

LAWN CARE MARKET REPORT > ADD-ON SALES ADD UP
TRENDS IN RESIDENTIAL DESIGN/BUILD

Landscape Management

The old COLLEGE TRY

There's a lot to be learned from student business owners who have found success.

WESLEY CHILES, 21, owner of Chiles Enterprises >>





CALLBACKS DAMAGE RELATIONSHIPS.

Callbacks are more than an inconvenience; they're costly and can destroy your business. Fifty percent* of customers who call to complain about dandelions will eventually end up canceling your service. Defendor™ specialty herbicide helps reduce callbacks by providing early season control of dandelions, clover and other winter annual and perennial weeds. For proven crabgrass and broadleaf weed control, apply Defendor when you make your first applications of Dimension® 2EW specialty herbicide. So spend time building relationships and keep the honeymoon with your customers alive. To learn more, visit www.DowProvesIt.com.



Dow AgroSciences

Solutions for the Growing World

*Jefferson Davis Consumer Research 2012. ®Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company ("Dow") or an affiliated company of Dow
State restrictions on the sale and use of Defendor and Dimension 2EW apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details.
Always read and follow label directions. T38-337-012 (01/13) BR 010-60828 DATOTURF2068

Scan this code for more information at www.DowProvesIt.com.



CONTENTS»

APRIL 2013
VOL. 52, ISSUE 4

DEPARTMENTS

8 News & Views

PLANET/Harris Interactive consumer survey results; Hear Me Out

14 Giving Back

Columbus State Community College students and alumni band together to help cancer patients. BY CASEY PAYTON

20 Weed Watch

Slender aster; English lawn daisy

22 Risk Management

Cut your insurance costs.

65 Market Watch

IRRIGATION IA's Chad Forcey offers an intro to lobbying

DESIGN/BUILD ASLA survey reveals residential trends

MAINTENANCE How frontline sales can boost business

LAWN/TREE CARE Regulatory changes could impact LCOs

72 Add-on Biz

One Wyoming landscape company profits from Japanese gardens.

BY CASEY PAYTON

74 LM Reports

Weed control products; annuals and perennials

80 1-Minute Mentor

We talk with George Gaumer, retired V.P., Davey Commercial Grounds Management.

BY MARISA PALMIERI



Landscape Management

OUR MISSION: *Landscape Management*—the leading information resource for lawn care, landscape maintenance, design/build and irrigation professionals—empowers Green Industry professionals to learn and grow from their peers and our exclusive business intelligence. Serving as the industry conscience, we not only report on but also help shape news, views, trends and solutions.



Wesley Chiles, Virginia Tech student and owner of Chiles Enterprises

COLUMNS

4 Editor's Note

BY MARISA PALMIERI

16 Best Practices

BY BRUCE WILSON

18 The Benchmark

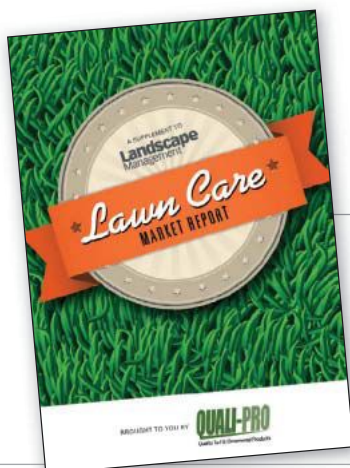
BY FRANK ROSS

IN EVERY ISSUE

79 Classifieds, Resources

ON THE COVER

Photo by Sam Doak



FEATURES

50 The old college try

There's a lot to be learned from student business owners who have found

SUCCESS. BY BETH GERACI

60 Humanize your business

How social media makes your firm more appealing to new customers.

BY JEFF KORHAN

70 Project Portfolio: Shopping in style

One contractor keeps an upscale shopping center looking radiant regardless of the weather.



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

S1 LAWN CARE MARKET REPORT
From pricing to trends, see what's happening in this important segment.

ONLINE NOW

BLOG

» LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET

FROM THE LM BLOG

» LandscapeManagement.blogspot.com

FD2B Talk Radio Insight of the Night

As part of a new partnership between *Landscape Management* and FD2B Talk Radio, we post a tip from the show each week. To listen to the show, tune in to FD2B Talk Radio at FromDesign2Build.com. Here are a few recent insights from the show's guests.

» When adversity does hit you, in business or in life, you need to remember that there's always a way to overcome it, there's always someone who's had the same experience and pushed through it and there are always people willing to help you, if you just ask.

—*Rich Arlington, Rich Arlington and Associates, Erie, Pa.*

» If you're providing original content online that solves

problems and is entertaining, then search engines like Google are going to quickly find you and significantly raise your rankings.

—*Jeff Korhan, True Nature, Naperville, Ill.*

» The easiest and best way to develop relationships with community and industry influencers is by getting involved. Volunteering for a worthwhile project is a great way to do something posi-

tive and get your name and your company's name out there. Not only will you get noticed, you'll get noticed by the right people. The decision makers. Participating and getting involved in landscape associations does the same thing.

—*Joe Salemi, DynaSCAPE, Ontario*



SEEN ON TWITTER

Follow us » @landscapemgmt

@FMcturf: What we're reading: converting social media marketing practices into everyday profits from @LandscapeMgmt. ow.ly/jqr8i

@LandscapeMgmt: Considering used equipment? Call the mfg'r before you buy. Check out this cautionary tale from @JasonCupp. <http://t.co/2xfmn3rj18>

@jasoncupp: @LandscapeMgmt thank you for the mention—this story horrifies me, so thanks for spreading the word

WEB EXTRAS

Visit LandscapeManagement.net

» Click on Web Extras

» Download the Green Industry chart of accounts, referenced in Bruce Wilson's Best Practices column (page 16).

» Read more from Jeff Korhan's new book, *Built-In Social: Essential Social Marketing Practices for Every Small Business*, due out this month.



ILLUSTRATIONS: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.



Looking for a great source of recurring revenue?



We've got an app for that!



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

Great margins and recurring revenues!

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

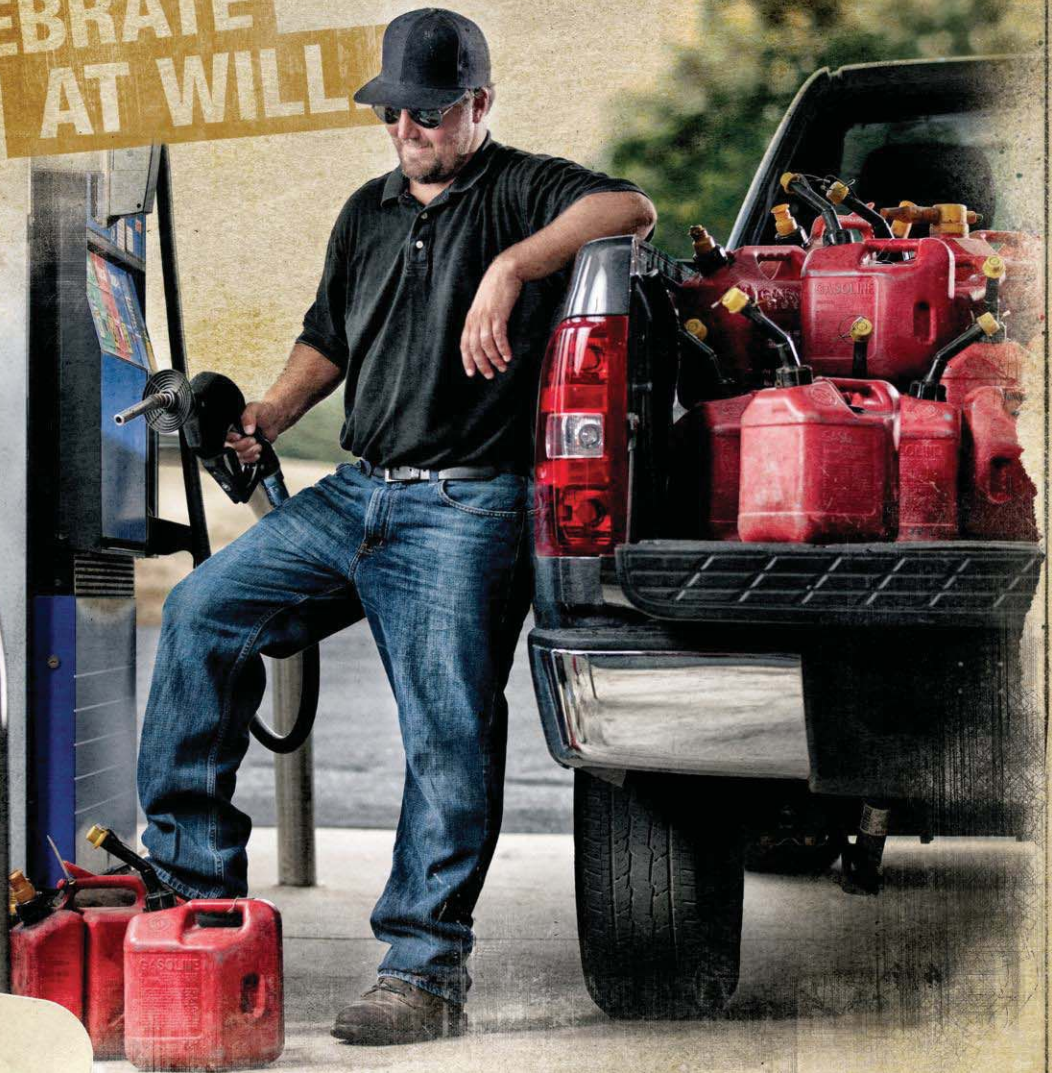


BECOME A MISTAWAY DEALER TODAY!



**SAVE UP TO \$600
A YEAR ON FUEL.***

**CELEBRATE
AT WILL**



*Compared to a comparable KOHLER carbureted engine under comparable loads and duty cycles. Based on 600 hours of annual operation at \$3.50/gallon.



Meet the **KOHLER COMMAND PRO® EFI ENGINE**. A penny-pinching fuel sipper that uses less gas than comparable KOHLER carbureted engines — saving you up to \$600 a year on fuel and fewer trips to the pump.* Every time gas prices spike, you save even more. See your savings at **KOHLERENGINES.COM/EFI**.

KOHLER.ENGINES

KOHLERENGINES.COM/EFI



EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI EDITOR

Contact Marisa at 216/706-3764 or via email at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net.

Art of simplicity

With a husband who's an Army sergeant, I've grown accustomed to military slang and acronym-speak. In our house we eat chow (food). We spell things in the phonetic alphabet (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie...). We inquire about ETAs (estimated times of arrival), we rack out (go to sleep) and things don't get misplaced—they're MIA (missing in action).

Turns out, many military terms have infiltrated the business world. Have you been to a conference or meeting where subject-matter experts (SMEs) will be presenting? Or have you been asked about the SOP (standard operating procedure) for completing a task? Or maybe you've taken on a project that's met a few SNAFUs? (Sorry, we can't print that one in a family magazine). There are likely more than you realize.

As we were putting together the editorial content for this issue of *Landscape Management*, one military-turned-business acronym kept coming to mind: KISS. That's right: good old, "Keep it simple, stupid," compliments of the Navy's Project KISS, dating back to 1960.

"KISS" is what many of the sources throughout this issue of *LM* seem to be telling us. As Senior Editor Beth Geraci points out in her column (page 12), a KISS mindset is what led Craig Ruppert, CEO and founder of Ruppert Landscape, Laytonsville, Md., down the entrepre-

neurial path. "I had a lawn mower and figured if I worked hard I could succeed," he told her for the cover story, starting on page 50.

Kelly Banfield, president and CEO of Banfield's Lawn Care & Landscaping, is in the midst of establishing his *second* successful Green Industry company. He grew and sold his first one in Youngstown, Ohio, over a few decades before moving to Florida to try his hand in the panhandle. He told me, for the Lawn Care Market Report, "To me, it seems pretty easy. If you say you're going to do something and follow through, I've never had a problem being in business. If you have a good product and stand behind it, wherever you're at, you'll be successful." (See page S8.)

Both men make running successful businesses sound like a breeze, and of course that's not the case. Hard work and follow-through aren't *easy*. Neither is any of the (very good) advice laid out in Bruce Wilson's column this month (page 16). But all of these concepts are *simple*.

Think about it: In business and in life, is there any advice more practical than KISS? Maybe the Navy had it right. Or maybe they knew when you complicate things, you run the risk of the situation becoming FUBAR. (Sorry, you'll have to Google it. Or, watch *Saving Private Ryan*.)

~ NOTABLE ~
This issue we say congratulations and farewell to Carrie Parkhill Wallace, who's made Landscape Management look consistent yet fresh for more than a decade. She'll be missed, and she's going to be an amazing mom.

Landscape Management

HEADQUARTERS

1360 EAST 9TH ST., SUITE 1070, CLEVELAND, OH 44114

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor Marisa Palmieri 216/706-3764 | mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net

Senior Editor Beth Geraci 216/706-3756 | bgeraci@northcoastmedia.net

Contributing Editors Heather & Jamie Gooch 330/723-3539 | hgooch@northcoastmedia.net, jgooch@northcoastmedia.net

Art Director Carrie Parkhill Wallace 216/706-3780 | cwallace@northcoastmedia.net

ADVERTISING STAFF

Vice President, Sales Patrick Roberts 216/706-3736
Fax: 216/706-3712 | proberts@northcoastmedia.net

North American Sales Manager Craig MacGregor 216/706-3787
Fax: 216/706-3712 | cmacgregor@northcoastmedia.net

Account Executive Classifieds Kelli Velasquez 216/706-3767
Fax: 216/706-3712 | kvelasquez@northcoastmedia.net

BUSINESS STAFF

Administrative Coordinator Petra Turko 216/706-3768 | pturko@northcoastmedia.net

Marketing Manager Ryan Bockmuller 216/706-3772
Fax: 216/706-3712 | rbockmuller@northcoastmedia.net

Marketing Specialist Michelle Mitchell 216/706-7922
Fax: 216/706-3712 | mmitchell@northcoastmedia.net

Manager, Production Services Debbie Parker 216/978-9622 | dparker@northcoastmedia.net

Senior Audience Development Manager Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins 216/706-3750 | asanchez-perkins@northcoastmedia.net

MARKETING/MAGAZINE SERVICES

Reprints & Permissions Nick Iademarko 877/652-5295 | niademarko@wrightsmedia.com

Circulation List Rental Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins 216/706-3750 | asanchez-perkins@northcoastmedia.net

Subscriber, Customer Service 847/763-4942
For current single copy, back issues, or CD-ROM



CORPORATE OFFICERS

President & CEO Kevin Stoltman 216/706-3740 | kstoltman@northcoastmedia.net

VP of Finance & Operations Steve Galperin 216/706-3705 | sgalperin@northcoastmedia.net

VP of Graphic Design & Production Pete Seltzer 216/706-3737 | pseltzer@northcoastmedia.net

Editorial Director Marty Whitford 216/706-3766 | mwhitford@northcoastmedia.net

We call it a Cat® Mini Excavator.

**THE COLEMANS CALL IT A WAY
TO MAKE THAT FISHING TRIP HAPPEN.**



Frank Sr., Frank Jr.,
and Greg Coleman
Visionscapes, Inc.
Cat Customer: 20 years



HELPING YOU MAKE A LIVING, SO YOU CAN CREATE THE LIFE YOU WANT.



Caterpillar helps businesses like the Colemans' succeed every day – by ensuring they have the right machine for the job, making parts available, giving them plenty of work tool options and providing expert service – so they can enjoy more time fishing together and less time thinking about work. With more jobs per machine and higher resale value, owning a Cat machine is your smartest investment. **LEASE A CAT MINI EXCAVATOR FOR AS LOW AS \$380 USD PER MONTH.***



Scan to hear the Colemans' story.
Visit CatResourceCenter.com/Coleman

*Offer good from February 1 to May 31, 2013 on select new models at participating Cat dealers. Offer is available to customers in the USA and Canada and cannot be combined with any other offers. Suggested retail 60-month lease payment does not necessarily reflect the exact model and configuration shown. Lease payment is based on a 10% down payment. The stated financing offer is through Cat Financial and does not include taxes, freight, set-up, delivery, additional options, or attachments. The Maintenance Credit applies to select models at participating Cat dealers. Financing and published rates are subject to credit approval through Cat Financial. All support for EPP included here provide 25% parts reimbursement and governmental rates may differ. Additional terms and conditions may apply. Subject to change without prior notice.

CAT, CATERPILLAR, their respective logos, "Caterpillar Yellow," the "Power Edge" trade dress, as well as corporate and product identity used herein, are trademarks of Caterpillar and may not be used without permission.

© 2013 Caterpillar. All Rights Reserved.

Low-maintenance,
single part looking for
long-term relationship.

Easily available, not
interested in downtime.



At John Deere, we offer what the others guys can't. Not only are we committed to fulfilling our customers' needs, we give incredibly easy access to all our parts. Through our Parts OnSite™ program, Next Day Parts Guarantee and special financing options, you get exactly what you need – low-maintenance, worry-free service, leaving you time to focus on your business. We realize this makes us easy...but isn't that what you want in a parts partner?

Let's start building that partnership today. Visit your John Deere dealer for details.



GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND

What consumers want

Green Industry marketing experts translate the results of PLANET/Harris Interactive's consumer survey.

IN DECEMBER, Harris Interactive conducted an online survey on behalf of the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) to discern homeowners' landscape priorities. The study was conducted among more than 2,800 U.S. adults. ■ To learn how some of the study's results can be used by landscape professionals to improve their messaging, we tapped three Green Industry marketing pros to give us their take. Here's how they broke it down.

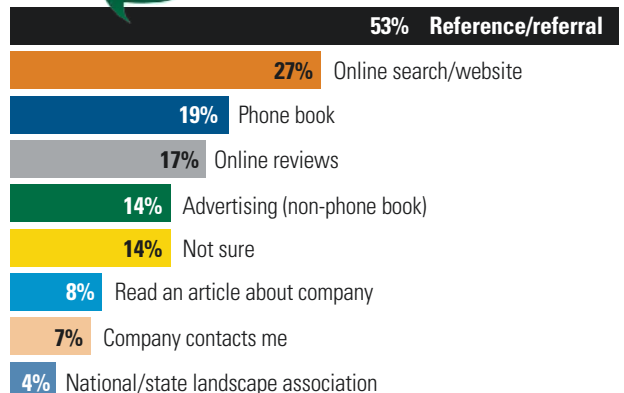
—MARISA PALMIERI

HOW THEY FIND YOU

Most common sources for finding a landscape company

(among U.S. adults who have a yard/landscape; respondents could select all that applied)

RESEARCH SAYS



continued on page 10

You might not hit your target on the first shot.



FREEHAND[™]
1.75G HERBICIDE



But you can target weeds and take them out the first time.

FREEHAND[®]
1.75G HERBICIDE

You always aim for optimal weed control. Now you can hit the bullseye with **FreeHand**[®] 1.75G herbicide. Using two highly effective active ingredients and two unique modes of action, **FreeHand 1.75G herbicide** enables you to control a wide range of grasses, broadleaf weeds, and sedges with one application. **FreeHand 1.75G herbicide** is perfect for all planting beds and warm-season turf and is an effective resistance management tool. Don't miss the mark and lose money on re-treats. Hit your target the first time with **FreeHand 1.75G herbicide**.

betterturf.basf.us

BASF
The Chemical Company

Always read and follow label directions.
FreeHand is a registered trademark of BASF. © 2013 BASF Corporation. All rights reserved.

CONTROLLING THE TOUGHEST WEEDS REQUIRES A POWERFUL PUNCH!

Particularly stubborn weeds – such as wild violet, ground ivy, black medic, clover and other species found in cool-season turfgrasses – call for tough weed control products. That is the constant challenge of herbicide producers, who are leveraging the latest field research and chemistry to develop formulations that pack a punch against these particularly hard-to-control weeds.

A formulation with active ingredients including sulfentrazone, a phenoxy and triclopyr creates a potent, fast-acting solution for tough weeds, says Jim Goodrich, product specialist for Kansas City, Mo.-based PBI-Gordon Corp. Sulfentrazone is a protox inhibitor, which works by preventing a key enzyme required for chlorophyll production, and it provides enhanced speed as well as yellow nutsedge suppression. Triclopyr provides an extra kick for controlling problem weeds such as wild violets.

One product that includes this formulation and provides a precision performance tool for turf managers is T-Zone™ Broadleaf Herbicide for Tough Weeds. Even hard-to-control weeds show visible injury within a few hours, and weed death can occur within 10-14 days.

The low-odor, oil-based formula opens up more application opportunities than most herbicides. Improved cool-weather activity allows for a wider span of applications in the growing season. And because T-Zone is rainfast in just three hours, weather interference is less of a concern.



As shown in this before and after treatment photo, wild violet was eliminated from the treated area after 14 days.

T-Zone™ is a trademark of PBI-Gordon Corp.
Always read and follow label directions. 2/13 02443

NEWS+VIEWS

continued from page 8



“ These survey results are consistent with others that suggest the two most trusted sources of information for making buying decisions are the web (online search and reviews equal 44 percent) and recommendations of friends (referrals at 53 percent).

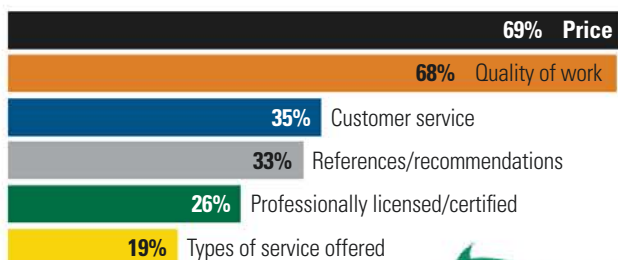
While the recommendations of trusted influencers will always be powerful, the truth is people make choices based upon a number of criteria. We have access to data and opinions like never before, and we use that information from signage, print media, traditional websites and now social media to make better decisions.

