factor in its benefits because, in some cases, they warrant and then cancel out any related threats.

Turf has many benefits that are very visible.

First, “turfgrass is one of the softest, safest playing surfaces for family fun and relaxation ... in backyards, as well as in parks, sports fields, etc.,” Hunter points out. In a study of football injuries at 12 Pennsylvania high schools, researchers determined one-fifth were field-related. “Fields with good quality turfgrass cover have higher traction, cushioning and resiliency, and lower surface hardness, reducing the probability of injury,” a UCR turf report explains.

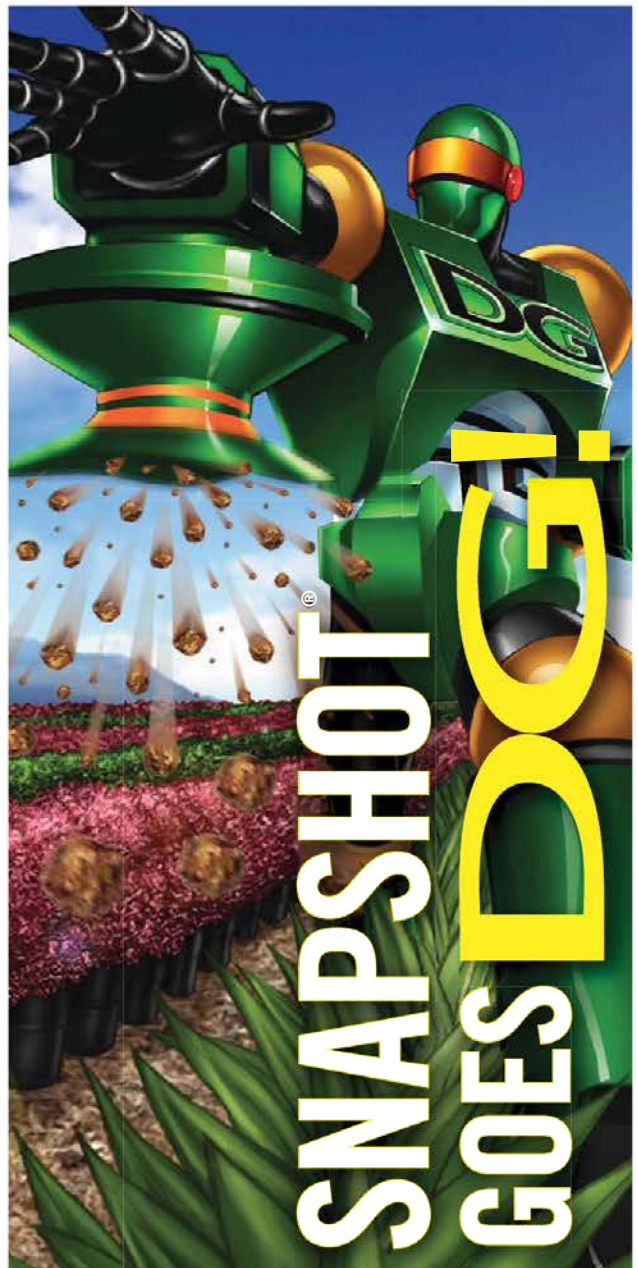
Turf also stabilizes the landscape — reducing runoff and soil erosion and minimizing dust. “You can’t find a plant that grows such a dense groundcover per square inch than grass,” Zirkle says. Mowed turfgrasses are estimated to have shoot densities ranging from 75 million to more than 20 billion shoots per hectare, UCR turf says.

Turf’s cooling effects are also easy to feel. The EPA says the annual mean air temperature of a city with more than 1 million people can be 1.8 to 5.4 degrees F warmer than its surroundings, and in the evening the difference can be as high as 22 degrees F. This phenomenon, also known as the “heat island” effect, can increase summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, heat-related illness and mortality, and water quality, the EPA says. The EPA points to green spaces as appropriate ways to lessen these effects because their leaf evapotranspiration, or loss of water via transpiration and subsequent evaporation, causes this cool down.

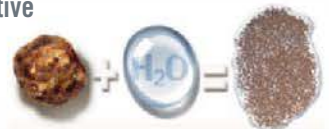
“How much extra energy would be used to cool a home if it weren’t for turf?” Smith asks. Lawns are 30 degrees cooler than asphalt and 14 degrees cooler than bare soil in

WEB EXTRA

For four vital turf maintenance pointers, visit www.landscapemanagement.net/turf.



One advanced technology **SNAPSHOT DG Granule** + **Water Rapidly Dissolves** Into thousands of micro particles forming a potent, long lasting control treatment that's effective on over 100 Grassy And Broadleaf Weeds.



Contact 800-253-5296 or visit www.AndersonsTurf.com

SnapShot DG™

The Andersons

©2011 All rights reserved.
®™ The Andersons and DG are trademarks of The Andersons, Inc.
© SnapShot is a registered trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC.
Always read and follow label directions.

PHOTO BY: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.



continued from page 25

summer, Project EverGreen reports. And, more importantly, if a portion of the water used in a lawn evapotranspires, providing this cooling benefit, “is this water really being wasted?” Sahu asks.

The heat island effect also increases water evaporation from nearby reservoirs. Turf functions as a sponge that traps water and increases groundwater recharge. “Turfgrass areas can even be designed with contours to temporarily hold water (i.e. swales), further decreasing storm water runoff,” Zirkle explains.

As water availability continues as an issue, particularly as the population is expected to grow 50% by 2050, “whatever resource stretch we feel now will be exacerbated,” Smith says.

Better capturing rainfall may help future water reserves. “We should be using our yards to filter the rain where it fall,” Zirkle says. “We should be soaking up water like a sponge, capturing and retaining as much as we can,” Smith agrees.

“While turfgrass is aesthetically appealing, it also provides functional benefits beyond what the eye can see,” Hunter adds.

One invisible concern to many Americans today is carbon dioxide. Once released into the atmosphere, scientists say it lingers for 100 to 200 years, building in concentration and raising the Earth’s average temperature, otherwise known as global warming.

Zirkle worked on a thesis called “Modeling Carbon Sequestration in the U.S. Residential Landscape” at The Ohio State University under Dr. Rattan Lal in March 2010 looking at how because of its permanent cover, turf naturally sequesters carbon in the soil. Even after factoring in the energy associated with turf maintenance, lawns are net carbon sinks, she found.

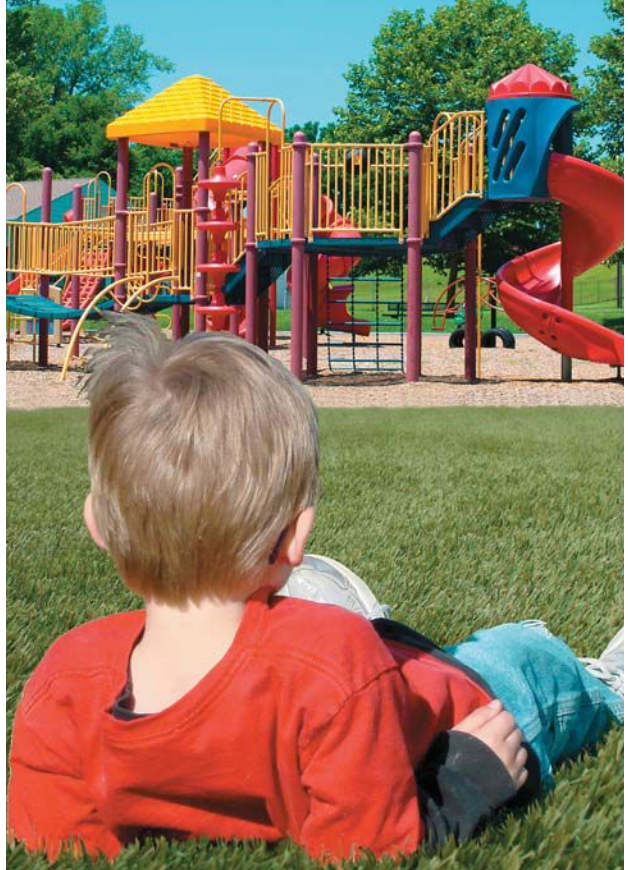
Eliminating turfgrass would result in a reversal of this benefit, adding to the atmospheric burden, Sahu points out. “This benefit alone should cause a reassessment of any policy that encourages reduction in turfgrass areas,” he says.

Another invisible turf benefit people feel rather than see is oxygen generation via photosynthesis. “Thirty acres of grass provides enough oxygen for 2,000 people to breathe,” Smith says.

Stress reduction is also a hidden green space perk. A recent *Men’s Health* article “Recapture Your Wild Side” says one in four U.S. workers describe themselves as chronically angry. Over the past 20 years, outdoor playtime has decreased by 50% as adolescent obesity rates have tripled.

The article says “the 21st-century man spends 90% of his time sealed off from nature. The ultimate cost of this separation is impossible to calculate. But in recent years, scientists have measured enough specific benefits of exposure to the outdoors — less anger, more productivity, quicker thinking, faster healing, longer lives — that the lesson seems obvious.”

“Imagine a therapy that had no known side effects, was



“Imagine a therapy that had no known side effects, was readily available, and could improve your cognitive functioning at zero cost.”

This from a *Psychological Science* study.

The therapy: interacting with nature, as T. Kirk Hunter’s son, Talon, does here.

readily available, and could improve your cognitive functioning at zero cost,” *Psychological Science* asks readers. The therapy: interacting with nature. In a University of Michigan study, a short nature hike sharpened memory and attention by 20%.

“There’s a realization that incorporating nature into the places where we live, work and play has a profound impact on our well-being,” says William Sullivan, Ph.D., in *Men’s Health*. He studies how regular exposure to green spaces helps people function better. “Find a home in a green neighborhood, one with street trees and sidewalks that encourage walking.”

For these reasons, “green space has been and will continue to be a coveted commodity,” says Evin Ellis, marketing communications manager for Husqvarna, Charlotte, NC.

And, “of course, to advocate a single replacement for the lawn is to risk reproducing the problem” because research will need to be done to factor in the inputs and benefits relating to those substitutes, *The New Yorker* says.

In the end, “people shouldn’t feel like having grass is bad,” Zirkle urges, especially “when there are so many benefits to it.” **LM**

WEB EXTRA

To share the positive attributes of turf with your local legislators and regulators, go to landcarenetwork.com for a sample letter or contact PLANET’s Government Affairs Director Tom Delaney at tomdelaney@landcarenetwork.org or 800-395-2522.



The last time turf herbicides saw
an innovation this big, man
had yet to walk on the moon.

**Introducing DuPont™ Imprelis™ herbicide—
one giant leap for broadleaf weed control.**

DuPont™ Imprelis™ is the most scientifically advanced turf herbicide in over 40 years. Thanks to its innovative technology, you can control even the toughest broadleaf weeds—like ground ivy and wild violets—with more application freedom than ever before. Apply Imprelis™ on rainy days, hot days, dry days, cold days ... even reseeding days, and experience longer-lasting residual control on a wider range of broadleaf weeds. Imprelis™ is easy on the environment too—with one of the lowest application rates in lawn care, combined with low mammalian toxicity. **Make the leap with DuPont™ Imprelis™ herbicide.**



The miracles of science™

DuPont™ Imprelis™ may not be registered for sale or use in all states. Contact your DuPont sales representative for details and availability in your state. The DuPont Oval Logo, DuPont™, The miracles of science™, and Imprelis™ are trademarks or registered trademarks of DuPont or its affiliates. Copyright © 2010 E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. All rights reserved.



