



# LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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# THE SHOW GOES ON!

After an unexpected year off,  
**GIE+EXPO** is set to come  
back with a bang

September 2021 VOL 60, ISSUE 9

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# CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER 2021 • VOL 60, ISSUE 9



## THE SHOW GOES ON!

After an unexpected year off, GIE+EXPO is set to come back with a bang

12

## TURF + ORNAMENTAL

**24 Products That Work**  
The latest aerators on the market

**26 Weed Avengers**  
How to contend with *Poa annua*

**28 Tipsheet**  
Tree and shrub care basics

**49 Turf Disease ID + Control**  
Why fall is a good time to think about snow mold control

## MOWING + MAINTENANCE

**52 The Big One**  
Environmental Management Inc., Plain City, Ohio

**54 Iron Workhorses**  
The ins and outs of large mowers

**56 Recommender**  
The weather apps pros are using

**58 Maintenance Shop**  
Tips to get equipment ready for winter

**60 Experts' Tips**  
Insight on holiday lighting

## DESIGN BUILD + INSTALLATION

**62 Hardscape Solutions**  
Designscapes Colorado, Longmont

**64 Maintenance Shop**  
Track loader maintenance musts



**65 Brand U**  
One pro explains his water feature provider of choice

• One firm's award-winning design project (page 62).

## IRRIGATION + WATER MANAGEMENT

**66 Business Boosters**  
The pros of a drainage certification

**68 Installation Solutions**  
Installing drip irrigation systems

ON THE COVER: PHOTO BY BRIAN BOHANNON PHOTOGRAPHY



Set the stage for 2022 with our lineup of EOP discounts. (Starts after page 28).



.....  
How landscape firms are handling the heat (page 10).

## IN EVERY ISSUE

### 8 LM Gallery

The faces and places the LM team has encountered recently

### 10 Need to Know

The latest news from around the industry

### 70 Five Questions

Mike Horak, Wells Fargo Commercial Finance, Hoffmann Estates, Ill.

### 71 A Look Back

A glimpse at EOPs of the past

### 76 SafetyWatch

How to build a safety culture

### 78 Ad Index/Classifieds

## COLUMNS

### 4 Seth's Cut

BY SETH JONES

### 72 Business Insider

How to take advantage of your time at GIE+EXPO

PHIL HARWOOD

### 74 Marketing Mojo

Learn how to be a decisive communicator

JEFF KORHAN

### 80 Grow with Grunder

Three tips for making changes at your company

BY MARTY GRUNDER

.....  
One company's safety success (page 76).



## [ NOTEWORTHY ] Most memorable day

Whether you've been in the business 30 years or 30 days, you've likely had a day on the job that stands out to you. We want to know what it was. Email your responses to Editor-in-Chief Seth Jones, [sjones@northcoast-media.net](mailto:sjones@northcoast-media.net) and you may be featured in an upcoming story and an "LM At Home" Zoom interview!



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## When “Ten” turned 30

**M**y friend Marlan recently texted me a message that stopped me in my tracks: “Pearl Jam’s album ‘Ten’ turns 30 today. I’m still alive!” Almost immediately I cued up the album on my Rowe jukebox, another relic, and blasted Eddie Vedder and the guys into the countryside outside my detached garage.

Was it really 30 years ago that I was pushing this same disc into my first CD player in Mom and Dad’s basement? I can practically see the posters on the wall: a 1958 Corvette on the beach, Karl “The Mailman” Malone and the Michael Keaton Batman movie. The 14-year-old playing “Ten” didn’t know about the massive alternative music movement that was about to take over his teenage years, or that he’d later be traveling to different cities over the next three decades to see Pearl Jam perform the songs from that album in person.

Lately, it feels like I’m being reminded of a monumental anniversary of some sort every other day. My wonderful wife and I will celebrate 15 years of marriage next month (I better get her something nicer than just a mention in this column.) Last month marked 40 years since the debut of MTV (and 20 years since they actually played music.) Those are the fun ones. There are also the sad anniversaries. In a strange coincidence, Hurricane Ida made landfall on New Orleans on the 16th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. And it was 20 years ago when we witnessed the tragic events of 9/11, a day that touched so many.

Today, I picked up a shrink-wrapped package of magazines in

“Multiple landscape pros, suppliers and manufacturers told us about how excited they are to put the shutdown year of 2020 behind them. And we are, too.”

the garage. (I have lots of magazines in my garage, as opposed to actual useful stuff.) Inside were copies of the November 2019 issue of *LM*. I turned to my column (oh nice, my photo is now celebrating its fourth anniversary) and saw that in that issue I was writing about the frenetic pace the *LM* team kept at the 2019 GIE+EXPO show. We took a crew of 16 people that year to report on the industry’s largest event. We came back with enough material to fill an entire magazine, and then some.

The next year, there were zero people at GIE+EXPO, not just from our publication, but for any company. It was 2020, the no-show year.

In this issue of *LM* our cover story focuses on the triumphant return of

the 2021 GIE+EXPO show for its 38th anniversary in Louisville. We also have other useful content in this issue, like our groovy early order program guide (EOP1), insights on getting into the holiday lighting game (page 60) and the best-case scenario for regions that combat snow mold (page 49).

Multiple landscape pros, suppliers and manufacturers told us about how excited they are to put the shutdown year of 2020 behind them. And we are, too. As we stand weeks away from the doors opening on the 2021 GIE+EXPO show, we realized we had a fun anniversary story in the works. And on the one-year anniversary of the no-show, I find it extremely fitting that the keynote speaker, Admiral James Stavridis, will be speaking about resilience, a topic our industry knows a whole lot about, and is vital to making our return to normal.

Happy anniversary. We look forward to seeing you there in Louisville in October, for this 38th year and for many more to come. As John Perry, president of Greene County Fertilizer told us, “I’m more excited to just see the people I haven’t seen for the last couple of years.”

After the show ends let’s get down to Fourth Street Live!, find a place with a jukebox and put on Pearl Jam’s “Ten” and sing, “I’m still alive, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!”

Who is coming with me? 🎵



PHOTO: LM STAFF

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## MORE ONLINE

See more great advice and complete answers from our Editorial Advisory Board in the online version of this feature at [LandscapeManagement.net](http://LandscapeManagement.net).

## What's your favorite memory of GIE+EXPO?

"I loved seeing the latest equipment with new innovations, which continues today with battery power as an example. The GIE+EXPO show is just improving with age in my opinion."



### Landscape Professionals

**Richard Bare**  
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**Kevin Kehoe**  
3PG Consulting  
Laguna, Calif.

**Jeffrey Scott**  
Jeffrey Scott Consulting  
New Orleans, La.

"My favorite memory is meeting one of my longtime mentors, Mike Bogan (CEO of LandCare) at the Marriott bar! He just came up to me and started asking questions. I didn't know who he was at the time, and it was amazing the interest he showed in a young kid from Omaha. We are great friends to this day!"



"My favorite memory of GIE+EXPO are all of the wonderful friendships I have made while there. My best mentors and friends in the green industry are people I have met at GIE+EXPO."



"The Neal McCoy concert at 4th Street Live stands out as one of my favorite GIE moments."



"Too many to mention."

"Networking around the bourbon bars and best restaurants with both old friends and new colleagues."



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# LM GALLERY

Check out a few of the places where the *LM* team made its rounds recently

**1 All Time Low show** Editor-in-Chief Seth Jones (left) was happy to catch the band All Time Low recently with PBI-Gordon's Brett Rieck (right) and his wife Dana and Seth's friend Sean Lipford in back. The bassist for All Time Low, Zack Merrick, is the son of Mark Merrick, a longtime green industry professional.



1

**2 Hello, Cleveland** The *LM* team of Jones, Editor Christina Herrick, Publisher Bill Roddy, Associate Publisher Craig MacGregor and Senior Editor Robert Schoenberger hosted some special visitors from the National Association of Landscape Professionals: CEO Britt Wood (center), Vice President of Marketing and Communications Lisa Stryker; and Vice President of Education and Professional Services Heather Parker.



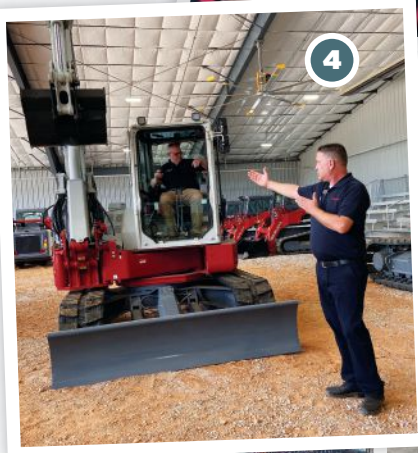
2

**3 Fenway fans** Jones (left) was able to take in a game at Boston's Fenway Park with his friends from Quali-Pro (left to right) Erica Cardenas, Paul Blodorn, Fenway Groundskeeper David Mellor, MacGregor, Shannon Slevin and Allan Fulcher.



3

**4 Give it a go** David Caldwell (left), national product manager for Takeuchi-U.S. demonstrates the ins and outs of Takeuchi machines, while Mike Shebetka, West region product manager, Takeuchi (right), explains how the machines are best used.



4

**5 Expert alert** Caldwell shows attendees of Takeuchi's Media Day how its new training center benefits dealers.



5

**6 Forever a member of the Tribe** North Coast Media turned out the lights on the 10th floor and headed to Progressive Field, to pay tribute to longtime employee and lifelong Indians fan Jeff Heide, who recently passed away. The Tribe got trounced by the Oakland A's that game, but it didn't make much difference to Jeff's friends, who all cheered when the scoreboard flashed his name in tribute in the middle of the fourth inning.



6

A man in a brown jacket and tan pants is driving a yellow riding lawn mower on a lush green lawn. He has his arms raised in a celebratory gesture. In the background, there is a two-story house with a porch, a yellow pickup truck with 'LUKE'S' written on it, and several garden gnomes. The garden is filled with topiary animals, including a bear, a dinosaur, and a snake. Two flying lawnmowers are in the sky. The scene is set in a rolling green landscape under a blue sky with light clouds.

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COMMERCIAL

# How landscape companies are handling record heat

BY SARAH WEBB | LM MANAGING EDITOR

As temperatures climbed in many places into the 90s and 100s, landscape companies made adjustments to protect their crew members and plant materials.

“We do our best to be prepared, and we are constantly watching the weather forecast and monitoring long-term forecasting and trends to make sure we’re prepared and react appropriately,” said Bob Grover, president of Pacific Landscape Management. “In our industry, we’re dealing with so many variables. We had a snowier February

than we normally do. We had a wildfire last fall. We’re having an extended dry spell this year. We just roll with the weather.”

In Portland, Ore., where Pacific Landscape Management is located, Grover said it’s been a record-dry summer so far, with several days of record-high temperatures. At the end of June, temperatures broke an all-time-high record by nine degrees.

To protect employees from extreme heat, the company allowed crews to not work during the record-high days. Additionally, in the summer, days

start as early as possible, supervisors take water out to crews and the company encourages crews to carry their own water.

Art by Nature in Granite Falls, Wash., made similar efforts to keep employees safe from the heat, according to Ryan McMahon, president and owner.

During days with extreme temperatures, the company held off on installing plantings and sod.

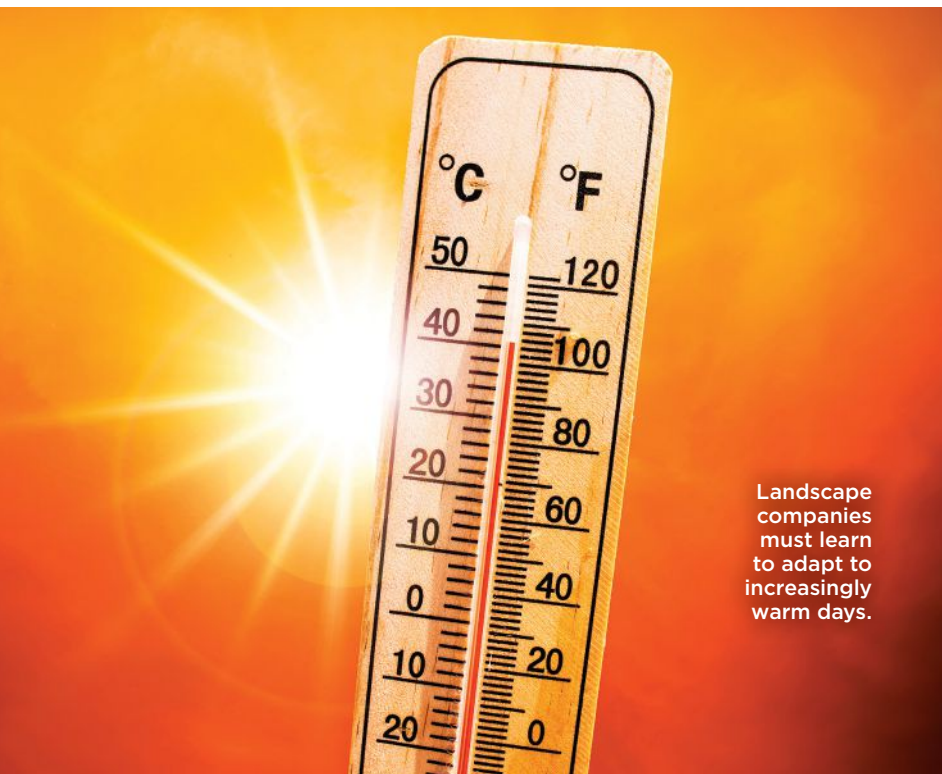
On the two days where it was extremely hot, Art by Nature shut down construction and gave employees the option of working in the company’s nursery from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. or take the day off. The company always ensures crews have a water station with the truck, and on days where it’s just warmer than usual, the company gives employees the option to take breaks whenever they need to, instead of just at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

For other companies dealing with the heat, McMahon suggests listening to feedback from workers.

“Everyone’s driven by the bottom line, but your workforce is your most important asset, and you want to protect them, especially these days when everyone is going crazy with the worker shortage,” McMahon said. “You want to make sure you listen to them. If they’re too hot, take the precautions necessary to keep them comfortable.”



Bob Grover



Landscape companies must learn to adapt to increasingly warm days.



The Takeuchi Training Center features track loaders, wheel loaders and excavators.

# Takeuchi showcases new training center at Media Day event

BY SARAH WEBB | LM MANAGING EDITOR

**T**akeuchi-U.S. welcomed *Landscape Management* to its new 37,000-square-foot Training Center in Pendergrass, Ga., during its Media Day on Aug. 24.

The company opened the center earlier this year. Located next door to the company's headquarters, the Takeuchi Training Center serves as the site of sales and technical instruction for the company's salespeople, dealer principals, dealer technicians and corporate dealer trainers.

Takeuchi President Jeff Stewart said the idea for the new space stemmed from a desire to improve the training the company provides. Previously, training was held in a smaller space that included various disruptions.

"Here, the dealers can focus on the equipment, and there are no distractions," Stewart said. "They can be completely immersed in what they're doing."

With hundreds of dealer locations, Takeuchi runs multiple training sessions each month, in the indoor and outdoor demonstration spaces. The center typically holds classes Tuesday through Thursday each week, with other days used for prepping the sessions.

In addition to answering dealers' questions and going over machines' features, the training center staff "bugs" several machines with issues, and the training center attendees work together to figure out what's wrong and how to fix it.

"There are more and more machines out there, so we're wanting to

provide more and more support," said Keith Kramlich, national product and training manager at Takeuchi.

All in all, the training center boasts six track loaders, three wheel loaders and 17 excavators on the property.

Lee Padget, product manager for Takeuchi, showcased key features of various machines, mimicking the walk-around trainings presented to dealers.

Kramlich said so far, feedback from dealers on the trainings, which began in late March, has been positive, but that the instructors are always looking for ways to improve upon the classes.


Additionally, Takeuchi hopes to hire more trainers — there are currently five, but there's room for eight. 

