

**PAY-PER-CLICK MARKETING** > **BED WEED CONTROL**  
**INVESTING IN ATTACHMENTS**

# Landscape Management

# THINK

**LM 150**

A look at the industry's largest firms and how they're growing. Plus, 13 ideas any company can implement.

# INNER STRENGTH & OUTER GENIUS

BEST-IN-CLASS GCWR (37,500 LB)<sup>1</sup> ★ PROVEN 6.7L CUMMINS<sup>®</sup> TURBO DIESEL ENGINE  
UNSURPASSED 5-YR/100,000-MI POWERTRAIN WARRANTY<sup>2</sup> ★ 15,000-MILE OIL CHANGE INTERVALS  
CLASS-EXCLUSIVE ELECTRONIC STABILITY CONTROL<sup>3</sup> ★ CLASS-EXCLUSIVE MANUAL TRANSMISSION

THE NEW RAM CHASSIS CAB

GLITS-GHORY  RAM



[RAMTRUCKS.COM/COMMERCIAL](http://RAMTRUCKS.COM/COMMERCIAL)



<sup>1</sup>Class 4.5, medium-duty commercial chassis cab, 4x4, 6-cylinder engine. See dealer for a copy of the powertrain limited warranty. Always drive carefully, especially with no load. Always use your seat belt and obey traffic laws. Ram is a registered trademark of Chrysler Group LLC.

# CONTENTS »

JUNE 2013  
VOL. 52, ISSUE 6

## DEPARTMENTS

- 6 News & Views**  
LM cleans up at TOCA; Hear Me Out; John Deere upgrades loyalty program; CLCA's McGuire retires
- 14 Giving Back**  
American Profit Recovery includes employees in its service efforts.  
BY CASEY PAYTON
- 48 Weed Watch**  
Horseweed; dogfennel

## 67 Market Watch

**DESIGN/BUILD** The value of equipment attachments

**MAINTENANCE** Minimizing equipment loss

**IRRIGATION** Smart marketing for Smart Irrigation Month

**LAWN/TREE CARE** Bed weed control an appealing option



76

- 76 Add-on Biz**  
Kane Landscapes enhances a boutique through seasonal containers.  
BY CASEY PAYTON
- 78 LM Reports**  
Turf products; lighting
- 82 1-Minute Mentor**  
Jim McCutcheon, LIC  
BY MARISA PALMIERI

**\$1 SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT**  
STARTING AFTER PAGE 16

THINK

LM 150

A look at the industry's largest firms and how they're growing. Plus, 13 ideas any company can implement.

## COLUMNS

- 4 Editor's Note**  
BY MARISA PALMIERI
- 16 Best Practices**  
BY BRUCE WILSON
- 44 The Benchmark**  
BY JEFF HARKNESS

## IN EVERY ISSUE

- 81 Classifieds, Resources**

52



## FEATURES

- 52 Point & click**  
A beginner's guide to Green Industry pay-per-click marketing.  
BY SHAUN KANARY

- 64 Side by side**  
Two landscape competitors decide to share space and get much more than they bargained for.  
BY DAN JACOBS

- 74 Project Portfolio: Room for a view**  
Gardeners' Guild's award-winning project incorporates more outdoor living space and showcases the San Francisco Bay.

**ON THE COVER**  
Photos: iStock International Inc.

**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.

# ONLINE NOW

BLOG

» LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET

## FROM THE LM BLOG

» [LandscapeManagement.net](#)

### LM blog has a new address

*Landscape Management's* blog has made an exciting new move—to *LM's* newly redesigned website ([LandscapeManagement.net](#)). In its snazzy new home, the blog still offers the same great posts it always has, including FD2B Talk Radio Insight of the Night by Jody Shilan, Randy's Way by Randy Newhard, the latest from Jeffrey Scott, thoughts from *LM's* editors and more.

In June, the blog's abuzz with Editor Marisa Palmieri's write-up on an Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week, Scott's take on increasing sales and more.

## SEEN ON TWITTER

Follow us » [@landscapemgmt](#)

**@DanielDFisher:** You didn't really believe that California healthcare rates were going down because of Obamacare, did you? <http://onforbes.com/1418OrB>

**@OhioTurfgrass:** Great article from @LandscapeMgmt - EPA: Lawn fertilization is good for water quality - <http://tinyurl.com/klzu3lf>

**@BugDoc:** April showers bring May flowers which usher in June "bugs"! <http://fb.me/33sSjXD0E>

**@GardenGroveLand:** Big week this week. Finishing projects we started 10 weeks ago. Welcome June! Welcome new beginnings! Keep the #landscapevision going!

## WEB EXTRAS

Visit [LandscapeManagement.net](#) » [Click on Web Extras](#)

- » Gary Mallory, CEO of Heads Up Landscape Contractors, Albuquerque, N.M., provides insight on how to better balance your business life and your personal life (from page S20).
- » Internet marketing talent Shaun Canary shares five killer pay-per-click ad tips and an ad copywriting worksheet to help get you started (from page 52).

ILLUSTRATION: 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!

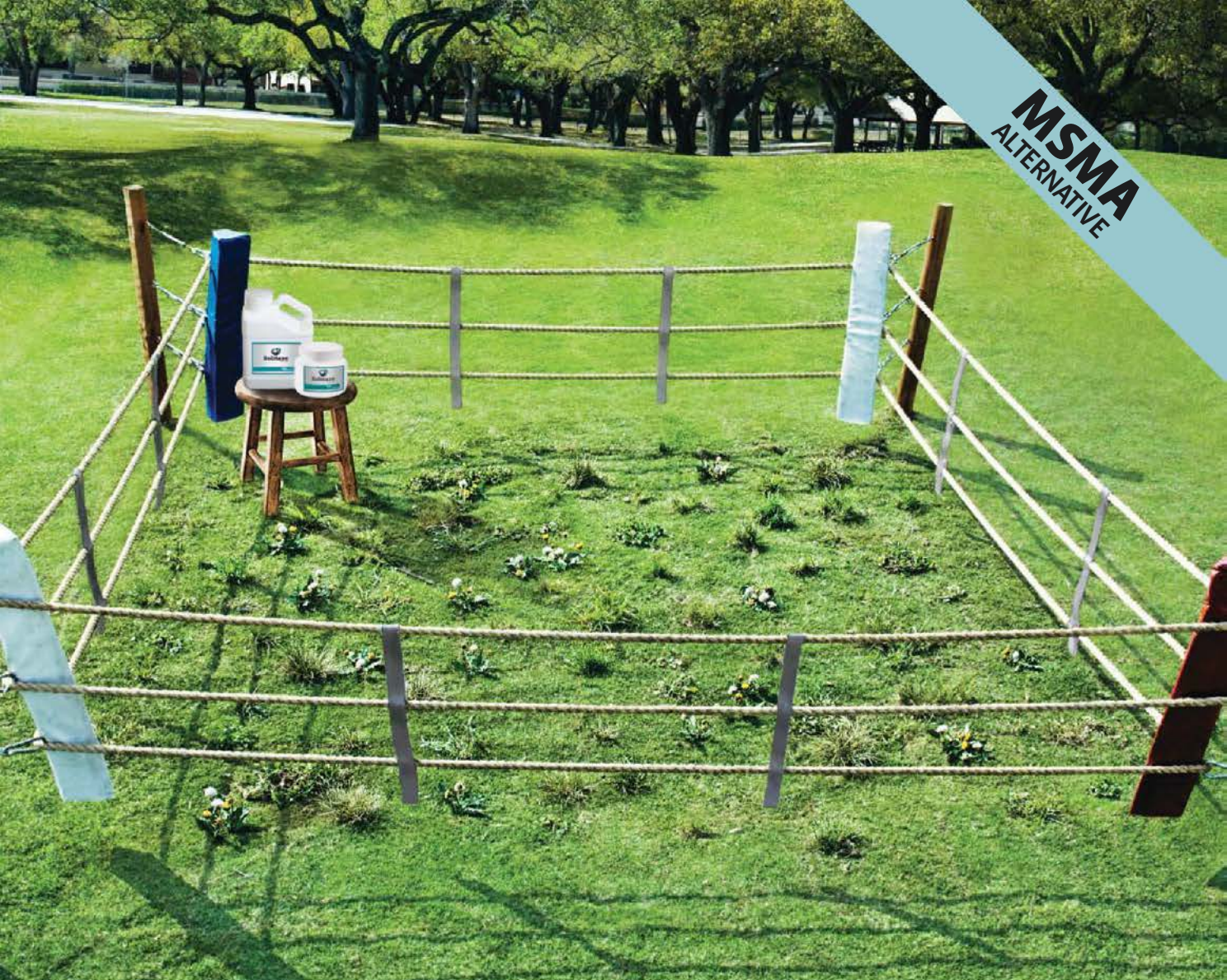
**1-866-485-7255**  
**WWW.MISTAWAY.COM**



**BECOME A MISTAWAY DEALER TODAY!**



**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 an all-in-one postemergence treatment designed to help you fight crabgrass, sedges and tough broadleaf weeds all with 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. Solitare is available in a 1-lb jar for one-acre applications and an economical new 4-lb bottle for a reduced cost per acre.



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

**FMC**



FMC Turf



@FMCturf



FMC Turf

fmcprosolutions.com

  
**Solitare**  
HERBICIDE



## EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI EDITOR

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

# Yours for the taking

**T**here's an intriguing quote attributed to artist Pablo Picasso, "Good artists copy. Great artists steal."

That's what the best of the best in any profession do. Excellent writers curate concepts and borrow themes from other writers all the time. Top landscape designers pull ideas from not only nature but public gardens and parks created by other designers. Successful businesspeople do the same—they make some of their best decisions based on what's worked in other industries or by modeling other organizations that have found success.

Just ask Jim McCutcheon, LIC. He's CEO of HighGrove Partners and the subject of this issue's 1-Minute Mentor department (see page 82).

When I spoke with him about his involvement in national trade associations, he said one of the greatest benefits of membership has been meeting other contractors and traveling around the country to visit them and do R&D—"rob and duplicate."

He chuckled when he said it, and so did I, but the programs and systems he's nabbed from others and put to work in his business are no laughing matter. HighGrove ranks 88th on the new *LM150* list—and it's on track for 8 percent growth in 2013.

Our *LM150* supplement, starting after page 16, features 13 ideas ripe for McCutcheon-esque R&D.

Some of my favorite ideas to consider taking?

▶ American Landscape Systems' move to in-source all of its work. (page S8) "It's such a bad marketing tactic to have another landscape company on one of your projects," says Vice President Joseph Angelone.

▶ Earthworks' effort to host educational sessions for its clients (page S10). "Look at the biggest education shortfalls in your area," says President Chris Lee. "Then go there."

▶ Mission Landscape Cos.' strategy to improve face-to-face client communications by visiting clients in person more often for things as simple as letting them know when tree work will take place (page S12). "Today emails get buried," CEO David DuBois says. "That little touch is pretty basic but effective."

▶ The Stockner Group's realization that it needed to simplify its message to clients by rebranding (page S15). "A rebrand is not about you, it's about servicing your clients better," says President Gary Stockner.

Please, read through these items and "borrow" from them shamelessly, remembering that nothing's truly original. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. And you don't have to feel guilty about all of the great ideas you're going to steal as long as you give credit where it's due. That's the difference between borrowing an idea and completely ripping something off: Sharing where it came from.

As Austin Kleon, author of "Steal like an Artist" points out, the justification is right there in the Bible: "There's nothing new under the sun."

# 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** Tracie Martinez 216/363-7924 | tmartinez@northcoastmedia.net

## ADVERTISING STAFF

**Publisher** Bill Roddy 216/706-3758  
Fax: 216/706-3712 | broddy@northcoastmedia.net

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

**National Account Manager** Carla Kastanis 216/363-7923  
Fax: 216/706-3712 | ckastanis@northcoastmedia.net

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

## BUSINESS STAFF

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

**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 Iademarco 877/652-5295 | niademarco@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

# 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](http://www.zspray.com)  
(877) 482-2040

# NEWS+VIEWS

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

## Landscape Management shines at TOCA awards

The magazine earns eight excellence awards in the Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association's annual competition.



Once again, the Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) showered *Landscape Management* with accolades for outstanding editorial excellence and design at the awards ceremony held at the group's annual meeting May 7-9 in Portland, Ore.

*LM* earned eight awards for writing, design and photography, continuing the magazine's six-year run of winning more awards than any of its competitors.

"We were thrilled to win eight awards in TOCA's annual communications contest," said *Landscape Management* Editor Marisa Palmieri. "It's an honor to earn awards in a competition where you're judged among your Green Industry peers. We're very happy with our staff writing awards, but we're especially proud of the first place award for overall magazine design for our October 2012 Business Planner issue."

*Landscape Management's* 2012 TOCA awards include:

**Best Photograph, Print Magazine Cover**—"Game Changer"

**Printed Magazine: Overall Magazine Design**—Business Planner 2013: How To Edition

**Writing, Commercial Publications, Editorial/Opinion Piece**—"The giving trees of the 9/11 Memorial"

**Writing, Commercial Publications, Column**—"Profiting by Design"

**Writing, Commercial Publications, Operations Profile**—"Game Changer"

**Writing, Commercial Publications, Business Management**—"Rebranded"

**Writing, Commercial Publications, Environmental Stewardship Article**—"A Greener Land"

**Writing, Commercial Publications, Series**—"Add-On Biz"

*LM's* sister publication *Golfdom* also went home happy from TOCA this year, reaping nine nods for new media, writing, photography and design. North Coast Media led all publishing companies that competed for TOCA awards in the golf and landscape markets with 17 awards.

"We had a very strong showing at TOCA once again this year bringing home the highest number of honors among landscape market magazines," said Kevin Stoltman, president and CEO of North Coast Media. "This recognition validates the hard work of our editorial team, led by Marisa Palmieri, who is so dedicated to its products—or more accurately stated, to our readers."



We call it a Cat® Skid Steer Loader.

**ROY CALLS IT A WAY TO SPEND TIME  
AT THE BEACH WITH HIS FAMILY.**

*Roy Chipley*  
Roy Chipley  
Chipley Company  
Cat Customer: 12 years



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



Caterpillar helps businesses like Roy's succeed every day – by ensuring he has the right machine for the job, making parts available, giving him plenty of work tool options and providing expert service – so he can enjoy more time with his family and less time on the job site. With more jobs per machine and higher resale value, owning a Cat machine is your smartest investment. **GET 0% FOR 60 MONTHS WITH ZERO DOWN ON A CAT SKID STEER LOADER OR RECEIVE A \$2,500 REBATE IN LIEU OF FINANCING.\***



Scan to hear Roy's story.  
Visit [CatResourceCenter.com/Roy](http://CatResourceCenter.com/Roy)

\*Offer good for qualifying customers from June 1, 2013 to September 30, 2013 on select new models at participating Cat dealers. Not all buyers will qualify. Financing is subject to credit application and approval through Cat Financial. Offer is available to qualifying customers in the USA and Canada only and can be combined with select Cat Work Tool offers – see your participating dealer for details. Additional terms and conditions may apply. Offer 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.



# John Deere upgrades loyalty program

BY MARISA PALMIERI

**J**ohn Deere is rolling out its new GreenFleet Loyalty Rewards Program, designed to function as a loyalty, rewards and

discount program all in one.

“This program is our way of thanking [customers] for their loyalty,” said Steve Wilhelmi, tactical marketing

manager for John Deere Commercial Mowing, calling it “much more than just a perks program.” GreenFleet’s four main member benefits include equipment discounts, parts/workshop discounts, financing specials and exclusive email offers.

Program benefits kick in for John Deere customers after they purchase at least two qualified John Deere products. They’re then automatically enrolled in the program and receive program benefits for two years. To stay enrolled, customers must purchase at least two machines every two years.

It’s different from what the company has offered in the past because the discount levels are transparent to the customer, which allows them to better plan for their equipment needs, Wilhelmi said. The qualified products and savings amounts are published on John Deere’s GreenFleet web page ([tinyurl.com/p46rpjm](http://tinyurl.com/p46rpjm)).

The program is separate from John Deere Landscapes Partner Program, but when customers purchase equipment through GreenFleet, they’re eligible for Partner Program points. GreenFleet customers also will have access to special offers through John Deere Landscapes, Wilhelmi said.

FULL TIME. OVERTIME.  
ANY TIME.

SNOWEX  
DELIVERS UPTIME.

You can’t afford downtime. That’s why we design our equipment with the fewest moving parts in the industry. No engines. No pulleys. No belts. No chains. Simply put...No headaches. Just more time on the road, and making money.

And you can’t afford high interest payments. So we’re also offering 0% interest for 2 years on everything.



**Maximize your uptime.**  
Go to [snowexproducts.com/uptime](http://snowexproducts.com/uptime) to find your local dealer or call us at 1-800-725-8377.  
**Visit us at SIMA booth #106**

**SNOWEX**  
LEADERS IN ICE CONTROL



John Deere GreenFleet program members receive personalized loyalty cards.

PHOTO: JOHN DEERE

# CLCA Executive Director Sharon McGuire retires

**S**haron McGuire, the longtime executive director of the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA), retired on June 9. McGuire was an active member of the CLCA since 1980 and held the executive director post since 1986.

The association praised McGuire in a press release, saying, "As executive director, Ms. McGuire has overseen the expansion of the association from four staff members to nine in-house staff members. Her sound financial management, excellent analytical skills and long-term vision have allowed the association to survive and thrive throughout her tenure, despite

some tough times through droughts and recessions."

And McGuire's impact endures. Through her leadership, McGuire helped increase the CLCA's governmental affairs presence, expanded member benefits and communications, played an important role in starting the Landscape Educational Advancement Foundation and advocated for the reduction of outdoor water use.

"It will be tough to fill Sharon's position," said CLCA President Frank Niccoli in the release. "Her dedica-



Sharon McGuire

tion and commitment to the association and the industry are legendary. She is the heart of our association."

McGuire chaired the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET) Association Executives Committee from 2008-2010. In 2010 she was recognized as Executive Director of the Year by PLANET and inducted into the Green Industry Hall of Fame.

With McGuire's departure, the association's Larry Rohlfs has been promoted to interim executive director.

When you miss a job in landscaping, you lose more than money—you lose your reputation. That's why so many landscapers trust Mobil Delvac™ heavy-duty diesel engine oil in their trucks—it's formulated to help keep engines running longer by reducing engine sludge and deposit buildup. To learn more, visit [mobildelvac.com](http://mobildelvac.com)

**Mobil Delvac™**  
For Long Engine Life

**A reliable truck means  
reliable business**



© 2013 Exxon Mobil Corporation. Mobil and Mobil Delvac are trademarks or registered trademarks of Exxon Mobil Corporation or one of its subsidiaries.

# Looking up

Last month at this time, I was hiking trails along the Mediterranean Sea in Cinque Terre, Italy. With me were 10 strangers from Canada, the U.S., Ireland, Italy and Australia. We made for a diverse group. Among us were a marine biologist, a nurse, a multimillionaire couple and two 70-something sisters.

Despite our diversity, we all were united in an unspoken desire to live in the moment. And it was easy to do, even as we kept our eyes to the ground to navigate the trail's large stones.

Below us, the Mediterranean collided with rocky cliffs in a spray of white. Above us, falcons spread their broad

wings and glided silently through a cloudless blue sky. Beside us, wildflowers bloomed brightly amid the grass. And at every overlook, we stopped to take it all in. Then we moved on.

Overlooks are great, but there is more to Cinque Terre—and to life—than overlooks. If I'm going to Italy, I want to savor it every step of the way. I want to remember it not only from pictures, but also from memory.

While the group forged ahead, I hung back to admire the view. I heard a rustling above me. It was the millionaire man carefully making his way down a steep incline. "I have to remember to look up," he said to me. And there it was.

Because as gratifying as it can be to reach the trail's end, there's little joy in it if you don't even know what all you passed along the way—if you watched the sun

glint off the sea in a sweeping vista but were blind to the lemon trees at your back; if you ascended Cinque Terre's challenging steps in lightning speed but didn't look down from the top; if you admired the fragrant scent of jasmine along the trail but didn't hold it to your nose.

This summer, as you're immersed in your busiest season, remember to look up. Look up to see the progress your team is making, to relish the strong year you're having, to assess what needs to improve. Just look up.

And then, at summer's end, be sure to look behind you. Take a breath, see how far your business has come, then move forward again.

*Reach Geraci at [bgeraci@northcoastmedia.net](mailto:bgeraci@northcoastmedia.net).*



## Hear Me Out

BETH GERACI  
Senior Editor

PHOTO: BETH GERACI



## WHO'S IN CHARGE OF YOUR FLEET?

A fleet manager **PURCHASES** all vehicles, trucks, and equipment, **SCHEDULES** maintenance, **FOLLOWS** the latest technology trends and software, **MAINTAINS** the fleet budget, **IMPLEMENTS** safety standards, and **PROVIDES** technical support for your operation.

*Do these responsibilities fall onto you or one of your employees?*

NAFA Fleet Management Association offers fleet solutions for landscaping and lawn care companies, no matter what size trucks or vehicles you have!

Gain access to a community of more than 3,000 fleet professionals that can share their expertise and best practices. Advance your company and become an NAFA Member!



**To more effectively manage your fleet operations, connect with NAFA!**

**Join NAFA Today!**  
[www.nafa.org/join](http://www.nafa.org/join)



# First the neighbors will be jealous. Then they'll give you a call.

Our best-in-class products combined with the WinField Insights™ Tech Kit and WinField™ Academy classes can help you look deeper and plan smarter.



VISIT [WINFIELD.COM/LAWNINSIGHTS](http://WINFIELD.COM/LAWNINSIGHTS) ON YOUR  
MOBILE BROWSER, THEN PLACE YOUR PHONE HERE



**WINFIELD™**

WinField is a trademark of Winfield Solutions, LLC. ©2013 Winfield Solutions, LLC.



## Laughing with you

We got our copy of *LM*'s April issue yesterday and I was looking through it (as I always do), and I have to tell you I really enjoyed your Editor's Note this month ("Art of simplicity," page 4). It was very clever, light-hearted and I actually did laugh out loud.

### Jody Shilan

*Executive Director, New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association  
Editor, FromDesign2Build.com  
Elmwood Park, N.J.*

## Be careful whom you encourage

"The old college try" (April) is a good article. You mention a number of firms that have been successful and I know most of them; yes, they deserve compliments.

I have my own story: I think we need to be careful about encouraging people to do work without really knowing even half of what they need to know. There



is the mention of insurance, which is so vital. Then there is OSHA, and then there are the organic problems, as well as chemistry. There are legal problems, such as writing contracts and how to collect money. You may be able to mow a lawn first class, but there is a lot more to it. Do you need a license in the community you

are working? Today there are so many government rules that it's impossible for a young person to comply with even half of them.

I think those people who have been successful should give those young people a chance in their company and give them some training so that they will be prepared when they go out on their own. Unfortunately,

we have so many small firms that are janitors rather than professional people and we need to help them to become professional. Those inexperienced people do harm to the gardening profession.

### Ernest Wertheim, ASLA

*Wertheim, van der Ploeg & Klemeyer  
San Francisco*

Kudos? Complaints? Share your thoughts with the *Landscape Management* team by emailing [mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net](mailto:mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net).

# If you're not using Solu-Cal, you're *cheating* your soil.

Enhanced Calcitic Lime • Enhanced Gypsum  
Hi-Mag Lime • Enhanced NPK  
Coarse & Micro Grades • Dry & Sprayable Formulas

**pH!Ca Technology**  
Solu-Cal products contain PHCA Organic Acid

PHCA is essential for soil pH adjustment, and helps plants solubilize and extract nutrients from the soil.

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

[www.Solu-Cal.com](http://www.Solu-Cal.com)

**Solu-Cal** USA

774.678.0288

Lawn & Landscape • Golf • Hydro Seed • Wildlife

# 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](http://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.

# Honest work

American Profit Recovery strives to include employees in its service efforts. BY CASEY PAYTON

Although they're doing honest work, it's easy for a debt collection agency to get a bad rap. But American Profit Recovery (APR), with corporate locations in Massachusetts and Michigan, developed the tagline "You'll profit from our difference," and it truly believes it. It's true, APR says, not only for those the

company does business with but even for the consumers it collects from and the communities in which it operates.