SEEDS of change

Turfgrass developers are shifting the focus of their efforts to meet the industry's environmental challenges. BY **RON HALL** EDITOR-AT-LARGE

A SEED CROP of turfgrass at its full mature height under Oregon's pastel-blue, mid-summer sky is one of agriculture's more beautiful sights. Fickle breezes swirl the mass of stalks with their smallish seedheads, the whole golden mass seemingly extending to dark green mountains in the distance.

Oregon is the grass seed capital of the world and its Willamette Valley, flanked east and west by mountain ranges, is where most of it is grown. Grass seed is the state's fifth largest crop and, in good years, generates sales of more than \$500 million. Turfgrass (much of coming from the seed grown in these fields) is also the foundation of the \$53 billion professional

continued on page 29

continued from page 28

landscape/lawn service industry.

In recent years the soft, green, living carpet that surrounds our properties and that the great majority of Americans greatly appreciate is being attacked. It's being criticized for its water use, for the chemical inputs used in its management and for the emissions released into our atmosphere by fossil-fueled mowers.

Often (too often) these charges are made without mention of the documented societal and environmental benefits turfgrass provides urban communities.

Stung by the implications that the turfgrass industry is not "green" enough, the industry is starting to focus on the function as well as the beauty of lawns.

"We have to position the lawn as a resource beyond aesthetics," says Dr. Frank Rossi, Turfgrass Extension Specialist, Cornell University. "We have to optimize the functional aspects of lawn turf in harmony with the conservation of its natural environment and using economically and socially responsible management."

While Rossi focuses on and promotes "socially responsible" management of turfgrass, a related but separate segment of the industry is addressing turf's environmental issues with breeding and development.

"The big issues right now are water use and low-maintenance requirements," says Dr. William Meyer, Director of the Turfgrass Breeding Project, Cook College, Rutgers University. "We've expanded our breeding effort to address those concerns in a big way. We're maintaining and evaluating big areas that are not irrigated in the summer, fertilized once a year and mowed at three inches."

While Meyer doesn't expect these tests to immediately result in turfgrasses that would be acceptable to most homeowners, he's confident they and others like them (See "Turf for dry times" sidebar.) will lead to the continued development of lower maintenance turfgrasses that homeowners will embrace.

This is not too much to expect based

on the remarkable improvements to cool-season turfgrasses made by the Rutgers breeding program, starting with the pioneering work by Dr. C. Reed Funk almost a half century ago. Practically all of the top-performing cultivars of lawn grasses – perennial ryegrass, turf-type tall fescue, fine-leaf fescues and the majority of the available Kentucky bluegrass varieties, as well – are products of the University's program in collaboration with private seed companies.

Just don't expect too much, too soon, Meyer cautions.

Taking a hit

One of the drags on the turfgrass development business in recent years has been the stress of the country's poor economy.

The lack of construction (particularly of new homes) dramatically reduced demand for seed, at least from professional service lawn service providers. Americans are on track to buy fewer new homes in 2011 than in any year since the government began keeping data almost a half century ago. The anticipated annual rate of 250,000 is far below what economists say is healthy, about 700,000 a year.

Also, as luck would have it, the 2008-'09 Recession came at a time of overproduction, not uncommon in the cyclical seed production business, helping to depress prices of most popular turfgrass species in 2009, with the downward spiral continuing into 2010. Total sales of Oregon's grass seed crop fell from approximately \$467 million in 2008 to \$228 million in 2010. (See chart.)

"They were hit by a double whammy, the economy and overproduction. I think it really hurt them, although they seem to be coming out of it now as they're working through some of their surplus issues," says Kevin Morris, executive director of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP), Beltsville, MD.

Strangely, bad news elsewhere – weather usually – is actually good news for the seed industry. Seed companies

For "Right plant, wrong place?" sidebar, please turn to page 20

benefit when unusual weather devastates lawns. Last summer's unrelenting heat and humidity com-

combined with below-normal precipitation in much of the U.S. East, devastated lawns in large sections of the usually verdant Midwest, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Demand for lawn renovations will be great this season, lawn care professionals predict.

Another factor in the seed industry's recovery; Oregon seed producers reduced acreage significantly, from 489,660 acres in 2008 to 375,665 acres in 2010. This also should help equalize the supply/demand equation and stabilize prices.

The poor economy will improve and home construction will resume to a healthy level — eventually. The larger long-term challenge for the seed business, indeed for the turfgrass industry as a whole, will be dealing with the environmental concerns related to turfgrass management, and certainly not just water use.

In addition to lower water use, breeders are accelerating their efforts to develop turfgrasses that require less fertilizer and other chemical inputs, respond better to traffic and are more disease resistant. They're making headway on all of these, says Meyer.

"In the 1970s it was nothing to fertilize with five or six pounds of nitrogen per year. No one is using that much anymore. In our turf trials we don't put down more than three pounds per year in half-pound increments. In our low-maintenance tests we fertilize just once a year," adds Meyer, who worked for a

continued on page 32



TURFGRASS FOR DRY TIMES

How many times have you heard the term “water-thirsty Kentucky bluegrass” used in connection with landscape irrigation restrictions or incentives to homeowners to replace or reduce the size of their lawns? If you answer “too often,” you know your turfgrass.

Research has verified a wide range of responses to drought among bluegrass cultivars. Some varieties, in fact, compare favorably to the better-performing turf-type tall fescues, the cool-season species most often touted for its ability to stay green during periods of extended dryness.

“We were shocked that we had bluegrasses in the upper percentages of what we’ve surveyed in the best of the tall fescues,” says Kenneth Hignight, director of research NexGen Turf Research, Albany, OR. His company has been testing cool-season turfgrasses for a range of environment-friendly characteristics, including drought tolerance, for almost 20 years.

Bluegrasses that can stay acceptably green even during dry periods are significant for obvious reasons.

Landscape architects, landscapers or lawn care professionals can now confidently specify or recommend these water-efficient cultivars for customers desiring the beauty and texture of Kentucky bluegrass

lawns while still requiring reduced landscape water use.

To that end NexGen initiated the formation of the Turfgrass Water Conservation Alliance (TWCA), described on its website as “an unbiased independent foundation whose number one goal is water conservation focusing on live plant material.” Other founding members include ProSeeds Marking, Inc., Turf Merchants Inc. and Pennington Seed.

Research cooperators include Dr. Cale A. Bigelow at Purdue University, Dr. Mike Richardson and Dr. Douglas Karcher at the University of Arkansas, Dr. Jeffrey Derr at Virginia Tech and Steve Langlois, Langlois Turf Consultants in New Jersey. Drought stress testing continues at turf research sites in Albany, OR; West Lafayette, IN; Fayetteville, AR; Virginia Beach, VA and Pitman, NJ.

NexGen’s collaboration with Karcher (and the impetus of the idea for the TGWCA) began in 2004 after Hignight, attending an agronomy meeting, learned of Karcher’s use of digital imaging analysis to evaluate specific turfgrass characteristics. He realized that by taking digital images of selections of turfgrass as they dry down and analyzing these images, researchers could very accurately determine the percentage of green tissue for each selection over a period of days and weeks and, in

NexGen researchers evaluate the results of their drought tests plot by plot.

effect, measure its drought tolerance.

“A percentage of total pixels tells you the percent of green tissue color,” says

Hignight. “Now we have a system, counting the pixels, that says when a particular cultivar contains any level of green tissue between 100% and 0%, and compare its performance to other cultivars.”

Hignight says his company takes more than 30,000 digital images of turf plots each year of all popular cool-season lawn grasses which are being subjected to drought conditions inside of rainout shelters and out in the field.

“We could see differences in the first trials we ran. They were dramatic,” he says.

The difference in the ability of the most drought-tolerant bluegrasses to remain acceptably attractive under dry conditions is not insignificant. For example, using the cultivar, Mallard, one of the top performing varieties, as opposed to one of the least drought-tolerant cultivars can mean the difference between applying 8,000 and 19,000 gallons of water per summer to keep a typical 5,000 sq. ft. lawn in Albany, OR, acceptably green.

Hignight, however, doesn’t recommend using a single cultivar of bluegrass (or any species, for that matter) to establish a lawn. Each species and each cultivar of each species has unique characteristics. The strengths of one mask the weaknesses of others, he explains.

To that end, he and cooperators across the United States, continue to investigate all species of cool-season grasses and are measuring warm-season species, as well, for their drought tolerance.

To date the TWCA has certified 24 cultivars representing five cool-species meeting its criteria for offering end users “proven water conservation benefits.” They and other information about the TWCA can be found at tgwca.org. — RH

“ The **Z900** is a very easy machine to operate, not complicated at all. My operators are very happy with them. Which, of course, makes me happy. ”

Juan C. Vila

CEO
Vila and Son
Miami, Florida



To see more of what Juan has to say about the ZTrak 900, go to www.JohnDeere.com/mowpro

The ZTrak™ PRO 900 Series

Landscape pros like Juan know how easy it is to operate a ZTrak PRO 900. With exclusive features like the Brake & Go System™ and the height of cut adjustment dial, operators can spend more time mowing and less time fiddling with controls. And there are the other legendary benefits of a ZTrak PRO 900: superior controllability, and exceptional mowing performance.

Juan Vila accepts nothing less than the ZTrak PRO 900 for his business. Ask your local dealer what it can do for yours.

Accept Nothing Less





OREGON GRASS SEED CROP ESTIMATES*

SPECIES	HARVESTED ACRES	PRODUCTION	PRICE PER CWT	SALES
2008 Perennial ryegrass	122,860	174,861,000	75.62	\$132,230,000
2009 Perennial ryegrass	107,420	165,061,000	49.67	\$81,984,000
2010 Perennial ryegrass	91,579	146,590,000	49.50	\$72,569,000
2008 Tall fescue	174,580	262,237,000	67.07	\$175,833,000
2009 Tall fescue	157,570	268,223,000	40.04	\$107,409,000
2010 Tall fescue	117,080	186,363,000	31.52	\$58,734,000
2008 Kentucky bluegrass	20,500	26,132,000	111.46	\$29,127,000
2009 Kentucky bluegrass	17,970	18,967,000	104.69	\$19,857,000
2010 Kentucky bluegrass	13,350	16,445,000	96.37	\$15,848,000

* The majority of cool season grass seed is produced in Oregon. The figures are indicative of the industry as a whole.

Source: Extension Economic Information Office, Oregon State University

continued from page 29

Chicago lawn care company very early in his 40-year industry career.

That experience and everything he's learned since has convinced him that homeowners will not accept a lawn that's not green and attractive, even if it is more "sustainable".

Green still king

Proof of this is not hard to find.