PHOTO: LM STAFF

## Mowing goes virtual thanks to a new video game

After a long day of mowing lawns, landscape pros can relax by plugging in the Xbox and firing up a video game. Thanks to Scag Power Equipment and a British game developer, those landscape pros can apply their real-world expertise virtually.

Lawn Mowing Simulator, a game released earlier this month for \$30 on Xbox and PC game platforms, allows users to maneuver Scag, Toro and Stiga (a European brand) mowers across elegant British estates.

The bulk of the game's 407 reviews on PC game downloading platform Steam are positive, although a common complaint is one that landscape professionals can appreciate.

The game deducts points for bumping into trees and other obstacles, prompting some players to ask for smaller mowers or trimmers to avoid annoying their virtual customers. Scag's Patriot and Turf Tiger II mower models have been artfully recreated and officially

licensed for use in the game, providing a visually authentic mowing experience for the player. A variety of beautiful and realistic environments provides countless hours of mowing enjoyment.

## Boston-area landscaping company owner sentenced for tax evasion

Kevin Newman, 70, will spend 10 months in community confinement, have two years of supervised release and perform 100 hours of community service after pleading guilty in April to tax evasion.

U.S. Department of Justice officials said the Newton, Mass., owner of Kevin Newman Landscape and Tree claimed \$671,812 in tax losses between 2015 and 2019 by underreporting income and inflating expenses on his personal and corporate tax returns.

In addition to the confinement, probation and community service, U.S. District Court Judge Patti B. Saris ordered Newman to pay a \$10,000 fine and \$572,843 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service.

# THE SHOW



**After an unexpected year off, GIE+EXPO is set to return Oct. 20-22 with a bang**

BY THE LM STAFF

**C**hris Sonafrank, president of Lakeway Landscaping in Clemmons, N.C., had been trying to attend GIE+EXPO in Louisville, Ky., since 2010. Every year, he'd register but something always came up right before the show, forcing him to cancel.

In 2019, he finally broke through and attended his first GIE+EXPO. He was stunned by what he saw, what he learned and what he could immediately apply to his business.

"I went there thinking, I've been in business 17 years, I know it all," he recalls. "I thought I knew what I was doing, but that show changed so much for us ... cutting down on turnaround time, fleet management, time management, hiring people. I absolutely loved it. I implemented a new price list two days after I got back from GIE+EXPO."

# GOES ON!



Lakeway Landscaping has been growing exponentially and organically over the last 17 years, Sonafrank says. He's now entering the commercial construction and commercial installation markets and feels he's making better use of his time than ever. After the success of his 2019 show, he knew he would be back in 2020, and every year after.

Until the 2020 show was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, that is.

"I hated — *hated* — that the 2020 show was canceled," Sonafrank says. "We were ready to go, but we're ready to go this year. Mask or no mask, I don't care, it doesn't matter to me ... we have goals."

## Making up for a lost year

Dwight Bizzell, vice president, Bizzell Nursery Co. in Sikeston, Mo., is the third generation to work for Bizzell Nursery Co. — his grandfather Walter started the business in the late 1960s. Dwight Bizzell has been attending GIE+EXPO on and off since 2014. He says it was weird not attending the show after it was canceled last year.

*Continued on page 14*

**"Look at what classes are offered and get signed up prior to getting there. Plan your schedule. I went with a purpose. To be effective, you have to have a plan. Don't just show up to get swag."**



CHRIS SONAFRANK, PRESIDENT OF LAKEWAY LANDSCAPING

**“Don’t walk through without stopping and asking questions. These guys and gals have spent countless hours and dollars to set the booths up, and if you like something, stop and talk to them. When we see something, we stop and ask questions. It’s great to talk to them and break down what their product is and how it could help you in the future.”**

DWIGHT BIZZELL,  
VICE PRESIDENT,  
BIZZELL NURSERY CO.



*Continued from page 13*

“We typically bring quite a few of our people just to see what’s out there and what can make their jobs easier,” Bizzell says. “Seeing the new technology and new equipment, anything that’s going to make us more efficient to get our jobs done quicker is key.”

GIE+EXPO was one of the main motivating factors in the company switching over to Steel Green spreaders. It wasn’t just the equipment and the labor savings that impressed him, but also the relationship that was formed between Bizzell Nursery Co. and Steel Green over the last few years at the show.

“We all know the labor force in our industry is very hard to get, so anything that’s going to make it easier to get the job done with fewer employees is where we’re having to go,” Bizzell says. “That’s one of



Outdoor equipment demonstrations, such as this one for Vermeer mini skid-steers, are a major highlight of GIE+EXPO.

my favorite things (about GIE+EXPO), getting to see everyone again and getting to see what’s new, what’s out there that’s going to make my business that much better. I’m excited to see what’s new over the past two years since we lost a year and to see old acquaintances that we’ve built relationships with at the show.”

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## Value of face to face

Trevor Koolmees, sales manager for tree care rental and landscape teams for Vermeer, has been back on the road again over the last five or six months. While some aspects of travel are still unusual — keeping a mask on in the airport at all times, for example — he says visiting customers in person makes it all worth it.

“We’ve been fortunate enough to see customers and see how they’re doing it and how they’re coming out of the pandemic,” Koolmees says. “The travel portion is still a little weird; there are a lot of do’s and don’ts depending upon what state you’re in and where you’re going to visit. We’re trying to be respectful and take those safety precautions. On the same token, I think a majority of our customers are excited to have people back at their facilities, on their job sites and doing business like we used to do before: face to face, hand in hand, really seeing how we can help our customers be more productive and more successful.”

Koolmees was in the Atlanta airport when he spoke to *LM*, just coming off one of those job site visits. While job site visits are great, in terms of sheer volume of people and demo opportunities, nothing beats GIE+EXPO, Koolmees says.

“The best thing for me and for us as a company is the opportunity to

*Continued on page 16*

PHOTO: BRIAN BOHANNON PHOTOGRAPHY

“Look at the map of the exhibitors. Plan your day around the inside the first day and then look at a path so you can see as many places as you possibly can after the first day. If you don’t have a plan going into GIE+EXPO, you’re going to leave the show saying, ‘man I had a great show, but I missed out on talking to these two people I really wanted to see.’”

TREVOR KOOLMEES, SALES MANAGER, VERMEER



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Continued from page 15  
be face to face with customers, not only on the showroom floor but also the opportunity to go outside, put their hands on it and drive it around. They see how our machines can have a real effect on what they do,” Koolmees says. “The number of people that are there and the opportunity that we have as an equipment manufacturer to continue to raise our brand awareness and let people know about the different solutions we offer from an equipment perspective, a service perspective and a dealership network perspective ... every year we go to GIE+EXPO it just keeps getting better and better.”

### Lightning in a bottle

One of the most exciting things about returning to Louisville this year for John Perry, president of Greene County Fertilizer Co., is seeing customers in person again for the first

Companies put a massive amount of effort into their booths at the show, hoping to draw curious visitors.



time in a long time. Greene County Fertilizer Co. has been exhibiting for more than a decade at GIE+EXPO. Perry echoes Koolmees and says the show is important to the company because of the volume of customers that he and his team can see in one place.

“There are new connections made every single year,” he says. “We can’t miss it because we get to rub elbows with a lot of our customers, we get to take them out, we get to go on the town, we get to enjoy everything Louisville has to offer.”

Perry recalls meeting Pete Denny, owner of GCI Turf Services, four years ago in Louisville, and from that meeting, Denny became Greene County’s first online distributor.

*Continued on page 21*



**“Download the app and make a plan or you will get lost!”**

JOHN PERRY,  
GREENE COUNTY  
FERTILIZER CO.  
PRESIDENT

PHOTO: GREENE COUNTY FERTILIZER CO.

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# CONNECT THE DOTS BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS, BRANCHES

Eliminate workarounds and guesswork with an integrated business management system

“**G**arbage in, garbage out,” is a common refrain among business owners and managers frustrated with their team’s use — or lack thereof — of a software system.

Do you feel like your ability to make good business decisions depends on whether or not your employees enter data correctly? Do you worry about a job or invoice falling through the cracks? In the landscape industry, you are not alone.

Bryan Shedd has been there. “In the past, we’ve had clients call up and say, ‘Why aren’t you servicing my property?’” says the recurring team coordinator for Belknap Landscape Co. in Gilford, N.H. “Well, it’s because we forgot to send them a renewal. That’s embarrassing to say the least.”

Many companies in the landscape industry struggle with disconnected systems that hinder their ability to make good business decisions, estimate jobs accurately and be more profitable.

“Inefficiency in your operations is a huge barrier to growing your landscape business,” says Mark Tipton, CEO of Aspire Software. The answer? An integrated landscape business management system, like Aspire Landscape, with end-to-end functionality.

“Aspire Landscape eliminates the workarounds and much of the data entry created by using multiple software solutions for tasks like estimating and job costing,” Tipton says. “An integrated system streamlines those processes and provides visibility into your business. This allows you and your team to be more efficient, act quickly to make decisions that generate more profit, and generate more revenue with the same amount of staff.”



MARK TIPTON

## 'No ticket left behind'

Prior to implementing Aspire Landscape two and a half years ago, Belknap Landscape used Excel spreadsheets, daily paper timesheets and whiteboards to manage its operations. The full-service landscape company has 80 to 100 employees at peak season.

"We had walls and walls of information that could ever so easily be erased by someone leaning against the wall," Shedd says, adding the company has multiple locations, so staff had to drive around every day to pick up paperwork and return it to the main office. Next, someone sorted through the paperwork; recorded each employee's time in QuickBooks for payroll; then tracked job names, tasks and actual man hours/material for each job in another spreadsheet. Finally, the data was entered into the master spreadsheet so the team could see how it was performing on each specific task.

"We would be handling the same data multiple times," he explains. "It took days if not weeks to get the information we needed to effectively manage each job, and by then it was too late."

There was a lot of room for error. And there was no time to proactively make adjustments to improve a job. When the company's growth flatlined a few years in a row, the Belknap team knew something had to change. After a nearly

two-year software selection process, they chose Aspire Landscape.

Now, things run smoother for a variety of reasons. One of them being the job ticketing system, which ensures all jobs are captured from the moment they are entered as a lead into the system and tracked all the way through invoicing.

"I like to use the term 'no ticket left behind,'" Shedd says. "Whether you check it daily, weekly or monthly, every job is in there and it all gets scheduled and pushed through to invoicing at some point."

Additionally, the ticketing system allows for more efficient crew communication. Any details the crew needs, including notes, photos, budgeted

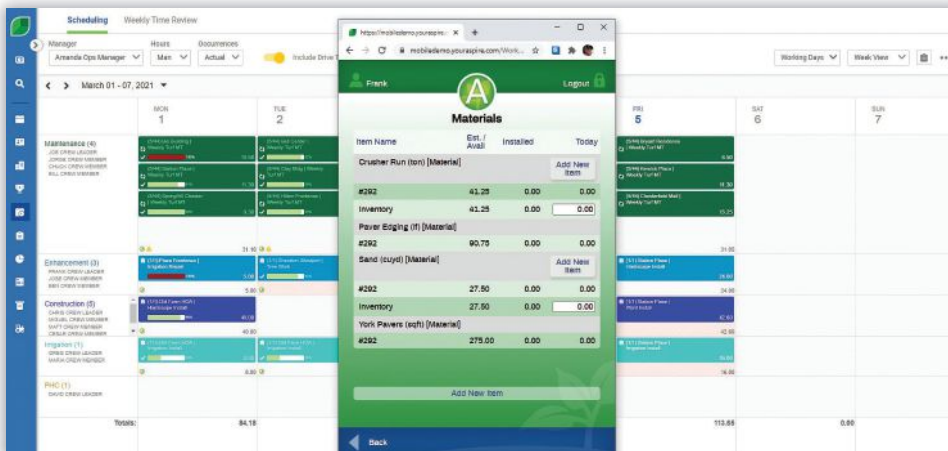
hours, materials needed, etc., are linked to their work tickets for the day, which they can easily access from their phone.

On the sales side, Belknap is seeing the benefit of Aspire Landscape's scheduling capabilities. Before the landscape season, the company used the platform to schedule all of its contracted work for the entire year, which would have been impossible to do on whiteboards, Shedd notes.

"(It) allowed us to see where we had holes and in turn gave the sales team an advantage when selling new work, being able to provide a more realistic timeline to clients," he says.

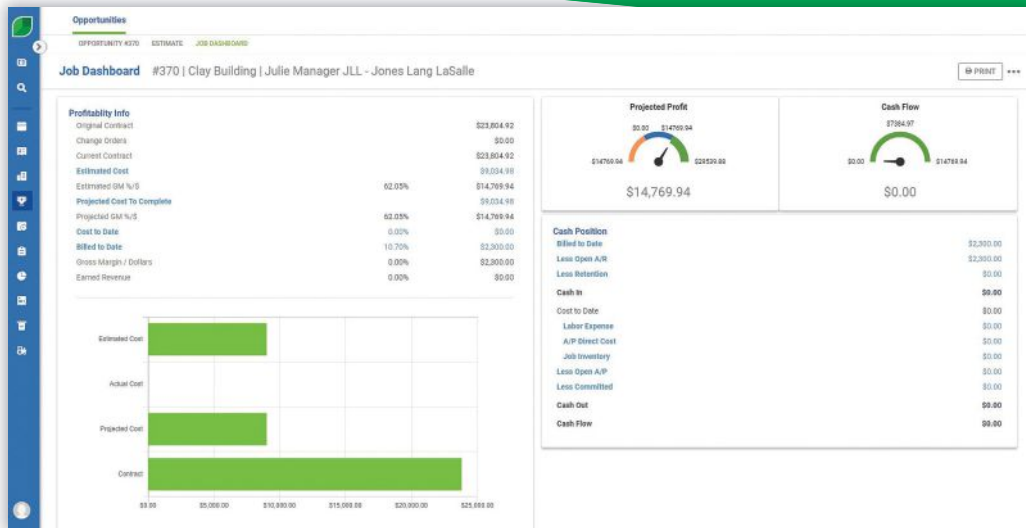


BRYAN SHEDD



## Seamless communication.

In addition to tracking labor hours and materials used from the field, Aspire Landscape's Crew Mobile app provides quick access to the information needed in the field and allows crews to create, assign or respond to issues as well as communicating these to their manager and then to the customer, if necessary.



**Real-time visibility.** The job dashboard in Aspire Landscape provides a quick, at-a-glance comparison of actual vs. estimated costs, allowing users to manage projects in real time and make proactive decisions — before it's too late — to ensure the profitability of every job.

## 'A live view'

K&D Landscape in Watsonville, Calif., adopted Aspire Landscape earlier this year. The company previously used a landscape estimating software along with a time-tracking program and a few other tools. So far, the management team is thrilled with the ability to see how the company is performing on any job on a daily basis.

“Because time capture is all done within the system, it's a live view,” says Shane White, maintenance department leader.

“Whereas before, we may not see a job report for a week or two weeks. By that time, the job could be over. With Aspire Landscape, we have better visibility on which teams are doing good or what teams need to be pushed or maybe need more training from the management team or need to adjust things on the fly.”

The real-time data gives the management team the ability to have a discussion with the production manager or crew about whether they're running into problems on-site and whether they need to do a change order for an additional scope of work.

“We can go to a client and say we ran into this problem (and ask), ‘Is this change order approved?’” he says. “It's a lot more difficult to go to the client and negotiate an extra cost when we're done with the job.”



SHANE WHITE

On the maintenance side, more accurate data is helping K&D identify which jobs are profitable or not profitable, so the team can decide whether or not to retain the client in the future.

“A client will only spend so much, and if we're not able to keep a client satisfied at the (agreed-upon) time or rate, maybe it's not the client for us,” White says. “Before, it was a lot more guesswork to determine profitability per account. Now, it's all in one place and we're able to run reports weekly, monthly or quarterly and see which jobs are doing well and not so well so we can dive in and figure it out.”