"One of our goals has always been to give back," says Michelle Riviello, director of operations. "The collection industry doesn't always have the best image. Nobody gets excited about calling us or getting a call from us. But our aim is to 'do the right thing' both internally and externally as a company."

Riviello says doing the right thing has meant not only handling collections diplomatically, but also getting involved in the community. Over the past several years the team at APR has raised and donated tens of thousands of dollars for charity and volunteered countless hours of service. It has participated in the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET) Day of Service several times and in a variety of other opportunities.

"Last year in Michigan we adopted Proud Lake State Recreation Area and put together 50 picnic tables and built a boardwalk," Riviello says. "This past year we returned and put together some more picnic



APR takes on service work at a state park, among many other efforts.

tables, replaced some railings and did some painting . . . We found a way to volunteer in this state park without that Green Industry expertise."

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer is another charity that APR participates in. It's particularly important to the company, Riviello says, because two of its owners are breast cancer survivors. Plus, many employees walk in honor of their own friends and family who've been stricken by the disease.

Riviello says the annual walk has become a "signature fundraising event" for APR, in both Massachusetts and Michigan. Though the company has raised thousands of dollars for Making Strides, Riviello says that employees appreciate that they aren't obligated to give.

"I think that people sometimes choose not to do more community service because of the monetary commitment, so this is a nice volunteer opportunity where people can just walk, even if they haven't donated," Riviello says. "If people just want to donate their time and not any money, they at least have that option."

Riviello says finding ways APR employees can contribute without spending much money has contributed to 100 percent employee participation in at least one service project.

"For instance, last Veteran's Day we sent cards to the soldiers and we did a coat drive," she explains. "Those were two easy ways that our employees could give back and not feel like they were pressured to give a lot of money."

"The more varied you make your service opportunities, the more likely you are to get participants," she continues.

It's important to APR that employees feel connected to their service. That's helped make its "Summer Charities of Choice" a popular program. Each employee has the chance to nominate a charity that has touched his or her life to receive part of the overall pot that's collected throughout the summer.

Charities that have benefited from the program include The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the Brain Tumor Foundation and the Ronald McDonald House. **LM**

## AT A GLANCE

**Supplier:** American Profit Recovery

**Location:** Marlborough, Mass.

**Director of Operations:** Michelle Riviello

### SELECT PROJECT LISTING:

▶ **Summer Charities of Choice—**

APR employees nominate charities to receive part of the overall amount the company raises during the summer. Charities that have benefited from this program include The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the Brain Tumor Foundation, Greyhound Friends, Michigan Walk n' Roll for ALS and more.

▶ **Making Strides Against Breast Cancer—**

Over the last five years, this walk has become the signature fundraising event for American Profit Recovery, which has raised tens of thousands of dollars for the cause.

▶ **ARMing Heroes—**

APR team members help raise donations to connect returning veterans seeking help with credit and financial issues with industry professionals who can help them.

Landscape Management is the media sponsor of the Professional Landcare 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 [landcarenetwork.org/awards/communityaward](http://landcarenetwork.org/awards/communityaward) or [landscapemanagement.net/givingback](http://landscapemanagement.net/givingback).



You might not be able to hit  
60 home runs in one season.



But you can take out more than  
60 weeds in one application.

**Onetime**<sup>®</sup>  
HERBICIDE

Is your weed control program striking out? **Onetime**<sup>®</sup> herbicide helps you win against nearly 70 troublesome weeds. An effective postemergent herbicide, **Onetime herbicide** combines the latest **Drive**<sup>®</sup> XLR8 herbicide technology with MCP-P and dicamba to deliver excellent, broad-spectrum weed control. **Onetime herbicide** absorbs rapidly, acts quickly and can be used in both cool- and warm-season grasses. Talk about a home run.

[betterturf.basf.us](http://betterturf.basf.us)

**BASF**

The Chemical Company

Always read and follow label directions.

Drive and Onetime are registered trademarks of BASF. © 2013 BASF Corporation. All rights reserved.



## BEST PRACTICES

BRUCE WILSON

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

# Make training stick

**W**e all know that continuous crew training and development is essential to creating and maintaining an engaged, motivated workforce. But doing it right and making it stick is one of a landscape company's biggest challenges.

Good training programs have been produced and are available from many Green Industry resources that provide companies with relevant, topic-specific direction and advice. But what I see when I visit field crews is not that there's a lack of training material, but that the trainees are often not implementing what they've been taught. This is not only frustrating; when crews gradually drift back to old habits there's a loss of tangible returns on lean management or other process efficiency initiatives.

Part of the problem is human nature. Research suggests that we forget most of what we learn after only a few days.

The other part of the problem is management's assumption that, if trained, employees will do it the way they're trained. When that approach does not work out, management assumes the worst. In truth, training requires constant monitoring, reinforcement, strong communication and clarity on desired outcomes.

Here are 10 best practices to help your field employees grow their skills and competencies, optimize motivation and retain what they learn:

1. Set realistic goals and a timeline for progress. Don't train on too many things at one time, so you can focus on enforcing the new training.
2. List expectations for specific outcomes. Does the employee clearly understand what's expected? Provide information about the why, the how and the link between the new skill and the job and its importance. (For example, working smarter makes working easier.)
3. Identify attitudes, skills and tasks necessary for advancement to give your crews long-term focus. Your laborers of today may be your project managers of tomorrow. These could include, but are not limited to:

- › Being safe with grounds equipment: using the right tool for the right job.
  - › Mastering new equipment-operating skills.
  - › Understanding your expectations for quality and learning how to recognize and deliver it.
  - › Learning basic landscape installation practices, planting techniques and horticultural expertise.
  - › Knowing systems and procedures and following them; troubleshooting or reporting when they're not followed.
  - › Taking pride in your company.
  - › Continuous learning (offer certification opportunities through associations, OSHA safety courses, first aid/CPR, etc.)
4. Hold regular training sessions to reinforce skills. Retention increases exponentially when employees experience training and learn new skills with ongoing follow-up and measurement.
  5. Provide rewards and recognition as a result of the employee's application of the training and opportunities for progressive advancement or incentives/bonuses for improved performance, production and learning.
  6. Instill the notion that supervisors are role models. Train supervisors and managers and set expectations for training others so they can model the appropriate behavior.
  7. Support the training process by observing your crews and acknowledge positive results of training. Discourage old habits with appropriate, progressive discipline.
  8. Use peer mentoring as a powerful way to transfer experience, skills and wisdom.
  9. Develop training tools and policies that encourage "learn by doing" with supporting visuals, demonstrations and handbooks in both English and Spanish.
  10. Build training programs on a foundation of trust and respect. Understand how culturally diverse backgrounds can influence perception; encourage trainers to build rapport and listen as well as teach—and to be respectful at all times.

A SUPPLEMENT TO

**Landscape**  
Management

THINK

**BIG**

**LM150**

**INSIDE:**

**LM150 list** > GATEFOLD

**Overview: Think big** > S3

**Top 25 by mix, services** > S4

**Double-digit growth** > S6

**13 big ideas for 2013** > S8

**3 firms, 40 years** > S19

**LM150 list index** > S21

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



**JOHN DEERE**



# *Listening and learning*



**JOHN DEERE**

JOHN DEERE is delighted to sponsor this year's *LM150* issue!

In addition to providing an overview of the biggest and best Green Industry service providers in North America, this issue features great ideas that any company can implement.

Over the years, I've learned there's tremendous benefit in listening to and learning from others in the industry. Those who've had different experiences can often provide a new perspective or additional insight into new areas of interest or a challenging situation.

A few ideas that I would encourage you to consider include:

- › Get involved! Be an active member in your state or national trade association, such as the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), whose members cite education and networking as their top reasons for joining. At the annual Green Industry Conference, as well as many specialty conferences throughout the year, PLANET continues to provide insight into the opportunities and challenges facing the Green Industry.
- › Consider joining a peer group that connects non-competing companies and their leaders together in small groups that hold each other accountable for the improvement and growth of their respective companies.
- › Join PLANET, JP Horizons and John Deere in expanding the Come Alive Outside movement in the communities where you work, live and play. Through the Come Alive Outside Challenge, you can share your landscape management experience and expertise by mentoring local FFA and 4-H Club members in a competition to enhance their local communities with service projects that promote and reinforce the benefits of well-maintained green spaces.

At John Deere, we know that listening to and learning from our customers is the key to our success and yours. By listening to you, we've developed innovative and quality products and realized the importance of continued learning about the industry and your business needs.

Our experienced John Deere dealer channel is there to support you before and after the sale with the most extensive factory-trained service technicians and knowledgeable staff in the industry.

In addition, John Deere Financial provides a wealth of knowledge in how to select the best finance option for your needs.

Today's world calls for new and innovative approaches to business. By listening to and learning from each other, we can continue to grow the business we love and give back to the industry with our shared knowledge.

I look forward to seeing you soon, whether at an industry event or at one of our facilities. Have a prosperous 2013.

Sincerely,  
**Ken Taylor, LIC**  
*General Sales Manager*  
*Corporate Business Division*



# RANKINGS

	Headquarters	2012 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev Change from 2011	% Projected Change for 2013	FT/PT Employees	Comm/ Res/ Gov Mix	
1	TruGreen	Memphis, Tenn.	\$979,100,000	-11%	NR	10,000 average	NR
2	The Brickman Group	Gaithersburg, Md.	\$900,000,000	6%	NR	2,500/n/a	NR
3	ValleyCrest Landscape Cos.	Calabasas, Calif.	\$880,000,000	4%	NR	NR	100/0/0
4	The Davey Tree Expert Co.	Kent, Ohio	\$680,153,000	5%	NR	7,202/121	NR
5	EMCOR/USM*	Norwalk, Conn.	\$399,124,002	19%	NR	0/0	NR
6	Scotts Lawn Service^	Marysville, Ohio	\$307,490,000	2%	6%	750/1250	3/97/0
7	Bartlett Tree Experts	Stamford, Conn.	\$183,000,000	10%	7%	1350/25	20/75/5
8	U.S. Lawns	Orlando, Fla.	\$128,450,000	10%	5%	1,350/450	100/0/0
9	Weed Man	Mississauga, Ontario	\$118,891,689	8%	10%	750/2,500	10/90/0
10	Ambius	Des Plaines, Ill.	\$99,300,000	-2%	1%	859/250	NR
11	Lawn Doctor	Holmdel, N.J.	\$94,094,170	6%	6%	48/2	5/95/0
12	Gothic Landscape	Valencia, Calif.	\$88,000,000	24%	NR	NR	NR
13	Yellowstone Landscape Group	Bunnell, Fla.	\$85,500,000	9%	0%	1054/432	NR
14	SavATree	Bedford Hills, N.Y.	\$76,800,000	14%	3%	594/12	20/80/0
15	Ruppert Landscape	Laytonsville, Md.	\$72,549,000	14%	16%	725/0	94/0/6
16	Ferrandino & Son	Farmingdale, N.Y.	\$71,000,000	35%	30%	325/0	100/0/0
17	Five Star Landscape*	Folsom, Calif.	\$68,503,803	20%	NR	NR	NR
18	Merit Service Solutions (formerly Lipinski Outdoor Services)	Marlton, N.J.	\$52,300,000	-7%	19%	100/100	100/0/0
19	Clintar Landscape Management	Markham, Ontario	\$51,300,000	2%	7%	180/375	100/0/0
20	Marina Landscape	Anaheim, Calif.	\$50,300,000	9%	19%	600/0	NR
21	Massey Services^	Orlando, Fla.	\$50,230,320	NR	NR	1,341/0	10/90/0
22	Mainscape	Fishers, Ind.	\$49,300,000	3%	10%	500/110	100/0/0
23	Meadows Farms	Chantilly, Va.	\$48,500,000	-1%	5%	175/250	2/31/0
24	Environmental Earthscapes/The Groundskeeper/ Greater Texas Landscapes	Tucson, Ariz.	\$44,500,000	5%	1%	800/0	80/0/20
25	NaturaLawn of America	Frederick, Md.	\$41,772,035	10%	3%	275/75	1/99/0
26	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services	Tampa, Fla.	\$40,000,000	0%	0%	500/150	90/0/10
27	Acres Group	Wauconda, Ill.	\$38,970,039	2%	10%	110/624	94/5/1
28	Spring-Green	Plainfield, Ill.	\$38,937,000	8%	8%	100/375	7/91/3
29	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	Portland, Maine.	\$38,000,000	15%	11%	465/0	87/8/5
30	Jensen Corp.	San Jose, Calif.	\$37,500,000	1%	3%	318/0	NR
31	Denison Landscaping	Fort Washington, Md.	\$35,480,000	-4%	1%	193/180	35/50/15
32	Mariani Landscape	Lake Bluff, Ill.	\$35,000,000	0%	3%	95/330	10/90/0
33	The Greenery	Hilton Head Island, S.C.	\$34,400,000	12%	10%	460/85	70/15/15
34	Christy Webber Landscapes	Chicago	\$31,000,000	11%	10%	350/0	71/11/18
35	Cagwin & Dorward	Novato, Calif.	\$30,700,000	15%	4%	365/0	80/10/10
36	The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin	Middleton, Wis.	\$28,400,000	-11%	-15%	130/300	80/20/0
37	Gothic Grounds Management^	Valencia, Calif.	\$28,372,196	7%	7%	450 fte	90/5/5
38	Greenscape*	East Taunton, Mass.	\$28,000,000	2%	NR	0/0	NR
39	Mission Landscape Cos.	Irvine, Calif.	\$27,582,460	14%	11%	540/0	100/0/0
40	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	San Antonio, Texas	\$27,400,000	71%	-16%	325/0	35/15/50
41	ISS Grounds Control	San Antonio, Texas	\$26,000,000	-13%	4%	430/1	85/2/13
42	Terracare Associates	Littleton, Colo.	\$25,562,572	0%	8%	320/118	62/0/38
43	Berghoff Design Group	Scottsdale, Ariz.	\$25,000,000	0%	0%	80/2	NR
	AAA Landscape	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$25,000,000	-7%	8%	370/0	60/0/40
45	Nutri-Lawn*	Toronto	\$24,875,000	4%	NR	NR	NR
46	Chalet	Wilmette, Ill.	\$23,700,000	-2%	1%	100/150	0/100/0
47	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	Woodbine, Md.	\$23,500,000	5%	6%	200/90	60/25/15
48	Ryan Lawn & Tree	Overland Park, Kan.	\$23,413,408	16%	7%	200/0	5/95/0
49	Landscape Concepts Management	Grayslake, Ill.	\$23,000,000	5%	9%	61/233	90/2/8
	Sebert Landscaping*	Bartlett, Ill.	\$23,000,000	5%	NR	NR	NR

**LEGEND** NR = Not reported; \* Indicates projected revenue reported in 2012; ^ Indicates a portion of reported revenue was removed (such as structural pest control, termite control or other non-Green Industry service)

		Headquarters	2012 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev Change from 2011	% Projected Change for 2013	FT/PT Employees	Comm/ Res/ Gov Mix
51	McFall and Berry Landscape Management^	Annandale, Va.	\$22,932,000	0%	2%	180/120	100/0/0
52	Scott Byron & Co.	Lake Bluff, Ill.	\$22,100,000	-11%	9%	90/170	12/88/0
53	Clean Scapes	Austin, Texas	\$22,000,000	16%	9%	261/0	98/0/2
	Pierre Sprinkler & Landscape	Monrovia, Calif.	\$22,000,000	18%	-25%	180/12	49/24/27
	Shearon Environmental Design*	Plymouth Meeting, Pa.	\$22,000,000	0%	NR	NR	NR
	Rotolo Consultants (RCI)	Slidell, La.	\$22,000,000	38%	23%	120/110	75/0/25
57	Russell Landscape Group	Dacula, Ga.	\$21,974,929	4%	2%	275/175	98/2/0
58	Environmental Management Services	Dublin, Ohio	\$21,000,000	24%	5%	100/200	80/5/15
	McHale Landscape Design	Upper Marlboro, Md.	\$21,000,000	40%	5%	200/0	0/100/0
	D. Schumacher Landscaping	West Bridgewater, Mass.	\$21,000,000	11%	10%	180/0	50/50/0
61	Bemus Landscape	San Clemente, Calif.	\$20,900,000	1%	20%	395/0	97/1/2
	Girard Environmental Services	Sanford, Fla.	\$20,900,000	8%	7%	350/0	100/0/0
63	James River Grounds Management	Glen Allen, Va.	\$20,500,000	-5%	7%	380/0	97/0/3
64	Garden Design (formerly Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping)	Dallas	\$20,000,000	21%	25%	32/1	40/60/0
65	Teufel Landscape	Hillsboro, Ore.	\$19,600,000	-3%	7%	205/73	72/8/20
66	Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care^	Denver	\$19,459,034	13%	3%	180/40	33/77/0
67	Dixie Landscape Co.	Medley, Fla.	\$19,300,000	26%	14%	212/0	100/0/0
68	Urban Farmer	Thornton, Colo.	\$18,893,000	5%	0%	62/90	48/2/50
69	Gibbs Landscape Co.	Smyrna, Ga.	\$18,792,878	5%	7%	234/44	57/43/0
70	Naturescape	Muskego, Wis.	\$18,339,021	10%	6%	175/10	10/85/5
71	Lambert's	Dallas	\$18,075,000	7%	0%	153/0	1/99/0
72	DLC Resources	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$18,000,000	-10%	-3%	288/0	100/0/0
73	David J. Frank Landscape Contracting	Germantown, Wis.	\$17,400,000	-2%	10%	250/50	70/15/15
74	Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping	Portland, Ore.	\$17,000,000	0%	16%	230/30	50/40/10
75	Senske Lawn & Tree Care^	Kennewick, Wash.	\$16,632,000	NR	NR	270/80	28/70/2
76	Southern Botanical	Dallas	\$16,262,357	15%	29%	165/0	42/58/0
77	Landscape Workshop	Birmingham, Ala.	\$16,175,000	8%	5%	275/0	NR
78	Reliable Property Services	St. Paul, Minn.	\$16,000,000	-18%	44%	80/300	95/0/5
79	Heads Up Landscape Contractors	Albuquerque, N.M.	\$15,981,026	-11%	2%	265/15	77/8/15
80	High Tech Landscapes	Branchburg, N.J.	\$15,921,482	1%	6%	28/315	60/38/2
81	Benchmark Landscape	Poway, Calif.	\$15,756,000	6%	0%	220/0	100/0/0
82	Complete Industries	Bowie, Md.	\$15,700,000	-19%	-4%	300/144	100/0/0
83	Clarence Davids & Co.	Matteson, Ill.	\$15,313,000	0%	4%	225/0	90/5/5
84	TBG Landscape	Brooklin, Ontario	\$15,200,000	-14%	15%	65/10	10/65/25
85	Greenscapes of Southwest FL	Naples, Fla.	\$15,000,000	6%	3%	241/0	100/0/0
86	Integrated Landscape Management^	Tempe, Ariz.	\$14,950,000	33%	20%	270/1	NR
87	Yard-Nique	Morrisville, N.C.	\$14,550,000	30%	31%	135/85	95/5/0
88	HighGrove Partners	Austell, Ga.	\$14,400,000	7%	8%	152/0	98/1/1
89	Pacific Outdoor Living*	La Crescenta, Calif.	\$14,000,000	12%	NR	NR	NR
	ArtisTree Landscape Maintenance & Design	Venice, Fla.	\$14,000,000	6%	15%	175/60	75/25/0
91	PROscape	Orlando, Fla.	\$13,803,377	-2%	1%	230/30	96/2/2
92	Designs By Sundown	Englewood, Colo.	\$13,500,000	35%	19%	110/0	10/90/0
93	Angler Environmental	Warrenton, Va.	\$13,404,764	5%	-3%	85/5	20/20/60
94	Sposato Landscape Co.	Milton, Del.	\$13,400,000	10%	7%	255/0	70/30/0
95	Stay Green^	Santa Clarita, Calif.	\$13,110,000	5%	53%	260/0	30/0/35
	Earthworks	Lillian, Texas	\$13,100,000	1%	7%	175/110	100/0/0
97	Complete Landscaping Systems	Wichita, Kan.	\$13,000,000	10%	NR	NR	NR
	LMI Landscapes	Carrollton, Texas	\$13,000,000	44%	50%	200/0	100/0/0
99	Luke Brothers Landscape Services*	Holiday, Fla.	\$12,500,000	25%	NR	NR	NR
100	New Way Landscape & Tree Services	San Diego	\$12,393,533	2%	-1%	200/0	67/0/33

		Headquarters	2012 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev Change from 2011	% Projected Change for 2013	FT/PT Employees	Comm/ Res/ Gov Mix
101	Cleary Bros. Landscape	Danville, Calif.	\$12,100,000	3%	12%	170/165	85/5/10
102	Hermes Landscaping*	Lenexa, Kan.	\$12,000,000	0%	NR	NR	NR
	Odyssey Landscaping*	Lodi, Calif.	\$12,000,000	71%	NR	NR	NR
	ProGrass	Wilsonville, Ore.	\$12,000,000	0%	8%	190/0	40/60/0
	Cornerstone Solutions Group*	Dade City, Fla.	\$12,000,000	-48%	NR	NR	NR
106	Basnight Land & Lawn*	Chesapeake, Va.	\$11,500,000	3%	NR	NR	NR
107	John Mini Distinctive Landscapes	Congers, N.Y.	\$11,304,000	30%	11%	72/35	95/5/0
108	North American Lawn & Landscape	Charlotte, N.C.	\$11,200,000	-1%	12%	200/0	90/8/2
109	Blondies Treehouse	Mamaroneck, N.Y.	\$11,000,000	10%	9%	95/35	70/30/0
110	The Spencer Co.	Houston	\$10,839,394	9%	-8%	190/5	95/0/5
111	American Landscape Systems	Lewisville, Texas	\$10,839,060	22%	1%	110/0	50/0/50
112	Arteka Cos.	Minneapolis, Minn.	\$10,500,000	5%	5%	110/5	85/5/10
113	Lawn Dawg	Nashua, N.H.	\$10,395,775	26%	16%	123/3	6/94/0
114	The Stockner Group	Rockville, Va.	\$10,300,000	51%	21%	185/45	85/10/5
115	Hoffman Landscapes	Wilton, Conn.	\$10,200,000	1%	8%	100/0	10/88/2
116	Perficut Cos.	Des Moines, Iowa	\$10,150,000	-17%	28%	75/55	80/8/12
117	Schultz Industries	Goldon, Colo.	\$10,132,267	12%	4%	85/69	100/0/0
118	Andre Landscape Service	Azusa, Calif.	\$10,046,000	7%	6%	208/208	85/10/5
119	CoCal Landscape Services	Denver	\$10,000,000	-9%	10%	140/125	65/5/30
	Parker Interior Plantscape	Scotch Plains, N.J.	\$10,000,000	5%	0%	100/10	99/1/0
	Webb Landscape	Bellevue, Idaho	\$10,000,000	25%	10%	120/10	NR
	Becker Landscape Contractors	Indianapolis	\$10,000,000	0%	10%	30/100	87/8/5
	American Civil Constructors	Littleton, Colo.	\$10,000,000	0%	0%	190/50	20/0/80
	Creative Environments Design and Landscape	Tempe, Ariz.	\$10,000,000	0%	0%	60/2	15/85/0
125	Southview Design	Inver Grove Heights, Minn.	\$9,900,000	25%	13%	30/65	6/94/0
126	Carol King Landscape Maintenance	Orlando, Fla.	\$9,450,000	10%	2%	133/38	69/6/25
127	Gardeners' Guild	Richmond, Calif.	\$9,440,000	1%	15%	135/2	75/15/10
128	Santa Rita Landscaping	Tucson, Ariz.	\$9,200,000	67%	24%	118/0	60/30/10
129	Native Land Design	Cedar Park, Texas	\$9,139,535	12%	1%	157/0	95/0/5
130	LegacyScapes	Groveland, Fla.	\$9,100,000	153%	15%	92/0	90/0/10
131	Heron Lawn & Pest Control^	Apopka, Fla.	\$9,046,836	NR	NR	154/0	0/100/0
132	Tree Tech	Foxboro, Mass.	\$9,000,000	6%	4%	85/5	45/45/10
	Kinsella Landscape*	Blue Island, Ill.	\$9,000,000	5%	NR	NR	NR
134	Visionscapes*	Tucker, Ga.	\$8,950,000	6%	NR	NR	NR
135	The Grounds Guys	Waco, Texas	\$8,601,909	260%	249%	9/0	45/50/5
136	The Pattie Group	Novelty, Ohio	\$8,500,000	13%	4%	55/30	11/89/0
137	Ecoscape Solutions Group	Huntersville, N.C.	\$8,476,000	25%	18%	165/2	98/2/0
138	Executive Landscape	Fallbrook, Calif.	\$8,350,000	15%	NR	125/0	75/5/20
139	Joyce Landscaping	Marstons Mills, Mass.	\$7,950,000	4%	8%	105/10	15/85/0
140	NJ Best Lawns Sprinklers & Fencing^	Lakewood, N.J.	\$7,908,750	15%	23%	14/62	5/75/20
141	Coast Landscape Management	Napa, Calif.	\$7,100,000	4%	6%	110/20	65/5/30
142	Grant & Power Landscaping	West Chicago, Ill.	\$7,000,000	-12%	11%	20/80	34/66/0
	Outside Unlimited	Hampstead, Md.	\$7,000,000	17%	14%	80/0	70/15/15
144	Borst Landscape & Design	Allendale, N.J.	\$6,842,000	2%	2%	73/2	20/80/0
145	Eastern Land Management	Stamford, Conn.	\$6,500,000	-3%	15%	20/45	100/0/0
146	Nanak's Landscaping	Deerfield Beach, Fla.	\$6,400,000	25%	16%	100/0	100/0/0
147	Green Lawn Fertilizing^	West Chester, Pa.	\$6,384,000	10%	NR	60/0	10/90/0
148	Pacheco Brothers Gardening	Hayward, Calif.	\$6,100,000	2%	8%	90/10	50/15/35
149	The LaurelRock Co.	Wilton, Conn.	\$5,454,000	21%	12%	11/37	0/100/0
150	Plantscapes	Seattle	\$5,353,128	21%	8%	85/50	90/4/6
			<b>Total: \$7,689,821,749</b>	<b>Avg: 11%</b>	<b>Avg: 11%</b>		



Runs his own **business**.

