

Where consumers spend

PLANET/Harris Interactive's research reveals consumers' spending habits on professional lawn and landscape services.

vs. 30 percent of men). About a third say they hire professionals because they don't have enough time and 31 percent say it's because they want a professional look. Fifteen percent say they don't have the patience. (See chart below).

What they'll spend on

A third of U.S. adults who have a lawn or landscape say they'll hire a professional in the next year for at least one service. Fifty-eight percent state they will not hire a professional in the next year for lawn/landscaping services. Nine percent are not sure.

The top five spending areas are expected to be landscape maintenance/care, such as mowing, edging, leaf cleanup;

lawn care (e.g., application of fertilizer and weed control products); tree care; landscape services, which could include design and/or installation such as planting shrubs, trees, flowers, mulching, etc.; and building patios, decks, walkways or outdoor kitchens. (See chart on page 10).

How much they'll spend

U.S. adults with a lawn or landscape who expect to spend on landscape maintenance/care in the next year plan to spend an average of \$700 on this service in the next year, a \$100 increase compared to what they reported spending last year.

Those who hired or expect to hire a professional for lawn care services

continued on page 10

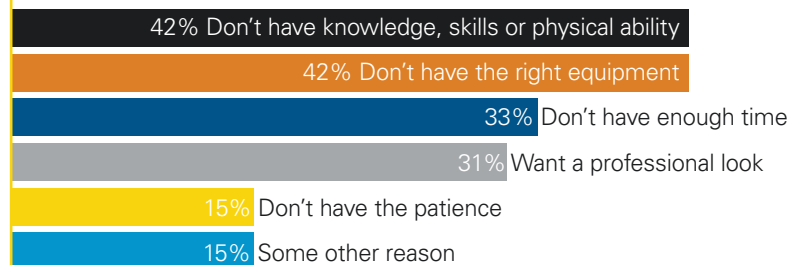
The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) commissioned Harris Interactive to field research, asking consumers about spending on professional lawn and landscape services. The online, five-question survey was conducted in February among 2,219 U.S. adults aged 18 years and older, of whom 1,830 (83 percent) have a lawn or landscape. The study is the second in a two-part series PLANET conducts with Harris. For complete reports on both parts, visit loveyourlandscape.com/research/.

Why they spend

Survey results show that those who purchased lawn/landscaping services in the past year or will purchase services in the next year do so primarily because they don't have the knowledge, skills or physical ability or they don't have the right equipment (both at 42 percent). Women are more likely to indicate the former response (56 percent of women

Main reasons for hiring a professional for lawn/landscape services

(Respondents could select more than one)



continued from page 8

will spend an average of \$400 in the next year, which is flat from what they reported spending last year. Tree care customers also expect to spend \$400 in the next year on those services, which is on par with last year.

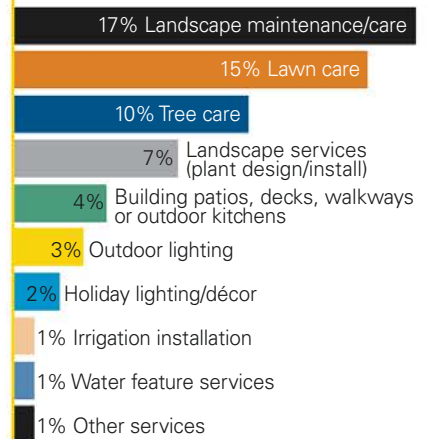
Those who spend on landscape services plan to spend \$1,200 in the next

year, which is a \$200 increase from what they reported spending last year.

Finally, those who hire professionals for building patios, decks, walkways or outdoor kitchens expect to spend \$2,900 in the next year, which is about double the \$1,500 they reported spending last year. —MARISA PALMIERI

Services consumers expect to hire a professional for in the next year

(Respondents could select more than one)



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LM ADDS STAFF

Landscape Management (LM), added two media professionals to its staff last month. Bill Roddy, a Green Industry marketing professional, has joined North Coast Media as publisher of *LM* and associate publisher of sister magazine *Golfdom*. Carla Kastanis has joined NCM as national account manager for *LM* and *Golfdom*.



Bill Roddy

Roddy has spent the past 13 years managing some of Melamed Riley Advertising's largest accounts, including Syngenta and FMC. He was responsible for developing and executing marketing strategies and tactics, launching and developing brands and products across myriad platforms, including events, print, digital and social media. Kastanis fills a newly created position at *LM* and *Golfdom*. She brings with her 17 years of B2B media sales and account management experience from roles at Advanstar Communications and Penton Media.



Carla Kastanis

Immigration bill on the table

The Senate bill could have a major Green Industry impact.

BY MARISA PALMIERI

The “Gang of Eight” bipartisan group of senators and representatives introduced an immigration bill to the Senate on April 17. The legislation includes many provisions that could affect the Green Industry.