So, whether one first goes to a friend for a referral or starts by doing research online, the truth is people will use one to vali-

WHAT THEY THINK OF YOU

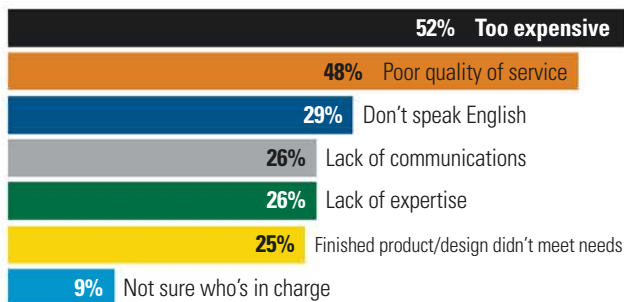
6 most important attributes for a landscape company

(among U.S. adults who have a yard/landscape; respondents could select up to three)



Top 7 frustrations with landscape company/professional

(among U.S. adults who have a yard/landscape and have dealt with a landscape company/professional; respondents could select up to three)



date the other. Therefore, if your business has a thin online presence, the likelihood of those personal referrals holding up is nearly cut in half, according to the data from this survey.

Professional landscape services are a significant investment, and consumers will seek businesses that measure up in multiple categories: trusted by friends, professional in their online appearance and, of course, active in their local communities, which is another measure of trust.

If the majority of consumers make their buying decisions based upon recommendations and online search, it stands to reason landscape professionals should focus on two things: Do good work to earn referrals and learn to use social media and other forms of online marketing to amplify that.”

JEFF KORHAN / *Author of Built-In Social: Essential Social Marketing Practices for Every Small Business* / JeffKorhan.com

EXPERT
SAYS

“ Research is one of the most valuable tools in business when designed, analyzed and leveraged correctly.

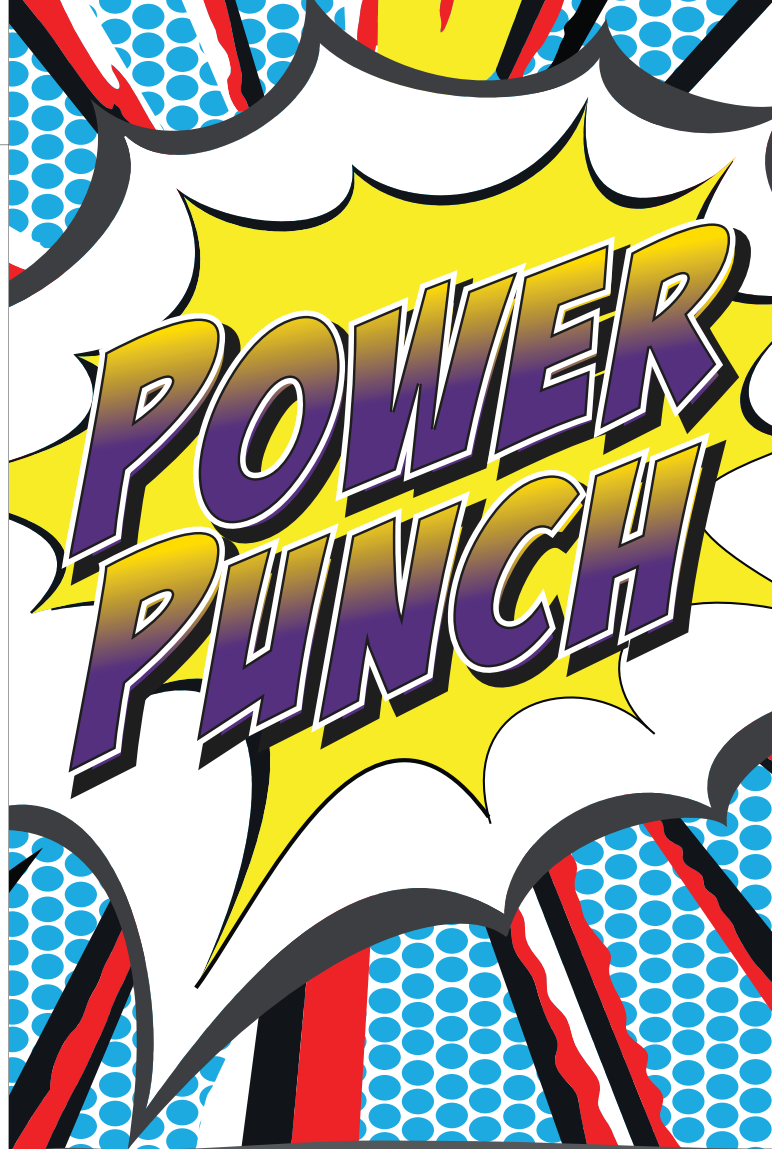
Looking at this research, you see that price and quality of work are rated No. 1 and No. 2 for both questions. Therefore, in order to be successful you’ll need to market and sell value and risk, not price, since value is defined as benefits divided by price.

What you want to communicate to customers is everything they’d lose by not buying from you (risk), and, conversely, everything they’ll gain by hiring you. You must clearly identify all of the benefits they’ll gain by using your products, services and team. Things that go a long way in communicating value and validating price include credentials, warranties and guarantees, sustainable practices and/or innovative payment plans. Sell opportunity not price.

Quality of work issues can be handled by the presence of a reputable list of references, strong warranties, a checklist of daily site activities performed, a map or personal tour of completed work and/or by providing product samples. All employees should be in uniforms with your company name clearly visible. Also consider having an English-speaking account manager with 24/7 accessibility, regularly scheduled walk-throughs and an easy-to-use feedback mechanism.

Don’t forget, these value and risk proof points need to be embedded into all of your communications—everywhere you connect with your customers and prospects.”

JUDY GUIDO / *Guido & Associates*
GuidoAssoc.com



T-ZONE™ PACKS A POWERFUL PUNCH!

- Fastest triclopyr combination product
- Proven cool-weather performance
- Effectively controls winter weeds including:
 - Henbit
 - Chickweed
 - Ground ivy
 - Violets
- Also controls traditional weeds including:
 - Dandelions
 - Clover
 - Spurge
 - Nutsedge (Suppression)

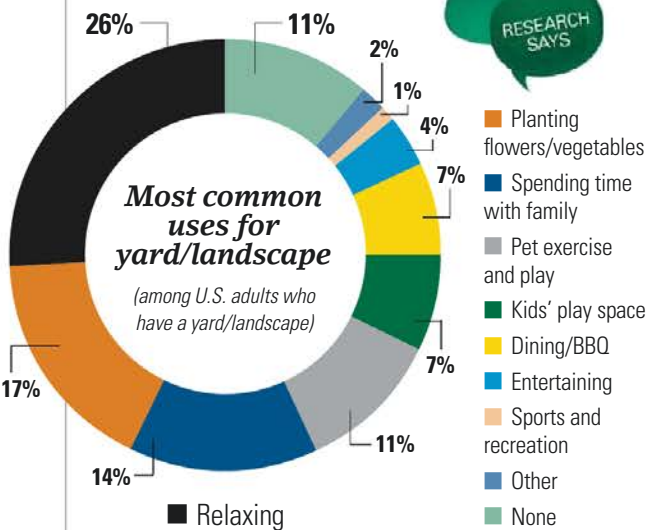
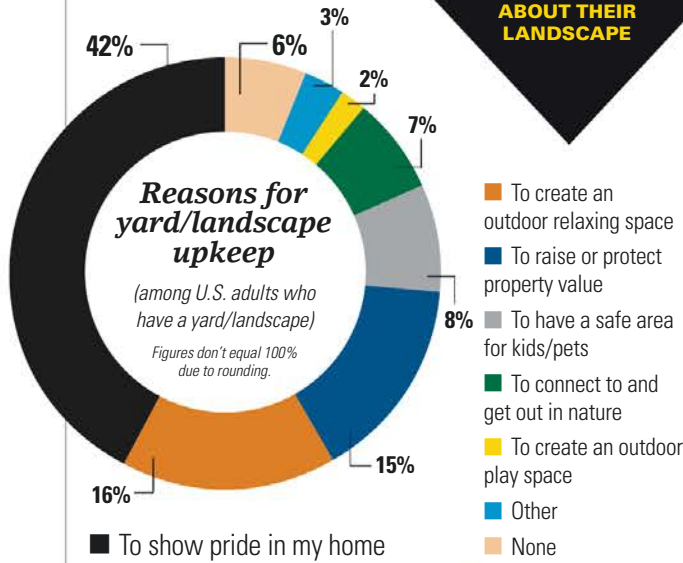


G pbi / GORDON
CORPORATION
An Employee-Owned Company

800.821.7925 • pbigordon.com/tzone

Checked Flag Label Design™, Gordon's and ProForm are registered trademarks of PBI-Gordon Corporation. T-Zone™ is a trademark of PBI-Gordon Corporation. Always read and follow label directions. 6/12 01944

WHAT THEY VALUE ABOUT THEIR LANDSCAPE



RESEARCH SAYS

EXPERT SAYS

“Looking at your communications, are you targeting these themes (homeowner pride, property values and relaxation) when you market? If not, it's time to make adjustments to your messaging. Think about your elevator speech and ensure your wording paints a clear picture of your work to a prospect. For example, 'The gardens my team and I create complement our clients' beautiful homes, enriching their lifestyles and giving them more time to relax with family and friends.'”

In reviewing images for future materials, which ones speak to pride, relaxation and property values while mirroring your sales messaging? Clients often don't know what they want, but they do know what they don't want. Plan your marketing well and help them make educated decisions.”

LARA MOFFAT, ASLA / LM Creative Consulting
LMCreativeConsulting.com

The power of youth

Every Thursday at 1 p.m. Professor McCafferty sat in her office, gazing out the window. She wasn't daydreaming. She was waiting for me. But I'd just pulled an all-nighter at the college newspaper.

While Professor McCafferty was waiting for me in her office, I was halfway across campus, oversleeping my independent study in fiction writing.



Hear Me Out

BETH GERACI
Senior Editor

Today, I'm feeling much more inspired. Not because I'm especially energized. Or because I woke to the sun streaming through my window. But because I've spent a good deal of time interviewing sources for this month's cover story.

They're all landscape business owners who launched their companies while full-time students. They're all much more disciplined than the stereotypical college student—and

they're all quite inspirational.

"I had a lawn mower and figured if I worked hard I could succeed," reasons Craig Ruppert, CEO and founder of Ruppert Landscape, Laytonsville, Md., who launched his business as a high school student.

In interviewing such former and current student business owners, I was struck by their wisdom, their foresight and above all, their determination. They attended class during the day, worked until dark and studied at night. They took the train home from college to work weekends. And they sacrificed much of their social lives for the sake of financial independence.

What stands out most about these men is the value they place on a college degree. They recognized that a degree would empower them. They took what they learned in class and used it to strengthen their businesses. They also kept in touch with their professors, relying on them later to expand their networks.

When I was in college, I didn't work during the school year. I suppose it would have been nice to have had additional spending money, but the thought of getting a job—much less running a business—didn't even cross my mind. It was hard enough writing my senior thesis, surviving chemistry and rising for an 8 a.m. gym class.

By waiting for me to arrive every week, Professor McCafferty taught me as much about patience as she did about fiction writing. The people in this month's cover story, however, taught me much more than that.

For a valuable lesson from them on how to run a business well, see "The old college try" on page 50.

Reach Geraci at bgeraci@northcoastmedia.net.

DEDICATION IS NOT SEASONAL.

When you put your name on a job, your reputation is on the line. That's when you need a commercial vehicle as dedicated to reliable performance as you are. With legendary durability and Best-In-Class payload capacity and side step-in height,* Freightliner Sprinter is ready to be the partner you can count on to help you get the job done, every day. freightlinersprinterusa.com



SPRINTER

DRIVEN LIKE YOU.

©2013 Daimler Vans USA, LLC. *Based on a comparison of the Automotive News classification of full-size commercial vans.

FREIGHTLINER

Students and survivors

Columbus State Community College students and alumni band together to help cancer patients.

BY CASEY PAYTON

Elaine Euwer knows how difficult it can be to give up favorite hobbies like gardening because of cancer treatments. She's lived it. As a breast cancer survivor, Euwer was hit hard by her cancer diagnosis. She not only had to give up her landscaping business, she also had to put her passion for gardening aside.

With the many medical restrictions cancer patients face during treatment, gardening can simply be too strenuous for them. But Euwer's journey gave her the idea to found an organization that could help restore cancer patients' landscapes while benefitting students in the field.

She founded Helping

Hands in the Garden, which provides support to patients receiving treatment for breast cancer in central Ohio by assisting them with the care and maintenance of their landscapes. Euwer is a graduate of the Columbus (Ohio) State Community College (CSCC) landscape program and has close ties with many students and alumni. In fact, the structure of Helping Hands in the Garden has been set up through the student-run Columbus State Landscape Association and its alumni affiliate.

With more than 25 volunteers, the organization has assisted 58 families with their gardens since 2009, completing general cleanups, installing a vegetable garden, adding seasonal color to a front yard and much more. The jobs are determined based on clients' needs.

Helping Hands in the Garden leaves brochures in local oncology clinics and doctor's offices throughout the Columbus area, so patients can apply to receive volunteer services.

Over the last three years,



Helping Hands in the Garden volunteers have provided landscape services to more than 58 families since 2009.

as well as the chance to network with industry professionals who are also volunteering."

In addition to student volunteers, Euwer says her organization gets a lot of cancer survivors who want to help. The projects are handled like any landscape job, she says. There's a walk-through of the site, followed by a meeting to discuss plans.

Euwer says being able to help other cancer patients has been gratifying. She adds that she has seen just how therapeutic gardening is.

"This has been a wonderful experience," Euwer says. "We feel we're making a difference in these cancer patients' lives, and it's also been a great way for students to learn." LM

several ongoing programs have been established to further the organization's mission. While the mission centers on garden cleanup and maintenance for cancer patients, several support programs and fundraisers have been established. For instance, the Janet Alexander Memorial Golf Tournament raised \$20,000 toward the work of Helping Hands in the Garden.

"I consider this a win/win/win," says Richard Ansley, landscape architecture professor at CSCC, who is closely involved with the program. "It benefits the students, who get real-life experience with hands-on work,

AT A GLANCE

Student Chapter: Columbus State Community College

Location: Columbus, Ohio

Advisor: Richard Ansley, professor

SELECT PROJECT LISTING:

▶ **Helping Hands in the Garden**—Founded by CSCC alumna and breast cancer survivor Elaine Euwer, this nonprofit affiliate of the student group has helped 58 families maintain and clean up their gardens since 2009.

Landscape Management is the media sponsor of the Professional Landscape Network's (PLANET) Community Stewardship Award. We'll feature each of the program's winners January through June. For more information or to read about the other winners, visit landscarenetwork.org/awards/communityaward or landscapemanagement.net/givingback.



Fill your spreader with me and I'll go to work for you, up to 180 days in a single application.

So you save fuel.
And labor.
And time.



I'll free up your crew to weed, prune, aerate—whatever needs to be done.

Now there's
A BETTER WAY TO FERTILIZE,
and I humbly say, it starts with me—
and these fine distributors.

Contact yours today.

SPREAD IT & FORGET IT™
for greener turf all season long

Find out more. Visit www.spreaditandforgetit.com

See what *Spread it & Forget it™* can mean to your business.

CONSULT WITH YOUR DISTRIBUTOR TODAY.





Fill your spreader with me and I'll go to work for you, up to 180 days in a single application.

So you save fuel.
And labor.
And time.



I'll free up your crew to weed, prune, aerate—whatever needs to be done.

Now there's
A BETTER WAY TO FERTILIZE,
and I humbly say, it starts with me—
and these fine distributors.

Contact yours today.

SPREAD IT & FORGET IT™
for greener turf all season long

Find out more. Visit www.spreaditandforgetit.com

See what *Spread it & Forget it™* can mean to your business.

CONSULT WITH YOUR DISTRIBUTOR TODAY.





Fill your spreader with me and I'll go to work for you, up to 180 days in a single application.

So you save fuel.
And labor.
And time.



I'll free up your crew to weed, prune, aerate—whatever needs to be done.

Now there's
A BETTER WAY TO FERTILIZE,
and I humbly say, it starts with me—
and these fine distributors.

Contact yours today.

SPREAD IT & FORGET IT™
for greener turf all season long

Find out more. Visit www.spreaditandforgetit.com

See what *Spread it & Forget it™* can mean to your business.

CONSULT WITH YOUR DISTRIBUTOR TODAY.

DIRECT SOLUTIONS™
Committed to Growth™

Fisher & Son
COMPANY, INC.

genesis
WE GOT IT GROWIN' ON

Valley Green
Incorporated



Fill your spreader with me and I'll go to work for you, up to 180 days in a single application.

So you save fuel.
And labor.
And time.



I'll free up your crew to weed, prune, aerate—whatever needs to be done.

Now there's
A BETTER WAY TO FERTILIZE,
and I humbly say, it starts with me—
and these fine distributors.

Contact yours today.

SPREAD IT & FORGET IT™
for greener turf all season long

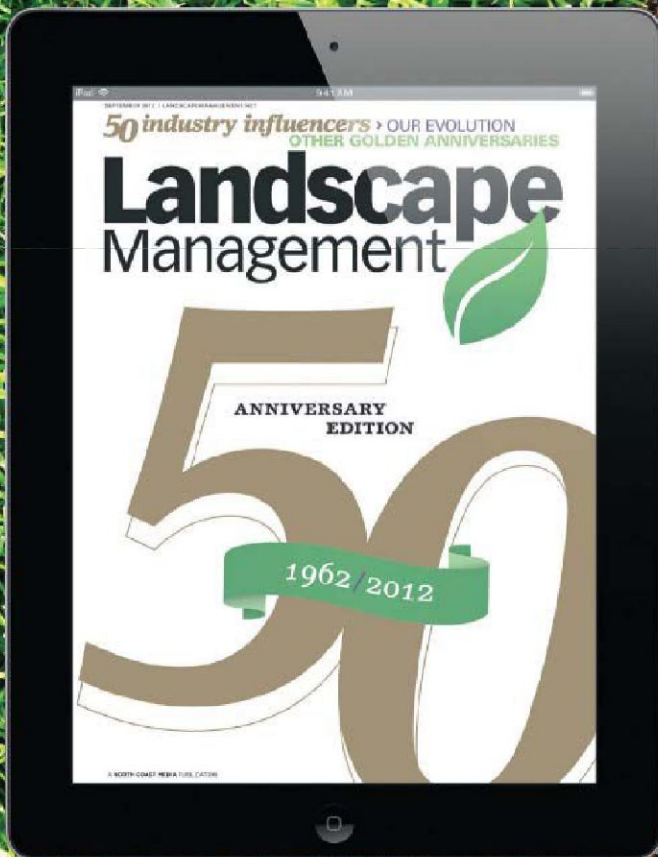
Find out more. Visit www.spreaditandforgetit.com

See what *Spread it & Forget it™* can mean to your business.

CONSULT WITH YOUR DISTRIBUTOR TODAY.



THE Landscape Management APP FOR iPad®



**NOW
AVAILABLE!**

FREE

**DOWNLOAD
IT TODAY!**



Search **Landscape Management HD** on the **App Store**™

Link: <http://itunes.com/apps/LandscapeManagementHD>

For more information, visit **LandscapeManagement.net**





BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

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

Just getting started?

Whether you're starting up or starting over, becoming a landscape entrepreneur can be a rewarding enterprise. The industry has a low cost of entry, and a business is often inexpensive to start and operate.

Classic examples of successful landscape businesses beginning in a garage or an apartment abound. Some have evolved from the owner's part-time landscape or grounds work during high school or college. Others spring naturally from a passion for gardening or landscape design.

Like any business, the secret to developing a successful landscape operation is simple: Never jump into it without any thought or planning.

Here are 10 practical insights to help you get your landscape business off to a smooth start and keep it strong for the long haul:

1 Start with a business plan. A business plan will help you determine the legal structure of your business, establish the framework for key financial decisions and identify the licensing and permits necessary to run your company. The planning process is essential to define your direction, give thought to your customer profile and your market mix, frame your value proposition and establish goals and a corresponding timeline for growth.

2 Create a budget. Manage your cash flow and understand the actual capital you'll need to support your business and equipment purchases, and develop and maintain a chart of accounts similar to the chart of accounts template used by the Green Industry. This will let you track costs and margins by business type and benchmark yourself against the industry.

3 Get your day-to-day operating and technology systems in place. Your company won't have the infrastructure to support growth without great systems and processes.

4 Join your state contractors association and the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). Professional trade associations are well

worth the investment for business assistance and training, networking, certification opportunities and continuing education. They also offer valuable advice and practical information about pricing.

5 Market your company. Become savvy in public relations and the use of social media for marketing on a tight budget. Having a communications strategy is a must to own your message and keep it strong. If you're new to the market, getting the word out is essential.

6 Grow organically. There's a temptation to bid low to build up volume. It's OK to do a little of this, but too much will hurt your margins. It's much better to grow organically, price competitively, stand up for your personalized service and "wow" your customers. It's possible to do small acquisitions and buy business, but costs to do so are high.

7 Leverage your skills and the capabilities of others. If you are a great operations guy, find a sales partner. If you are an energetic business developer, balance your entrepreneurial style with a strong administrator. Match up early with someone you trust who will challenge your thinking and then capitalize on your capabilities together.

8 Understand your core competency and don't work outside your expertise. If your company or team doesn't have the ability to perform specific technical work, consider a great subcontractor to partner with.

9 Remember you're in the service business. Your reputation depends on the quality of your work as much as on how you deliver it. Be professional at all times. Invest in a good website, return calls and be a proactive solutions provider. You're in business to make someone else's home or business look and be better.

10 Commit to continuous learning. Not only will continuous learning and improvements have a positive impact on the professional growth of your company by driving revenue and profits, it will play a vital role in establishing a more empowered workforce over time as your company grows.

» WEB EXTRA

To download a sample Green Industry chart of accounts, visit LandscapeManagement.net and click on Web Extras.

AMERICA'S NEWEST POWER FAMILY.



PowerNow™ 40V MAX
Lithium Ion Battery*

INTRODUCING THE OREGON® 40V MAX* CORDLESS TOOL SYSTEM.

