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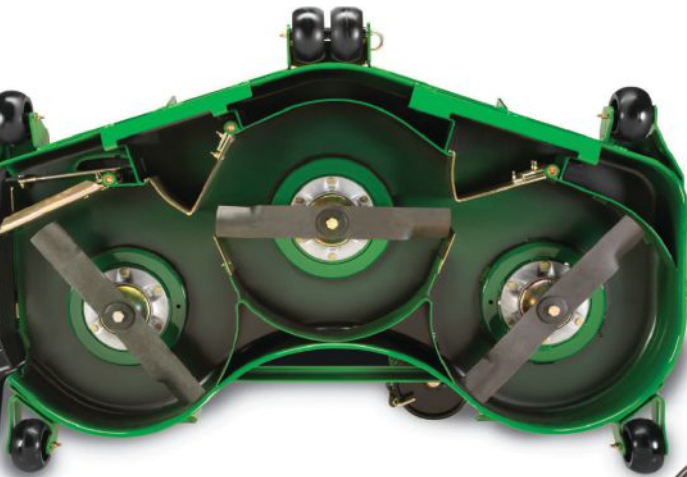
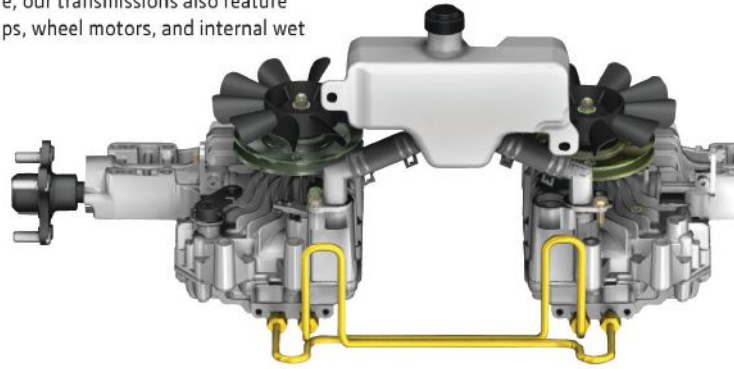
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A photograph of Roger Myers, a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored collared shirt. He is sitting at a desk, looking at a large document he is holding open. He is smiling slightly and pointing at the document with his right hand. On his jacket, there is a logo for 'American Beauty' with a red rose and the word 'QUALITY' below it.

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**Landscape Management**

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## WEB EXCLUSIVE

With the passing of Weed Man founder Desmond "Des" Rice, the professional lawn care industry loses one of its most beloved shining stars.



## DIGITAL VAULT

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As *LM* approaches its 50th anniversary, new *LM* editor-in-chief Dan Jacobs discusses his new role and how the magazine continues to evolve.

### *Athletic Turf News*

How environmentally and economically sound are synthetic turf football fields — truly?

### *LD/B Solutions*

A temporary garden and orchard created for a designer show house last spring gets new life as an organic vegetable garden. And its produce benefits a local food pantry.

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## THE *LM* DAILY



Phipps Conservatory's Center for Sustainable Landscapes, a \$7.8 million 24,350-sq.-ft. construction, will be among the world's greenest buildings once it's completed, says its executive director.

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## A poor choice of words

*Mother Nature bates you. Deal with it.*

**T**hat was the headline atop a promotional email sent out by **Backcountry.com**, an online seller of clothing, equipment and accessories for folks who like to spend their leisure time traipsing through dense forests, climbing the sides of snow-covered mountains or kayaking down rapids that make the most daunting roller coaster look like a ride in a kiddie park.

So a headline like the one above is actually somewhat fitting, given the company's clientele. These people enjoy testing themselves in extreme conditions — bone-chilling cold and extreme heat — in areas well known for not being well traveled. These people know what Mother Nature has to offer, and they “deal with it” on their terms.

There was only one problem with the email. It was sent a day or so after one of the worst tornado outbreaks in nearly four decades. Nearly 350 people died because of Mother Nature's fury. The intensity and ferocity of this cluster of storm activity devastated entire communities. Thousands were injured. One estimate suggested more than 1 million homes and businesses went without power.

No matter what outdoor activity you engage in, no matter how rugged you are, no matter how good your survival skills, you don't go test yourself during a tornado.

Receiving an email suggesting Mother Nature had it in for them smacks of poor taste. Granted, the marketing copy was likely written long before the storms hit, but failing to put a stop to hitting the send button left the company looking uncaring.

Backcountry did the right thing. CEO Jill Layfield immediately sent an email apologizing

for the bad timing and seeming bad taste. The mea culpa email began, appropriately, with the words, “We messed up.”

Accepting responsibility for your screw-ups is one of the most important steps on the road to forgiveness. Backcountry did just that:

*Please accept our sincerest apologies for this mistake. What was intended to be witty marketing copy may have been when we wrote these words two weeks ago, but in light of current events and the suffering of people affected by Mother Nature's wrath, it is not only not witty, it is completely unacceptable.*

At another time, the original headline and email would likely be considered clever. Arriving in an inbox the day after storms ravaged six states, it seems, at best, insensitive. I don't fault the folks at Backcountry for their choice of words. Headlines, whether they top newspaper stories, magazine articles or marketing materials, are meant to capture a reader's attention. This headline certainly did that — perhaps too well.

In the publishing business, these things are a bit of an occupational hazard. Articles and headlines are often written weeks in advance of when they are published and arrive on readers' desks. And that interval can lead to some embarrassing moments.

My guess is there have been moments in your business as well that you'd take back if you could. Maybe it was a marketing piece or an off-the-cuff comment to a customer. Even as the words leave your mouth, you wish you could snatch them out of the air. The look on your customer's face turns to one of dismay or disgust, and an uncomfortable silence swells.

Do the right thing. Apologize. Offer a sincere and heartfelt mea culpa for your indiscretion. And then get back to business.

---

*Editor's note: A tip of the hat to freelance writer and avid outdoorsman Curt Harler for bringing the issue to our attention.*





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# PROGRESS

## Change with the times

**D**avid Frank's rapid-fire speech emerges so fast, it's hard to keep up. So it's no surprise the first words out of his mouth are: "I speak quickly."

But Frank's speech also reflects the impressive quickness of his mind.

The 62-year-old president and chief executive of Germantown, WI-based David J. Frank Landscape Contracting (DJFLC) has helmed his company since its inception 52 years ago.

Yes, the math is correct: Frank launched his company when he was just 10 years old, caring for his neighbors' yards. Five decades later, his innate drive is intact as he still serves some of his first clients — and many more.

Frank's total recall says more about the type of businessman he is than perhaps anything else. He can recite every address he ever worked on — going back decades — and recount the exact work he did on each property.

"I could freak you out," he says. We first wrote about Frank 25 years ago, in

David Frank relaxes in the gardens outside DJFLC headquarters.



**For more than five decades David J. Frank has evolved with a shifting industry.**



February 1986, when he had just become president of the Milwaukee Chapter of the Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association.

His company was growing at 60% annually, and he had 19 crews working for him.

"It doesn't feel like 25 years ago to me," says Frank, who today has 96 crews and a staff of 325. "It's amazing when you look in the rearview mirror how fast time passes."

There's a lot to see in that rearview mirror. DJFLC's regular clientele has blossomed from about 600 in 1986 to 1,500 today. Along the way, the company accumulated more than 650 awards, dating back to 1978.

### Industry evolves, too

The Green Industry Frank supports has also soared.

It's "wonderful to be part of," says Frank, whose company installs green roofs that mitigate energy use and reduce storm water runoff. "When I was starting out, there was far less legislation and environmental awareness. Now people are concerned about the possibility that planet Earth is becoming a toxic landfill that won't support human life unless changes are made."

In our 1986 feature, Frank noted the burgeoning professionalism in the industry. Today, he says, that professionalism is deeply rooted.

"The landscape practice has become much more sophisticated," he says.

He cites today's broader use of layering, color and traditional materials.

"People want color.

They want music in the landscape area. They want outdoor kitchens, fireplaces and play areas," Franks says. "Clients' attitudes have changed. The public is much more educated."

Just as the landscape industry has changed, so has Frank. Early on, he just wanted to make a living. Today, the man who has logged more than 1,000 global scuba dives and is inspired largely by Antoni Gaudí's Barcelona Sagrada Família cathedral is most concerned with cultivating his staff and continuing to grow his business.

That growth has slowed to less than 5% annually in the face of an economic downturn and rising fuel and insurance costs that have "squeezed operating margins," he says. But the company has avoided layoffs.

Frank maintains the company's staff has been key to its longtime success. When things go awry, Frank doesn't blame his staff. Instead, he says, "I pick up a mirror and I look at it and say, 'Now you know who is causing you all this grief.' In the end, it doesn't matter who did it. It's what do we do about it. My mirror reminds me to look forward, not backward."

Frank doesn't look back much. "It's one of my shortcomings," he says, "because there are a lot of things to be proud of."



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## 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.

# Yes, you can lessen fuel shock

**F**or years I commuted a great distance to our editorial offices in Cleveland. I no longer make that drive. Thank goodness. As gasoline surpasses \$4 a gallon I can't afford filling up every couple of days. I can only imagine the distress fuel prices are causing those of you with more than a few service vehicles on the road.

Some companies are taking aggressive steps to control fuel costs. Rottler Pest & Lawn Solutions, St. Louis, uses technology to better manage its vehicles and fuel costs while also improving field efficiencies and reducing accidents. When Mike Rottler, company president, shared the following information at the Lawn Care Summit in Atlanta this past December many of us didn't realize how high fuel prices would be this spring, in spite of warnings. Is \$5-a-gallon gasoline in our near future? Hope not.

Consider some of the technology Rottler uses to help control fuel costs and improve safety:

▶ **Drive cam with streaming video from service vehicles.** Exceptional forces such as hard braking, swerving or collision triggers the drive cam, which records video of the critical seconds before and after the triggered event. Rottler says most accidents happen with employees who have been on

the job 12 months or less. He says the drive cam has reduced the incidence of accidents in his company. Fewer accidents mean fewer claims.

▶ **GPS with features to monitor fleet maintenance, vehicle idling and after-hours use.** It can also be used as a time clock to verify employee time sheets. Rottler adopted GPS years ago. "It's not going to solve all of your ills," says Rottler, adding it must be managed closely to be effective.

▶ **Routing software.** The system Rottler uses can be modified to route service set-ups or service orders. It also schedules around confirmed days and/or times.

▶ **Handheld devices.** These handy units provide field personnel with a tremendous amount of information when they're in the field, including valuable customer information. The devices Rottler techs use allow bar code scanning and can email invoices to customers. Because of nearly universal Wi-Fi coverage, field personnel can upload and download in the field and post to the office. Rottler says his employees like the devices.

▶ **SOTI MobiControl Software.** This program provides remote access to troubleshoot the handheld devices, which must have access via a data plan, Wi-Fi or ActiveSync. While connected, it allows you to monitor and/or control the device — and also view the connection status and battery life on each device.

Rottler recommends owners considering adopting the preceding or other new or unfamiliar technology develop a plan. Choose one or two initiatives per year, and test the technology on a small scale before rolling it out company-wide. Also, consider whether the technology matches your company's culture.

Finally, closely monitor the performance of the technology, even in the testing phase, to determine the measurable return you can confidently expect on your investment.

"The cutting edge of technology is also the bleeding edge," says Rottler.

---

Choose **one or two initiatives** per year, and test the technology on a **small scale** before rolling it out company-wide.



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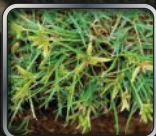
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— ROGER MYERS, PRESIDENT,  
AMERICAN BEAUTY LANDSCAPING





# Close THE DEAL

**In today's economy, customers are forcing down prices, so every sale matters. Veteran contractors offer proven strategies to increase your chances of getting the job.** BY **RON HALL** EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Roger Myers says it's easier to sell surrounded by fine architecture.

**A**merican Beauty Landscaping is headquartered on five wooded acres in Boardman, in far eastern Ohio. Ornamentals and attractive greenery border the 700-ft.-long drive to its office building. After parking your car, you walk a flagstone path to enter a lobby where a modern, flat-screen TV is displaying an audio-visual loop of the company's work — a collection of impressive projects featuring colorful plants, inviting hardscapes and soothing water features. The company has earned more than 130 landscape awards during its 30-year history.

"All of this helps deliver a message," says Founder and President Roger Myers of its headquarters.

Myers, who spent 17 years as a teacher (the last seven accomplished while also painstakingly building ABL), knows the value of

systems. Not surprisingly, he uses a carefully developed system to sell his company's services. ABL draws heavily on its regionally recognized reputation for excellence.

Myers wants the sales process for his company to be as efficient as possible, and also pleasurable for clients. If all goes well, it consists of a single meeting at the client's site. This is followed by an appointment for the client to visit his offices to review and discuss the design. The payoff, of course, is a signed contract.

"We bring our clients to our office. It cuts our visits in half, so we see them just once during the bidding process, where we have a nice discussion. It also allows us to control the environment. It's quiet, and the client is surrounded by architecture," says Myers.

More than a decade ago, Myers added maintenance and snow management to his company's offerings. It was a good move, he says. Given the opportunity, he uses

*continued from page 15*

essentially the same process to sell those services, especially to larger clients. He wants them to come to his facility and see ABL's capabilities for themselves.

"We want them to see our staff and our equipment, and to understand that we will not let them down, that what they'll get from us is dependability and reliability. That's important. Buying is an emotional process," says Myers. "If you're a mall manager and your livelihood depends upon how well a contractor is taking care of that property, you need the peace of mind that comes with dependability. We educate them; that's why our service costs a little bit more."

Typically, after a discussion featuring several "thought-provoking questions" zeroing in on both the practical and emotional needs of the client, Myers says it's time for him or any of his five other designer/salespeople to shut up.

"Even if we think we know what they want, we're going to be quiet. It's not about us; it's about the client," he explains. "Sure, there will be dead air, but clients ultimately tell us what they're really looking for."