It’s “the most encouragement we’ve had in a long time” on immigration, Tom Delaney, director of government affairs for the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), told *Landscape Management*.

Delaney highlighted a few key provisions pertinent to the landscape industry.

H-2B guest-worker program. The new bill would reinstate the returning-worker exemption through 2018. It also includes language that’s similar to the controversial 2008 wage methodology. However, the

bill would require employers to pay workers’ incoming and outgoing transportation costs and reasonable subsistence costs during the travel period. Plus, employers must certify and attest the H-2B workers didn’t and will not displace U.S. workers employed within 90 days before the start and end dates of an H-2B worker.

W visa program. This new program for low-skill workers allows spouses and minor children of the workers under the program to accompany workers to the U.S. and be given work authorization for the same period as the W visa holder. Some members of the landscape industry may qualify for this program, which isn’t seasonal and temporary in nature like the H-2B program.

E-Verify. The legislation requires all employers to use the federal government’s online system for verifying workers are legally permitted to work in the U.S. This mandate would be phased in over a five-year period. As part of the system, every

noncitizen would be required to show a “biometric work authorization card” or a “biometric green card.”

Unlawful status. The proposed legislation allows for people currently in the country illegally to apply to adjust their status to the legal status of Registered Provisional Immigrant (RPI). Those eligible to do so include people who have resided in the U.S. prior to Dec. 31, 2011, and have maintenance of continuous physical presence since then and have paid fees. After 10 years, aliens in RPI status may adjust to Lawful Permanent Resident status through the same merit-based system everyone else must use to earn a green card. Many people are ineligible, including convicted felons and other criminals.

“It’s a good start and it has a lot of good provisions in there,” Delaney said. “But I can guarantee you this isn’t the bill that’s going to be voted on. There will be changes made to get it more acceptable to more people.”



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Half a century of success

Michael Bellantoni may be stepping away from his business, but he's not slowing down.

BY DAN JACOBS

After 50 years of running his landscaping business, Michael Bellantoni, LIC, might be on the back nine. Or he might be in Hawaii or Florida or Aruba. But even as he winds down his role in the business, rest assured, he will not sit back and simply watch the grass grow.

"The worst thing for me to do is just stop because I'm so active with my lifestyle," says Bellantoni, who still retains the title of president and CEO of Michael Bellantoni Inc., the full-service, White Plains, N.Y.-based landscaping company he launched in 1963.

BELLANTONI'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

"These are the [principles] that we preach in our company to everybody—from the guy pushing the mower to the guy selling jobs, interacting with clients," says Michael Bellantoni, president and CEO of Michael Bellantoni Inc.:

1. Put safety first.
2. Make no excuses.
3. Be prepared.
4. Be honest.
5. Have a positive attitude.
6. Don't make promises you can't keep.
7. Look professional and be professional.
8. Be a leader.
9. Provide best value of service.

"That's the advice I'd give to other people in business," he adds.



While he has found time for golf and the occasional vacation, Bellantoni admits he usually put the business first.

"I always found a reason to stay at work and not go do something I wanted to do," Bellantoni says. "But, I made a commitment to myself. I'm not going to let work keep me from doing the things I want to do anymore. They need to learn to pick up the slack.... Otherwise, I'll be here forever."

The "they" Bellantoni refers to are his two sons and the management team he leaves behind. Statistics suggest about two-thirds of businesses handed to the second generation don't survive, but Bellantoni isn't worried about the future of his company. Two of his four children have been helping him run the organization for the past several years. His son Matthew Bellantoni is in charge of business development, and his son Michael Bellantoni, LIC, is operations manager.

In many businesses, "the second generation just doesn't have what the first generation had," Bellantoni says. "I preach this to my sons all the time. I have the strongest confidence in watching them operate and make decisions that they're not going to be part of that (failing) percentage."

Bellantoni retains majority ownership in the business. Over the next

Michael Bellantoni (center) is flanked by his two sons who work with him in the business: Matthew (left), who handles business development, and Michael Jr., who manages operations.

couple of years he will transition ownership to his sons.

"I enjoy going out to see clients, old and new," he says. "I enjoy designing. I enjoy engineering projects. As for everyday operations, I am going to get to a point this season where I really don't have to come in in the morning if I don't want to."

One thing he does want to continue is his work with the larger Green Industry. He's been a member of the New York State Turf & Landscape Association for 30 years, helped bring certification to the landscaping industry and has traveled around the country helping other states get their testing in line.

Bellantoni also has worked with national industry organizations such as the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), where he mentors others in the industry as a Trailblazer.

"The secret to success is good relationships," Bellantoni says. "That's with your people in the company as well."

Bellantoni's done it for 50 years. He should know.

Jacobs is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.