Doesn't **need** fancy gadgets.

Just something to keep him **mowing**.

**Z915B**

RAUL, LANDSCAPER

## Meet the Z900 B Series

Forget the bells and whistles. Get something you can count on: the Z900 B Series mowers from John Deere. But just because this mower is affordably priced, doesn't mean it's cheaply made. Truth is the Z915B comes with more features and quality Deere components than any other zero turn we've offered in this class. Like a larger fuel tank. Professional grade seat. Superb weight distribution. And larger tires for a smooth ride.

When a mower like this has all the basics, you can basically do anything. Ask your local John Deere dealer about Z900 B Series mower today.



[JohnDeere.com/MowPro](http://JohnDeere.com/MowPro)



# THINK



Whether your company's goal is to make this list someday (or stay on it)—or to remain the same size and improve other metrics, there is good reason to think big. Think: Benchmarks. Ideas. Growth strategies. That's what you'll find in issue's *LM150* report on the Green Industry's largest companies and the accompanying stories.

## Benchmarks

The industry's top 150 revenue-generating firms logged a combined \$7,689,821,749 in 2012 annual revenue—up 2 percent from last year's list totaling \$7,543,372,333 in 2011 annual revenue. Notably, this is the first year since 2009, when *LM* began tallying a list of the largest 150 firms, that there's no billion-dollar company ranked. TruGreen reported revenue of \$979,100,000 for 2012, down 11 percent from the previous year.

Seventy-three percent of companies experienced revenue growth in 2012 vs. 2011; 9 percent reported no growth and 17 percent reported a revenue decrease. The ones that shrunk? Many of them are snow market firms that experienced the pains of the 2012 winter that wasn't. (Two percent were unknown or the data couldn't

be compared). Overall, *LM150* companies averaged an 11 percent growth rate from 2011 to 2012.

See the full list in the gatefold section of this supplement for individual company figures (or check out the index on page S21 to easily locate a specific company).

We analyze data from the Green Industry's largest 150 firms. Plus, 13 ideas any size company can implement to boost revenue and profits. BY **MARISA PALMIERI**

COMBINED 2012 *LM150* REVENUE

**\$7,689,821,749**

COMBINED 2011 *LM150* REVENUE

**\$7,543,372,333**

↑ = +2%

## Ideas & Growth Strategies

Starting on page S8, we've culled some of the best revenue- and profit-improvement tactics from companies on the list to spread the wealth of good ideas.

Looking to rev up training? See page S14 for The Pattie Group's expansive program, or check out page S18 to see how Yard-Nique has trained its way through a tough time. Does your team need to reconnect with clients? Terracare (page S17) and Mission Landscape Cos. are doing just that (page S12). Need to boost the bottom line? American Landscape Systems has found one solution (page S8), as has Southern Botanical—see page S14.

## Methodology

*LM* sought submissions from companies online, in print, in direct email requests and through phone calls from February through May. Companies submitted their details via an online form. *LM* editors compiled the results and, where applicable, removed non-typical Green Industry revenue sources from the total reported by the company.

We estimated revenue for firms the editors couldn't reach from the 2012 projected revenue data they submitted last year. Additionally, *LM* editors calculated the figures for growth rates, service segment revenue charts and customer mix revenue charts (pages S4-S6) from the data companies submitted. **LM**

## BE ON THE 2014 LIST

Should your company be on the *LM150* list? If so, please contact Editor Marisa Palmieri at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net to be notified in early 2014 when the submission period opens. We encourage companies with \$5 million-plus in annual revenue to apply.



# Top 25

The LM150's leaders in client mix and service segment.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Companies that did not report customer mix and service segment data may not be included on these lists. LM staff calculated dollar amounts for Top 25 lists from reported data.

## COMMERCIAL

1	ValleyCrest Landscape Cos.	\$880,000,000
2	U.S. Lawns	\$128,450,000
3	Ferrandino & Son	\$71,000,000
4	Ruppert Landscape	\$68,196,060
5	Merit Service Solutions (formerly Lipinski Outdoor Services)	\$52,300,000
6	Clintar Landscape Management	\$51,300,000
7	Mainscape	\$49,300,000
8	Acres Group	\$36,631,837
9	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$36,600,000
10	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services	\$36,000,000
11	Environmental Earthscapes	\$35,600,000
12	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	\$33,060,000
13	Mission Landscape Cos.	\$27,582,460
14	Gothic Grounds Management	\$25,534,976
15	Cagwin & Dorward	\$24,560,000
16	The Greenery	\$24,080,000
17	McFall and Berry Landscape Management	\$22,932,000
18	The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin	\$22,720,000
19	ISS Grounds Control	\$22,100,000
20	Christy Webber Landscapes	\$22,010,000
21	Clean Scapes	\$21,560,000
22	Russell Landscape Group	\$21,535,430
23	Girard Environmental Services	\$20,900,000
24	Landscape Concepts Management	\$20,700,000
25	Bemus Landscape	\$20,273,000

## RESIDENTIAL

1	Scotts Lawn Service	\$298,265,300
2	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$137,250,000
3	Weed Man	\$107,002,520
4	Lawn Doctor	\$89,389,462
5	SavATree	\$61,440,000
6	Massey Services^	\$45,006,367
7	Naturalawn of America	\$41,354,315
8	Spring-Green	\$35,432,670
9	Mariani Landscape	\$31,500,000
10	Chalet	\$23,700,000
11	Ryan Lawn & Tree	\$22,242,738
12	McHale Landscape Design	\$21,000,000
13	Scott Byron & Co.	\$19,448,000
14	Lambert's	\$17,894,250
15	Denison Landscaping	\$17,740,000
16	Naturescape	\$15,588,168
17	Meadows Farms	\$15,035,000
18	Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care	\$14,983,456
19	Designs By Sundown	\$12,150,000
20	Garden Design (formerly Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping)	\$12,000,000
21	Senske Lawn & Tree Care^	\$11,642,400
22	D. Schumacher Landscaping	\$10,500,000
23	TBG Landscape	\$9,880,000
24	Lawn Dawg	\$9,772,028
25	Southern Botanical	\$9,432,167

## GOVERNMENT

1	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	\$13,700,000
2	AAA Landscape	\$10,000,000
3	Terracare Associates	\$9,713,777
4	Urban Farmer	\$9,446,500
5	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$9,150,000
6	Environmental Earthscapes	\$8,900,000
7	Angler Environmental	\$8,042,858
8	American Civil Constructors	\$8,000,000
9	Pierre Sprinkler & Landscape	\$5,940,000
10	Christy Webber Landscapes	\$5,580,000
11	Rotolo Consultants (RCI)	\$5,500,000
12	American Landscape Systems	\$5,419,530
13	Denison Landscaping	\$5,322,000
14	The Greenery	\$5,160,000
15	Stay Green	\$4,588,500
16	Ruppert Landscape	\$4,352,940
17	New Way Landscape & Tree Services	\$4,089,866
18	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services	\$4,000,000
19	Teufel Landscape	\$3,920,000
20	TBG Landscape	\$3,800,000
21	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	\$3,525,000
22	ISS Grounds Control	\$3,380,000
23	Environmental Management Services,	\$3,150,000
24	Cagwin & Dorward	\$3,070,000
25	CoCal Landscape Services	\$3,000,000

## BY MIX

## MAINTENANCE

1	U.S. Lawns	\$95,053,000
2	Ferrandino & Son	\$71,000,000
3	Ruppert Landscape	\$41,352,930
4	Mainscape	\$33,031,000
5	The Greenery	\$25,112,000
6	Environmental Earthscapes	\$24,475,000
7	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services	\$24,000,000
8	Mariani Landscape	\$22,750,000
9	Clintar Landscape Management	\$20,520,000
10	Mission Landscape Cos.	\$19,307,722
11	Acres Group	\$19,095,319
12	DLC Resources	\$18,000,000
13	ISS Grounds Control	\$16,900,000
14	James River Grounds Management	\$15,785,000
15	Girard Environmental Services	\$15,466,000
16	Marina Landscape	\$15,090,000
17	Merit Service Solutions (formerly Lipinski Outdoor Services)	\$14,644,000
18	AAA Landscape	\$14,250,000
19	McFall and Berry Landscape Management	\$13,806,000
20	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	\$12,925,000
21	PROscape	\$11,732,870
22	Integrated Landscape Management	\$11,500,000
23	Greenscapes of Southwest FL	\$10,800,000
24	Christy Webber Landscapes	\$10,230,000
25	ArtisTree Landscape Maintenance & Design	\$10,080,000

## DESIGN/BUILD

1	Ruppert Landscape	\$36,999,990
2	Garden Design (formerly Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping)	\$18,000,000
3	McHale Landscape Design	\$17,850,000
4	Christy Webber Landscapes	\$17,050,000
5	Environmental Earthscapes	\$15,575,000
6	U.S. Lawns	\$15,414,000
7	Meadows Farms	\$14,550,000
8	Scott Byron & Co.	\$14,144,000
9	Chalet	\$13,035,000
10	Angler Environmental	\$12,064,288
11	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	\$12,056,000
12	Mariani Landscape	\$11,900,000
13	TBG Landscape	\$10,640,000
14	AAA Landscape	\$10,000,000
15	American Civil Constructors	\$10,000,000
16	Creative Environments Design and Landscape	\$10,000,000
17	Rotolo Consultants (RCI)	\$9,900,000
18	Teufel Landscape	\$9,800,000
19	Southview Design	\$9,702,000
20	Southern Botanical	\$9,594,791
21	Designs By Sundown	\$9,450,000
22	Heads Up Landscape Contractors	\$8,949,375
23	Clean Scapes	\$8,800,000
24	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services	\$8,000,000
25	Benchmark Landscape	\$7,878,000

## LAWN CARE

1	Scotts Lawn Service	\$291,640,000
2	Lawn Doctor	\$89,389,462
3	Massey Services	\$42,606,075
4	Spring-Green	\$37,768,890
5	Ryan Lawn & Tree	\$18,730,726
6	Naturescape	\$14,671,217
7	SavATree	\$11,520,000
8	Lawn Dawg	\$10,083,902
9	Green Lawn Fertilizing	\$6,048,000
10	ProGrass	\$6,000,000
11	Senske Lawn & Tree Care	\$5,832,000
12	Merit Service Solutions (formerly Lipinski Outdoor Services)	\$4,184,000
13	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services	\$4,000,000
14	Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care	\$3,939,075
15	U.S. Lawns	\$3,853,500
16	Mainscape	\$3,451,000
17	Urban Farmer	\$2,833,950
18	Tree Tech	\$2,700,000
19	Chalet	\$2,370,000
20	Gardeners' Guild	\$2,360,000
21	Acres Group	\$2,338,202
22	Sposato Landscape Co.	\$2,010,000
23	McFall and Berry Landscape Management	\$1,404,000
24	ISS Grounds Control	\$1,300,000
25	Girard Environmental Services	\$1,254,000

## IRRIGATION

1	Marina Landscape	\$30,180,000
2	Urban Farmer	\$7,179,340
3	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	\$6,302,000
4	Merit Service Solutions (formerly Lipinski Outdoor Services)	\$4,184,000
5	OneSource Landscape & Golf Services	\$4,000,000
6	U.S. Lawns	\$3,853,500
7	American Landscape Systems	\$3,793,671
8	Clean Scapes	\$3,520,000
9	Teufel Landscape	\$3,332,000
11	NJ Best Lawns Sprinklers & Fencing	\$3,330,000
10	LMI Landscapes	\$3,250,000
12	Mainscape	\$2,958,000
13	ISS Grounds Control	\$2,600,000
14	The Stockner Group	\$2,575,000
15	Clintar Landscape Management	\$2,565,000
16	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	\$2,350,000
17	Environmental Earthscapes	\$2,225,000
18	Rotolo Consultants (RCI)	\$2,200,000
19	Massey Services	\$2,059,443
20	Acres Group	\$1,948,502
21	Santa Rita Landscaping	\$1,840,000
22	North American Lawn & Landscape	\$1,680,000
23	Executive Landscape	\$1,670,000
24	Southern Botanical	\$1,626,236
25	Garden Design (formerly Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping)	\$1,600,000

# BY SERVICE SEGMENT



# DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH SPURT

58 LM150 companies grew 10 percent or more in 2012. Here they are and how six of them continue to grow.

**How they do it:** In its solid 2012, The LaurelRock Co. added an up-and-coming service line—green walls and green roofs—by partnering with a manufacturer and becoming certified. To gain efficiencies, the company also purchased equipment: a mulch blower and switch-and-go truck, and rewarded employees through a profit-sharing program. With the success of these initiatives, the company plans for continued growth in 2013.

**How they do it:** To combat increasing fuel costs, Native Land Design is targeting new work strategically around existing clients to build route density and decrease drive time between sites. The company also is purchasing propane-powered and other fuel-efficient equipment.

## % revenue change from 2011

1	The Grounds Guys	260%
2	LegacyScapes	153%
3	Odyssey Landscaping	71%
	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	71%
5	Santa Rita Landscaping	67%
6	The Stockner Group	51%
7	LMI Landscapes	44%
8	McHale Landscape Design	40%
9	Rotolo Consultants (RCI)	38%
10	Ferrandino & Son	35%
	Designs By Sundown	35%
12	Integrated Landscape Management	33%
13	John Mini Distinctive Landscapes	30%
	Yard-Nique	30%
15	Lawn Dawg	26%
	Dixie Landscape Co.	26%
17	Nanak's Landscaping	25%
	Southview Design	25%
	Ecoscape Solutions Group	25%
	Luke Brothers Landscape Services	25%
	Webb Landscape	25%
22	Gothic Landscape	24%
	Environmental Management Services	24%
24	American Landscape Systems	22%
25	Garden Design (formerly Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping)	21%
	Plantscapes	21%
	The LaurelRock Co.	21%
28	Five Star Landscape	20%
29	EMCOR/USM	19%
30	Pierre Sprinkler & Landscape	18%
31	Outside Unlimited	17%
32	Clean Scapes	16%
	Ryan Lawn & Tree	16%
34	Southern Botanical	15%
	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	15%
	NJ Best Lawns Sprinklers & Fencing	15%
	Executive Landscape	15%
	Cagwin & Dorward	15%
39	Ruppert Landscape	14%
	SavATree	14%
	Mission Landscape Cos.	14%
42	Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care	13%
	The Pattie Group	13%
44	Schultz Industries	12%
	Pacific Outdoor Living	12%
	The Greenery	12%
	Native Land Design	12%
48	Christy Webber Landscapes	11%
	D. Schumacher Landscaping	11%
50	Carol King Landscape Maintenance	10%
	Complete Landscaping Systems	10%
	Green Lawn Fertilizing	10%
	Blondies Treehouse	10%
	Sposato Landscape Co.	10%
	Naturescape	10%
	Naturalawn of America	10%
	U.S. Lawns	10%
	Bartlett Tree Experts	10%

**How they do it:** At a growth rate of 260 percent from 2011 to 2012, managing growth is a challenge for The Grounds Guys, which began franchising in the U.S. in 2010 and topped the 100-franchisee mark in 2012. The company plans to continue growing by increasing sales training, staffing up, and continuing communications with the franchise's advisory council members and franchisees at large.

**How they do it:** Part of Cherry Lake Tree Farm, a diversified agri-business, LegacyScapes has continued to invest in its team and assets. Challenges include the costs and shortage of plant material and difficulty finding laborers. The company mitigates its plant market challenges by educating clients on plant supply pendulum shifts and partnering with suppliers to schedule and plan plant material needs in advance. To combat labor challenges, it shares resources with its sister companies and has begun using the H-2B guest-worker program.

**How they do it:** Expanding commercial construction and erosion control services has been a boon for NJ Best Lawns Sprinklers & Fencing. The company hopes future profit improvements will come from its efforts to cross train employees and the addition of a full-time accountant to facilitate the accounts receivable process.

**How they do it:** A quality inspection program has helped pave the way for happier customers and continued growth for The Greenery. Supervisors and managers inspect one another's accounts and report results that are shared and discussed with each account's branch manager and supervisor.

0%  
APR  
FOR 48  
MONTHS

Got **lots** of clients.

Needs mowers with **power**,  
but **fuel efficient** too.

Wants a machine that can  
save him **time** and **money**.



**Z925M**

JOHN, FLEET OWNER

## Meet the Z900 M Series

When you've got a lot to manage, you don't have time for mowers that aren't going to make the most of your time. Sounds like you need to meet the Z900 M Series mowers. They deliver all the power you need, and with available electronic fuel injection, you can turn your mower into a fuel-sipping dynamo. Add a Mulch On Demand™ deck and you are instantly mulching when you need to, and back to side-discharging in the blink of an eye.

If you're looking for efficiency for every mower in your crew, you've just met your match. Ask your local John Deere dealer about the Z900 M Series mower today.



\*Offer available through July 31, 2013. Subject to approved installment credit with John Deere Financial. For commercial use only. Up to a 10% down payment may be required. Taxes, freight, setup and delivery charges could increase monthly payment. Other special rates and terms may be available, including financing for consumer use. Available at participating dealers in the US only.

[JohnDeere.com/MowPro](http://JohnDeere.com/MowPro)



*any size company  
can learn from*



Joseph Angelone

## #1 *Un-subcontracting*

**Company:** American Landscape Systems

**Location:** Lewisville, Texas

**LM150 rank:** 111

**Hiring subcontractors can** be expensive, and after a decline in profits in 2011 the folks at American Landscape Systems were on a quest to save money.

So in 2012, the company decided to bring in-house all the landscape services it had been shipping out to subcontractors, including chemical applications, hydro-mulch services, mowing and tree services.

The move paid off. Why? Because in 2012 American Landscape Systems was able to recapture 100 percent of the *profits* it previously had lost to subcontracting.

“At the end of 2011 we looked at how much we spent on subcontractors. It was almost \$1 million,” says American Landscape Systems Vice President Joseph Angelone. “Our goal at the beginning of 2012 was to capture more of the profit of the annual revenue we were performing.”

In looking at its numbers from 2011, American Landscape Systems had to reevaluate its practices. Bringing services in-house enabled the company to establish a stronger presence in the competitive Dallas market.

“Costs are consistently rising, but our prices are decreasing because of how competitive it is,” Angelone

says. “We have to do everything we can now to keep as many of our services in-house as possible.”

In making the transition, the company made an initial investment of \$200,000 in equipment and staff. It trained its workers, hired a licensed applicator and bought chemical application equipment, trucks, trailers and hydromulch equipment.

“To spend \$200,000 in light of the \$1 million we were spending previously, it seemed like the right idea, and it turned out it was,” Angelone says. “And I’ll tell you what, we won’t go back. No more subcontractors on landscaping services. It’s such a bad marketing tactic to have another landscape company on one of your projects.”

It’s much better, he says, to have your own employees—and American has 110 of them year-round—getting face time and interacting with clients.

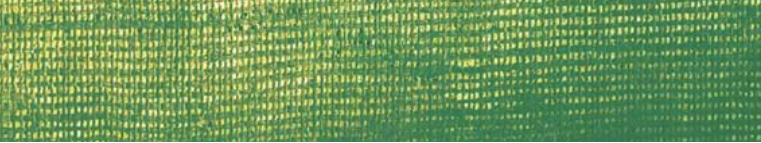
Today, the company pays for minor upkeep on the equipment as well as for the ongoing labor costs, which are only about 20 percent of what they were with subcontractors.

“Now we can capture \$750,000 to \$800,000 more of gross profit than we could before,” Angelone says.

Finding an experienced licensed chemical applicator wasn’t easy, Angelone adds, so the company hired a new person with no experience, sent him through training and built the department around him. “It took four to six months for us to get him ready, but he matched our company style,” Angelone says.

The insourcing delivered, and not only on profits.

“There was better and more consistent communication overall, and we have more knowledge of what’s happening on our properties,” Angelone asserts. “We’ve long been a full-service company. Now we’re a full-service company that’s doing it all on our own.” —Beth Geraci



# #2

## Moving to a four-day workweek

**Company:** Clean Scapes

**Location:** Austin, Texas

**LM150 rank:** 53

**Never underestimate the** power of a good motivational seminar.

After attending a GIE+Expo presentation extolling the virtues of the four-day workweek, Ivan Giraldo decided to implement the idea at his company.

“We started pushing it very hard and implementing it in 2008,” says Giraldo, who is president of Austin, Texas-based Clean Scapes.

Five years later, Giraldo is pleased with the results.

Shifting the company’s property-maintenance crews to four-day workweeks has reduced overtime and helped manage steadily creeping fuel prices, Giraldo says.

The shorter workweek has led to a 10 percent reduction in overall labor costs for the company’s property-maintenance division, which employs 130 or so people during the busy season, he says.

Giraldo also has seen a reduction in vehicle wear and tear.

“The less time they’re out on the road, the better,” he says.

Less time on the road also equals less fuel consumption. While Giraldo notes that rising fuel prices have erased any potential savings from the shorter workweek, the company has been able to keep its fuel costs flat—a nice achievement in today’s environment.

There have been a few speed bumps. Hourly crew workers worried that their paychecks would take a big hit from the shorter workweek.

“We had a little bit of pushback from the crew members,” Giraldo says.

They bought in, though, when they saw they still could log 40 hours of work—plus a few hours of overtime—in a four-day span, with the added bonus of an extra day off.

Another concern was getting five days’ worth of work done in four days. However, Giraldo notes that property-maintenance crews have adapted beautifully.

