

MARKET WATCH

MAINTENANCE

Welcome wagon

The Greenery targets new movers for its residential maintenance and retail garden center business. *By* MARISA PALMIERI

Homeowners who've recently moved are a target for The Greenery, a \$34.4 million landscape company based on Hilton Head Island, S.C. The company provides landscape maintenance services, but it also has a retail component. The Greenery may be on to something, considering new movers spend more in their first six months post-move than a typical consumer does in three years, according to MoverTrends.com. Plus, research says they're five times more likely to become long-term customers compared to a settled household.

The Greenery has been targeting this market for about 18 months with a service called Welcomemat, which sends an oversized envelope to new movers with gift certificates from participating businesses.

We asked Lee Edwards, company president and CEO, about this approach and its results.

Q How effective has this method been?

A We feel it's an excellent way to introduce new movers to our retail garden center, nursery and antiques gift shop, as well as to our residential maintenance program. We have a very nice garden center

and gift shop, and by enticing newcomers with a gift certificate, this program gets them to visit our facilities before they might happen to see one of our competitors. I'd say we've added about 120 newcomers to our mailing list from this program after their first visit, and now we can market to them regularly with other promotions.



Lee Edwards

Q What "offers" have you tried and which ones work best?

A We've had one basic offer since the start of \$10 toward a purchase in the garden center/gift shop

or 50 percent off the first month of a residential yard maintenance program.

Q Do you use any other methods to get in touch with homeowners who've recently moved?

A We have an active advertising and direct mail program, but this is the only one geared specifically to newcomers. We believe that many newcomers want to spruce up and add their

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MAINTENANCE How one firm focuses on new movers

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LAWN/TREE CARE Scale insects

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IRRIGATION A sprinkler standard is finally in the pipeline

own personal touches to the landscaping of their new home.

Q Why is this an attractive audience for your landscape business?

A We have a very good operation and excellent service, so we feel that anytime we can get someone to start a relationship with us, it will be a long-term relationship at all levels.

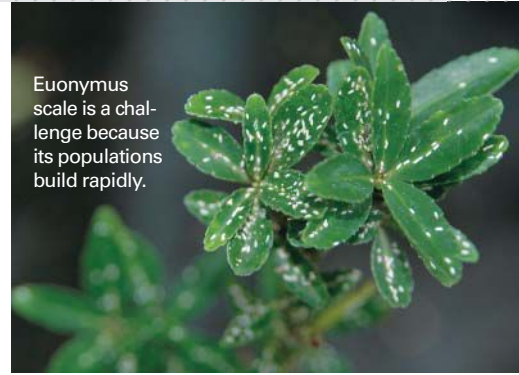
Q Do you have any tips for other landscape businesses interested in reaching new movers?

A Being visible is the key thing for any business that hopes to grow, but what I don't like about most advertising is that it's not trackable. This service takes our gift certificates and then follows up by providing us with good information about the customers themselves. I believe that the more you know about your customer, the better your marketing efficiency will be.



Up to scale

How to determine the most effective methods for treating scale insects. *By* MARISA PALMIERI



Euonymus scale is a challenge because its populations build rapidly.

Green Industry professionals facing down scale insects have a variety of treatment options on their hands, but knowing which one to choose for which species can be tricky. In May Joe Boggs, assistant professor at The Ohio State University Extension, and Rex Bastian, regional technical advisor for The Care of Trees in Wheeling, Ill., presented a webinar in conjunction with *Landscape Management* and sponsored by Valent Professional Products, on scale insect identification and treatment.

ON THE LOOKOUT

The first line of defense against scale is knowing the common species and hosts for the geographic area, Bastian says. Plant health care professionals should be on the lookout, particularly, for species that can cause significant injury, like euonymus scale or magnolia scale.

Whether the plant is plagued by soft or armored (hard) scale will have an impact on the plant's symptoms (see "Soft scales vs. armored scales," below).