Longtime Green Industry consultant Kevin Kehoe, Kehoe & Co., Laguna Niguel, CA, describes Myers' sales technique for selling maintenance and snow management as "finding the customer's point of pain."

"Everybody knows the price points in their markets these days," Kehoe adds. "But most people are not pure price buyers because they've gotten bad surprises before. They've received poor service or unexpected change orders, and that's upset them. The good salesperson finds the customer's point of pain."

## Train for success

Wayne Volz, founder and operator of Wayne's Lawn Service, Louisville, KY, says good salespeople are made, not born. Through training and practice, they learn how to find out what prospects are really looking for — apart from price, of course — and how to overcome objections.

## BOOST SALES, ONE DRIP AT A TIME

Being Green Industry professionals, you're familiar with the benefits of drip irrigation. By providing a slow steady drip of water to the roots of plants, drip irrigation uses water more efficiently, often saves fertilizer and pesticide costs and, most importantly, provides clients with healthier plants.

Did you realize that you could use the same concept to market your services? The technique is called "drip marketing."

The concept is simple: Send out a stream of promotional pieces over a period of time to important sales leads, and maintain an ongoing and beneficial relationship with customers. What landscape/lawn service company owner wouldn't want to establish and maintain contact with prospects — and build loyalty among customers?

Start with a plan that fits your company's personnel, its unique culture and capabilities. Your plan doesn't have to be complicated, but it does have to be consistent and measurable. It must include a way to track the type, number and frequency of prospective contacts, and measure results in terms of sales.

Drip marketing programs use:

» **Email.** These can be pre-written or personalized. Email is a powerful relationship-building tool, which leads to sales. Once contacts grant permission, schedule a "drip" message at least weekly.

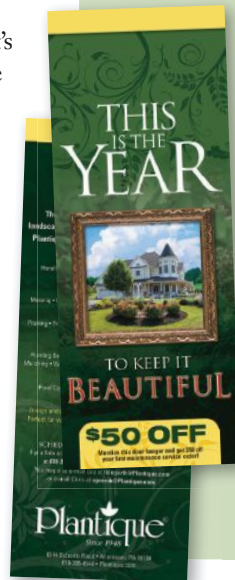
» **Direct mail.** This is more costly than email, but each drip message can be personalized.

» **Social media.** Several popular online tools allow users to time messages and send them via Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites simultaneously.

» **Customer relationship management (CRM).** CRM systems track and record every stage in the sales process for each prospective client, from initial contact to final sale. The cost and complexity of implementing a dedicated CRM system is too great for most small landscape/lawn service companies. But every company should develop some system to accurately record, track and measure the effectiveness of its correspondence, meetings and proposals against sales.

Plantique keeps its name in front of clients and prospects with a range of colorful reminders.

Finally, realize that drip marketing won't work without personal follow-up. — RH



Regular specials keep customers tuned into Wayne's Lawn Service.

"There are a whole lot of people out there making tall grass short, more and more competitors every day," says Volz, who picked up valuable sales skills from his father, a professional salesman who peddled automotive parts over a six-state region.

"He would sit me down and I would have to sell him my services," recalls Volz. "He came back with every reason in the world why he shouldn't buy my services. It created a real love-hate relationship

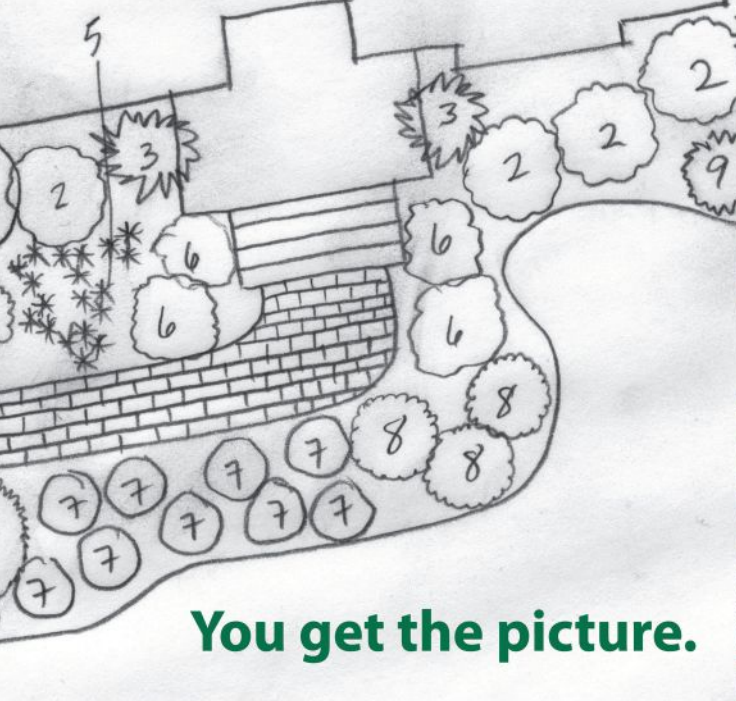
with my father at the time, but I love him for it now. It prepared me to sell, whether I'm sitting in a boardroom talking to an industrial account or talking to the lady of the house in her driveway."

Volz preaches the power of role-playing in building sales skills.

"The first thing you should go over is, 'Tell me three to five reasons why somebody should hire you over the competition,'" he suggests. "You might

*continued on page 18*





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*continued from page 16*

be surprised how many people have to think a long time to answer that.”

Even though Wayne’s Lawn Service long ago passed the point where Volz could be involved in every aspect of its operation, he’s been hesitant to add a “full-time salesperson.” Instead, at about the \$300,000 mark, he took aside several crew leaders and trained them to price services.

“It’s easier to find people who are capable and can do the work and run a crew than to do sales,” says Volz, who, after founding his company 32 years ago,

still sells along with his son, Kyle, and his business partner and brother, Corky.

**Price vs. value**

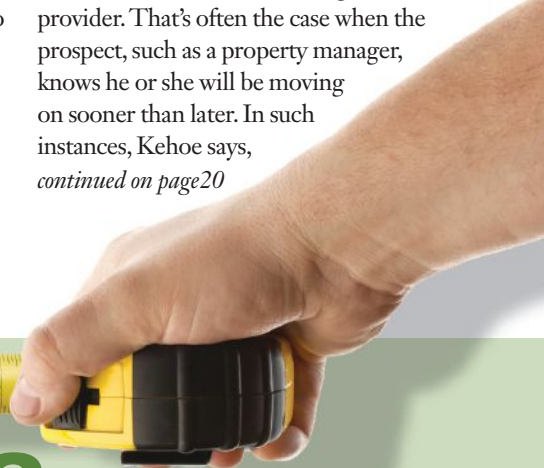
Volz says his company’s message to prospects is always the same: its ability to create customer value.

“It took us almost nine years to realize that the person who hires you because you’re the lowest price will fire you for the same reason,” he says. “Sometimes we hear customers say, ‘You’re too high.’ And we respond, ‘Compared to what?’ And if they say,

‘compared to everyone else I’ve talked to,’ it’s probably not a good fit for us.”

Kehoe agrees that not every sale is worth pursuing, especially if lowest price is the sole criterion for selecting a service provider. That’s often the case when the prospect, such as a property manager, knows he or she will be moving on sooner than later. In such instances, Kehoe says,

*continued on page 20*



**MAKE YOUR MARKETING MEASURE UP**

**T**oday’s economic conditions — the lack of new home construction, rising product costs and \$4-a-gallon gasoline — have raised the stakes for acquiring and retaining lawn care customers. With fewer new developments to target, companies are targeting competitors’ clients with special offers and, in some cases, lower prices. This is hardly new, but the competition is becoming more fierce.

For these reasons and others, Joe Kucik, owner of a \$2.5-million-plus Scotts Lawn Care franchise headquartered in Lansing, MI, says marketing and sales now take on greater importance than ever before. In fact, he says that owners must mesh them with the other business management functions to reduce costs and increase customer contacts to remain competitive.

In addition to running the lawn care franchise, Kucik is also president of Real Green, a total business management software system for lawn care, so you would hardly expect him to say otherwise. But you can’t argue with the success that he and other industry-specific software users are experiencing. These software packages are enabling owners to better identify, contact and entice prospects with special offers in a timely and cost-efficient way. In addition to Real Green, there are at least six other popular business management software packages for lawn care, probably more. In addition to typical functions, such as billing and routing, some offer strong marketing components.

Kucik himself has owned and sold “four or five” lawn care companies over the course of a career starting in the 1970s. He says that getting to customers first and selling them on the first contact is the most cost-efficient way to sign them up. He calls it “one-step sales,” a technique his company uses for an 80% close rate.

“People want things done easily,” says Kucik. “We tell them this is what it costs and this is the special offer we have for you today, and we’ll have somebody out on your property tomorrow.”

He says his company can do that confidently because of the huge database it has developed (and continues to add to) on customers and prospects, and their properties. This includes information from aerial photography, which it uses to measure properties online. This greatly speeds the estimating and proposal-generating process, which is key to selling customers on first contact.

“We’re coming up with new ways to use these tools every day,” says Kucik.

Even so, his company still also uses traditional marketing and sales techniques, including direct mail with follow-up calls, and offering financial incentives for technicians who refer clients that sign-up for a year’s service.

Kucik’s Scotts franchise tracks and measures the financial cost of every marketing initiative against sales. The days of “shotgun” marketing are over, or soon will be, he says, because owners can’t afford to guess at the effectiveness of their marketing efforts.

“In three or four years, everybody will be doing it this way,” he says of his company’s sophisticated and technology-aided approach to marketing and sales.

Long gone are the early days when a homeowner, envying a neighbor’s green, weed-free lawn, would chase a ChemLawn truck seeking service. (Yes, that wasn’t uncommon in the industry’s early days.) Today, to remain competitive in lawn care, owners require a marketing plan — relying upon both technology and boots-on-the-ground field technicians — to deliver measureable sales results.





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**syngenta**

## COVER STORY

*continued from page 18*

“power has shifted to the customer.”

Nevertheless, price, as important as it is, too often dominates sales presentations.

“Good salespeople are not just quoting numbers. Good salespeople are qualifying to fit,” says Kehoe. “They’re not selling landscapes, they’re discussing the customer’s business, their budgets and finding out what the customer is trying to accomplish — maybe improve occupancy rates, get higher rents or something else.”

Once a salesperson establishes a dialogue based on customer needs, his or her role becomes more collaborative and consultative.

But don’t dawdle, says Kehoe. If it’s a small job, give the customer a deal and close the sale: “Why bring work back to the office and complicate your life?”

While a bigger contract may (and often does) require more work, such as estimating and a second meeting, the faster you get back to the client, the better chance of making the sale. In other words, get there first, and get back to them promptly.

*(Editor’s Note: For more on closing the sale on-site, see Kehoe’s column this month on page 22.)*

### Selling multiple services

Michael McShane began working full-time at Plantique in 1978. Today, he’s president and CEO of the landscaping

company that was founded in Allentown, PA, in 1948, and that serves the Lehigh Valley and northeast Pennsylvania. Plantique, like most other diversified landscape companies, has different people and procedures for selling maintenance and design/build. Obviously, says McShane, you want build jobs to become ongoing management.

All of Plantique’s landscape architects and designers who sell projects possess academic degrees and are experienced. Once they design and sell a project, it’s handed over to one of the company’s three primary design/build supervisors. The supervisors, each with more than 20 years’ experience, schedule the work and — barring any major design changes — it’s their job to complete it.

“We try to give areas of responsibilities to match the strengths of the people we have,” says McShane.

The company’s maintenance salespeople, one of whom came up the ranks and another formerly with a national company, develop the property management regimen and scheduling for each customer. While they maintain customer relations, their primary responsibility is to sell.

“Everybody in the Lehigh Valley knows who Plantique is. We’ve been around for more than 60 years,” says McShane. “What we have to fight constantly is that we have a reputation for being expensive. Our job is to communicate to the public that the reason why we charge what we charge is because we do it right.”

McShane says this includes emphasizing the intangibles Plantique provides that other companies may not.

For example, the firm tells customers what its guarantee and warranty mean. That it has its own nursery. That its designers have both education and experience.

“We use all of this and more in promoting our brand, and attempting to create separation from the competition,” says McShane. LM

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“We must communicate the reason why we charge what we charge is because we do it right.”

— MIKE McSHANE, PRESIDENT,  
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# THE BENCHMARK

KEVIN KEHOE

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

## Selling small jobs

**W**e all want to increase sales, but too often we complicate the process. This is especially true of the small job sale. I am referring to a job that takes a day or less to install. The standard approach is to meet the customer, take notes (or not), return to the office, produce an estimate, send it to the customer, then follow up or forget about it.

The problem here should be obvious. First, the process is costly. Including drive time, meeting time and computer time, it can take three hours to bid a three-hour job. At an hourly cost of \$100 for a salesperson's time, that's \$300. For a busy salesperson, this approach is a huge time waster.

Second, the process is frustrating for the customer. You appear and they get excited. You disappear and they wonder when you will return. They call you and you promise to get right on it. Then they give up and call another guy. For the customer, this approach is a big source of dissatisfaction.

Why do we do this? We do it because we must put everything into our "system," and we don't have the confidence to price it on the spot because the boss will kill us if we sell too low.

So, how should it be done? Simple: Price it and get a decision on the spot. This will make the customer happier, save you time and conserve computer server space.

### Simple minimum pricing

Set up a pricing model based on a minimum quarter-day, half-day and full-day install. Figure 1 provides an example for a typical planting job, with formulas for calculation.

In the example, a typical quarter-day job would be priced at \$445 for a two-person crew, given the

FIGURE 1: JOB PRICE CALCULATION

| Factors                        | Numbers | Formula   |
|--------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| A Day part (quarter day) hours | 2.5     |           |
| B Crew size                    | 2       |           |
| C Labor price/hour             | \$35    |           |
| D Labor cost/hour              | \$12    |           |
| E Labor cost                   | \$60    | A x B x D |
| F Material/labor ratio         | 2.00    | O / P     |
| G Material cost                | 120     | F x E     |
| H Material markup              | 125%    |           |
| I Labor price                  | \$175   | A x B x C |
| J Material price               | \$270   | G x H     |
| K Job price                    | \$445   | I + J     |
| L Job cost                     | \$180   | E + G     |
| M Gross profit                 | \$265   | K - L     |
| Gross margin                   | 60%     | M / K     |

standard estimating factors for labor and materials for this company. I use 2.5 hours for a quarter day, 5 for a half day, and 10 for a full day to arrive at the standard price. This type of price will cover 90% of your small job bid situations.