“When you’re doing the work in four days, you need to plan it better,” he says. “The guys just work a little more efficiently, because they know that they have to



**Ivan Giraldo**



**Ivan Giraldo (right) and Rigoberto Esparza walk a Clean Scapes account.**

finish the job in four days. Even if they would like to work more hours, night will come eventually, and they cannot work anymore.”

Around the same time Clean Scapes shifted to a four-day workweek, the company installed GPS tracking devices on all of its trucks. While Giraldo emphasizes that the company uses the devices to help with time tracking, route selection and job costing—and not as a punitive tool—he acknowledges the mere presence of the GPS devices encourages workers to use their time efficiently.

“Of course everybody knows it’s there, so everybody becomes a little more conscious of how they spend their time,” he says. “If I used to spend an extra 15 or 20 minutes at the 7-Eleven, now I know that I shouldn’t and I can’t because that’s going to be registered on my GPS.” —*Josh Cable*

## Using mobile technology

**Company:** DLC Resources

**Location:** Phoenix, Ariz.

**LM150 rank:** 72

# #3

**Landscape companies provide** the most value when their crews are out in the field—not in the office filing paperwork.

That’s why Phoenix-based DLC Resources equips its managers, foremen and other field personnel with iPhones and iPads, CEO Jeff Penney explains.

“This is about harnessing technology to drive value,” Penney says. “Value to us is: 1). keeping our field managers out of the office and in the field with our clients, and 2). being more in tune with our customers’ needs.”

Since the initial rollout in spring 2012, Penney estimates that 130 field personnel—including foremen,

*continued on S10*



**Jeff Penney**



*continued from S9*

mechanics and irrigators—now have iPhones, while some 30 department and field managers have iPads.

Penney points to several examples of how the mobile devices have boosted communication, improved document management and made processes more efficient.

Armed with iPhones, foremen now electronically file their time-cards on Friday afternoons, versus the old method of bringing their paper timecards to the office on Monday mornings.

“So now on Monday mornings, we’re talking about the future with our people,” Penney says. “We’re not talking about the past—that’s already been wrapped up.”

The devices also have changed the dynamic between field personnel and customers.

Each planned community serviced by DLC Resources has access to a customized Web portal, which includes work orders, proposals, weekly schedules, maps and other pertinent information for the landscaper and the client.

Field managers now can connect to the Web portals via an icon on their iPads, giving them access to key project documents that previ-

ously might have been available only in paper form.

“Essentially, everybody is updated on an hourly basis, so [customers’] need for sit-down time with us is less, because we’re not talking about the past, if you will,” Penney says. “And when we do sit down with them, we’re talking about the future—not ‘Here’s what we did.’ That’s already been communicated.”

Among other key benefits, the mobile devices have made it easier to locate underground utilities. Using Google Maps and an iPad app called GIS Pro that harnesses geographic information system technology, field personnel can geolocate underground utilities—or “blue stakes,” as they’re called in some parts of the country—more precisely before excavating.

“It removes the guesswork from the process,” Penney says.

While DLC Resources is reaping the benefits of equipping its field personnel with electronic devices, this is not the company’s first foray into mobile technology. Prior to spring 2012, field managers carried BlackBerrys.

However, the company has found that the Apple devices “are a lot more capable and user-friendly,” Penney says.

“Some of our power users who had iPhones for personal use had to educate us,” Penney says. “They said, ‘Hey, these things are a lot better, and they’ll be better for work.’” —*Josh Cable*

**At DLC Resources about 30 managers have iPads and 130 field personnel have iPhones.**



# #4

## Hosting client education sessions

**Company:** Earthworks

**Location:** Lillian, Texas

**LM150 rank:** 95

**You don’t have** to be a school-teacher to be rewarded for educating others. Just ask the staff at Earthworks. In 2009, Earthworks began educating its commercial clients on drought management and water conservation methods. It found that teaching can be quite profitable.

“When the economy started to tank, our clients wanted to save money, and we saw a move from them to start to do irrigation repairs themselves,” says Earthworks President Chris Lee. “We thought, ‘This could either be a terrible thing or it could be an opportunity for us.’”

To create goodwill, Earthworks decided to talk to its clients and explain to them the right way to make those repairs—not for a fee, just as a courtesy. The result surprised Lee.

“Inadvertently, it started to drive new business our way,” Lee says. “It convinced people that they didn’t have the resources to do these repairs and would have to come up with the money. They didn’t understand that there are miles of pipe and water pressure and electricity. They realized, ‘Wow, there’s a reason people get licensed to do this.’”

Earthworks’ initiative to educate clients on responsible water use took another lucrative turn in 2012, when conversations about water shortages, restrictions and drought became more frequent in Texas, faced as it was with one of the fastest-growing populations in the country.





**Chris Lee**

Earthworks began hosting free monthly classes for clients, classes that covered the efficiency of ET-based controllers, drip irrigation and other water-related tools and methods.

The classes inform clients not only about water issues, but also about the impact of shade on plants, tree trimming's importance and how to budget for projects in the long term.

“We don't ever try to sell them anything,” Lee says. “We don't want people to get the impression that that's the point of the class and then miss the intent of the program—which is just to educate them.”

Despite its good intentions, the program is translating into a profitable endeavor. For one, it costs Earthworks very little to implement, other than the time it takes to strategize the classes and the cost of the breakfast or lunch

the company serves during the sessions. The company hasn't had to make any new hires for the initiative, either.

Lee says the free classes, along with customer referrals garnered from it, generated about \$400,000 in new maintenance accounts for Earthworks in 2012, accounting for just more than 3 percent of its \$13.1 million revenue.

“It's actually turned out better than expected, because it's brought us additional revenue,” Lee says. “We'll give these classes to 10 of our properties and then one of the higher ups says, ‘Wait, will you do it for all 30 of my properties?’”

“They see we're investing in them,” Lee says, “so it works out that we pick up new business and we have better goodwill in the market.”

For other companies looking to capitalize on client education, Lee has one recommendation: “Look at the biggest education shortfalls in your area. Ask yourself, ‘Where is the biggest opportunity to make a difference?’ Then go there.” —*Beth Geraci*

## #5 *Refocusing on client relationships*

**Company:** Integrated Landscape Management

**Location:** Tempe, Ariz.

**LM150 rank:** 86

**Integrated Landscape Management's** customer-retention rate has consistently registered in the 90 percent range, says Robert Clinkenbeard, founder and co-owner. The company's focus on customer satisfaction is a major reason ILM has grown from a small start-up out of a garage to a \$15 million operation with 270 full-time employees.

Clinkenbeard and John Garigen founded the company in 2001 and have focused on steadily growing the business by building client relationships. As the company has expanded, Clinkenbeard has further emphasized client retention and employee professionalism.

Last year the company invested in additional client relationship training. One training exercise involves weekly role playing on potential customer concerns. ILM account managers involved in the role-playing exercise then will review processes and procedures to handle client complaints.

In addition, Clinkenbeard has redefined account managers' responsibilities so they're more focused on



**A focus on employee professionalism is a key component of ILM's growth.**

serving clients. They're not expected to handle as many operational issues as they had in the past, such as staffing issues, Clinkenbeard says.

ILM also conducts quarterly meetings with select customers to find out how the company can improve its service, Clinkenbeard says. “We recognize our clients are busy, so we try to identify ways to make their

*continued on S12*



# #6 *Nurturing client relationships*

**Company:** Mission Landscape Companies

**Location:** Irvine, Calif.

**LM150 rank:** 39

**You don't build** relationships sitting behind a desk, says David DuBois, president and CEO of Mission Landscape Cos. in Irvine, Calif. Sluggish growth following the global recession forced DuBois to rethink his company's approach to developing clients.

"We pulled back and said, 'Let's go back to our roots and build on relationships,'" DuBois says. "I feel this industry is more relationship driven. We made some adjustments on staffing and converted our efforts to what can we do to nurture the relationships and build them out further."



**David DuBois**

In 2012, DuBois eliminated three traditional sales positions, added an event marketing person and asked his vice presidents and regional managers to focus on the company's existing client base. The initiative required

top-level managers to address client needs with in-person visits vs. phone calls and emails.

So far, the strategy has paid off. In 2012 the company experienced 13.5 percent growth compared with 11 percent growth in 2011, DuBois says.

Face-to-face communication gives Mission Landscape managers an opportunity to educate customers

*continued from S11*

jobs easier, maybe by less paperwork and making the process simpler so they don't have to worry about their landscaping," Clinkenbeard says.

For instance, ILM plans to release an app in June that that will allow clients to view their property's quality scores or request work on the property. ILM primarily serves commercial clients, so the app is designed to help these customers save time and focus on their core responsibilities.

The company is also hiring account managers who are more professional and "polished," Clinkenbeard says. "I think all those things are contributing to



on seasonal needs, such as overseeding in the late summer, and other services that are available, DuBois says.

For example, the company recycles tree trimmings into mulch. Mission Landscape then offers mulching at a discount to customers receiving the trimming service since the company doesn't have to transport the material.

**One service Mission Landscape Cos. offers is recycling clients' tree trimmings into mulch.**

The approach is particularly useful with the commercial clients that Mission Landscape serves. That's because commercial customers are typically working within a budget. "You have to be ahead of them; you have to let them know what's coming next," DuBois explains. "In the commercial market they're always forecasting. Looking ahead on the quarters makes a big difference rather than being reactive on a month-to-month basis.

Company managers also drop in to tell clients when Mission Landscape employees will be working on their property. "Some of the best people on our team have stopped by on the simplest things, such as letting them know we're doing tree work on a Saturday," DuBois says. "Today emails get buried. That little touch is pretty basic but effective." —Jonathan Katz

higher retention rates and higher extra sales," he says.

Customer-satisfaction surveys indicate the company's efforts have paid off. Two years ago the company's customer-satisfaction rate was about 75 percent and the most recent survey score was about 90 percent, Clinkenbeard says.

As Clinkenbeard implemented these client-centric processes, he realized the importance of leveraging employees' core strengths. "The biggest lesson is trying to find where people's core strengths are, so if somebody's strength is being in the field or operations, that's where they should be," Clinkenbeard says.

—Jonathan Katz

PHOTO: MISSION LANDSCAPE COS.



## Those of you getting great discounts on equipment, please raise your hands.



When you're a John Deere GreenFleet Loyalty Rewards member, the discounts just keep coming. Becoming a member is easy: all you need to do is purchase two qualified units. After that, you'll receive valuable equipment discounts, parts savings, workshop products discounts, and other great benefits. There isn't a better equipment rewards program in the industry.

For more information, visit [JohnDeere.com/GreenFleet](http://JohnDeere.com/GreenFleet)



[JohnDeere.com/GreenFleet](http://JohnDeere.com/GreenFleet)



## Mandating continuing education

#7

**Company:** The Pattie Group

**Location:** Novelty, Ohio

**LM150 rank:** 136

**Employee education has** long been a priority at The Pattie Group, says Jonas Pattie, LIC, executive vice president, and from the moment they're hired, all employees are given a career path and a job "buddy." And training isn't just provided, it's required. Everyone in the company must take 45 hours of continuing education each year and is given a minimum annual budget of \$300 to that end.

Growth depends on excellent employees, says Pattie, and excellence comes from giving employees the tools to develop and learn. "When you're lucky enough to find people in this industry, you want to keep them and you want them to grow and get better, and you want them to see a career path in this industry, not just a job."

Out of the 45 required education hours, some training is done in-house by The Pattie Group experts. For example, the company may organize a training seminar by their head arborist to talk about tree disease. In other cases, particularly for sales, employees will take courses externally.

The company started its education program 15 years ago and has refined it in the last five years to provide clarity and more tools so everyone is aware of the expectation. One example: The group recently reworked its evaluations to make them more specific, detailed, actionable and measurable.

"From the moment an employee walks in the door, we want them to know what their goals are, what's expected [of them], what they're measured on, and really what it takes to be considered an excellent employee," says Pattie.

Education doesn't come cheap, however: Pattie estimates the annual cost of classes and paying speakers



Jonas Pattie

## Refining crew hour management

#8

**Company:** Southern Botanical

**Location:** Dallas, Texas

**LM150 rank:** 76

**Dale Selby is** excited, because in 2012 Southern Botanical strove to better manage its crew hours, and the company succeeded.

Southern Botanical turned away from Excel to a cloud-based program called Method Integration to track its crews' hours and overtime.

"We said, 'Let's automate this and see some results from it,'" says Selby, Southern Botanical's director of corporate finance.

Now, with just a few clicks of the mouse, Southern Botanical can judge when a crew is bordering on overtime and sub in another crew to cover for it. Method Integration also enables Southern Botanical to track vehicles. "It shows where efficiencies lie or where they don't lie," Selby says. "Are we routing correctly? How efficient is our team?"

For a company that has 150 crew workers and fore-

men in the field, those are important questions to answer.

Selby didn't divulge the cost of the program, acknowledging simply, "It's not cheap." Nonetheless, he says Southern Botanical leaders "feel like we're making a great investment in the company. We plan on growing a lot from it."

Selby says the program makes life easier for employees. Company leaders want to see that continue, because if their crews' jobs are easier, workers can focus on their more important duties—like making clients happy. "I think our teams are stronger because of (Method)," Selby says. "It serves as motivation for them because they see we're making an investment in them."

Southern Botanical has taken other steps to grow in the last year, among them: bringing its tree care and



The Stockner Group spent \$50,000 last year to market its new brand.

to come in easily runs \$25,000, and that doesn't include downtime when employees are in class.

For others who may want run an employee education program, Pattie says organization and planning are key. He recommends getting advice from local business organizations or using consultants. You'll need schedules, syllabi and systems—and don't forget testing to make sure the training is hitting home. (The Pattie Group used J.P. Horizons to help set up its program.)

Flexibility is another vital component of a good training program. Is it tree planting season and staff members are making mistakes? Don't get upset, says Pattie. Train. "We'll say, 'Hey, we've seen X, Y and Z on a couple of jobs. We think we need to review this,' and then we'll do a hands-on training session."

The Pattie Group knows that happy employees make happy customers, and its training program leads to that end. "We've had people ask, 'How can you afford to do this?'" he says. "The question is, how can you afford not to?" —*Danielle Beurteaux*



Southern Botanical executives analyze labor expenses with a new program.

pool work in-house and encouraging staff to pursue professional certifications and participate in industry associations.

Because of all those initia-

tives, Southern Botanical is poised for nearly 20 percent growth from 2012 to 2013, Selby says. In fact, he adds, the company had its best month ever this March, when it saw \$2.56 million in top-line revenue.

As for implementing Method itself, Selby says it's been a little bit of a slow process, but the company is now seeing good returns from it. "We were just looking for a more robust system," he says. "We initially just used it to route our crews, and it's been sort of a growing process between Method and ourselves, uncovering all the different things we can do." —*Beth Geraci*



## Rebranding

**Company:** The Stockner Group

**Location:** Rockville, Va.

**LM150 rank:** 114

#9

**What do you** do when your family company has outgrown its roots? Rebrand. That's what The Stockner Group did when its leaders realized they needed to educate clients about the many facets of their business. Started by the current owners' grandfather in 1981 as a nursery, the company's expertise now encompasses everything from hardscaping to snow removal—but its reputation hadn't kept pace with the growth.

"We needed people to know The Stockner Group means a lot of different things, that this division specializes in irrigation, this division specializes in grounds management, this division in landscape," says President Gary Stockner.

The rebranding initiative was the idea of newly hired COO Steven Cohen, who was brought in to help direct the company's growth. By bringing clarity to the brand, says Stockner, current and potential clients now know that Stockner's is a one-stop shop for grounds care, and each division is run by experts with many years of experience.

The rebranding took about \$50,000 of the company's \$100,000 annual marketing budget, for things like resigning the trucks and advertising. Stockner's main concern was people would think the firm was rebranding for the wrong reasons—like financial difficulties—and he wanted people to know that Stockner's is still a family company with the same culture. But he's very pleased with the overall results. "Now we're really educating our market on what we are and who we are," he says. "It's easier to tell our story now."

As the rebranding was under way, The Stockner Group launched its green initiative in spring 2012, knowing environmental sustainability is the future of landscaping. And it intends to walk the talk. "So many of our competitors talk about green initiatives, but are they using propane, are they using electric-powered blowers like we are?" Stockner asks. "We educate the

*continued on S16*



continued from S15

clients about why we're doing it and how it can add value to what they're receiving."

The company began with a gradual integration of equipment, starting with propane-powered mowers, a compost pile, electric-powered trimmers and blowers and organic lawn treatments. It replaced and upgraded equipment as needed in phases. The company also has introduced green guarantees in some multi-year contracts, pledging an annual increase of environmentally sound practices over the life of the agreement. Clients see The Stockner Group is taking environmental sustainability seriously, Stockner says, and can hold them accountable.

Companies thinking of a rebranding initiative must educate clients on how the results will benefit them. Says Stockner: "A rebrand is not about you, it's about servicing your clients better."

And green initiatives are great, he adds, but you have to really believe and do them—they're a long-term, evolving commitment. Clients are smart; they know when you're not really committed. "Everyone's got to buy in and take it seriously." —Danielle Beurteaux

## #10 Hiring a full-time recruiter

**Company:** Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care

**Location:** Denver, Colo.

**LM150 rank:** 66

The idea to hire a full-time recruiter had been bouncing around Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care for a couple of years, and while the company knew having a hiring expert on board would alleviate some of the existing staff's workload and give the company a competitive

## Going paperless

# #11

**Company:** TBG Landscape

**Location:** Brooklin, Ontario

**LM150 rank:** 84

Mark Bradley isn't a big fan of paperwork—in particular, the kind that involves actual paper.

"Paperwork is so unsystemized, so free," says Bradley, president of Brooklin, Ontario-based TBG Landscape. "People can write whatever they want on a sheet of paper. That leads to a lot of questions, and when there are questions, that means there's a lot of back and forth [between the company and the client], and a lot of guessing."

Through the use of mobile devices and cloud-based information sharing, paperwork is becoming a thing of the past at TBG Landscape—and the company's bottom line is reaping the benefits.

The paperless "evolution" began about five years ago, Bradley says, when the company started using budgeting and estimating software in the Landscape Man-

edge, it held off because of the recession. As the economy began to improve over the last few years, Swingle was already having difficulties finding qualified personnel. So many people had left the landscape industry during the recession that Swingle found itself in a bit of a hiring bind trying to get experienced employees to return and make potential employees aware of the career opportunities in the business. Company leaders made the move and hired a full-time recruiter last spring.

The results, says CEO and owner Tom Tolkacz, will be gradual and long term. The goals are employee recruiting, retention and development and moving to a proactive instead of reactive approach to hiring—always having a pipeline of quality candidates available, something he sees as a necessity for business growth.

He says landscape industry experience is not the most important qualification in a recruiter. He looked for someone who was passionate about searching out the best candidates, understood the company's core mission and values and could effectively sell Swingle as an employer and sell the Green Industry as a career path.

**Being part of the team is important at Swingle, which recently hired a full-time recruiter.**

Tolkacz's advice for other landscape companies thinking of doing



PHOTO: SWINGLE LAWN, TREE & LANDSCAPE CARE



**Mark Bradley**

agement Network (LMN), an online suite of business tools for landscaping contractors. Bradley is co-founder of LMN.

“It’s cloud-based, and it allows us to share estimate information, in real time, between our salespeople and customers, and ultimately to break the information down to the crews,” Bradley explains. “From an estimating and sales perspective, [field personnel] don’t have to rely on looking at an estimate spreadsheet and wondering if this is the latest version, or if they’re reviewing something that isn’t right and approving something that isn’t what the salesperson is currently presenting,” Bradley says.

The company saw enough value in the cloud-based approach that it decided to apply it to other functions.

TBG developed an in-house Web portal—“The Hub”—to enable field personnel to access project information, time sheets, HR forms, equipment-repair requests and other previously paper-based documentation, all on their mobile devices.

Coinciding with the shift to cloud-based data

sharing, the company has invested in tablet PCs for its supervisors and independent workers and put mobile devices in the hands of more of its field personnel.

Overall, the results of the paperless initiative have been nothing short of “fantastic,” Bradley says. Given TBG’s rapid growth, the company likely would’ve needed two full-time administrative employees to process and compile the paperwork associated with time-keeping forms, equipment-repair requests, refueling orders, vendor transactions and other functions. With all of those tasks now conducted electronically, TBG has been able to redeploy one administrative employee and avoid hiring a second one, Bradley says.

“The operational savings that I get in a week probably would pay for what we’ve invested in the tablets,” Bradley says.

Likewise, the budgeting and estimating software “paid for itself in the first month, in terms of better pricing and overhead recovery.”

“I could never have had the number of estimators that we have and have that much confidence in pricing,” Bradley says. “It saves me hours of reviewing estimates.” —*Josh Cable*

the same: Recognize your company’s tipping point when it comes to staffing. “When landscape companies grow into the region of 100 or so employees, then recruiting starts to be a full-time situation,” he says, and that work will become a burden to existing staff. “That’s the point in time that a company of that size should consider hiring a recruiter.”

The spring has been tough for Colorado landscapers, as winter’s cold and snow persisted, and demand for Swingle’s services has been lower than usual, which has led to overstaffing. “This time last year, we were probably 15 percent understaffed and this year we’re about 15 percent overstaffed,” says Tolkacz. Colorado also is in a drought and under water restrictions, so Swingle has been using various forms of outreach, including social media, to educate residents about water use and how the drought will affect their landscaping.

But even though it’s been a tough first quarter, Swingle is committed to its improved recruitment process. “It would be very easy for us right now to say let’s not undertake that cost,” says Tolkacz. “But I truly believe for our vision and where we’re headed, it’s something we need to do.”

How did Swingle find its recruiter? A recruiter, of course. Tolkacz’s only regret is he didn’t hire one sooner. —*Danielle Beurteaux*

## Increasing in-person client communication

# #12

**Company:** Terracare Associates  
**Location:** Littleton, Colo.

**LM150 rank:** 42



**Dean Murphy**

### There’s something about

face-to-face communication that makes for a tighter bond between a company and its clients. And in 2012, the staff at Terracare Associates got a valuable lesson in that, monetarily and otherwise.

In late 2011, Terracare devised a plan to strengthen client relationships, ramping up its efforts to communicate with every client in person and tracking staff’s communications with each. The initiative, says President Dean Murphy, applies to everyone from managers down to field superintendents.

*continued on S18*



*continued from S17*

“We established a requirement to meet with our clients from twice a year to once a month, depending on the position,” Murphy says. “We’re trying to listen and ask questions instead of assuming.”

Terracare tracks its client touches with spreadsheets. Murphy says the company shows its appreciation for clients based on customers’ interests. One Terracare salesperson, for instance, is an ex-professional golfer who gives clients free lessons, then takes them out for a round of golf. “Clients think that’s really cool,” Murphy says.

Although it’s still too early to see major returns on its customer touches, Terracare’s customer retention numbers are up by about 4 percent from 2012 to 2013, Murphy estimates. And although the company’s spent slightly more

on marketing in the last year, the overall cost of implementing the changes has been minimal, Murphy says.

“It’ll be money well spent, absolutely,” he adds. “We wouldn’t spend this much time on it if we didn’t think it would work out. Think about it, at the end of the day who do you want to do with business with?”

But relationship building is not without challenges, especially for a staff that long has been focused on operations. “We need the softer skills now,” Murphy says. “Relationship building takes work. It takes patience.”

Having a successful business depends on many things, Murphy says, but nothing is more important than customer service. “Production is great, safety is paramount, operations is critical,” he says. “But if you don’t have clients, you don’t have a reason to do anything else.” —*Beth Geraci*

## #13 *Training through growth*

**Company:** Yard-Nique  
**Location:** Morrisville, N.C.  
**LM150 rank:** 87

**Brian DuMont** started Yard-Nique as a two-man operation shortly before graduating with a horticulture degree from North Carolina State University in 1997. Since then, the company has averaged 20 to 30 percent growth annually, except for the Great Recession year of 2008, and expanded its workforce to 260 employees.

DuMont attributes much of Yard-Nique’s success to a focus on “controlled growth.” That means occasionally turning down work to stay focused on core business practices, such as budgeting and ongoing training, DuMont says. It also means adapting to change. In recent years, DuMont noticed some of his longer-term employees struggling to accept the changes necessary for growth.