For example, soft scales insert their mouthparts into the plant's phloem bun-

dle, damaging cells and causing localized symptoms. The main problem is soft scales withdraw large quantities of liquids, which they eventually void as sticky honeydew. The honeydew is problematic because it can allow fungi like black sooty mold to develop. Left unchecked, soft scales may result in dieback or death.

Armored scales also insert their mouthparts into plant cells. In this case the cells become damaged and die, producing leaf symptoms. Without treatment, heavy infestations may stunt plants and kill all or part of the plants.

The next step is to formulate a management plan. Biorational options include soaps/oils or insect growth regulators. Chemical approaches may include foliar sprays, soil applications, lower trunk sprays or trunk injections with systemic or contact insecticides. Consider the following:

- › Length of residual effect;
- › If systemic, translocation speed;
- › Possible side effects;
- › Off-site movement;
- › Mite outbreaks;
- › Non-target effects; and
- › Costs (product and labor).

PARTICULAR PESTS

One armored scale Boggs honed in on was euonymus scale.

When it comes to euonymus scale, the top three challenges are rapidly building populations, difficult detection due to some scale that may remain hidden on stems and the fact that two generations are produced per season.

Dormant oils don't offer any control for euonymus scale, he says. With contact insecticides, it's best to target crawlers, and timing is critical. Pyrethroids offer good control but require multiple applications. Effective systemic insecticides include dinotefuran and aceamidprid. The lady beetle is a beneficial insect to help combat euonymus scale.

On the soft scale side, Boggs addressed calico scale. He says professionals can target overwintering crawlers with a pyrethroid contact insecticide, though results haven't been consistent. Likewise, you can target newly hatched crawlers with a contact pyrethroid product, but timing is important, he says. Effective systemic soil drench applications include imidacloprid or dinotefuran in late spring. From September to early November, imidacloprid, clothianidin or dinotefuran may work. Beneficial insects like the lady beetle are another option for lighter infestations.

SOFT SCALES VS. ARMORED SCALES

	Soft scales	Armored scales
Body	Covered by leathery exoskeleton	Covered by hard, waxy shell called a "test"
Size/shape	Usually large and oval (1/8-in. or larger)	Usually small and round, oval or drop-shaped (less than 1/8-in. long)
Eggs	Females produce hundreds to thousands of eggs	Females usually produce less than a hundred eggs each
Mobility	Nymphs and early females remain mobile	Second instar and adults are not mobile
Honeydew	Produce	Don't produce

TREND WATCH

Bastian noted a few trends in scale treatment, including the increased use of biorational materials for foliar applications. Insect growth regulators—especially for armored scale management—are another option on the rise. Finally, Bastian is seeing the use of soil-/bark-applied systemic chemicals more, especially for soft scales on large trees.

DESIGN/BUILD

Construction comeback?

The design/build sector finally shows signs of growth. *By BETH GERACI*

After years of decline, the construction business finally is showing signs of a turnaround, reports *Engineering News-Record* magazine in its latest Construction Industry Confidence Index.

The second-quarter report released in June showed that a record 69 percent of more than 300 respondents felt optimistic about the state of the market, indicating it has stabilized.

Landscape design/build professionals are seeing the positive results firsthand.

"It's definitely turning around, no question about it," says John Mariani, design director at Mariani Landscape, Lake Bluff, Ill. "People are doing some pretty major projects. In fact, in the last few weeks I sold one of the biggest projects I've ever sold."

Lambert's Director of Garden Development Jud Griggs also is encouraged.

Because Texas emerged from the recession last year, Dallas-based Lambert's had a "remarkable" 2012, Griggs says. "Our revenues were about a million and a half dollars more in design/build last year than the previous year."

Lenny DiTomaso, owner of Landscape Perceptions in Oakland, N.J., is noticing growth there, too. "People realize the market is so up and down that when it's up and they have the money, they're going to spend it," he says.