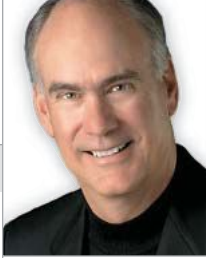
Increasing pressure to regulate emissions and noise can be bad for your business. But with OREGON®'s new PowerNow™ 40V MAX* Lithium Ion battery system, you can have all the runtime and performance you need, without the hassles of gas. It's the perfect way to position your business for the future. Because when you cut all the noise, emissions and runaway fuel expense, all that's left is green.



**ALWAYS
READY.**

Learn about the 40V MAX* Cordless Tool System and find where to buy at OregonPowerFamily.com.

*Fully charged battery voltage measured without a workload is 40 volts. Nominal voltage is 37.



THE BENCHMARK

FRANK ROSS

The author is owner-manager of 3PG Consulting. Reach him at frank@3PGConsulting.com.

Growing net profit

Last month, my good friend and partner Kevin Kehoe wrote about the trends in revenue growth from 2011 to 2012. (See goo.gl/IKoWM for the column.) He referenced a random sampling of 30 companies from the collective client base of 3PG Consulting. This month we'll look at those same firms, honing in on my favorite line item on the income statement—net profit.

Table 1 shows the result of the benchmark analysis. The average revenue growth rate from 2011 to 2012 was 8 percent, while the growth in net profit over the same period was a whopping 27.6 percent. Wow. Let's see if we can surmise why.

Table 2 breaks out the growth in net profit by revenue size and shows that no matter the size of company in the sampling, every volume group grew, and grew substantially, in net profit from 2011 to 2012. Just what can we make of these statistics?

1 My personal interpretation begins with a **psychological opinion**. We all have experienced the economic downturn for about four years. I believe we have collectively come to the conclusion that the only way things are going to get better is if we accept the realities, understand that no one is coming to our rescue (but us) and focus on making

improvements to not only survive in these markets, but thrive in them.

2 Speaking on behalf of those companies for which we have an intimate knowledge, every one has a strong **information system**. No matter the size, all have an effective customer relationship management (CRM) system; all have a detailed estimating system and employ a pricing method that tells them when to walk away from lousy jobs; all have job controls, the information from which cycles daily or weekly; all produce a departmental income statement monthly; and all use a budgeting process that's updated monthly and constantly informs the management team of rough waters ahead so course corrections may be made promptly.

3 **Tough decisions** are now common. We've seen many examples of management constantly evaluating the value of past decisions and measuring their benefits for the company. For example, if a market you serve doesn't add value to the momentum and direction of the company, make the tough call and refocus attention to the markets that do. If a profit center isn't making money, and if its problems cannot be corrected quickly, jettisoning it should not be out of the question. If people in critical positions aren't producing results, analyze why. If a turnaround cannot be realized quickly, a career change may be in the offing. In the past, we may have hung on.

Gratuitous spending is all but eliminated. Compensation and benefit structures are being retooled. All of these are examples of the tough decisions we've seen companies make to improve profits.

4 More than ever, we're seeing companies **benchmark** themselves against other strong organizations. The use of qualified industry consultants has exploded. Peer group interest is on the rise. The drive is to compare oneself against the best, analyze the differences and strive to become the best.

It's been fascinating to watch the industry transform over the last four years, and there's every reason to believe the next four will smoke that experience.

TABLE 1: NET PROFIT GROWTH OVERALL

	2011	2012	Average growth	Highest growth	Lowest growth
Revenue	230,565,723	249,090,541	8%	32.4%	-17.3%
Net profit	12,750,284	16,265,577	27.6%	800.5%	-243.9%

TABLE 2: NET PROFIT GROWTH BY REVENUE SIZE

Under \$3 million	\$3 million - \$5 million	\$5 million - \$10 million	\$10 million-plus
26.9%	32.4%	38.5%	19.6%

**MSMA
ALTERNATIVE**



Knock out multiple weeds in a single round.

Only Solitare® takes on crabgrass, sedges and broadleaf weeds with no tank mixing required.

When multiple weeds gang up on you, there's just one solution you need in your corner: Solitare® herbicide. A powerful MSMA alternative, Solitare is the only all-in-one postemergence treatment designed to help you control crabgrass, sedges and tough broadleaf weeds all in a single, fast-acting application.

Dual-action Solitare controls or suppresses over 60 weeds without the hassle and cost of tank mixing. Underground, Solitare fights seeds and tubers to reduce weed populations this season and next. For more information, contact your FMC Market Specialist or local FMC Distributor.



Scan this code to learn more about MSMA herbicide alternatives from FMC.

FMC

@FMCturf

FMC Turf

fmcprosolutions.com

Solitare®
HERBICIDE

Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
solution
Gallery® specialty
herbicide



SLENDER ASTER

Eurybia compacta

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

▶ This herbaceous annual weed is commonly found in the southeastern U.S. along the coastal plains in dry, sandy soils.

▶ It's a small, erect plant with several stems and a thick, woody base. Left untreated, slender aster can grow 1 to 3 ft. tall.

▶ Thick, veined leaves alternate along the stems.

▶ Pale violet to reddish-purple ray florets with pale yellow centers emerge from mid-summer to early fall.

▶ This spring/summer weed grows in warmer

temperatures and easily camouflages itself in lawns and fields, hiding under taller, more aggressive grasses.

CONTROL TIPS

▶ Its flowers produce tiny seeds, dispersed by wind and water throughout the grass, so it's essential to control this weed before it flowers and goes to seed.

▶ Apply a preemergent herbicide containing isoxaben or a combination product of isoxaben and trifluralin in early spring, before soil temperatures are warm enough to initiate germination.

Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
solution
Sapphire® specialty
herbicide*



ENGLISH LAWN DAISY

Bellis perennis

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

▶ This fibrous rooted perennial has a prostrate, spreading growth habit. Because it spreads through a rapidly advancing rhizome system, it has the potential to root and produce new plants at each node along individual rhizomes.

▶ Its basal leaves are nearly smooth, loosely hairy and margined or variably toothed. They are broad at the top and narrow at the base.

▶ Flower heads consist of tiny white or pink petals

surrounding a yellow center; the flower stalks generally exceed the leaves in length.

▶ In California, seedlings germinate from April through September.

CONTROL TIPS

▶ Postemergent applications of products containing penoxsulam should be applied in late summer to early fall.

▶ To optimize control of English lawn daisy, make two to three sequential applications 28 days apart.

* State restrictions on the sale and use of Sapphire apply.

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

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



Dow AgroSciences



GENERIC HERBICIDES ARE FINE IF YOU RUN A GENERIC BUSINESS.

Dimension® specialty herbicide isn't the No. 1 brand in the lawn and landscape markets just because it offers outstanding preemergence and early postemergence for crabgrass control.¹ Or because it also controls more than 45 other grassy and broadleaf weeds. It's No. 1 because it's a proven product from a proven company. Unlike generic manufacturers, Dow AgroSciences provides innovative products, expertise and field support that helps retain and grow business. It's what sets Dimension apart from the competition. And when you use it, it can do the same for you. **To learn more, visit www.DowProvesIt.com.**



Dow AgroSciences

Solutions for the Growing World

¹2010 Specialty Product Consultants. ®Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company ("Dow") or an affiliated company of Dow. State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension specialty herbicide products apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions. T38-813-005 (12/12) BR 010-60787 DATOTURF1074

YOUR INSURANCE RESOURCE

Cut your costs

INSURANCE COSTS ARE INCREASING—
HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO KEEP THEM DOWN
IN FOUR VITAL CATEGORIES.

WITH INSURANCE COSTS poised to rise, now is the time to keep your costs down as much as possible. John Hodapp, CPCU, senior vice president of Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits, shares some ways landscape contractors may be able to lower costs on four main types of insurance.

1 Workers' compensation—

It's likely that workers' compensation is a large percentage of a landscape firm's overhead. There are some things companies can do to keep the number of claims at a minimum. The key is a safety culture, Hodapp says.

He recommends "tailgate safety meetings," which are short meetings, often held right before crews go out in the field. "The topic can be closely tied to whatever they're doing on the job site that day so the information is fresh in their minds," Hodapp says. "For instance, you can talk about team lifting for heavy objects or lifting with the legs when you're lifting on your own."

Companies also should pay attention to credits that may be available for drug-free policies. Larger companies should form a safety committee, typi-

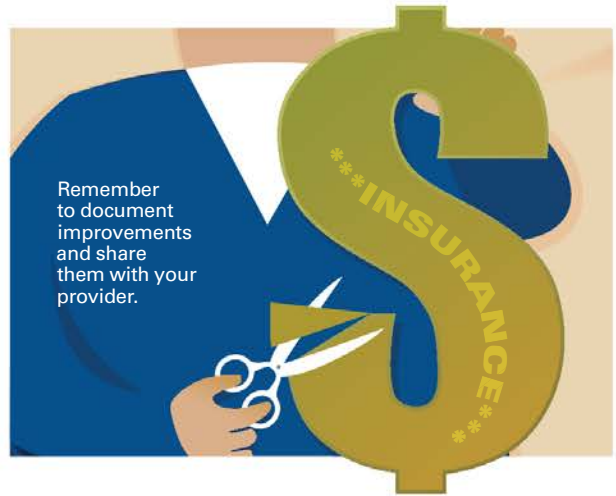
cally made up of four to six members and consisting of both management and non-management employees. A safety committee is responsible for reviewing accidents and near-misses and recommending corrective procedures.

If a claim needs to be filed, Hodapp says it's best to be proactive and handle it right away as opposed to letting the situation drag on. "It's always best to show empathy and let the employee know the situation is being cared for," he says. "You're not taking blame, you're just taking action. When employees do return, a 'return to work' program should already be in place."

2 Auto insurance—

The effort to keep auto costs down starts well before employees are even driving your vehicles. "The best predictor of future driving is previous experience," says Hodapp. "Employees should not have DUIs or have been cited for careless or reckless driving. One or two minor violations in the last three years might be OK, but if it's anything beyond that, you might want to assume that driver might be more likely to be involved in future accidents."

Business owners also should ask their insurance



companies about a credit for vehicles not being utilized in the winter, Hodapp says. Also consider asking the insurance company to put on a defensive driving course for all employees. Distracted drivers are too often the cause of serious accidents. Cell phone use should be limited to minimal use of hands-free devices in uncongested areas. Texting while driving should be prohibited.

Finally, operators must make sure every load is properly secured. Large insurance claims often result when unsecured cargo spews from trucks.

3 Property insurance—

With equipment, the mantra is "reduce loss, reduce cost," says Hodapp. "Avoid leaving equipment on job sites overnight and if you can't, at least fence it in. Also focus on anything that will make the equipment less desirable to steal. That includes making your equipment look like it belongs to your company with painting, logos and making sure the company's unit number is emblazoned on the equipment, installing interlocks, and putting the VIN number in more than

the one place the manufacturer put it."

4 General liability—

With general liability insurance, focus on managing claims costs. "This includes transferring risk to responsible third parties," Hodapp says. For example, make sure subcontractors have proper insurance.

Though it may be tempting, one thing business owners shouldn't do is lower liability insurance to try to save a few bucks. "You're betting the farm," Hodapp says. "In even the most safety-conscious companies, accidents still happen."

Companies should document changes and bring them to the attention of their insurer. Improvements won't save money if the provider doesn't know about them. "Make your insurance company understand why you deserve a better price," says Hodapp. "If I'm the underwriter and one company has a written safety program, a safety committee and a good plan to prevent theft and another company doesn't, it's obvious which one will get a better price."



Does your insurance company
think a “grub problem” means
mystery meat monday?

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

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


hortica[®]
INSURANCE & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
To guide and provide

Does Your Sprayer Have?

- 75' Cox Hose Reel
- 4.0 GPM Liquid Pump
- Low Drift Air Injected Spray Nozzles
- 16HP Engine
- Electric Start
- 3-25' Variable Spread Width
- Speedometer
- Pressure Gauge
- All Stainless Steel Chassis
- Up to 75 Gallon Capacity*
- Up to 300lbs Fertilizer Capacity
- Up to 2 gallon per 1000 sq. feet liquid spray*
- Zero Turn Maneuverability
- Foam Marker*
- Locking Caster System
- By-Pass Agitation (wetttable powders permissible)

OURS DOES.

*with optional accessories



L.T. RICH PRODUCTS, INC.
www.zspray.com
(877) 482-2040

A SUPPLEMENT TO
Landscape
Management

★ *Lawn Care* ★
MARKET REPORT

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

QUALI-PRO

Quality Turf & Ornamental Products

THE NEW GENERATION BASIC.

ADDING VALUE AND VERSATILITY WITH THE BROADEST
PORTFOLIO OF ACTIVES IN THE INDUSTRY

Fungicides

Contact & Systemic



Herbicides

Pre and Post-Emergent



PGR's



Insecticides

Liquid and Granules



Find out more about these and our 45 other products at quali-pro.com

QUALI-PRO

> Basically Better.

THIS IS QUALI-PRO: Getting Basically Better™ every day

QUALI-PRO SHARES HOW IT'S WORKING CONSTANTLY TO OFFER BETTER OPTIONS



AND INNOVATIONS FOR LAWN CARE CUSTOMERS, AND IT MAY EVEN "BUST SOME MYTHS" ALONG THE WAY...

◀ BY RICK GRANT

WHO WE ARE

The Quali-Pro brand is part of Control Solutions Inc. (CSI), a specialty chemical company based in Pasadena, Texas. CSI's parent company, Makteshim Agan (MAI), a global ag-chem manufacturer, acquired Quali-Pro with Farmsaver in 2004 and rolled it under the CSI umbrella in 2011 to help it thrive in the ever-changing and competitive marketplace. This move gave Quali-Pro renewed support in the areas of management, structure, product development, regulatory and marketing. The combined businesses now make up the largest non-crop company within the global MAI. We now employ and access the most talented and knowledgeable formulation chemists, production engineers and sales and marketing people to help our customers be successful.

INNOVATIVE FORMULATIONS

We at Quali-Pro have access to more active ingredients globally than any other company. This unique situation gives us the ability to improve upon the current products in the marketplace and deliver products that are unlike anything lawn care operators (LCOs) can get from other companies. We are a new generation basic! We're proud of our formulations and we're willing to compare them to the original products that exist today. In fact, many of our most popular products and formulations already have been put in side-by-side testing at the major universities and they perform very well compared to the "basic registrants." In many instances our products bring additional value through minor differences that improve mixing, handling or performance.

WELCOME TO PASADENA, TEXAS!

Many of our products are manufactured at the CSI headquarters in Pasadena, Texas, near Houston. Our manufacturing and formulation facility is state of the art, extremely clean and very well run. Spending most of my career in the specialty chemical business, I've been in

many manufacturing facilities and was completely impressed when I toured the CSI plant for the first time.

LCOs want their technicians to present themselves in a professional manner because their look and demeanor reflects on the company. That works the same way for our company. Most of our customers will never see the inside of our manufacturing plant, but how we maintain the facility and the processes we use to create our products reflect CSI's quality.

BRIGHT FUTURE

We've launched five new products in 2013, including Negate and Enclave. Both products are a direct result of our superior market understanding and formulation know-how. CSI currently has more than 100 projects on the five-year developmental schedule with 20 exclusively for Quali-Pro.

One of the most exciting things we're going to be doing in 2013 is something no other post-patent manufacturer has done. CSI will be launching patented, proprietary products for the turf, nursery, ornamental and pest management markets. Other manufacturers are becoming more generic in their offering and at Quali-Pro we're becoming more basic in our offerings.

BASICALLY BETTER™ SUPPORT

Quali-Pro provides full technical and sales teams to support our current and future customers. In addition to retaining seasoned veterans like Jerry Corbett, the Quali-Pro technical service manager, CSI also added a vice president of business development in 2012: Rami Soufi, Ph.D., MBA. We have a desire to fully support the industries and businesses we participate in. Expanding the support we provide to our customers and building a new product development team is how we plan to continue to bring innovation and value to our industry.

There's no compromise when you choose Quali-Pro products, whether it's the current product line or the soon-to-be proprietary products. You're continuing to get quality products at a great value, which makes our value proposition to the customer "basically better."



Quali-Pro is part of CSI, which is headquartered in Pasadena, Texas.



Lawn Care

MARKET REPORT

LAWN CARE—the segment of the Green Industry in which professionals apply fertilizer, pesticides and/or use cultural methods to improve and maintain turf—remains one of the most profitable yet competitive parts of the market. There are many regional players competing with a few large, national companies and franchises—in addition to the full-service or landscape maintenance companies that do application work for their clients.

Because lawn care is its own animal within the landscape industry and among our readers, we investigated the state of the lawn care market, how its operators are faring and what's on the horizon with a mix of interviews and an exclusive survey. These are the results.

Survey methodology

To gather insights for the 2013 Lawn Care Market Report, *Landscape Management* surveyed readers online in February, resulting in 773 responses. The charts and statistics published throughout this report come from that survey, unless otherwise noted. Based on the sample size and response rate, a 95 percent confidence level is assumed with a +/- 5 percent margin of error. Not all respondents answered every question; we denote the response number with each chart (i.e., $N=619$).

CONTENTS

- S5** **BLUE SKIES AHEAD**
Lawn care operators are poised for a strong 2013.
- S10** **SHARE OF WALLET**
Lawn care companies consider a variety of new services when looking to grow.
- S13** **ORGANICS: A BALANCING ACT**
Some lawn care pros see a rise in demand for “natural” turf service offerings.
- S16** **EXPENSE TRACKING**
Lawn care operators report concern but stability for 2013.
- S18** **IS THE PRICE RIGHT?**
Lawn care companies carefully consider charging more.
- S20** **BOUND BY RESTRICTIONS**
The industry addresses fertilizer and pesticide regulations at the local, state and national levels.



BLUE SKIES AHEAD

*Lawn care operators
are positioned for
a strong 2013.*

BY MARISA PALMIERI

BUSINESSES OPERATING ON the lawn care side of the Green Industry are feeling positive about the year ahead.

Nearly 90 percent of respondents to *Landscape Management's* Lawn Care Market Report survey say they are "very optimistic" or "somewhat optimistic" about their 2013 business outlook.

Companies say despite some less-than-stable conditions on the economic and political fronts, they're positioned to grow this year. Only 8 percent expect a decrease in revenue for 2013 over 2012.

Seventy-one percent expect an increase, and 21 percent foresee no change.

“The market is coming around a bit,” says Andrew Ziehler, president of Ziehler Lawn and Tree Care in Centerville, Ohio. His firm grew 40 percent last year and is expecting another 40 percent bump this year. “I think it’s going to be a good year. People are tired of doing without. For years they’ve tried to save money and they’ve lost out on service or quality.”



ANDREW ZIEHLER

On the East Coast, Jim Campanella, owner of Lawn Dawg, a \$10 million, 10-branch outfit based in Nashua, N.H., agrees.

“We’re projecting about 16.4 percent growth this year, and we think that’s a little conservative,” he says, noting the growth will be organic vs. through acquisitions. Lawn Dawg has acquired three firms since December 2011. “We’re already ahead of the same time last year.”

Bill Leuenerger, soil and turf management depart-

ment manager for Chalet’s landscape division in north Chicago, Ill., also sees a good year on the horizon for lawn care.

“I think lawn care will continue to do fairly well,” he says. “People don’t go on vacations like they used to, they’re putting money into their yards and one of the cheapest ways to look good is through lawn care, maintenance and specialty gardens. Those three areas have been strong for us the past year and I believe that’s going to continue.”



JIM CAMPANELLA

CHALLENGES REMAIN

Despite overall optimism, there are some concerns. For example, the 2 percent payroll tax reduction workers have benefited from the last two years expired on Jan. 1. That amounted to an annual pay cut of up to \$2,202 for a worker



NASHUA, N.H.-BASED LAWN DAWG, WHICH HAS ACQUIRED THREE COMPANIES SINCE DECEMBER 2011, EXPECTS ANOTHER GROWTH YEAR.



LEE KRAL

earning \$110,000 a year, the *Wall Street Journal* reports. When families have to tighten their budgets, some opt to cut discretionary expenses like lawn care, says Lee Kral, lawn service manager for Mountain High Tree, Lawn & Landscape Co., Lakewood, Colo. His division constitutes about 20 percent of the company's \$7 million in annual revenue. He plans for lawn care to be up about 5 percent in 2013 over 2012, but says that may be a struggle.

"Originally I thought 2013 was going to be good," he says. "It's not looking as good as I thought it would look. A lot of people are on the fence this year. In Colorado, there's still a pretty high foreclosure rate, we've got a lot of older people and everyone recently saw the payroll tax hike take a bite out of their checks."

Plus, Kral points to Washington, D.C., specifically the series of federal spending cuts that went into effect March 1 (better known as the sequester) as a major source of uncertainty that could hurt the economy.

These federal cuts are also a concern for Rick LaNore, technical director and co-owner of MRW Lawns in La Plata, Md. Last year was a good year for his firm, but when you ask him about 2013 he says, "That depends."

"We're looking at something different this year with the sequester," he says. "We have a lot of customers in the military and government, and we're getting some phone calls from folks getting furloughed, so we're not sure how it's going to affect us."

Another concern for LCOs is complying with new restrictions and regulations, and that will be the case for LaNore later this year. Beginning in the fall, the state of

WHAT MAJOR PESTS ARE YOU COMBATTING THIS YEAR?



// The biggest thing is Emerald Ash Borer, but it's been here for a while now. They've found Asian Longhorned Beetle in some parts of southern Ohio, but we haven't dealt with it here. It's quarantined, but you do still have to pay attention."