An effort to popularize the use of buffalograss to California homeowners during a severe drought in the late 1980s fell flat on its face, says Dr. Ali Harivandi, longtime environmental horticulturist at the University of California, Davis. Homeowners didn't take to the drought-tolerant native grass, which had been improved in Nebraska and is still extensively used in the Plain States. Californians, who have year-round outdoor lifestyles, didn't like that buffalograss goes dormant and brown five months of the year, and doesn't do well in shade or under traffic.

"We, in this industry, tend to oversell things," says Harivandi. "We tend to talk about all the attributes of a particular grass and we don't tell about the problems. People get excited to do something, and when, later on, they find out that it wasn't so great there is a backlash."

Harivandi says when he arrived in California 30 years ago most lawns were Kentucky bluegrass or a mixture of bluegrass and ryegrass. Now, most are turf-type tall fescue, except for Bermudagrass, which is common in hot, desert communities.

"I have no doubt we have reduced water use on lawns by 15% to 20% over these past 30 years by switching from Kentucky bluegrass to tall fescue," he says.

Cornell's Rossi feels a similar shift to tall fescues and away from less-water-efficient varieties of bluegrass would reduce landscape water use in the Northeast. That is if (a big "if") property owners would do a better job of watering.

"We are the worst water managers in the world in the Northeast. We don't get it. Typically, we count on precipitation to forgive us our sins," he says.

In recent years, both Harivandi and Rossi have been looking at a range of fine-leaf fescues as a viable option for certain types of low-maintenance, low-water-use landscapes. While they're not suitable for home lawns — at least not when they're allowed to grow to their full height or mowed at four inches as they are in some locations of the Cornell campus — they could be just the grass for industrial sites, highway medians,

naturalized commercial sites, slopes and even as decorative mounds on residential landscapes.

Similar strides are being made in the development and improvement of warm-season turfgrasses.

In 1993 the University of Georgia initiated its seashore paspalum breeding program and has since released several attractive cultivars that grow well using saline water. So far, seashore paspalum been used mostly on golf courses and sports fields, but the species' popularity for home lawns should grow as more communities mandate or offer reclaimed water for landscape irrigation.

Meanwhile, the University of Florida is touting its UltimateFLora Zoysiagrass as an alternative to St. Augustinegrass, the predominant lawn grass in Florida around the Gulf Coast. The University says that its improved zoysia requires less water and fertilizer to stay healthy and attractive than St. Augustine.

Discovering genetics and incorporating them into new cultivars that deal with drought and other environmental stresses is a slow painstaking process, but it continues on a steady pace.

Every year brings advances that will allow turfgrass to maintain its role as our most versatile and popular landscape plant. **LM**

Available exclusively at Ewing Irrigation

www.ewing1.com | 800.343.9464



**Adjusting the way
you see high efficiency.**

That's intelligent.

Introducing the Rain Bird® HE-VAN—the world's first high-efficiency variable arc spray nozzle. Believe your eyes. Through more uniform coverage, you can now increase water efficiency, while actually shortening run times. You can simplify your inventory with full adjustability from 0° to 360°. And you can do it all with a nozzle backed by the name you trust. Seeing what you can accomplish with the first high-efficiency variable arc spray nozzle. That's The Intelligent Use of Water.™



*New Rain Bird® HE-VAN Nozzles
High-Efficiency Variable Arc Spray Nozzles*





SEF94 - The Perfect Fuel for Gas-Powered Tools



Developed by



World Leader
In Performance Fuel
Technology™

SEFfuels.com

More Trimming, Less Fixing

You know the frustration of gas-powered tools that won't start when needed and the cost to repair them. Small engine repair shops report that currently 75% of all repairs involve fuel systems degraded by ethanol in street gasoline. And it will only get worse, as the EPA continues to increase the amount of ethanol allowed in street gas.

SEF™ 94 Contains No Ethanol

SEF94 is ethanol-free, so it prevents ethanol-related problems that fuel stabilizers can't fix.

- Permits Easier, More Dependable Starts
- Provides Worry-Free Long-Term Storage
- Extends Engine Life
- Avoids Costly Repairs, Rebuilds & Downtime

The Only Small Engine Fuel Offering:

Three formulas to meet virtually any manufacturer's specifications

- 4-Cycle Unleaded Fuel
- 2-Cycle Fuel Pre-Mixed with Oil (50:1)
- 2-Cycle Fuel Pre-Mixed with Oil (40:1)

Four packaging options - for small to large volume applications

- Quart Containers
- 5-gallon Pails
- 30- and 54-gallon Drums

SEF94 - The Only Fuel Backed by VP Racing Fuels, The World Leader in Performance Fuel Technology™

For more information, call 877.515.1SEF or email SEF94@vpracingfuels.com TODAY!



NOTE: SEF94 is for use in small engines only. It is not a street legal fuel and may not be used in motor vehicles.





Setting the TONE?

As New Jersey passes the most restrictive fertilizer legislation to date, other states may be looking to follow suit. BY CASEY PAYTON

AFTER TWO YEARS of negotiations, New Jersey's Fertilizer Pre-Emption Bill was signed in January, with what is now the most restrictive legislation in the country. It's no doubt that many states will soon follow suit and that has many worried about what's in store for the future of the industry.

"I was willing to adapt to any changes regarding the fertilizer type we put down or even the amount — but to put a restriction on when you can apply the product crossed the line," admits Jeff Cooper, president of Lawn Con-

nection, West Berlin NJ. "It hit a nerve with me. That'll affect my livelihood."

What Cooper is referring to is part of the legislation that prohibits fertilizer applications before March 1st or after December 1st. Among other things, the legislation restricts the amount of quick-release nitrogen allowed in products and application amounts; bans all phosphorus use (no phosphorus can be used unless a soil test proves phosphorus application is needed or after soil disturbance when reestablishing turf surfaces); prohibits applications when raining or

on impervious surfaces; requires all professionals to be certified; and establishes fines for noncompliance with all of these regulations. The comprehensiveness of this legislation has made it the strictest in the country to date.

“Other states have phosphorous bans and date restrictions but none address nitrogen restrictions and the percentage of slow-release nitrogen,” says Jim Jensen, regional sales manager, Nufarm Turf & Specialty — Nufarm Americas, and a member of the board of directors of the New Jersey Green Industry Council (NJGIC), an umbrella organization which represents, promotes and defends Green Industry interests. “All of these various elements in one bill are what makes it so restrictive. Never has a fertilizer law incorporated so much regulation.”

Lawn care operators (LCOs) are finding this troubling, but it seems the shortened season is the biggest worry of all. “Economically that’s going to zing us,” admits Cooper, who says he’s already become an organic-based company and dramatically reduced the amount of pesticides he’s putting down. “I feel like we were doing everything right, and they’re still coming after us. I value every single day I have to work, including the months of December, January and February. I feel like I’m now a seasonal business. I’m only getting nine months to operate, and if you also subtract the bad weather days, it may be down to eight.”

Nancy Sadlon, executive director of NJGIC, says unfortunately the differing date restrictions and content requirements for consumers vs. and professionals were part of the emotion-based legislation that passed without any scientific backing, including information about weather fluctuations and freeze and thaw variations. “In a world that’s regulated based on science, we would have one standard for both consumers and professionals and dates of applications would be region specific without

the limiting windows,” she says. “But now, even if the ground isn’t frozen and the turf active, they can’t apply fertilizer simply because of a law’s limiting dates. Since LCOs can only do so much in the time period they’re now dealing with, it’s going to limit business growth.”

A fight for science

NJGIC has been involved in the discussions about nutrient management since it began about five years ago. Their primary role as a consolidating voice for the whole Green Industry in New Jersey has been education and communication to regulators at New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) about real world lawn care operations. Sadlon says they fought for science-based legislation when the conversation seemed to be driven by emotion. “Just one example is we surprised many of the decision makers involved when we showed them professional lawn care companies have already eliminated phosphorus from many of their programs because there was no need to add the nutrient,” she says. “This practice was started over 15 years ago.”

While Sadlon was happy with many of the compromises NJGIC was able to reach, she says a lot of emotion-based information still made it into the bill. Once these types of unscientific regulations make it into the law books, they can be hard to change, and since emotion-based policy is spreading, it would behoove others to get involved now since it does seem other states will be soon to follow suit, she adds.

“It’s already happening,” asserts John Buechner, director of technical services at Lawn Doctor, Inc. “Pennsylvania is in the draft stages of a bill, and Maryland is even a little ahead of them. Plus, Delaware and Virginia are also considering legislation because of their own proximity to the Chesapeake Bay.”

And these other states are adopting the language from New Jersey’s bill. “It’s likely New Jersey is going to be a

THOUGHTS ON NJ’S FERTILIZER PRE-EMPTION BILL

“I was willing to adapt to any changes regarding the type of fertilizer we put down or even the amount — but to put a restriction on when you can put the product down crossed the line. It hit a nerve with me. That’ll affect my livelihood.”

JEFF COOPER,
Lawn Connection



“All of these various elements in one bill are what makes it so restrictive. Never has a fertilizer law incorporated so much regulation.”

JIM JENSEN,
Nufarm Turf & Specialty



“Even if the ground isn’t frozen and the turf active, they can’t apply fertilizer simply because of a law’s limiting dates. Since LCOs can only do so much in the time period they’re now dealing with, it’s going to limit business growth.”

NANCY SADLON,
New Jersey Green Industry Council



“It’s likely that New Jersey is going to be a model for future legislation. And just looking at what’s happening in these states near large bodies of water, you can predict that the Great Lakes states may be the next targets.”

JOHN BUECHNER,
Lawn Doctor





model for future legislation,” says Buechner. “And just looking at what’s happening in these states near large bodies of water, you can predict the Great Lakes states may be the next targets.”

Buechner says LCOs can make a difference in what their regulations will be if they’re willing to get involved. “Individuals may feel helpless but they can make a difference when they join together and form coalitions with others in the industry,” he says. “Even if you don’t want to be a part of the group doing the advocating, a small contribution can help support the people who are doing it for you. Most of those people are making that effort on a volunteer basis and putting their own time and money into fighting for the best legislation for the whole industry.”

What happened in New Jersey should be a call to action for the rest

of the country, Jensen adds. “There is a clear agenda by environmentalists to characterize fertilizers as a primary cause of the nutrient problems of our waters — despite lack of evidence to prove such a claim,” he stresses adding that the basis of the environmental activists’ push is they feel nitrogen ends up in nearby waterways as a result of fertilizer runoff, but science proves there are many contributing factors. Commercial turf fertilizers are a minor contributor, but the easiest target to go after. “Legislators like to be saviors of the environment, and so long as it is perceived by their voting public to be true, they will accept these false claims about fertilizers and pesticides. Efforts to stand up for our products and practices have never been more important.”

The “Safe Playing Fields Act” (a bill that would impose a ban on the use of all pesticides at schools, child care facilities and recreation fields) is the next big issue for New Jersey, and Cooper says he’s

63



% of lawn care professionals who will purchase fertilizer or fertilizer/pesticide combination products this year.