## 'Eliminates the guesswork'

Bob McCurdy, regional director of operations for Brilar, joined the company a month before it implemented Aspire Landscape in November 2019. Before making the switch, the commercial maintenance company based in Oak Park, Mich., used a few different landscape industry software programs that were not working well for its operation.

The biggest benefits of Aspire Landscape McCurdy sees are the simplicity, the visual nature of the program and the continuity its use creates.

“With Aspire Landscape, the way the estimates are built, if you hit your hours and buy the right materials at the right prices, you pretty much guarantee your margins,” he says. He's a fan of the system's catalog of inventory items like sod, seed, trees, shrubs and more, and the fact

that labor hours for installing each item are included. “It eliminates the guesswork. If we estimate 80 hours and we do it in 80 hours, we’re going to make money.”

Because Brilar has five branches, it’s helpful that Aspire Landscape allows for pricing templates with market-specific pricing. “We do a lot of snow, and salt prices can be different in Des Moines than in Detroit, so the ability to use the same

template with different mark-ups is great. It’s consistent but customized by branch.”

McCurdy also favors Aspire Landscape’s ability to deliver timely information in an easy-to-read format. “On the schedule board, you get a green or red bar if you’re over or under production hours,” he says. “I don’t need to



BOB McCURDY

| Item                      | Quantity | Complexity | Hours | Unit Price | Total Price | OM %   | TOTAL OVERHEAD | TOTAL COST | PRICE W/ TASK |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|-------|------------|-------------|--------|----------------|------------|---------------|
| <b>Plant Install</b>      |          |            | 42.00 |            | \$7,491.96  | 61.85% | \$3,547        | \$2,895.62 | \$8,138.74    |
| Plant Installation        | 14.00    | 0.00%      | 42.00 | \$749.14   | \$7,491.96  | 61.85% | \$3,547        | \$2,895.62 | \$8,138.74    |
| Cactus Planting           | 14.00    |            | 14.00 | \$78.40    | \$1,098.65  | 68.15% | \$395          | \$560.00   | \$1,196.65    |
| Shrub Planting            | 8.00     |            | 8.00  | \$78.40    | \$627.91    | 68.15% | \$340          | \$200.00   | \$689.79      |
| Planting                  | 7.00     |            | 10.80 | \$403.04   | \$3,171.29  | 59.14% | \$1,482        | \$1,285.65 | \$4,853.03    |
| Planting                  | 5.00     |            | 1.50  | \$68.64    | \$843.22    | 59.80% | \$157          | \$187.87   | \$378.77      |
| Planting                  | 17.00    |            | 5.10  | \$73.87    | \$1,255.91  | 59.68% | \$573          | \$567.01   | \$1,947.69    |
| Planting                  | 35.00    |            | 3.50  | \$28.42    | \$994.78    | 59.28% | \$450          | \$465.09   | \$1,083.92    |
| <b>Hardware Install</b>   |          |            | 43.00 |            | \$18,685.90 | 59.50% | \$4,862        | \$4,327.56 | \$11,637.03   |
| Hardware Installation     |          |            | 43.00 | \$1068.96  | \$10,689.56 | 59.50% | \$4,862        | \$4,327.56 | \$11,637.03   |
| Design Entry              | 12.00    |            | 12.00 | \$81.50    | \$978.75    | 68.29% | \$140          | \$300.00   | \$1,048.68    |
| Design Entry              | 20.00    |            | 20.00 | \$11.90    | \$2,380.00  | 69.20% | \$900          | \$500.00   | \$1,772.80    |
| Design Entry              | 270.00   |            | 11.00 | \$29.90    | \$8,071.81  | 59.50% | \$1,423        | \$3,527.56 | \$8,900.55    |
| <b>Irrigation Install</b> |          |            | 16.00 |            | \$2,924.33  | 62.40% | \$1,418        | \$1,067.00 | \$3,184.00    |
| Irrigation Installation   |          |            | 16.00 | \$292.40   | \$2,924.33  | 62.40% | \$1,418        | \$1,067.00 | \$3,184.00    |
| Labor                     | 16.00    |            | 16.00 | \$69.00    | \$1,104.00  | 68.15% | \$98           | \$82.00    | \$1,234.00    |
| Irrigation                | 745.00   |            | 0.00  | \$2.41     | \$1,819.20  | 59.00% | \$320          | \$745.00   | \$1,981.11    |

**Simplified estimating.** Aspire Landscape allows users to build unlimited estimating templates and production-rate kits to enable their teams to quickly, accurately and consistently bid large and/or complex jobs, simply by altering the takeoffs and quantities.

print out a spreadsheet; I can see it right in front of my face. The biggest benefit is the lack of paper on my desk. I can dig inside the system without the need to bury my desk in reports and paper.”

At a multibranch company, it’s imperative that everyone speaks the same language and uses the same system across the board, he says, and Aspire Landscape allows for that.

“It just makes you more efficient and connects the dots between departments, whether that’s finance and accounting, sales or our branch management operations,” he says. “I can only imagine what a disaster it would be if we’re all doing different things, especially with multiple branches.”



The Aspire landscape management platform offers the cloud-based, end-to-end functionality contractors need to gain full visibility into their business, make better decisions, and increase profit margins. **Aspire is trusted by more than 51,000 users in over 1,200 locations to manage nearly \$4 billion in industry revenue.**

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**“Get outside and try the products. There’s so much to do out there. All the brands that you know, have their products on display. That’s a great opportunity to get to try new things, or if you have your eye on something on a piece of equipment, it’s a great place to check it out.”**

KEN OSBERG, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, ECHO

*Continued from page 16*

“It’s been an incredible relationship since the time I met him at that show,” he says. “I’m more excited to just see the people I haven’t seen for the last couple of years.”

Missing out on the 2020 GIE+EXPO was particularly painful for professional equipment manufacturer Echo. The company experienced “lighting in a bottle” at the 2019 edition of the show and had high hopes for the 2020 follow-up.

“GIE+EXPO is our Super Bowl,” says Ken Osberg, director of marketing for Echo. “It’s our No. 1 opportunity to put a tool in a user’s hands, and there’s no better place to do that than GIE+EXPO. It gives the market a chance to see what’s new. It also gives a user who may not be familiar with Echo an opportunity to try our tools. It’s our once-a-year opportunity where the entire green industry comes together.”

For Echo, the anticipation for the 2021 show is even higher as the company plans several new product launches, a celebration of its 50th anniversary and a new collaboration with industry



partners. Echo, GIE+EXPO and The Davey Tree Co. are partnering to present a Women’s Tree Climbing Workshop in the Expo Center’s Freedom Hall.

“We’ll be doing demonstrations and talks in between Davey’s trainings and demonstrations as well,” he

says. “(Outdoor Power Equipment Institute President and CEO) Kris Kiser calls it ‘the reunion of the industry.’ He’s so on point with that because we get a chance to see all our

Echo plans to celebrate 50 years in business at GIE+EXPO.

*Continued on page 23*

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Continued from page 21 partners and potential partners as well. We really welcome that. That's why the show is so important for us."

### Ready to go

It is possible that absence makes the heart grow fonder, but it also sure seems like the industry is ready for the 2021 GIE+EXPO show to go on. Cam St. Jean, owner of Kootenay Lawn Doctor in Cranbrook, British Columbia, Canada, is hopeful to attend the show, even though travel through an international border has become complex since the pandemic.

"If you're looking for equipment, if you're looking for software or you're looking for strategy, it's all there," St. Jean says. "There's just new ideas all around that if you can implement them into your company, you'll get a great return on investment."



**"The first year I went, I wasn't sure what to expect, but since then, I've come in with a real strategy. I research ahead of time to know who I should meet with while I'm there."**

CAM ST. JEAN, OWNER,  
KOOTENAY LAWN  
DOCTOR

Kootenay Lawn Doctor employs 30 people and operates 18 trucks. A majority of the business (75 percent) is spraying liquid herbicide and fertilizer, while 20 percent is mowing/aerating and 5 percent is irrigation/miscellaneous.

Formal meetings and education sessions are great, St. Jean says, but the greater value is being around peers who can trade ideas with each other. Other than looking for equipment, the trips to Louisville give him a chance to

visit Fourth Street Live! and drink some bourbon. As a fan of Kentucky's signature liquor, that's a highlight of his trip.

"I like touring the distilleries. We got out to a bunch of them in 2019," St. Jean laughs.

Here's a cheers to getting back in 2021. 🍷

### Looking forward to Louisville

While he expects to stick with his Wright zero-turns for many years to come, Nick Brummel, owner of Brummel Lawn and Landscape in Kansas City, is excited to see what's next from manufacturers. He's been paying attention to electric models and has seen videos of autonomous mowers, something he hopes to see at GIE+EXPO this year. There's not

a lot of demand for electric-only mowing in Kansas City right now, he says, but he's watching the market.

"What's going on on the West Coast has gotten our attention," Brummel says. "The push is coming, so we're looking into the sustainability of batteries. Can they last?"



PHOTO: BRIAN BOHANNON PHOTOGRAPHY

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← **Z-AERATE 40  
STAND-ON AERATOR**

**COMPANY:** Z Turf Equipment  
**URL:** ZTurfEquipment.com  
 The Z-Aerate 40 stand-on aerator from Z Turf Equipment features a 40-inch floating tine head. The design enables maneuvering around obstacles during aeration, and the hydraulic lift provides quick turnarounds. Patented locking front caster wheels increase hillside stability. Dual-pump hydraulic wheel motors deliver an 8 mph maximum speed. The Z-Aerate 40 accepts optional accessories including a 30-gallon sprayer, 46-inch dethatch rake and 36-inch slicer seeder. Multi-function versatility enables one operator to do more work, more quickly.



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← **X10 STAND-ON AERATOR**

**COMPANY:** Turfco  
**URL:** Turfco.com

Turfco's XT10 stand-on aerator includes zero-turn agility, an optional 60-pound seeder attachment and patent-pending Auto Depth Control tine-setting capacity. A 23-hp engine boasts an aerating speed of 7 mph and a 30-inch aerating width, capable of covering 2 acres of turf per hour. The XT10 enhancements include improved axles, new semipneumatic front caster wheels, improved tine wheels, an upgraded electronic foot-controlled tine switch and optimized weight distribution for better handling in a variety of conditions. The Auto Depth Control function adapts automatically to changing ground conditions so that operators can preset the depth once and achieve uniform consistency.



↑ **PLUGR 25-INCH RECIPROCATING AERATOR**

**COMPANY:** Billy Goat  
**URL:** BillyGoat.com

Billy Goat's 25-inch PlugR reciprocating aerator offers up to 42,550 square feet of aeration per hour in a single pass. Variable aeration density, a Billy Goat exclusive, lets operators vary hole spacing from eight to 45 holes per square foot for single-pass aeration, eliminating double aerating. The unit features in-ground steering for maneuverability, ergonomics, ease of turning, improved production and reduced downtime and turf repair compared to drum aerators.



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**POA PROBLEMS**  
*Poa* typically occurs in turf areas that have been weakened by disease or destruction.



# Pesky *Poa*

Lawn care experts explain what operators should look for when dealing with *Poa annua*

BY SARAH WEBB | LM MANAGING EDITOR

**M**any lawn care operators in warmer regions contend with *Poa annua* on an annual basis, according to Dean Mosdell, Ph.D., technical services manager for Syngenta.

He notes that when conditions are favorable, it also proliferates as an annual to perennial biotype in cool-season turf where germination occurs, and it establishes itself as a competitive weed in lawns that are overwatered, shaded or lacking density.

Ben Pease, turfgrass agronomist at The Andersons, agrees.

“It’ll typically come in in areas where the turf isn’t doing too well, where it’s been thinned out by a disease or it’s encountered some sort of destruction,” Pease says. “If the turf isn’t fed properly, the weed that prefers low fertility will overtake other turf. To keep a balanced fertility program, you want some fast-release nitrogen as well as some slow-release nitrogen to keep the turf fed, rather than a large flush of growth.”



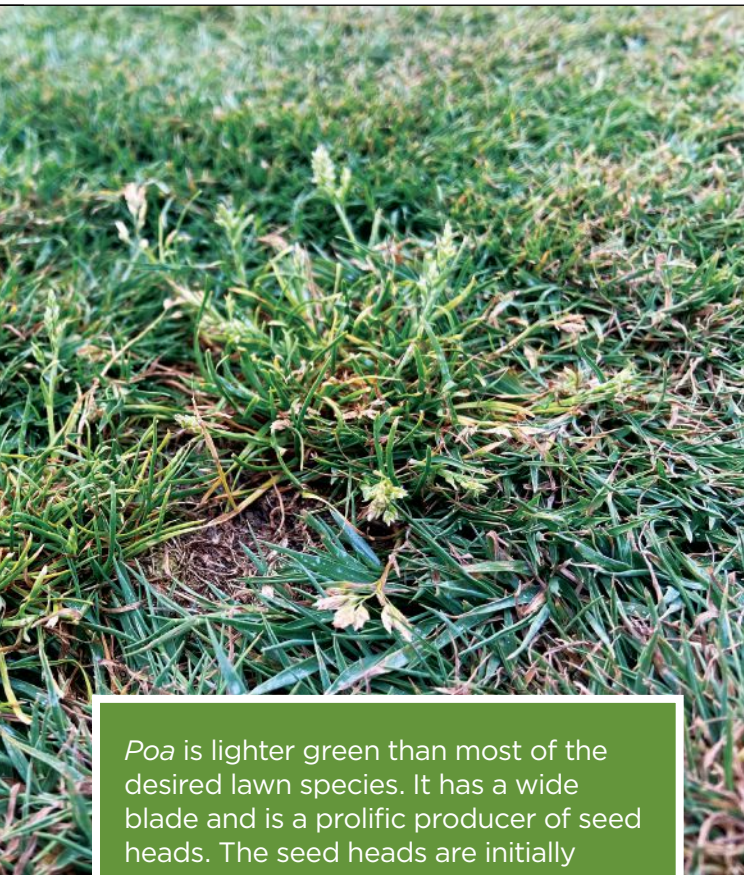
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*Poa* is lighter green than most of the desired lawn species. It has a wide blade and is a prolific producer of seed heads. The seed heads are initially green before turning to white. — PEASE

*Poa* is a clump grass that will slowly spread. Somewhere halfway down the leaf, the leaf will look crinkled as if someone were to fold a piece of paper into an accordion style. — PEASE

Leaves can be rolled in the bud and have boat-shaped tips. — MOSDELL

Properly selecting the lawn species for a region and site is paramount. For example, Bermudagrass may be suitable in the South, but not if the lawn is mostly shaded. — MOSDELL

Maintain proper mowing heights for lawns, fertilize turf based on recommendations from your state's extension service and monitor irrigation practices. Lastly, make sure to deeply water, at least beyond the upper 2 inches, and water infrequently to avoid favoring the shallow-rooted *Poa annua*. — MOSDELL

Introducing new cultivars helps fill in blank areas and outcompete the *Poa* before the *Poa* has a chance to take over those weakened spots. — PEASE

PHOTO: BEN PEASE

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**KNOW THE TREE**  
It's key to know the ins and outs of the type of tree to be treated and to not over-treat.



# Don't overlook the basics in tree and shrub care

Plant health care experts urge contractors to consider environmental factors along with pest issues when diagnosing tree and shrub problems

BY EMILY SCHAPPACHER | CONTRIBUTOR



**W**hen it comes to treating trees and shrubs, Kyle Davis believes less is more.

"Most people overdo it and apply too much product," says the chemical and fertilizer manager for Yellowstone Landscape, a \$358 million, full-service company headquartered in Bunnell, Fla., that serves commercial and governmental clients. "A lot of plants are pretty hardy against insects and diseases. Contractors need to be smart about what they're doing."