—ANDREW ZIEHLER, *Ziehler Lawn and Tree Care / Centerville, Ohio*

// Stink bugs, although they're not supposed to be as bad this year. And the department of agriculture is going crazy about Emerald Ash Borer, but we haven't seen a big problem here yet." —RICK LANORE, *MRW Lawns / La Plata, Md.*



// Chinch bugs are always a big concern of ours, and we also deal with mole crickets and fire ants. Plus there are the insects there's no cure for, like ground pearl and nematodes, to some degree." —KELLY BANFIELD, *Banfield's Lawn Care & Landscaping / Pace, Fla.*

// Last year we saw chinch bugs for the first time on the North Shore of Chicago. It's hard to forecast if it'll be a problem but we're going to be proactive and try to get the insect at hatch before they actually do damage." —BILL LEUENBERGER, *Chalet / North Chicago, Ill.*



// There's nothing out of the ordinary, it's grubs, chinch bugs and other nuisances such as weeds. And unfortunately, there's not a lot of new products for managing them. I'd like to see some new technology coming out of the chemical industry." —JIM CAMPANELLA, *Lawn Dawg / Nashua, N.H.*

Maryland's new fertilizer law goes into effect, including a blackout period from March 1 through Dec. 1 when companies can't apply fertilizer. Historically, LaNore's company has started applications in mid-February.

Campanella has concerns about impending restrictions in several of the states in which he operates.

"The Northeast has some of the toughest regulatory controls on lawn care there are," he says.

One thing he has his eye on is the Northeast Voluntary Turf Fertilizer Initiative, a collaborative of six states, the Environmental Protection Agency and other stakeholders that are looking to develop regional turf fertilizer application guidelines.

“There’s talk about reducing the amount of fertilizer per application, the amount allowed over the course of the year, phosphorous restrictions and reducing annual nitrogen input,” Campanella says. “We’re concerned about it—that it’s not based on any good science. We plan to attend the meetings and tell the decision makers that a healthy lawn is the best protection you can have against runoff.”

(For more on the restriction and regulatory landscape, see page S20.)

INTERNAL FOCUS

Despite challenges, most companies plan to focus internally to prosper this year.

Kelly Banfield, president and CEO of Banfield’s Lawn Care & Landscaping in Pace, Fla., takes a refreshingly simple approach to his business.

“To me, it seems pretty easy,” he says. “If you say you’re going to do something and follow through, I’ve never had a problem being in business.”

His 3-year-old business, 60 percent of which is made up of lawn care revenue, is on track to do \$1.8 million in 2013.

Before moving to the Florida panhandle and founding Banfield’s, he grew and sold a firm in Youngstown, Ohio, called Naturally Green.

He says, “If you have a good product and stand behind it, wherever you’re at, you’ll be successful.”

Likewise, Campanella attributes his company’s projected growth in recent years to internal measures, namely marketing campaigns, the centralization of its sales division and quality service.

“We’ve been able to grow the business significantly and keep a majority of our carryover customers,” he says.

LaNore, too, says quality is the key to retention, which in turn generates more business through referrals.



FIFTY-NINE PERCENT OF RESIDENTIAL LAWNS TREATED BY LAWN CARE FIRMS ARE A HALF ACRE OR SMALLER.



RICK LANORE

He says his company’s cancellation rate is about 12 percent, compared to some national firms that can be as high as 40 percent annually. “In the fall we were able to increase referrals by 35 percent—we really weren’t asking for them before,” he says. “So now we’re focusing on referrals and on encouraging salespeople to create their own leads: knock on a few doors, do more block leading. We’ll probably get warmer leads and the closing percentage should go up.”

Ziehler is counting on a well-trained, happy staff to ensure success.

“This year we have a 100 percent return rate for our staff,” he says. “That’s huge. We’ve done a lot to develop our staff and make sure it’s a good place to work.”

How so? “It’s adding up a bunch of tiny things that make everyone’s day a bit easier,” Ziehler says. These measures include a complimentary healthy snack center at the office, free Gatorade for production members on Fridays during the summer and company-provided 2-gallon water jugs for employees during the season.

Additionally, once a month the whole company meets for a “Z Team Breakfast.”

“We take a few minutes to go over what’s happened in the previous month, share any compliments we’ve gotten, discuss things to look out for and talk about anything that needs to be improved,” Ziehler says, noting the meetings also often include games and prizes to make it fun. “Sometimes you get that divide between sales and the office and production, and this has really brought everybody together.” LM



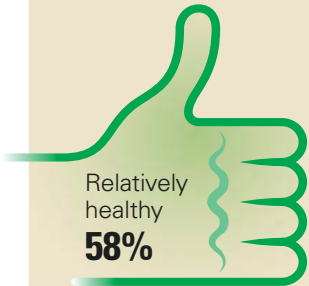
KELLY BANFIELD



HOW ARE YOU FEELING?



Describe the state of the lawn care market in your region.



N=616

Figures don't equal 100% due to rounding.



Very healthy
13%



Slightly down
22%



Down significantly
6%

What's your 2013 business outlook?



Very optimistic
32%



Somewhat optimistic
57%



Somewhat pessimistic
10%



Very pessimistic
2%

N=616 Figures don't equal 100% due to rounding.



WHAT ARE YOUR WORRIES?



Top ranked business concerns



- 2- Operational efficiency
- 3- Effective marketing
- 4- Quality control

- 5- Customer service
- 6- Accounts receivable
- 7- Technician staffing
- 8- Accounts payable
- 9- Sales staffing
- 10- Management staffing

N=615

Top ranked external factors

- 2- Health care
- 3(t)- Taxes
- 3(t)- Consumer confidence/economy
- 5- Pesticide regulations



- 6- Fertilizer regulations
- 7- Immigration reform

N=614



WHAT'S AVERAGE?

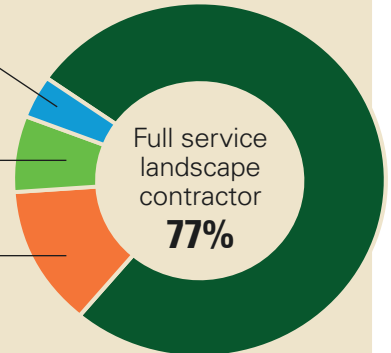


What best describes your service mix? N=595

Chemical lawn care company only **4%**

Chemical lawn care company plus tree care **7%**

Chemical lawn care company plus mowing **13%**



Figures don't equal 100% due to rounding.

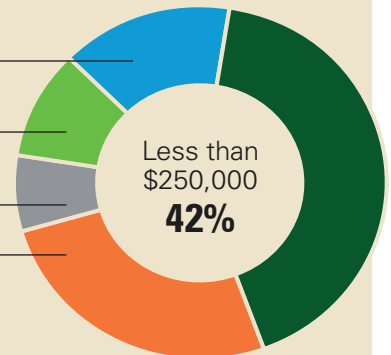
What was your total revenue for 2012? N=619

\$250,000 to \$499,999 **15%**

\$500,000-\$749,999 **10%**

\$750,000-\$999,999 **7%**

\$1 million+ **26%**

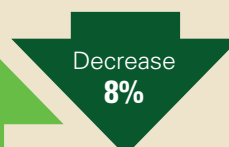
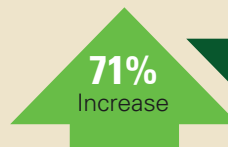


If you treat residential lawns, what's the average size of the properties?



N=485 Figures don't equal 100% due to rounding.

Do you expect an increase or decrease in revenue for 2013 over 2012?



No change
21%

N=616

SHARE OF WALLET

Lawn care companies are adding services when looking to grow.

BY MARISA PALMIERI



THOUGH FERTILIZATION AND weed control have long been the mainstays for traditional lawn care companies, other services are prevailing as ways to increase customers' total spending levels or reach new clients.

When it comes to the service that will grow the most in 2013, lawn care operators (LCOs) expect it to be their bread and butter—fertilization plus weed control. That's followed by organic and natural lawn care, landscape bed weed control and tree and ornamental applications (see chart lower right), according to *Landscape Management's Lawn Care Market Report* survey.

Anecdotal evidence shows companies are adding other niches.

INSECT CONTROL OPPORTUNITIES

Lawn Dawg, Nashua, N.H., and its 10 branches are considering adding a few new services, says owner Jim Campanella. One of them is mosquito control. The mosquito control effort is in the early stages, he says, noting the company's training director is studying the options.

"I know it's something many lawn care companies do," Campanella says. "But like everything we do, if we're going to do it, we're going to research it thoroughly."

In the Midwest, Chalet initiated mosquito control this year, and Soil and Turf Department Manager Bill

SERVICE OFFERINGS

What services does your company offer? *N=541*

Aeration	80%
Disease control	71%
Fertilization	93%
Fire ant control	30%
Hydroseeding	23%
Grub control	69%
Insect control	75%
Landscape bed weed control	85%
Lawn renovation	80%
Macro/micro injection	21%
Organic/natural lawn care	44%
Perimeter pest control	25%
Seeding	85%
Sodding	73%
Spring/fall cleanup	83%
Tree and ornamental applications	66%
Tree trimming/pruning	72%
Tree removal/transplanting	57%
Weed control	93%

Which service do you expect to grow the most in 2013? *N=459*

Fertilization only	5%
Fertilization plus weed control	40%
Fertilization plus insect control	4%
Fungicide-only treatments	0.2%
Herbicide-only treatments	3%
Insecticide-only treatments	3%
Landscape bed weed control	14%
Organic or natural lawn care	16%
PGR applications	3%
Tree/ornamental applications	11%

Leuenberger is anxious to see how sales will go. The company likely will begin selling it in May.

"It's taken us all winter to put everything together," he says. "This year is going to be trial and error, but we're confident in the products we're using, which are a combination of organic and synthetic materials, so that's kept some of my fingernails on." Chalet plans to market and sell the service, which will be offered biweekly and for special events, through its retail location and also to maintenance and lawn care customers.

Tick control is another service Lawn Dawg is looking to expand, Campanella says.

"Ticks are more prevalent over the past couple years and carry a lot of diseases, especially Lyme disease," he says. The service is popular in the Northeast and especially New Hampshire, where the company is headquartered; the state has one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the U.S.

"We currently offer a three-application process during the growing season," Campanella says, noting the treatment covers ticks,



fleas and ants. "The life cycle of ticks isn't being covered in that window, so we're going to add a fourth app."

Insect control is also a growth target for MRW Lawns in La Plata, Md., which is slowly launching termite and pest control. Co-owner and Technical Director Rick LaNore got his wood-destroying insect certification two years ago.

"We're trying to market it to our existing customers, but we haven't cracked the egg yet," he says. Even though the company isn't doing full-scale termite and pest control yet, it has had some success offering a termite monitoring service.

"We add six bait stations to the

property and we'll monitor them to see if there's a problem, and then we can make recommendations," he says. "It's a service that can give customers some piece of mind."

ADD-ON APPLICATIONS

Not all add-on services are coming from creepy crawlies. For example, Chalet has a waiting list

for its specialty lawn renovation program that controls creeping bentgrass and nimblewill with three herbicide applications in a six-week period, followed up by slit seeding in the fall.

"We expect that to grow," Leuenberger says. "We have a waiting list of people who want that done, but there's such a short window for doing it, so there's only so many you can do."

Lee Kral, lawn service manager for Mountain High Tree, Lawn & Landscape Co. in Lakewood, Colo., has added two new services: iron treatments and dog spot treatments.

"Both give a better look to the lawn," he says. "We sell them as add-ons—it's another thing to offer the customer."

Applying wetting agents is a specialty offering Lawn Dawg's considering.

"In the Northeast, we have watering bans throughout the region that go into effect the minute things start to get hot and dry," Campanella says. "It will allow our customers to keep their lawns greener with less inputs." Ideally, the wetting agent would go down with the last spring or early summer application, before the lawn goes into drought stress, he says. **LMI**

SERVICE OFFERINGS

Do you offer any winter services? *N=308*

Snow/ice removal

88%

Holiday lighting/décor

37%

Other 14%

ORGANICS: A BALANCING ACT

Some lawn care pros see a rise in demand for "natural" turf service offerings.

BY DAN JACOBS & MARISA PALMIERI

AMERICANS STILL WANT a lush, green lawn, but today, lawn care companies realize that some customers want that look provided by organic and natural lawn care solutions.

According to *Landscape Management's* Lawn Care Market Report survey, 44 percent of respondents offer an organic or natural lawn program.

The challenges of offering these "green" programs include higher prices, lower effectiveness and the fact that some customers aren't exactly sure what they're asking for when they say they want an eco-friendly program. To be sure, lawn care firms apply their own definitions to these terms, and their program offerings run the gamut.

Generally, many companies offer a program that

includes all organic fertilizer or a “bridge” product that incorporates synthetic and organic fertilizer with minimal use of synthetic herbicides (i.e. spot spraying weeds or one herbicide application). A 100-percent organic program would include only organic fertilizer and no weed control at all or the use of corn gluten meal for weed control.

Some companies are learning it behooves them to give clients options, even if many don't end up choosing the “organic” or “natural” programs when they find out they cost more and weed control may not be as effective.

Andrew Ziehler, president of Ziehler Lawn and Tree Care in Centerville, Ohio, used to have just one lawn care program. He's rolling out two additional ones for the 2013 season; one of them is called Natural Touch Organic and is a 100-percent organic program with organic fertilizer and zero use of pesticides.

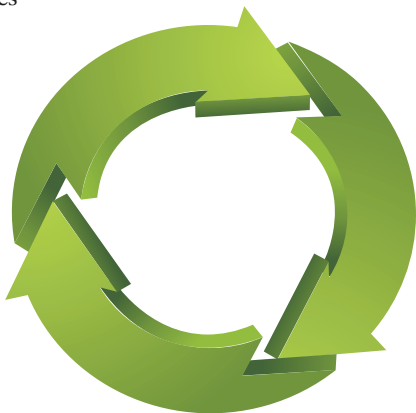
Ziehler decided to add this program due, in part, to research conducted on his firm's behalf as part of a University of Dayton master's program project two years ago.

“We asked them to do a survey of our customers to get some insight to see what they actually wanted,” Ziehler says. “Things that came back were ‘more choice’ and ‘interest in organics.’ That's the main reason we developed the other programs.”

Michael Bellantoni Inc., a full-service landscape company based in White Plains, N.Y., is seeing demand from his customers for pesticide-free lawn care. The firm recently bought out an organic lawn care franchise to help support its plant health care division, says President Michael Bellantoni.

“It's a 100-percent organic program,” he says, noting his company studied the program for about six months before deciding to buy out the franchise. “I think it's going to be big in this industry. It's a program with products that haven't been so common in the industry. We like the results of them. We've adopted them 100 percent

ORGANIC FERTILIZER CAN BE DECEIVING



What's driving consumer interest in organic products? Some communities require organic fertilizer, a move that in many places was initiated by a desire to limit the amount of phosphorous applied, says Tom Delaney, director of government affairs for the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET).

The irony is, mandating “organic” fertilizer isn't necessarily a fix. “Some of these laws and regulations that are trying to keep phosphorous out can't be done with organics,” Delaney says. “They can't control the amount of phosphorous that's in their fertilizers because it's naturally occurring in their sources.”

From phosphorous restrictions many cities move to nitrogen next, he says. Some of these rule changes can be tied to President Obama's declaration of the Chesapeake Bay as a national treasure during his first term. States surrounding the Chesapeake Bay are seeing a push for changes in when and where they can apply fertilizer. —DAN JACOBS

and we've started to market that fact, as well.”

Ziehler and Bellantoni aren't alone in pursuing this market. According to *Landscape Management's* Lawn Care Market Report survey, more than 16 percent of respondents expect their “organic” or “natural” lawn care programs will grow more than any other service they offer this year. That ranked as the second “fastest-growing” service to traditional fertilization plus weed control, which came in at just under 40 percent.

CHALLENGES REMAIN

Even if there's the perception of consumer demand for these services, barriers to organic/natural programs are price and effectiveness, lawn care companies say. The products often cost more and may not be as effective as their synthetic counterparts.

ORGANIC/NATURAL PROGRAMS

44

% of lawn care firms that offer organic or natural programs

If you offer organic/natural lawn care services, are clients willing to pay a premium for these options?

Yes 57%

Clients who want these services generally will pay a premium

No 43%

Clients who want these services generally will not pay a premium

N=319

More than half (57 percent) of the Lawn Care Market Report survey respondents who offer an organic or natural program indicated their clients are willing to pay a premium for the service, but 43 percent said clients want the organic/natural lawn option, but aren't willing to pay more for it.

That's what the research conducted on behalf of Ziehler's company discovered, too. "Customers said they weren't willing to pay a lot more, but they did recommend we have some choices," he says.

Even in Toronto, Ontario, where there's a provincial ban on the sale and use of pesticides for cosmetic use, customers aren't readily forking over extra cash to keep their properties green with "green" products, says Kyle

Tobin, of LawnSavers Plant Health Care.

"Clients who want these services generally will not pay a premium," he says. "Organic lawns are still an evolving business and customers remain very fickle."

Rebecca Trammell, owner of Timbers Prairie Consulting in Austin and Dallas, has clients who *are* among those willing to pay a premium for "green" solutions, and her Austin clients may be willing to accept less-than-perfect turf. However, she points out, Austin is "the liberal oasis of Texas."

"People here have a motto, 'Keep Austin Weird,'" she says. "People are into beneficial nematodes, compost tea, Habiturf [a native turfgrass developed by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin], disease-resistant plants, firescaping, etc." When Trammell comes across someone looking for the "quick fix," she takes a pass because it's not a good fit.

The bottom line is educating clients up front about what they're paying for, says Ziehler, who tells the story of another lawn care company a few hours away that heavily advertises its organic program. "I asked them how many people are actually on that program and it's 1 percent," he says. "People call in and once they figure out the cost they end up with the regular program they can afford."

Ziehler's organic program rolled out this spring and after one month he'd sold "a couple." "We're telling people, it's 100-percent organic fertilizer and we're not doing any weed control," he says. "We say, 'There will be weeds.'"

For most customers, even if they say they want an all-organic program, that's a tough pill to swallow considering the primary reason many of them hire a lawn care company is to take care of weeds.

Jim Campanella, owner of Lawn Dawg, which has 10 branches throughout the Northeast, says he's seen demand decrease in his firm's 100-percent organic program, which it has offered for five years.

"People will ask about the all-organic program because they think they should," he says. "But they're starting to say, 'We understand it doesn't work as well in some areas and it's not worth the higher costs.'" Lawn Dawg's all-organic program is 81 percent more expensive than the traditional program.

"Is it safe?" is still the question most often asked by customers and prospects," Campanella says. "Once we explain the benefits of our traditional program that uses organic-blend products and the responsible use of pesticides, they are comfortable choosing our standard program." **LM**

EXPENSE TRACKING

Lawn care operators report concern but stability for 2013.

BY MARISA PALMIERI

THE COST OF doing business is always a concern for Green Industry businesses. Lawn care operators (LCOs), in particular, have specific costs to contend with: inputs like pesticides and fertilizer.

“As far as the products we purchase, they’re pretty stable,” says Kelly Banfield, president and CEO of Banfield’s Landscaping and Lawn Care in Pace, Fla. The pricing offers a respite from years past, he says, noting that fuel costs are always a concern.

“For fuel costs, I always factor them into the budget high,” he says. “If it’s \$4.35 a gallon, I’ll input \$4.75 a gallon when I figure the budget. I don’t foresee the price going over \$4.75.”

Banfield is much like his peers—fuel and health

care costs are their top two external concerns, according to *Landscape Management’s* Lawn Care Market Report survey. The good news is, fuel costs are leveling out. Not so for health care costs (see charts at right).

PRODUCT PRICES

Lawn care companies are happy to report pesticide prices are stable and fertilizer prices have leveled off from the spike endured during the Great Recession, though they’re still seeing a slight bump.

“Fertilizer seems to be going up every year, but it’s not as bad as 2008,” says Rick LaNore, co-owner and technical director of MRW Lawns in La Plata, Md. “That was horrible—2009 to



2012 were all better as far as stability, I think, because natural gas was so plentiful.”

For pesticides, LaNore doesn't “see them going crazy. I try to keep my budget within 12 to 15 percent for material.”

Jim Campanella, owner of Nashua, N.H.-based Lawn Dawg, is seeing a slight increase in fertilizer prices over last year. “There's concern that an increase in corn production and even almond production out West is going to drive the cost of urea, which will drive up fertilizer prices,” he says. “With pesticides, they're steady, or in some cases down.”

Andrew Ziehler, president of Ziehler Lawn and Tree Care in Centerville, Ohio, sees a similar trend.

“Herbicides tend to stay consistent or they're smaller increases,” he says. “Fertilizer prices are continuing to go up, so we take advantage of early-order programs so we can lock in prices and know what we have for the year. We're also looking for products that won't fluctuate as much. Sometimes I wonder if I should just invest in fertilizer, buy it up and sell it off the next year.”

Bill Leuenberger says Chalet's pesticide and fertilizer budget should be about the same as last year's, although he's hoping to see a volume increase on the lawn care side of the business, which would boost the budget.

“Fertilizer prices are going up, and there isn't too much you can do,” he says. “We're on the North Shore of Chicago, so the quality has to be very good. That's part of the reason we have a price increase this year.” Chalet is raising lawn care program prices 5 percent for the first time in nine years. **LM**

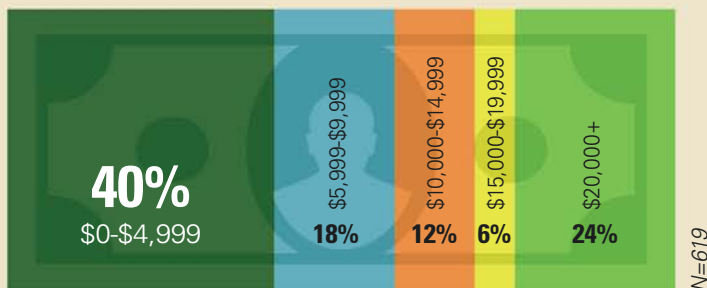
PHOTO: LAWN DAWG; ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

★ PURCHASING BUDGETS ★

How will your pesticide- and fertilizer-purchasing budgets change in 2013 vs. 2012?