### Simple maximum closing

While you are asking the customer questions, you "draw up" the job and material list on your Company Contract duplicate copy form, an example of which is seen in Figure 2. Then you assess crew size and time required to demo, haul, grade, plant, feed, water and clean, and write the price on the bottom of the form and hand it to the customer. If he or she blinks at the price, hold firm. If necessary, cut to the chase and cut 10% from the price (you already have a 60% gross margin in the job), ask for a signature and wait until the customer tells you "yes" or "no." If yes, get a check to start. If no, both parties will waste no further time.

Sitting in an owner's office a few years ago, I noticed a basket full of paper. He said it was all the bids he had yet to get to. There were 40 opportunities in that basket. Fully 25 were one-day jobs or less. I suggested the system outlined above. He sold 30% more that year by closing on the spot.

Remember, customers want to feel the process went smoothly and they got a good deal. Make it happen, and you will close more small job sales.

FIGURE 2: TYPICAL P&L

| Formula | Factors              | Numbers     |
|---------|----------------------|-------------|
| N       | Revenue              | \$1,000,000 |
| O       | Material             | \$350,000   |
| P       | Labor                | \$180,000   |
| Q       | Total job cost       | \$530,000   |
| R       | Gross profit         | \$470,000   |
| R / N   | Gross margin         | 47%         |
| O / P   | Material/labor ratio | 1.94        |





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# Lawn care's

Industry leaders share their best advice on adapting to the push for more sustainable services and practices while also overcoming the challenges from an increasingly regulatory environment. BY CASEY PAYTON





# new frontier

**W**hile the economy seems to be improving, a lot of companies are still playing it safe as client spending isn't back to where it once was. But the industry seems to be adapting and is responding to a storm of issues, including

not only a rocky economy, but increasing regulations and a greater demand for sustainable products and practices. Chemical manufacturers say that in order to succeed, lawn care operators (LCOs) are going to have to be willing to adjust their business to meet these changes. It's a matter of "adapting to survive," and it's something the manufacturers say they're already working on themselves with efforts toward more education and a stronger focus on sustainability.

The best thing that LCOs can do right now is to accept changes are occurring in the industry and try to get ahead of the curve, says Alan Whitney, marketing services manager for Agrium Advanced Technologies. While many might not like the changes, being disgruntled does nothing to advance business. "LCOs should continue to look for eco-responsible solutions that increase their efficiency and effectiveness, while ensuring their customers and communities are aware of these efforts," suggests Whitney.

Sustainability is certainly a hot button issue that's not going anywhere, and the industry's manufacturers are responding by inventing new formulations to meet those needs. "The reason for this is that there is a growing sense from customers/homeowners that they are becoming more aware of what is being used on their lawns," reports Reinie Drygala, manager of lawncare and agriculture sales for Petro-Canada Lubricants Inc. "Homeowners are becoming more aware of the impact they have on their

surroundings, and as a result are starting to ask more questions about control products and asking what they can do to reduce their impact."

"I believe most manufacturers realize sustainability initiatives are important to their customers as well as themselves," adds Roger Storey, vice president, turf and ornamentals, SePRO Corp. "Making a formulation more sustainable could be achieved in many ways. Some examples of a more sustainable formulation could be using recycled materials for granular carriers, reducing the active ingredient necessary by improving the formulation efficiency or reducing off target dust or drift."



**"Lawns need to be defended—they protect our environment from erosion and nutrient run-off, filter water and air, and cool the environment."**

**DAVE HEEGARD**

*Lebanon Seaboard Corp.*

## Proper use & training techs

Of course it's not just the product itself that contributes to sustainability. It's the practice as well. Proper use of products is an important component. "We stand by the 4R's set forth by the 4R Nutrient Stewardship," says Carrie Doza, senior manager marketing and communications, AGROTAIN International. "This best management practice includes: Right source- use the right product for the application to ensure proper nutrients for that area; Right rate-conduct a soil test to make sure the appropriate rate for the job is being used; Right time-make

your application decision based on stage of plant uptake, nutrient loss risk, soil supply and of course local regulations; and Right place-applications should stay on the target property where they are intended and not on non-growing surfaces in order to deliver the most value to the customer."

Many manufacturers have taken a proactive approach to helping their users apply product correctly and follow such guidelines. Companies like Dow AgroSciences LLC, say they work hard to develop clear and easy-to-understand label directions. Others like Agrium Advanced Technologies say they've actually worked with some of the environmental organizations to encourage proper understanding of current and pending legislation. And some are even taking advantage of opportuni-

# A CONVERSATION WITH THE CUSTOMER

With regulatory control on the increase and an industry shift toward sustainability, educating customers is critical. LCOs have an opportunity to give customers the scientific facts about lawn care. Here are the Top 5 things chemical manufacturers wish LCOs would tell their customers.

**1 Healthy turf contributes to a healthy environment.** “Lawns need to be defended—they protect our environment from erosion and nutrient run-off, filter water and air, and cool the environment,” says Dave Heegard, GM professional business, Lebanon Seaboard Corp.

Weed control is an essential part of overall healthy lawn plan, adds Patrick Bell, product manager, Dow AgroSciences LLC. “Weeds compete with plants and grass for nutrients and water. An effective weed control product can reduce the competition and help create and maintain a healthy lawn.”

**2 Organic or natural is not always better.** “Mercury and asbestos are natural and organic,” points out Russ Mitchell, marketing director for Quali-Pro.

And while everyone wants to practice sustainability, the definition of sustainability can be broad. “You could use one of the new herbicides that claims residual control of broadleaf weeds and at first glance fewer applications equals more sustainable,” suggests Brian Rund, director, branding & marketing services for Nufarm. “Look a little deeper, you find the clippings from lawns treated with it can’t be composted, which is most definitely not a ‘sustainable’ philosophy.”

**3 Regulations aren’t new.** Roger Storey, vice president, turf and ornamentals, SePRO Corp., says he’d like LCOs to make sure their clients realize an important fact. “Plant protection products are regulated

by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and have been tested thoroughly for effects on human health and the environment.”

**4 Chemical manufacturers wish LCOs would tell their clients not to be afraid of chemistry.** “It’s in nearly everything we touch and when used properly, yields great benefits to ourselves and the environment around us,” says Brian Lish, business manager, BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals.

It drives home the importance of customer education. Lish says LCOs should also be open with their clients.

**5 If customers are doing any of their own applications or maintenance, LCOs should ensure customers know what they’re doing.** Reinie Drygala, manager of lawncare and agriculture sales for Petro-Canada Lubricants Inc., recommends educating customers on their role in producing healthy turf. “Follow up with them and find out what’s working and what’s not,” he adds. “Work with the customer to find a solution that works for both of you.”

ties that technology offers. FMC Professional Solutions has used videos that show the proper use of new measurement chambers on the company product, and Petro-Canada Lubricants Inc., hosted a webinar led by some of the leading academics on the company’s product. Part of that webinar included detail on most effectively using product. It was recorded so that it can be repeatedly watched on the company’s website.

These are just some of the many efforts manufacturers are making to help with proper application. Still, it’s important that this information doesn’t only reach the business owner, but the technician as well. Dan Steltz, market manager, lawn & landscape, for Syngenta, says that the company makes every effort to communicate not only the importance, but the legal obligation of users to read and follow label instructions. He hopes that information is properly conveyed



**“We have a number of initiatives, including participation through Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), that help us provide sound scientific information.”**

**BRENT RENFROW**  
Monsanto Co.

to the technician. “Business owners should be consistent with the training and licensing of their technicians and vigilant with continuing education on new products and application techniques,” he says. “And LCOs should also remember the best source of information about a product is the manufacturer. Don’t hesitate to ask for support for the products you buy. Good manufacturers provide good support for their products.”

And while it seems obvious, chemical manufacturers would like to remind users about the importance of following label instructions. It may seem simple, but many fail to do so. “I compare it to my own personal experience of recently getting a new company vehicle,” says Dr. Doug Houseworth, technical service manager, Arysta LifeScience Corp. “The thing is loaded with technology and I spent three or four nights reading

*continued on page 28*





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## SUSTAINABLE LAWN CARE

*continued from page 26*

through the brochures and playing with the controls in order to maximize what I've invested in. It's similar to all the new pesticides coming out on the market. They're more technically evolved and in order to maximize the ROI for buying these things, you have to make sure you know what the capability is and how to extract that benefit. Take time to read through the company information on a product and make sure you understand it and how to apply it. Products are really expensive, and you can't afford to waste what you're buying."

Passing that information to technicians is also critical. Matthew Bradley, lawn & landscape market lead/herbicide marketing product manager with Bayer Environmental Science, recommends a hands-on approach. "It is important for lawn care business owners to train their technicians by actively engaging them in the daily business practices and making them feel they



"We stand by the 4R's set forth by the 4R Nutrient Stewardship... **right source, right rate, right time, and right place.**"

**CARRIE DOZA** AGROTAIN International

are part of the overall company," Bradley says. "For example, owners should encourage technicians to participate in CEU programs or invite them to seminars the owners are attending. Taking the technicians out of the field for a day to learn the ins and outs of the business, and see why it is important to use the products properly, and to be stewards for their companies can encourage technicians to properly use the products." LM

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



## LAWN CARE INNOVATOR PROFILES //

A quick look at top products and some timely advice from some of the most experienced suppliers in the Green Industry.

### AGRIUM ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

**HEADQUARTERS:** Loveland, CO

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Spread it & Forget it DRIVEN BY DURATION CR Controlled-Release Fertilizer
2. POLYON Controlled-Release Fertilizer
3. XCU Slow-Release Fertilizer

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

"Become more efficient. Fuel prices are continuing to rise with no end in sight. As you know, overhead costs make up the largest portion of any LCO's budget and fuel plays heavily into these costs. LCOs need to try and find greater efficiencies in their day-to-day operations. From route mapping and maximizing each visit to researching

and properly applying the most effective products and, overall, reducing the number of times needed to visit a specific site for routine landscape maintenance.

— Alan Whitney, marketing services manager



### AGROTAIN INTERNATIONAL

**HEADQUARTERS:** St. Louis, MO

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. UFLEXX
2. UMAXX
3. HYDREXX

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

Choose products based on economic, environmental and agronomic value, not just price. Do your research, talk to your distributor representative, manufacturer representative, university researchers, and don't forget to ask your colleagues. There are many online resources and forums to interact with other lawn care operators throughout the country. This is a great way to learn about firsthand experiences regarding use of different products or share your own experience. Utilize all of these resources to choose the right product for you.

— Carrie Doza, senior manager marketing and communications



### ARYSTA LIFESCIENCE CORP.

**HEADQUARTERS:** Cary, NC

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. ALOFT insecticide (four different formulations)
2. DISARM fungicide (four different formulations)

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

Watch what the competition is doing and stay ahead of them. Make sure you look at the latest technology and be aware of what it may be able to do for you.

— Dr. Doug Houseworth, technical service manager



*continued on page 30*



# THE ARMY KNIFE OF TURF HERBICIDES



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01192

## SUSTAINABLE LAWN CARE

### BASF PROFESSIONAL TURF & ORNAMENTALS

**HEADQUARTERS:** Research Triangle Park, NC

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Onetime herbicide
2. Drive XLR8 herbicide
3. FreeHand 1.75G herbicide

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

Position yourself for growth and diversify yourself to minimize any setbacks by finding additional service offerings for your customers that don't stray too far from your core competencies while providing additional value and revenue.

— Brian Lish, business manager



### BAYER ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

**HEADQUARTERS:** Research Triangle Park, NC

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Specticle – herbicide
2. Celsius – herbicide
3. TopChoice – insecticide

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

The most important business advice for a lawn care operator this year is to continue to provide a high level of service in order to retain current and attract new customers. The economy will make it difficult for many customers and lawn care operators need to show their value and what they've accomplished over the past few years to help them grow their business.

— Matthew Bradley, lawn & landscape market lead/ herbicide marketing product manager

# Celsius™

### CLEARY CHEMICAL CORP.

**HEADQUARTERS:** Dayton, NJ

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. 3336
2. Protect
3. Affirm

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

You need to focus on customer attention and provide a service that keeps the customer interested. To do that, look for new things and new ways of doing what you've already been doing.

— Bill Bewlay, CEO of Cleary Chemical Corp.

### DOW AGROSCIENCES LLC

**HEADQUARTERS:** Indianapolis, IN

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Dimension specialty herbicide
2. Snapshot specialty herbicide
3. LockUp specialty herbicide

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

My best business advice would be to look at ways to expand their service offering. Add services like weed

control in plant beds to reduce the need for hand weeding. It takes twice as much energy and resources to land a new customer than it does to keep an existing customer, so look for growth opportunities with current customers.

— Patrick Bell, product manager



### FMC PROFESSIONAL SOLUTIONS

**HEADQUARTERS:** Philadelphia, PA

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Talstar
2. Dismiss
3. Solitare

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

There are a number of new products (new actives and new combinations) available that will change the weed/insect control spectrum, increase the speed of control, and save time and money. Hence, LCOs need to try new products and evaluate how they can improve their business' bottom line.