Industry experts like Davis agree that understanding the basics of tree and shrub care is key to doing it right and avoiding some common mistakes. One such mistake occurs when contractors misidentify the affected plant, says Rob Gorden, director of urban forestry and business development for Arborjet.

"This sounds really simple, but you wouldn't look at an oak tree and assume it's going to get emerald ash borer," Gorden says, adding that there are a number of books, apps and industry associations that can help contractors with plant identification.

## UNDERSTAND THE STRESS

Once the plant is properly identified, contractors then need to determine what is causing it stress. Contractors should first consider environmental factors such as drought, improper planting or "volcano mulching" (when too much mulch is piled up around the base of the plant, cutting off water and nutrients to its root base).

"Thirty to 40 percent of problems in a landscape are actually not caused by insects or diseases. They are caused by environmental issues," he says. "Contractors need to know how to identify what is wrong."

Gorden also suggests contractors learn to identify the four or five most common pests and diseases in their area and then build upon that knowledge.

Kathy Glassey, plant health care director for Monster Tree Care, a \$55 million tree care company with an 85 percent residential, 15 percent commercial clientele headquartered in Fort Washington, Pa., agrees that some companies are too quick to apply a pest or disease diagnosis without first identifying the environmental stressors. She warns that if the stress from environmental factors is not addressed, it can open the window for pests and diseases to take hold. But, if a pest or disease is in fact identified, contractors then need to select the right product and determine the proper treatment schedule.

"The timing of treatment is crucial to a successful application, and it requires proper planning," Glassey says. "When there are pests and diseases, many times, companies will use a broad-spectrum product instead of a targeted product because they can't get the timing right. This approach can impact beneficial insects and is not always best for the plant or for the environment."

## GET PROACTIVE

Rod Marquardt, national warm-season

LCO accounts manager for Nufarm, agrees the use of the right product at the right time is important to get problems under control, and he adds that a proactive approach will generally give better results than a reactive approach.

"Most contractors do not take a proactive approach to tree and shrub care and rather wait until a problem is present," Marquardt says. "But treating preventively for insects that come back around the same time every year can significantly improve the health of the plant and avoid last-minute 911 calls to take care of issues. Similarly, plant diseases are very hard to control curatively. Treating before an outbreak is the best way to take care of a disease."

Marquardt says the type of product matters, too. For example, trying to control sucking or piercing insects with contact insecticides is often ineffective, he says, as pests like scale and mealybugs have an outer coating that is difficult for a contact product to penetrate. Using different types of products applied through various techniques also can maximize results.

"Using a horticultural oil, a systemic product and an insect growth regulator can provide excellent results when one product alone may not do the job," he says. "Different application techniques, such as root drenching, root injection, bark spray, bark banding, tree injection and foliar applications, can also affect efficacy."

Schappacher is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

A SUPPLEMENT TO



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“I think 32 fluid ounces of Coastal applied twice is going to become a standard for crabgrass and winter annual control, bridging the gap between the turf tolerance requirements of sensitive warm-season grasses, like centipede and St. Augustine, and having lasting efficacy within Bermudagrass.

**DR. JAY MCCURDY**

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

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Sipcam has been a great collaborator. I always appreciate when a group like Sipcam wants to jointly explore solutions that help the end user.

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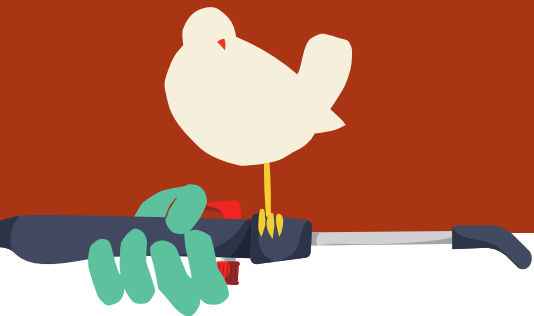


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# Early and in person

## Readers say cost savings and flexible payment options make EOPs valuable

BY THE LM STAFF

In late spring of this year, *Landscape Management* asked readers to give some insight on how they perceive chemical manufacturers' early order programs (EOPs). We received responses from readers in 18 states. Overwhelmingly, respondents said they will participate (75 percent) in this fall's EOPs, and they prefer both meeting in person with their distributor sales representative and online virtual models.

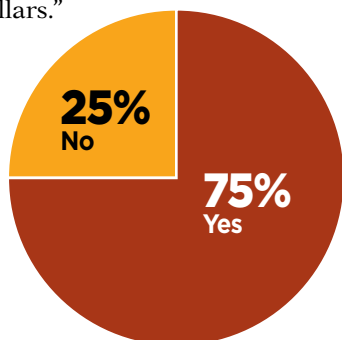
Most respondents listed "cost savings" as the main reason they participate in EOPs. "We are able to achieve some discounting and lock in pricing," a reader in North Carolina wrote.

A respondent in New Jersey said EOPs "save some money and get this end of our work out of the way."

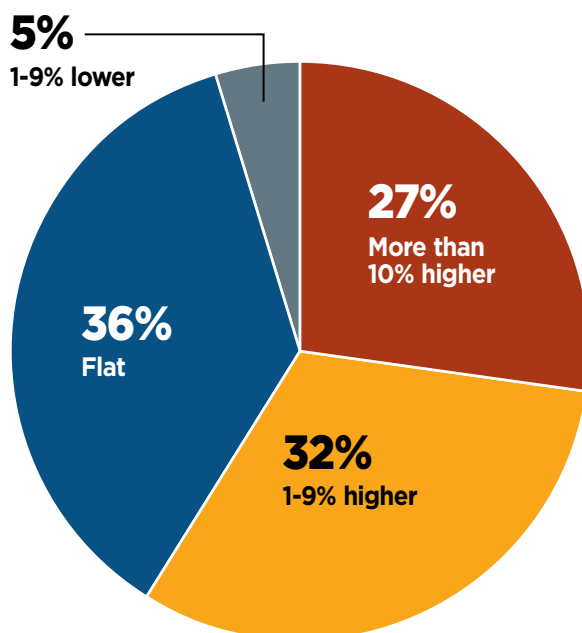
Still, some readers bemoaned the programs, saying EOPs can be complicated, they have too much inventory from 2020 still or the benefits are not realized for their businesses.

"I don't like pallet deals or bundles," said a reader in Kansas. "I want the products that I want. I don't want to have to buy something that I don't really want to save a few dollars."

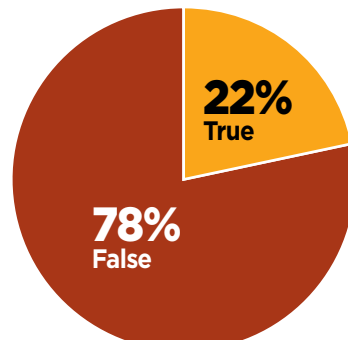
**DO YOU  
PLAN TO  
PARTICIPATE  
IN EOPs IN  
2021?**



**WHAT DOES YOUR EOP SPEND LOOK LIKE THIS YEAR, COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?**



**I ALWAYS  
PURCHASE MY  
FERTILIZER  
DURING EOPs  
FOR THE  
UPCOMING  
YEAR.**



## What you need to know about EOPs

### Lawn care operators explain the when and why behind early order programs

BY SARAH WEBB | LM MANAGING EDITOR

**F**all is the time lawn care operators (LCOs) start parsing through early order programs (EOPs) to figure out what products they can order early to save on costs and improve efficiency.

Here to help explain how they use EOPs each year are Bruce Love, owner and president of LawnRx in Latrobe, Pa., and Kevin Cooper, vice president of Cooper's Landscape Management in Virginia Beach, Va.

#### THE WHEN

Love says he usually starts considering his early order program in October and locks in the orders before the New Year. LawnRx has been using early order programs since the company's founding in 2004.

"You want to start planning in the late fall," Love says. "The downtime in our industry tends to be around that time of year, so that's a good time to look at your numbers and determine where you are seeing growth."

He places an early order for fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides — about 15 percent more



product than he ordered the previous year.

"We pretty much know what we need for the coming year based on the previous year's client base," he says. "Everyone should have some kind of budget or some kind of sales goals."

Cooper notes that fall is a good time for planning because he's able to easily recollect what worked well that season.

"I'm able to rehash it all because it's early enough, and it's still fresh in your mind when you get to October," Cooper says. Cooper Landscape Management

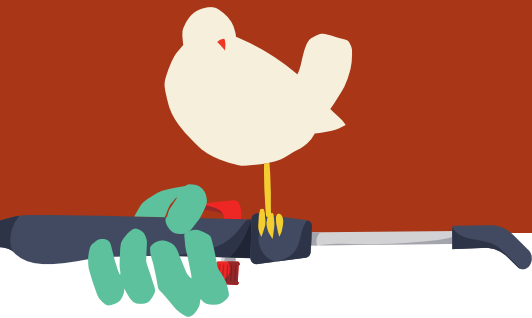
has been taking advantage of EOPs from distributors and manufacturers since the early 2000s.

Cooper starts his EOP planning in September after consulting his notes and various spreadsheets on what products the company used that season and what worked well.

"I think, 'What am I going to change from last year to this year? How much of that do I

**LawnRx knows about how much product it will need each year based on the previous year's numbers.**

*Continued on page EOP6*



Continued from page EOP5

think I need?” Cooper says. “And then, I have the chats with the supplier reps and our manufacturer reps and see what they come back with. It’s a lot of back and forth to get that figured out.”

By mid-October Cooper has his purchasing plans finalized, giving him plenty of time to evaluate the incentives and decide which companies’ EOPs he’ll take advantage of.

### THE WHY

This year more than ever, Love plans to take advantage of EOPs because of market fluctuations and supply shortages due to factors such as the February freeze in Texas and the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This year, it was key because prices were 30 percent more,” Love says. “Shipping prices are through the roof right now. Anything you need from shipping is a lot harder to get. For fertilizers, the market is usually at its lowest in fall and winter, so the best time to buy fertilizers is then. By locking those prices down, I beat the fluctuations for the following year.”



**EOP TIP: “Consider your warehouse availability because a lot of times, manufacturers and suppliers want you to take delivery January through March.”**

—BRUCE LOVE

In 2020, Love ordered a few products in-season and had to pay about 30 to 40 percent more on the product itself, excluding the increased cost of shipping.

He says those types of costs are hard to offset midseason, affecting the bottom line.

“In our industry, our prices are pretty much set. You can’t charge differently throughout the year to compensate for the increases,” Love says. “We give a base price, where this is the price per application per year. You can’t raise that. Plus, a lot of our customers prepay for the season.”

Love says the EOPs are also attractive because many com-

**it’s important to ensure there’s enough storage space before considering buying materials early through EOPs.**

panies provide terms that lawn care firms couldn’t get otherwise,

such as not having to pay for product until June.

EOPs also allow lawn care companies to cement their relationships with distributors and manufacturers, according to Cooper.

For example, Cooper says one season, he told one of his manufacturer reps that he wasn’t a big fan of the company’s fungicide because it came in a granular form. The rep informed him that the manufacturer also produced a liquid form, which Cooper had not previously known. From then on, Cooper says the rep made an effort to offer him mostly liquid products.

“They have my best interests at heart,” Cooper says. “The rep remembers, ‘Kevin likes the liquid products as much as he can go liquid, because there’s less settling out in the tank. You’re not going to have clogged up filters in your spray rig and all that.’”

When it comes to the cost savings on EOPs — which can be as high as 18 percent, Cooper says — Cooper puts them back into his company.

“You could put that money into employee benefits, pay raises or the price of gasoline that’s going up,” Cooper says. “In our business, I want to make us look better than everyone else out there. I put it into better products that are going to have the efficacy and the longevity that I want. That’s going to keep us looking better out there, because we’re a word-of-mouth business.”

## 10 reasons why you should participate in EOPs

**Experts say EOPs will be vital this year to promote service growth, protect supply chains and lower costs**

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

Imagine it's March and the winter weather has finally broken for much of the country. Your clients are champing at the bit for you to get out and start treating lawns, but instead of having inputs ready to go, you and your team are spending time securing the products you need for the season.

This, experts say, is precisely why lawn care operators (LCOs) should consider participating in an early order program, or EOP.

"This program can help them by making sure they're efficient and well planned during that busy spring 12-week time frame and not chasing something down," says Brett Rieck, Eastern regional sales manager with PBI-Gordon. "So, when the weather breaks, you go as hard and as fast as you can to get that first round of applications completed."

Here to detail 10 benefits of early order programs are Rieck; Stephanie Schwenke, turf market manager with Syngenta; Chris Moyer, Corteva Agriscience turf and ornamental category lead; and John Smith, vice president of commercial operations for Amguard Environmental Technologies.

### 10 Your business has grown.

Demand for green industry services shows no sign of slowing down, and this scenario has likely boosted your business. A great reason to participate in EOPs, manufacturers say, is if your business has experienced year-over-year growth.

Rieck says EOPs help contractors plan for that growth and understand exactly how many inputs to buy next season, especially for those companies that have doubled or tripled clients.

"It makes them think through and go, 'how many acres am I really treating now? I don't have 2,000 customers; now, I have 2,500. I don't have 500 customers now; I have 1,000,'" he says. "Some just don't know they are covering that many new acres."

### 9 You want to add a service.

As you start to look to next year, EOP season is a good time to think about adding a service such as pest control, Smith says.

"Take advantage of EOPs by taking the opportunity to add a new service or an offering to your customers," he says.

"Because you're doing it at a much more affordable price."

Smith says adding a service using products purchased with EOP pricing allows you to charge a premium for that new offering and drive a good profit margin.

### 8 You want to try a new product.

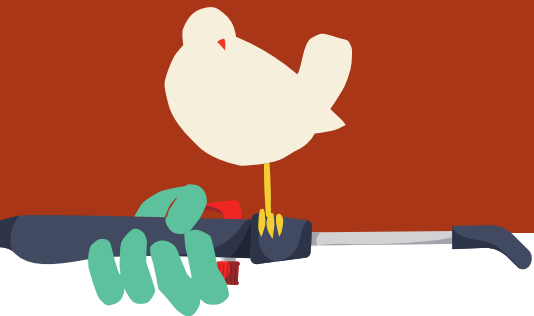
As with adding a new service, experts say EOPs are a great time to try a new product. Contractors will get the bonus savings during EOPs and have the ability to try something new. Rieck says if a contractor has contemplated changing up a product mix, there's no better time than EOP season.

"I suggest that everyone try the next new thing, whenever they want," he says. "If you're going to do it, you should know exactly what you're doing and plan ahead. When you know within reason what you have to treat, make your best choice and pull the trigger."

### 7 There are tools to help you understand the savings.

Suppliers offer many tools to help you calculate your savings

*Continued on page EOP8*



*Continued from page EOP7*

throughout the early order program period. Tools such as Syngenta's GT365 online calculator populate the savings realized as lawn care operators begin filling out a sample order form online.

"It very clearly shows LCOs what they can save if they buy in October and November versus waiting until February," Schwenke says. "Savings will be automatically calculated for them to place an order, print, share and save through the online calculator, making it easy to plan each year."

## **6 Your distributor may help with space.**

Some lawn care professionals may avoid EOPs because of space issues at their operation. Manufacturers say they can still take advantage of EOP pricing without adding storage capabilities. Many distributors will work with companies to store products until needed or find ways to help an LCO who has minimal storage.

"There are storage capabilities at distributors," Smith says. "If asked, a distributor may store product for them until they need it in the spring."

## **5 You don't have to buy for your entire program.**

Experts say a good idea for contractors getting started with EOPs is to take a small amount of the business and purchase products through EOPs for that segment, even if that's just the first and second round of applications. Many LCOs offer a prepay system or early signups. This gives you an estimate of inputs needed next year.

"(Ask) 'What percentage of my business do I know I've got locked in?' and take advantage of EOPs," Smith says.

## **4 You're going to need it.**

Rieck says many lawn care pros believe they could get stuck with excess product if purchased through EOPs. He says that's why it's a good idea for them to start with a small percentage of the business to purchase inputs for.