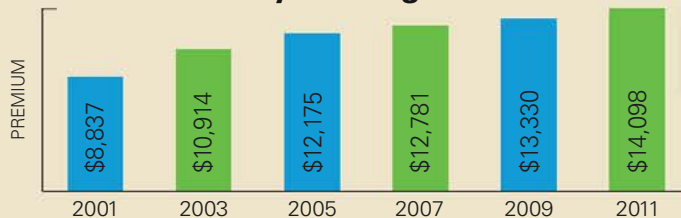


What's your estimated pesticide- and fertilizer-purchasing budget for 2013?



★ FUEL, HEALTH CARE COSTS ARE TOP CONCERNS ★

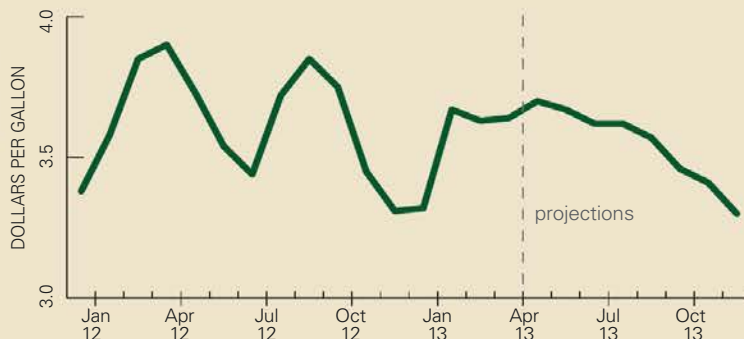
Annual business health care premiums for family coverage (in 2011 dollars)



Health care rising

Source: Scott Shane, Case Western Reserve University, with data from the Kaiser Family Foundation's Employer Health Benefits 2011 Annual Survey

U.S. average gas prices (regular grade retail price including taxes)



Source: Energy Information Administration's Short-Term Energy Outlook

IS THE PRICE RIGHT?

Lawn care companies carefully consider charging more.

BY MARISA PALMIERI

THOUGH MANY LAWN care businesses say the time is right for a price bump (46 percent), just more than half say they'll hold steady and won't raise prices this year, according

to *Landscape Management's* Lawn Care Market Report survey. Only 2 percent say they'll decrease lawn care prices this year (see chart on opposite page).

Those who plan to increase prices will do so about 5 percent, while those who plan to decrease prices will do so less than a percent, according to the survey.

Price increases or not, companies report the lawn care application business remains profitable—with respondents to *LM's* Lawn

Care Market Report survey reporting a 25 percent profit margin on lawn care services.

North Chicago, Ill.-based Chalet raised lawn care prices 5 percent for 2013—its first increase in nine years.

"We've done a slight price increase and we haven't had a huge cancellation like we might normally get from an increase," says Bill Leuenberger, soil and turf management department manager. "Cancellations have

been about the same as a normal year—and most of those are people who are moving, so we'll follow up on those and the people who move in."

Likewise, Lawn Dawg, based in Nashua, N.H., instituted its first price increase in a decade—a 5 percent bump.

"My customer service team has had minimal push back," says owner Jim Campanella. "When they do get push back, we're not





ILLUSTRATION: iSTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

★ PROFITS & PRICES ★

Will your company's prices for lawn care applications change in 2013 over 2012?



25

% profit made on lawn care services

N=511

By what percent will you change prices from 2012 to 2013? N=396



going to lose a customer over \$20 a year; keeping the business is more important. But people understand. They see the price of fuel going up every day and that we haven't had an increase in so long. They've been expecting it."

In the Florida panhandle, Banfield's Lawn Care & Landscaping has not raised prices yet in its three years in business.

"I don't really have a need to do it," says Kelly Banfield, president

and CEO. "I don't believe price increases are important as long as the business itself is growing. Of course, if the product prices really jumped you'd have to."

Lee Kral, lawn service manager for Mountain High Tree, Lawn & Landscape Co., in Lakewood, Colo., also didn't raise prices this season.

"There's definitely a lot of competition on price," he says. "A couple years ago we had to raise prices because of fertilizer costs, but I'm going to keep it steady this year, get more clients on board and then look at it next year."

Some companies find ways to selectively raise prices, like MRW Lawns in La Plata, Md. "We didn't do an across-the-board price increase this year because we did a select price increase last year," says

Rick LaNore, MRW's co-owner and technical director. "But we did raise prices on our new customers—we couldn't afford to give everyone the old prices because of fluctuating fertilizer prices."

Andrew Ziehler, president of Ziehler Lawn and Tree Care in Centerville, Ohio, typically raises prices 2 percent to 4 percent per year, and he did so this year.

"There was one year we didn't raise prices because our product costs actually went down," he says, noting that's not the case this year. His protocol is to let customers know in a letter at the end of the season if prices will rise the next year. "They have a payment option that lets them avoid the price increase if they want to. Otherwise, the increase takes effect." **LM**

BOUND BY RESTRICTIONS

The industry addresses fertilizer and pesticide regulations at the local, state and national levels. BY DAN JACOBS

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION. The oft-cited phrase used to justify the price and salability of any home is equally good at describing the state of fertilizer and pesticide regulations across the country.

In some places, New Jersey for example, the rules are relatively set and contractors are learning to deal with the requirements. In areas where things are less settled, lawn care companies and industry associations are working furiously to ensure those who oppose fertilizers and pesticides are unable to have their loud protestations enacted into law.

One of the myths everyone jumps to is people oppose chemical product use, and they don't, says Karen Reardon, vice president, public affairs, for Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE). It's up to the industry to do a better job of reminding consumers about the public health aspects of these products.

And it's not just the public that needs to be educated. It's politicians, too.

"The biggest problem in a lot of these regulations, in addition to having to jump through more hoops, has



been these blackout periods, when legislators arbitrarily decide when the frost will come in a state," says Tom Delaney, director of government affairs for the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). Politicians set hard dates about when products can be applied.

"In New York it cut back almost a full month from when lawn care professionals could fertilize," Delaney says. "Usually lawn care professionals started in March, depending on the weather, but now they can't start until April. Some of these guys are still trying to figure out the influence on their business."

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Since politicians serve at the pleasure of the public, they often use public polls to guide their decisions.



“Most people, we know from surveys, agree products should be available and used when needed,” Reardon says. “Some of these policies and proposals are not reflective of broader public opinion when you remind folks about why we need pesticides.”

The problem is, politicians aren’t polling on these issues. Instead they are hearing the voices of those opposing the use of chemicals. Anti-pesticide activists are engaging in conversation with legislators at the local and state levels while many contractors are busy running their businesses. The voice of the industry is often left unheard, Reardon says.

“Opponents and activists are very vocal and very dedicated to driving the policy discussion and debate at the state and sometimes at the local level about these products,” she says. “They’ve been at it at quite some time. Although they certainly are a minority, they are well known and they have something to say. They’re influential because they show up. As the saying goes, ‘The world is run by those who show up.’”

Industry associations like RISE and PLANET track proposed rule and regulation changes across the country, but they can’t fight the battle by themselves.

“Don’t be ignorant of what’s happening in other states, because it will come to you,” Delaney says. “Be vigilant when things are introduced in your legislature and play an active role, even if it’s just being supportive and attending a hearing by showing your interest in a subject.”

And there is plenty to be paying attention to.

STATE ACTIVITY

Some states have preemption laws, which prevent local governments from enacting their own pesticide ordinances that are stricter than the state’s rules.

New fertilizer laws and restrictions have been the hotbed of activity recently. When enacted, the two-year-old New Jersey fertilizer law was one of the most comprehensive and restrictive to date. It has applicator training and certification requirements, rules on when applications can be made (March 1 through Dec. 1), where product may be applied and what types may be used (no phosphorus may be applied unless a soil test shows it’s necessary).

Other states have followed suit. Maryland is one of them.



TOM DELANEY, PLANET

“Next year, because of the new fertilizer law, we’ll have blackout dates that will prevent us from putting fertilizer down from March 1 to Dec. 1,” says Rick LaNore, technical director and co-owner of MRW Lawns, in La Plata, Md. His firm historically has begun applications around President’s Day, so it will take a hit next year. “That’s about two weeks of billings, probably around \$100,000, that we’re not going to have.” The Maryland law, which will be effective Oct. 1, also will have a certification and licensure component for applying fertilizer, as many other states have adopted.

In some of the states that require applicators to be certified and/or licensed before they can apply products, getting the systems up and running isn’t always a smooth process.

Rutgers University is in charge of New Jersey’s training and testing. Once you’ve gone through the study materials, a contractor pays a \$75 fee to take the test. Those who pass the test become certified for five years and pay a \$25 per year fee to keep that certification. As certified applicators, they are able to train other employees in the business. Those secondary certifications cost \$25 and are only good for one year.

“Virginia has been slow in getting their training requirements in for fertilization,” Delaney says. “They had that same problem in New Jersey. Rutgers took a long time to get theirs done.”

The University of Florida, which also has many fertilizer restrictions, offers training on fertilization, but the state has yet to formalize training, Delaney says. At PLANET’s most recent Lawn Care Summit a speaker from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection indicated the time is coming when lawn care professionals in that state will be required to show verification of their training, Delaney says.

Although fertilizer laws have been a focus as of late, pesticide restriction concerns remain. An article in the *Denver Post* in February highlighted one bout.

“The battle is so pitched that local lawn-and-garden pros fear that a Canadian-style ban on pesticides and herbicides looms and they’ll be left without a powerful tool to fight landscape-decimating pests and weeds,” reads the article written by Colleen O’Connor.

One of those worried about the changes going on in



his state is Tom Lynch, Fort Collins, Colo., branch manager for Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care.

“The biggest thing we can provide is an education to the decision makers of these municipalities that are faced with this type of coalition that says ‘We want to ban the use of all pesticides,’” Lynch says. “We need to be able to educate those decision makers about what we do and why we do it. We’re willing to work with them. That’s the one big thing that’s lost on this—we’re being targeted as the bad guy. We are practicing integrated pest management where we are only applying a pesticide when it’s deemed necessary.”

NATIONAL ACTIVITY

There are challenges on a national level, as well.

“We are tracking a couple of issues there, including one that might seem unusual for the lawn care industry—the Endangered Species Act (ESA),” Reardon says. “There are a number of significant lawsuits that have the potential to impact the availability of products.”

The lawsuits, typically filed by individuals or groups opposed to chemical usage, often name particular compounds.

“One of the suits we’re calling the ‘megasuit,’ would impact the use of between 300 and 400 active ingredients across the United States — touching virtually every aspect of product use, including lawn care,” Reardon says. “If provisions of a certain number of these suits have merit and go forward, essentially they would in some ways take over EPA’s product registration process with necessary ESA consultations. That, in turn, would hamper the ability to get new products into the marketplace in a timely way for lawn care and other categories of use as well.”

The Clean Water Act has had an impact on fertilizer and pesticide applications, as well. Reardon says there’s already robust legislation governing chemical applications through the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and that much of the legal action is simply duplicative.

GETTING INVOLVED

The best way to combat those opposed to the application of pesticides and fertilizers is to make sure invested business owners share their concerns with their legislators.

Reardon believes the efforts of organizations like RISE and PLANET are slowly beginning to get that message across to the industry.

“We’re meeting some of our old friends,” Reardon says. “People are really enthusiastic about speaking positively and proactively—so, changing that conversation from defense to something that is very productive.”

RISE has been talking with applicators over the winter to help educate them about the issue.

“We’ve created a great consumer-facing website that also has resources for applicators at DebugTheMyths.com,” Reardon says. “It’s really just having the conversations with your customers, with your neighbors. People really value that peer-to-peer exchange on these kinds of topics. It’s being mindful of starting those conversations before there’s an issue and taking the time to talk with folks, whether it’s at church coffee hour or on the sidelines at

the soccer games, and really distinguish yourself as a subject matter expert on this.

“We’re getting a lot of enthusiasm around that,” Reardon continues. “We know these folks have to stand up in their communities or in their states, and we’d like to help them have a conversation that’s more like one they would have with a customer versus having to be there possibly in an adversarial situation or on defense, which is not for everyone.”

PLANET has its own approach to encouraging landscapers and lawn care professionals to get involved at a grassroots level.

“We’re trying to get more people to sign up to agree to be leaders in their state,” Delaney says. That individual can help mobilize other state residents to get the message out. “That is so important,” Delaney says. **LM**

“ACTIVISTS ARE
INFLUENTIAL
BECAUSE THEY
SHOW UP. AS
THE SAYING GOES,
‘THE WORLD IS RUN
BY THOSE WHO
SHOW UP.’”

—KAREN
REARDON, RISE



Jacobs is a freelance writer based in Cleveland, Ohio. Additional reporting by Marisa Palmieri.

[ADVERTORIAL]

Talkin' Tech

JERRY CORBETT » TECHNICAL SERVICES MANAGER, QUALI-PRO



Q What trends are you seeing in the lawn care market?

The lawn care markets have been steady, even during these economic times. Most folks still enjoy having a nice lawn and it's an important part of our culture. This is also true for office/business complexes and apartment buildings. It's important to have nicely maintained landscapes and turf. There's value from the aesthetic appearance and having professionally maintained landscape and turf. With regard to housing, we know the landscape adds 10 percent or more to the overall home value. This is certainly an advantage if you're in the process of refinancing or looking at purchasing property. With regard to commercial complexes, it gives us the perception that the businesses operating within those confines are professional operations.

Q What pests are lawn care operators (LCOs) most concerned with these days?

2012 was a different year! Whether you believe in global warming or 20-year weather cycles, we can all agree that 2012 resulted in a mild winter and thus gave us a much longer spring and summer. It may have been more regional, but I think the ticks, fleas, flies and mosquitoes were rampant in 2012. In my opinion, fire ants were worse last year than I've ever seen before. Also, because of a mild winter, we had larger weed infestations, including broadleaf weeds early in the spring, followed by late flushes of crabgrass and goosegrass. Goosegrass! This grassy weed has become more problematic in northern areas than I ever would have expected. Another pest that's on the rise are nematodes. If this temperature

cycle continues, I predict many LCOs will see nematode symptoms increase even in the farther North than normal areas. We've been dealing with them in turf and ornamentals in the South for years, but with the longer seasons and warmer temperatures, their presence will be more prevalent in the North as well.

Q What's new with Quali-Pro in the lawn care market?

The newest LCO product we're marketing is our Quali-Pro Dithiopyr 2L herbicide. It's an outstanding liquid formulation, providing season-long control of grassy and broadleaf weeds in golf, lawn care, landscape, sod production, nursery and other areas. It has the following features:

- High-performance formulation;
- Excellent turf selectivity;
- Non-staining;
- Instantly blooms upon dilution even in cold water;
- Pleasant odor;
- Stable viscosity during cold exposure; and
- Extended shelf life consistency.

I know most of the first-round preemergent herbicide applications have gone out by this time of the year, but I recommend Dithiopyr 2L as an excellent option for the second-round applications. It will provide postemergent control of seedling crabgrass at the 1-5 leaf up to the early tiller stage. The point is if there's seedling crabgrass beginning to emerge, then here's a good tool to clean it up early and provide residual efficacy.

Another product we offer LCOs is Fipronil 0.0143 G Broadcast. Fipronil is one of the best products on the market for fire ant control. It's specially formulated for broadcast application

for control of existing and prevention of new fire ant infestations in residential, commercial, golf course and recreational turfgrass and landscape beds. A single application delivers up to one year of reliable fire ant control. It works by contact and ingestion and in all weather conditions. Low use rates mean it has an "anytime" application period, including fall and winter.

With regard to postemergent broadleaf weed control, we offer Quali-Pro 3-D Herbicide which is a combination phenoxy herbicide that can be applied to most warm-season and cool-season turfgrass cultivars. It will control a wide spectrum of broadleaf weeds, including henbit, chickweed and dandelions.

For the LCOs dealing with southern turfgrass cultivars and weed control, we have Quali-Pro MSM. MSM contains Metsulfuron, which is a powerful sulfonylurea herbicide used on southern turf and will control several broadleaf weeds.

Q What's different about Quali-Pro?

All Quali-Pro products are university tested, as well as tested internally. We promise to deliver an economically competitive product with superior formulation technology. Our office and headquarters are located outside of Houston near Pasadena, Texas.

Also, with Quali-Pro you have someone that you can call anytime. If you have a question about a Quali-Pro product with rates, issues or performance, you can contact me at JerryC@quali-pro.com.

Pour on the POWER.



Introducing Dithiopyr 2L, an easy to use, non-staining liquid formulation. An outstanding pre-emergent and early post-emergent herbicide for control of all your grass and broadleaf weeds.

Trust your lawns and landscapes to Quali-Pro®, **we're making "Basic" even "Better"**.

To learn more, visit quali-pro.com.

QUALI-PRO[®]

Quality Turf & Ornamental Products

> Basically Better.

PICTURE PERFECT CONTROL.



The improved formulation is apparent, the control is outstanding and the value is a given.

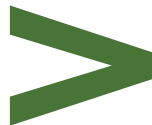
T/I 2.5G from Quali-Pro, harnessing Isoxaben and Trifluralin the combination of two of the best and most widely used actives in the industry.

Combined value and convenience with the proven power of Isoxaben and Trifluralin.

To learn more, visit quali-pro.com.

QUALI-PRO

Quality Turf & Ornamental Products



Basically Better.



The old COLLEGE TRY



»» **W**esley Chiles was young enough to have a lemonade stand. After all, he was 10 years old making \$35 in cash mowing a neighbor's yard. At age 12, he got his first riding mower. He was too young to drive a car, yet he suddenly found himself in the throes of his own landscaping business.

Chiles' is the story of so many other young landscaping entrepreneurs who started their businesses while students—whether in grade school, high school or college. Theirs are the stories of youth who started in the business with no more than a truck, a mower and a friend or family member to help them. They scuttled home from college on the weekends to man their landscaping businesses, only to hurry

back in time for Monday's classes.

What separates these student business owners from the rest of the pack is their staying power—their ability not only to learn, but to teach how to run a business well.

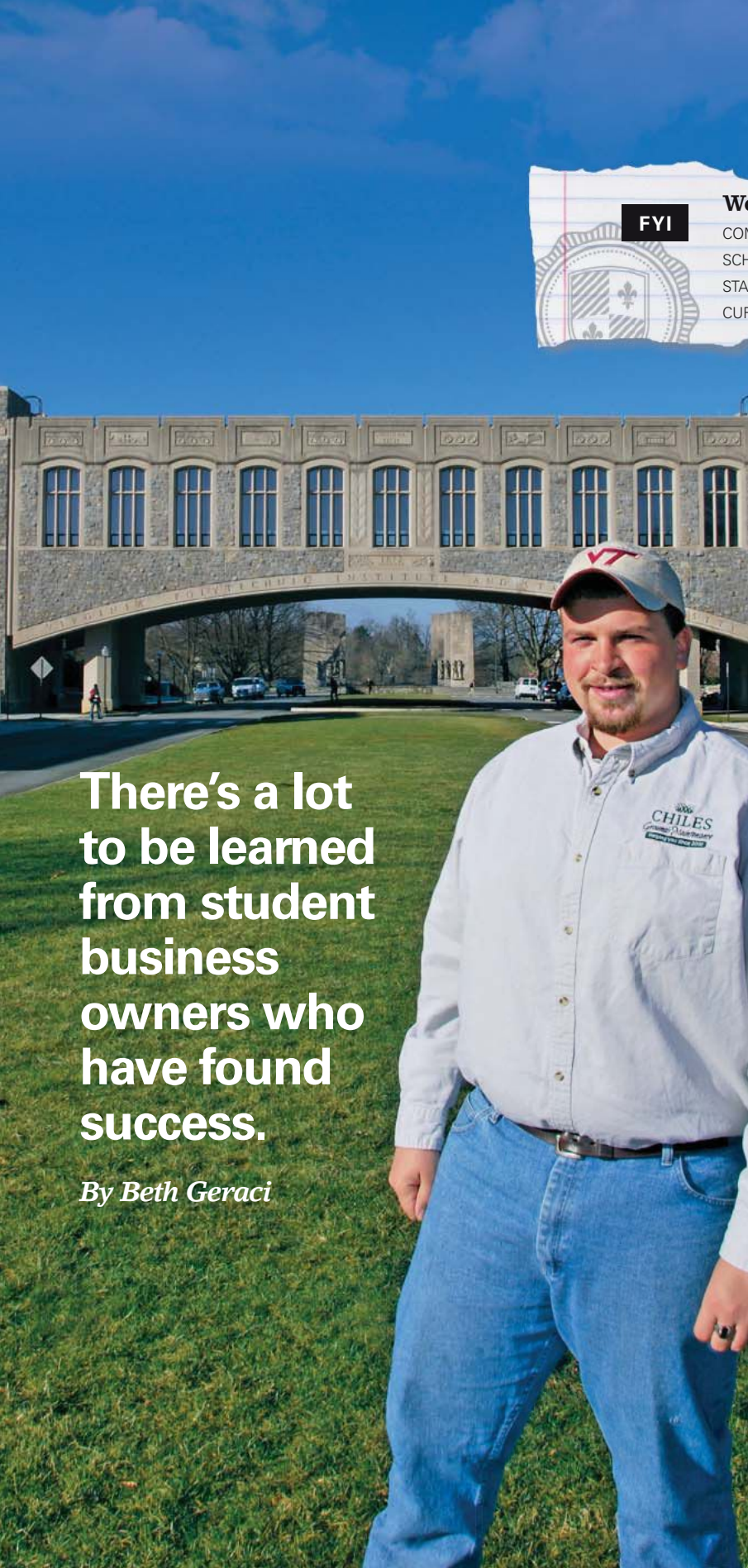
Growing the biz

Chiles, 21, is on spring break. A sophomore majoring in agribusiness at Virginia Tech, he's the owner of Chiles Enterprises in Louisa, Va. "I'm only concerned with providing the best quality possible, because that's what's grown my business to what it is today," he says.

What it is today is a six-figure, full-service landscaping business with 160 clients. "When I was 13, I heard competitors say, 'Hey, he's young, he's inexperienced, don't hire him,'" he says. "That's to be expected when there's a little



PHOTO: SAW DOAK; ILLUSTRATIONS: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.



FYI

Wesley Chiles

COMPANY: Chiles Enterprises

SCHOOL: Virginia Tech

STARTED BUSINESS AT AGE: 10

CURRENT AGE: 21

There's a lot to be learned from student business owners who have found success.