— Adam Manwarren, turf & ornamental product manager



### LEBANON SEABOARD CORP.

**HEADQUARTERS:** Lebanon, PA

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. ProScape
2. LebPro
3. Woodace

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

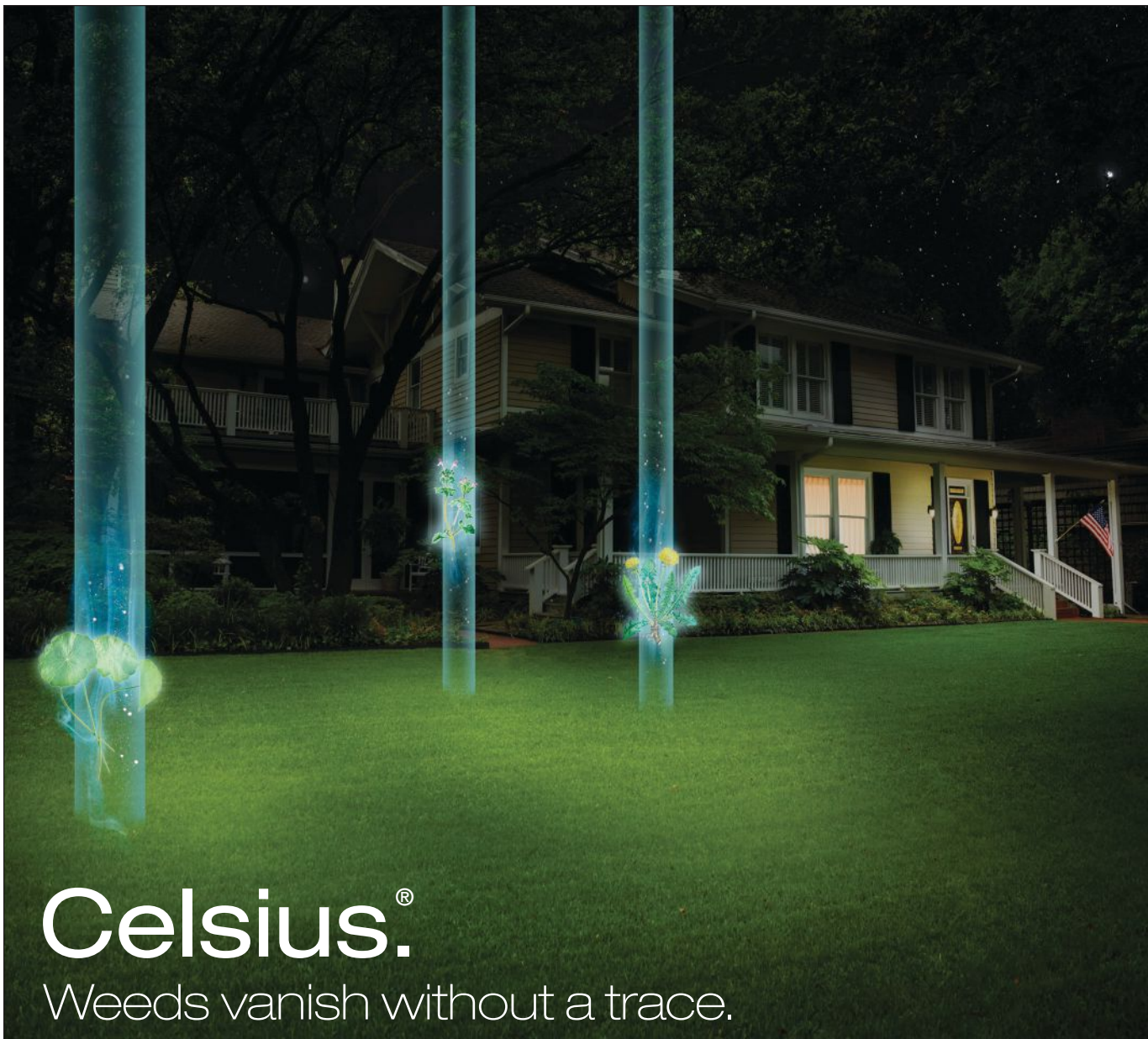
Differentiate and communicate. Make it easy for end users to see what's different about your offering.

— Dave Heegard, GM professional business



continued on page 32





# Celsius.<sup>®</sup>

Weeds vanish without a trace.

## Celsius.<sup>®</sup> A higher degree of weed control.

Unlike traditional herbicides, Celsius works with less risk of turf damage, even at high temperatures. Celsius, the newest generation post-emergent herbicide, effectively controls over 100 weeds, including several hard-to-control grasses and broadleaf weeds. Plus, Celsius offers pre-emergent control of germinating weeds – after all, healthy, weed free turf is the best herbicide available on the market. Celsius delivers superior results in balance with consideration for our environment, because we believe in Protecting Tomorrow,

Today. And, as always, you're Backed by Bayer and all the science and technology that support it. Sustainable weed control from a name you trust.

**For more information visit [BackedByBayer.com/Celsius](http://BackedByBayer.com/Celsius)**



 Bayer Environmental Science



## Celsius<sup>®</sup>

*Murdannia nudiflora* (Doveweed) is a summer annual identified by its fleshy, narrow lance-shaped leaves as well as its stems that root at nodes. Doveweed is also identified by short leaf sheaths with short hairs on the upper margins. Doveweed usually germinates later in the growing season than other summer annuals and can be found from Virginia, into Georgia, through Florida and west into Texas.

## SUSTAINABLE LAWN CARE

### MONSANTO CO.

**HEADQUARTERS:** St. Louis, MO

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Roundup ProMAX
2. QuickPro herbicide
3. Certainty Turf herbicide

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

From a manufacturer's perspective, we recommend operators choose herbicide products that have shown consistent quality and professional performance, and have the highest quality ingredients. It's also important that after the purchase, operators have support from, and access to, experienced experts in the business.

— Brent Renfrow, marketing manager



### NUFARM

**HEADQUARTERS:** Burr Ridge, IL; Melbourne, Australia

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Millennium Ultra 2
2. Escalade 2
3. 4-Speed/4-Speed XT

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

In this still-recovering economy, LCOs need to be looking for any edge they can get in providing the same or better performance for less investment. Whether it's restructuring routes to cut fuel costs or looking at post-patent chemistry to reduce herbicide costs, no factor is too small to overlook.



— Brian Rund, director, branding & marketing services

### PETRO-CANADA LUBRICANTS INC.

**HEADQUARTERS:** Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Clear Choice – Lawn Selective Herbicide
2. CIVITAS – Turf/Golf Course Fungicide
3. Pure Spray Green – Horticultural Insecticide and Fungicide



**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

Find a way to differentiate yourself from your competitors. In this industry, many of your competitors utilize the same control products that you use. You either need to differentiate on your service or provide new products or offerings that are going to set you apart from the competition.

— Reinie Drygala, manager, lawn care and agriculture sales



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## QUALI-PRO

**HEADQUARTERS:** Raleigh, NC

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Prodiamine 65 WDG
2. Imidacloprid 2F
3. Dithiopyr 40 WSB

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:** Do good work for a fair price and never forget the power of word of mouth advertizing within your area of influence from satisfied customers. Make sure you set realistic expectations up front with your customers so you are not setting yourself up to fail.

— Russ Mitchell,  
marketing director



## SEPRO CORP.

**HEADQUARTERS:** Carmel, IN

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Cutless Granular Landscape Growth Regulator
2. Octane Herbicide
3. Pentathlon Fungicide

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

Labor is the highest input cost for most landscape/lawn care contracted work. There are products (example: Cutless Granular Landscape Growth Regulator) that will reduce labor costs and provide the opportunity to gain more efficient use of the available labor. The result should be reallocation of existing labor to other jobs, resulting in more profit per man-hour.

— Roger Storey, vice president,  
turf and ornamentals



## SYNGENTA

**HEADQUARTERS:** Global- Basel, Switzerland; USA- Greensboro, NC

**TOP BRANDS:**

1. Barricade
2. Heritage
3. Meridian

**BUSINESS ADVICE FOR LCOs THIS YEAR:**

My advice to LCOs is to maintain their strategic direction in 2011. It's important as a business to establish a long-term plan and a path to achieving key objectives. It's then very important to be disciplined enough to follow that plan in spite of what challenges come. Maintaining the strategic direction for your organization will allow more long-term goals to be met.

— Dan Steltz,  
market manager,  
lawn & landscape



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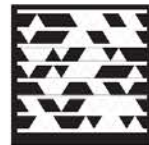


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## AT A GLANCE

**COMPANY:** Turf Doctor Inc. dba Weed Man

**FOUNDED:** Turf Doctor (1994), Weed Man (2000)

**HEADQUARTERS:** Fresno, CA

**TITLE:** Dr. Jeffrey Kollenkark, President

**YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY:** 19 lawn care / 30 total in Green Industry

**SERVICE AREA:** Fresno, Kings, Tulare Counties in San Joaquin Valley

**INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT:** Member of PLCAA and PLANET since 1981

**NUMBER OF LOCATIONS:** One

**EMPLOYEES:** In season, 14 full-time, 20 part-time

**SERVICES:** Fertilization, weed, insect, disease, aeration, lawns and flowerbeds

**REVENUES:** This year's goal is \$2.4 million

**PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS/HOBBIES:** Travel, golf and exercise (the last not always so fun)

**FAMILY:** wife, Melissa; five children (ages 12-30), nine grandchildren

Needing an attention getter for his 1994 lawn care company start-up, **Dr. Jeff Kollenkark** bought a couple of box-style ambulances, complete with emergency lights, and plastered his Turf Doctor company logo on their sides. (He's allowed to do it. He's a doctor, right?) But since joining the Weed Man team in 2000, Kollenkark has been using more traditional service vehicles in his San Joaquin Valley, CA, operation.

**Jeff, you started on the manufacturer/supplier side soon after earning a Ph.D. at Purdue University, then switched to the service side.**

**Tell us about that.** I really enjoyed working for roughly 14 years as an R&D rep for both Elanco and Ciba-Geigy, and I loved the turf and ornamental industry people. It was a tough decision. I had a great boss, Dr. Doug Houseworth, and a great T&O team, but my family came first. I thought there would be a few job opportunities back there (California), but they quickly disappeared and so I started my own lawn care company, Turf Doctor, in order to stay in a field that I loved and to pay the bills.

**We understand that you used unusual service vehicles when you founded Turf Doctor.**

I wanted to work around the concept that Turf Doctor could fix sick lawns and keep healthy ones healthy. I picked up two box-style ambulances and logoed them up with the company information. It attracted a lot of attention from people, as they would pull off to the side of the road or make their heart skip a beat as we pulled up in front

of their neighbor's house to treat the lawn. Of course, it really caught people's attention when one of the guys accidentally turned on the strobe lights as he was driving down Shaw Avenue — not such a good idea. It would be killing us now, as they only got 4 miles to the gallon.

**In 2000, you joined the Weed Man franchise system. Tell us about that.** I was not initially interested as Weed Man was granular and I was liquid. Plus, they were really pushing telemarketing, which I could not see myself doing.

I agreed to meet Roger Mongeon in Scarborough the summer of 2000, but I was really thinking that I might want to franchise my Turf Doctor, and that I could get some ideas.

I was overwhelmed with the effort and support required to support a franchisee, and that convinced me that I had no interest in reinventing the wheel for myself.

**The San Joaquin Valley is not your typical lawn care market. Tell us about it.** It is a unique market. Even though we don't see snow and we

have 30 to 40 days over 100° Fahrenheit in the summer, we still have roughly 55% of our lawns as tall fescue and the balance common and hybrid Bermudagrass. There is an occasional Kentucky blue/rye or St. Augustine. Crabgrass pressure is severe, and so we go with split applications of pre-emergent starting in January. Crabgrass is usually germinating by mid-February.

We have eight rounds per year, every six weeks, for the basic service programs.

**How did the Recession affect your company? How is your 2011 season looking so far?**

The latest figures I heard was that Fresno was at 18.2% unemployment, and it might be higher because I suspect a lot of people have given up looking. I have seen our retention rates drop from 84% before the Recession to an average of 74% the last two years. We are striving for 80% this year.

Last year was our first year in 16 years that we did not grow. The Recession did have an impact on this, and our sales execution was lackluster as well last year. This year, we have been seeing great

results in new sales. We just need to stop the bleeding on the retention side and be willing to adjust programs, to keep even partial programs in place if necessary.

I think we have a good shot at reaching our goals of \$300K in net new business this year, but we will have to be hitting on all cylinders.





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# WEEDWATCH

STANDING SENTINEL TO PROTECT PLANT HEALTH



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**Turflon® Ester**  
Ultra specialty  
herbicide\*

## KIKUYUGRASS

*Pennisetum clandestinum*

### IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This aggressive perennial grass is adapted to warm, temperate climates.
- ▶ The prostrate plant spreads by producing a network of thick, fleshy stems that can form a thick mat above the soil.
- ▶ Its leaves are folded in the bud. The ligule is a fringe of hairs, and there are no auricles.
- ▶ Growth begins in late spring, and a rapid growth rate continues through summer and into fall.
- ▶ Carbohydrates, stored in the stems, can be used for regrowth after cultivation.

### CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ Clean up the infested area with a product containing triclopyr. Multiple applications four to six weeks apart may be required.
- ▶ Clean mowing equipment to remove any seeds or stem sections before taking equipment from an infested site, as it is easily spread.
- ▶ Dense turfgrass and mulched ornamental areas block out sunlight and reduce the vigor of kikuyugrass.

\* State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension specialty herbicide products and Turflon Ester Ultra apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details.



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solution  
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## COMMON LESPEDEZA

*Lespedeza striata*

### IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This prostrate, free-branched summer annual features inconspicuous purplish flowers.
- ▶ Leaves are trifoliate, with lance-shaped stipules and hairs along the leaf margins.
- ▶ Small single flowers grow from the leaf axils on most of the nodes on the main stems.
- ▶ Commonly found on soils with low fertility, it grows close to the ground in thin turf and dry, compacted areas.

### CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ One of the best control options for this summer annual is to keep it from germinating. In spring, apply a pre-emergent herbicide labeled for control of common lespedeza. A product containing dithiopyr will control your grassy weeds, as well as lespedeza and many other broadleaf weeds.
- ▶ If turf is thin or compacted, alleviate compaction, raise your mowing height, and keep the soil's pH and fertility levels within appropriate guidelines for your turf.

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

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## Cole Hersee Co.