"No one usually has any left," he says. "They always think they're going to, but they always have so many upsells and so many other things. It's always gone. They're always having to buy more in every round."

## **3 Plan now, save the scramble.**

Instead of trying to find products at the same time as the calls, emails and inquiries start in the spring, with an early order program, lawn care firms have a good chunk of their applications budgeted and planned for.

"Planning ahead and purchasing early allows lawn care operators to secure the products they rely on before the rush of the season," Moyer says. "Ordering early not only secures the quantity but also the preferred package sizes."

Rieck says now is a good time to imagine that first warm day of spring, above 70 degrees when LCOs are anxious to get the first applications down.

"When the weather breaks and it's 70 degrees, those days are huge if you've got an inventory. You can bust out there and get round one done," he says.

## **2 The best prices you'll see.**

LCOs may think it's better to ride out the market and see if a fluctuation in prices ends up saving them in the long run, but experts say it's unlikely prices will go down for chemical inputs.

"In the last two years, you are not seeing a whole lot of price fluctuations where you see significant price decreases," Smith says. "In 2022, you're not going to see that, where prices drop significantly."


Locking in EOP pricing even for a small amount of the business can free up some funds for use elsewhere, such as marketing, customer acquisition or hiring.

"Early order programs are designed to create business opportunities for companies that have tight cash flow before and during the season," Moyer says.

## **1 Avoid supply chain issues.**

As LCOs have noticed, 2021 has been a year of supply chain disruption. EOPs are a way to ensure you have the products you need when you need them.

"If LCOs were ever doubting the reason to participate in an EOP, I would highly encourage them to consider this to be the year they engage, plan and participate," she says. "There's a shortage of employees. Turnaround times to get product and deliveries can be anywhere from two weeks to a month delay due to shortages of truck drivers, much less packaging."

In short, EOPs help lawn care companies prepare for the next season. "With EOPs, LCOs have the confidence that they're going to get what they need when they need it," Schwenke says. 

# 2022 EARLY ORDER PROGRAM GUIDE

## FMC

### Early Order Program: 'Simple and Thoughtful'

The theme of the 2021 FMC EOP is "Simple and Thoughtful." Simple, by bringing back the same familiar features from last year's EOP, and thoughtful, by allowing you to purchase the exact products you actually need. Together, we'll set a plan to help you save even more in 2021.

#### SOME HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- **September Spotlight** — offering the best rebates of the year on fungicides and purchases of Fame® will count toward your total EOP purchases
- The FMC EOP will run from **Oct. 1-Dec. 10, 2021**, with **July 2022** terms on qualified purchases



- **RebateLock**, only from FMC, is back and better than ever — offering more opportunities to lock in rebates on select FMC products all season long!
- **Maximize RebateLock** by purchasing **Fungicides in September and Insecticides & Herbicides in October**
- Get the **best rebates by purchasing in volume**
- Lock in your volume rebates and **get these rebate levels all next season** with RebateLock
- See **FMCTrueChampions.com** for full rebate and program details
- New customers may **enroll at FMCTrueChampions.com**

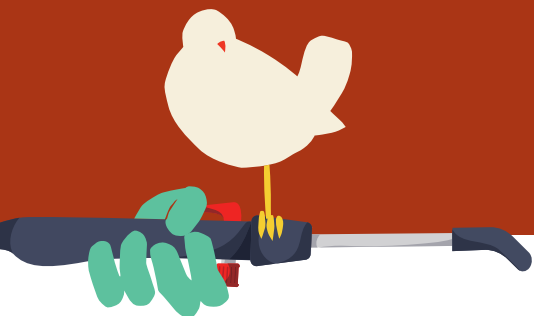
— FMC —

# TRUE CHAMPIONS

## NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Dec. 10, 2021

Website: [FMCTrueChampions.com](https://www.FMCTrueChampions.com)



# Bayer

## NOW Solutions

**T**he Turf and Ornamentals business of Bayer is offering lawn care operators the best pricing on a range of innovative lawn and turf products. This year's Fall Solutions program from Bayer offers four ways to save, including volume discounts, select product rebates, tier rebates and pairing rebates on the essential products you need to achieve healthy, beautiful turf.

The 2021 program also includes three new products. Celsius® XTRA combines the trusted broadleaf weed control of Celsius with the added control of sedges to create one simple, broad-spectrum solution for postemergent weed control. It eliminates the need for tank mixing multiple products — reducing the risk for mistakes — and offers excellent turf safety on all major warm-season species, including sensitive varieties like St. Augustinegrass and centipedegrass. Tetrino™ is the new Bayer insecticide that controls two major pests in one complete solution. This game-changing technology features tetraniliprole as its active ingredient to offer fast-acting, flexible, seasonlong control of a wide range of turf-damaging insects, including white grubs and caterpillars. Densicor®, a new DMI fungicide, helps you harness the power of streamlined fungicide management. It provides next-level control of dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot, snow mold and other harmful diseases in one simple solution.

All rebates will be issued in the form of My Bayer Rewards points. Customers must be enrolled in My Bayer Rewards and accept current terms and conditions to receive a rebate. Points can be redeemed for checks, agent credit or thousands of catalog items.

For more information on the products featured in this program, contact your distributor representative or visit [es.bayer.us/now-solutions](https://es.bayer.us/now-solutions). You can also pick your products and calculate your savings by visiting the Flex Solutions online tool at [flexsolutions.bayer.us](https://flexsolutions.bayer.us).

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## NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Sept. 30, 2021

Website: [es.bayer.us/now-solutions](https://es.bayer.us/now-solutions)





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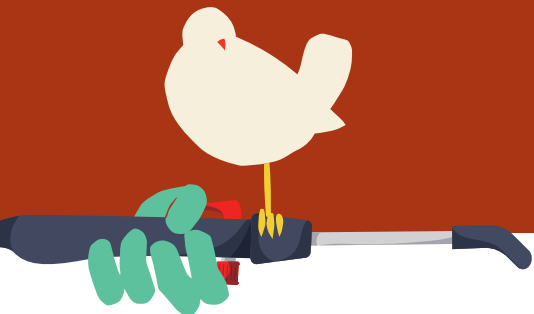
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To learn more, contact your distributor representative, scan the QR code or visit [es.bayer.us/now-solutions](https://es.bayer.us/now-solutions) to select products and calculate your savings.



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# Corteva

## Ultimate Rewards

### Maximize your savings all year long with Corteva Ultimate Rewards

**T**he foundation of your success is better-looking turf and landscapes. That's why maintaining beautiful, lush lawns and landscapes requires the use of proven turf management products. As you plan ahead, Corteva Agriscience is providing an easy way to earn cash back on the products you rely on. From Oct. 1, 2021 through Feb. 28, 2022, Corteva Ultimate Rewards is offering locked-in savings on qualifying products.

#### What is Corteva Ultimate Rewards?



- A simple yearlong rewards program designed to put money back into your pocket. With minimum qualifying quantities, the program provides a simple way to save when buying the products you need for exceptional control. As you purchase qualifying products, you can:

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- Lock in yearlong rates
- Secure rebate multipliers
- Receive cash-back incentives all year

#### When to purchase products?

Corteva Ultimate Rewards offers two flexible ordering periods: purchase qualifying products before Dec. 31 to lock in your rebate for the full market year or by Feb. 28 to lock in rebates through September 2022.

#### Which products qualify?

You know the difference between getting the job done and getting the job done right. As an industry-leading preemergent herbicide that also offers excellent early postemergent control of crabgrass and more than 45 other grassy weeds, Dimension® specialty herbicide is the backbone of a program you can rely on year after year. This No. 1-selling herbicide now comes with the ultimate offer:

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#### How to secure your savings?

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1. Go to COREUltimateRewards.com, pick your distributor(s) and complete the rebate form.
2. Submit rebate form.
3. Lock in savings through September 2022.

**With Corteva Ultimate Rewards, the power is in your hands.**



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## NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Feb. 28, 2022

Website: [COREUltimateRewards.com](https://COREUltimateRewards.com)

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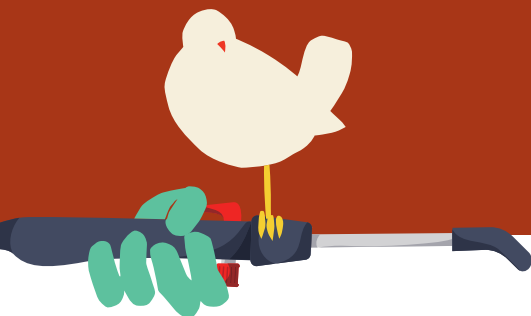
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# Nufarm

## Edge Rewards Program Boosts Profit Potential in 2022

**T**he 2022 Nufarm Edge Rewards Program offers landscape professionals the best opportunity to save on more than 35 popular Nufarm brands during the upcoming season. Nufarm is a leading provider of high-performing turf and ornamental solutions, and participation in the Edge Rewards Program extends top savings on these proven solutions to lawn care operators during two order periods.

- Save the maximum during Period 1: Sept. 13 – Oct. 31, 2021.
- Extend your time to save during Period 2: Nov. 1 – Dec. 10, 2021.

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Nufarm's 2022 program is designed to deliver an added edge with significantly increased rebate savings on top-performing premium herbicides. During period one, maximize savings with a 50% rebate increase over 2021 on Escalade® 2, Cool Power® and Horsepower® herbicides. Plus, save on Aloft® LC SC for grub and insect control in ornamental beds with a volume bonus offer, only available during period one.

Act during period one for highest rebate and reward savings.

- Escalade® 2 Herbicide: Save \$15 per jug.
- Cool Power® Herbicide: Save \$15 per jug.
- Horsepower® Herbicide: Save \$15 per jug.
- 4-Speed® XT Herbicide: Save \$25 per jug.

## NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Period 1: Sept. 13 – Oct. 31 and Period 2: Nov. 1 – Dec. 10  
Website: [NufarmRewards.com](https://NufarmRewards.com)

### 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

#### NUFARM EDGE REWARDS PROGRAM



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**GROW REWARDS FASTER**

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Registration is easy and required to participate in Nufarm Edge Rewards. Visit [NufarmRewards.com](https://NufarmRewards.com) and submit the registration form. Previous registrants are automatically registered and do not need to register again. At the Rewards website, browse eligible products and build a qualifying order with ease using the online Nufarm Edge Rewards Calculator Tool. It can tabulate your savings and be emailed directly to your distributor.

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// REWARDS PROGRAM

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# Nufarm

# EDGE

/// REWARDS PROGRAM

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# 2022

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**ESCALADE® 2 // 50% INCREASE**

**COOL POWER® // 50% INCREASE**

**HORSEPOWER® // 50% INCREASE**

### SAVE MORE

**ALOFT® LC SC // SAVE \$50+ EACH\***

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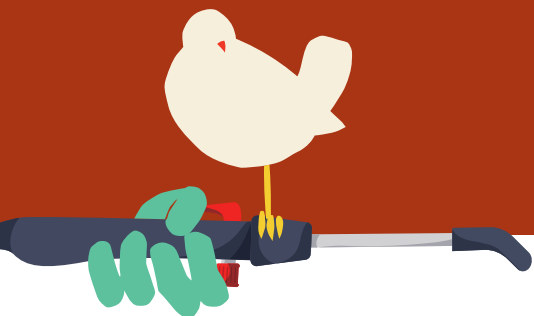
**NUFARMREWARDS.COM**



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\*With Ant, ABW and Grub Volume Bonus



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Quali-Pro is offering special incentives now through Nov. 30. Take advantage of the Simply Grow Together early order program by Oct. 31 for the biggest rebates.

To qualify, the participating end user must earn a minimum rebate of



\$100. When 50% or more of the total rebate is derived from Platinum Products, a Double-Base Bonus will be added to your rebate total. Products must be purchased from an authorized Quali-Pro distributor between Aug. 15, 2021 and Nov. 30, 2021.

This is an end-user promotion. Distributors and dealers are not eligible for this rebate. Purchases used to qualify for this promotion are not eligible for any other free goods, cash back or rebate programs. Internet sales and purchases do not qualify.

All submissions must be uploaded by Jan. 14, 2022. Visit [simplygrowtogether.com](http://simplygrowtogether.com) to learn more.



# QUALI-PRO



## NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Aug. 15-Nov. 30, 2021.  
Upload rebate submissions by Jan. 14, 2022  
Website: [simplygrowtogether.com](http://simplygrowtogether.com)

Quali-Pro | 5903 Genoa Red Bluff, Pasadena, TX 77507

800-242-5562 | [Quali-Pro.com](http://Quali-Pro.com) | [@Quali\\_Pro](https://twitter.com/Quali_Pro) | [@qualipro](https://facebook.com/qualipro)



August 15th - November 30th

# EARLY ORDER PROGRAM

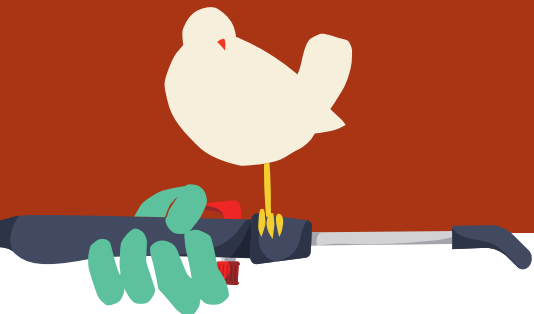
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**QUALI-PRO**

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# Syngenta

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Scan the QR code to watch a video on how your savings can add up.

### Yearlong Rebates



Lock in your **yearlong rebate of 5% - 9%** during EOP to save on purchases through **Sept. 30, 2022**.

### NEW Small Packs



Small packaging sizes (4 oz. and 8 oz. bottles) of essential products like **Acelepryn®** insecticide, **Barricade® 4FL** and **Tenacity®** herbicides, **Heritage® SC** fungicide and **Primo**

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### Save up to 26% with the 2022 GreenTrust 365 Program

|                     | GreenTrust 365 Yearlong Rebate | GT Bonus Booster | Barricade Brand Bonus | Automatic Pallet/ Multipak Savings | Volume Discount | TOTAL     |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Acelepryn (0.5 gal) | Up to 9%                       | Up to 2%         | —                     | —                                  | Up to 10%       | Up to 21% |
| Barricade 4FL       | Up to 9%                       | Up to 2%         | 3%                    | —                                  | Up to 9%        | Up to 23% |
| Multipaks           | Up to 9%                       | Up to 2%         | —                     | Up to 15%                          | —               | Up to 26% |
| Pallet              | Up to 9%                       | Up to 2%         | 3%                    | Up to 10%                          | —               | Up to 24% |

To calculate your total savings and plan your agronomic program, visit [GreenCastOnline.com/Calculator](http://GreenCastOnline.com/Calculator)

## NEED TO KNOW

Deadline: Oct. 1, 2021 – Feb. 28, 2022  
 Website: [GreenTrust365.com/Lawn](http://GreenTrust365.com/Lawn)



# 2022 EARLY ORDER PROGRAM GUIDE



## Pallet Solution



Apply intelligently with the right mix of herbicides. The Warm Season Herbicide Solution includes Barricade 4FL herbicide and Monument® 75WG herbicide and is available Oct. 1 – Dec. 8, 2021.

## Multipaks



Save even more, **up to 15%**, on complementary products delivered in convenient Multipaks.

## Product Assurance Programs



Protect your customers' lawns with confidence through expert application recommendations and performance guarantees.



## GT Bonus Booster



Purchase at least \$30,000 of qualifying products in **October and November** to automatically receive an **additional 2% rebate**.

## Barricade Brand Rebate

**Add 3% to your yearlong rebate** by purchasing Barricade brand herbicides during the EOP. Order in October and November to add an **additional 2%** with the GT Bonus Booster for **savings up to 23%**.