By Beth Geraci

kid out there. But it was also the best thing anyone ever said to me. It fueled my fire even more. It made me want to be the best damn grass cutter out there, the best damn landscaper out there.”

Chiles' business took off last year, after he acquired a small retail garden center that led to 63 percent growth for the company from 2011 to 2012.

Matt Turner, 30, shares Chiles' ambition. The owner of Turner Landscaping in St. Paris, Ohio, launched the business in 2001, when he was 19 and a freshman at The Ohio State University.

“I thought if I started when I was in college I could grow a client base while I was in school, so when I got out my business would be strong,” he says.

Turner, who graduated in 2005 with a degree in landscape horticulture, started with just six clients. Today, Turner Landscaping is a \$360,000 business with one foreman, 2 full-time laborers and about 300 clients. The company blossomed in 2009, when Turner acquired the pond maintenance and installation divisions of Green Vista Water Gardens. “I saw a niche I could tap into. I saw an opportunity, and that's when we really took off,” Turner says.

The company has grown by 10 percent to 20 percent every year since then, thanks to adequate staffing and a focus on customer service, he says.

“For us, it's not about volume,” Turner says. “It's about the quality we do. We keep ourselves small, do a great job and build a relationship with every client. Then word of mouth spreads.”

Craig Ruppert, CEO of Ruppert Landscape, Laytonsville, Md., knows a lot about growing a business. After all,

COVER STORY

Ruppert Landscape has grown exponentially since 1971, when he launched it as Ruppert Lawn Maintenance in his dad's garage.

Ruppert started his business like so many others—with a mower and a used pickup truck he bought for \$800. “I was a 17-year-old high school student from a large family of eight who had to contribute to our tuition and had to be able to help pay for any extra activities we participated in,” recalls the founder of one of the industry's largest companies. “I had a lawn mower and figured if I worked hard I could succeed.”

And succeed he did. Today, Ruppert Landscape is a \$72.5 million company with 725 employees. Ruppert grew his business from a \$20,000 operation with one full-time employee (his



FYI

Michael Field

COMPANY: Premium Properties, Spicer, Minn.

SCHOOL: University of Minnesota, Crookston

STARTED BUSINESS AT AGE: 17

CURRENT AGE: 26

2012 REVENUE: \$150,000

brother Chris) to what it is today by doing what he says is most important of all—keeping his employees “content and productive.”

Ruppert says he made mistakes and learned from them. Eventually, he and his management team became adept at recognizing and preventing potential mistakes before they happened, which helped grow his business all the more.

doing and I am going to meet or exceed their expectations.”

Turner, meanwhile, started out with insurance from the get-go, on the advice of his father. “From Day 1, we had all the necessary insurance. We had a business plan. We had an accountant, everything,” he says. “We weren’t just a push mower and a truck. We weren’t just fly by night. We ran it correctly.”

Michael Field agrees that having a business plan is important. The 26-year-old is the owner of Premium Properties, based in Spicer, Minn., and a 2010 graduate of the University of Minnesota, Crookston. He started his business when he was a junior in high school, working multiple jobs to keep

continued on page 54



“We weren’t just a push mower and a truck. We weren’t just fly by night. We ran it correctly.”

—Matt Turner

Doing it right

Chiles was 13 and cutting grass for a new client. The day after he started, she called him. “Are you insured?” she asked him. “No ma’am, I’m not,” Chiles replied. He lost the job.

The next week, he obtained a \$1 million insurance policy. “That was a turning point in my professional development,” he says. “I became a legitimate business. I started paying taxes. I got safety gear. I said, ‘This is what I’m

PHOTO: MICHAEL FIELD



www.turfbooks.com

Accountants to the Lawn Care Industry

Does Your Accountant understand the Lawn Care Industry?

- ▶ Accounting / Bookkeeping Services
- ▶ Tax Preparation and Audit Representation
- ▶ Bank and Credit Card Reconciliations
- ▶ Outsourced CFO Services
- ▶ A / P and A / R Management
- ▶ Fast, Reliable, Affordable

Serving Lawn Care Companies Nationwide

Want Better Financial Information? Call Turf Books Now

Ph: 973-300-0288



Daniel S. Gordon, CPA

As an Owner, Manager, CFO and Industry Consultant, Dan has been involved with the development of several service companies from inception to \$15 million in annual sales levels and beyond.

What Others are Saying:

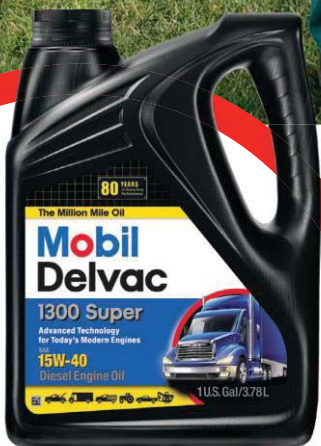
Dan has helped take my business to a new level with focus on improving accounting, operations and financial management. If you are looking for one of the finest accounting service providers in the industry, Dan is your guy! He listens, is down to earth, and provides crucial feedback to help your business grow!

Matt Jesson
President, Green Lawn Fertilizing, Inc

The longer my truck's engine lasts, the better it is for my business.
That's why I switched to Mobil Delvac.



©2012 Exxon Mobil Corporation. All trademarks used herein are trademarks or registered trademarks of Exxon Mobil Corporation or one of its subsidiaries unless indicated otherwise.



You want your engine to have a long life. So you too should switch to Mobil Delvac. It delivers performance beyond the boundaries of conventional oils because its unique formulation includes Trimer Core chemistry – a powerful additive technology that resists oil degradation and prevents wear, ultimately extending drain intervals and engine life. Ask for Mobil Delvac wherever you get your oil changed or at any auto parts store.

mobildelvac.com

Mobil Delvac
For Long Engine Life

COVER STORY

continued from page 52

it afloat, much to the chagrin of his parents, who worried he wasn't getting enough sleep.

Field always strove to be professional, going back to those early days, when he took out an \$800 ad in the local paper. He hoped to get 10 new customers from that; he got 20, along

with many customer referrals.

Today Field's is a \$150,000 business that has grown largely from customer retention and referrals. The Premium Properties owner has clearly defined contracts for his customers and a no-profanity policy for his employees. He mails out his invoices with postage-paid return envelopes. And his workers wear



FYI

Tim Rowe

COMPANY: Tim's Landscape Care, Cherry Hill, N.J.
SCHOOL: Loyola University Maryland
STARTED BUSINESS AT AGE: 14
CURRENT AGE: 23

safety gear and embroidered polo shirts.

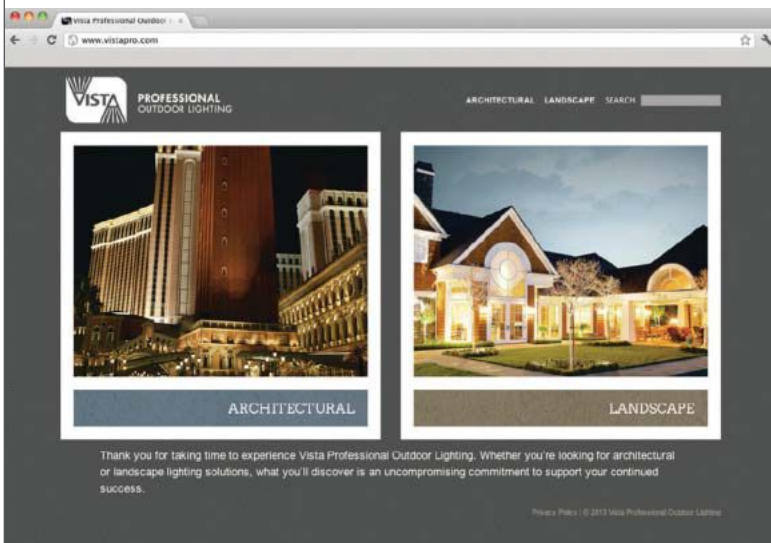
Like Field, Tim Rowe, a 2011 graduate of Loyola University Maryland—where he swam and made the dean's list—started his business as a teen. However, he didn't incorporate the company under its current name, Tim's Landscape Care (TLC), in Cherry Hill, N.J., until this January.

Despite his youth, throughout the years, Rowe acquired new clients through advertising—specifically by passing out fliers. It was something he'd done since he was 15, when his dad bought him a riding mower and Rowe strove to build his business. "Every spring, I printed out a thousand fliers and passed them out throughout the whole neighborhood," Rowe says.

He thus established a clientele that grew through name recognition and word of mouth. Rowe, a gifted swimmer, also grew his customer base through his swimming network, using it to obtain his biggest job yet—a \$50,000 residential account (as shown in the photo above).

It came just last fall, after Hurricane

vistapro.com



Bookmark this page so you can experience the value of partnering with Vista Professional Outdoor Lighting again and again. Whether you're looking for architectural or landscape lighting solutions, what you'll discover at this address is an uncompromising commitment to support your ongoing success.



VISTA
PROFESSIONAL
OUTDOOR LIGHTING

800-766-8478 | www.vistapro.com



Sandy battered New Jersey. It was on hill on a street corner, the ideal advertising spot. “That job really helped me out with visibility, which led to other jobs right down the street,” Rowe says.

Knowing the value of a degree and networking

Ruppert has valuable advice for students with burgeoning businesses: “Work hard and don’t be afraid to ask for advice. Align yourself with others in the industry. Pay close attention to the numbers early. Join trade associations as soon as you can. And most importantly, remember the most valuable asset in our companies is our people.”

Chiles may still be in school, but he’s already living some of that advice. “I have a lot of resources at the university. If I don’t know something, I can just pick up the phone and call a professor and find the answer,” he says.

Chiles puts what he learns in school into practice on the job. “It’s always relevant,” he says, whether it’s keeping accurate records or making his company logo.

AJ Davis, 23, also knows the value of a college education—and those associations Ruppert mentioned. He founded Davis Outdoor Jobs, Apalachin, N.Y., in 2008, when he was a senior in high school. A 2011 graduate of the State University of New York-Delhi, Davis says his degree in landscape design and management helped build his business—now climbing to \$200,000.

“Once my customers saw I had a degree, they were more willing to let me try other projects,” he says. “I graduated and then the following summer I got two big

PHOTO: TIM ROWE

HIGH SPEED

INSECT CONTROL

for trees & shrubs



Zylam[®] Liquid
SYSTEMIC INSECTICIDE

- Rapid Movement Through Plant Tissue
- Extended Systemic Activity
- Controls Over 70 Sucking & Chewing Pests
SCALES | THRIPS | LACE BUGS | WHITEFLIES
- Provides Control In As Little As 30 Minutes*
- Ideal For Multiple Application Methods
SOIL DRENCH | BARK BANDING | FOLIAR APPLICATION

**on select insect species*



Labeled For
TREES & SHRUBS

G pbi / GORDON
CORPORATION
An Employee-Owned Company

800.821.7925
pbigordon.com/zylam

Gordon's[®] and Zylam[®] are registered trademarks of PBI-Gordon Corporation. Always read and follow label directions. 12/12 02078

COVER STORY

jobs from customers we already had. They were worth substantially more than my other jobs.”

Before graduation, Davis was doing mostly mowing and maintenance work. After graduation, the installation side of his business grew. And he makes it a point to never stop learning.

As a student he attended the Profes-

sional Landcare Network’s (PLANET’s) Student Career Days. Today he belongs to the New York State Nursery & Landscape Association and a business networking group called BNI.

Field, meanwhile, says



» WEB EXTRA

To learn about landscaping students on the rise today, Visit the Web Extras section of LandscapeManagement.net to see what went down at this year’s Student Career Days, hosted by the Professional Landcare Network.

his degree in turfgrass management/horticulture and the things he learned in college “were absolutely essential” to his success in the Green Industry.

Having worked for a landscape maintenance company in high school, he also sees the value in mak-

ing mistakes at other companies before starting your own.



“You have to continually improve, or the new guys will have an advantage.”

—AJ Davis

Phil Allen, a professor of landscape management at Brigham Young University, says that’s exactly the advice he’s hearing from landscape company owners today.

“They say you’d be smarter if you work for somebody else for a while, figure out the business and the laws, and then go on and do your own if you want to,” he says. “The laws are more complicated today. It’s a more complicated world than it was 20 years ago.”

If at first you don’t succeed

Allen, who has been a professor for 22 years, has seen many of his own students man the reins of their own landscaping businesses. He’s also heard company business owners say they like to hire people who owned their own small business and failed.

“The person who failed can be a more valuable and loyal employee,”

CUT YOUR MOWING COSTS WITH PROPANE.

AND GET UP TO \$1,000 PER MOWER TO PROVE IT.

Take part in our Propane Mower Incentive Program and get \$1,000 back for each new qualifying propane-fueled mower purchase, or \$500 back for each qualifying mower conversion. In return, you’ll tell us about your experience for one mowing season.

For more information, see your mowing equipment dealer or visit poweredbypropane.org.

Some restrictions apply.
See rules at poweredbypropane.org.

 PROPANE EDUCATION & RESEARCH COUNCIL



Allen explains. "Sometimes if you've failed at something, you're not as anxious to go out and try it again."

Dean Trondle knows what it's like to try in this business and fail. He grew his company too big too fast. He informally started his landscaping business with a friend when he was in high school, a "summer hobby," Trondle calls it. By their senior year, the duo had 120 mow-and-blow accounts and was making \$60,000 in revenue.

Once in college at Bob Jones University in Greenville, S.C., Trondle bought out his friend. He sold his first annual contract to a homeowners association his freshman year. "That showed me the light that it could be a career," he said. His sophomore year, he hired his friend BJ Flora as his operations manager, named the company Cut Above Enterprises and got serious about it. "I'd go to classes, work till dark and then go home and do my home-



"We had a strong brand, a strong logo, but that only carries you so far. If you don't have a strong model underneath, it's not sustainable." —Dean Trondle

work at night," Trondle says.

Working toward his accounting degree, Trondle used the knowledge he acquired in class to organize his finances and strengthen his business plan. "I feel like I gleaned more practical knowledge because I was applying it right away," he says.

Before Trondle graduated from college in 1999, Cut Above already had obtained a huge maintenance account at Bob Jones University and had more than \$1 million in revenue. "That helped us with credibility," Flora says. "Once we landed Bob Jones, our com-

munity recognition just skyrocketed."

The duo began picking up more properties around Greenville and connected with local property managers. By 2001, the company was primed to do \$3 million in revenue and had a staff of 73, including a full-time mechanic and managers for irrigation, installation, maintenance and chemical applications.

But in 2001, the bottom fell out when the company's acquisition of a TruGreen Landcare branch went awry. "I tried to do the acquisition and I lost [business] to a competitor," Trondle says. "By the end of the first month, a



Man's best friend
is no friend to your turf.
Flush excess Sodium
from your soil with Solu-Cal S.

Solu-Cal S Enhanced Dihydrate Mined Gypsum helps alleviate damage from deicing agents, effluent irrigation water, and dog urine.

Solu-Cal products contain **pH₃Ca** Technology

PHCA enhances the plant's ability to convert vital nutrients into an available form for plant uptake and soil pH adjustment.

Available in liquid form as Diamond Grow 12% Humic/Fulvic Acid.

www.Solu-Cal.com • 774.678.0288

Lawn & Landscape • Golf • Hydro Seed • Wildlife



COVER STORY

lot of customers cancelled on me, and I realized I was going to be hurting.”

When he looks back, the TruGreen acquisition is Trondle's only regret. “I think I was a bit naive,” Trondle says. “Success breeds an unrealistic pride. I had gleaned a lot of success early on, then I realized I needed to eat humble pie in a way. No one wants to eat it, but it refocused my life.”

In March 2002, Trondle was 26 and had \$1.6 million in personal liability. He sold the business to Flora, who made it his priority to downsize the company. Working for his dad to make extra money, Flora hired a couple of people to run the company for a year before he rejoined the business full time. “We paid down the debt and



BJ Flora

COMPANY: Cut Above Enterprises, Taylors, S.C.

SCHOOL: Bob Jones University

BOUGHT BUSINESS AT AGE: 25

CURRENT AGE: 36

2012 REVENUE: \$1 million

FYI



laid a stronger foundation,” he says. “I have no regrets—none at all. Probably because it's worked out so well.”

Indeed it has. Cut Above's 2012 revenue is \$1 million. Its maintenance division grew 30 percent in the past year and its landscape division about 15 percent.

“Now I'm closer to living the American dream,” Flora says. “I've got a good business. I've got good guys working for me, and I've got more family time.”

That's what Chiles is aiming for. “I want to grow my business to the point where I could just write the checks and look at the numbers,” he says. “And when I get to that point, I don't know, I might want to dabble in real estate.” **LM**

» WEB EXTRA

Want to learn more from these student-teachers? Visit the Web Extras section of [Landscape Management.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net) to see their top 10 tips for running a successful business.

PHOTO: BJ FLORA

The best way to protect trees and shrubs from insects is to get out ahead of them. The super-systemic activity of Safari[®] Insecticide delivers quick uptake and knockdown of a broad spectrum of the most damaging landscape insects including scale, emerald ash borer, aphids, mealybug, boxwood leafminer, whitefly, lacebug, hemlock woolly adelgid and more. And the long-lasting control of Safari will result in satisfied customers and reduced callbacks. With Safari, you'll outpace the bugs and leave your competition in the dust. To learn more, visit valentpro.com/safari.

CLOCKED AS THE FASTEST BROAD SPECTRUM INSECTICIDE ON THE MARKET.

Safari[®]
INSECTICIDE

PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTS
VALENT
Products That Work, From People Who Care[®] | www.valentpro.com | 800-89-VALENT (898-2536)
Always read and follow label instructions.

Safari and Products That Work, From People Who Care are registered trademarks of Valent U.S.A. Corporation.
©2013 Valent U.S.A. Corporation. All rights reserved. AM35573

Perfection is perfectly simple.



TRIMEC[®]

BROADLEAF HERBICIDE

RELIABLE
DEPENDABLE
PREDICTABLE

Trusted for over 40 years | Original low-odor herbicide



800.821.7925 • pbigordon.com/trimec

Gordon's[®] and Trimec[®] are registered trademarks of PBI-Gordon Corp. 12/12 02275

Humanize YOUR BUSINESS

How social media makes your firm more likeable, trustworthy and attractive to new customers.

While many companies are busy adding social media to their marketing practices, they're not fully understanding the magic that makes it work: its humanizing qualities that make your business more approachable. For the most part, businesses are simply adding a social layer to their marketing, like a fresh coat of paint. What

they should be doing instead is baking the qualities of social into every aspect of the business—from operations to sales, marketing and customer service.

This is especially true for small business, where effective social media use realistically calls for owners and management team members to become directly involved. After all, these are the individuals with the decades of

vital experience for capably processing and responding to the engagement that social media technologies make possible. To delegate those interactions to lower-level employees risks compromising what social media does best: humanizing your business to make it more likeable, trustworthy, and therefore more attractive to the new customers that have yet to learn about it.



BY **JEFF KORAN**



» **WEB EXTRA**

Visit the Web Extras section of LandscapeManagement.net to read Korhan's lessons from the trenches.

Social creates expectations

What would you think if you visited your favorite store and found it closed at a time when it's normally open? Customers develop expectations and one of them is that your business is open, ready and willing to serve as they've known it to be.

If you operate a small business, you understand this. You open and close on time and follow a number of other standard business practices.

A new expectation is that your business is friendly. This is a byproduct of our social media-influenced world. It's just one of many new expectations that social media has created of businesses, along with others that are derivatives of it.

Here are five more relevant expectations that are becoming part of the fabric of the business environment—one in which every business will have to adapt to if it expects to enjoy continued relevance and growth:

1 | Visibility. We are living in a period in which a business without an online presence is likely to be considered irrelevant by many consumers, whereas customers will perceive a company with an active social presence to be engaged with the community and openly prepared for more business.

2 | Authenticity. Customers want to have a relationship with your company; they want to know what's going on behind the scenes. They are curious, and you have to feed that curiosity in order for those relationships to flourish.

3 | Accessibility. The web gives everyone more access to people, companies and causes. This ease of attaining information has conditioned consumers to expect to have open access to your business—and especially with you, if you are the owner or one of its leaders.

4 | Community. It's no longer possible to be successful without a meaningful relationship with the communities you serve, as communities are the new markets. They equally serve the needs of businesses and the people within them. This is why locally engaged companies have distinct advantages when all other things are equal.

5 | Relevance. Savvy businesses understand their communities care most about the little things that only an insider would know. When you speak your community's language, you develop a bond that supports your business' ongoing relevance. And that

language often includes the keyword phrases that optimize your online content for search.

This is all going to become even more interesting as a growing number of the members of the "Facebook generation" find their way into the workforce. You can expect business to become profoundly social, because that will be the expectation of your younger employees. Students in high school and college today have much different views of authority figures than their parents do. While they respect the authority of these figures and their positions, they also expect full access to them. This means they will expect to have access to you as a business owner—just as your customers will.

One way to grant this access is to become personally involved with social media implementation. As a result, you'll learn more about your custom-



For over 40 years, Air-O-Lator has been making eco-friendly, high performance products. **Font'N-Aire** fountains combine aesthetic beauty with a natural way to improve water quality and health. Backed by outstanding customer service, Air-O-Lator fountains are easy to install, service and upgrade.

www.airolator.com

800-821-3177


SOCIAL MARKETING

ers, while also giving them the opportunity to learn more about you. This is what Tom Peters had in mind when he popularized the term “management by walking around” (MBWA) in 1982 as the co-author of the groundbreaking business book *In Search of Excellence*. Now you have social media to digitally facilitate walking around the communities your business serves, something your competitors already may be doing.

Consumers have a voice

The collective voice of consumers will continue to grow and shape the world of commerce. The challenge for businesses is to leverage its power by first engaging with it, and then facilitating the conversation to help the community do more of what it wants to do.

People want to be heard, and every business needs to provide a forum for that to happen. Many companies are



It's arguably more important to understand the influences of social media than to necessarily be using it.

using their Facebook page to accomplish this; it's smart, but only if the company monitors and manages the conversation.