“One of the challenges was me having a vision and realizing some of the other folks aren’t aware of the vision,” DuMont says. “Some folks that had been with us eight, 10, 12 years have grown tremendously with the company, and everybody needs to continue to adapt and change or we will not be able to continue to grow as a company.”

DuMont addressed this communication challenge with enhanced training, evaluations and goal setting. Yard-Nique’s different divisions, installation and maintenance, each receive various training sessions at least once per month. The departments receive training on company



standards to ensure everyone is on the same page, DuMont says.

A representative from each department leads 15-minute to 30-minute sessions on various topics, including safe mower operation, proper planting techniques and calibration of fertilizer spreaders. The training process also includes “ride-alongs,” when managers accompany crews to ensure everyone is following company expectations, DuMont says. Yard-Nique also invites vendors to provide training sessions.

In 2012, the company built an addition to its main office that includes a dedicated training and conference center. “We started adapting all of this over the last couple of years as we started to grow,” DuMont explains. “This past season we had close to 260 employees, so as you’re getting all of these employees on board, you have to think, “How do you make sure everything gets translated? I think communication and training is a big key to that.” —*Jonathan Katz*

**Fast growth can be challenging for employees, that’s why Yard-Nique focuses on training.**

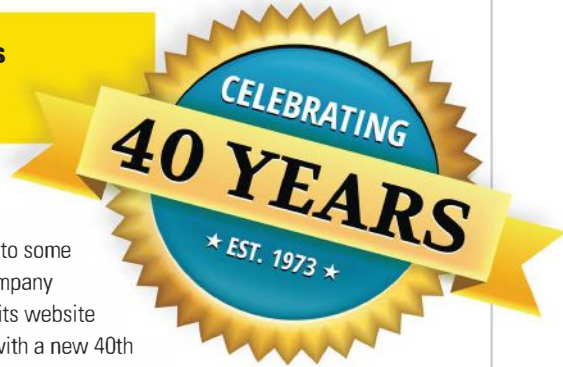
PHOTO: YARD-NIQUE



# X

Three **LM150** company executives reflect on 40 years in the industry and share how they'll celebrate their anniversaries.

BY **DAN JACOBS**



**1973 was quite a year.** Three of the industry's largest companies made their debuts then. Heads Up Landscape Contractors, Clintar Landscape Management and Denison Landscaping are marking their 40th anniversaries with a series of celebrations and activities.

### › Clintar Landscape Management

Bob Wilton, president of Clintar, started like many other business owners — by working for someone else before he and a friend decided they wanted to head out on their own.

"We thought we could do it a better way, particularly on the customer service side," Wilton says. "We thought there was opportunity to do things in a more professional manner. It was a leap of faith and confidence."

Today, the Markham, Ontario-based company has more than 550 full- and part-time employees across 24 franchises doing more than \$50 million in revenue in the U.S. and Canada. But the company started rather small, with about a dozen employees that first year.

"The financial challenge was probably the bigger thing than getting customers," Wilton says.

Forty years later, Wilton has certainly learned something about running a business. And he's seen a lot of change along the way.

"The industry today is much more professional," he says. "There are more educational tools. Certification was not even thought of in the 1970s. Today, we're real supporters of that."

Wilton plans to share the company's success with his employees and customers.



Clintar Landscape Management was founded in 1973 with about 12 employees.



In addition to some parties, the company has revamped its website and uniforms with a new 40th anniversary logo. Presentations and proposals are now distributed on USB devices shaped like Clintar vehicles and the company will also be handing out packages of chewing gum embossed with the company's name.

"When you spend an increased amount on marketing you hope it comes back in customer revenue," Wilton says.

In other words, Wilton plans to continue to expand the company.

"Our intent is mainly focused on the U.S.," he says. "We're in 90 percent of the major markets in Canada. We've been cautious at not being too bold, yet. We see opportunities. If we do it right, we can do business anywhere."

### › Denison Landscaping

John Denison found that a way to make money to pay for college became a passion. He had a pickup truck named "Chuck" and a mower.

"He decided landscaping was the thing for him," says Josh Denison, operations and human resources manager for the Ft. Washington, Md.-based operation and the son of the company founder. "His second year cutting grass, he had a customer ask him to plant some azaleas. He decided, 'I like this planting stuff more than I like this maintenance stuff.'"

Four decades later the company has more than 250 trucks on the road, trucks that drove a combined 24 million miles last year. Employees laid 18,197,000 square feet of sod.

Denison Landscaping has big plans to celebrate its anniversary. The company will complete 40 green initiatives that range from efficiency savings to community service.

"We can become the true green stewards that this industry truly is," Denison says. "Forty green initiatives in the spring is a tough thing to do. There are things that we've looked at. Some are long-term projects that we'll start this year and continue into the future."

Like Wilton, Denison is proud of the growth in knowledge and professionalism the Green Industry has undergone.

"A lot of the public still has that 'Chuck and a



## STAYING POWER

truck' stigma," Denison says. "I believe the knowledge base and the professionalism of the mid-size and larger companies are changing. It's an uphill battle. It's a good uphill battle to have."

While the industry has changed for the better, there certainly have been some negatives.

"The biggest challenges are government regulations and labor," Denison says. "I don't believe it's a great business environment for small, medium or large businesses, with all the regulatory action that all the government agencies are taking, including immigration, H-2B, health care and insurance regulation. We are all having a hard time adapting."

But Denison will adapt like it always has.

"We're a production-driven, get-it-done landscape company," Denison says. "We get into the spring. We get into our seasons. We put our heads down and go. We have a great organization with great people. We've got laborers in the field that have been with us 15-plus years. I see us continuing to improve and continuing to get better."

"There's no secret to our success," Denison continues. "It's hard work and determination, knowledge and good people. We couldn't have gotten where we are every day without the people that work for us."

### › Heads Up Landscape Contractors

Gary Mallory didn't know he was going to spend 40 years of his life working in the Green Industry, but he certainly isn't complaining.

"I've never been bored once in 40 years," says Mallory, founder and CEO of the Albuquerque, N.M.-based company. "Everyone has phobias and mine would be to be bored at my job."

Mallory and some friends started Heads Up (the name is a nod to a good sports play—"that was a heads up move") when they were in high school. Mallory worked at the business when he wasn't in class.

"I went to school for business," Mallory says of his college career. "I took all my classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays from early in the morning to late at night, and we worked on the business Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday."

Today the company has about 240 employees and will post revenue of more than \$18 million this year.

Like Clintar and Denison, Heads Up is in the midst of its 40th anniversary celebration. The anniversary is getting play on the company's Facebook page, web site, even its stationery.

"We're planning a big event for our customers at the end of the year," Mallory says. The company also has a planting initiative called "40 Trees in 40 Weeks." While the name is catchy, Mallory says it's more like 110 trees in 42 weeks.

#### › WEB EXTRA

Visit [LandscapeManagement.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net) and click on Web Extras for Gary Mallory's two cents on work/life balance.



Heads Up Landscape Contractors has adapted to trends in xeriscaping and irrigation since its inception.

"We're planting them for non-profits and charitable organizations," he says. "The community's been great to us for 40 years, and we want to give something back that will last for a long time."

Heads Up's charitable initiatives extend well beyond tree planting.

As part of the 40th anniversary celebrations, Mallory has committed his company to support the Ronald McDonald House, Habitat for Humanity and an orphanage in Santa Fe.

"We went and interviewed them and asked them what they needed help with," Mallory says. It wasn't necessarily money. The Ronald McDonald House wanted help dealing with its landscape issues. Habitat for Humanity needed irrigation system help.

Mallory confesses he considered letting the anniversary go by unnoticed.

"I thought it might imply we're on the downslope," he says. But ultimately he decided you're only as old as you act.

"We're 40 years young," he says. "We're embracing new ideas constantly."

One of the biggest and most important changes, especially for a company based in the dry Southwest, has been the focus on water technology.

"Forty years ago we put a lawn on both sides of the driveway, both sides of the front sidewalk, both sides of the house," Mallory says. "Now, we're very selective about where we put lawns. In Albuquerque we've come to appreciate xeriscapes, environmentally sensitive landscapes. The technology with irrigation is amazing."

And the rate of change for American business in general, and landscaping in particular, is accelerating and will continue to do so, Mallory says.

Heads Up, Clintar and Denison have a combined 120 years in the Green Industry. It takes hard work to survive, but as Wilton says, "It's a very respectable way to make a living ... It's a dedication of many years of effort—getting whacked, dusting yourself off and going at it again."

But the most exciting part of running a Green Industry business, says Wilton: "There's probably more opportunity now than there ever was." **LMI**

*Jacobs is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.*



# LM150 Company Index

## Company .....LM150 Rank

AAA Landscape.....	43
Acres Group.....	27
Ambius.....	10
American Civil Constructors.....	119
American Landscape Systems.....	111
Andre Landscape Service.....	118
Angler Environmental.....	93
Arteka Cos.....	112
ArtisTree Landscape Maintenance & Design.....	89
Bartlett Tree Experts.....	7
Basnight Land & Lawn.....	106
Becker Landscape Contractors.....	119
Bemus Landscape.....	61
Benchmark Landscape.....	81
Berghoff Design Group.....	43
Blondies Treehouse.....	109
Borst Landscape & Design.....	144
Cagwin & Dorward.....	35
Carol King Landscape Maintenance.....	126
Chalet.....	46
Chapel Valley Landscape Co.....	47
Christy Webber Landscapes.....	34
Clarence Davids & Co.....	83
Clean Scapes.....	53
Cleary Bros. Landscape.....	101
Clintar Landscape Management.....	19
Coast Landscape Management.....	141
CoCal Landscape Services.....	119
Complete Industries.....	82
Complete Landscaping Systems.....	97
Cornerstone Solutions Group.....	102
Creative Environments Design and Landscape.....	119
D. Schumacher Landscaping.....	58
David J. Frank Landscape Contracting.....	73
Denison Landscaping.....	31
Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping.....	74
Designs By Sundown.....	92
Dixie Landscape Co.....	67
DLC Resources.....	72
Earthworks.....	95
Eastern Land Management.....	145
Ecoscape Solutions Group.....	137
EMCOR/USM.....	5
Environmental Earthscapes/The Groundskeeper/ Greater Texas Landscapes.....	24
Environmental Management Services.....	58
Executive Landscape.....	138
Ferrandino & Son.....	16
Five Star Landscape.....	17
Garden Design (formerly Metroplex Garden Design Landscaping).....	64

Gardeners' Guild.....	127
Gibbs Landscape Co.....	69
Girard Environmental Services.....	61
Gothic Grounds Management.....	37
Gothic Landscape.....	12
Grant & Power Landscaping.....	142
Green Lawn Fertilizing.....	147
Greenscape.....	38
Greenscapes of Southwest FL.....	85
Heads Up Landscape Contractors.....	79
Hermes Landscaping.....	102
Heron Lawn & Pest Control.....	131
High Tech Landscapes.....	80
HighGrove Partners.....	88
Hoffman Landscapes.....	115
Integrated Landscape Management.....	86
ISS Grounds Control.....	41
James River Grounds Management.....	63
Jensen Corp.....	30
John Mini Distinctive Landscapes.....	107
Joyce Landscaping.....	139
Kinsella Landscape.....	132
Lambert's.....	71
Landscape Concepts Management.....	49
Landscape Workshop.....	77
Lawn Dawg.....	113
Lawn Doctor.....	11
LegacyScapes.....	130
LMI Landscapes.....	97
Lucas Tree Expert Co.....	29
Luke Brothers Landscape Services.....	99
Mainscape.....	22
Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping.....	40
Mariani Landscape.....	32
Marina Landscape.....	20
Massey Services.....	21
McFall and Berry Landscape Management.....	51
McHale Landscape Design.....	58
Meadows Farms.....	23
Merit Service Solutions (formerly Lipinski Outdoor Services).....	18
Mission Landscape Cos.....	39
Nanak's Landscaping.....	146
Native Land Design.....	129
Naturalawn of America.....	25
Naturescape.....	70
New Way Landscape & Tree Services.....	100
NJ Best Lawns Sprinklers & Fencing.....	140
North American Lawn & Landscape.....	108
Nutri-Lawn.....	45
Odyssey Landscaping.....	102
OneSource Landscape & Golf Services.....	26

Outside Unlimited.....	142
Pacheco Brothers Gardening.....	148
Pacific Outdoor Living.....	89
Parker Interior Plantscape.....	119
Perficut Cos.....	116
Pierre Sprinkler & Landscape.....	53
Plantscapes.....	150
ProGrass.....	102
PROscape.....	91
Reliable Property Services.....	78
Rotolo Consultants (RCI).....	53
Ruppert Landscape.....	15
Russell Landscape Group.....	57
Ryan Lawn & Tree.....	48
Santa Rita Landscaping.....	128
SavATree.....	14
Schultz Industries.....	117
Scott Byron & Co.....	52
Scotts Lawn Service.....	6
Sebert Landscaping.....	49
Senske Lawn & Tree Care.....	75
Shearon Environmental Design.....	53
Southern Botanical.....	76
Southview Design.....	125
Sposato Landscape Co.....	94
Spring-Green.....	28
Stay Green.....	95
Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care.....	66
TBG Landscape.....	84
Terracare Associates.....	42
Teufel Landscape.....	65
The Brickman Group.....	2
The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin.....	36
The Davey Tree Expert Co.....	4
The Greenery.....	33
The Grounds Guys.....	135
The LaurelRock Co.....	149
The Pattie Group.....	136
The Spencer Co.....	110
The Stockner Group.....	114
Tree Tech.....	132
TruGreen.....	1
U.S. Lawns.....	8
Urban Farmer.....	68
ValleyCrest Landscape Cos.....	3
Visionscapes.....	134
Webb Landscape.....	119
Weed Man.....	9
Yard-Nique.....	87
Yellowstone Landscape Group.....	13

Needs a **transmission**  
that can handle the hard jobs.

Wants something **easy** to use,  
and easy on him too.

He's not settling for anything  
but the **best**.



**Z950R**

TREY, OWNER/OPERATOR

## Meet the Z900 R Series

When you're out there cutting the big jobs down to size, you deserve the best. In other words, the Z900 R Series mowers. They come with everything you need to keep working your best: our Comfort & Convenience Package with ergonomic control levers, the Brake-N-Go starting system, our unique Cross-Porting transmission, and a power deck lift. It's a powerful, comfortable ride that makes it easy to keep going all day long, start to finish.

For those who want everything in a zero-turn mower, the Z900 R Series delivers big time. Ask your local John Deere dealer about one today.



[JohnDeere.com/MowPro](http://JohnDeere.com/MowPro)

# 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](http://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](http://permagreen.com) for details.



## THE BENCHMARK

JEFF HARKNESS

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

# Manage your capital, banker

**T**he big winners in 2013 and 2014 will be companies with access to capital. While the stock market is trading at all-time highs and the press is talking about economic recovery, let's not forget we're living in a higher tax environment and still have Obamacare costs looming. Remember: Net profit dollars drive your business and the costs mentioned above will have an impact.

I'm not trying to temper the improved sales performance we're seeing or a general feeling of optimism among companies, because the phone *is* ringing. But the fact is, profit is where it's at and costs will continue to rise. Do you have a plan? Is your banker on board?

Winning companies need to rely more on internally generated cash and at the same time solidify their banking relationships with a solid story. As a result, these companies will have access to relatively inexpensive money when they need to purchase assets, buy a company or simply fund accounts receivable during peak season. This is a huge competitive edge.

There are only three sources of capital: your profits, your bank or an equity investor. For most firms, equity money is either too expensive or simply not available. This leaves profits and bankers. And today more than ever bankers want you to prove that you don't need the money before they lend it to you. Therefore, you must find a banker who buys into your growth plans. Here's what you need to do to solidify your story.

### **Demonstrate to yourself and your bank that you have the ability to cash flow new and current debt obligations.**

▶ Take the time to update a mid-year rolling pro forma projection that focuses on your income statement. Use your year-to-date 2013 actuals plus forecast on a monthly basis your remaining revenue, direct costs, indirect and selling, general and administrative expenses to generate a projected net profit for 2013.

▶ Look at your current amortization schedules on existing debt and spread the remaining 2013 required principle payments against each month's net profit.

▶ Take the amount of any new loans you're trying to get approved and put the details into an amortization schedule. Add the expense against the bottom-line profit and on top of the existing principle debt payments.

▶ Look at your monthly net income and annual net income after backing out the principle payments on the "old" and "potential" new debt. What's the ratio? Is your profit versus debt 1.5:1 or better? Are you upside down? If so, "the numbers" don't cash flow. Keep in mind a 1:1 ratio puts you at broke; 1.5:1 or better is the target.

▶ Lastly, look at the results of the above exercise. You may need to revise how much money you ask for in a loan or try to cut operating costs. You may need to try to refinance existing debt.

### **Check all three of your credit reports.**

Pull your credit reports from Equifax, Experian and Transamerica. Review your score and any negative comments or incorrect information. Address any negatives with your banker. Note that a score of 650 or less makes things difficult. Take action to clean things up prior to a midyear checkup with your bank.

### **Know what collateral you have available.**

To get any new capital, what assets will the bank lien? The first step is to know which assets are or are not encumbered. Next make sure the free asset values mesh with the requested loan amount. No collateral, no loan!

Take this approach prior to your midyear visit with your bank. It will impress your banker and help set your own expectation on where you stand.

Lastly, don't forget that even when credit markets are slow, lending money is every bank's business. They must do it. Do your homework, make the plan and hunt for the best source of capital. It's perhaps the most important business strategy for the coming year.



## A WALL, IS A WALL...IS A WOW!

If your client wants more than an ordinary retaining wall, select VERSA-LOK. No other wall system gives you the same combination of aesthetics, installation ease and performance. VERSA-LOK's unique construction gives you the freedom to create stairs, curves, corners, columns and freestanding walls. Units can be quickly modified on site—eliminating the need to order special pieces. And their solid-unit characteristics provide unsurpassed durability. In addition, the Weathered™ texture and Mosaic® random-pattern options will give your project a look that is sure to turn heads.

To find out why customers prefer VERSA-LOK, call **(800) 770-4525** or visit **[www.versa-lok.com](http://www.versa-lok.com)**.



Freestanding Walls



Mosaic Random Face Patterns



Fully Integrated Stairs



Random-Pattern Tall Walls



Freestanding Columns



Multi-Angle Corners

**VERSA-LOK**®  
Retaining Wall Systems  
*Solid Solutions.™*

© 2008 Kiltie Corporation • Oakdale, MN

## Cutting edge

There's no need to wait for the future of commercial mower engines.



Equipment dealer Colten Wright says his customers save money and fuel with EFI mower engines.

### **Most of Colten Wright's landscaping customers "can barely remember a time when their car or truck didn't have electronic fuel injection."**

Wright, who owns the Tool Shack, an outdoor power equipment dealership in Gulf Breeze, Fla., tells his customers that a similar evolution is happening with commercial mower engines.

"What I explain to our end users is that EFI [electronic fuel injection] represents the future of small engines," Wright says. "And there's certainly no reason to resist the technology. In the long run, it'll be beneficial for everybody."

Landscape contractors don't have to wait, though. A number of Wright's customers are already enjoying the improved fuel economy and ease of use delivered by KOHLER Engines' EFI technology.

"My customers have seen firsthand that these engines can add money to their bottom line," Wright says. Using lawn mowers powered by KOHLER's closed-loop EFI engines can help cut gas-line costs by up to 25 percent compared with similar-size KOHLER carbureted engines under comparable loads and duty cycles.

### **EASY TO MAINTAIN**

In addition to the money-saving benefits delivered through the fuel efficiency of KOHLER's closed-loop EFI technology, the easy-to-maintain design of the engines also helps landscapers to minimize downtime.

In the event that a KOHLER EFI engine experiences an issue, the company's proprietary diagnostic software helps the Tool Shack to respond quickly and accurately. The software is able to pinpoint areas of concern and identify them with the same codes used by automotive mechanics—all with the simple point-and-click functionality of a PC.

Wright is quick to mention that KOHLER has even provided several training sessions on the troubleshooting software and other unique aspects of its closed-loop EFI technology.

"KOHLER has been great in supporting the product and getting the word out to dealers about how closed-loop EFI works and how dealers can provide support to the end user," Wright says.

### **EASY TO CONVEY**

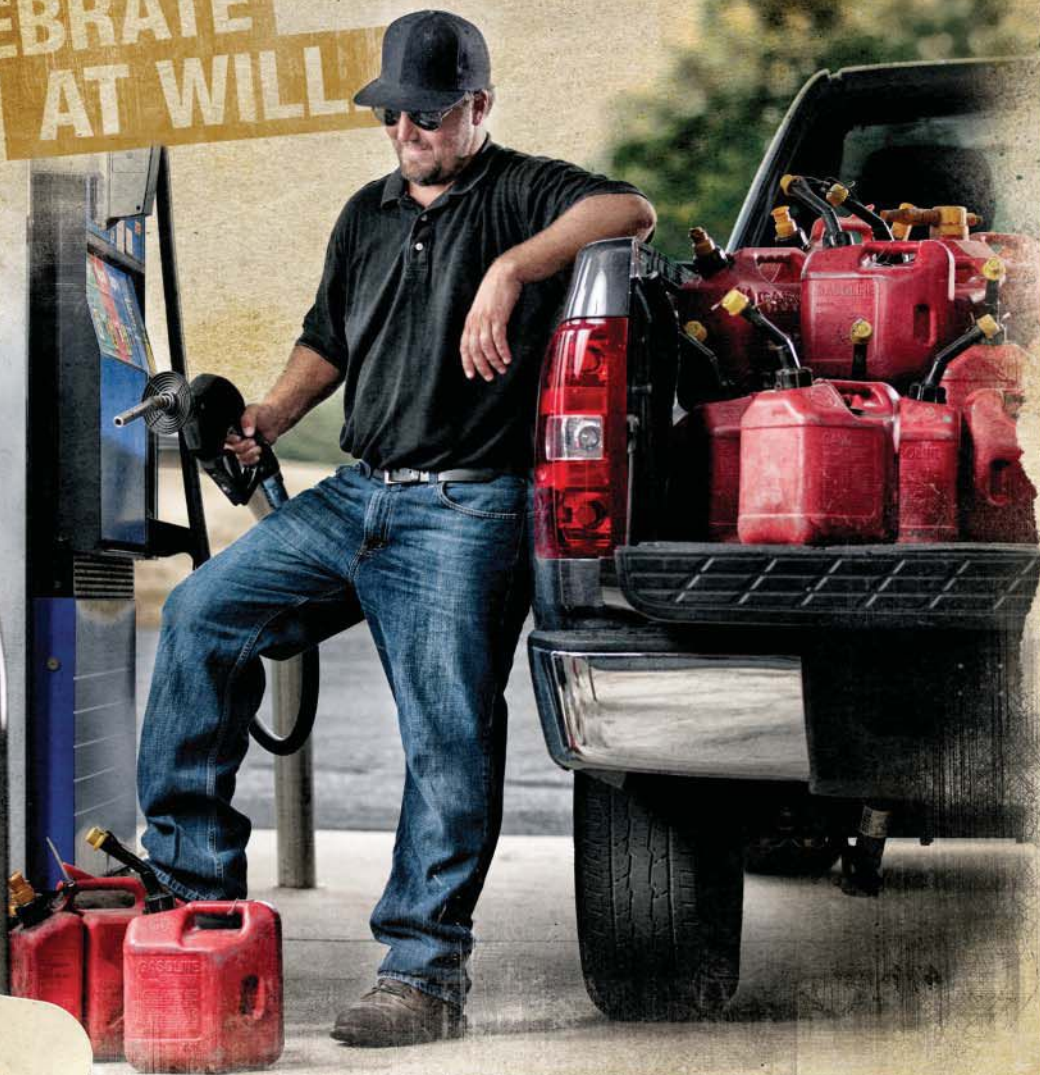
Although EFI technology is relatively new to outdoor power equipment, most people have been enjoying the benefits of EFI in their cars and trucks for several decades. That's made it easier for Wright to convey the benefits of KOHLER's EFI engines to his customers.