## SummerPay™



Keep your cash flow in check by **deferring payment until June 24, 2022**. It's just one way to manage your expenses more easily throughout the season.

## Free Customer Marketing Materials



Take advantage of an array of free homeowner brochures that Syngenta offers to help grow your business. Learn more at [GrowWithSyngenta.com](http://GrowWithSyngenta.com)

## Rebate Calculators



Maximize your savings with our easy-to-use rebate calculators. Simply input the products you would like to purchase to get customized savings for your business.

Visit [GreenTrust365.com/Calculators](http://GreenTrust365.com/Calculators) to plan your agronomic program.

Contact your local Syngenta territory manager or visit [GreenTrust365.com/Lawn](http://GreenTrust365.com/Lawn) to learn more.

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# Fall is a good time to think about snow mold control

When it comes to snow mold prevention, now is the time to start thinking ahead and communicating with your customers, experts say

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

**S**now mold is the name for several pathogens that occur following prolonged cool and wet conditions. Gray and speckled snow mold tend to surface in areas with extended snow coverage. Pink snow mold can occur anywhere that has extended wet conditions.

“For a good portion of the winter, the disease can occur really anywhere in the country that can have wet conditions during the winter that

persist in the 40s and 50s,” says Paul Koch, Ph.D., assistant professor in the department of plant pathology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Koch, along with Jason Jordan, owner of Spring-Green Lawn Care in Rockford, Ill.; Chuck Silcox, Ph.D., product development manager for Am-guard Environmental Technologies;



Jason Jordan

Brian Aynardi, Ph.D., Northeast research scientist for PBI-Gordon Corp.; and Bret Corbett, director of technical services for Prime Source, share some tips and tricks to stop snow mold in its tracks.

## START EARLY

Jordan says contractors should think about snow mold in the fall. He leaves information with his clients on mowing height recommendations to prevent the pathogen from taking hold.

“We started leaving recommendations when we’re doing the winterizing application the year before to try to help minimize the impact of snow mold the following spring,”

he says. “You want to minimize the amount of leaf surface that’s available for the snow mold to grow over the course of the winter.”

Aynardi adds, “The best prevention for gray and pink snow mold is fungicides applied in the fall prior to conditions favoring disease development, and prior to snow cover in the case of gray snow mold.”

## UNDER PRESSURE

Talk to clients about snow mold prevention in the fall, especially in high-pressure areas.



Brian Aynardi

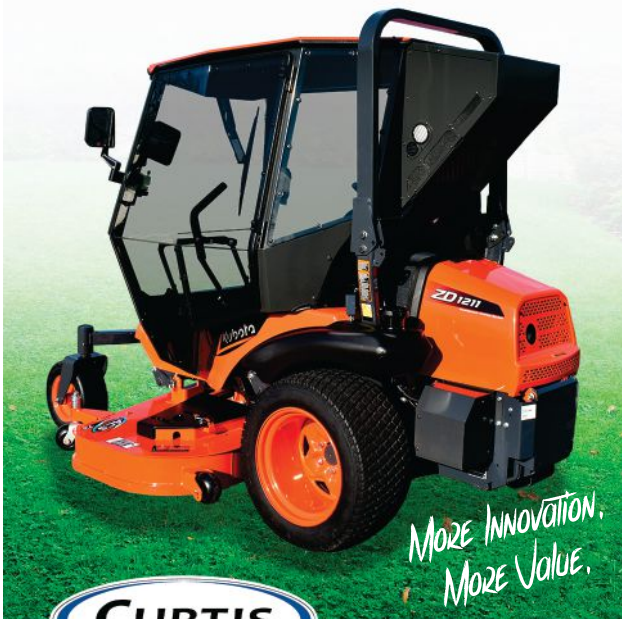
Continued on page 50



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## TURF + ORNAMENTAL

### TURF DISEASE ID + CONTROL

*Continued from page 49*

Silcox says contractors should understand what type of snow mold pressure is common in their area. For high-pressure areas, it's important to have a conversation with clients about preventive applications.

"The ideal situation is you treated a lawn in November, and come April, it's clean as a whistle, and the neighbor's lawn is brown and looks dead," he says. "That's a good selling point for the next year. Give people confidence that they're spending their money for good reason."

Adding an informational brochure comparing photos of treated and untreated lawns for snow mold could help encourage more clients to think about preventive applications.

#### **DON'T NEGLECT CULTURAL PRACTICES**

Improving drainage and airflow can help reduce disease pressure on susceptible turf, experts say. Late-season nitrogen applications can feed the pathogen.

"Make sure there is not excessive canopy growth going into winter, and do not over-fertilize with quick-release nitrogen," Aynardi says.

Corbett recommends aerification and reducing thatch to eliminate pathogen buildup in the turf. High-traffic areas or places on a lawn where snow lingers are more susceptible to snow mold.

"Removing snow will be efficacious as far as reducing the severity of the disease," he says.

As symptoms appear in the spring, Aynardi suggests lawn care operators (LCOs) encourage the turf to recover.

"Rake up dead plant material when green-up begins to occur, and add seed or fertility to encourage new growth to help patches heal," he says.



**Bret Corbett**



**Chuck Silcox**

**KNOW WHAT YOU'RE APPLYING**  
Silcox cautions lawn care professionals to read any product label before applying fungicides.

"LCOs need to be aware that not all products are labeled for use on home lawns," he says. "Make sure you're selecting one that is labeled for your use site."

Another option for lawn care professionals to consider is granular versions of fungicides, Koch says.

"You spread them out and they're pretty effective," he says. 🍷



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## 22-0-4 with HCU

In this product, we've replaced the limestone filler with Black Gypsum DG, an amendment that provides calcium and sulfur, helps to relieve soil compaction and salinity, and improves root development.



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## THE BIG ONE

# Large-scale coordination

**LOCATION** Grandview Heights, Ohio

**COMPANY** Environmental Management Inc.

**DETAILS** Grandview Yard, when finished by the end of this year, will be a 125-acre mixed-use neighborhood with hotels, restaurants, apartment complexes, grocery stores, commercial offices including facilities for a Fortune 500 company and lots of green space.

Environmental Management Inc. (EMI) initially contracted with developers to install hardscapes and softscapes throughout the campus but won the maintenance contract as well.

Jason Hall, EMI's senior commercial accounts manager, says working on the design/build side and the maintenance side of the contract carried a huge advantage — EMI maintenance professionals were able to advise developers on what foliage to choose based on the region's soil and climate and EMI's capabilities.

"Originally, they were putting a lot of hollies in that just don't do well around here with the clay soil we have," Hall says. "We were ending up replacing more of them when they died out, and it was costing them a lot more than they wanted."

EMI has a two-person crew on-site all week to handle watering, pruning and other detail maintenance, and it brings in five-person crews to spend two days mowing every seven days in the growing season.

"The biggest challenge for us is irrigation," Hall says. "There's a ton of construction going on. They're getting close to being finished, but they'll bust through main lines or tear out the wires, and we won't know about it until it's too late."

Winning the irrigation work was great, he adds, but it's meant keeping irrigation specialists and crew members on alert to fix damage caused by other contractors.

EMI's work on Grandview Yard won a 2020 Silver Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

*See more photos from this project at [LandscapeManagement.net/thebigone](https://LandscapeManagement.net/thebigone).*



PHOTOS: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT INC.



2



3



5



6



8

**Captions** | 1. Retaining walls double as seating near corporate office entrances. 2. The mixed-use development hopes to attract restaurants, grocery stores and residents, along with corporate offices there. 3. Tree-and-turf medians divide streets throughout Grandview Yard's campus. 4. Grandview Yard, a nearly finished development near Columbus, Ohio, sits on 125 acres. 5. Newly installed tree groves line walkways at Grandview Yard. 6. A lawn panel at one of the Yard's entrances. 7. Flowers provide pops of color in front of many of the development's buildings. 8. Green spaces surround buildings at Grandview Yard, including this hotel.

## IRON WORKHORSES

# Big properties demand bigger mowers

**Mowing contractors looking to move from residential to commercial properties can boost acres-per-hour cut with zero-turn mowers**

BY ROBERT SCHOENBERGER | LM SENIOR EDITOR

Customers may judge landscape companies by how neatly they edge and trim properties, but operators tend to make their money by the acre — mowing as much space as quickly as possible to give crews time to perform all of that pretty finishing work.

That's why Wally Parrish sticks to Scag zero-turn mowers with 61-inch decks for most of his projects. His crews can mow lots of territory quickly, giving them more time for everything else.

"With the larger properties, you need to cover a lot of ground, or you'll spend too much time on the site," says Parrish, owner of Parrish Lawns near Lexington, Ky. "The zero-turns cut down on manpower, and they're pretty simple to operate when you get to running them. They're very operator friendly."

Parrish's business is all commercial and municipal work with some contracts for highway mowing and a 15-acre park. He used to mow residential lawns, and he said upgrading his equipment was critical to getting bigger jobs and being able to perform that work profitably.

Brummel Lawn and Landscape owner Nick Brummel says his Kansas City-area company still has a few walk-behind units, but the majority of his fleet is Wright zero-turn models.

"The productivity of the zero-turns is critical," Brummel says. "They're three to four times more efficient than the walk-behinds. And, our people are more productive when they're out in the field because they're not as tired."

When asked why they stick with zero-turn mowers for their high-acreage projects, Brummel and Parrish don't hesitate to call out productivity and speed, saying no other class of machines can chew through grass as efficiently.



Nick Brummel

### USEFUL TIPS

Parrish says there are big differences between zero-turn mowers, including the sizes of their decks and their reliability.

"I run all liquid-cooled engines," Parrish says. "They last a lot longer. My oldest one is 20 years old, and it still runs great."


Brummel says his fleet is all Wright because he likes the products but also because standardizing on one model keeps crews in the field.

"The biggest reason we stick with one manufacturer is to be able to have parts," Brummel says. "We run 11 crews, so having the same equipment makes it easier to have parts that are interchangeable."

Running the proper deck size is also important. The bigger the deck, the more grass you mow per pass, but the less flexibility operators have. So, Brummel says he reserves his biggest decks for wide-open spaces, not properties covered with trees or other things a mower could hit.

"As our properties have gotten larger and we've gotten more industrial work, we've had to change our deck sizes," Brummel says. "We used to always run a 52-inch deck unless we were in a backyard and it was just tiny. Now, we've gone up to the 72-inch deck on some of our bigger properties that are more open."

Expanding the deck 20 inches has cut mow times as much as one-third, he adds, meaning he can take on jobs with one fewer crew member or add another job per day.

"With our industry, the biggest challenge that we all face is labor," Brummel explains. "So, anything we can do to be more efficient and capture more acres per hour is important." 



Pros say zero-turn mowers are perfect for large properties, especially with deck sizes that reduce the amount of time spent mowing.



# FUTURE BUSINESS GROWS IN SILENCE

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## RECOMMENDER

### What weather app do you use for snow and ice services?

Weather apps can help snow contractors stay ahead of inclement weather.



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**ADAM SCHLUTT**  
PRESIDENT  
MAAC PROPERTY SERVICES  
SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN/  
NORTHWEST INDIANA

“We have been using weather services and apps now for 15-plus years, primarily Accuweather. Our service area sits anywhere from 1 to 20 miles east of Lake Michigan, so the majority of our events are lake-effect storms. It’s not easy to predict lake-effect (snow), which is why we rely so heavily on not only Accuweather but other weather services as well to help us make an educated guess on when it’s time to go to work. They provide multiple radars, hourly updates and send us updates on any incoming events.”



**KEVIN SHACKLEFORD**  
OWNER  
SHACKLEFORD  
LANDSCAPE GROUP  
BEAR, DEL.

“I use the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website. It can tell me 48 hours before a storm what to expect. It’ll project that we’ll get 2 inches per hour in each area that I serve. I use the site to get crews to the areas expected to receive the most snow before the first flakes fall. We’re spread out over a wide area, so it helps to understand that somewhere 30 miles north might be getting twice as much snow as the guy 30 miles east of us.”

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Now lawn care managers can build an entire fertility program based upon three GreenTRX product choices — **GreenTRX90**, **GreenTRX75** and **GreenTRX60** — designed to fit various turf conditions and climatic seasons. GreenTRX contains USDA-certified biobased organic material that is returned to soils for improved soil health and outstanding sustainable performance.

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Balanced nutrition of nitrogen, potash, sulfur and iron allows GreenTRX to jumpstart grass and slowly release to feed plants consistently and continuously as they grow. GreenTRX facilitates easy, even spreading and clear visibility. Customers benefit from greener, lusher lawns with reduced leaching, reduced volatility and healthier soils compared to typical fertilizers

“We can balance the soil and make it healthier with the organic matter in GreenTRX. Increasing microbial activity in the soil gives plants better access to the nutrients in the soil,” says Justin Berg, lawncare owner-operator, Purple Care, Fort Worth, Tex. “We don't have to keep pouring more nitrogen on the lawn. We can be more sustainable and productive with the natural biological activity of the soil working for plants and lawns.

“Purple Care wants sustainable solutions, and Anuvia is at the forefront. GreenTRX can help us with better performance and reduced environmental impact.”

Lawn care managers often juggle performance, economics and sustainability when developing fertility programs. Three different GreenTRX analyses provide a seamless solution.

Steve Murray, McCall's Lawncare Service based in Jacksonville, Fla., says, “GreenTRX is better than any fertilizer I've ever applied or blended, and I've been blending for over 12 years. I want my fertilizer money to go on the ground as a useful nutrient where every prill counts and every penny is doing something for me agronomically and environmentally.

“By using a high organic matter product in your soil and increasing water holding capacity, you're going to improve water retention and nutrient usage. GreenTRX allows plants to use all of the nutrients on lawns and make best use of your money. You're doing the right thing environmentally and providing value to the client that's going to last for years.”

Lawn care manager/owner Luke Hawthorne, Emerald Lawns, Round Rock, Tex., agrees. “There's no filler and no uncoated urea. No matter where the GreenTRX granule falls, it's going to feed the plants and provide even consistency. You don't get that with a lesser fertilizer.

“Three GreenTRX products allow me to use a premium fertilizer at a standard fertilizer price. The organic matter in GreenTRX provides a greener, thicker lawn while at the same time it's sustainable and good for the environment.”



*“GreenTRX is better than any fertilizer I've ever applied or blended.”*



Learn more about how GreenTRX can work for you. Visit [www.GreenTRXAdvantage.com](http://www.GreenTRXAdvantage.com).

## MAINTENANCE SHOP

### Winter is coming, and it's time to get your fleet ready

Simple preventive maintenance can extend the lives of landscape tools if operators act proactively **BY ROBERT SCHOENBERGER | LM SENIOR EDITOR**

**B**etween increasing amounts of ethanol in fuel and the growth of electric landscaping tools, manufacturers say the basic advice on how to prepare for cold weather is changing.

When to start prepping tools depends entirely on location — landscaping companies in Florida, Texas and Southern California need not read any further. Any-one operating farther north should pay

attention to local forecasts or the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center, says Jean-Pierre Dermendjian, technical training supervisor for Stihl.

#### FIGHTING ETHANOL

One of the biggest maintenance problems that equipment faces when not used for months is ethanol exposure. In most parts of the country, ethanol makes up 10 percent of the gasoline purchased at

standard fuel pumps. In corn-growing states, the numbers can climb up to the 20 percent range.

"Stagnant fuel or fuel that's been left in the system is the big culprit," Dermendjian says of ethanol exposure.

Ethanol eats away at rubber in fuel lines and engine gaskets. Modern engines use materials that resist ethanol's corrosiveness, but older machines can leak fuel following prolonged exposure.

Another risk with ethanol exposure is water pooling against engine gaskets or hoses. Freezing water expands and can cause tears. Plus, when users start



PHOTO: STIHL

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equipment is ready to  
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machines in the spring, water collected in the fuel tank will hurt machine startup.