Designed for use on vehicles containing a cargo compartment, the compact FlexMod 48636 Electronic Timer unit automatically turns off interior lights, protecting starting batteries from being drained by lights left on for extended periods. To operate interior lights, the vehicle operator presses a momentary switch, which provides up to 20 minutes of lighting, after which the unit offers increasingly urgent warnings within the cargo compartment before the lights turn off. The unit can then be reset. FlexMod can be controlled from two switches, so one can be installed at the back of a compartment and one at the front. The timer works on 12- and 24-volt systems, is waterproof, dustproof and vibration-proof. [ColeHersee.com](http://ColeHersee.com)

## DESIGN/BUILD: LIGHTING

### Meyda Custom Lighting

The new Rockport Wall Sconce (29561) is designed to illuminate the exteriors and interiors of residences, retail, hotel, restaurant and commercial settings. Hand finished in Black, the 10-in.-wide fixture features White Faux Alabaster. The fixture is handcrafted by skilled Meyda artisans in the company's manufacturing facilities in Yorkville, NY. It stands 22.25 in. tall and 7 in. deep. Custom colors, designs and sizes are available, as are energy-efficient lamping options. The sconce is UL-listed for wet locations. [Meyda.com](http://Meyda.com)



### Schröder Lighting USA

Crafted with fine aluminum and glass to create robustness, efficiency and elegant aesthetics, NEOS allows for a multiplicity of applications, including floodlighting buildings, monuments, bridges, stadiums, arenas and playgrounds. Three floodlights are offered in four sizes, with power ranging from 35 to 1,000 watts, operating on 120- to 347-volt systems. Three beam spreads are available, including narrow, wide and asymmetrical. The standard NEOS mounting bracket provides a wide range of adjustment for precise, lockable aiming. Energy-efficient lamping technology ranges from T6, ED17, ED18, ED28 and ED37 Metal Halide, to ED17, ED18 and ED25 high-pressure sodium lamps. Options include louvers, glare shields, protection grids, color filters, wire guards, fuse holders and tenon adapters. A variety of finishes are available: Textured Black, Textured Gray, Textured White, Textured Bronze and Smooth Aluminum, plus custom colors. [Schreder.us](http://Schreder.us)



### Bulbrite

Ideal for outdoor use, Bulbrite Bug Lights can be used for outdoor security fixtures, downlights and portables. They are available in compact fluorescent (CFL) and standard incandescent lamps. Both are designed with a bright yellow finish, which repels insects. The CFL Bug Light offers 75% energy savings and lasts eight times longer than standard incandescent lights. The 15-watt CFL has an A19 shape with an E26 base, and is UL-listed for damp locations. It is equivalent to a 60-watt incandescent, runs on a 120-volt lighting system, has a Color Rendering Index of 82, and an average life of 6,000 hours. The lights are available in four wattages: 25-, 40-, 60- and 100-watt A19 versions with E26 bases. Each has an average life of 2,500 hours. [Bulbrite.com](http://Bulbrite.com)



### Chance

Chance, a business unit of Hubbell Power Systems Inc., in collaboration with Enterprise Properties Inc., a family of precast concrete companies, introduces the C/E Pole Foundation System. This engineered pole foundation and protective precast concrete collar system installs up to four times faster with a higher quality finished appearance and damage resistance. The two-part system provides a strong, distinctive pole base that can be easily customized in size, color and finish for initial construction. The C/E Pole Foundation System's consistent height above grade and durability of the 6,000-psi concrete collars instill more lifetime value than cast-in-ground concrete bases. [ABCChance.com](http://ABCChance.com)



continued on page 40



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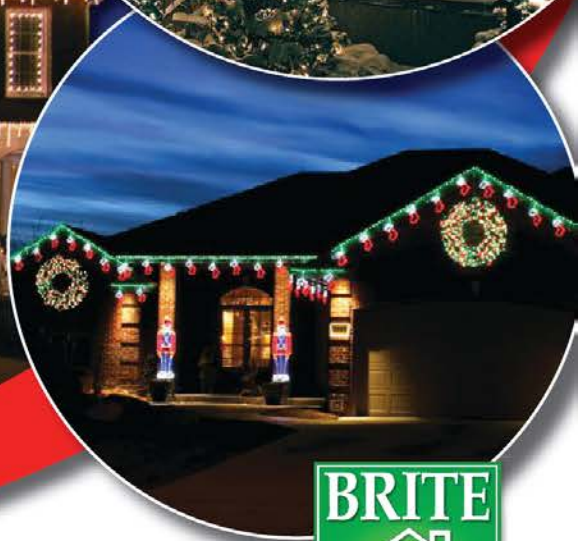


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continued from page 38

## Architectural Area Lighting

AAL introduces the Largent LED as part of its new Designer SSL Series of high-performance area luminaires featuring exclusive MicroEmitter technology. It features a modern geometric housing design, and is the first post-top luminaire to feature the exclusive MicroEmitter LED technology — allowing the light to be precisely aimed with minimal glare. Largent LED is available with four distribution patterns (Type 2, 3, 4 or 5) and two color temperatures: 60LED-WW and 60LED-BW. Field replaceable upgrade kits are available, including existing HID-to-LED retrofits. An entire EmitterDeck assembly, including drivers and 20 LED MicroEmitters (60 diodes), is provided, along with a replacement dome assembly for the luminaire. Largent LED's finish consists of a five-stage pretreatment regimen with a polymer primer sealer, oven dry off, and top coated with a thermoset superTGIC polyester powdercoat finish available in 13 standard colors. [AAL.net](#)



## Vista Professional Outdoor Lighting

Vista introduces best-in-class LED products that use up to 80% less energy than traditional sources. They feature precision-engineered optics and a pleasing warm white light. The new 3000 series LED accent fixtures offer a rugged design to protect against moisture and heat, assuring long life. Three different emitter packages are offered matching 20-, 35- and 42-watt halogen sources, each available with different beam options: narrow spot, medium flood or wide flood. Each fixture is rated for more than 17 years of normal use, and allows field replacement of internal components. Units are built to order in Vista's California facility in your choice of 15 finishes. [VistaPro.com](#)



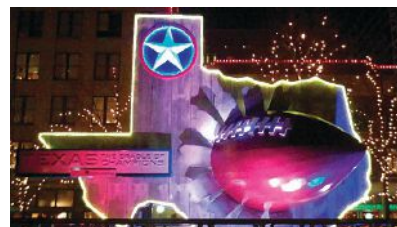
## Orbit/Evergreen

Orbit/Evergreen presents an expanded series of 120-volt floodlights in powdercoated cast aluminum or heavy-duty ABS plastic. Promoting nighttime safety and security, the versatile floods are also designed to highlight architectural details and landscape design. Models range in width from 8 to 15 in.; depths vary from 4.25 to 7.25 in. Fixtures include one to three PL13 lamps, depending on model size. The cast aluminum fixtures have a tempered glass lens and are featured in black, bronze, green or white finish. ABS plastic luminaires have an acrylic lens and are offered in black. An adjustable knuckle allows any fixture to be rotated for precise subject illumination. [OrbitElectric.com](#)



## Cooper Lighting

The McGraw-Edison Ventus, an outdoor LED area luminaire, incorporates Cooper Lighting's modular LightBAR technology and AccuLED Optics system. It can provide up to 75% in energy savings over traditional High Intensity Discharge (H.I.D.) outdoor sources. The luminaire is offered in two- to 12-IP66 rated LightBAR system configurations, with a choice of 15 unique optical distributions — including a family of proprietary Spill Light Eliminator optics. The Spill Light Eliminator optics drastically reduce spill light from behind the luminaire and redirect light to the task surface, resulting in increased task efficacy. Featuring rugged, die-cast and extruded aluminum construction, the design allows for passive cooling and natural cleaning of the extruded heat sink, ensuring reliable operation. Backed by a five-year warranty, the luminaire is Dark Sky Compliant, solving the public concern of both light trespass and sky glow/light pollution. [CooperLighting.com/LED](#)



## IlluminFx

Illuminating the massive "Cradle of Champions" sculpture, installed in Sundance Square, the heart of Fort Worth, TX, are IlluminFx's new Rio Series of energy-efficient, user-programmable LED fixtures. This new system features a variety of colored lighting options, and can be user-programmed to execute up to 24 lighting scenes of varying duration in four distinct light shows per unit. Light shows are created through an easy-to-use Windows-based program. And because of the Rio Series' energy-efficient LEDs, the system uses about one-fifth the amount of energy of traditional lighting systems. [IlluminFx.com](#)

continued on page 42



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## BUSINESS: SOFTWARE

### TopDown Conservation

TurfManager, a Web-based Software as a Service (SaaS) record-keeping solution, helps facility and property managers better monitor costs and resources by consolidating and automating the daily functions of turf management in one user-friendly Internet portal. It also aids in the process of measuring and quantifying costs for containment and sustainability programs — resulting in greater transparency and lower operational costs. GPS-linked aerial imagery overlays show accurate “as built” configurations, while the maintenance manager solution includes a program to be used by the turf manager or general manager to improve inventory accuracy, better manage labor and hourly tasks, equipment maintenance and scheduling, extend asset life, and develop metrics and processes that will save significant time and money. [TopDownConservation.com](http://TopDownConservation.com)



### Magnetag Visible Systems

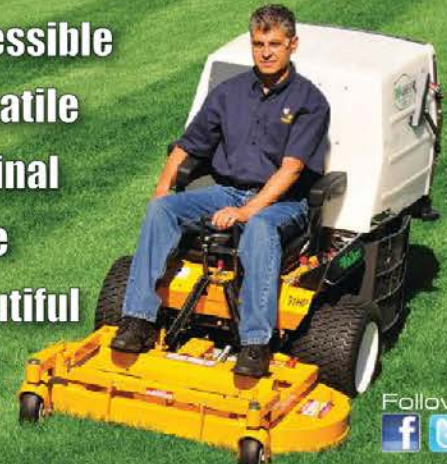
The new Crew and Route magnetic whiteboard allows Green Industry professionals to manage and communicate their weekly workloads so employees can see what to do and when to do it. The printed boards are easy to set up, easy to use and come with everything needed to operate them — including color-coded magnetic cardholders with printable inserts for job information and locations; two-sided, red/green Flip-Over magnets to show job status; and color-coded magnet signals for job priorities, equipment needed or your own special codes. Kits are available in three sizes, for 5 to 21 crews per board. [Magnetag.com/CrewRoute](http://Magnetag.com/CrewRoute)

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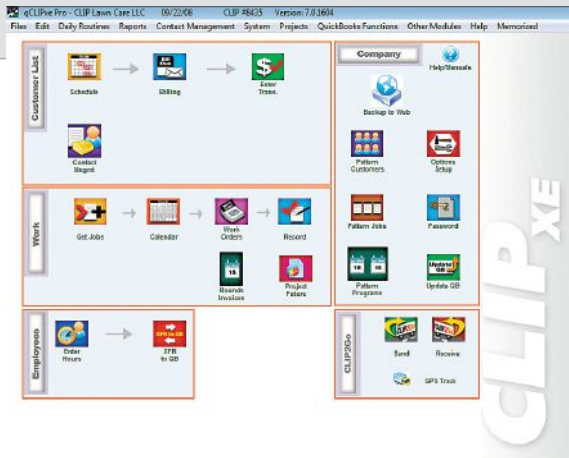
### Drafix Software

Now featuring 3D capabilities, PRO Landscape is the standard in design software for landscape professionals. PRO Landscape includes photorealistic imaging, night and holiday lighting, CAD and estimating in one easy-to-use and easy-to-learn program. Now with 3D. The program has helped literally thousands of contractors and architects save hours of valuable time, sell a higher percentage of jobs, and dramatically increase profits. [PROlandscape.com](http://PROlandscape.com)

### LS Training

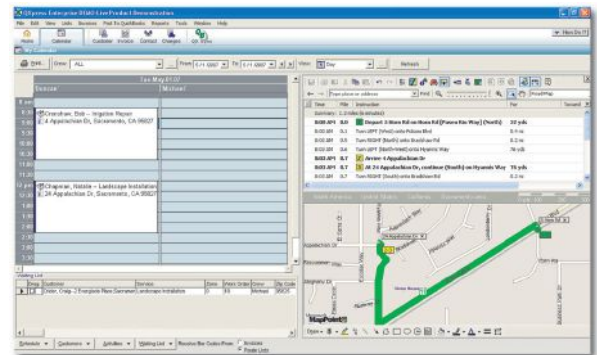
LS Training has released its newest online training videos: Personal Safety, Aerator, and Fertilizer Spreader. This makes for a total of 23 online videos, with online exams in English and Spanish. More than 10,000 landscape workers in North America get their training from LS Training. [Landscape-Safety.com](http://Landscape-Safety.com)





## QXpress Scheduling Software

QXpress is the scheduling software of choice for field service companies using QuickBooks. QXpress adds scheduling, job costing and invoicing capabilities to QuickBooks, so users don't have to learn a whole new system; they can just add industry-specific functionality to their existing QuickBooks. Cut office time and increase productivity by simplifying tasks such as scheduling and dispatching, tracking service calls, scheduling multi-day projects, generating estimates, managing inventory and tracking job cost. [QXpress.com](http://QXpress.com)



## Clip Sensible Software

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## LAWN CARE: INSECTICIDES

### FMC Professional Solutions

Talstar EZ Granular insecticide featuring Verge granule technology is now available. The clay-based granule breaks down quickly to release the active ingredient and disappear into the landscape, providing long-lasting control of surface-feeding pests such as ants, billbugs, chinch bugs, fleas and ticks. Virtually dust- and odor-free, the new formulation reduces applicator exposure while providing a more uniform distribution of product. Plus, now through Nov. 30, 2011: Buy nine, get one FREE! Simply purchase nine bags of Talstar EZ featuring Verge granule technology (25-lb. bag) or Talstar PL (25-lb. bag) and you'll receive the 10th bag free. Honored at the time of purchase, this promotion is a simple, cost-effective way to provide lawn care customers with the proven performance of Talstar. [FMCprofessionalsolutions.com/LawnCare/Products/Insecticides/TalstarEZfeaturingVergeGranuleTechnology.aspx](http://FMCprofessionalsolutions.com/LawnCare/Products/Insecticides/TalstarEZfeaturingVergeGranuleTechnology.aspx)



### The Andersons Inc.

DuoCide Insect Control provides a preventative and curative treatment to control a variety of common insect pests, including ticks, grubs, fire ants, mole crickets, European crane flies and more. Similar in cost to other single-mode insecticides, the product combines carbaryl and bifenthrin into a unique multi-mode formula that enhances performance both above and below the surface. DuoCide's performance is confirmed by multiple university research studies, and is formulated on the dispersible DG Pro carrier for easy spreading, low visibility and maximum performance. [AndersonsInc.com](http://AndersonsInc.com)

### PBI/Gordon Corp.

With an active ingredient of dinotefuran, Zylam 20SG Systemic Turf Insecticide is a soluble granule labeled for key turf insect pests such as chinch bugs, annual bluegrass weevils, crane flies and mole crickets. State registrations for the product are complete, and availability is expected in January. A liquid formulation labeled for a wide range of tree and shrub insect pests will be available this summer. [PBIGordon.com](http://PBIGordon.com)



### Arysta LifeScience Corp.

Aloft combines two modes of activity for maximum performance: Bifenthrin provides immediate knockdown (within hours) of early-season adults, including black turfgrass ataenius, annual bluegrass weevil, cutworms and billbugs, as well as surface-feeding pests like chinch bugs, armyworms and sod webworms. Then, the outstanding systemic and residual activity of clothianidin provides preventive, season-long control of all white grubs, plus "reach-back" control of any escaped larvae from early-season adult and surface feeder eggs laid prior to Aloft application. [TotalInsectControl.com](http://TotalInsectControl.com)

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### United Turf Alliance

New ArmorTech Guillotine, a fast-acting insecticide providing preventive and curative control of both grubs and surface-feeding insects, is a water-dispersible granular formulation containing the active ingredient clothianidin.