SOURCE: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

going to be ready this time around. “I’m going to learn as much about the bill as I can and represent my side — the small businesses of New Jersey. I’m learning you can’t change the world, but you can get your voice out there and be heard.”

Strong voices can make a difference in the end result of a bill, Sadlon adds.

And with regulations like these, industry professionals agree even small changes can make a big difference on business survival. **LM**

Payton is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscaping.

WE GET IT. IT'S NOT JUST A PIECE OF SOD. IT'S YOUR LIVELIHOOD.

RYAN sod cutters carve out smoother curves and straighter edges with precise, controlled depth. Replacement turf fits. And with 75% less vibration, RYAN won't rattle your cage. RYAN sod cutters – re-engineered and ready to take on the next job.

Because it's not just ready ... it's RYAN ready.



AERATORS | DETHATCHERS | OVERSEEDERS | SOD CUTTERS
Build your fleet at ryanturf.com, or (866) 469-1242.

See the amazing performance for yourself at youtube.com/ryanturfrenovation



The First Name in Turf Renovation™



FREEHAND[®]
= 1.75G = HERBICIDE

You have enough things to worry about. But with **FreeHand[®] 1.75G herbicide**, money-draining re-treats aren't one of them. **FreeHand 1.75G** enables you to control a wide range of grasses, broadleaf weeds and sedges with one application. And since **FreeHand 1.75G** utilizes two highly effective active ingredients and two unique modes of action, it's a great resistance management tool, too. Don't lose profits to re-treats. Treat it right the first time, with **FreeHand 1.75G**.

betterturf.basf.us

 **BASF**

The Chemical Company



BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

The author, of the Wilson-Oyler Group, is a 30-year industry veteran. Reach him at bwilson@questex.com.

10 steps to successful satellite yards

The industry has used satellite yards throughout its history. Personally, I have used them throughout my career. I have had mixed results, as have clients of mine. When satellite yards are successful, the benefits are very rewarding. If there are problems, however, they can be very troublesome.

Contractors usually use satellites to reduce travel time, and sometimes to add storage space. They usually satisfy that need. This benefit can be offset by some of the associated consequences.

The list of challenges that satellites create is fairly long:

- › maintaining your company culture;
- › control;
- › accidents;
- › surprises resulting in contract loss;
- › low morale;
- › equipment abuse and theft;
- › administrative issues; and
- › employee retention.

There are probably some that I have missed. Given this long list, why would someone consider this option? The reality is that there is risk to almost anything; you just have to know how to mitigate it.

Here are 10 best practices to avoid the pitfalls of satellite yards, and turn a potential problem into a worthy solution.

Contractors use satellites to **reduce travel time** and **add storage** space. When satellite yards are successful, the benefits are very rewarding.

- 1** Staff the satellite with tenured, trusted key employees.
- 2** Make sure you have systems working in your base operations that will also work in a remote location.
- 3** Management must communicate daily with the manager of the satellite.
- 4** Provide the same communication to the satellite that you provide your base employees on company news, policies, etc.
- 5** Bring the satellite employees to the base at least quarterly so they are included as part of the team.
- 6** Owners and key managers must be visible to the satellite employees at least a couple times per month.
- 7** Stock the satellite with the best and newest equipment to minimize breakdowns, which are hard to support.
- 8** Make sure you have figured out how to give shop support and maintain a preventive maintenance program.
- 9** Have management “take the temperature” of employees so that you can beware of changes in morale.
- 10** Senior management must stay close to customers to measure satisfaction.

Good management can help assure that the satellite yard is successful. If you *consistently* follow the best practices above, you will be successful.

Dow AgroSciences

Dimension[®]

Specialty Herbicide



GOLF



LAWN



NURSERY



ORNAMENTAL



THE HOTTEST SHOW ON THE WEED CONTROL ROAD JUST GOT EVEN LOUDER.

Only a superstar rolls like this, and you're about to get a backstage pass to the hottest tour on the road. It's the Rock the Weeds Tour featuring Dimension[®] specialty herbicide, the No. 1 preemergence herbicide brand in the lawn and landscape markets.¹ Dimension is cranking up the volume on tough weeds like crabgrass, creeping woodsorrel, bittercress and many other grassy and broadleaf weeds. And its nonstaining formulation rocks all season long and delivers outstanding early postemergence control on crabgrass. On this tour, there are no groupies or wannabes. It's brought to you by the company that delivers only proven solutions — Dow AgroSciences. www.DowProvesIt.com

¹2008 Specialty Product Consultants. [®]Dimension is a trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension specialty herbicide products apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions. [®]The swinging golfer logo is a registered trademark of PGA TOUR, Inc. ©2010 Dow AgroSciences LLC T38-813-002 (12/09) BR 010-60661 DATOTURF9075

OFFICIAL
CHEMISTRY
COMPANY



P R O V E N S O L U T I O N S

James River Grounds Management is the largest privately held provider of landscape management services in the central Virginia region. The company was formed in 1989 by Ray F. Lazarchic and Michael C. Hildebrand and was sold in 2005 to four members of the management team, **Maria Candler**, president and CEO; Jason Knight, vice president and COO; Todd Pendleton, vice president business development; and James Batterson, director of facilities. *LM* spoke with Candler on how the current leadership deals with today's management issues.



Maria Candler

TOP TRENDS

› **Quality is no longer the differential.** For so many years we were the "quality" company. That was how we set ourselves apart from our competition. Times are constantly changing. Now it's about being who you need to be to the person you're dealing with in any given moment. We've worked hard to maintain our culture as a quality, relationship driven company. Flexibility however, is what has sustained our success. We are learning each day how we can meet our customers ever-changing needs while still being true to who we are.

› **Do more with less.** I've noticed that these are the days that separate the men from the boys. It's helped us that we are always focusing on what can be eliminated even when times are good. As our costs increase but our customers are paying less, that mentality has really helped us thrive in a down economy. The successful contractors that I talk with regularly have been on a lean business management journey for several years not just in reaction to the marketplace changes.

› **Creativity/flexibility with contracts.** Our ability to be creative and flexible with our pricing and specifications has become increasingly important. We have been a relationship-focused company since the beginning. Lately we have seen that relationship we have built with our customers doesn't give us the benefits it used to. It has at least kept us in the negotiations, which allows us to demonstrate our flexibility and therefore will always remain our focus where customers are concerned.

TOP OBSTACLES

› **Employee recruiting.** The high unemployment rate has only translated into more applicants who need to be processed but still yield dismal results. It's still very challenging to recruit a

INSIDE INFO

Company: James River Grounds Management

Website: www.jrgm.com

Founded: 1989

Headquarters: Glen Allen, VA

LM Top 150 Ranking: 60, with revenue of \$19,760,785

Employees: 441 full-time/
3 part-time

Key to being a maintenance leader: A culture of continuous improvement has made a huge impact on our growth. We have never been afraid to change. The day we stop evolving and accept status quo is the day we start shrinking. Another key is sharing our performance goals and actuals with the team. Everyone needs to know where the company is headed and how they fit into the big picture.

legal, stable work force. More and more each year our human resources staff is operating much like our sales team. Hire 10, hope to keep 2. Bid on \$1,000,000, hope to close \$200,000. The up side is that it's forced us to really tighten up on our hiring procedures and look more closely at our staffing benchmarks. We're working with a variety of government agencies to promote our jobs as well as hosting our own job fairs.

› **Government regulations.** Everywhere we turn, legislative changes are causing great challenges. The recent regulatory changes with prevailing wage calculations for the H-2B program, as well as more changes looming on the horizon, could make that program unusable. E-Verify is much closer to reaching the end goal of mandatory for all businesses. We watch pesticide and water restrictions closely. As tough as these changes are, there are opportunities attached to each. For example, our irrigation technicians have obtained certifications that exhibit their expertise in effective water management.

They are poised and ready to guide our customers through tough restrictions on water usage.

TOP OPPORTUNITIES

› **Quality of management team.** For the past two years we have been very focused on the quality of our management team. We buy the same equipment and products as our competitors. We recruit from the same labor pool. The quality of this team is our best opportunity to set ourselves apart. Focusing on this team is how we go from being grass cutters to landscape professionals. We've brought some really great people onto our team in the last few years. We're focused and committed to building a career ladder for them. It's very exciting.

Need Speed?

SEE RESULTS IN
JUST 24 HOURS!



UnTreated

Treated



Visual results in 24 hours and dead clover in as little as a week. That's the kind of performance you can expect from a precision product like SpeedZone®.

University tests, field trials and turf managers have demonstrated consistently fast control of tough weeds such as clover, plantain and spurge without regrowth. And dandelions are blown away!

Get your weed control program on the fast track with SpeedZone® Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf.

- Low odor
- Excels in cool-weather
- Rain-fast in 3 hours
- Reseed in 1 weeks

G pbi / GORDON
CORPORATION
An Employee-Owned Company

SpeedZone is a registered trademark of PBI-Gordon Corp.
ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS 01285

800.821.7925
pbigordon.com/speedzone

Tending turf

Properly renovating turf is all about the science.

Renovation isn't just about repairing the turf — it's also about maintaining, says an Arizona-based landscape business owner.

BRIAN GOLEMBIEWSKI TAKES turf renovation seriously. He doesn't see it so much as an "add-on" service, but something that landscapers should already be doing to offer their clients the very best value. To him, turf renovation comes down to the soil. "Even though the turf is the indicator of a problem, it has less to do with the grass itself than the soil," says Golembiewski, president of Paramount Landscape & Maintenance, Inc., in Tempe, AZ. "Before you can even start solving the problem you have to know what you have in terms of the soil. We do soil samples where we'll plug 10 random locations and fill up a bag of dirt. Then we send that out to testing labs."

In Arizona, Golembiewski says they're dealing with a variety of soil types — everything from clay to sandy — and the issues can be very different depending on the area the client is based in. He says that makes a large part of the turf renovation job about diagnosing. "Diagnosing is really the key to success with turf renovation," says Golembiewski. "Say you go to the doctor with symptoms but they diagnose you with the wrong thing. You're going to get the wrong treatment, and it won't solve the problem. It's the same thing with grass, which is also a living organism. It needs to be properly diagnosed before any problems can be solved."

While it begins with the soil, Golem-

biewski says there are many other factors that come into play with turf problems like water, sun and disease. He says the issues need to be discovered so that they can be addressed and treated properly. On the properties he's already managing, Golembiewski does annual soil testing. This ensures Paramount is constantly monitoring the turf's condition and developing plans to head off any problems. It's just packaged right in with the service that Golembiewski already offers his existing clients.

However, he has picked up some new clients based purely on renovating damaged turf. "We have picked up properties that are a mess and the client wants us to fix it," says Golembiewski. "The thing is it takes six to 12 months for a landscaper to ruin a property. It's not something that happened over night. The previous landscaper wasn't doing the right things and the property was deteriorating over time. By the time that previous landscaper is fired, and we're brought in, it looks terrible and it can be expensive and lengthy to solve. That's not always something the client wants to hear."