“It is something that’s very easy to avoid,” Dermendjian says. “Once you decide that you’re going to bench that piece of equipment, flush the system with some sort of engineered fuel, something that’s ethanol-free.”

Dermendjian has a mantra for any question about what to use in your equipment — check the user’s manual. Most manufacturers sell ethanol-free fuel mixes optimized for their equipment. So, even if you use standard fuel through most of the year, a few dollars spent on premium fuel at the end of the season can protect machines during their downtime.

Sean Dwyer, Husqvarna’s product manager for professional mowers, agrees, saying, “A preferred option would

be to run equipment dry of fuel or store with ethanol-free fuel. Gummed-up carburetors and rotten fuel lines can cause expensive and time-consuming repairs when it’s time to mow again.”

**GOING ELECTRIC**

Nick Carlson, owner of Mulch Mate and a longtime landscaper, says companies can avoid fuel and ethanol issues by switching to battery-powered gear.

“You just have to pull the batteries out and store them safely where they won’t freeze,” Carlson says.

Electric units aren’t completely maintenance-free. Clean and lubricate wear parts such as blades and driveshafts before storage. Carlson adds greasing electrical connections can protect critical spots from exposure to the elements.

“Applying a little dielectric grease to

terminals means you’ll get a good connection when you put the battery back in or connect cables,” Carlson says.

Be sure to use the right grease, though, one that’s electrically conductive and won’t harm materials used in electrical housings.

**USE TIME WISELY**

Husqvarna’s Dwyer says as much of a chore as winterizing can be, it’s also an opportunity to thoroughly inspect gear and address service concerns.

“Giving your equipment a complete lookover can give you a heads-up to some potentially unknown repairs that require service parts,” Dwyer says. “The more your equipment can be prepped and ready for the next season, the more peace of mind you’ll have when it’s not being used.”

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## EXPERTS' TIPS

### Holiday Lighting

# More than an add-on

Contractors share how adding holiday lighting service has become more than a source of additional revenue

BY LAUREN DOWDLE | LM CONTRIBUTOR

**H**oliday lighting not only brings in revenue as an add-on service, it's also grown so much that many landscape contractors are creating separate companies dedicated only to this service. Just ask Joe Guarino, owner of LCM Plus in Melrose, Mass.

His full-service design/build firm offers fencing, hardscapes, snow removal, tree work and mosquito control. Its customers are 90 percent residential and 10 percent commercial.

Guarino has also offered holiday lighting since 2006 as a way to regulate his cash flow and keep his employees working during the winter months. His holiday lighting has continued to grow to a point where he's now created a separate lighting company, Northeast Illuminators. The holiday lighting company's customers are 70 percent commercial and 30 percent residential. The company uses Minleon products.

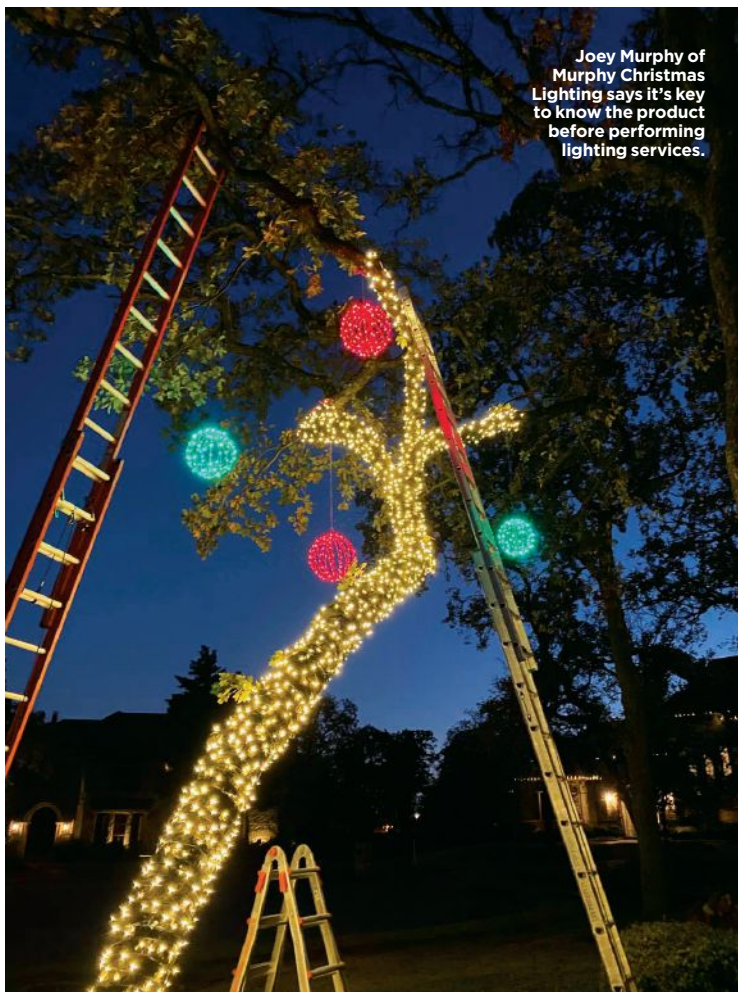
"When we started, I thought we'd be offering lighting for Halloween and Christmas," Guarino says. "Now, the service has become year-round."

He's learned how to manage the different factors involved with holiday lighting, including weather, staffing and ongoing hardscape projects.

"It's not just putting lights on people's homes or commercial buildings. You have to make sure you manage your time and staff when you're doing holiday lighting," Guarino says. "If you're just starting, start off small."

#### DO YOUR HOMEWORK

A former firefighter and paramedic, Joey Murphy — owner of Murphy Christmas Lighting in Roanoke, Texas — now offers holiday lighting all year, along with a landscape lighting division. His customers are about 60 percent commercial and 40 percent residential. He's tripled his business every year, with an annual revenue of \$1.45 million.



Joey Murphy of Murphy Christmas Lighting says it's key to know the product before performing lighting services.

The company turns to TwinklyPro's plug-and-play product to avoid systems that require complex wiring. It's app controlled with lighting options of RGB (red, green and blue), RGBW (red, green, blue and white) and AWW (amber, warm white and cool white). LED technology ties into a router, which also allows homeowners to interact with the app.

Adding holiday lighting services comes with a learning curve, but Murphy says there are resources available to get started. "Know the products and what you're getting into," he says.

Two of the biggest concerns with this service are the logistics and finding enough labor. Once those are solved, the sky — or maybe rooftop — is the limit.

"If you have the manpower, you're going to be able to get the clients to do the lights," Murphy says. 🎄

Dowdle is a freelance writer based in Nashville.

**MINLEON**  
**Augie Roper**

*Factory representative*

"Anything in landscaping and the green industry ends around October, unless you're in a Southern state. You're either going to get into snow removal or Christmas lighting. Christmas lighting is a unique business model because of its high margins. It's far more lucrative than mowing or other summer services. People need their yards mowed, but people want Christmas lighting. It's a great business model to add to your current company. The leasing model allows you to own and control the products that you're selling. There's 50 percent down at the time of the client signing the contract, with 50 percent at the time of install. You get all of your money upfront. The margins can be 80 percent or more depending on your market."



**TWINKLYPRO**  
**Brian Schreiner**

*Vice president of sales*

"Holiday lighting is an additional revenue source, especially in areas that have an offseason. One of the main things is to stay on top of the current technology. As newer businesses start to adapt or rush in on the market share, the ones that are able to adapt and change will be the ones to succeed. The industry has doubled if not tripled over the past five years. Some contractors have gone and started additional companies outside of their landscape business just to focus on Christmas lighting. There's so much business out there. Don't get stuck waiting for someone to call you. Create the market for yourself in your geographic area and be the expert."



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## HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

# Nature's play

**LOCATION** Longmont, Colo.

**COMPANY** Designscares Colorado

**DETAILS** An area decimated by the catastrophic 2013 Colorado Front Range flood is the location for Dickens Nature Farm Area. The city of Longmont worked with Designscares Colorado to develop the land into a nature play area using some of the debris.

"There's no typical equipment," says Travis Sommervold, commercial assistant manager and lead estimator for Designscares Colorado. "It's all fallen logs, log climbers and stump staircases. The entire main play pit is built out of trees that were there during the flood."

The area includes bike racks, gateways, benches created from the logs on-site and a sensory path with different elements such as flagstone, cobblestone, wood mulch, sand and more.

Designscares Colorado stripped the bark and filled in holes with grout for the play elements created from trees. This move prevents the trees from further deterioration. Challenges included clearing flood debris, large tree removal, grading cobblestones and boulders into usable elements and weed management. Another challenge the crews faced was how to engineer cottonwood trees to form the gateway to the park.

Designscares Colorado won a Bronze Award for this project in the 2020 National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

*See more photos from this project at [LandscapeManagement.net/hardscaresolutions](http://LandscapeManagement.net/hardscaresolutions).*



PHOTOS: DEREK JOHNSON VISUALS (1-5, 7-8); DESIGNSCAPES COLORADO (6)





**Captions** | **1.** In this play area, a sensory path, nest and sand-blasted totem pole furnish the foreground and salvaged logs, the background. **2.** This 20-foot-tall grand gateway made out of cottonwood trees welcomes visitors to Discovery Island. **3.** An aerial shot of Dickens Nature Farm Area's Discovery Island after completion. **4.** A log ladder leads to the upper berm of the park for play and as an outdoor classroom. **5.** To prepare this tree for use in play, Designsapes Colorado stripped the bark off the 12-foot-tall, 60- to 70-foot-long tree and filled all holes. **6.** A large fallen tree Designsapes Colorado repurposed as a focal play element. **7.** The sensory path outfitted with rocks, sand and logs gives visitors the opportunity to experience walking on various textures. **8.** These vines will climb up and fill the tunnel in time.

## MAINTENANCE SHOP

# Top 10 tips for track loader maintenance

Extending the life of tracked equipment requires a little bit of planning and effort, but experts share some tips and tricks to keep your tracks rolling

BY ROBERT SCHOENBERGER | LM SENIOR EDITOR

**K**eeping track loaders in the field instead of the shop is critical to turning a profit, so *LM* talked to experts from several producers to find out the best ways to keep those tracks rolling. The tips come from:

- Patrick Baker, **Kubota** product manager, construction equipment
- Sarah Peckskamp, **Bobcat** product marketing manager, loaders
- Lee Padgett, **Takeuchi** product manager, compact track loaders, and David Caldwell, Takeuchi national product manager
- Andrew Kick, **Caterpillar** product marketing specialist for compact track loaders, multiterrain loaders and skid-steer loaders.

**10 Bring machines to the dealer annually.** Dealers can replace hydraulic fluid/hydraulic filters and clean heater coils. They can diagnose issues and set the service clock to a custom interval.

**9 Use real-time maintenance data provided by the machine.** Many newer track loaders use telematics systems to track use or suggest service after a certain number of use hours or a specific time frame from the last service.

**8 Choose quality components.** Parts and components made or recommended by the machine's manufacturer are precision engineered for maximum performance. Factory-offered remanufactured parts can boost reliability at a lower cost. When replacing worn tracks, check drive sprockets, drive systems and bottom rollers and idlers.

**7 Train crews.** Crews operate equipment daily, so they're in an ideal position to recognize problems. Proper driver training can also extend equipment life. Some skid-steer operators apply enough down force to raise the front tires off the ground, maximizing down pressure on the bucket. On compact track loaders,

this technique reduces traction, spins the track and promotes premature wear of the track and rear roller wheels.


**6 Maintain attachments.** Proper attachment maintenance, handling and storage ensure best performance. Consult equipment manuals. Perform daily service tasks such as wiping off hydraulic couplers and electrical pins or removing debris before use.

**5 Take it easy.** Avoid sharp turns or pivots, rough ground conditions (asphalt, rocks, gravel) when possible and driving along or over curbs. When working on a slope, keep the drive motor facing the rear of the machine to avoid wear. Operating at minimum ground speed also extends equipment life. Machines with high-speed ground modes shouldn't stay at high speeds at all times.

**4 Maintain the tracks.** Clean and inspect tracks, check track tension regularly and look for uneven track wear patterns. Make sure the correct-sized tracks are properly installed.

**3 Keep everything clean.** Much undercarriage wear comes from debris lodged between components. Daily washing of tracks and undercarriages identifies potential problems, reduces track wear and tear and keeps machine performance high. Exposure to salt, chemicals or oil should be avoided and cleaned off immediately.

**2 Perform daily service checks.** Check fluid levels, clear debris off the machine and lubricate grease points. Keep a service schedule checklist in a shared space.

**1 Create a long-term service schedule.** Plan big jobs around maintenance schedules by anticipating machine needs and downtime. List maintenance tasks with intervals based on hours of operation or calendar days from the last check. 

**QUALITY COMPONENTS**  
Using parts from a vehicle manufacturer or a remanufactured part certified by the factory will extend machine longevity.

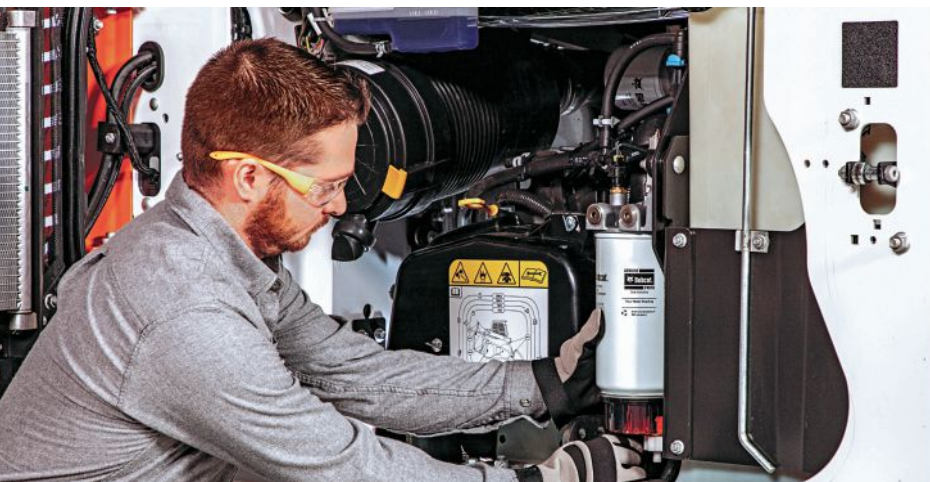


PHOTO: BOBCAT

# A flood of creativity

Contractor says his imagination is the limit when using customizable products from Atlantic Water Gardens **BY LAUREN DOWDLE | LM CONTRIBUTOR**

All contractors have a favorite tool or product they use when installing a water feature or fountain. Maybe it's a powerful pump, stunning spillway or reliable pond kit. All of those are much larger and flashier than the go-to product for George Mihalchick, owner of Ponds by George in Southampton, Pa.

His favorite product from the Atlantic Water Gardens line is one of its smallest: the check valve.

"I'll never forget when Atlantic asked what my favorite product was," Mihalchick recalls. "It's the little, simple check valve because it does what it's supposed to do. I've used ones from other companies, but these aren't bulky and are so easy to use."

A check valve goes into every pump he installs, and he estimates he'll use about 50 of them this year between upgrades and new installs.

Mihalchick provides ponds, waterfalls, fountains, pond lighting, pond maintenance, holiday lighting, landscaping and landscape lighting services to about 85 percent residential and 15 percent commercial properties. He also has a garden supply store. Ponds by George's annual revenue is \$900,000.

## EASE OF USE

Mihalchick has been using Atlantic Water Gardens products for about a decade — exclusively for the past eight years.

"I love the fact that I can do anything with their products. They come up with product lines or alter things to make them easier for installers to use," he says. "They're easy to use and easy to get, even through this tough time the past year or so (due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Atlantic is always there if I have issues, even though I haven't had any."

Atlantic's products also allow him to use his creativity when creating a water feature. That could mean creating a spillway and wetland filtration system where the water comes up through their boxes with gravel on top, giving the illusion of a stream instead of a waterfall.