I happen to be a fan of Southwest Airlines. When it redesigned its awards program, I went over to its Facebook

page to do some research on whether to convert my old reward points or keep the free tickets from the earlier program. There was a string of hundreds of negative comments without a single response from Southwest. It's surprising because Southwest is a well respected company that's known for its friendliness and personal engagement with customers. Unfortunately, the lack of response only served to fan the flames of customers who were looking for answers—and not finding them.

The worst thing a business or brand can do is fail to respond. If you're going to open up a Facebook page or accept comments on your blog, you have a responsibility to respond to your audi-



Wherever your business takes you, we're there to help.

At Progressive Commercial Auto, we know your business depends on your vehicle. For over 40 years, we've been offering Commercial Auto insurance designed specifically for small business owners. And with 24/7 live support and expert claims representatives, we get you back on the road fast. On the road with you. Now that's Progressive.

- Call for a Free Quote
1-888-375-7905
- Find an Agent
ProgressiveCommercial.com



PROGRESSIVE
COMMERCIAL

Progressive Casualty Ins. Co. & affiliates.
12800197.L06 (02/13)

ence. That expectation doesn't seem to make sense to the same companies that always will answer the telephone if it rings. Today those calls may not be coming so much by the telephone as they are from the social networks. Is your business answering the call? It's an expectation you must build into your standard business practices.

Customer service is moving online

A growing number of consumers are feeling more and more comfortable openly expressing their true feelings online. While this scares the heck out of most businesses, it's something that we're all going to have to come to grips with. For that to happen, your business has to be willing to join the conversation and be prepared to make strong moves.

Business is no longer the monologue that it used to be—when the message of the company was taken at face value.

Now, it's a dialogue with increasingly vocal consumers. According to most research studies over the past several decades, approximately 70 percent to 80 percent of all consumers do not trust businesses in general, especially large corporations.

Your company can embrace this reality by using the social networks to proactively reach out to your customers. While taking this approach makes the company somewhat vulnerable, it's much less risky than erecting perceived barriers where consumers expect transparency. Times are changing; generally accepted practices are being redefined. Social media is democratizing business in general by giving everyone equal access—as well as supporting the expectation that every customer will receive first-class service.

You can wait for this trend to become more prevalent; or, you can take action now to lead your industry.

The collective voice of consumers is growing more powerful every day—something that forward-thinking businesses know they can no longer ignore. One innovative approach is to give up control of your brand to consumers. Instead of trying to completely manage your brand, focus instead on encouraging community conversations that speak favorably about it. **LM**

Korhan is a former landscape business owner who now helps Green Industry businesses use social media and Internet marketing to create exceptional customer experiences.

Excerpted with permission of the publisher, Wiley, from *Built In Social: Essential Social Marketing Practices for Every Small Business*, copyright ©2013 by Jeff Korhan. This book is now available at all bookstores and online booksellers.



PVB LOCK BOX

PVB LOCK BOX

The **P.V.B LOCK BOX** will come in one size 24x24x12 this will fit all wall mounted Pressure Vacuum Breaker units ranging from 3/4" to 2 1/2" as you may have seen at the 2012 irrigation show this product is professionally built in the U.S.A. The product is powder coated hunter green, it comes with the four security bolts and lead anchors it also comes with one security key unlocking bit. This unit wholesales for \$319.99 and the manufactures suggested retail price is \$499.00. Our contractors are installing these units at \$600.00 each and the unit installs in less than 20 minutes.



CLOCK BOX

The **CLOCKBOX** will come in one size 14x17x10 this will fit most outdoor irrigation controllers, this unit will also be powder coated hunter green and come with a removable front cover for access to the unit the locking mechanism will be (2) security hex pin locking bolts and will come with two unlocking bits one for the owner and one for the irrigation or maintenance tech. This unit wholesales at \$259.99 and the MSRP is \$439.00. Our contractors installed pricing is \$539.00 and this also installs in less than 20 minutes. By installing this product this assures that no unauthorized person or persons are tampering with the irrigation controller and will also protect it from being stolen.



Call 800.372.1434 To Place Your Order Or Visit Us At www.pvblockbox.com

permagreen™

Using our 100+ years of lawn care experience and 15 years of R&D, we've invented great spreader sprayers that make you *MORE* money and give you more free time to enjoy it. That's why PermaGreen™ is the go-to industry standard.

PermaGreen's are the everyday choice of over ten thousand professionals who use them to profitably treat everything from postage stamps to multi-acre sports and commercial complexes. Agile, fast & powerful, it's a sound investment with a quick Return On Investment.

We'll prove its money-making power. Ride a PermaGreen™ Triumph on your lawns for 30 days: If you don't love it, we'll buy it back!* It's just that simple.



WIN A TRIUMPH!*

Enter online for your chance to make your dreams come true!

Triumph Options: Available with choice of standard 3-hole or optional 1-hole spreader mechanisms in a Spreader Sprayer, Spread-Only or Spray-Only version

permagreen.com | 800.346.2001

DREAM BIG. EXPECT MORE.

© 2012 PermaGreen™ Supreme, Inc. U.S. Patents 6,366,600 & 7,954,573. PermaGreen™ is a registered trademark of PermaGreen™ Supreme, Inc. All rights reserved. *See permagreen.com for details.

MARKET WATCH

LAWN/TREE CARE

ESA at play

RISE serves up the latest on the Endangered Species Act and its impact on you.

By BETH GERACI

At the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) breakfast meeting at this year's Golf Industry Show on Feb. 6 in San Diego, federal legislative and regulatory issues took the spotlight. In his introduction, Steve Gullickson, RISE governing board chairman, said in 2013 the organization is setting its sights most on California, Florida and Northeastern states such as New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

"Those are key states where legislative and regulatory challenges are moving at a relatively fast pace," he said.

They're challenges he said could inhibit the entire Green Industry's ability to deliver as broad a range of products as it does today (think: pesticides).

Conversation at the breakfast focused on a few issues but most dominating was the Endangered Species Act. It's at the center of multiple federal lawsuits that could curtail the Green Industry's ability to apply pesticides on their current schedules, based on alleged risks to endangered species.

A northern California district court's decision on the issue is looming. A ruling is expected this spring.

"It's really a massive challenge for us in terms of everything—from crop all the way through golf and commercial and residential (landscaping)," Gullickson said.

RISE is striving to ensure lawsuits fighting EPA on the issue aren't successful. And by intervening in *Center for Biological Diversity v. EPA*, otherwise known as "the megasuit," RISE is taking on a proactive role, one on the side of EPA.

The suit is called the megasuit "because about 380 registered pesticides (across the U.S.) potentially could be impacted under this litigation," said Dudley Hoskins, manager of regulatory policy at RISE.

Depending on the suit's outcome, provisions could delay new pesticides from coming to market or limit their use altogether, having a major impact on the Green Industry.

The nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity contends that EPA did

RISE's Dudley Hoskins says the so-called EPA "megasuit" could affect up to 380 active ingredients.

not consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service properly about the effects of EPA-registered pesticides on some endangered species in the San Francisco Bay area.

But Karen Reardon, RISE's vice president, public affairs, said there's nothing wrong with EPA's standards.

"EPA has the gold standard for risk assessment," Reardon said. "They are very well resourced; they do a fine job in meeting their remit and risk assessment. We would like the services to be more open to the EPA and the great job they're doing on this as being protective of species."

But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has its own species risk assessment process, which it's confident in, Reardon said. As a result, she added, it simply doesn't consider EPA's perspective.

RISE's hope is the consultation process among the federal services can be streamlined under the ESA and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

Regardless of the issues at stake, the conflict would be much better resolved through inter-agency partnership—not played out in the courts, said Hoskins.

Reardon said RISE intervened in the megasuit, so if there is a settlement, the organization could give lawn care professionals a voice in any future discussions.

"Our goal would be to ensure there would be collaboration going forward and more perspectives involved in the decision making," she said. "We would like the interests and perspectives of pesticide applicators and manufacturers to be represented at the table through us."

PG 65 **LAWN/TREE CARE** Regulatory changes could impact LCOs

PG 66 **DESIGN/BUILD** ASLA survey reveals residential trends

PG 68 **MAINTENANCE** How frontline sales can boost business

PG 69 **IRRIGATION** IA's Chad Forcey offers an intro to lobbying



What's hot

The ASLA's 2013 residential trends survey shows demand for mainstay landscape elements plus new areas of interest.

By MARISA PALMIERI

The American Society of Landscape Architects' (ASLA's) annual Residential Landscape Trends Survey reveals that fire pits/fireplaces and grills remain hot items this year, along with terraces, patios and decks. For the survey, landscape architects who specialize in residential design were asked to rate the expected popularity of various residential outdoor design elements in 2013.

We compared the data with 2012's survey to identify the items with the greatest change in popularity over last year. They include:

ELEMENT	2012	2013	% CHANGE
Wireless/Internet connectivity	42.7	47.8	5.1 ▲
Outdoor heaters	39.9	50.6	10.7 ▲
Ponds/streams	52.2	58.3	6.1 ▲
Rooftop gardens	38.3	50.4	12.1 ▲
Solar-powered lights	32.8	40.6	7.8 ▲
Geothermal-heated pools	21.7	28.4	6.7 ▲
Arbors	88.7	83.5	5.2 ▼
Decks	74.5	80.9	6.4 ▲
Utility shed	56.5	64.8	8.3 ▲
Columns	49.6	44.5	5.1 ▼
ADA-accessible structures	14.6	22.1	7.5 ▲



Not surprisingly, the following elements remain in demand, ranking in the 90th percentile on popularity:

- Terraces/patios/decks (97.6)
- Fire pits/fireplaces (97)
- Grills (96.3)
- Seating/dining areas (96.3)
- Lighting (95.1)
- Outdoor living spaces (kitchens, entertainment spaces) (94.5)
- Gardens/landscaped spaces (94.4)
- Low-maintenance landscapes (93.9)
- Installed seating (benches, seat walls, ledges, steps, boulders) (90.3)



Your Vision, Their Dream – Anywhere

Communicating your vision to prospective customers has never been easier with PRO Landscape design software. Whether your design platform is a desktop, laptop or tablet you can design and sell anytime, and now – anywhere.

PRO Landscape is not only easy to use, but feature rich including stunning photo imaging, night and holiday lighting, 2D CAD, 3D renderings, and complete customer proposals.

Bring your customer's dreams to life – starting today!

prolandscape.com
sales@prolandscape.com
800-231-8574



PRO Landscape
DESIGN SOFTWARE

MAINTENANCE

Selling on the frontline

Encouraging employees in the field to sell add-ons can improve net profit. Here's how to get started.

By MARISA PALMIERI

Landscape companies can improve their sales and profitability by empowering frontline employees like foremen and project managers to sell, according to consultant Jeffrey Scott. "It's very effective for raising overall net profit by selling high-margin, add-on sales," he says.

He outlined what it takes to get frontline employees to close deals during the Jeffrey Scott Sales Summit, a three-part webinar series held earlier this year in partnership with *Landscape Management*.

The frontline employee's sales role includes spotting and preventing problems, planting seeds and reporting needs, Scott says. Encouraging employees to sell requires training, incentives and collaboration.

Basic training for frontline employees should cover things as simple as making eye contact and smiling, wearing a clean uniform, asking questions and practicing active listening. Also, ensure employees know what services your company's already supposed to be providing the client.

"Don't make suggestions for things you're already doing or supposed to be doing and haven't done yet," Scott says.

Incentives are important to motivate staff who aren't accustomed to selling. If selling isn't a core part of an employee's job, incentives typically have to be enough "to make it fun," Scott says. Consider incentivizing team members for leads, bringing in new clients and making enhancement sales.

For starters, introduce the new frontline sales program to the team and explain the incentive. Consider giving your new "salespeople" business cards if they don't already have them, which adds some weight and importance to their role. Provide them with forms to return to the office for leads or sales made. Remember to celebrate successes, and not just with money, Scott says.

"Making it important is what will make it happen," he says. "You can't just throw it out like a boomerang and expect it'll come back."

Finally, good internal communication among departments is important for collaboration. "If not, you'll find you may step on each other's toes and cause more problems," Scott says.



FRONTLINE SALES LADDER

1
First, frontline employees may begin by finding needs and reporting them back to the office.

2
Next, they may practice the "art of suggestion" to plant a seed in the client's mind about an additional service the company offers.

with small sales, it's hard to make money sending out a salesperson, but the sales can add up."

with unit pricing for some services. "A sale made on the spot can be very profitable," consultant Jeffrey Scott says. "Especially

3
Third, the company can set up a system for frontline employees to give quotes on the spot

4
Finally, the fourth rung on the ladder is to ink the sale with a quote form.

IRRIGATION

Intro to lobbying

Use these points to guide your advocacy efforts.

By CHAD FORCEY

While the mere mention of influencing regulatory policy may seem like a long and tough road, the fact is it's becoming a necessary route for irrigation and Green Industry professionals. With demand for water on the rise, legislators and regulatory bodies require the expertise and input of irrigation professionals to shape policy that not only promotes water-use efficiency but helps our industry's interests. In that respect, every irrigation contractor and business owner, big or small, should know how he or she can play a role in influencing public policy.

The Irrigation Association's (IA's) Landscape Water Management Contractor Common Interest Group sponsors regular webinars that offer solutions to issues important to its members. One recent webinar addressed the ways contractors can influence the laws that guide their industry. Greg Mahon, budget and policy specialist for Pennsylvania State Senator Joe Scarnati, offered some tips for irrigation professionals.

► **Define your goals.** Distill them to the most salient points. Even though the legislative process is different in every state, commonalities remain. For instance, legislators and their staff members hear from numerous interest

groups. Keeping your goals simple and easily digestible will help decision makers keep facts straight and help your cause stand out.

► **Speak out and tell your story.**

Don't count on someone else to do it for you. Not only are you advocating for your industry and interests, but you're also offering expertise on the issue. Providing tangible value to legislators on what your issue is—and how it affects the local economy and jobs in their districts—is a top selling point.

► **Build a consensus.** Typically, by the time legislation reaches the floor of any legislature, it has a relatively good chance of passing. It wouldn't have reached that point without widespread support, usually across diverse groups. Broadcasting this value to lawmakers shows that your cause has widespread support across constituencies. Consensus also gives advocates a chance to “take the temperature” of pending legislation along the way. If your lobbying efforts take an unexpected turn, you will likely hear about it from someone in your coalition. These “ear to the ground” relationships are extremely valuable.



Legislators need irrigators' expertise and input, says IA's Chad Forcey.

These points represent the beginnings of an effective strategy to advocate for your interests. Partnering with state or national associations can provide guidance on more detailed tactics, help with coalition building and assist with plans on how to best access legislators and key staff.

Access to legislators and their staffs is only as valuable as the results of the relationships formed from that access. When you effectively provide them with clear goals, a compelling case and a coalition of diverse interests, it will go a long way in the success of your advocacy efforts. **LM**

Forcey is state affairs director for the IA. Reach him at ChadForcey@irrigation.org.

IA Corner

Save the Date for the
2013 Irrigation Show and Education Conference in Austin, Texas, Nov. 4-8, 2013!



The Irrigation Show offers you opportunities to focus on your know-how, your business, your connections, industry innovations and fun, all in one place. For more information see irrigationshow.org.

Registration is now open for **IA certification exams** in Austin!

For 30 years, IA certification has been the way to tell customers, employers and peers that you know how to get the job done right. ► Go to irrigation.org/certification for more on IA's Select Certified program.

Want to influence the direction of your industry? Join IA today.

Visit irrigation.org for information to grow your business through:

- Utilizing continuing education tools.
- Gaining a competitive edge through professional certification.
- Influencing water-use public policy at the local, state, regional and national levels.
- Ensuring irrigation interests are represented in industry standards and codes development.

PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

shopping in style

THE MISSION

Keep an upscale shopping center's surroundings looking radiant regardless of the weather and other challenges.

The client's intent was to create an upscale, family-oriented shopping center. To achieve that goal, the firm sought a lot of landscape color on the property.

However, the existing conditions presented plenty of challenges—including a lack of irrigation; pollution elements from the nearby toll way and surrounding streets; foot traffic; shrubbery; natural area plants around the lake; and water fowl.

To address those issues, Landscape Concepts Management, Grayslake, Ill., decided to go the extra mile in plant care. That included hand watering areas that needed it and adding slow-release irrigation bags to the trees.

"We also made sure we sought the right plants for the area, that can handle both drought and wet areas," says Mark Gemmer, account manager for the project.

Shade trees were planted throughout the shopping center but are kept open to prevent wind damage. Plants are changed out each season and hand watered daily; bed lines are edged monthly; and the turf is replaced annually in small areas that have been affected by salt after the winter season. Perennials and shrub roses are deadheaded weekly to control overgrowth. Soil amendments are added twice a year for maximum growth.

The first year was somewhat of "a learning process," Gemmer acknowledges, and some of the plants did not work out. Eventually, though, the team became more familiar with the site and achieved its original goals.

"We were able to populate the site with flowers and plants that have lots of color and beautiful leaves," he reports. "Our plant experts were able to pick the right plant materials needed for certain areas, like those with high foot traffic, and plants that can resist both drought and wet conditions."



PHOTOS: LINDA OYAMA BRYAN



3



4



5



6

THE WORK

- 1 | Curb appeal.** The shopping center sign is surrounded by 27 flower beds. The hedge rose and shrubbery are hand pruned for lighting quality and a formal look.
- 2 | A pleasant stroll.** All shrubs are hand pruned so shoppers may enjoy the sitting areas. The hardscapes are checked each season and leveled to prevent tripping hazards.
- 3 | To everything, there's a season.** There are 47 containers and more than two dozen flower beds throughout the property that are changed seasonally.
- 4 | Scenic drive.** The parking lot is also decorated with lots of color, trees and plants. The concrete parking lot containers are hand watered during a drought to prevent foliage from burning.
- 5 | Water play.** Four fountains are placed in the pond each year to prevent stagnant water.
- 6 | Clean slate.** The walking paths are made from slate chips and raked weekly for a leveled ground.

Landscape Concepts Management, based in Grayslake, Ill., serves Midwestern commercial sites, retail and mixed-use properties, homeowners' associations, multiunit rentals, educational and healthcare facilities and government agencies. Learn more at LandscapeConcepts.com.



Far East design

Offering Japanese gardens has been both profitable and fun for this Wyoming landscape company.

WHEN AARON RODOLPH, president of Rodolph Brothers, based in Casper, Wyo., first started reading about Japanese garden design, he was amazed how much of the elements he'd already been incorporating into his projects. It's all about natural flow and placing boulders in just the right way—design elements that Rodolph realized he was already trying to achieve. Since learning more about Japanese gardens, which typically include water, rocks, architectural elements and trees and shrubs, Rodolph has gone on to offer them specifically as a service.

Regardless of whether or not a client asks for a Japanese garden, Rodolph instinctively incorporates similar design elements into his projects, such as natural flow, simplicity and asymmetry, to make the project look more natural.

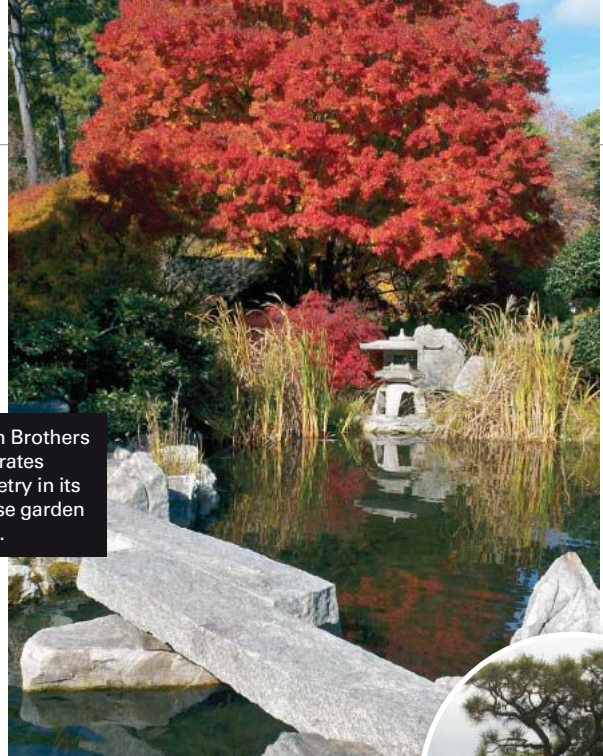
"I always find that clients end up being struck by the design and saying, 'Those boulders look amazing,'" says Rodolph. "They don't realize our eyes are drawn to having things laid out in order and in specific numbers. So we'll continue to use some of these design principles—such as boulder placement and plantings—regardless of whether it's a dedicated Japanese design or not."

But customers who know that Rodolph has studied Japanese gardens specifically ask for them on their landscapes. In those cases, Rodolph strictly adheres to all of the design principles of the art. "I want to ensure that I'm being true to the culture with the design," he says.

Rodolph acknowledges that Japanese gardens are very specific and may not have broad appeal. He doesn't promote the service by itself much.

"I'll bring it up in a design meeting and show some examples of what I've done, but if the client doesn't gravitate that way, it's not something I push," he says.

Rodolph Brothers incorporates asymmetry in its Japanese garden designs.



"Doing the whole nine yards with the bonsai trees and everything is certainly not for everyone."

Still, offering Japanese gardens has been a profitable service for Rodolph. It's been an interesting offering that separates him from his competitors. And the clients who want a true Japanese garden appreciate the intense studying he's done.

"People definitely see value in our ability to create these gardens," says Rodolph. "They're also willing to pay for our time in finding the unique materials that go into them."

"They understand how much work is involved in finding the plants and ensuring the design adheres to certain principles," he continues. "I've found the clients who want them are willing to pay for design fees on top of all the work."

Though Rodolph says it's a lot of work, it's also something he enjoys. "It may require searching from nursery to nursery to find the exact materials but that's enjoyable and not something I usually get to do," he says.