Golembiewski says that means the service isn't always an easy sell with new clients, but being able to offer turf renovation services to existing clients — in terms of diagnosing problems before they become severe — is huge. "It's certainly a value-added service to our customers," says Golembiewski. "And it's a discriminator against our competitors. I would say turf renovation requires both offensive and defensive posturing because being proactive, and preventing problems in the first place, is a big part of the service."

Since Golembiewski is doing annual soil checks and looking for problems before they start, turf renovation is only a small part of his business. "It's maybe just five percent of what we do — and that includes fertilizing five times a year, doing some weed control, and checking soil annually," he says. "Keeping up with those things prevents us from having to do major repair work. We don't let it get to that point in the first place."

Golembiewski says there's no major cost to get involved with this type of service, but there is a need for education. "It wouldn't be capital that's required, it's intellectual," he says. "If you don't already have an understanding of these things, schooling would be necessary. There's a scientific element to turf renovation. And there's a lot more to soil than dirt!"

The author is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscaping.

» SERVICE SNAPSHOT

COMPANY NAME: Paramount Landscape & Maintenance, Inc.

HEADQUARTERS: Tempe, AZ

WHY TURF RENOVATION? It's part of the overall maintenance service that Paramount offers its clients in ensuring their property is pristine year-round.

INITIAL INVESTMENT: Not much capital, but a need for education

WHY CUSTOMERS LIKE IT? Because it adds value. "It means a lot to the client in terms of long-term value of their property, says Brian Golembiewski, company president. "Part of turf renovation is keeping the value up all year — not letting it go. It costs a lot more money to bring back damaged turf than to just maintain it well in the first place."



A Game Changer™

*Setting the new standard in service excellence
and solution delivery*



Your business is measured in results and customer satisfaction. So is ours.

As the new direct-to-market sales division of Agrium Advanced Technologies, Direct Solutions' dedicated sales team knows the lawn and landscape markets intimately. We understand the challenges you face on a day-to-day basis, and we have the right products at the right price to help you grow the greenest, healthiest turf possible.

Our Promise.

As your one-stop supplier, Direct Solutions' commitment to you is simple:

Provide a complete range of the most advanced turf-growth solutions on the market.

Our Partnership.

Develop agronomic and economic solutions tailored to your specific turf conditions, budget and delivery schedules.

Our Performance.

Deliver proven turf management programs that integrate environmentally-responsible fertilizer technologies, micronutrients, seed and chemical products.



Visit us online
www.aatdirectsolutions.com
or call us at 855-228-1133



Chalet Nursery, a true Green Industry pioneer, began providing lawn care in 1981, as an adjunct to the company's landscape maintenance services. "We realized that if we were responsible for clients' landscapes, we needed control over the fertilizers and pesticides applied on them," says **William "Bill" Leuenberger**, soil and turf department manager. Leuenberger has more than three and a half decades in the industry, and he's seen lawn care evolve. "Our program has matured into our Soil and Turf Management Department. Our lawn services focus on improving the soil environment, the foundation for healthy, vigorous turf and ornamentals."

Bill, you spend a lot of your time with various industry associations and serving on a variety of industry committees monitoring and dealing with government and legislative issues. What are you seeing as big issues now? I thought the biggest battles for the industry would be with pesticides, but it turns out they're mostly about turf fertilizers, phosphorus right now. It's happening even here in Illinois, which also now limits the commercial applications of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus. Working with the IPLCA (Illinois Professional Lawn Care Association), we were able to get pre-emption, which keeps cities and towns from making their own fertilizer rules. Otherwise, we weren't going to be on board with the bill. I'm worried that nitrogen is next on the list.

You seem to view issues like this pragmatically rather than confrontationally. The problem with us taking an extreme position is that it's unsustainable just like the extreme position activists take. While we haven't agreed with many of the positions activists have taken, especially the obviously unsound ones, their squawking has moved the industry toward more environmental practices. Give them credit for that.

Please describe Chalet's approach to lawn care. We used to have nine different programs. Now we have just two — organic and synthetic. We're talking about fertilization. Our organic program uses 80% to 90% organic fertilizers. We also use some organic fertilizer in our synthetic program. Our focus is more on training our people rather than applying

products. We realize that every company has to make sales, but we want to feel good about what we're doing and to feel good that we're doing it right

What changes or new initiatives are you making in Chalet's lawn care programs for 2011? We're focusing on improving our customer relations. We're already recognized as a leader in client satisfaction, and we want to keep that trust with our customers by constantly evaluating our service commitment and reinventing ourselves. Next, we want to continue improving our nutrient management programs emphasizing to our clients our dedication to appropriate fertilization practices. Finally, we're developing a Chalet accreditation for our employees in regard to all phases of responsible turfgrass care.

AT A GLANCE

COMPANY: Chalet Nursery

FOUNDED: 1917

HEADQUARTERS: Wilmette, IL

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY: 36

SERVICE AREA: Chicago and surrounding communities

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT: Long-time member of PLCAA and PLANET, PLANET Trailblazer, former president and founder of the Illinois Professional Lawn Care Association, board member of Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, member of Illinois Landscape Contractors Association serving on their Education Committee.

NUMBER OF CHALET LOCATIONS:

Three — Retail nursery and garden center, Wilmette IL, Landscape Division, North Chicago, IL and Chalet Farm, Salem, WI

EMPLOYEES: 275 in season

SERVICES: Landscape design/build, monthly maintenance, soil and turf management, arboreal services, retail nursery and garden center, perennial propagation

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS/HOBBIES:

Collect music (primarily music from the 60s & 70s), annual pilgrimage to Las Vegas

FAMILY: My wife of 28 years passed away in 2005, one son, one grandson (18 months old) and a second grandchild expected in August.

SECOND BEST ONLY GETS YOU SO FAR.



Target Specialty Products. The quality leader for over four decades.

Wholesale distribution of specialty agricultural chemicals • Recognized for integrity
Experienced training and regulatory staff • Licensed customer service
Next day delivery in most areas • ISO compliant



SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

Delivering Value

Fumigation • Golf • Landscape • Nursery • Pest Control • Vector • Vegetation Management

Visit us at www.target-specialty.com

**40 YEARS
AND GROWING
STRONG**

SANTA FE SPRINGS HOME OFFICE 800-352-3870

Fresno, CA
800-827-4389
Tempe, AZ
800-352-5548

San Jose, CA
800-767-0719
Austin, TX
800-896-1259

San Marcos, CA
800-237-5233
Dallas, TX
800-345-9387

Sacramento, CA
800-533-0816
Houston, TX
800-901-9746

Las Vegas, NV
800-533-0816
San Antonio, TX
800-925-3922

Portland, OR
877-827-4381
Oklahoma City, OK
800-522-9701



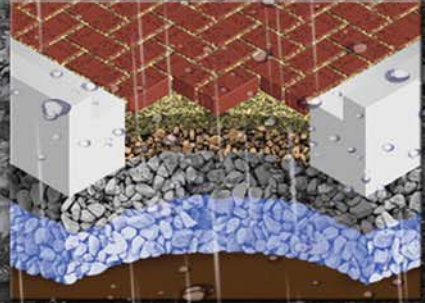


ood for you, good for the environment...

When installed in a permeable pavement system our permeable clay pavers allow rainwater to filter through and dissipate into the soil rather than carry excess pollutants into storm drains and waterways.



StormPAVE



- Strong - 12,000+ psi
- Durable - life cycle of 100+ years
- Colorfast - no pigments or dyes
- LEED - can help qualify in five categories

americaspremierpaver.com
800.334.8689



Pine Hall Brick



earth friendly...naturally green



WEEDWATCH

STANDING SENTINEL TO PROTECT PLANT HEALTH



Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
solution
Lontrel® specialty
herbicide*

LARGE HOP CLOVER

Trifolium campestre

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This winter annual has trifoliate leaves similar to white clover (see March, page 46).
- ▶ Leaflets have prominent veins, with the terminal leaflet on a short stem.
- ▶ Short, hairy, slender stems are reddish in color and have a tendency to sprawl.
- ▶ Bright yellow flowers grow in clusters; each produces a single seed.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ Apply a post-emergent herbicide when clover is young and actively growing. All clover species are particularly susceptible to products containing clopyralid or fluroxypyr.
- ▶ Good turf maintenance ensures a thick stand of grass and will help keep clover from recurring. Consider adjusting your fertility program to include more nitrogen and less phosphorous.



Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
solution
Confront® specialty
herbicide*

DANDELION

Taraxacum officinale

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This perennial weed thrives in weak, thin turf.
- ▶ Bright yellow blossoms have many petals, followed by puffball seed carriers.
- ▶ Long, hairless leaves have jagged teeth growing from a low rosette.
- ▶ Leafless, hollow stems emit a white milky sap when broken.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ A post-emergent application of two-, three- or four-way broad-leaf herbicides are most effective in spring or fall.
- ▶ Thick, healthy turf is important for managing this weed species. Properly mow, water and fertilize lawn to encourage healthy growth and minimize thin turf.

* Confront is not for sale or use in Nassau and Suffolk counties, New York. State restrictions on the sale and use of Confront and Lontrel apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details.

For more information regarding these and other turf weeds — and related control technologies and tips — please visit www.DowProvesIt.com or call 800/255-3726.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY  **Dow AgroSciences**

Dimension[®]
Specialty Herbicide

Gallery[®]
Specialty Herbicide

Snapshot[®]
Specialty Herbicide

 **Dow AgroSciences**



It takes courage to admit there's a problem.

Meet Frank. He's got what you'd call a "problem" with hand-weeding. Fortunately, there's Dimension[®], Gallery[®] and Snapshot[®] specialty herbicides from Dow AgroSciences. They give Frank the kind of group therapy he really needs by delivering serious control of the toughest weeds in lawn and landscape settings. So go ahead and skip the awkward meetings. Come learn more about the portfolio of products proven to help kick the hand-weeding habit at DowProvesIt.com.

www.DowProvesIt.com 800-255-3726

*Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension specialty herbicide products and Snapshot apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions. *The swinging golfer logo is a registered trademark of PGA TOUR, Inc. ©2010 Dow AgroSciences LLC T38-000-018 (2/10) BR 010-60665 DATOTURF9072

OFFICIAL
CHEMISTRY
COMPANY



P R O V E N S O L U T I O N S

PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

IPM in action

THE MISSION

Beneath the weeds and the grubs lies a beautiful lawn, waiting to be revived.

This residential lawn account was acquired by Farmside Landscape & Design in 2004. Kentucky bluegrass sod, specific cultivar unknown, was installed approximately five years before. It appeared the sod had been installed and maintained improperly. Layering had developed between native soil and sod layer, compaction was evident and roots were barely penetrating. Frequent shallow watering also enhanced shallow rooting. Thatch build-up was excessive, and very tough to penetrate. Grub history was evident, and disease activity was heavy, particularly those associated with poor construction, such as necrotic ring spot and summer patch.

The property is also bordered on both sides by poorly maintained lawns with high weed populations. A large row of deciduous trees running the length of the lawn had created a microclimate where the trees, surface roots and turf competed for nutrients and water in approximately 25% of the lawn area.

Rick Kalish, turf health care manager for Farmside Landscape & Design, led a team to help bring the lawn back to life.