It controls white grubs and other insects for an extended length of time because of low water solubility and its ability to remain in the turf/soil interface area longer than other neonicotinoid chemistries. Guillotine is effective against most grub species, as well as ants, billbugs, annual bluegrass weevils, armyworms, cutworms and southern chinch bugs, including those resistant to synthetic pyrethroid insecticides. It is also labeled for use on ornamentals, interior plantscapes and non-bearing fruit and nut trees in a landscape environment. [UTAarmorotech.com](http://UTAarmorotech.com)

### MistAway Systems

Looking for a complementary, highly profitable, recurring service business? MistAway Systems is a leading manufacturer of automated outdoor misting systems for control of mosquitoes, spiders, no-see-ems and other annoying insects. During the last five years, our dealers have installed more than 13,000 of our systems in the United States and abroad. We are actively seeking landscaping professionals to sell, install and service our innovative systems in markets across the country. [MistAway.com](http://MistAway.com)

### Valent Professional Products

The new formulation of Arena 0.25 G Insecticide, incorporating the dust-free Biodac granular carrier from Kadant Grantek Inc., is a significant improvement over the clay-based carriers used for many granular products. Arena 0.25 G is now drier and less dusty, facilitates superior spreading and collects less moisture than its previous incarnation, resulting in better pest control. This includes long-lasting control over the pyrethroid-resistant chinch bug, as well as other pests like white grubs in turf and whitefly on ficus. [ValentPro.com/Arena](http://ValentPro.com/Arena)

### BioWorks

Molt-X Botanical Insecticide / Nematicide works primarily as an insect growth regulator (IGR) that disrupts the molting process in insects. Once treated with Molt-X, the company says, insects become sluggish, stop feeding, and fail to mature and reproduce. Molt-X also acts as an insect repellent, anti-feedant and ovipositional deterrent. Molt-X is an emulsifiable concentrate containing 3% azadirachtin, a potent insect-active compound found in the neem tree. While it is derived from neem seed, Molt-X is not a neem oil. It has a 4-hour Restricted Entry Interval (REI), zero-day pre-harvest interval and is labeled for use on a broad range of turfgrass, outdoor shrubs, trees, ornamentals and food crops, as well as on greenhouse ornamentals, shadehouse, interiorscape and nurseries. Other key product features includes no residue on plant foliage and flowers; no phytotoxicity issues on most plants; generally safe on beneficial insects and bees; and it's compatible for tank-mixing/rotation with other registered inputs including BotaniGard and SuffOil-X. [BioWorksInc.com](http://BioWorksInc.com)



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## BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

The author, of the Wilson-Oyler Group, is a 30-year industry veteran. Reach him at [bwilson@questex.com](mailto:bwilson@questex.com).

# Outsourcing to manage costs

**O** utsourcing or subcontracting might be a good business decision in the day-to-day running of a landscape business under normal circumstances. I keep hearing the “new normal” term being thrown around. So what should one think? What is “normal,” and what works? Today, you have to examine and question everything you do.

Many of today’s property managers prefer dealing with fewer suppliers when hiring service providers. As a basic landscape maintenance company, you might find yourself at a disadvantage to your

multi-service competitor unless you can also be that one-stop-shopping answer.

On the other hand, the process of starting new service lines, such as arborist services or irrigation services, can be a major distraction — as well as a drain on profits. With your customers on tight budgets, you might find you can no longer keep a crew busy, but need to carry the people so they don’t go elsewhere, offsetting any profit you might have made on them.

Most customers probably do not care whether you self-perform these additional services; they just would like you to make them happen. With some trades, you might be able to make as much marking up a subcontractor as you would self-performing, and do it with less risk.

The key factor in making this work is finding the right subcontractor. Good characteristics to look for include:

- › They are responsive.
- › They provide the level of quality you require.
- › They are price competitive, even with your mark-up.
- › They can refer you to their customers.

### Other opportunities

What about outsourcing? We are in a business that relies on our customers outsourcing their maintenance rather than doing it themselves, yet we fail to look for the same opportunities to make our own operations more streamlined.

In our consulting business, we call any unnecessary overhead a company carries and tries to pass on to its customers a “dumb tax.” We see many companies self-performing tasks in their business that are a huge distraction to them, and could be outsourced for less money (see box).

A good business does not lock itself into one way of doing business. Take advantage of all the options available so you can compete and serve your customers better.

### OUTSOURCING OPPORTUNITIES

**Payroll:** Payroll can be outsourced to a payroll company or an employee leasing company. For small companies in this industry, employee leasing is one of the most cost-efficient ways to handle payroll. It can often save a considerable amount on worker’s compensation insurance, and it also allows you to offer benefits you wouldn’t be able to afford otherwise.

**Fleet maintenance:** Mechanical shops can be a huge black hole. Shops are hard to control, especially if you are not really a hands-on manager. There are many mobile services available today that service your vehicles — do brake work, tire maintenance, etc. Having your own mechanic is a major commitment. Few companies in this industry have efficient shops. Outsourcing is the right solution when you are in the various growth stages where you are too small for a full-time mechanic, or have too much work for one mechanic but not enough for two.

**Spray techs:** Many companies struggle to keep good spray techs. The struggle is even greater when you have to carry them in the winter so as not to lose them. Hiring a good lawn care subcontractor may be the most cost-effective way to do this work.



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# CONTAIN CLIENTS' **Gardens**



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## CONTAINERS OPEN UP NEW OPTIONS FOR PLANTINGS.

BY M. ROLL AND C.R. WILSON

**C**ONTAINERS CAN be grown where traditional landscape plantings are not possible, including apartment balconies, small courtyards, decks, patios and areas with poor soil. They are an ideal solution for clients in rental situations, with limited mobility, or with limited time to care for a large landscape.

### Container considerations

Just about any container can be used, however, make sure you never use a container that held toxic materials, especially if edible

plants are going to be grown.

No matter the container, the most important thing to consider is drainage. Plants will not grow successfully in soil that is continually waterlogged. In waterlogged soils, space fills with water and leaves no room for air, which is necessary for proper root growth. If there are no existing drainage holes in the container, make multiple holes in the bottom. Keep in mind that containers made from porous materials (like clay and wood) lose moisture quickly, but allow air movement into the root zone. Metal, plastic and glazed containers hold water longer, but restrict air movement making drainage holes especially

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Ball's Gryphon Begonia creates a uniform mound, while the company's Silver Falls Dichondra cascades out from under Celebration Orange N.G. Impatiens and Celebrette Frost N.G. Impatiens.

important. Use a container insert if you plan to use an expensive decorative container without drainage holes. Make sure the insert does not rest in water.

Consider whether your pots will be moved during the growing season. When water is added to soil in an already heavy container, the weight might be too much to lift easily. Plan ahead when planting large containers and add container dollies with wheels.

The container should be large enough so the plants won't dry out between waterings. Consider using larger containers with more soil to hold moisture and reduce maintenance.

The size of the container should accommodate the roots of the plants when fully grown. With flowers, a general rule is the larger the height of the flower, the more root mass is produced, thus requiring a larger container.

### Soil choice

Potting soil should be free of disease organisms, insects, and weed seeds. It should be porous yet hold water and nutrients with a slightly acidic pH. Do not use native soil, even if you can pasteurize it. Most native soils have a high percentage of clay particles that easily compact, reducing the oxygen available to the roots.

Never reuse the same potting soil from the previous growing season because it may contain disease organisms.

Soilless mixes contain many of the same ingredients as potting soil, but are two to three times lighter because they don't contain heavy soil. You can add up to 10% of the volume with clean, coarse sand to add weight for top-heavy plants.

The rapid growth of many container plants quickly depletes the fertilizer available in the limited volume of soil. Well-drained soil mixes also result in the regular loss of fertilizer in the drainage water. To provide the right amount of fertilizer, mix controlled-release fertilizer granules into

the soil mix at planting. The large number of plants often grown in containers places extra demands on the fertilizer supplied by timed-release products. Fully soluble fertilizer products can be added to the irrigation water to supplement or replace timed-release products.

### Design basics

There are a few design principles to consider when planting container gardens.

To avoid a flat look, add a spike — a tall plant, or a garden ornament — for height and a trailing plant to drape down from the container. A grouping of different-sized containers will also help achieve this goal. Choose plants that are in scale with the size of the container and planting backdrop. Generally, plants should be twice as tall as the visible part of the container. If planting one large plant, such as an ornamental grass, select a larger container that will fulfill both plant growth and design needs.

Consider the texture or shapes of plant leaves and flowers. A variety of leaf shapes and sizes can be more appealing than uniform foliage. Combine round-shaped flowers with irregularly shaped ones.

Use complementary colors on the opposite side of the color wheel or analogous colors adjacent on the color wheel. Also consider whether you want an area to stand out through the use of hot colors like orange and red, or recede through the use of cool colors like blue and violet. Repeating a flower color among different vertical plant layers will give a stronger and more unified appearance.

### Plant types

The group of plants most immediately thought of for container use may be annuals. In addition to new versions of old favorites, many new choices are available. Geraniums feature new zonal, ivy, and cascading types. New petunia colors are available as well as improved trailing

types that require no pinching or pruning. Other improvements have been seen in Verbena, Salvia, Impatiens and Fuchsia.

Don't overlook "indoor" or tropical foliage plants for shady areas. Cacti and succulents can also be used, but don't combine them with plants that require more moisture.

Perennials are generally treated as annuals in containers and not overwintered. Bulbs and bulb-like plants can also be grown in containers. Ornamental grasses and grass-like plants grown in containers make bold statements.

Either alone or for height in a mixed container, consider woody plants. If you want to evoke an English garden, container roses are a good choice. Vines on a trellis can also be used in containers. Consider morning glory, Nasturtium, scarlet runner bean, or canary creeper.

Many vegetables and herbs can be successfully grown in containers as well. **LM**

**M. Roll and C.R. Wilson are Colorado State University Extension horticulture agents.**



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### Singing the blues

*Viola cornuta* 'Shangri-La Marina' F1 from **Tokita Seed** is an early-flowering, mounding viola in a vibrant new color for this type. In trials, the 6-in.-tall plants kept a low-growing mounding habit. Colorful and prolific 1.25-in. blooms have light-blue petals with a velvety dark-blue face that is surrounded by a narrow white border. Flower color is a consistent deep marina blue throughout the season. This vigorous, frost-tolerant biennial provides a solid mat of fall color until covered with snow, followed by a recovery in spring. Grow in full sun as a low edging in the landscape bed or in hanging baskets and pots.

[TokitaSeed.co.jp/eng](http://TokitaSeed.co.jp/eng)



### Must-have color

It's official: Honeysuckle is the Color of the Year for 2011, according to the Pantone Color Research Institute. With that in mind, **Anthony Tesselaa International** turns the spotlight on its Flower Carpet Coral ground-cover rose. It blooms in profusion from late spring through fall and exhibits natural disease resistance in the landscape. The honeysuckle-hued petals don't fade in the sun, but rather darken over time to a deep reddish-coral. The flowers are arrayed in large clusters of about 25 blossoms. Throughout the bloom season, the plant continues to look fresh with glossy green leaves unmarred by spent blossoms as its petals fall away after flowers have peaked, according to the company. [Tesselaar.com](http://Tesselaar.com)

### Purple reign

**PanAmerican Seed's** Ornamental Pepper Purple Flash combines striking coloration with an interesting plant architecture and heat tolerance to enhance in-ground plantings and mixed containers. Purple Flash grows with a layered, scaffolding habit to create an exotic look. Leaves are almost black, with pops of bright purple foliage. The small fruit is glossy, black and hot to the taste. It performs best under high light and warm temperatures. [PanAmSeed.com](http://PanAmSeed.com)



### 2011 Plant Select winner

Discovered and introduced by David Salman of **High Country Gardens**, 'Blonde Ambition' *Bouteloua gracilis* PPAF ornamental grass offers big, showy chartreuse flowers, held horizontally 2.5 to 3 ft. above the leaves. These flag-like flowers rise up out of the blue-green foliage in mid-summer and are held on stiff, weather-resistant stems. It also provides winter interest, as the stems of seed heads pop up even after a heavy snow and remain standing through winter, giving the grass 6 to 8 months of garden color and texture. It was recognized as a winning choice by Plant Select, a cooperative program among the Denver Botanic Gardens, Colorado State University and the regional Green Industry that evaluates and recommends trees, shrubs and perennials for performance in the Rocky Mountain and Great Plains states. This hardy grass grows in a wide range of soil types and is ideal for low-maintenance landscapes. [HighCountryGardens.com](http://HighCountryGardens.com)



### Sage advice

'Summer Jewel Red,' a *Salvia coccinea* bred by **Takii & Co. Ltd.**, was consistently rated "superior" or "above average" by the AAS judges because of its early and generous flower blossoms, continuing from spring to autumn. Each dwarf and densely branching plant of this hummingbird sage grows to 20 in. tall. The bright red flower spikes are covered with half-inch blooms, acting as a magnet for hummingbirds. Goldfinches also swarm the plant for seeds. Even the leaves add beauty with their finer-textured, dark-green color. Expect long season performance and superior holding ability in both wind and rain, especially in full-sun containers, mixed beds and borders where uniformity is desired. [Takii.com](http://Takii.com)

## For the love of lighting

Passion breeds success for a business owner who transformed his lighting service into a full-time gig.