He adds that while the company has offered a comprehensive lineup of services over the last 15 years, "it's design that's really my passion. Doing these special gardens is very fulfilling for me and ultimately for the client who gets to enjoy it."

Payton is a freelance writer with eight years of experience writing about the landscape industry.

>> SERVICE SNAPSHOT

WHY JAPANESE GARDENS?

"When I started reading about Japanese gardens I realized I was already using many of the principles," says Aaron Rodolph, president of Rodolph Brothers.

INVESTMENT? Because Rodolph's firm already did design/build work, adding this focus didn't require adding equipment. The biggest investment was the time involved in studying the design principles. "Plus, it's getting the crews and foreman to buy into the design," he says. "For us that wasn't hard. They were amazed they'd already been incorporating a lot of the elements."

BEST TIP? "Don't get so hung up on the look of it—like whether you're using lanterns or not," says Rodolph. "Go back to the design principles. It's more about how many plantings or boulders you choose and how you lay them out. In the end, it's about creating a sanctuary."



BUILD YOUR BUSINESS WEBINAR SERIES

WEBINAR #1:

Landscape Bed Weed Control

Thursday, April 25
10 a.m. PT/1 p.m. ET/6 p.m. GMT



**FREE
Weed Control
Webinar**

WEBINAR DESCRIPTION:

Join *Landscape Management* for an hour-long webinar on landscape bed weed control. Our experts will cover both the technical side and business side of taking on this potentially lucrative service.

PRESENTERS:

Pre- and Postemergent Weed Control in Landscape Beds



Joseph C. Neal, Ph.D.

*Professor of Weed Science
North Carolina State University*

Neal is a professor of weed science at North Carolina State University. He has extension and research responsibilities for weed management in landscape

plantings, nursery crops and Christmas tree production.

How to Add Bed Weed Control to Your Business



Phil Fogarty

*Owner
Weed Man/Lake County*

Fogarty is owner of Weed Man of Lake County and Crowley's Vegetation Management in Euclid, Ohio. He's an active member of the Professional

Landcare Network (PLANET) and its predecessor PLCAA.

MODERATOR:

Marisa Palmieri, *Editor of Landscape Management*

Sponsored by: **SureGuard**
HERBICIDE

Brought to you by: **Landscape
Management**

**DON'T MISS THE FIRST WEBINAR OF THE BUILD YOUR BUSINESS SERIES!
REGISTER NOW! LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET/WEBINARS**

LM REPORTS

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH

WEED CONTROL PRODUCTS



WeedAlert.com

The newly redesigned Weed Alert.com allows professionals to search and identify weeds by name, appearance or region. Detailed information about each weed includes description, non-chemical cultural control practices, geographic coverage maps, herbicide use and recommended control products. The Tech Advisor feature lets users interact with experts on specific questions.

PBI-Gordon Corp. //
WeedAlert.com



Echelon

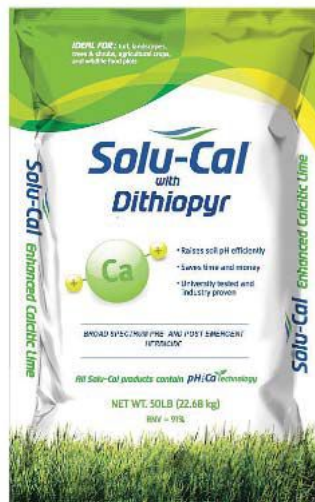
Featuring a dual mode of action, Echelon herbicide controls sedges and other weeds from the foliage down and from the root up, with residual for preemergent crabgrass and *Poa* control. It controls pre-emergent and early postemergent goosegrass and is available as a sprayable or dry application on fertilizer for most cool- and warm-season grasses.

FMC // *FMCProSolutions.com*

Escalade 2

Escalade 2 combines the power of three herbicides in one pre-mixed formulation for broad-spectrum broadleaf weed control under any environmental condition. It provides control of more than 240 broadleaf weeds, including clover, dandelion, plantain, oxalis, chickweed and other hard-to-control species.

Nufarm // *Nufarm.com/USTO/Escalader2*



Solu-Cal with 0.13 percent Dithiopyr

Solu-Cal with 0.13 percent dithiopyr is a broad-spectrum herbicide for early post-emergent control of crabgrass and pre-emergent control of more than 40 grassy and broadleaf weeds. The non-staining, low-odor formulation delivers Solu-Cal Enhanced Calciatic Lime and herbicide in a one-pass application and offers season-long control of other grasses and broadleaf weeds.

Solu-Cal USA // *Solu-Cal.com*

Spread it & Forget It with herbicide

New Spread it & Forget It controlled-release fertilizer, available with Barricade preemergent herbicide or Dimension specialty herbicide, has been added to Agrium's line of slow- and controlled-release fertilizer technologies. With a choice of Barricade or Dimension impregnated into the granule, users fertilize once up to every six months, while getting preemergent crabgrass control.

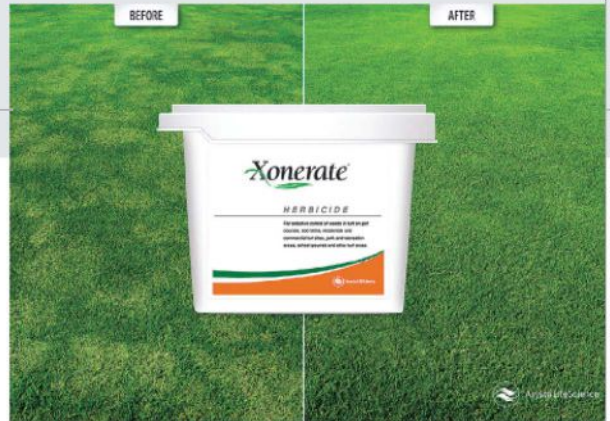
Agrium Advanced Technologies //
SpreadItAndForgetIt.com



Negate 37WG

New Negate herbicide works by inhibiting the growth enzyme aceto-lactate synthase (ALS). It controls more than 35 grasses and broadleaf weeds in bermudagrass and zoysiagrass, including *Poa*, ryegrass, clover, dandelion, henbit, chickweed and prostrate spurge. The wettable granule formulation is available in a 1.5-oz. pack, which treats one acre.

Quali-Pro, a division of Control Solutions // Quali-Pro.com/negate



Xonerate

Xonerate is available in a water-dispersible granule formulation and offers selective removal of *Poa annua* in warm-season turfgrasses, including seashore paspalum and bermudagrass. Xonerate works as it's absorbed by plant leaves and roots. It inhibits photosynthesis in sensitive plants; with *Poa annua*, the weed turns brown.

Arysta LifeScience North America // ArystaLifeScience.us

FROM **DESIGN2BUILD.COM**

Professional landscape design/build contractors, this website is for you!



Exclusive "members only" access is just \$14.95 per month—less than one yard of mulch or a 3-gallon shrub!

Check out what this incredible online community has to offer!

Visit FromDesign2Build.com today!

The Source Professionals Trust for Expert Weed Identification and Control!

- **Enhanced Weed ID Search Options**
- **Weed ID Photos**
- **Ask the Tech Advisor**
- **Weed Control Options**



Correctly identify the weekly weed for a chance to win this LED flashlight

An industry service brought to you by: **pbi / GORDON CORPORATION**
An Employee-Owned Company

weedalert.com is a service mark of PBI-Gordon Corp. 1/13 01250



Bayer Specticle G

New Specticle G preemergent herbicide provides up to six months of broad-spectrum weed control for use in landscapes, including mulched areas and around ornamentals, and in warm-season turf. It protects against a broad spectrum of more than 80 grassy and broadleaf weeds, as well as annual sedges.

Bayer // BackedByBayer.com

A.D.I.O.S.

A.D.I.O.S. is an odorless, foliar systemic herbicide. It's a selective postemergent for broadleaf weed and crabgrass control and is labeled as a minimum-risk pesticide. No buffer zone is required next to drinkable wells.

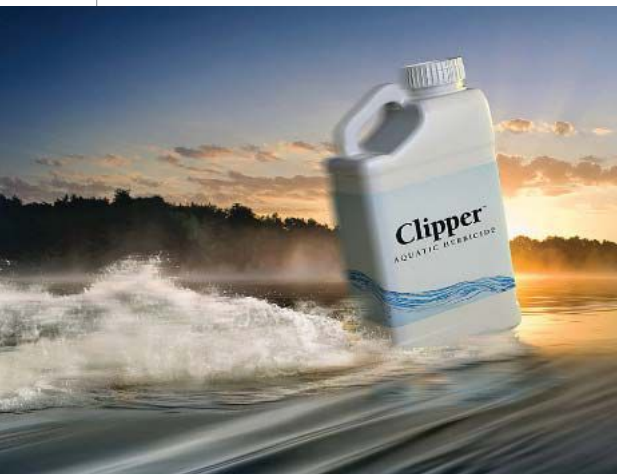
Tech Terra Environmental // TechTerraEnvironmental.com



Monument 75WG

A broad-spectrum, selective, postemergent herbicide, Monument 75WG controls all major sedges and more than 40 other weeds. It's available in new individual 0.5 gram premeasured packets to add to 2 gal. of water in a backpack or hand-held sprayer. It's effective on dandelion, crabgrass (suppression), nutsedge, clover and spurge, among others.

Syngenta // GreenCastOnline.com



Clipper

Clipper aquatic herbicide controls many tough aquatic plants—including duckweed and water-meal—and has activity on some algae. Available in a new 1-lb. package, Clipper dissipates quickly from the water column and does not accumulate in the sediment. It has minimal irrigation restrictions and does not require perfect coverage for results.

Valent Professional Products // ValentPro.com/clipper

Defendor

New postemergent Defendor specialty herbicide is designed to be applied when it's too cold for other broadleaf herbicides to be effective. It provides early-season control of dandelions, clover and other winter annual and perennial broadleaf weeds, on both cool- and warm-season turf. It also provides activity at low use rates (0.013 lb. a.i./A).

Dow AgroSciences // DowProvestt.com



ANNUALS AND PERENNIALS



Zinnia 'Profusion Double Hot Cherry'

'Double Hot Cherry,' a 2013 All-America Selections Bedding Plant Award winner, offers an abundance of deep-rose double flowers. Plants mature to between 8 and 14 in. tall and feature disease resistance to Alternaria and powdery mildew.

Sakata Seed Corp. // SakataOrnamentals.com



Polygonatum odoratum 'Variegatum'

The Perennial Plant Association named Polygonatum odoratum 'Variegatum' its 2013 Perennial Plant of the Year. Commonly known as Variegated Solomon's

Seal, this all-season plant has greenish-white flowers in late spring. Hardy in USDA Zones 4 to 8, its variegated foliage turns yellow in the fall and grows well in moist soil in partial to full shade.

Wayside Gardens // WaysideGardens.com

'Amethyst' coral berry

The Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers recently named 'Amethyst' coral berry its 2013 Cut Flower of the Year woody plants winner. Hardy in USDA Zones 3 to 7, the deer-resistant plant features a neat habit and is bred for perennial or cutting gardens. Small white midsummer flowers produce hot pink berries in late summer.

Proven Winners // ProvenWinners.com



E-750
Electric Wheelbarrow
By PowerPusher

**Move more.
Move it faster!**

Improve productivity and profits.

- Work earlier and later without noisy gas engines
- Reduce damage from heavy equipment
- Move up to 750 lbs at 3 mph
- Rugged, high torque, easily recharged
- 9 cu ft capacity with power dump
- Improve safety, reduce injuries

MORE INFO AT
www.electric-dumper.com

PowerPusher
A Division of NuStar Inc.

©2012 NuStar, Inc.

LED lighting to fit every need... including profit



G-Lux plug n'play

Professional series with solid cast brass housing, heavy weight construction and IP68 rated.

compare at
\$39.95

replacement bulbs

Direct LED replacements for common Incandescent and Halogen bulbs.



landscape fixtures

Light fixtures for landscape applications such as garden, path, fountain, and pond lighting.

superbrightleds.com
Fast Delivery • Always In-Stock • 866-590-3533

Order by 1:00 p.m. CST
for same day shipping.



'Feelin' Sunny' deodar cedar

This Monrovia-exclusive dwarf-spreading evergreen has an irregular growth habit. It's been bred to contrast against darker green conifers and deciduous trees, especially in rock and container gardens and other small spaces. It does best in partial to full sun in USDA Zones 7 to 9, and once established, needs only occasional watering.

Monrovia // Monrovia.com



Echinacea 'Secret Affair'

'Secret Affair' is a double-flower that combines tyrian-rose, mauve and lavender colors. Possessing a low-branching habit with foliage to the base of the plant, it's the newest addition to Terra

Nova's Secret Series. Bred for mixed beds and mass landscapes, it performs well in USDA Zones 4 to 9.

Terra Nova Nurseries // TerraNovaNurseries.com

IN OTHER PRODUCT NEWS...

Watering rod

The new Watering Rod is a 3/8-in. steel tube with a bullet tip to water roots without the runoff associated with surface spraying. It's available in 8-, 18- and 36-in. lengths. To use, connect a regular garden hose to the Tri-Con spray gun and insert the rod downward into the soil.

Tri-Con Sprayers // TriConSprayers.com



MORE confidence.

Use it on any cool-season turf, any time during the season, and control virtually any broadleaf weed. And do it all without any surprises. That's how Escalade² herbicide gives you more confidence where it matters most.



More where it matters most.
www.nufarm.com/usto

©2013 Nufarm. Important: Always read and follow label instructions. Escalade® is trademark of Nufarm.



CLASSIFIED SHOWCASE

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

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

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



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

Mail LM Box # replies to:

Landscape Management Classifieds, LM Box # _____
1360 E. 9th St., Ste. 1070
Cleveland, OH 44114
(please include LM Box # in address)

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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

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

THE COMPANY CORPORATION



INCORPORATING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU Save \$25 by scanning this code

FOR SALE

NEED A LANDSCAPE DESIGN?

We use:



- your photos
- your measurements
- your client's wish list

Sell more jobs with professional designs that you present to your client. Scaled plans with photo imaging. Zones 3-7. *Se habla español*

GREENSCAPE DESIGN INC

Your virtual on call designer
815.363.9377
greenscapedesign@att.net
www.greenscapedesign.net



Tri-Con Sprayers a USA manufacturer of water guns and specialty nozzles since 1932. All Tri-Con products are not for one time use and throw away. They are made for commercial, industrial and personnel abuse and use. Checkout the complete line of Tri-Con Sprayer products at: triconsprayers.com or give us a call 1-216-496-2419



HELP WANTED

FLORASEARCH, INC.

In our third decade of performing confidential key employee searches for the landscape/horticulture industry and allied trades worldwide.

Retained basis only.

Candidate contact welcome, confidential and always FREE.

1740 Lake Markham Road
Sanford, FL 32771

407-320-8177 ♦ Fax: 407-320-8083

E-mail: search@florasearch.com

www.florasearch.com

Keep your business growing.

Advertise in *Landscape Management*.

Contact Kelli Velasquez today:
216.706.3767

kvelasquez@northcoastmedia.net

RESOURCES

AD INDEX

Agrium Advanced Technologies.....	15A, 15B, 15C, 15D
Air-O-Lator.....	61
BASF Corp.....	9
Blount International.....	17
Caterpillar.....	5
Dow Agrosciences.....	CVR2, 21
FMC Professional Services.....	19
Forestry Suppliers Inc.....	Insert
Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits.....	23
Irrigation Association.....	69
John Deere.....	6-7
Kohler.....	3
L. T. Rich Products.....	24
Mercedes-Benz Sprinter.....	13
MistAway Systems.....	2
Mobil Delvac.....	53
NuFarm Americas.....	78
PBI Gordon.....	10A, 11A, 55, 59, 75
PermaGreen Supreme.....	64
Power Pusher.....	77
PRO Landscape by Drafix Software.....	67
Progressive Insurance.....	62
Propane Education & Resource Council.....	56
PVB Lock Box.....	63
Quali-Pro.....	CVR3, 49
Rain Bird.....	CVR4
Solu-Cal USA.....	57
Super Bright LED's.....	77
Valent USA Corp.....	58
Vista Professional Outdoor.....	54

The ad index is provided as an additional service. The publisher does not assume any liability for errors or omissions.

[Now online]

Be featured in *Landscape Management*

We're always looking for great reader stories to tell. That's why we've created a new page on our website to invite you to share your article ideas, unique company growth stories, letters to the editor and more.

Visit LandscapeManagement.net/

BeFeatured for more information or

email your ideas to Editor Marisa Palmieri at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net.



LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT (ISSN 0894-1254) is published monthly by North Coast Media LLC, IMG Center, 1360 East 9th Street, Suite 1070, Cleveland, OH 44114. Subscription rates: One year \$35, two years \$76 (U.S. and possessions), one year \$67, two years \$127 (Canada and Mexico) and one year \$165, two years \$346 (all other countries). Air expedited service is available in countries outside the U.S. and Canada for an additional \$75 per year. Current issue single copies (prepaid only) \$8 (U.S. and possessions) \$10 (Canada and Mexico) and \$15 (all other countries). Back issues (if available, prepaid only) \$16 (U.S. and possessions), \$20 (Canada and Mexico) and \$30 (all other countries) add \$6.50 per order shipping and handling for both current and back issue purchases. Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland OH 44101-9603 and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER: Please send address change to Landscape Management, PO Box 2090, Skokie, IL 60076.** Printed in the U.S.A.



Copyright 2013 North Coast Media, LLC. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical including by photocopy, recording, or information storage and retrieval without permission in writing from the publisher. Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients is granted by North Coast Media, LLC for libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Dr, Danvers, MA 01923, phone 978-750-8400, fax 978-750-4470. Call for copying beyond that permitted by Sections 107 or 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law.

Landscape Management does not verify any claims or other information appearing in any of the advertisements contained in the publication, and cannot take any responsibility for any losses or other damages incurred by readers in reliance on such content. *Landscape Management* welcomes unsolicited articles, manuscripts, photographs, illustrations and other materials but cannot be held responsible for their safekeeping or return. North Coast Media LLC provides certain customer contact data (such as customers' names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses) to third parties who wish to promote relevant products, services and other opportunities which may be of interest to you. If you do not want North Coast Media LLC to make your contact information available to third parties for marketing purposes, simply call 847-763-4942 between the hours of 8:30 am and 5:00 pm CT and a customer service representative will assist you in removing your name from North Coast Media LLC's lists.





George Gaumer

Retired v.p. and general manager of Davey Commercial Grounds Management, Kent, Ohio



Who's your mentor? If I had to pick one, it would be my father. But here at Davey there are a lot of folks who have championed me and helped me along the way.

My dad ran a landscape company in Warren, Ohio. He was a good general landscape professional and taught me a lot about values.

You retired last month after 36 years at Davey.

What's changed the most about the Green Industry during that time? The first thing that comes to mind

is government regulations. They're so much more difficult to adhere to today. Another change is all the litigation has created a tremendous trickle-down effect. Our health care costs have been driven through the roof. It has hit landscape businesses in contract costs: insurance, indemnification and holds harmless contracts and various wage and hour issues. All of us in leadership positions have to make sure all the Ts are crossed and Is are dotted. Some of my compatriots in the industry don't read contracts closely enough and that can expose you to serious risks.

Davey is now 14 times the size it was when you joined it as a \$50 million company.

What's driven the company to such heights? A couple things come to mind: One is employee ownership. We all own a piece and that creates a great deal of motivation. Also, it's very fiscally sound. That's allowed us to take advantage of some growth opportunities, like acquisitions or big contracts. We've been conservative over the years and it's served us really well.

What are you most proud of accomplishing during your career? I'd have to say it's this last phase of my career where we basically started the commercial grounds maintenance division. Around 1996 the commitment was made and we started with a talented team of guys here. We were able to build the systems and the branch network and a whole separate division. And, within our grounds management division we have a division that focuses on just golf course maintenance. We're up to 750 people and I'm really proud of seeing that develop over 16 years. Another thing I'm proud of is having a great team in this succession. They have a tremendous level of experience and energy and they're going to do a great job.

What advice do you have for young landscape professionals who are company execs rather than sole owners? When you look at the role you play in a company, it's important to realize it was there before you got there and it will probably be there after you leave, so realize you're responsible for moving forward the legacy. It's about doing your job and handing it off in better shape. That's always served me well.



OFF THE CLOCK

WHAT DO YOU HAVE PLANNED FOR RETIREMENT? It's a culmination of a long-term plan to live in the Rocky Mountains. We built a house outside of Park City, Utah.



WHO'S YOUR TEAM? We're big-time Buckeye fans. My wife and I met at Ohio State; we're both alumni, and our son is too.

DO YOU HAVE ANY INDULGENCES? I love horsepower and I love wine. But no, not together (laughs). My wife and I love to travel. We've been to 47 states, all but Oregon, Washington and Alaska. After we move we're going to cruise up through Oregon and Washington. And then an Alaskan cruise is on the list. After that, Italy is next.

IF YOU WEREN'T AT DAVEY ALL THESE YEARS, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN DOING? My goal was to be an ad exec. I grew up in my father's business, went to Ohio State for marketing and wanted nothing to do with the landscape business. This worked out a whole lot better than Madison Ave. would have.



A Powerhouse of Prevention & Control.



Get persistent pre-emergent grass and broadleaf weed control.

Defend your ornamental beds all season long with the proven power of Isoxaben and Prodiamine 4L.

Trust your lawns and landscapes to Quali-Pro, we're making "Basic" even "Better".

To learn more, visit quali-pro.com.

QUALI-PRO[®]

Quality Turf & Ornamental Products

> Basically Better.

Learn more about WR2 features and simple LCD interface programming at www.rainbird.com/WR2



Giving the green light to one-man installation. That's intelligent.



With the Rain Bird® WR2, one person can install the system in half the time of competitive wireless rain sensors. So you can save labor costs for your business while saving wasted water for your customers. That's The Intelligent Use of Water.™

Step 1



All settings programmed in one place using intuitive icons.

Step 2



Blinking green light indicating signal strength expedites sensor placement.

Step 3



Versatile bracket snaps on gutters easily or can be mounted to walls or fences.

RAIN BIRD®