The basic management strategy on this lawn is a six-visit program based on integrated pest management (IPM). Soil testing was done at the start and approximately every three years to address pH. Fertilization is done five times a year using 25% to 50% slow-release nitrogen sources.

Exact phosphorous and potassium ratios are manipulated to meet those needs as indicated by the soil test. Late spring through late fall applications use organic-based bridge fertilizers with 30% to 50% organics.

Initially, core aeration was done annually to help break down thatch and increase nutrient and water penetration. It also helped reduce compaction and encourage deeper root development.



PHOTOS COURTESY: FARMSIDE
LANDSCAPE & DESIGN

THE WORK



1 | Sweat equity. While Farmside initiated the overhaul of the lawn and does scheduled visits, some of the responsibility is shouldered by the homeowner, who does his own mowing and cleanups. An automatic underground sprinkler helps with irrigation.

2 | Proof of program success. Exposure on this lawn is a combination of full sun and partial/heavy shade. The turf is healthy and weed-free, even with the little sunlight it receives in the shaded areas.



3 | Root of the issue. One of many shallow roots in the lawn area, competing for nutrients and water with the turf.

4 | Here comes the sun. This north-facing photo shows shade in the foreground from the trees along the southwest property line, with roadside and driveway trees in the distance. The turf is exposed to full sun in the middle ground.

5 | On the shady side. Tall deciduous trees reside across the lawn by the street, with a few on the opposite border of the yard.



6 | A noticeable difference. A fairly distinct line separates the lawn of the client, right, and his southwest neighbor's lawn.



Headquartered in Wantage, NJ, Farmside Landscape & Design offers a complete range of services, from design concept, hardscape construction and landscape installation, to plant and turf health care and maintenance. This particular project garnered a 2010 Environmental Improvement Grand Award from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). Learn more at Farmside.com.

Author's note: These photos were all taken on June 25, 2010.



THE BENCHMARK

KEVIN KEHOE

The author, owner-manager of 3PG Consulting, is a 25-year industry veteran. Reach him at kkehoe@questex.com.

How to manage a salesperson

PART 2

What keeps salespeople from achieving greater success? My observations suggest there are several areas where salespeople can improve with the help of a sales manager. If you are willing to take the time and work with your sales team to address the issues most relevant to them, they will get better. The areas where they can benefit most include the following:

▶ **Time:** Salespeople waste time working on “low-return” opportunities. You can help them by insisting they produce a two-week plan every week that identifies their lead, call, appointment, bid and presentation activities. The key is to ask, “Will that activity get you closer to your goal, and have you allocated too little or too much time to it?” Then be willing to help them rearrange the calendar.

▶ **Process:** Salespeople should spend time on high-value activities. These include networking, cold calling, appointment setting, phone call and email follow-up, face-to-face meetings, presentations and closing. You don’t hire them for their measuring, estimating and proposal-producing skills. You can help them by delegating these important tasks to others.

▶ **Product:** In recent months, it has become painfully apparent to me that many salespeople do not truly understand the product they sell — in a way that matters to the customer. While they do not need to be horticultural experts, they must

understand how your service benefits the customer in terms of your service features. For example, a basic knowledge of irrigation technology and its application to proper lawn care can demonstrate a practical problem-solving expertise that can close a sale. You can help them by identifying their gaps in product knowledge and training them.

▶ **Story:** Many salespeople talk too much — often without saying a lot. This is especially true when responding to the most important customer question they face: “Why should we hire you?” You can almost hear the rambling begin and the wincing that follows. A simple, value-based story communicated in three to four sentences is sufficient to answer this question. You can help them by having them commit your story to memory.

▶ **Personality:** Account managers are gatherers, and are good at it because they have a need to be liked. Great salespeople are hunters, not gatherers, and are not as concerned with being liked. They are more concerned with winning. As a result, they will generally be better at qualifying and not waste theirs or the customer’s time. You can’t really train this demeanor; you have to hire it. That’s why I tend to shy away from great talkers and hire hunters to sell.

▶ **Poise:** Many sales are lost in negotiation. A negotiation starts after the first customer objection — “you are too high-priced,” “we like our current contractor,” “we are in year two of a three-year contract,” etc. Lots of salespeople freeze up at this critical stage, including myself. You can help your sales team keep their poise by role-playing a simple formulaic method: Validate the objection, ask a question to clarify it, restate the objective, provide a possible solution, then trial close on the solution.

Salespeople respond to coaching if they believe it is honest, direct and practical, and will help them win more often. Don’t wait for them to learn on their own time. Observe their performance and address the right issues.

Great salespeople are hunters, not gatherers, and are not concerned with being liked. They are more concerned with winning.



PENDulum^{Herbicide}
AquaCap™

You've got enough things to worry about. But the proven performance of **Pendulum® AquaCap™ herbicide** means weeds aren't one of them. Its water-based formulation gives you long-lasting, broad-spectrum preemergent grass and broadleaf weed control, with reduced staining and odor, plus easier clean-up. So don't worry about weeds popping up. Use **Pendulum AquaCap**.

betterturf.basf.us

 **BASF**
The Chemical Company

LM REPORTS

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH



MAINTENANCE: TURF CARE



Grasshopper

Improve productivity, reduce time-consuming hand-edging and eliminate the need for two-cycle edgers with Edge-EZE. Electric and manual models deliver a clean edge up to 2.5 in. deep up to 500 ft./minute along sidewalks, driveways and roadways, and vertical adjustment up to 12 in. and allow edging from the sidewalk, turf or curb. An optional electric actuator increases downward pressure in tough conditions and raises the disc to cross sidewalks. By increasing productivity and decreasing labor, Edge-EZE can have significant impact on the bottom line. GrasshopperMower.com/edge-eze.php

Pearl's Premium

Pearl's Premium Ultra Low Maintenance Lawn Seed is drought-resistant and low maintenance. Available in sunny mix, shady mix and sun & shade mix varieties, the seed grows at one quarter the rate of bluegrass and requires only monthly mowing on average. It grows 12-in. roots, does not require chemical fertilizer, rarely needs water after it is established, and looks like a lush green lawn — even during winter, the company says. PearlsPremium.com



Pennington Seed

Princess 77 is Pennington Seed's first seeded F1 hybrid bermudagrass, with the texture and color to match the best vegetative varieties. It is less expensive and has faster establishment time than sprigging — plus requires 21% less water. Princess 77 has improved drought tolerance, density, wear and damage recovery, helping to make it one of the top choices among landscape professionals. A trusted name since 1945, Pennington Seed has provided much of the world's bermudagrass and continues to be a key player in the research and development of top quality grass seed. PenningtonSeed.com

FMC Professional Solutions

The Echelon herbicide Spring Rebate is an in-season promotional program based on purchases for a minimum of 30 acres. In addition to the discount(s), all purchases qualify for the Echelon Performance Assurance Program. The Spring Rebate includes all purchases invoiced and delivered between March 15 and May 15, 2011. Discounts by formulation are as follows:

- Echelon 4SC (1-gal. container): \$15 off the purchase of 6 gal. or more
- Echelon 0.3% on fertilizer: \$23 off the purchase of 5 tons or more
- Echelon 0.375% on fertilizer: \$28 off the purchase of 4.5 tons or more
- Echelon 0.5 percent on fertilizer: \$38 off the purchase of 3.5 tons or more

For program details and online redemption, look for the Echelon logo at the URL below. Or, buy Echelon and then use your smartphone to enter purchase information by snapping a picture of the Microsoft tag depicted at right. FMCprosolutions.com/Home/Promotions.aspx



Echo Inc.

The new PAS-225VPB Combo Pack is part of the Echo Pro Attachment Series (PAS). The kit combines a power source, trimmer attachment and a blower attachment in one box. Its power source is equipped with a 21.2cc Power Boost Vortex engine and an i-30 starter for a 30% reduction in starting effort. The power source employs a coupler that allows fast and easy changing of attachments without the use of tools. The PAS-225VPB power head can also accommodate nine other PAS attachments, including the brushcutter, articulating hedge trimmer and power pruner. The combo kit also includes the new Speed-Feed trimmer head. Echo-USA.com



Gravely

Gravely has added the Thatch-O-Matic to its Chore Line. Housed in heavy-duty, fully welded 12-gauge steel, the Thatch-O-Matic Power Rake digs out thatch where major lawn repair is needed. Interchangeable tine,

flail or knife reels allow operators to adapt to any commercial or rental application. A 12-position height moves in 1/4-in. increments from 1 to 4 in. with a locking collar. The clutching mechanism and actuator design are optimized to extend the life of the product. Additional features include an adjustable height handle with a vibration-absorbing comfort grip. *Ariens.com*



Knox Fertilizer Co.

Knox Fertilizer Co. has been granted registration by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its product, Shaw's Turf Food with Acelepryn and Dimension, which provides season-long control of crabgrass and grubs in one early-season application. The company says the product provides balanced plant nutrient needs for as long as 90 to 180 days. The new plant food-insecticide-herbicide combination is a granular product that is easy to apply in standard equipment to provide uniform coverage, even in difficult-to-reach areas. *KnoxFert.com*

United Turf Alliance

ArmorTech PAC 223 uses the active ingredient paclobutrazol to slow turfgrass growth for up to two months, while improving grass quality. This plant growth regulator can reduce frequency of mowing and clippings up to 50% for as long as two months, according to the company. *UTAarmortech.com*



Save time, achieve more, season after season.

Forged Pruner

Wire Cutter

Sprinkler Adjuster*

MAX SHARPNESS
DURABILITY.

Landscape-Irrigation

BYPASS PRUNER

Finally, a 3-in-1 tool for landscape professionals designed to save time and money. Built with the same craftsmanship you have come to expect from Corona - forged for strength and lasting performance, season after season.



Scan on your smartphone to see a product video!
Get the free mobile app at: <http://gettag.mobi>

Connect with Corona Tools!
800.847.7863 | coronatoolsusa.com

*patent-pending design



FREE Leather Scabbard

AC 7220 (\$13.56 suggested retail value)
with purchase of BP 3670

Visit your local dealer or our website for more information.