"In the 1960s and 1970s, if your car had 50,000 miles on it, you'd better keep a toolbox around," Wright says. "In our modern automobiles, it's not even a thought until a car has well over 100,000 miles on it. If a person does proper care and maintenance on an EFI engine, they'll see a significant increase in the life expectancy of the engine, much like we've seen in our automobiles."



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

**CELEBRATE**  
**AT WILL**



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**.

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

**KOHLER**.ENGINES

KOHLERENGINES.COM/EFI



## HORSEWEED

*Conyza canadensis*

### IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ Also known as maretail, horseweed is sometimes mistaken for dogfennel.
- ▶ The immature rosette (pictured) looks much different than the mature plant. Seedlings develop a basal rosette and young leaves are egg-shaped with toothed margins.
- ▶ Mature leaves are hairy, slightly toothed and crowded along the stem. Full-grown plants have leaves without petioles, and they become smaller farther up the stem.

### CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ A postemergent herbicide containing clopyralid alone or clopyralid plus triclopyr will clean up existing horseweed.
- ▶ This annual weed can produce more than 200,000 seeds per plant, so preemergent herbicides may provide the best option for control.
- ▶ Apply a preemergent herbicide containing dithiopyr prior to germination in fall or early spring or in tank-mixtures with a postemergent herbicide containing clopyralid.



## DOGFENNEL

*Eupatorium capillifolium*

### IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This short-lived summer perennial is commonly found in the South and along the East Coast.
- ▶ Unlike horseweed, dogfennel's leaves are divided into thread-like segments, resembling a fern. Leaves will emit a foul odor if broken.
- ▶ The stems are reddish, hairy and grow from a woody base. Small, white flowers grow from branched panicles.

### CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ Apply a postemergent

- herbicide containing clopyralid, which will translocate throughout the plant, controlling the dogfennel—roots and all.
- ▶ For preemergent control of dogfennel, apply an herbicide containing isoxaben prior to germination or in a tank-mix with a postemergent herbicide labeled for dogfennel control.
- ▶ Dogfennel will not thrive in thick, established turf. Because of its upright growth habit, it will not tolerate low mowing. Properly mow, fertilize and water to encourage dense turf.

®Trademark of The Dow Chemical Co. ("Dow") or an affiliated company of Dow. \* State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension specialty herbicide products and Lontrel apply.

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

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.<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.DowProvesIt.com).**



**Dow AgroSciences**

*Solutions for the Growing World*

<sup>1</sup>2010 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

## Well covered

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE.

**B**Y ITS VERY nature, landscaping is a risky business. That's why it's so important to be properly insured. General liability insurance is designed to provide protection against third-party insurance claims as a result of alleged bodily injury, property damage or personal injury. John Hodapp, CPCU, senior vice president of Hortica Insurance & Employee Benefits weighed in on what landscape contractors should know about their general liability policies.

General liability insurance may come as part of a package—that's when two or more types of insurance are grouped together. The most common grouping is general liability and property insurances, Hodapp says. "A property could be anything from an office to a storage garage," he says. "Property insurance would provide protection against your risk to that property. It makes sense to package this with general liability because there's a discount to bundle—maybe as much as 10 to 15 percent. If you're going to buy both, it makes sense to buy them both from the same company so you can get that discount."

Hodapp says that it's also a good idea to have general liability and auto

insurance written by the same company to avoid uncertainty. While some situations are straightforward—for example if you're driving a truck and there's an accident, the auto insurance would cover it—there is room for confusion.

"For instance, say you're not driving the truck, but you're unloading it—that's a gray area between general liability and auto," Hodapp explains. "Having the same insurance company write both of those policies takes away that gray area."

#### Other coverage

As part of general liability coverage, landscape contractors also want to make sure they have products liability and completed operations liability coverage. Claims or lawsuits resulting from injuries or damage to property caused by products you sell are covered by "products liability." In addition to the products sold, businesses also create potential liability exposure as a result of the work they do—known as "completed operations."

While these are some key coverage opportunities that should be added to a general liability policy, there are other optional liability coverages to consider. Hodapp says the most important is pesticide applicators coverage.



"It's important to realize that a general liability policy excludes pollution," Hodapp says. "But as a landscape contractor, it's likely that part of your job may be to apply chemicals. If you don't opt for any additional coverage, then you're not covered if something goes wrong—since the general policy excludes pollution. You need pesticide or herbicide applicator coverage, which amends the pollution exclusion of your policy."

This is an important point, as problems with chemicals may arise, Hodapp says. "Say you spray a yard and the residents downwind claim their property was damaged from the chemical traveling into their yard. It wasn't your original client, but you would be liable for that, making specialty coverage an important addition to your policy."

Some landscape businesses also may consider adding employment practices liability. "If allegations of wrongful discharge or harassment arise, this

would be the coverage that handles those situations," Hodapp explains.

Many Green Industry businesses also inquire about umbrella liability policies. This is a policy that "sits above" your general liability and auto insurance, he says. "With an umbrella policy, if you have a big loss that exceeds the limit of your policy, the umbrella may be available to provide liability coverage beyond those limits," Hodapp says. "It's an important option and is how you protect companies against the worst-case scenario."

While all of this coverage can add up expense-wise, Hodapp says companies that emphasize loss control will have the best success in keeping their rates down. Have good practices in place and focus on managing claim costs by emphasizing safety.

"You always want to make sure you're well covered," adds Hodapp. "Claims and lawsuits can easily cost much more than insurance coverage, so being well protected is critical."

# Not your ordinary claims adjuster.



  
**hortica**<sup>®</sup>  
INSURANCE & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS


*You don't need superpowers to get back to business after a disaster — we help you get there.* Our claims adjusters have the strength to support your unique horticultural insurance needs. Call Hortica Insurance at **800.851.7740** or visit us at **hortica.com**.

# POINT & CLICK



---

A beginner's guide to  
Green Industry pay-per-click  
marketing. BY **SHAUN KANARY**



**In the past,** advertising to consumers in the Green Industry was difficult. Limited budgets and a limited potential customer base often caused traditional advertising campaigns, such as television, magazine, billboard and direct mail, to fail. Through these traditional advertising channels, your message gets broadcast to many consumers who may not want, need or even qualify to purchase your services.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could advertise our Green Industry services to only those consumers who have indicated an interest? Better yet, pay a reasonable rate for those who not only have an interest in our advertisement, but who actually want to learn more about our companies? Wait no longer, because this form of advertising does exist. It's called pay-per-click (PPC) advertising. »

Even hard case weeds like crabgrass can't get away from Quincept® herbicide. With three active ingredients in rates that optimize performance, Quincept nails more than 200 broadleaf and grassy weeds. And since it's ideal for broadcast or spot application, Quincept delivers the versatility you need to address many weed problems.

EsQape-proof.



More where it matters most.  
[www.nufarm.com/usto](http://www.nufarm.com/usto)

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



## PAY-PER-CLICK



YOU CAN TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE BY TIME, LOCATION AND SPECIFIC DEMOGRAPHICS, WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS.

### **PPC advantages**

The concept of PPC advertising is simple. Search engines such as Google allow users to search for various products and services by matching the user's question or query to a page of results. On the results page are advertisements tied to the search queries by keywords on which advertisers bid.

Which ads appear and in what order are closely tied to the keyword the advertiser used, how relevant it is to the user's search query (referred to as quality score), and how much you as the advertiser are willing to spend for someone to click on it (referred to as maximum cost per click). These two factors multiplied by each other gives Google your Ad Rank Score. The highest "ad rank" has its ad in the first spot, followed by the next highest in order.


You as an advertiser are not charged until a user clicks on one of your ads. At that time, you are charged a specific amount of money for that click. However, you control the amount you are willing to spend on each click, as well as the amount you spend on your campaigns daily, weekly or even monthly.

PHOTO: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

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](http://valentpro.com/safari).

**CLOCKED AS THE FASTEST BROAD SPECTRUM INSECTICIDE ON THE MARKET.**

**Safari**  
INSECTICIDE

 Products That Work, From People Who Care® | [www.valentpro.com](http://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



In addition to controlling how much you pay for advertising and who sees your message, PPC advertising allows you to change your messaging at any time, testing different offers and ads based on successes and failures. Furthermore, you can target your audience by time, location and specific demographics, which is impossible with traditional marketing methods.

The days of advertising your snowplowing services when it's not snowing are over. With PPC advertising, you're in control of when your ads show, and more importantly, when they don't.

Each major search engine has its own version of pay-per-click marketing and, subsequently, its own separate platform. However, Google's AdWords platform represents 70 percent of the market share, with Bing/Yahoo! (a very similar platform) making up roughly 20 percent of the market share. So for the sake of this article, we'll discuss Google AdWord's platform in depth.

## **Campaigns**

Campaigns are the main groups of keywords that share similar main settings, such as the

location where your ads appear, times when your ads show, which types of devices your ads display on (tablets, phones, PCs, etc.) and daily budgets. These settings are unique and shared by each keyword in your campaign. Let's examine some important settings you should be aware of when setting up your campaigns:

**Location.** When setting the location of where your campaign's ads will appear, it's most effective to target a metro area, a service radius in miles from your location, and a custom shape on a map. Warning: A person's location is not determined by geography, but rather by where the Internet Service Provider (ISP) is located. For example, in rural areas, a consumer's ISP may be located in a major city many miles away, causing problems with your ad showing in areas you do not serve. Additionally, people often live in the suburbs but work in cities up to 30 miles away. So don't be too limited in your geographic settings; it could backfire.

**Time settings.** When setting times for your ads to appear for each campaign, keep in mind any times during the day that tend to produce

Formulated exclusively for nutsedge control, Nufarm Prosedge® herbicide wipes out troublesome sedge patches without killing your bottom line. Plus, Prosedge makes it easy to achieve complete weed control – use with your favorite broadleaf herbicide, such as Quincept®, to develop an effective program for your turf and your profits.

***Proscribed as needed.***

**Nufarm**  
**Prosedge®**

More where it matters most.  
[www.nufarm.com/usto](http://www.nufarm.com/usto)

©2013 Nufarm. Important: Always read and follow label instructions. Prosedge® and Quincept® are trademarks of Nufarm.

**Nufarm**

## PAY-PER-CLICK

weak leads. Also, thanks to the time settings, you can have campaigns that feature an “after hours” phone number and information to supplement your campaigns during regular business hours.

**Daily budget.** Controlling your campaigns by daily budget is another great feature of AdWords. It allows you to set an advertising budget for a specific campaign and turns off your ads when it reaches that spend. This feature is great for smaller businesses that may not have huge budgets for advertising.

Most Green Industry companies are at the mercy of the seasons. In fact, a majority of our services revolves around them. Separating your services into different campaigns allows you, as an advertiser, to have precise control over each service’s advertising reach, budget and timing. Landscape companies often use different campaigns for their snowplowing keywords (to only show during the winter), their individual locations (if they’re located in multiple cities) or if they have an after-hours call center (showing different phone numbers in ads).

### Keywords

Keywords are words or phrases you choose to bid on that could be contained within or match a search query that a potential consumer uses in the search engine’s search box. When a

*continued on page 58*

## Match type tips

When first developing keywords, using broad match terms will help you establish and learn which terms are successful and can be broken out even further. You may pay for some irrelevant clicks, however, you can collect some valuable data on which keywords are effective. As you develop your keywords, you can start to build more groups containing phrases and exact match keywords and begin to eliminate unprofitable broad match keywords.

Not only will using broad match cost you clicks that won’t deliver bids, it also will cost you more for each of those clicks. As we discussed earlier, your ad’s rank is determined by multiplying the amount you’re willing to pay by the quality score for the keyword. If your keyword is in broad match and gets a lot of impressions without clicks, it’ll drive your quality score down, making you bid more to keep your ad ranking high.



ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL, INC.

# 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 ¾" to 2 ½" 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](http://www.pvblockbox.com)

# Helping you save money, no matter what you drive.



No matter what business you're in, you could save with Progressive Insurance. To learn more about Progressive, and see why we are the #1 Truck Insurer in America, please visit [ProgressiveCommercial.com](http://ProgressiveCommercial.com).

Call for a Free Quote  
**1-888-375-7908**

Find an Agent  
**[ProgressiveCommercial.com](http://ProgressiveCommercial.com)**

**PROGRESSIVE**  
COMMERCIAL

GROUP KEYWORDS TOGETHER IN SMALL, TIGHTLY KNIT THEMES OR GROUPS OF WORDS THAT TRIGGER THE SAME AD TO SHOW.

*continued from page 56*

consumer searches using terms that match your keywords, it triggers the appearance of the ad associated with those keywords.

The most common types of keywords explicitly describe what you do, the services you offer (landscaping, lawn care), the product lines you offer (Unilock, Belgard, Hunter), and problems that could arise (weeds in lawn, broken sprinkler). Or, they're informational in nature, seeking answers to things such as "how to trim a tree." When developing these keywords, keep in mind terms that your customers would use to search for your products or services.

To help control when your keywords are triggered by search queries, there are rules that you as the advertiser can set up, based on how closely the keyword matches the search query:

**Broad match.** This setting triggers your keyword and its associated ad whenever the consumer uses a search query that's similar to your keyword. For example, if you had the broad match keyword "lawn service prices," your ad would be triggered by the search query "lawn

prices," "lawn service costs" or "lawn costs." The only problem is that Google determines which search queries are similar. This can lead to a lot of search queries triggering your ad that are not relevant to your business. For instance, using the keyword "lawn service prices" in broad match may lead to your ad being triggered for the search query "house with a lawn," "locksmith service" or "prices for shoes online." Therefore, broad match should be used sparingly. (For more on broad match, see "Match type tips" on page 56.)

**Modified broad match.** With modified broad match, you can tell Google which words in your keyword phrase are important and should be in the search query that triggers your ad. To use modified broad match, simply put the plus (+) sign in front of the important words. So in the example above, making the keyword a modified broad search, "+lawn +service prices" will tell Google to only show your ad to similar search queries that include the words "lawn" and "service."

**Phrase match.** This match type tells Google that the search query must include your keyword

*continued on page 60*

**NEW LAWNAIRE® V with EASY STEER TECHNOLOGY**

# PROS DO IT FASTER WITH RYAN


Aerate up to 45,000 sq. ft. per hour! Each tine assembly rotates independently and propels the unit at the same time. Turns easily without removing the tines from the ground. Follow landscape contours with higher productivity and less operator stress. The NEW Lawnaire V with EST from RYAN – arguably the most productive aerator on the market.

**Because they're not just ready ... they're RYAN ready.**

**AERATORS | DETHATCHERS | OVERSEEDERS | SOD CUTTERS**


Request free product information and locate a dealer to schedule your free demo, today! Call us (toll-free) at **(866) 469-1242** or visit [ryanturf.com/lawnest17](http://ryanturf.com/lawnest17) and enter department code RY1317 and see RYAN turf care equipment perform for yourself.

©2013 Schiller Grounds Care, Inc



Easy steer technology follows your lead. Below shows a right turn.

**GreatEST Aerator Giveaway**  
**ENTER TO WIN!**  
 Now through August 31, 2013  
[ryanturf.com/lawnest17](http://ryanturf.com/lawnest17)



The First Name in Turf Renovation™

# It's Live *(and free!)*

Tune in to  
FD2B Talk  
Radio



Every Wednesday, 7–8 pm EST!

FD2B Talk Radio is a weekly internet radio show for landscape design/build contractors who want to take their companies to the next level.

**Tune in @ [FD2B.COM](http://FD2B.COM)!**

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

DATE	SPECIAL GUEST	PROGRAM TOPIC	SPONSOR
6/5	<b>Judith M. Guido</b> , Consultant, <i>Guido &amp; Associates</i>	Public Relations & Branding	Sponsorship Available
6/12	<b>Adam Sokoloff</b> , Vendor, <i>Sunrise Signs</i>	Visual Marketing for Landscape Contractors	Sponsorship Available
6/19	<b>Rich Goldstein</b> , Contractor, <i>Green Meadows Landscape Contractors</i>	Growing a Balanced Landscaping Business	Sponsorship Available
6/26	<b>Frank Ross</b> , Consultant, <i>Ross-Payne &amp; Associates, Inc.</i>	Business Financial Management	Sponsorship Available
7/3	<b>Stephanie Cohen</b> , Garden Expert, <i>The Perennial Diva</i>	Tried and True Perennials	
7/10	<b>Jerry Gaeta</b> , Consultant, <i>J. Gaeta Business Planning, LLC</i>	\$0 to 1 Million in 60 Minutes	

## ABOUT THE HOST

Jody Shilan is an award-winning landscape designer with more than 35 years of experience in the green industry. In addition to hosting FD2B Talk Radio and managing FromDesign2Build.com, Shilan is a regular presenter at industry events and writes the "Profiting from Design" column for *Landscape Management* magazine.



Shilan earned his Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture (BSLA) from Rutgers Cook College and his Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture (MLA) from the University of Massachusetts.

Remember: all shows are archived for later listening at [FD2B.COM](http://FD2B.COM)!

## LISTENERS LOVE IT!

"I love listening to FD2B Talk Radio. I appreciate the candid yet light-hearted conversations he has with his guests. And the topics are relevant and on-point." —Chris Heiler, president & founder, *Landscape Leadership*

"Jody has brought a great variety of industry resources to a single media channel. I feel that the topics are relevant and the concise manner in which they are delivered saves me time. The format allows for feedback and questions, which I find helpful." —Michael McShane, president, *Plantique*

"FD2B Talk Radio is not only informative and insightful, but it's also entertaining. Each week I look forward to learning the next guest speaker and topic of discussion." —Amanda Bell, landscape designer, *Landscape Design by Amanda*

"I listen to FD2B Talk Radio to educate myself on the landscape design/build topics to better my business. Jody responds to all my questions promptly and with helpful hints you can't get anywhere else." —Kim Stratton, landscape designer, *Stratton Landscape Design*

Interested in FD2B Talk Radio sponsorships? Contact Craig MacGregor 216-706-3787.

*continued from page 58*

in the same order that you have it in your group. For example, the keyword “patio install” in phrase match would trigger your ad to appear for search queries such as “patio install companies,” “quick patio install,” or “patio install tips.” Your ads would not appear for the search queries, “install patio,” “installing patios” or “how to install a patio,” because it does not match the order of your keyword phrase.

**Exact match.** When using this match type, the search query must match your keyword phrase exactly. Using the above example again, your ads would only appear when consumers use the search query “patio install.”

**AdGroups**

When developing your keywords, you’ll want to group your keywords together in small, tightly knitted themes or groups of words that trigger the same ad to show. This group is known as your AdGroup. Some common AdGroup themes include product names (Belgard, Unilock, Rainbird), services (lawn care, mowing, patio installation), geography-driven keywords (lawn care Cleveland, Columbus landscaper) or even names of your competitors.

For example, let’s say you have a campaign featuring your paver installation services. If your company handles multiple lines of pavers, you’ll feature different product names in your

campaigns, such as Belgard, Unilock and Pavestone, just to name a few. To make your campaign more powerful, you’ll want to group those keywords into similar groups so you can create very specific ads that mention the product’s name. This way, when someone is searching for Belgard pavers, not only will your ad appear, but by grouping your Belgard keywords together you can create an ad that has the word “Belgard” in it.

**Ads**

As we learned above, when a searcher poses a question or enters specific words in the search engine box, a series of ads are shown on a search results page. These ads are tied to the searcher’s query through the keyword associated with the ad.

Text ads are the most common AdWords advertisement, consisting of a subject line of 25 characters or less, two body lines each 35 characters or less and a display URL (website address) line of 35 characters or less. The typical ad looks like this:

Stop Crabgrass Early  
 Keep Your Lawn Crabgrass Free!  
 Free Lawn Analysis & 25% Off  
[Weed-Pro.com/Crabgrass](http://Weed-Pro.com/Crabgrass)

*continued on page 62*

**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.



# PLANET Legislative Day

**ON THE HILL** July 21-23, 2013 | Washington, D.C.

Educate and influence your lawmakers by highlighting and discussing vital industry issues. Take a stand for your industry!



## Renewal & REMEMBRANCE

July 22, 2013 | Arlington, Va.

Show your pride by joining hundreds of landscape professionals from across the country in this annual beautification project of the sacred grounds of Arlington National Cemetery.



Registration Deadline: **July 5, 2013**

Register for both events at [LandcareNetwork.org/renewal](http://LandcareNetwork.org/renewal) or call **800-395-2522**.  #rrlegday

Participation in Renewal & Remembrance is limited to PLANET members and capped at 500 volunteers—**Register early!**

Renewal & Remembrance partners:



Legislative Day on the Hill partner:



Renewal & Remembrance and Legislative Day on the Hill partner:



PLANET partner ASCA funded by:



Media Sponsor:



PLATINUM SPONSOR



GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS



*continued from page 60*

It's important that your ads reflect the user's search query. This cardinal rule is often broken, with advertisers using generic ad text about their company instead of copy regarding the keyword that's associated with the ad. If your ad is connected to an ad group containing keywords about a certain product or service, make sure the ad text has a variation of those keywords in the ad text. This will allow your ad to be noticed by more consumers and improve your quality score, making your ads more relevant and reducing your costs.

Let's take a look at two ads written for the same group of keywords:

### AdGroup Example

**Keywords:** belgard, belgard patio, belgard pavers, belgard landscapers

#### Ad No. 1:

Jim's Landscaping  
From Trees and Shrubs to  
Lawns, Check Out Jim's!  
[www.JimsLandscaping.com](http://www.JimsLandscaping.com)

#### Ad No. 2:

Belgard Paver Installer  
Certified Belgard Contractor.  
Save 20% Off a Belgard Patio!  
[www.JimsLandscaping.com/Belgard](http://www.JimsLandscaping.com/Belgard)

Ad No. 1 is a poorly written, generic ad that has nothing to do with the keywords for this AdGroup. With all the keywords centered around Belgard pavers, it's hard to imagine consumers feeling confident that this ad will lead them to find the answer to their search query. Ad No. 2, however, is well written, using keywords from the AdGroup in the ad copy itself. A consumer will no doubt realize this ad will lead him to an answer regarding his search query about Belgard pavers.

Finally, where your ad takes consumers on your website is just as important as the ad itself. Similar to the rules when creating an effective ad, you'll want this page on your website to talk about the keywords contained in that AdGroup and ad. Using the example ad above that talks about Belgard pavers, you should lead visitors to a page on your website that discusses that product and service. Taking visitors to your main page will irritate them and increase the chances they leave without converting into prospective customers.

### Expanding your knowledge

As you can see, pay-per-click marketing is a powerful tool that can help even the smallest companies advertise effectively on the Internet. The ability to alter your advertising strategy in real time allows you to test different things, increase or decrease your investment and accurately track the overall success of your advertising immediately.

Additionally, your success with pay-per-click marketing depends on how much time you put into expanding your knowledge on the subject. Many resources on it are available, and most of the good ones are free through Google's AdWords Knowledge Center. The website features tutorials, videos and online seminars that you can use to increase your skill set.

Finally, Google's AdWords team is available during business hours and will perform an audit on your AdWords account at no charge. Google feels that helping you become more successful with AdWords will only encourage you to spend more with them. **LM**

#### » WEB EXTRA

For more from Kanary, including 5 killer PPC ad tips and an ad copy-writing worksheet, visit the Web Extras section of [Landscape Management.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net).

**Work Visas**

**Legal and low wage foreign workers with H2B visas may be the answer to your labor needs!**

**EARLY SIGN UP OFFER - 1-99 H2B Visas \$2,000.00\***

**THAT'S \$2,000 IN FEES FOR ALL OF YOUR VISAS, NOT \$2,000 PER VISA!!!**  
(Flat rate per application paid in advance, or pay in installments of \$1,000<sup>00</sup> down with 3 installments of \$500<sup>00</sup>)

\* Does not include bus fare, USCIS (INS) fees, required newspaper ads, foreign processing & consulate fees, nor foreign recruiting fees. Give us the opportunity to beat any competitor's published price.