A recent Lambert's project.

TRENDS

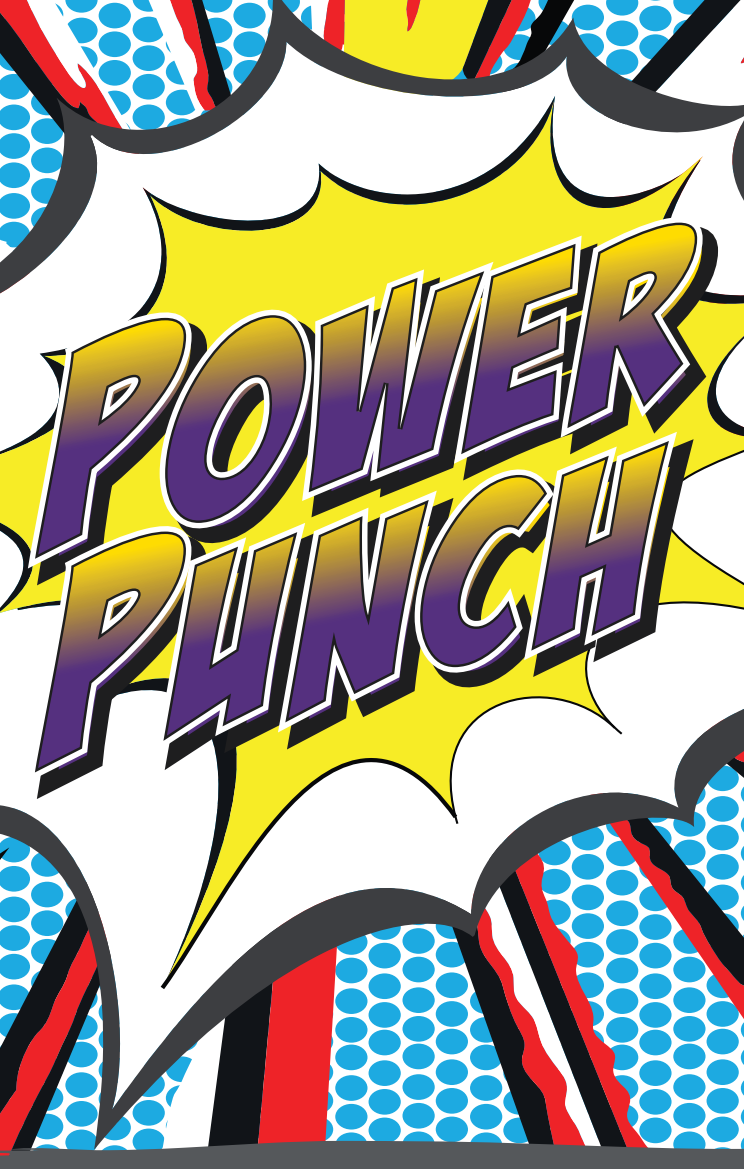
The caveat, Griggs says, is "people are taking much longer to make decisions now. It's more of 'Let's look at this option and let's explore these materials and we're going to think about it.'"

DiTomaso sees the same scrutiny. "Usually people cut me loose and allow me to do my thing, but this year customers are watching every single thing that's being done," he says.

Things also are trending toward more water features, patios and swimming pools, sources say. Lambert's completed 15 pools in the last year; Mariani already has installed three of them in 2013. All of that growth is creating a pretty positive picture.

"It's a ways a way," Mariani says, "but I do believe it will be better than before the crash. I'm pretty positive about that."

PHOTO: LAMBERT'S



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IRRIGATION

Sprinkler standard in the pipeline

Irrigation professional Tim Malooly shares the latest efforts to implement the first U.S. landscape irrigation sprinkler standard.

By JONATHAN KATZ

Water districts and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), most notably through its WaterSense program, have pressured the irrigation industry to use water more efficiently. Some contractors are taking notice and action; the Irrigation Association has ramped up education, promotions and advocacy; and landscape irrigation manufacturers have responded by advancing controller technology and introducing more water-efficient sprinklers.