Offer expires 5/31/11



CORONA
SEASON AFTER SEASON

MAINTENANCE: MOWERS

Dixon

The new Grizzly SE features a ground speed as fast as 12 mph. A welded tube frame, extensive use of cast iron components, premium commercial engines and high performance hydro systems combine to achieve long service life and increase productivity. A rugged new 7-gauge steel cutting deck design provides a high quality of cut. Dixon-ZTR.com



Schiller Grounds Care

The new BOB-CAT Predator-Pro LP-61 is a no-hassle, propane-powered commercial zero-turn rider that use two 33.5-lb. standard liquid withdrawal tanks — no conversion system needed and no costly, specialty tanks required. It is powered by a 30-hp Generac 990 engine. The mower is available in a 61-in. side discharge DuraDeck or a new 61-in. rear discharge deck that allows trimming on both sides of the mower. It also offers a Dual Choice 2-year/2,000-hour or 5-year/500-hour warranty, with a lifetime warranty on deck, deck cradle and engine deck. BOBCATturf.com



EverRide

Available in three deck sizes (48-, 52- and 61-in.), the Fury features a fabricated flat deck for mulching, easy-to-use controls and a low center of gravity for improved hillside performance. All models cut at a speed up to 9 mph and have 12-volt, 340-amp batteries with a 90-minute reserve capacity. EverRide.com

MAINTENANCE: TREE CARE

Morbark

The Beaver M18RX is a new lightweight option package for the Beaver M18R Brush Chipper. Weighing in at less than 10,000 lbs. fully charged with fluids, spare tire and a rugged winch, this rigid and efficient machine can be towed without a CDL. Other key modifications include the single feed-wheel yoke pivot assembly with TorqMax drive, which minimizes dead space between the feed wheel and chipper drum, and increases down pressure efficiency. The unit is available in 140 hp to 170 hp, with Cummins, John Deere or Caterpillar power options. Morbark.com



Vermeer

The SC372 stump cutter offers power and agility in a compact package. Powered by either a 378 hp diesel or 35 hp gasoline engine, the SC372 has the torque to cut through the toughest stumps.

The unit features the optional AutoSweep monitoring system from Vermeer, and a combination belt and gearbox direct drive system offers an efficient transfer of horsepower from the engine to the cutter wheel. An operator presence system monitors the operator's touch and maintains cutter wheel engagement. When the operator's hands leave the control levers, an automatic disengage and braking sequence will stop the cutter wheel in less than nine seconds. Vermeer.com



Cub Cadet Yanmar

The Tank S D and Tank S LP (pictured) mowers feature Synchro Steer technology for intuitive zero-turn control with a steering wheel and dual foot pedal controls instead of lap bars, while giving users the choice of diesel or liquid propane. Both options offer increased fuel economy and extended engine life. CubCadetCommercial.com



Excel Industries

The Big Dog X Series is powered by Kohler and Kawasaki commercial V-twin engines. Durable side discharge decks feature multiple reinforcements. Large 24-in. drive and 13-in. front caster tires provide a smooth ride, and an optimal center of gravity provides superior balance. The mowers' top speed is 11 mph, and fuel capacity is 10 gal. BigDogMowers.com



Billy Goat

The new DL Series of debris loaders offer CustomFit options to build a machine that's just right for the job. Features include an exclusive dual-shredding system with Piranha blade, a replaceable steel housing liner, rotational discharge and a heavy-duty, clear urethane helical intake hose with user-friendly handles and hose connection for improved hose management and maneuverability. The unit can be skid-mounted as standard; options include a tailgate mount or swing-away truck hitch. BillyGoat.com



Husqvarna

The TechLite chain saw bar is made with an aluminum core and steel side plates to give the bar structural integrity comparable to a professional solid bar. The TechLite, on average, is 27% lighter than a standard professional replaceable sprocket nose bar. The reduced weight allows chain-saw operators to run a 20-in. TechLite for the same weight as a 16-in. solid pro bar, both weighing 2 lbs. Husqvarna.com



BIG DOG MOWERS

UNLEASH BIG PROFITS

RELIABILITY, PERFORMANCE, VALUE!



JOIN OUR TEAM TODAY! Find your distributor at

www.bigdogmowers.com

IRRIGATION: SYSTEM SOLUTIONS



Underhill International

Bubblers for low-volume irrigation is now available from Underhill International for use on planting beds, shrubs, medians and other landscaped areas. The bubblers feature a self-sealing design that allows them to be installed without special tape,

saving time and material. They provide full-circle coverage and allow water output to remain constant, even with input pressures from 5 to 60 psi. Two models are available: pre-set flow bubblers and adjustable flow bubblers. Pre-set flow bubblers have three rate options: .25, .50 and 1.0 gpm. Adjustable flow bubblers can be set from .10 to 1.0 gpm. They are both compatible with any 1/2-in. MIPT nipple or fitting. *Underhill.us*

Netafim USA

New Techline EZ is a 12mm drip line for "looped" on-surface irrigation installations. It efficiently irrigates a 1,500-sq.-ft. shrub or planting area with one 250-ft. roll of 12mm Netafim tubing and two fittings that include a Low Volume Control Zone Kit and Line Flushing Valve. Dripper spacings are placed at 12 and 18 in. for uniform water application; the system can be installed within an hour and "disappears" into the landscape with mulch or ground cover. Techline EZ contains a minimum of 25% post-consumer recycled materials, and Netafim is the only manufacturer that offers drip products that qualify for LEED credits. *NetafimUSA.com*



Weathermatic

The SLRC is a new wireless handheld remote for SmartLine controllers that offers the benefits of SmartLine "wireless irrigation network" technology, including plug-and-play capabilities. The unit works with models SL800, SL1600 and SL4800 (Firmware version 1.08 or later) and uses the same "communications hub" as other components in the SmartLine system, such as the SLW15 weather sensor. Powered by two AAA batteries, the SLRC operates within a 1,000-ft. line-of-sight — accessing up to 48 stations instantly. It measures just 2x3 in., and has a bright LCD screen that displays zone number, RF signal indicator and hourglass icon for zone run time. Individual zones can be identified and run from 1 to 90 minutes, or an entire program (A, B, C and D) can be accessed and run for the pre-set length of time. *Smartline.com*



Rain Bird

The IQ v2.0 Central Control System is comprised of four basic components: the central computer, IQ v2.0 software, one or more on-site controllers and a network communications cartridge. Depending on the site's specific needs, the central control system can be configured using Direct Satellites, Server Satellite and Client Satellites. Each system can use one satellite type or a combination of satellite types. Built-in control is available for up to five satellites; however, the central control system's capacity can be easily and affordably expanded in five-satellite increments to meet larger system requirements. IQ v2.0 is designed to work with either of Rain Bird's newest modular controllers: the traditionally wired ESP-LXME or the two-wire, decoder-based ESP-LXD. Each of these controllers features Rain Bird's Extra Simple Programming language for easy set-up and adjustments. *RainBird.com*

LAWN CARE: SPREADERS



Ecolawn

Save time, labor and operating costs with the new Ecolawn Applicator 2011. This multi-purpose and motorized unit is built for turf professionals to aid in top dressing, compost spreading, turf renovation and seeding organic matter. Ecolawn spreads a wide variety of materials, including soil mix, pelletized product, calcite clay and crumb rubber. EcolawnApplicator.com

TurfEx

The new TS-75 commercial-duty, manually powered spreader features a heavy-duty, corrosion-resistant, 1.3-cu.-ft. polyethylene hopper. Nylon axle and wheel bearings provide self-lubrication with wear and load-carrying performance. Large gears are constructed of Nylatron GS nylon, which provides wear and impact strength. A rugged gear cover with quick-release clamps keeps gears well protected, while also allowing for quick and easy serviceability. Large 13-in.-diameter pneumatic tires are featured on the spreader to easily traverse rough, uneven terrain and to minimize pushing effort for the operator. Other standard features include a clear, fitted hopper cover and one-year warranty. TrynexFactory.com



PSB Co.

PSB, a division of White Castle System Inc., introduces the PS200 — the newest addition to its line of Prizelawn fertilizer spreaders. With its 6 mph transport and application speed, coupled with its 200-lb. capacity, the unit can be on and off jobs as large as an acre in as little as eight minutes. Its 2.5-ft. turning radius, instant reverse and 35-in. width allows the operator to get in and out of tight spots or through garden gates with ease. The Honda GXV 160 commercial engine ensures years of reliable operation. Find a video featuring the PS200 at the company's website. PrizelawnSpreaders.com



He found an illuminating way to eliminate downtime.

With hands-on training, guidance and support from VISTA Professional Outdoor Lighting, you can profitably expand your list of services and also fill the void between irrigation and landscape projects. VISTA experts will show you how to utilize the skills you already possess to install outdoor lighting solutions at moneymaking margins.



**VISTA
PROFESSIONAL
OUTDOOR
LIGHTING**

Light up your bottom line.

Call 800-766-VISTA or visit www.vistapro.com today.



CLASSIFIED SHOWCASE

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Call Kelli Velasquez at
216-706-3767,
Fax: 253-484-3080,
E-mail:
kvelasquez@questex.com



Payment must be received by the classified closing date. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and American Express.

Mail LM Box # replies to:
Landscape Management Classifieds, LM Box # _____
306 W. Michigan St., Suite 200
Duluth, MN 55802
(please include LM Box # in address)

Every month the Classified Showcase offers an up-to-date section of the products and services you're looking for. **Don't miss an issue!**

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

SELL MORE LANDSCAPES & JOBS



Two **NEW** Profit Centers - 50%+
Two **NEW** Revenue Streams
Two **NEW** Customer Bases
A Simple, Easy Add-On Service
Buy Factory Direct - Wholesale
NO PAYMENTS & INTEREST
FOR 90 DAYS
We **FUND** Your Installs
1-800-334-9005
www.allprogreens.com/training

FREE DVD & TRAINING
SYNTHETIC LAWN

SELL MORE LANDSCAPES & JOBS



Two **NEW** Profit Centers - 50%+
Two **NEW** Revenue Streams
Two **NEW** Customer Bases
A Simple, Easy Add-On Service
Buy Factory Direct - Wholesale
NO PAYMENTS & INTEREST
FOR 90 DAYS
We **FUND** Your Installs
1-800-334-9005
www.allprogreens.com/training

FREE DVD & TRAINING
SYNTHETIC GOLF GREENS

Incorporate
for as little as **\$99**

Visit www.incorporate.com
or call 800-616-0216

— THE —
COMPANY
CORPORATION™

INCORPORATING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

Professional Business Consultants
PBC
Merger & Acquisition Specialists

WANT TO BUY OR SELL A BUSINESS?

Professional Business Consultants can obtain purchase offers from numerous qualified potential buyers without disclosing your identity. There is no cost for this as Consultant's fee is paid by the buyer. This is a **FREE APPRAISAL** of your business. If you are looking to grow or diversify through acquisition, I have companies available in **Lawn Care, Grounds Maintenance, Pest Control and Landscape Installation** all over the U.S. and Canada.

182 Homestead Avenue, Rehoboth, MA 02769

708-744-6715 • Fax 508-252-4447
E-mail pbcmello1@aol.com

EARN BIG
With Landscape Lighting



-Great Add-On Sale
-Enhance Your Projects
-Penetrate Affluent Households

WE CAN TEACH YOU TO DO LANDSCAPE LIGHTING THE RIGHT WAY!

Training ~ Support ~ Products
Call For Information
1.800.687.9551
www.nitetimedecor.com



HELP WANTED

FLORASEARCH, INC.
In our third decade of performing confidential key employee searches for the landscape/horticulture industry and allied trades worldwide.
Retained basis only.
Candidate contact welcome, confidential and always FREE.
1740 Lake Markham Road
Sanford, FL 32771
407-320-8177 ♦ Fax: 407-320-8083
E-mail: search@florasearch.com
www.florasearch.com

SOFTWARE

MANAGE your BUSINESS **FREE DEMO**
the **SMART WAY** ...