Number of potential clients is limited! Call toll free for more information  
**1-855-321-0077**

**Robert Kershaw, Attorney**  
The Kershaw Law Firm PC, 3355 Bee Cave Rd Suite # 715, Austin Texas 78746  
Office (512) 347-0007, 1-855-321-0077, Fax (512) 347-0009, [www.workvisasusa.com](http://www.workvisasusa.com)

Licensed by the Texas Supreme Court  
Not certified by the Texas Board Of Legal Specialization

*Kanary, a Certified Google Adwords Individual, is director of marketing for Weed Pro, based in Sheffield Village, Ohio.*



# Perfection is perfectly simple.



# TRIMEC<sup>®</sup>

## BROADLEAF HERBICIDE

**RELIABLE**  
**DEPENDABLE**  
**PREDICTABLE**

*Trusted for over 40 years | Original low-odor herbicide*



800.821.7925 • [pbigordon.com/trimec](http://pbigordon.com/trimec)

Gordon's<sup>®</sup> and Trimec<sup>®</sup> are registered trademarks of PBI-Gordon Corp. 12/12 02275

# Side *by* side



Competitors Laura McMurray and Michael Ackerman share office space at work and a life together.

**T**hey say “If you can’t beat ‘em join ‘em.” Or, if you’re Laura McMurray and Michael Ackerman, join in matrimony.

When the competing landscaping business owners decided to share space to save money, they ended up sharing so much more.

“Ultimately, the two of us fell madly in love,” says McMurray. “You are now speaking to two fierce competitors who are (almost) married. We still compete and run separate businesses side by side.”

As of press time the pair had yet to make their personal commitment official, but they considered themselves married. As far as the businesses are concerned, though they share the same grounds, they remain two separate entities.

“We have legally binding agreements, both personally and professionally,” McMurray says. “We have pro-

## *Two landscape industry competitors decide to share space and find a whole lot more than they bargained for.*

BY **DAN JACOBS**

tected ourselves as much as any business owner would. We have worked too hard for our respective successes or failures, and neither one of us would ever be willing to jeopardize one another’s security or our employees’ livelihoods.”

It all started with a plan to save a little money. Ackerman, who runs Michael’s Complete Lawn Care and focuses on the Wichita, Kan., area, had a facility

that included too much office and not enough yard for his dirt and mulch.

McMurray, whose Complete Landscaping Systems is more nationally focused, had the opposite problem. She wasn’t using her yard.

That’s when she decided to give Ackerman a call.

They planned to meet in early 2013 for an hour to discuss some options. The pair now considers that meeting to be their first date.

In fact, Ackerman used an old-fashioned first date ploy just in case things weren’t working out; he had one of his trusted employees call him after an hour, which gave him an out if he needed one.

“I guess I was OK for that first hour,” McMurray says. “Six hours later we were still brainstorming. From that first face-to-face meeting, we’ve never really left each other’s side.”

McMurray and Ackerman estimate they'll each save about \$65,000 a year by sharing the facility and related costs, such as trash and utilities. And that does not include the bulk buying power they have or the increased revenue from subcontracting work to the other.

Factoring all the elements, Ackerman thinks they might each be able to have a \$100,000 impact from the arrangement.

The pair admits their employees had some initial concerns. And even though they have different management styles, the staffs have since bought into the new approach.

"I'm probably a bit more firm," McMurray says.

"And a bit more hands on," Ackerman adds.

"I'm a bit of a control freak," McMurray admits.

On the other hand, Ackerman says, "I'm of the belief you provide them with the tools; you provide them with the systems and then you back off."

But at the end of the day, one of the nicest things about having a spouse in the business, Ackerman and McMurray say, is having someone who truly understands your problems.

"For us to be able to simply vent to one another, it's almost as if we absorb about 50 percent of each other's stress," Ackerman says. **LM**

*Jacobs is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.*

## AT A GLANCE

### Complete Landscaping Systems

**Revenue:** \$13 million

**Employees:** 115 in 38 states

Laura McMurray purchased Complete Landscaping Systems four years ago and has grown the company from \$1.2 million to \$13 million. The company has been on the *Inc.* 5000 list of fastest-growing companies for the past four years and is No. 97 on the *LM150*.



### Michael's Complete Lawn Care

**Revenue:** \$3.5 million

**Employees:** 60

Michael Ackerman started his company as a way to make some extra money during high school. By the time he was 16 years old, he had revenue of \$1 million. He made a deal with a private school he was attending to

trade out grounds maintenance services for his tuition. "At the time it made sense to me," he says. "They probably got the better deal."



**CHECK OUT THE NEW PRODUCTS. THEN HEAD OUTSIDE FOR THE DEMOS. GIE+EXPO's 19-acre Outdoor Demo Area is a grownup's ultimate playground and a businessperson's serious research center. Conduct your own research. 750 exhibits indoors and out.**

**Thinking about expanding your services?**

Browse the newest hardscape products in Hardscape North America - collocated with GIE+EXPO, indoors and out. Upgrade your registration to learn installation techniques in HNA's Outdoor Arena.

**You'll Never Look at Networking the Same Way Again**

Scheduled meetings, booth visits, roundtable discussions - GIE+EXPO provides the perfect setting for powering up your opportunities.

**The networking continues with free evening concerts!**

Wednesday, Oct. 23 • Craig Morgan

Thursday, Oct. 24 • Three Dog Night

Friday, Oct. 25 • Holly Williams

**REGISTER EARLY FOR \$2,000 TRAVEL PRIZE!**



**GIE+EXPO**  
THE GREEN INDUSTRY & EQUIPMENT EXPO

Kentucky Exposition Center • Louisville, KY

Toll Free: (800) 558-8767 • Phone: (812) 949-9200

WWW.GIE-EXPO.COM • info@gie-expo.com

Oct. 23, 2013 - Dealers, distributors, retailers & media only

Oct. 24-25, 2013 - GIE+EXPO open to all in the industry

GIE+EXPO is SPONSORED BY





**JERRY GAETA**  
Landscape Solutions



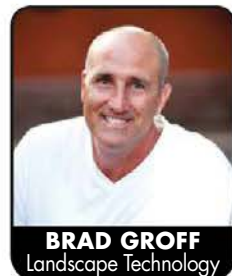
DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO **GROW** AT

# PANTS13

*We Mean Business*

Penn Atlantic Nursery Trade Show

## **IDEAS SOLUTIONS STRATEGIES TRENDS**



**BRAD GROFF**  
Landscape Technology



**JODY SHILAN**  
Plans & Proposals



**ED LAFLAMME**  
Business Management

# JULY 31 AUGUST 1

## Pennsylvania Convention Center PHILADELPHIA

*Easily accessible from New England to the Mid Atlantic*



REGISTER AT: [www.PANTSHOW.com](http://www.PANTSHOW.com)



*Registration Includes:*

**All Education &  
Access To The Trade Show For Both Days**

### **WHAT TO EXPECT FROM PANTS13**

New Ideas to Improve Your Business

Find New Products & Suppliers  
to Drive Real Profits

Uncover Green Business Solutions  
to Increase the Bottom Line

Discover the Hottest Trends  
to Boost your Sales.

### **TANGIBLE TAKEAWAYS FOR THE GREEN INDUSTRY**

High quality education for all segments of the  
Green Industry focusing on business solutions to  
increase your profits & bottom line.

**For a full schedule, discounted hotel rates  
and more information, visit [www.PANTSHOW.com](http://www.PANTSHOW.com)  
or call 732-449-4004.**

**Take Advantage of Show Specials &  
Early Season Deals from Exhibitors**



PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE  
**PENNSYLVANIA  
LANDSCAPE & NURSERY  
ASSOCIATION**



**Landscape  
Management**

# MARKET WATCH

DESIGN/BUILD

## Getting attached

For one business owner, a small investment in attachments pays off big. *By BETH GERACI*

PG 67

**DESIGN/BUILD** The value of attachments

PG 70

**MAINTENANCE** Minimizing equipment loss

PG 71

**IRRIGATION** Smart marketing for Smart Irrigation Month

PG 72

**LAWN/TREE CARE** Bed weed control an appealing option

It's no secret that finding innovative ways to grow your business has become increasingly important in recent years. And some landscape business owners, such as Carl Williams, general manager at Lawn Sense in Monroeville, Pa., are finding compact equipment attachments to be a direct and inexpensive path to diversifying.

"Using attachments has allowed me to not give my competition the oppor-

tunity to service my accounts," Williams says. "It allows me to offer additional services and retain customers. I don't want my competition to get their foot in the door."

Williams, whose business is 70 percent commercial and 30 percent residential, has expanded his business and saved money largely through two attachments—Bobcat's Brushcat mower and Box Blade plow.

Brushcat mowing jobs have generated for Williams \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year, he estimates. The mower attaches directly to a skid steer or track loader. Williams' team uses it to cut grass that hasn't been maintained for several months, such as undeveloped parcels that need to be maintained just annually or semi-annually.

"It's for builders that may want to maintain their lots just to keep them walkable, that's been the niche for that piece of equipment," says Williams.

*continued on page 68*



Carl Williams uses equipment attachments strategically.

## Cultivate Your Success Through THE GROUNDS GUYS® FRANCHISE



Just two years after being introduced to the U.S., The Grounds Guys® has blossomed over 100 franchise locations in 34 states and is a top franchise opportunity for green industry professionals. Our franchise owners are achieving their dreams, beautifying their communities, and building a Culture of Care all across the nation. No matter what stage you're at in your journey, The Grounds Guys landscape management franchise can help you take your business to the next level. Don't miss out on the opportunity of a lifetime.

**the GroundsGuys®**  
LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

**888.205.0661**  
**GroundsGuysInfo.com**



**Want to Learn more?**  
**Check out Joe's story at**  
**www.Joes-Story.com**

© 2013 The Grounds Guys, LLC

## MARKETWATCH

*continued from page 67*

By filling that niche, Lawn Sense has been able to retain customers who otherwise would have sought service from its competitors. "It's allowed me to offer that same service to a few more customers that I maybe would have turned away in the past because I would have had to rent that piece of equipment," Williams says. "It's opened up a new market for me."

Williams also has turned to Bobcat's Box Blade plow, a snow pusher, to save money—and a substantial amount of it. "I can buy one of those for a few thousand dollars and put it on my skid loader," Williams says, adding that snow constitutes about 15 percent of his business. "The snow pusher allows me to not have to purchase an additional pickup truck to service that account," he says. "If I wanted to put a plow on a pickup truck, I'm into \$8,000 to

\$10,000 for that pickup truck, just so it can plow snow."

Williams' decision to invest in attachments was a strategic one he came to early in the 12 years he's owned his business. "Ever since I started, I've been benchmarking what we do, how long a task takes, what the cost associated with each task is," he says. "That's why those pushers make sense on a skid-steer instead of having a pickup truck that sits there all winter. You have to keep your costs as tight as you possibly can."

Some winters, Mother Nature doesn't bring as much snow as others. With that in mind, Williams reasons, a truck is a big investment that doesn't provide as strong a return as a \$3,000 snow pusher.

All of Williams' attachment purchases "have been money well spent," he says. "To me, if I couldn't work those situations with my customers, I don't think I'd be in business today."

### WHEN TO RENT, WHEN TO BUY

While rental remains a strong alternative to ownership, an improving economy is convincing contractors to buy compact equipment again. Rental and acquisition strategies each offer unique benefits for different stages in an operation's life cycle, and both are demonstrating positive trends.

The final decision boils down to being able to complete your work in the most efficient and affordable manner possible. As you weigh your options, it's important to evaluate the following considerations:

**Job site conditions** – Are your typical project tasks, terrain or space constraints changing enough to require a different type or size of machine than you currently operate?

**Project frequency** – How often will a machine be used? Will the length of your contracts and the volume of work generate revenue to support a short-term payment schedule or long-term investment?

**Attachment versatility** – Do your attachments provide flexibility, compatibility and accessibility for multiple job sites? Attachment utilization of 50 to 75 percent usually justifies a permanent fleet addition.

**Capital resources** – Rental payments can be tax deductible, but are there greater tax incentives for purchasing? If you're repeatedly renting a machine, but cash is tight, does a rent-to-purchase option agreement (RPO) pencil out?

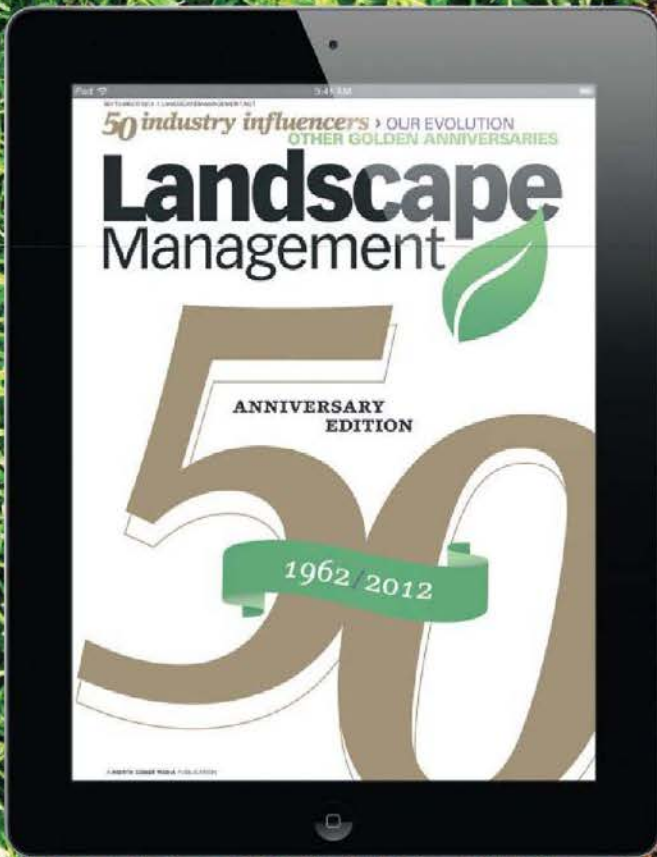
The decision to buy or rent entirely depends on your company's situation, so take the time necessary to fully evaluate what is best for your operation.

*Source: Bobcat*



# 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**



## MAINTENANCE

# Protecting equipment

Pro Care Horticultural Services minimizes equipment loss with a financial incentive.

By CASEY PAYTON



**T**here's no doubt that landscape equipment experiences a lot of wear and tear and many pieces break down over time.

But improper maintenance and carelessness can lead to earlier breakdowns, loss or even theft. Lowell Rolsky, president of Pro Care Horticultural Services in Carmel, Ind., recently implemented a new tactic that aims to minimize equipment problems. By deducting from the bonuses he offers employees at the end of the year, he believes he may be able to reduce the amount of lost, stolen or damaged equipment the company deals with annually.

"We've been in business for 42 years and trying to fight this problem for a long time," says Rolsky, who employs between 65 and 80 people during peak seasons and retains 30 to 35 full-timers. "Over the years we've tried a lot of approaches and nothing really worked. The fact is money is what motivates most people, and while we can't take wages away, we found that

deducting from the employee's bonus is quite effective."

At the end of the year, supervisors and foremen are eligible for a bonus of \$50 for every year they've been with the company. That's in addition to a \$50 bonus that employees get any time their name is mentioned by a customer. But Rolsky has found that deducting money from that "end-of-year" bonus is most effective considering it's a time when the holidays are on employees' minds and they're hoping to make some extra cash.

"We look at the equipment issues on a case-by-case basis," Rolsky says. "We certainly aren't out to penalize our employees for equipment that breaks down for normal wear and tear. But if it becomes obvious that equipment was stolen because a truck was left unlocked or that the equipment was mistreated, that's negligence, and we hold the employee accountable for that with a bonus deduction."

Lowell Rolsky has a plan to limit equipment maintenance costs.

In determining how much to deduct, Rolsky says he looks at the deductible for that piece of equipment and determine a value based on that. "For instance, if it's a \$300 blower that gets lost, we will ask for a third of that by taking it from the bonus," he says. "That can add up if the employee is careless, but the fact is, someone who is regularly careless shouldn't be with the company anyhow. So the second benefit of this program is that it focuses our attention on employees who are perhaps not suited to remain with the company."

While the deduction program has only been in place about two years, Rolsky believes it's working. "We haven't quantified whether this is saving us a lot of money yet, but what I do know is that employees have become more aware that we're serious about them taking good care of the equipment," Rolsky says. "For a long time I think they thought it was just talk. But now that they're seeing consequences, I believe we'll start seeing change."

Rolsky adds that he's already observed positive changes. Workers, for instance, are remembering to lock their trucks, and leaders are doing a better job of looking at their trucks before they leave job sites. "It's helping our employees to pay attention to the bigger picture," Rolsky says.

The end-of-year bonuses are easy to budget for since they're based on how long employees have been with the company, he says. As the end of the year approaches, he knows what he should set aside and says he'd be happy to continue to pay out the full amount and see a decrease in his equipment loss percentage.

But Rolsky doesn't want his employees to expect the bonus no matter what. "I think another good thing this has done is show our employees that a bonus is never guaranteed and it's not just a free hand-out," Rolsky says. "I feel our employees are becoming more aware that a bonus is not a guaranteed entity but is something that is based on your actions."

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



# Smart communication

A look inside a successful Smart Irrigation Month marketing campaign. *By ERIC HORVATH*

The Toro Co. is the manufacturer winner of the 2012 Smart Marketing Contest. We spoke with Mike Baron, Toro's national specifications manager, to learn more about how to successfully communicate the tenets of Smart Irrigation Month.

**Q:** Toro's 2012 Smart Irrigation Month efforts included reaching out to diverse audiences, including contractors. Describe Toro's approach to promoting Smart Irrigation Month to them.

**Mike Baron:** While contractors are not monolithic by any stretch of the imagination, they do share something in common: they have direct contact with property owners, property managers and their irrigation systems. In a real sense, contractors are the gatekeepers for both innovative technology and evolving best practices.



Mike Baron

**Q:** So while contractors are an important piece, it is incumbent on the industry as a whole to participate in Smart Irrigation Month promotion?

**Baron:** Contractors are a strategic constituency for promoting Smart Irrigation Month because of their unique relationships with property owners and managers. But a singular focus on only contractors would be much less effective than a coordinated effort. That being said, it's important to remember that contractors influence distributors because that's where they buy their products. There is a synergy that multiplies effectiveness and speeds market adoption when a manufacturer communicates effectively with both the selling distributor and the buying contractor.

**Q:** Toro has won the Smart Marketing Contest manufacturer category twice. Do you have any advice for how other manufacturers and contractors can put together similarly successful campaigns?

**Baron:** Any manufacturer, regardless of size, should ask itself, "How important is the future availability of water to my business?" If water availability is important, then the next question is, "How has that fact been integrated into strategic planning?" Take that information and then think about the primary message being communicated by the IA through the Smart Irrigation Month initiative.

Leverage that message, and what the IA is doing, in ways that help achieve the goals in the strategic plan that are affected by future water availability. The key piece of advice: Don't force it! Make promoting Smart Irrigation Month complementary to and reinforcing of your strategic plan, marketing and sales efforts.

For contractors, the recommendation is to use the same concepts as stated for manufacturers, but adapt it to what's cost effective—especially if you're participating for the first time. Start small, easy and cost effective. During July, you will start to see opportunities for enhancements appear as if by magic. Keep a file and jot down notes. That file will serve you well for next year. And of course, take advantage of the many graphics offered online by the Irrigation Association. Their support gets better every year.

*Horvath is communications manager for the Irrigation Association.*



**Smart practices.**



**Smart technology.**



**Smart business.**

- **Educate** water users.
- **Grow demand** for water-efficient technologies, products and services.
- Provide **real solutions** to today's water challenges.
- Position your company as a leader in **smart water stewardship**.



For Smart Ideas & Free Resources:  
[www.smartirrigationmonth.org](http://www.smartirrigationmonth.org)

## LAWN/TREE CARE

# It's bed time

Landscape bed weed control is an attractive service opportunity, says one LCO.

By MARISA PALMIERI

Lawn care companies that haven't yet embraced the business opportunity of landscape bed weed control should rethink their decision not to provide this service. So says Phil Fogarty, owner of Crowley's/Weed Man of Euclid, Ohio, which has a 90 percent renewal rate for bed weed control program.

There are a few reasons why he called this service area a "tremendous opportunity" for lawn care operators (LCOs) during a webinar *Landscape Management* hosted in April, sponsored by Valent Professional Products. These include the advantages of serving a niche, offering high-quality services and customer satisfaction.

In Fogarty's area, other lawn care companies don't market weed control in both turf and landscape beds, so it's an advantage for Weed Man to offer both.

"There aren't other lawn care companies customers can call to get both services done at the same time," he says.

Quality control is one of the biggest advantages to taking care of both services.

"The customers we're doing lawn care and bed weed control for, we have fewer service calls on both sides because we have control over both," Fogarty says, explaining there's less movement of the weeds between the beds and the turf. "We've become irreplaceable for these customers."

### SELLING IT

When it comes to adding this service, Fogarty recommends selling the bed weed control as recurring service that's part of a program.

Due to preemergent herbicide application costs and the labor that may be required on the first visit for this service, an LCO is going to spend more money on the front end than later in the year.

"You want to prevent the customer from taking just one application," he says. For example, his company's bed weed control program typically includes four visits per year at an annual rate of about \$400 for a 1,500 sq ft to 2,000 sq ft lawn. Fogarty emphasizes that prices vary.

The best time to add new bed weed control clients is in the summer.

"It's easy in June and July when you see people with big weed problems and can tell they haven't gotten ahead of it," he says. "A well placed phone call or flier in the door can work very well."



Phil Fogarty

To market to existing clients, Fogarty suggests using any potential customer touch points to promote the service. "Just giving someone a bill is wasting a great sales opportunity," he says. "That contact with the customer is a natural opportunity to remind them of other things you do."

Setting expectations upfront with customers is very important.

"There's going to be a weed from time to time," Fogarty says, adding his company instructs customers to alert the office for a free service call when that happens. Why? Some weeds like nutsedge get worse when customers pull them versus letting a technician treat them with glyphosate.

### UP AND RUNNING

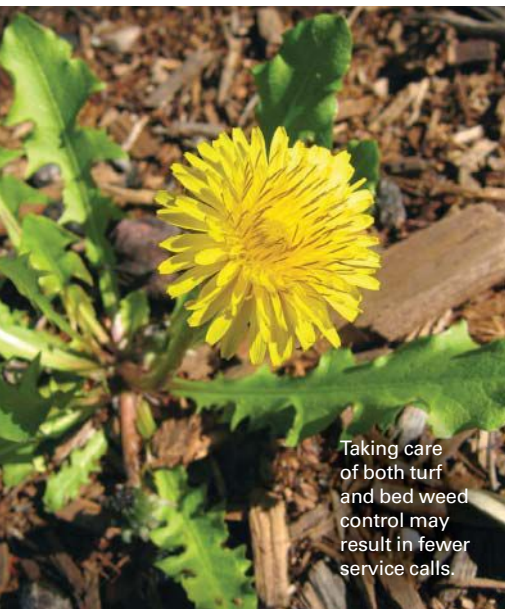
Staffing is crucial when it comes to adding bed weed control, Fogarty says, noting the knowledge base and techniques are different from treating lawns. Having a technician with ornamental plant knowledge is vital because some perennial plants may be easily confused with weeds.

"You can't send your average guy out there," he says. "You need someone with knowledge and experience."

For example, spraying bed weeds is different from spraying weeds in turf—applicators must take care not to overpressurize sprayers or glyphosate may come in contact with trees, shrubs, perennials or annuals, he says. Another tip is to train applicators to put themselves between what they're spraying and what plants they don't want to be exposed to a control product, to act as a shield.

Similarly, Fogarty recommends keeping a separate route, truck and equipment for bed weed control due to the possibility of mixing up products or other risks.

"You don't want someone walking across a lawn without changing their shoes and you don't want backpack sprayers, hoses and tanks going back and forth," he says. "Our equipment is sequestered." **LM**



Taking care of both turf and bed weed control may result in fewer service calls.



