

## Contractors take to the Hill

PLANET's Renewal & Remembrance and Legislative Day on the Hill programs offer the opportunity to give back and speak up.

**T**he Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) held its annual Renewal & Remembrance service event at Arlington National Cemetery and its Legislative Day on the Hill program last month.

"This year's Renewal & Remembrance event once again showed the commitment and dedication to service that our PLANET members have," said Norman Goldenberg, president of PLANET. "It is such an honor to see our members, their children and our sponsor companies come together to help Arlington National Cemetery provide the best possible green spaces for our military heroes and their families."

Renewal & Remembrance included more than 400 PLANET members and their families, who spent their time helping to mulch, prune, aerate, irrigate, plant, spread lime and provide cabling and lighting protection for some of Arlington's historic trees. (For more on Renewal & Remembrance, see page 8.)

After Renewal & Remembrance, the focus switched to legislative issues. More than 100 PLANET members



and their families met with legislators or staff from their local districts to talk about important issues, including overregulation, NPDES permits, H-2B and Lyme disease. PLANET members visited with representatives from approximately 20 states.

"This event allows PLANET members to meet with their elected officials and discuss issues that are important

U.S. Rep. Bobby Schilling (R-Ill.) (center) with Alan and Mary Ann Skoog of Skoog Landscape and Design of Sterling, Ill.

to their businesses and the lawn and landscape industry as a whole," said Goldenberg.

The Irrigation Association partnered with PLANET to host this year's Renewal & Remembrance and Legislative Day on the Hill.

## DOWN-Y BUT NOT OUT

Cornell experts offer tips for managing impatiens downy mildew in landscape settings.

This year, downy mildew has been widespread on landscape impatiens in Florida, the Mid-Atlantic and the Northeast. Cornell's Margery Daughtrey and Nora Catlin

offer the following tips for management:

» Scout plantings for symptoms (look for the diagnostic white sporulation on the undersurface of



leaves, pictured here) and remove—including roots—any infected plants immedi-

ately. Bag them and remove them from the site.

» Don't replant previously infected beds with susceptible varieties of impatiens. Replant with alternatives, such as New Guinea impatiens, begonias or coleus.

» Focus on prevention and consider integrated pest management.

# OFA, ANLA to create new association

The new group will be established by January 2014.

OFA – The Association of Horticulture Professionals and the American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) will begin the process of organizing a new association. Following several

months of working together in a joint venture, the working group, comprising leaders from both organizations, determined it was time to formally create a new trade association, which will



replace OFA and ANLA.

OFA and ANLA announced in January a joint venture to support business education and government relations activities. The vision statement adopted by OFA's board of directors expressed the desire to form a new organization if it brings more value to its members and the industry. Since June 2011, OFA's executive committee has been meeting with ANLA's leaders about the opportunity for and viability of a formal relationship between the two organizations. As early as the first meeting, the idea of forming a new organization has been discussed by the joint venture working group.


"We are listening to our members," said Mike McCabe, owner of McCabe's Greenhouse & Floral in Lawrenceburg, Ind. "Results of a membership and organizational study performed at the end of last year indicated that members of both associations want the organizations to work closer to unify the industry. They want their industry association to be all encompassing—one that touches and links all pieces of the horticulture industry, which can be offered by a new organization. After significant exploration and evaluation the elected leadership of OFA determined this is the best way to meet the needs of our members and the industry."

The timeline is to have a new organization established between July 2013 and January 2014.

"This is not a merger. This is taking the best of what both associations do to create a new organization that will advance the industry and better serve our members," said OFA CEO Michael Geary.

Following ANLA Executive Vice President Bob Dolibois' scheduled retirement at the end of the year, Geary will become the chief staff executive of both ANLA and OFA beginning on Jan. 1. The organizations will continue to be governed separately, but Geary will lead the daily operations of both associations.

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## Weed Man named a military-friendly franchise

The company was recognized for volunteerism and financial incentives offered to veterans.

As a result of the financial incentives offered to veterans who open a Weed Man franchise and the community initiatives the company implements to support military families, Weed Man was recently recognized as a 2012 Military Friendly Franchise by *G.I. Jobs* magazine.

"It is our goal to support our nation's heroes by providing them with a business opportunity that has a low overall investment, but enables them to be financially successful," said Jennifer Lemcke, COO of Turf Holdings and Weed Man USA. "Franchising is a great avenue for veterans to turn to, as it offers an established business model and

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a support system that will help them achieve long-term growth goals."

The honor ranks Weed Man in the top 10 percent of all franchises nationwide, and recognizes the company for demonstrating best practices in recruiting military members as franchisees. As part of the company's incentives for veterans, Weed Man offers a 25 percent discount off the franchise fee. The initiative is in support of the Veterans Transition Franchise Initiative (Vet-Fran), a voluntary effort of International

Franchise Association (IFA) member companies to provide franchise business opportunities to honorably discharged veterans transitioning to civilian life or seeking a career change.

Weed Man also has partnered with Project EverGreen's GreenCare for Troops program for the past six years. Weed Man franchise owners across the country provide free lawn care for military families. Currently, more than 15,000 families are registered with the GreenCare for Troops program.



## Ideal Landscape Group adopts propane mowers

St. Louis-based Ideal Landscape Group added 30 propane-powered mowers. It anticipates the switch to propane-powered mowers will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 50 percent compared to gasoline mowers.

The environmental benefits are a plus, but according to Tim Kircher, Ideal's maintenance division manager, there's a strong business case to be made.

"Making the switch to propane isn't just about emissions," Kircher says. "We're certainly proud of the part we're playing there, but there are additional benefits that are significant as well, including longer engine life for the mowers and reduced maintenance costs because the cleaner fuel deposits less carbon in the engine."

The most compelling reason to make the switch, Kircher says, is the savings. The price of oil continues to hover around \$90 a barrel, pushing the average cost of gasoline in St. Louis to approximately \$3.35 per gallon. The price for propane is significantly less.

"In addition to the savings we'll enjoy on the service side, we're also paying less than half for the fuel. In a business like ours, where the cost of fuel is one of your largest expenses, that's significant."

## SWINGLE ACQUIRES LAWN CARE FIRM

The move expands the company's reach in northern Colorado

Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care, Denver, acquired Saratoga Ventures, a lawn services company in Boulder-Longmont, Colo. Terms were not disclosed.

The acquisition will help Swingle provide increasingly improved and expansive service for residential and commercial lawn service clients in northern Colorado.

"Our team's focus will be on servicing our existing client base while fostering loyalty among new customers as we integrate them into the Swingle family," said Thomas Tolkacz, ceo of Swingle.



## TORO CELEBRATES 50 YEARS IN UNDERGROUND IRRIGATION



Fifty years ago, The Toro Co. got its start in the underground irrigation business with the purchase of Moist O'Matic, Riverside, Calif.

Moist O'Matic had made advancements in the use of plastics and new designs to make water-efficient sprinklers, valves and control systems. In

1962, Toro's fourth president, David Lilly, initiated the purchase of Moist O'Matic and hired irrigation contractor John Singleton to pioneer Toro's entry into golf irrigation. Today, Toro owns more than 225 irrigation patents. It has added to its irrigation capabilities over the years with multiple acquisitions.