Still, the industry doesn't have consistent testing methods to identify and document component performance. In 2011, the International Code Council (ICC) and the Association of Agricultural & Biological Engineers formed a subcommittee to develop the first consensus standard for landscape irrigation sprinklers.

The subcommittee includes representatives from irrigation component manufacturers, water utilities, designers, installers and consumers.

Landscape Management recently spoke with the irrigation committee Chair Tim Malooly, CIC, CID, CLIA, president of Minneapolis-based Water in Motion, about the status of the standard and how it will affect contractors.



Tim Malooly

Q What type of standard is the ICC subcommittee developing?

A This applies to landscape irrigation sprinklers, including pop-up broadcast sprinklers, pop-up misting or spray sprinklers and drip and micro components. One of the first things we've focused on is testing sprinkler performance. Right now, manufacturers test their products in their own facilities with their own methods and without independent verification.

The standards also give agencies—such as local units of government or the EPA—reliable, credible information from which to build a labeling program for products.

Q So you're looking at labeling in this standard?

A Labeling is an important component of this work. We're considering how to label what's

being standardized. For instance, when you buy cereal at the grocery store, there are standard nutrition facts, such as calories, sugar and serving size. A similar label is now available for light bulbs. How that relates to landscape irrigation sprinklers is still undecided, but packaging and labeling is one component of the standards.

Q What is the status of the standard right now?

A The first public comment period took place in late winter of 2013. We're currently in the process of considering every comment and making adjustments to the draft document.

My hope was to have the standard in place by the end of this year. It's a little unknown whether we're going to hit that target because a second comment period is expected to take place in August or September. Depending on how many comments we have, we may have to go to a third public comment period. However, if we don't have to go through that, I think it's realistic to expect the standard to be completed by March 2014.

Q What type of feedback have you received so far?

A There have been comments on testing methods, parameters and how we're defining things. For example, the industry commonly refers to the application rate of an irrigation sprinkler as the "precipitation rate." But after much deliberation, the committee chose to adopt the term "application rate" instead because the term "precipitation rate" connotes something other than mechanical irrigation taking place.

Q What will this standard ultimately mean for landscape and irrigation contractors?

A It's important to the industry because the use of water in the landscape is currently receiving and will continue to receive a high level of scrutiny. People are questioning whether the water being



The landscape irrigation industry lacks universal component performance testing methods.



The International Code Council's landscape irrigation sprinkler standard may be complete early next year.

individual doesn't have to know a lot of the details of why a sprinkler system works. As a result, many irrigation systems are being installed indiscriminately and outside of best practices without consideration for water efficiency. In other words, many poor-quality lawn sprinkler systems are being installed with accompanying poor-quality maintenance and scheduling practices.

We're using a resource that's been identified as being more precious than it was in the past, and the Green Industry has been identified as one of the biggest users. There's a science behind the design, installation and scheduling of irrigation systems. If the industry doesn't take more seriously selection, design, installation, maintenance and scheduling practices, we run the risk of being put out of business. **LM**

Katz is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

used in the landscape is being used wisely and responsibly. And the definition of "responsibly" is changing. Currently the definition of responsibly by some includes emotional decision making or social engineering positions. With the creation of industry standards—and codes that likely follow—responsible water use moves away from emotion and toward process and verifiable science.

Now more than ever practitioners must adapt to changes occurring around

them and become as technically adept as possible. The industry is changing, and the world around the industry is demanding more discipline, efficiency and rigor. If practitioners choose to do things the way they've always done them, they will ultimately be left out.

Q What are you referring to when you talk about adapting to change?

A Right now landscape sprinkler components are so reliable that an

PHOTOS: RAIN BIRD

PVB LOCK BOX

PVB LOCK BOX

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CLOCK BOX

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