## 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](http://prolandscape.com)  
[sales@prolandscape.com](mailto:sales@prolandscape.com)  
800-231-8574



**PRO Landscape**  
DESIGN SOFTWARE

# PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

*Room for a view*

## THE MISSION

Incorporate outdoor living space and provide more opportunities to showcase the views of the Bay.

This San Francisco Bay property was at one time part of a larger estate with some historical significance. The landscape project began midway through a major renovation to the primary residence, which itself was added years before with a more modern, contemporary design than its neighbors. It was that design style, and the need for additional outdoor living space, that provided the basis for the landscape design concept.

The team consisted of David Thorne Landscape Architect, Oakland, Calif.; Gardeners' Guild, Richmond, Calif.; the owner/architect; and the general contractor. Kip Matthews, operations manager of Gardeners' Guild's construction division, notes that BCP Concrete, Pleasanton, Calif., and Above The Rest Builders, San Rafael, Calif., went "above and beyond" to make this project a success.

"There were a few challenges," admits Matthews, "including narrow streets, neighbor coordination and a wet winter."

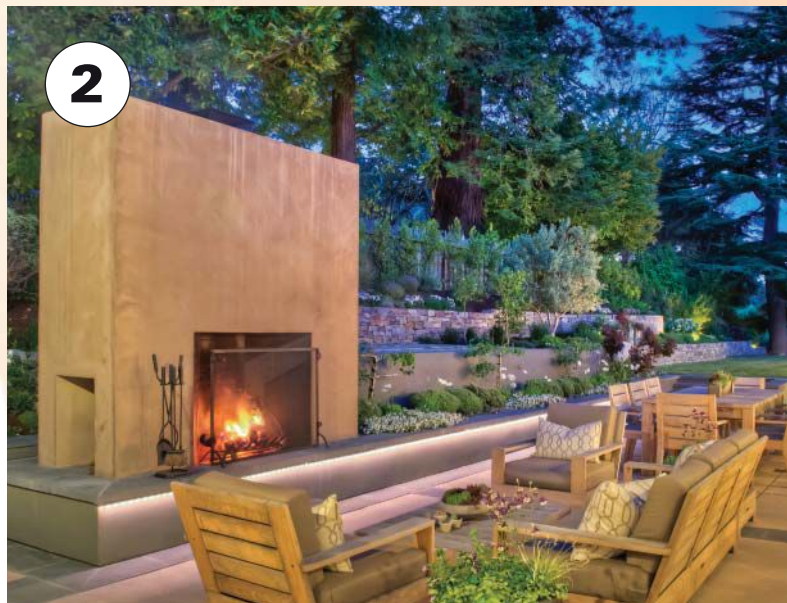
But the team met and overcame these obstacles, he adds, and success soon followed.

"Concrete stairs, walls and balustrades from the original estate were removed and terraces cut to capture much of the sloping hillside, creating additional usable space," he explains. "Ledge stone and CMU/stucco retaining walls were constructed. Turf areas for the kids were added, as well as planting areas with specimen olive trees, perennials, annuals and vegetables from various patios and sun decks."

Matthews notes that engineered footings, piers, sub-slabs and grade beams "provide a solid foundation where necessary. A water-efficient irrigation system, extensive drainage system, and other required utilities were provided to energize and sustain all the elements and functions related to the project."



1



2

PHOTOS: TREVE JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY

## THE WORK



3

**1 | A welcoming walk.** The concrete grand staircase entry to upper levels from the driveway and property entry. A specimen *Acer* tree anchors the front entry planting area.

**2 | The great outdoors.** The further end of the turf area shows a custom design/build water feature, concrete patio, fireplace sitting area and kitchen area.

**3 | Hidden spa.** Adjacent to the fireplace is the outdoor kitchen/barbecue area, complete with a Big Green Egg smoker. Behind the kitchen is a secluded spa inset in another deck, cantilevered off a slope. Extensive site and underground work accompanied this portion of the project.



4

**4 | Retaining elegance.** The view from the top of the grand staircase, looking at the back of the residence. Note the Ipe deck and suspended bridge from the house with clear redwood and black poly-coated welding wire railings. The midlevel turf area is retained by a CMU/stucco wall with a bluestone cap. Upper levels are supported by dry-stacked ledgerstone walls.

**5 | Garden of paradise.** The view from the upper sun deck, with plantings such as fruitless olive trees, herbaceous perennials, vegetables and fruit and citrus trees.

**6 | Water wonder.** This custom water feature can be enjoyed from the front porch. The vertical piece is a broken basalt column with a cut and polished basalt base.



5

*Founded in 1972, Gardeners' Guild is an employee-owned landscape management company with experience maintaining and building both commercial and residential landscapes throughout the San Francisco Bay area. Learn more at [GardenersGuild.com](http://GardenersGuild.com).*



6

## In store

With seasonal containers, a Virginia-based landscape firm finds work styling the exterior of a boutique.

**W**HEN A HIGH-END clothier showed interest in a new storefront plant display, it led to a new account for Kane Landscapes, a Potomac Falls, Va.-based landscape company. While it was the company's first seasonal color change-out job for a commercial client, the mostly residential company found enhancing storefronts is similar to performing container gardening services for homeowners.

The entire project came about when landscape designer Amanda Hamilton was attending a professional networking meeting and met a fellow attendee whose father owned a high-end boutique. He was looking for a way to make his storefront pop. While the upscale shopping center already had a landscape company handling plant change-outs in common areas, the shop owner was looking for something that would set it apart.

"When they came to us, they just wanted new urns and new plant material, but we talked to them about doing bimonthly change-outs that coordinated with the store's advertising or the changing seasons," Hamilton says. "They signed on for us to come back every other month. They give me some idea of what color they like, but I pretty much have free reign on the design, which has been fun for me."

Hamilton says it takes approximately an hour for her and another manager to do the actual plant change-out, so she accounted for that time plus design time when she priced the job. She also set a bimonthly budget of \$300 for the material itself.

Instead of discarding the old, brown urns that were previously used for the storefront, Hamilton says she cleaned them up and installed interior plant material. The urns now are on display inside the store. A store employee is responsible for watering both the indoor and outdoor containers.



Containers make this entryway shine. Kane Landscapes workers change out plants to reflect the season.



Adding this service didn't require much investment because Kane already handled residential container gardens and had the necessary tools.

The biggest difference for this job involves transporting the materials to the site.

"We got a little cart where we can wheel all the material to the storefront," Hamilton says. "This is a large outdoor shopping area and we have to walk down several corridors to get to the store. It was very important that we didn't make a mess on any of the walkways."

To contain dirt, Hamilton says, workers put out tarps when they perform the change-outs. "Handling a storefront as opposed to a residential property definitely required a little more caution in containing the mess," she says.

Because Hamilton's networking group meets only a few doors down from the storefront, she occasionally stops to check on the plants. "It's definitely not a display that requires a lot of upkeep," Hamilton says. "It's been fun to get creative in picking out the plant material and coordinating it with what the store has going on."

The store has been happy with its new storefront designs. In fact, it recently renewed its contract with Kane Landscapes.

"This is the first time we've done a storefront like this, but if more work came from it, it's certainly something we'd like to do," Hamilton says. "While we've been working, shoppers have stopped and asked what we're doing or commented that it looks nice, so it may bring future work."

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



Containers add color to an entry.

### SERVICE SNAPSHOT

**COMPANY:** Kane Landscapes.

**LOCATION:** Potomac Falls, Va.

**SERVICE:** Storefront seasonal containers

**PRICING:** Materials and time for design and installation.

**BIGGEST CHALLENGE:** Mid-winter is a difficult time to do a container garden because there's limited plant material to choose from. Landscape designer Amanda Hamilton says evergreen grasses and colorful cabbage are one way to retain color.

**BEST TIP:** "When it comes to container gardening, I use the 'filler, thriller, spiller' rule," Hamilton says. "Thrillers are the main attraction, while the fillers complement it without overshadowing. The spiller would be a trailing plant that spills over the sides for added interest."



**Our mission is to preserve and enhance green spaces in our communities where we live, work and play.**

## BECAUSE GREEN MATTERS.

A national non-profit service organization, Project EverGreen works to help spread the good word to consumers about well-maintained lawns and landscapes, sports fields, parks—anywhere that green exists. The more people believe in the environmental, economic and lifestyle benefits of green spaces, the better off we'll all be.



## WORKING TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

Together with key industry partners, Project EverGreen has established the following programs to help make a greater impact, sooner:

### GreenCare for Troops SnowCare for Troops



- Project EverGreen connects military families with lawn and landscape companies, as well as snow removal companies to receive free services while their loved one is serving overseas.
- More than 3,500 contractor volunteers and 12,000 military families have signed up for GCFT, while 1,100 contractor volunteers and 1,500 military families signed up for SCFT.
- These popular programs have garnered attention on TV and in newspapers across the nation including Mike Rowe's *Dirty Jobs* and NBC's *Nightly News*.

### Community Based Revitalization Projects

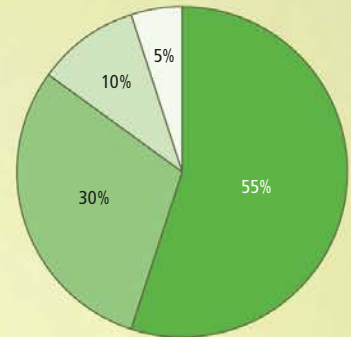
- Focused community revitalization and renovation projects across the United States encourage industry professionals, consumers and anyone who's passionate about healthy green spaces to work together to improve their city and surrounding areas.
- Over the last seven years, our message has made a positive impact in: Akron, Ohio; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Greensboro, Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina; Ft. Myers, Florida; Toronto, Canada; and San Antonio, Texas.
- Maintained green spaces generated community engagement, involvement and communication among residents, city leaders and visitors.

### GreenCare for Youth

- By reaching out to children of all ages, we can create a greener tomorrow.
- The Art of Green Spaces Competition, sponsored by Birds and Blooms, encourages students to use all forms of art to share how they feel about the green spaces in their lives.
- Golf bag tags, featuring messages on the benefits of green spaces, are given to participants of the GCBAAs Sticks for Kids program.
- Youth sports field renovations make playing surfaces better and safer.

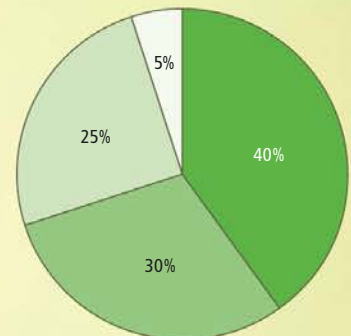
## YOUR SUPPORT HELPS US SPREAD THE GOOD WORD.

- Company contributions (55%)
- Service contractor contributions (30%)
- Associations/Media/Agencies (10%)
- Individual contributions (5%)



## HOW YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE UTILIZED.

- Programs (40%)
- National marketing/communications (30%)
- Administration (25%)
- Fundraising (5%)



For more information about Project EverGreen, call us toll-free at 1-877-758-4835 or check us out on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ProjectEverGreen](http://www.facebook.com/ProjectEverGreen).

**[www.ProjectEverGreen.com](http://www.ProjectEverGreen.com)**

# LM REPORTS

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH

## TURF PRODUCTS



### Majestic Green specialty turf

Majestic Green is a Minnesota-based, custom grow-to-order turf facility for residences, golf courses (bentgrasses) and lakeshore restorations. It specializes in native grasses, quick establishment for construction and drainage issues, wildflower mats and greenroom applications. The lightweight, chemical-free soilless turf uses less water and is grown in a state-of-the-art greenhouse.

**Majestic Green** // [MajesticGreen.org](http://MajesticGreen.org)

### Square Foot Advantage Calculator

Calculate your fertilizer cost savings with the Square Foot Advantage Calculator. This easy-to-use online calculator will take you through the steps to compare the total cost-in-use of what you're currently using to a single application of Spread It & Forget It. For a more in-depth comparison, contact your distributor and proceed through the calculations together.

**Agrium** // [DrivenByDuration.com](http://DrivenByDuration.com)



### CoverGrow mulch pellets

CoverGrow can be applied by hand or spreader, or sprayed hydraulically. It mixes easily, even in jet-agitated hydroseeders, where it goes quickly into suspension. Once activated by water, the mulch pellets quickly expand in size and disperse to provide greater coverage and a stronger protective cover. A 40-lb. bag yields 50 lbs. of coverage.

**Profile Products** // [ProfileCoverGrow.com](http://ProfileCoverGrow.com)

## INSECTICIDES



### Insecticide line

Manufacturing capabilities combined with advanced formulation technologies allow Quali-Pro to deliver an array of insecticides that treat most soil-inhabiting pests in turfgrass and landscape plantings.

**Quali-Pro** // [Quali-Pro.com](http://Quali-Pro.com)

### Merit insecticide

Featuring a comprehensive offering of pack sizes and formulations, including tree injections, Merit provides the industry's longest-lasting grub control, according to the manufacturer. It also offers residual control of numerous ornamental pests. Merit's broad-spectrum, systemic action delivers preventive and curative results at usage rates up to 96 percent lower than many registered soil insecticides.

**Bayer** // [BackedByBayer.com](http://BackedByBayer.com)







### Talstar Professional insecticide

Running now through Nov. 30, 2013, the "Buy Three Get the Fourth Free" promotion is for 0.75- and 1-gal. jugs of Talstar Professional liquid insecticide. It's used on more than 75 pests, including billbugs, chinch bugs, fleas, ticks, stink bugs and all species of ants. It contains no odorous or plant-damaging solvents—and, once dry, it's difficult to tell where it was sprayed.

**FMC Professional Solutions** // [FMCproolutions.com](http://FMCproolutions.com)

### Caravan G insecticide/fungicide

This insecticide/fungicide is a broad-spectrum combination product, delivering the disease control of Heritage G fungicide and the insect control of Meridian 25WG insecticide. Depending on application timing and geography, one application can yield season-long grub control—and up to one month of preventive brown patch control. This ready-to-use product comes in a 30-lb. bag with an easy-to-close zipper seal.

**Syngenta** // [GreenCastOnline.com](http://GreenCastOnline.com)



### DuoCide insect control

DuoCide provides a preventative and curative treatment to control ticks, grubs, fire ants, mole crickets, European crane flies and more. Similar in cost to other single-mode insecticides, the product combines carbaryl and bifenthrin into an exclusive multi-mode formula that enhances performance both above and below the surface.

**The Andersons** // [AndersonsInc.com](http://AndersonsInc.com)



### Safari insecticide

Available in two formulations, Safari is a super-systemic insecticide with quick uptake and knockdown. It controls a broad spectrum of pests, including Q- and B-biotype whitefly, Hemlock woolly adelgid, emerald ash borer, mealybug, mountain pine beetle 2(ee), leafminer, fungus gnat, black vine weevil, glassy-winged sharpshooter and more.

**Valent BioSciences Corp.** // [Valent.com](http://Valent.com)

### MistAway Systems outdoor misting systems

MistAway is a manufacturer of automated outdoor misting systems for control of mosquitoes, spiders, no-see-ems and other insects. During the last five years, its dealers have installed more than 13,000 systems in the U.S. and abroad. The company is actively seeking landscaping professionals to sell, install and service the systems in markets across the country.

**MistAway Systems** // [MistAway.com](http://MistAway.com)

## HOLIDAY DESIGN

### PRO Landscape software

This software allows you to create visual holiday lighting designs. Using a photograph of your customer's house or building, you can draw light strings and icicle lights, and show holiday displays. The holiday lighting is tied to the estimating, users can quickly create a bid for your work.

**PRO Landscape by Drafix Software** // [PROLandscape.com](http://PROLandscape.com)



### LED 3-Channel chasing lights

Create custom Christmas light displays with amazing effects with the Versaline LED 3-Channel Chasing Light System. Choose from a variety of string types to mix and match together, and link them

all in one complete system. EnvironmentalLights.com also offers complimentary design advice and professional pricing discounts.

**EnvironmentalLights.com** // [EnvironmentalLights.com](http://EnvironmentalLights.com)



## LIGHTING OPTIONS



### Brick Step Lights

Nora's new LED Brick Step Lights are the size of a standard brick (8 5/8 x 3 15/16 x 3 in. deep), and can be installed in brick walls, patios, walkways and steps. Each light features 24 LEDs for even illumination and consumes just 4W of power for energy savings. The 120V units have an integral driver for wet-labeled applications, and can be installed inside or outdoors.

**Nora Lighting** // [NoraLighting.com](http://NoraLighting.com)



### G-Lux Plug n' Play series

This LED Landscape Lights series includes accent lights, path lights, underwater lights, in-ground lights, and accessories. They can be integrated quickly into existing systems. The company notes that the series is designed with LED technology that's 80 percent more efficient than other bulb types and lasts eight to 10 times longer with less maintenance.

**Super Bright LEDs** // [SuperBrightLEDs.com](http://SuperBrightLEDs.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](http://FromDesign2Build.com) today!

### MR-16 LED lamps

Professionals can use these new, patent-pending lamps to upgrade existing landscape lighting installations to the energy-saving benefits of LED. Designed and built in the U.S., the lamps are available pre-installed in all of Vista's fixtures that currently use an MR-16 Halogen Lamp.

**Vista Professional** // [VistaPro.com](http://VistaPro.com)



### Model 114 path light

This new LED-ready path-light is available in copper or architectural bronze finish. It's equipped with a halogen JC bi-pin lamp and also accepts an LED bulb.

The LED lamp delivers 1.6W of illumination, equivalent to 10W incandescent. Durable GS-10 spikes are included, and a brass-finished swivel and key connect the shade to the stem.

**Orbit Industries** // [OrbitElectric.com](http://OrbitElectric.com)

# 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](http://www.incorporate.com)  
or call 800-616-0216

THE COMPANY CORPORATION

INCORPORATING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

Save \$25 by scanning this code

[LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET](http://LANDSCAPEMANAGEMENT.NET)

## 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](mailto:search@florasearch.com)  
[www.florasearch.com](http://www.florasearch.com)

When responding to an ad, tell you saw it in

**Landscape Management**

## Place your ad in Landscape Management's next classified section

Issue Date	Ad Closing
August 2013	6/24
September 2013	7/18
October 2013	8/16
November 2013	10/3
December 2013	11/1

# RESOURCES

## AD INDEX

BASF Corp.....	15
Caterpillar.....	7
Dow Agrosciences.....	49
FMC Professional Solutions.....	3
GIE+Expo.....	65
The Grounds Guys.....	68
Hortica Insurance.....	50-51
Irrigation Association.....	71
John Deere.....	CVR4
Kershaw Law.....	62
Kohler Engines.....	46-47
L.T. Rich Products.....	5
MAC Events.....	66
MistAway Systems.....	2
Mobil Delvac.....	9
NAFA Fleet Management Association.....	10
NuFarm Americas.....	53, 55
PBI/Gordon.....	63
PermaGreen Supreme.....	43
PLANET.....	61
Power Pusher.....	60
PRO Landscape by Drafix Software.....	73
Progressive Insurance.....	57
PVB Lock Box.....	56
Quali-Pro.....	CVR3
RAM.....	CVR2
Schiller Grounds Care.....	58
Solu-Cal USA.....	12
Super Bright LEDs.....	60
Trynex International.....	8
Valent USA Corp.....	54
Versa-Lok.....	45
Winfield Solutions.....	11

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

[ Coming in July ]

## Finding focus

Businesses in the landscape industry often feel pressure to provide a gamut of services to their customers. But some companies shirk the one-stop shop approach, favoring specialization. We look at why firms go this route and whether or not it's paying off. Check out *Landscape Management* in print and online at [LandscapeManagement.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net) next month for the full story.



**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 \$55, two years \$76 (U.S. and possessions), one year \$87, two years \$127 (Canada and Mexico) and one year \$165, two years \$246 (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.

**VERIFIED**  
BY BUSINESS

**AMERICAN BUSINESS MEDIA**  
The Association of Business Media Companies



# Jim McCutcheon, LIC

*CEO of HighGrove Partners, Austell, Ga.*



**Who's your mentor?** As far as the landscape industry goes, it's the tale of the two Franks. Frank Ross [with 3PG Consulting]: I've been working with him for over 15 years. He's had a huge impact on not only my business growth but my personal growth. And with Frank Mariani [owner of Mariani Landscape], it's about seeing a man that's truly in love with this industry and loves his business, as well.

**When did you first get involved with PLANET [and its predecessor, ALCA]?** The first event I attended was in Ft.

Worth in 1995. I was just blown away. I knew there was an industry out there, I just didn't know how dynamic it was. Then I realized I could meet some really fantastic people. I started traveling the country doing R&D—rob and duplicate.

My first Student Career Days was in 2001 and I was the chair by 2003.

**You said in a blog post not too long ago, "Every company needs to have a leader that's willing to be unpopular at times. That willingness means you have the courage to make tough calls that will lead to better times for all members of the team." What's a tough call you've made?** I've made a number of them, particularly over this difficult economic time. I've bought out two partners in the last four years, both of whom did not know it was coming. I'm still a friend to both of them and we do some work with them from time to time. It was an extremely difficult thing to do.

The year before last I told our team in our year-end town-hall meeting, as I looked at where we were with tremendous momentum, we needed to make an investment in the company. I decided that we not do raises for the following year. I said, "Look, if we had leaders in the world today that were willing to be unpopular at times, we wouldn't be in nearly as bad a shape as a country. My responsibility is to make sure not only today is great but tomorrow is better." Several people have thanked me for always thinking about the future. It was the right decision.

**When you were studying landscape architecture, did you ever envision yourself as a CEO?** I studied landscape architecture, but in reality I'm a terrible landscape architect. I realized pretty quickly I had a better knack for building and running a business. Pretty early on when I was with Post Properties as a junior landscape architect, I knew I wanted to do a lot more and I quickly came to understand I wanted to own my own business. Thankfully the opportunity came to buy the business from Post Properties in 2001.



## OFF THE CLOCK

### DO YOU DO ANY OF YOUR OWN LANDSCAPING?

I'm terrible at it. Years ago, I told the [HighGrove] guys, "I can't keep up with the landscape anymore." They said, "Good, you've been embarrassing us for a long time."

### WHO MAKES UP YOUR FAMILY?

I have three kids 13, 14 and 15. They are my world. My daughter is the oldest—it's Anna Reeves, Brenner and Wills.



### HAVE YOU SEEN ANY GOOD MOVIES LATELY?

Good movies? I did enjoy the Bond movie, "Skyfall." It's still hard to beat "The Godfather: Part II." I really love the whole trilogy.

**WHERE ARE YOU FROM?** I've been here since I was about 9 years old. In Atlanta, that's as close to a native as you get.

**FAVORITE VACATION SPOT?** I'm an obsessed fly fisherman. I go to Montana every year. My good friend Tom Fochtman [of Ceibass Venture Partners] is part owner of a lodge in Ennis, Mont. This year is the first time ever I'm taking customers out there.



# We've Got The Largest Portfolio In The World.



## Quali-Pro® Delivers Innovative Formulations

Our products are University tested with proven results. Designed to help you prevent and eliminate diseases, weeds and pests. We're making "Basic" even "Better" by creating new and unique products to help keep Lawns, Landscapes, Golf Courses, Nurseries, Greenhouses and other general maintenance areas looking and playing their best. Just what you'd expect from Quali-Pro®, and you *Know The Sign*®.

Experience more of Quali-Pro® — Visit [www.quali-pro.com](http://www.quali-pro.com) or call 800-242-5562.

# QUALI-PRO

**> Basically Better™**

If all of our customers were the same, we'd make the same mower for all of them.



**Z925M** JOHN, FLEET OWNER



**Z915B** RAUL, LANDSCAPER



**Z950R** TREY, OWNER/OPERATOR

## Introducing the new ZTrak 900 Series Mowers

Meet the mowers designed with you in mind. Our new Z900 B, M, and R Series mowers are three distinctly different mowers, with features aimed at every type of commercial customer. The B Series has essential features at a reasonable price. The M Series appeals to those with large fleets who demand efficiency. And the R Series was created for those who want the ultimate in features.

Call your John Deere dealer today and discover which one is right for your business.