CLIP Software

- Schedules customer's jobs
- Routes crews in best order
- Tracks employees
- Finds your profitable customers
- Can bill from QuickBooks®

Why do 10,000+ companies run 2 Billion \$\$\$ through CLIP every year? **Because it WORKS!**

www.clip.com • 800-635-8485



TELL THEM YOU SAW IT IN

Landscape
Management

LM Blog

To read daily Green Industry news & views on the *Landscape Management* blog, visit www.landscapemanagement.blogspot.com or scan the tag below.

Get the free mobile app at <http://gettag.mobi>



Landscape Management is proud to be the official publication of the American Society of Irrigation Consultants. Our commitment to coverage of irrigation and water issues makes us the perfect fit to work with "an organization of professionals within the irrigation industry."



AD INDEX

Agrium Advanced Technologies	43
The Andersons	25
BASF Corp	37, 51
Belgard	7
Corona Clipper	53
Cub Cadet	9
Dodge Chrysler	CV3
Dow AgroSciences	39, 47
DuPont	27
Earthway Systems	2
Forestry Suppliers	Insert
Honeywell	20, 21
Hortica Insurance	13
Hustler Turf	55, CV4
John Deere Commercial	31
Kohler Engines	15

Kubota Tractor	19
Kunz Engineering	59
L T Rich	CV2
Mistaway Systems	4
PBI Gordon	41
Pine Hall Brick	45B
Project Evergreen	23B
PRO Landscape by Drafix	11
Rainbird	Insert (reg), 33A
Ryan	36
Syngenta Corp	23A
Target Specialty Products	45A
U S Lawns	3
Vista Professional	57
VP Fueling	33B
Walker Mfg	2

Indices are provided as an additional service. The publisher does not assume any liability for errors or omissions.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT (ISSN 0894-1254) is published monthly (12 issues per year) by Questex Media Group LLC, 306 W Michigan St, Suite 200, Duluth, MN 55802. **Subscription rates:** one year, \$54, two years \$76 in the United States & Possessions; \$87 for one year, \$127 for two years in Canada and Mexico; all other countries \$165 for one year, \$246 for two years. For airmail delivery, include an additional \$75 per order annually. Single copies (pre-paid only): \$8 in the United States; \$10 in Canada and Mexico; \$15 all other countries. Back issues, if available: \$16 in the U.S.; \$20 in Canada and Mexico; \$30 all other countries. Add \$6.50 per order for shipping and handling. Periodicals postage paid at Duluth, MN 55808 and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send address changes to *Landscape Management*, P.O. Box 1268, Skokie, IL 60076-8268. Canadian G.S.T. number: 840 033 278 RT0001. Publications Mail Agreement Number 40017597. Printed in the U.S.A.



Copyright 2011 Questex Media Group LLC. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including by photocopy, recording, or information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients, is granted by Questex Media Group LLC for libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Dr., Danvers, MA 01923 phone: 978-750-8400 fax: 978-750-4470; call for copying beyond that permitted by Sections 107 or 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law. For those not registered with the CCC, send permission requests to questexpermissions@theygsgroup.com or phone 800-494-9051 ext. 100.

Landscape Management does not verify any claims or other information appearing in any of the advertisements contained in the publication, and cannot take any responsibility for any losses or other damages incurred by readers in reliance on such content. *Landscape Management* welcomes unsolicited articles, manuscripts, photographs, illustrations and other materials but cannot be held responsible for their safekeeping or return. Questex Media Group LLC provides certain customer contact data (such as customers' names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses) to third parties who wish to promote relevant products, services and other opportunities which may be of interest to you. If you do not want Questex Media Group LLC to make your contact information available to third parties for marketing purposes, simply call 866-344-1315; 847-763-9594 if outside the U.S. between the hours of 8:30 am and 5:00 pm CT and a customer service representative will assist you in removing your name from Questex Media Group LLC's lists.



COMING IN MAY



LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT'S SNOW & ICE GUIDE

Winter is finally behind us, which means it's time to put the snow and ice management equipment away start planning for the next cold season. In *LM's* biannual **Snow & Ice Guide** we bring you the latest tools to make your winter operation more productive and more profitable.


James Truan, vice president of Sales & Marketing, SnowEx, offers some tips on preparing your winter-maintenance spreader for next season. Randy Strait, president, Arctic Snow & Ice Control Products, tells how to select the right snowplow for your equipment. And, of course, we'll highlight all the latest products available.

Look for the Snow & Ice Guide in the May issue.

Acrease


QUALITY PULL MOWERS

THE ACREASE MODEL PRO60K 60" WING MOWER IS THE SMART CHOICE FOR MANAGING LARGE JOBS.



- Reduces Mowing Time
- Reduces Labor Costs
- High Mowing Speeds
- 18HP-23HP Engines

- Pulls Easily Behind Zero Turn Mowers
- Very Maneuverable
- Professional Grade



For a free catalog and product DVD please call 815-539-6954 or visit www.kunzeng.com!

MY BIGGEST MISTAKE

LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY » BY CASEY PAYTON



Letting an employee problem fester brought Landscape America's owners to the boiling point. Today, they address employee issues head-on.



Doug McDuff

COMPANY: Landscape America, Inc.

PRESIDENT: Doug McDuff

HEADQUARTERS: Wrentham, MA

FOUNDED: 2006

EMPLOYEES: 15

SERVICE MIX: 30% maintenance; 60% design/build; 10% snow

CLIENT MIX: 70% residential; 30% commercial

2010 REVENUE: \$1.2 million

WEB: www.landscapeamerica.com

BEST ADVICE: Everyone has different motivation factors. Find out what drives your employees and what they want to achieve. We want employees who are motivated to move up and to grow with the company.

ONE DISGRUNTLED EMPLOYEE can easily cause problems that spread through the entire company. It's something that needs to be stopped in its tracks. But Doug McDuff, president of Landscape America, Inc., in Wrentham, MA, says he didn't realize this soon enough and a problem with an employee grew much larger than it had to be.

The problem stemmed from an employee who was a friend and had been with the company from its start. The fact that he was a friend made it a little difficult to address complaints, so the concerns went unhandled for quite some time. "Things started out well, but over time the employee became negative and was making other employees negative as well," says McDuff. "It was mostly just a bad attitude but it became like a cancer within the company."

Each day, a negative tone would be set the minute the employee showed up for work. "He was always in a bad mood and difficult to communicate with," says McDuff. "His performance was never really an issue and in that aspect he was a good, well-rounded employee who we relied on. He knew how to do whatever we needed him to do and we could send him out

and trust he would handle things well. The problem all came back to his attitude around the office."

With the negativity mounting and other employees starting to complain, it came to the point where McDuff thought he'd have to fire the employee. But when he sat down to have that hard talk, he realized the sit-down itself should have happened a long time ago. "We flat-out told him he had been showing up to work with a bad attitude and we couldn't have that anymore," remembers McDuff. "But then he started telling us why. He thought by this point with the company he'd be at a management level. So we talked it over and came up with some goals for him to hit."

When McDuff realized this employee wanted more responsibility, he found ways to give him just that. "We started doing a weekly meeting and had him facilitate some of those meetings," says McDuff. "Getting up in front of the group gives him a little bit of local fame. One of his strong points is speaking about plant material and now the employees go to him if they have questions. That's been a big motivator. Using key employees' names more when talking about the functions of the business allows them to feel

important and also lets the younger guys look up to them and gives them some motivation of their own to get to the next level."

Today, things have improved all around. McDuff says failing to sit down with the employee earlier was a mistake on his part, and many of the issues could have been avoided. "I learned I need to communicate better when I have an issue with an employee," he says. "The fact that this employee was not communicating with me was my fault, too, and I should have sat him down sooner. My advice to other business owners is not to let problems go until they reach the boiling point."

In addition, McDuff also set up a peer review system that helps address employee problems head-on. "Every year we send each of our employees a peer review form and ask them to fill one out for other team members in our business," he explains. "Every employee gets back three forms that other employees have filled out about them, and we sit down and go through all the comments. The employee never knows who wrote it. From there, we set our goals for the next year for each employee. They have been great for communication and have really helped address concerns. This is also a chance to share positive employee performance comments, which is important for motivation."

Payton is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscaping.



PROPERLY SECURE ALL CARGO.

FATHER NATURE.

GENUS' POWER PLANT. IT ALL STARTS WITH THE LEGENDARY 5.7-LITER HEMI V8 THAT PRODUCES 383 HORSEPOWER AND COMES WITH A BEST-IN-CLASS⁽¹⁾ STANDARD SINGLE 52-GALLON FUEL TANK FOR EXCELLENT DRIVING RANGE. NOT TO MENTION THE LARGEST BRAKE ROTORS AND PADS IN THE CLASS,⁽¹⁾ AND AVAILABLE INTEGRATED TRAILER BRAKE CONTROLLER. A TRAILER TOW RATING OF UP TO 18,750 POUNDS MEANS ALMOST NO JOB IS TOO BIG TO HANDLE. AND WHEN EQUIPPED WITH THE PROVEN 6.7L CUMMINS⁽²⁾ TURBO DIESEL ENGINE, IT MEANS ONE LESS THING TO WORRY ABOUT. MOTHER NATURE DOESN'T COMPROMISE. AND NEITHER DO WE.

RAM MEANS BUSINESS

RAM 3500/4500/5500 CHASSIS CABS

INCREASED FRONT GAWR UP TO 5500 LB
AND GVWR UP TO 13,000 LB (ON 3500)

AVAILABLE 6.7L CUMMINS TURBO DIESEL
WITH STANDARD DIESEL EXHAUST BRAKE

BEST-IN-CLASS STANDARD GVWR
FOR 5500 TRUCKS⁽¹⁾ (18,750-19,500 LB)

ALL-NEW CREW CAB DESIGN

BEST-IN-CLASS 5-YEAR/100,000-MILE
POWERTRAIN LIMITED WARRANTY⁽²⁾



RAM

RAMTRUCKS.COM/COMMERCIAL

BUSINESS



DISCOVER SMALL-BUSINESS BENEFITS AND MORE AT RAMTRUCKS.COM/BUSINESSLINK.

(1) CLASS 3-5 PICKUP-BASED CONVENTIONAL CAB CHASSIS. (2) BASED ON FULL-LINE CLASS 3-5 CONVENTIONAL CAB CHASSIS. RAM AND HEMI ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF CHRYSLER GROUP LLC.

THE BAR HAS BEEN RAISED. AGAIN.

The New Standard, here's why:

- HyperDrive™ Hydro System - Industrial Grade Pumps and Motors
- VX4™ Deck Technology provides the best finished appearance period!
- 60, 66, and 72 inch Side Discharge decks
- 60 and 72 inch Rear Discharge decks
- Simple design
- SmoothTrak Steering - responsive precise control
- Kohler/Kawasaki engine options up to 37 HP
- 15 MPH

LIMITED WARRANTY

5 YEAR | **3000**
YEAR | HOUR
ON TRANSMISSIONS

*See your local Hustler dealer
for complete warranty details



*Visit hustlerturf.com and contact your nearest
Hustler Dealer for more information.*

CUTTING GRASS, NOT CORNERS.

HUSTLER 
HUSTLERTURF.COM