**T**OMMY HERREN HAD ALMOST thrown in the towel when he finally saw the light. He was frustrated with the direction his landscape business was headed. But he knew he loved doing landscape lighting. That's when the big idea struck. He could turn that service into a full-time career.

Herren, now "head geek" (owner) of The Lighting Geek in Antelope, CA, says he hasn't looked back since. It's what he was meant to do.

"I think the biggest thing is having a passion for your work," he says. "People see through it if you're just going through the motions to do what you can to make money. If you're truly sincere about what you're doing, and not just putting on an act, you will succeed."

### STEPS TOWARD SUCCESS

Early on, Herren says, there were several manufacturers who helped him. One of the first things he recommends to other contractors starting out is to look for support.

"Find a brand you believe in, go to that sales rep and tell them you're starting this service," he suggests. "There's a lot more support in this segment than people realize."

The second step, says Herren, is to get a demo kit. "It doesn't have to be anything fancy. It could even be things you already have, such as used fixtures that need to be repaired. The power behind a demo kit is proving to a client what you can do."

Use the power of light to draw in your customers, Herren continues. "One thing I learned very early on is that it's difficult to talk about a lighting plan and get your clients to picture it in their heads the way you do, especially if it's something they've never seen before. You need to show them."

That's also why photography is such a powerful tool in the lighting industry, says Herren. He suggests purchasing a decent camera and building a portfolio of work to show new clients.



Herren reveals the finished project at night for full effect.

### THE JOURNEY

Herren views the sales process as a journey, and he walks clients through the lighting possibilities. That's why he says the No. 1 mistake he's witnessed new contractors make is leaving a catalog behind.

"That's the first thing new guys do, and it's a big mistake," he says. "It's like handing someone a catalog of cars and saying 'Go pick one.' They hired you because they don't know anything about lighting, and they don't know what's best or what they want."

Also part of the journey is a successful marketing plan. Herren says too often, contractors' biggest marketing mistakes center on the fact they don't know their clients. He suggests learning the demographic you're looking to reach before making any major marketing efforts.

The first year he invested everything he made into marketing. "You can't do it by only word of mouth," he says. "Word of mouth is when you're doing a lot of work and people keep talking, but what happens when you aren't doing a lot of work anymore? I can't tell you how many people have fallen hard in these hard times because they relied on word of mouth alone."

Herren says when the job's complete, he makes a big deal out of the reveal, and that has resulted in a lot of happy clients and good referrals, too. He brings the clients outside in the dark and presses a button to light up the whole scene.

"What happens next I call the 'OMG Factor,'" says Herren. "Their yard being done perfectly is emotional for the client. That's one of my favorite moments."

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

### >> SERVICE SNAPSHOT

#### COMPANY NAME:

The Lighting Geek

#### HEADQUARTERS:

Antelope, CA

**WHY LIGHTING?** "A film exec once said you can make a movie without actors, but you can't make it without lighting. Without lighting, you can't do anything. It's more than the icing on the cake. It's a necessity."

**INITIAL INVESTMENT:** "For around \$1,500 you could have the tools — outside of marketing — to start this service. A voltmeter, wire strippers, four-in-one screwdriver, wire staples, knee pads, a good flashlight, a good headlight, and a demo kit are the must-haves to start out with."

**INVESTMENT RECOUP TIME:** "The tools could be recouped in one job. But there's a lot more to growing the service."

**WHY CUSTOMERS LIKE IT:** "It's emotional."



# SNOW+ICE

## GUIDE

How to select the proper snowplow for your equipment.

BY RANDY STRAIT

**L**ESSTIME. LESS LABOR. Fewer overhead costs. These days, it seems every company must do more with less. While “less” is the operative word, it’s the “more” that counts. More efficiency. More productivity. And most importantly, more profit.

To get more, companies are becoming more resourceful. The snow and ice management business is no stranger to the efficiency crunch, as it’s had to be more efficient every year to keep up with everything from government liability regulations to skyrocketing salt prices. The outside business environment, combined with other factors, makes it crucial to not just plow snow, but to plow it thoroughly and effectively. Whether you’ve been in the plowing business for one month or 10 years, there have never been more reasons to re-examine efficiencies in your operation.

Acquiring the proper snow plow is among the most important steps in starting up or improving a snow and ice management operation. The right plow will move more snow, increase operator ease and safety, and reduce repair expenses — not to mention costly downtime. In addition, the right



Containment plows, or snow pushers, typically include side panels to keep snow contained, reducing the need for follow-up plowing as well as potential damage.

## A FLURRY OF *choices*

plow has a positive impact on the life of the machine powering it, whether it’s a small skid steer or larger loader.

Many contractors get hung up on size. But it’s more than a matter of size; snow plows now offer numerous advancements and features designed to maximize efficiency.

With so many options, from different moldboard and hitch designs to cutting blades and side panels, deciding on features can be overwhelming. But evaluating how each feature can improve your bottom line will help you choose the right plow.

### Sizing it up

Snow plows are available in many styles and sizes. Equipment-mounted plows, commonly referred to as containment plows or box plows, typically range in size from 6 ft. for smaller machines such as skid steers to 30 ft. for larger equipment such as wheel loaders.

Plow size primarily affects how much snow is removed and with what precision. Longer, one-piece containment plows move larger quantities of snow the first time but leave a lot behind because they ride on the highest ground.

*continued on page 55*



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**Newer “drop-and-go” hitch designs enhance the life of plow components and let the plow and machine ride evenly along the pavement.**



*continued from page 53*

No pavement is completely level. Roads tend to be higher in the center and gradually slope downward on each side; parking lots have both raised and depressed areas throughout. A longer plow rests at the highest point on a surface floating over lower areas, which might mean leaving behind inches of snow that require follow-up plowing.

On the other hand, a shorter plow is more concentrated and precise. Operators are able to better target areas and clear more snow with less follow-up. Shorter plows are also ideally suited for common, smaller pieces of equipment in a fleet, such as skid steers and compact loaders.

But smaller plows mean more passes are needed to remove the same amount of snow. Outsourcing or adding a pick-up plow to handle follow-ups might be required, as shorter plows still miss small areas like dips in roads or parking lots.

## Independent and group effort

Sectional moldboard designs consist of several pieces that together form one large surface area, allowing large amounts of snow to be removed in a single pass. What’s unique about these styles is the way the sections operate to also provide precise, efficient removal.

Nearly every plow on the mar-

ket offers a trip edge feature. As an obstacle is encountered, the plow “trips,” or lifts slightly to clear the object without damaging the plow. But when the plow lifts up, it misses a whole pile of snow. Sectional moldboard plows offer the same concept, but on an individual basis. Rather than the whole plow width tripping, only the individual section encountering an obstacle trips, leaving virtually no snow behind and eliminating the need for follow-up plowing. Not only does this reduce fuel and labor costs, plowing a clean lot the first time will also eliminate any liability issues and costs resulting from slip-and-fall claims.

The independent movement of each “mini plow” provides further efficiency and plowing precision by essentially letting the entire plow contour to any given surface. On sloped roads, the outer pieces rest at lower points, while those toward the center rise up as the pavement does. The same is true in parking lots. As the plow approaches a depressed or elevated area, the section will respond to the change in elevation and adjust itself accordingly. This ensures virtually no snow is left behind, and essentially eliminates the need for a pick-up mounted plow or salting.

In addition to providing better clearing performance, the individual

tripping action helps prevent damage to the plow and machine if a small obstacle is encountered. For larger, rigid objects such as curbs, consider a plow with mechanical side panels to help prevent damage.

## Panel of experts

Most containment-style plows are built with side panels, or wings, attached to both ends of the moldboard. The panels keep snow contained and prevent it from rolling off the sides, but they also pose major challenges.

Imagine a loader plowing full speed on a city street using a model with fixed side panels. The snow is deep and blowing across both lanes, so the driver can’t see that he’s approaching a concrete median on his left side. When he eventually hits it, something will absorb the impact, whether it’s the plow, the machine — or the operator.

To address this serious problem, some manufacturers offer plows with mechanical side panels, which respond to impact from major obstructions such as curbs and medians. Rather than hit these objects head-on, the side panels lift up and go over them, clearing even tall obstacles and reducing damage to the equipment, plow and, most importantly, the operator.

## Get hitched

Newer hitch designs take stress off the operator and enhance the life of plow components. Plows are picked up and dropped down hundreds of times each night. Typical hitch designs force the operator to manually adjust the plow each time it’s dropped, making for a time-consuming, frustrating process, especially for inexperienced operators. Newer “drop-and-go” hitch designs adjust the plow automatically. The hitch design ensures the plow will lie correctly, extending plow life and ensuring a clean surface.

These hitches also let the plow and machine move independently of one another. As stated, rarely is pavement perfectly level.

# SNOW + ICE GUIDE

Take a parking lot, for example. Because the plow leads the way, it's going to reach a raised point in the pavement before the machine does. Normally in this situation, the plow will rest on the higher ground and lean slightly forward. The action lifts the machine up off its front wheels, creating drag, while

putting weight on only two tires. Over time, this will result in uneven tire wear and more frequent replacement issues.

With newer hitches, the plow can lift up and adjust to the pavement while the machine stays balanced on all four tires, keeping even wear on the tires and the plow. Especially when

combined with sectional moldboard styles, this movement further lets the plow continuously adjust to changes in the pavement for optimum plowing efficiency and reduces the need for follow-up plowing.

These types of hitch designs also prevent premature wear on the plow's shoes. Side panels, whether fixed or mechanical, include smooth, flat pieces called shoes that ride along the surface. Commonly made of steel, the shoes are designed to last several years. But their lifespan can be cut short with premature wear, a common occurrence with typical hitch designs that require manual adjustment. "Drop-and-go" styles are designed to lay flat and ensure the shoes do as well, leading to even wear and less replacement for the operator.

Together, these features significantly enhance performance and minimize maintenance expense. But the plow cutting edge affects both the machine's performance and the plow's total lifecycle cost, and should therefore be carefully considered.

## Cutting edge counts

Every plow has a cutting edge. Designed to scrape and clean away compacted snow and ice, cutting edges further reduce the need for re-plowing and salting.

Ideal for cutting through and scraping snow and ice, steel cutting edges prove to be more effective and more durable than rubber options. On the down side, replacement of steel edges can be significantly more expensive, but that shouldn't necessarily be a deterrent. Together with sectional moldboards, steel cutting edges are effective and can be replaced in one section rather than across the entire length of the plow. This significantly reduces maintenance costs, while providing all the benefits of the steel edge. **LM**

**STRAIT** is president of Arctic Snow & Ice Control Products (ArcticSnowAndIce.com).

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# PRODUCTS

## Parallel design

**Henke's** new Parallel Lift Plow is designed to remain parallel to the ground in transport or in angling positions. It can be completely removed from the truck hydraulically, leaving only a flat plate. The truck hitch and power reversing and lifting mechanisms remain with the plow. The plow features an inverted "J" shaped, 43-in. high moldboard with 10 vertical ribs. The moldboard is available in steel or polymer in 10-, 11- and 12-ft. lengths. *HenkeMfg.com*



## Electric start

**Ariens' Sno-Tek** single-stage snow thrower is powered by a 205cc Briggs and Stratton engine and features a 22-in. clearing path. A Quick Chute deflector rotates 200 degrees, so operators can keep snow off previously cleared areas. The single-stage Sno-Tek is easy to start, and the aluminized Lo-Tone muffler resists corrosion while minimizing noise. The 86-lb. unit can discharge snow up to 40 ft. and features a two-year limited consumer warranty. *Ariens.com*

## Multi-tasking machines

The **Gravelly Rapid M** and **Rapid E** two-wheel tractors are powerful all-in-one machines, featuring five different attachments: snow blower, blade, brush, mowing deck and car pusher. Both models feature a hydrostatic drive system and pistol-grip controls to make operation easy. Operator-friendly controls and handle with tool-less height adjustments and side-to-side adjustments helps to make short work of any job. Available with a two-year warranty. *Ariens.com*



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## Move large volumes

**The Boss** BX-12 is the first box plow designed for professionals seeking to remove large volumes of snow in a single pass. Easily attaching to a loader or backhoe, it features a 12-ft.-wide sectioned trip edge, featuring segmented cutting edges that allow each 8-in. cutting edge segment to trip individually. This keeps the remaining cutting edges in contact with the surface and pushing snow for maximum efficiency. Articulating end plates are self-leveling to keep the scraping edge surface closely in contact with the pavement, reducing wear and tear on the shoe heel and the impact felt when an obstruction is struck. During plowing operations, the Quickhitch system's vertical hitch float lets the box plow slide up and down, also reducing wear and tear on the tractor, operator and plow. [BossPlow.com](http://BossPlow.com)



## Zero-turn maneuverability

**Grasshopper's** zero-turn FrontMount power units serve as the heart of a complete snow removal system comprising commercial snowthrowers, dozer blades (pictured), rotary brooms and V-plows. Applying zero-turn maneuverability to snow removal saves time and labor so each operator can accomplish more work in less time. Grasshopper's exclusive QuikConverter implement system lets you install and remove implements in minutes without tools. An optional winter enclosure (for 700 and 900 Series) and 16,000 BTU/hr heater (for liquid-cooled models) protect operator from the elements for enhanced comfort and efficiency. [ThrowMoreSnow.com](http://ThrowMoreSnow.com)

## Tow-behind

**SnowEx's** new SP-7000 Tow Pro spreader features a 1.4-cu.-yd. capacity. It tows behind tractors and UTVs with a lawn and garden hitch, eliminating the need to mount a large spreader in the truck bed. This helps maximize the truck's utility by freeing the bed to carry additional spreading materials or peripheral pieces of equipment, such as walk-behind spreaders and snow blowers. It's designed for treating parking lots and garages, college campuses, private roadways, and other off-highway uses. With an 18-in., stainless steel spinner, the unit can spread material up to 30 ft. wide. For maximum control of the spread pattern, the spinner can be tilted between 0° and 15° downward.

[TrynexFactory.com](http://TrynexFactory.com)



## Save time and energy

**John Deere's** Frontier SB2176 snow blower has a quick-attach feature, allowing operators to mount the blower without removing the John Deere 400 Series' loader. The blower is driven by an independent, hydraulic three-point hydraulic power pack that attaches to the rear of the tractor. Self-contained and driven by the tractor's rear PTO, it is also Category 1- and iMatch-compatible. It features a 76-in. working width and automatic auger speed control to prevent clogs. Six anti-scalp wheels are located at all four corners and the front center position of the deck. The cutting edge is replaceable, and the steel skid shoes are adjustable and replaceable. [Deere.com](http://Deere.com)

## Clean sweep

Ranging in width from 96 to 120 in., **Case Construction Equipment's** new angle brooms enable Case wheel loaders to sweep streets and parking lots, clean up jobsites and remove snow from jobsites. Angle broom models are available for Case 521D and E, 621D and E, 721D and E, and 821E wheel loaders. The brooms feature durable poly-wire brushes, broom heads that adjust 30° left or right and an integrated nozzle for applications requiring water for dust control. The brooms attach to the CNH Quick Coupler (JRB-compatible) for wheel loaders. Quick-change hydraulic fittings enable the operator to attach and detach the broom without disrupting hydraulic lines. [CaseCE.com](http://CaseCE.com)

## Adaptable plow

With its ability to switch between a rubber edge and steel trip edge, the new Switchblade containment plow can handle changing weather and jobsite conditions without having to change plows. Its steel edge features **Pro-Tech's** patented IST technology, which includes a steel edge mounted on a specially blended memory urethane. When an obstruction is hit, the edge flexes and snaps back to its original angle in a smooth, non-shocking trip action. Because the new design uses a cutting edge that spans the entire width of the unit, the Switchblade eliminates snow trails at its sides. A total of 12 models are available. [ProTechCorp.com](http://ProTechCorp.com)





# WIDE-OUT™ ADJUSTABLE WING SNOWPLOW: AN UPGRADE THAT PAYS FOR ITSELF

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*Kale Christman // The Ground Specialists // Valparaiso, IN*

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*Shannon Shaw // Pinnacle Property Maintenance // Columbus, OH*

*"Since I upgraded my old V-Plow to a WIDE-OUT, I'm able to finish my jobs at least 20% faster. When you can use 80% of the blade versus half, and angle the blade to carry snow around corners without spilling off, it makes a big difference. Next year I plan to upgrade another truck with a WIDE-OUT."*

*Paul Kiedrowski // Oconomowoc Lawn // Oconomowoc, WI*



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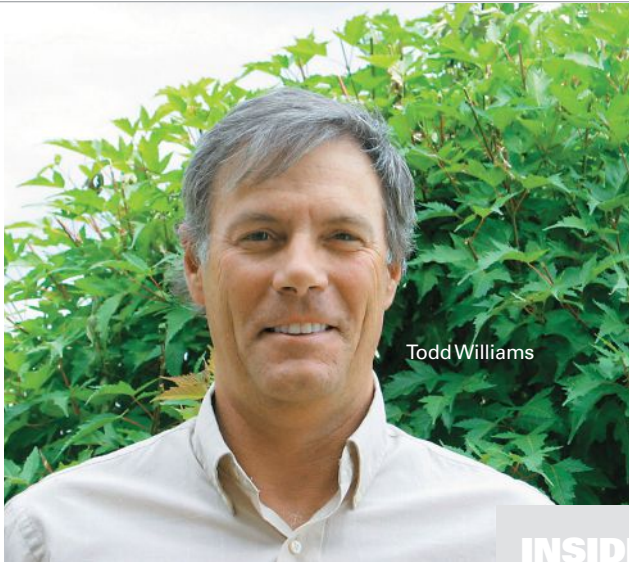
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Todd Williams

“Business has been challenging in the last couple years, but our long-term clients and contracts have helped us weather the storm fairly well,” says **Todd Williams**, executive vice president of Terracare Associates. Terracare’s ability to maintain strong client relationships and keep up with industry trends has enabled it to stay competitive during the recession, and now Williams stops to discuss with *LM* where the company — and the maintenance industry — is headed today.

## TOP TRENDS

› **Sustainability.** We are seeing more clients focus on having landscapes that use fewer resources or are sustainable in nature. This trend is positive for our enhancement business, as landscapes are converted from turf to other types of uses. As an organization, our passion is to be stewards of our local environment while protecting the health, safety and welfare of our communities, clients and staff. Environmental sustainability is at the core of who we are. As our reputation and clientele continue to grow and diversify, the standard of excellence we strive to meet every day keeps us at the forefront of our industry.

› **Technology.** Technology is finding its way into our business more and more all the time. GPS, handheld data collection and Internet-based solutions are becoming the norm rather than cutting-edge. We utilize an integrated business management tool known as Asset, which eliminates the need for multiple software systems to operate our business and significantly reduces overhead by eliminating redundant processes in our company. Additionally, our field crews utilize CREWtek, a handheld device that lets our staff manage projects remotely, handle billing, manage equipment and schedule crews efficiently and effectively. It ensures our teams know where they are going and what tasks they need to perform. Additionally, we utilize our growing social media network to develop business relationships with our key clients.

› **Water efficiency.** We have converted a significant amount of the irrigation systems we maintain to evapotranspiration and Internet-based controls. Assisting our clients in conserving water and saving money is a key focus in how we approach the maintenance of a property’s irrigation system. Our technicians

## INSIDE INFO

**Company:** Terracare Associates  
**Headquarters:** Denver  
**Employees:** 250 full-time (plus 125 seasonal and part-time)  
**2010 revenue:** \$26 million

**Key to being a maintenance leader:** Providing a progressive and supportive culture for employees is key. We try to really challenge our people, but at the same time provide them with the right amount of support so they can succeed. It is important our people feel they are a part of the family, and something bigger than just a job. As a company, we encourage participation by all employees in developing creative ways to solve problems, improve effectiveness and grow our business. Members of the staff often participate in company-sponsored volunteer committees tasked with improving our safety standards, expanding into peripheral business opportunities, or becoming more sustainable in our business practices.

are highly trained in evaluating and providing solutions to the customer with the most innovative water conservation tools available for the site conditions. Our goal is to save our clients water and money without sacrificing the beauty of their landscapes.

## TOP OBSTACLES

› **Competition.** We are seeing the market prices for maintenance services go down fairly significantly. Creating continued efficiencies and cost savings is critical for survival. Unfortunately, we are seeing more work go for below fair market value, but you can’t blame owners for wanting to save all they can. Our goal is to target clients who place a value on the professionalism we bring to the table.

› **Labor availability.** The landscape industry is a very labor-intensive one. Forging of documents and now identity theft are rampant problems, and the current national immigration policy puts employers in a terrible position of having to be the enforcer of immigration laws — with very little tools or support to accomplish this. We use the H2B program in Colorado. It’s a seasonal guest worker program that allows employers to recruit and hire seasonal workers from other countries, but it is a program that is more difficult and expensive to use all the time.

## TOP OPPORTUNITY

› **Enhancements, with landscape use changes and water efficiency in mind.** There is a real return on investment for many clients. Selling that return is key to generating the work. Our continued success depends on our ability to capitalize on our expanding service lines and project portfolio. This requires that we approach every project with a more holistic approach to landscape maintenance and environmental development.

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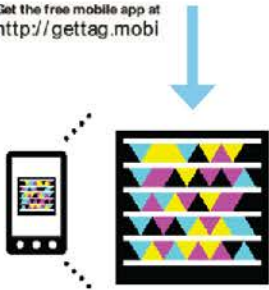
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# MYBIGGESTMISTAKE

LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY » BY CASEY PAYTON



DeSantis Landscapes, like every other business, has left a carbon footprint on the environment. But today, the company is looking to erase that mark.



Dean DeSantis

**COMPANY:** DeSantis Landscapes Inc.

**PRESIDENT:** Dean DeSantis

**HEADQUARTERS:** Salem, OR (with a branch office in Oregon City)

**CLIENT MIX:** 60% residential; 40% commercial

**SERVICE BREAKDOWN:** 50% design/build; 50% maintenance

**2010 REVENUE:** \$4 million

**NO. OF EMPLOYEES:** 60 employees in peak season

**D**EAN DESANTIS HAS always had an appreciation for the environment. But after spending six post-college years traveling abroad, he was even more deeply affected by what he saw.

"I was able to see firsthand the effects of what man had done to our environment around the world," says the president of Oregon-based DeSantis Landscapes, which has offices in Salem and Portland. "That really hit home for me."

Today, as a business owner, DeSantis has been able to do something about it. The process has been an invaluable lesson.

Since the company started focusing on improving the environmental impact of its internal business operations back in 2005 (now branded as the "Earth Sense" program), some serious changes have taken place for the \$4 million business. Today, DeSantis Landscapes, a company that is 50/50 in design/build and maintenance services, has reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by more than 500,000 lbs. That's the equivalent of taking 45 vehicles off of the road. At the same time, the company is saving money on fuel costs, receiving tax breaks, and enhancing its reputation as a leader in sustainability.

One of the biggest

changes that DeSantis made was to switch his management team members from pickup trucks to hybrid passenger cars.

"I drive a Prius and get 45 miles to the gallon, which is a big difference from what I used to get in my pickup," says DeSantis.

The company has also made the switch to biodiesel instead of petroleum diesel for its fleet of trucks, tractors, large mowers and other equipment. DeSantis says that switch was a big learning experience.

"We have two 500-gallon tanks on-site where we store fuel, and one of the things that happened was that the biodiesel actually started to clean the inside of the tank by getting all of that crud and gunk off of the sides. The problem is that it started going into our fuel lines...but as soon as we got over that hump, we haven't had any problems."

DeSantis is now also working with the local office of Enterprise Fleet Management, a full-service fleet management company for businesses with medium-sized fleets, to offset 100% of the company's verifiable greenhouse gas emissions for the entire fleet. It's part of Enterprise's nationwide comprehensive environmental platform pledge to match a portion of each customer's greenhouse gas offset

purchases (up to a national total of \$1 million).

While these changes are starting to pay off for DeSantis, the cost of going green isn't always cheap upfront. But DeSantis says the return on investment does come eventually.

Take, for example, the solar panels that the company had installed on its roof. DeSantis says that the projected return on investment was about 3-and-a-half years, a time span he's just reached. He now expects to save about 15% to 18% on power costs.

And it's important to remember that payoff also comes in the form of goodwill and good publicity. DeSantis says he feels great about what he's doing for the environment, but it's also been a wise business decision to let other people know about his efforts.

"We knew we couldn't just roll this out quietly," he says. "We also needed to couple the efforts we were taking internally with education for our clients, so we developed several informational pieces and put them on our website for people to access."

Today, DeSantis is proud of what he's achieved — and he looks forward to doing even more. He's become a leader of sustainability and hopes others will follow in his footsteps, adding: "I'm reminded of a quote that says the best time to plant a tree is 100 years ago, but the next best time is *today*."

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





## Project EverGreen: Continuing to Make a Measurable Difference

By Norman Goldenberg, President  
Project EverGreen Board of Directors

Just six years ago, with the support of our contributors, staff and industry partners, Project EverGreen launched an effort to preserve and enhance green spaces in our communities for today and future generations.

We remain committed to winning the hearts and minds of consumers by using local grassroots efforts to carry the resonating message about green spaces throughout America—ultimately sustaining the vibrant green industry that makes it all possible.

### Highlights:

- The Milwaukee EverGreen Zone launched with landscape personality, Melinda Myers, as spokesperson.
- Our third EverGreen Zone launched in North Carolina in Spring 2010.
- We officially launched Project EverGreen in Canada.
- Green industry companies are now including the Project EverGreen logo into their business and marketing materials.
- A new hosta named for GreenCaare for Troops goes on sale this summer.
- We continue working closely with other green industry associations to help educate consumers about how we are positively impacting green spaces.
- Holiday CD by Little Chicago is a big hit nationwide.

### EverGreen Zone Grassroots Education Program Returned in Akron, Ohio and launched in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 2009

Independent research verifies that we continue to increase consumer awareness about the benefits of green spaces. By educating consumers through EverGreen Zones, we are changing consumer attitudes.

#### Change in Awareness:



### GreenCare for Troops Continues to Grow

- The total number of families grew by 21% in 2009.
- The total number of volunteers grew by 20% in 2009.
- Approximately 9,200 military families and more than 2,400 volunteers are involved.



### Help Us Spread the Good News About "Managed Green Spaces"

Continue your financial support of Project EverGreen because "a rising tide lifts all boats."

For more information about Project EverGreen go to [www.ProjectEverGreen.com](http://www.ProjectEverGreen.com) or call us toll-free at 1-877-758-4835.

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**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JULY 8, 2011**

\* Renewal & Remembrance is a PLANET members-only event and attendance will be capped at 500 volunteers, taken on first come first served basis, so register early!

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