Some manufacturers' products come prewelded and drilled, requiring installers to follow those predetermined designs. Atlantic's products, however, don't come with those holes in them, allowing Mihalchick to cut the products at the level and position he wants.

The possibilities of what and how he can use the products are nearly endless. He says the company's



**SKY'S THE LIMIT**  
Ponds by George uses Atlantic Water Gardens' products to customize creative water features.

products come in a variety of sizes to accommodate a range of water features.

"I just love working with them and supporting their cause and company," Mihalchick says.

One of his most recent projects included removing a pond kit from another manufacturer that was about 15 years old. He took out the old components like the pump and tubing, which were too small for the pond, and installed an Atlantic skimmer.

"The customer immediately noticed the difference and said it was so much easier and operated better than what he had before," Mihalchick says. "That's the fun part — when you're creating it and the water does what you want it to do in the end. We always have the homeowner plug it in the first time. They enjoy it, and it's their investment."

To create a natural effect, he uses either driftwood or rocks in every project to change the direction of the water — just one of the things that helps set his company apart.

"When you can create something from nothing and make it look like it's been there forever, that's the best part," Mihalchick says. "Our motto is, 'We create what nature forgot,' and we do."

He tips his hat to his partner in each of those projects — Atlantic Water Gardens. "I've been doing this for 32 years, and these guys are family," he says. 🐾

Dowdle is a freelance writer based in Nashville.



**ROCK ON**  
Ponds by George uses rock or driftwood on ponds to enhance the natural effects.

## BUSINESS BOOSTERS

# How a drainage certification can present new opportunities

Contractors say participating in a free Professional Drainage Certification Course gives their businesses credibility and a leg up when competing for a job **BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR**

**N**DS, a global company that develops stormwater management solutions, and Advanced Drainage Systems (ADS), a company that develops drainage products, recently partnered to help contractors understand and mitigate stormwater drainage issues. The goal: train more contractors to identify and install proper stormwater management solutions through NDS' free Professional Drainage Certification Course.

*Landscape Management* sat down with Michael Schreiber, residential stormwater product manager for NDS, and Brian King, executive vice president of product management and marketing for Advanced Drainage Systems, Brittany and Caleb Auman, owners of Auman Landscape in Lancaster, Ohio, and Grant Rardon, owner of McPherson Turf Care in McPherson, Kan., to learn more.

King says one reason ADS partnered with NDS is the companies saw an underserved part of the industry.

"There is very little available industry training regarding residential landscape drainage problems, solutions and best practices," he says. "Landscape contractors and wholesale distribution partners increasingly asked for drainage training resources, so we joined with NDS to expand and promote their formalized program."

Schreiber says the fit was natural to educate the green industry on proper stormwater management.

"There are relatively few landscape

contractors promoting drainage services or even comfortable in doing so," he says. "Nearly every home in the U.S. has a drainage issue. Landscape contractors are already on properties doing work like lawn maintenance, planting, hardscapes, irrigation and lighting. With minimal training, contractors can begin to recognize existing and potential drainage problems and deliver profitable, cost-effective solutions."

## HOW IT WORKS

Contractors can create an account at **Connect.NDSPro.com/Contractor-Training** for the four-hour, online, self-guided class. Topics include drainage fundamentals such as surface types and runoff, subsurface groundwater, soils and properties, how to identify and solve common landscape drainage problems, how to calculate peak-flow runoff and regional drainage design.

Contractors who complete the course and pass an exam will earn four continuing education units for NALP recertification. Contractors will have their business added to a directory of certified contractors on **Drain-It-Now.com**.

Brittany Auman, whose business is primarily residential design/build projects, says the sign-up was easy and took less than five minutes. Short videos, broken up by topic, made it easy for her and her husband, Caleb, to study.

"You do not have to commit to sitting for four hours at a time," she says. "It is broken into small three- to five-minute videos with a few questions at the end."



## WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR BUSINESS

### IT'S OFFICIAL

Brittany Auman says the drainage certification course has helped her business gain credibility with potential clients.

Rardon, whose business offers mowing, maintenance, turf care and irrigation installation for a primarily residential clientele, says this education has given his business more credibility with potential clients. He registered and completed the training after seeing the Aumans promote the coursework through social media.

"It gives you a good base knowledge on products and how to calculate your load capacities for designing your systems," he says.

Brittany Auman agrees, saying the time spent has been invaluable, and clients appreciate the effort they took to learn about drainage.

"We were actually bidding a job a few weeks ago, and it was beneficial mentioning that we have gone through the course," she says. "The homeowner has had a lot of drainage problems in his yard/basement, and knowing we had been through the course made him more comfortable with our drainage solution." 🗣️

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## INSTALLATION SOLUTIONS

# How to install drip irrigation systems

Each project is unique, but some basic standards apply to all drip irrigation installations **BY LM STAFF**

**D**rip irrigation systems use significantly less water than spray systems, targeting water directly to plant roots to allow deep soil penetration, promoting healthy roots. However, planning such a system requires a thorough understanding of water pressures, plant hydration needs and system components, says Michael Derewenko, marketing manager for Jain Irrigation, Fresno, Calif.

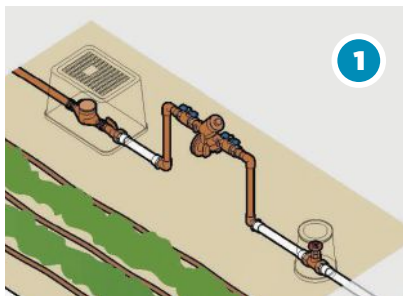
Consulting with an irrigation designer who can translate the landscape designer's plans into different hydro-zones for different plants — one zone with one water flow rate for trees, a different one for bushes, a third for turf — is critical.

However, while each system is different, a few basic steps remain the same.

### STEP 1:

#### Establish a point of connection

with the water supply — not a spigot, a hard connection to the home water supply or backflow preventer. Install the system's manifolds and place the automated controller nearby. The manifolds' valves will direct specific water flows to each hydrozone.



**STEP 2: Dig trenches** for main lines to carry water throughout the area and the lateral supply lines off the main lines to direct water to specific areas of the landscape. Bury the lines deep enough to protect from freezing, depending on the climate and the region, deeper for colder regions.



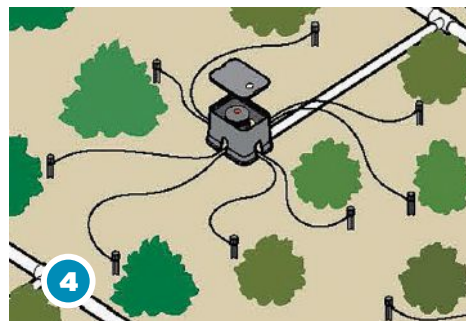
### STEP 3:

#### Install main and lateral lines.

Install stub-ups on the lateral lines to bring water to the surface.

### STEP 4: Connect stub-ups to drip-irrigation

fixtures such as bubblers for plants or subsurface drip lines for turf. Install filters and water-pressure regulators on the backside of valves to prevent debris from entering water lines and to prevent damage to irrigation units from water overpressure.



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*– Jamie Hageman, Manager, GreenLawn*



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# FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## Mike Horak

**COMMERCIAL LEADER, OUTDOOR PRODUCTS,  
WELLS FARGO DISTRIBUTION FINANCE  
HOFFMANN ESTATES, ILL.**

**1 What does your job entail?** I've been part of distribution finance — which is a legacy company going back to TransAmerica, GE Capital and now the last five years with Wells Fargo — I've been involved with the business for about 30 years. I run a group that lends money to the lawn and garden industry. We work with over 200 OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) and distributor relationships and over 10,000 active independent lawn and garden dealers. We've built up a nice portfolio over 40 years. Primarily it's about getting the equipment to the dealerships to get it to the end user, so the commercial landscaper can use these great products.

**2 In your experience have you seen end users change the way they buy product?**

Even though they're online researching the product, end users still want to see the equipment, touch and feel. They want to work with a wonderful independent dealer who shows the product to them and explains the features. Although there are five or six clicks going on before they walk through the door, the experience with the dealer is so important in order to ultimately sell the equipment.

**3 What is the current health of the equipment market?**

There's a lot more equipment being sold right now, right? One, this industry revolves around weather patterns. The weather has been favorable the last couple of years with precipitation ... It's not a technical term but there's something of a COVID-19 bump going on. For the last 18 months, people have

been working from home. People are improving their landscapes. That has really increased end-user demand. In aggregate, year over year we're up about 30 percent in volume. That's quite a lift for manufacturers to be that much over the prior year's volume. It hasn't abated yet either. Usually, it slows down by now but it's held up really well.

**4 There has been talk that some companies are struggling to get the equipment they need for various reasons. What's your view?**

There are some pinch points, but overall, the manufacturers have kept up. Those orders are essentially spoken for, they're pre-sold orders. We want to get those through the finance pipe quickly. There's heightened transparency between end users and dealers. Everything is working pretty well in the industry. With the supply chain what it is, there are some additional costs that are being brought to bear. Our biggest concern is dealer health. When you work with 10,000 independent dealers — these can be very sophisticated or mom and pops — we're seeing

overall the channel is extremely healthy. Our bad debts are at historic lows. That will help the industry for years to come.

**5 What are some of the equipment segments you're seeing that are really trending upwards?**

We do a lot of compact tractors. That area is very hot. A smaller segment that we're seeing a lot of traction is battery-powered equipment; now this is on the consumer handheld side. A lot of homeowners, whether it be noise abatement or emissions regulations, a self-awareness of wanting to be more environmentally friendly, those have gone way up, that's the biggest trend. And I think it will continue; a lot of research and development is going into it. Certain OEMs are getting into partnerships with battery companies. I think it's the way to go and I think the industry is trying to adapt quickly. 🍷



PHOTO: COURTESY OF WELLS FARGO



# A LOOK BACK

## What's old is new again

A look at our 2014 early order program (EOP) survey shows the motivation, or the lack thereof, to participate remains largely unchanged.

We asked readers in our November 2014 issue to list their top reasons for and for not participating in EOPs. The answers remain largely unchanged from 2014 to 2021, thanks to data in our latest survey (see page EOP4).

In 2014, the top reasons **FOR** participating were:

1. Lock in current prices.
2. Take advantage of early pay discounts.
3. Earn extended payment terms.

4. Earn rebates.
5. Secure inventory early.

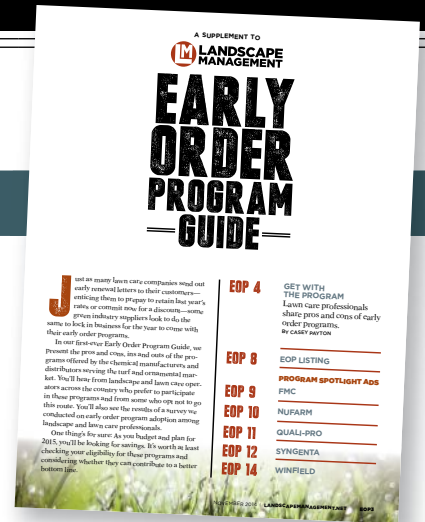
In 2014, top reasons **FOR NOT** participating were:

1. I don't like making my product selections that early.
2. Other (responses included don't buy enough quantity, unfamiliar with the programs, cash/credit concerns and storage concerns).
3. It doesn't make sense; I buy from too many vendors.
4. I don't see the savings.
5. They're too complicated.

Dan Gordon, CPA with Turf Books in Newton, N.J., told *LM* readers EOPs can offer good discounts, but only if they've thought through their cash situation. "You're

going through the worst part of the year, cash-flow wise, so you can get yourself into a situation where you could deplete your cash until you start again in the spring," he said.

William Iddings, co-owner of Advantage Green Lawn & Pest Solutions in Summerfield, Fla., told *LM* in 2014 EOPs make sense for his business, adding, "We're going to be buying these products anyway, so it makes sense to buy them in advance and get the discount."



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**BY PHIL HARWOOD**

The author is president and CEO of Pro-Motion Consulting. Reach him at [Phil@GrowTheBench.com](mailto:Phil@GrowTheBench.com).

# Take advantage of your time at GIE+EXPO with ERP

**G**IE+EXPO is the largest trade show in our industry with more than 20 acres of outdoor equipment demo area in addition to more than a thousand indoor exhibits. I'm a regular attendee, and the word that continues to come to my mind when I walk the trade show floor is "opportunity." But not just the regular version of opportunity. This version of opportunity is jaw-dropping, overwhelming, heart-pounding. It evokes thoughts of abundance, innovation, growth. Unless you had too much fun at Fourth Street Live! the previous night, you can't help but walk away with a multitude of new ideas after attending this show.

The challenge then becomes how to respond to these great ideas. Too often, we have breakthrough ideas at trade shows that never move forward. As soon as we get back to normal, those great ideas get put aside until tomorrow, next week, next month, and ultimately just fade into a black hole. The problem here is the lack of a system. Let me explain.

I grew up in a family business and have been working since I was 8 years old. I've worked for and consulted with startups, small family businesses, nonprofits, midsize businesses and Fortune-500 global organizations. At every level, successful organizations and leaders have a number of systems. I've written extensively about time management systems and strategic

planning systems. In this article, I'm going to discuss another system that some of you may not be familiar with called an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

## WHAT IS ERP?

ERP systems became cool in the 1990s, so they aren't new kids on the block. They originally came from the manufacturing world in various forms such as material requirements planning systems, manufacturing resource planning systems and computer-integrated manufacturing systems. Today, ERP systems are fully integrated but still retain strength in the areas of resource planning and supply chain management, which is why I'm writing about them in conjunction with GIE+EXPO.

Due to the massive disruption of the global supply chain in 2020, equipment procurement has never needed to be more strategic because the turnaround time for new equipment orders has been stretched. Buying or leasing equipment at the last minute is no longer an option. Instead, businesses need to be much better at planning ahead and placing orders well in advance of when the equipment will be needed. For many in our industry, this is a foreign concept and may even seem impossible. That's where an ERP system mentality comes into play.

In an ERP system, you establish long-term and short-term goals, including sales and production goals.

Production goals are translated into resource requirements, which is a fancy term for what you need to have to meet your production goals. How many people will we need? How many trucks and trailers will we need? How many crews can work out of our current facilities? How many of each type of equipment do we need? Create the plan and execute the plan. You get the idea.

## THE BENEFITS TO ERP

Like I said earlier, successful organizations set these goals and projections as part of their three-year or five-year planning systems. Because they have been doing this for years, their plans are consistently reliable with built-in scenarios for when outside factors affect them. When it comes to ordering equipment, they know what they need well in advance. This planning gives them a huge advantage — with respect to procurement, pricing and relationship-building with equipment manufacturers, distributors and retailers — over their scrambling, last-minute-shopping competitors.

So, this year when you're walking the trade show floor or visiting the outdoor demo area, being inspired by the opportunities all around you, consider how you might be more strategic with your equipment procurement. Think about your long-term vision and your three-year plan. Take more of a systems approach to translating your great idea into your strategic plan. Then, work in tandem with your preferred equipment brands to execute your plan. This is a systematic approach that leads to success.

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BY JEFF KORHAN

Jeff Korhan is the author of *Built-In Social*, founder of Landscape Digital Institute and a Duct Tape Marketing Certified consultant. Reach him at [jeff@landscapedigitalinstitute.com](mailto:jeff@landscapedigitalinstitute.com).

# Learn how to be a decisive communicator

**D**ecisive communication is a remarkable skill because it's uncommon. It comes naturally to a few, but for most of us, daily discipline is necessary to hone the skill.

Nowadays, it's common for emails and texts to be incomplete, or worse, unnecessarily wordy. Unclear messages make everyone else work harder than they should.

Some people take poor communication skills as an excuse to ignore phone calls, emails and texts. Ignoring inquiries is disrespectful because it makes others manage your inefficiencies.

They may be good friends or loyal clients, but deep down, they are frustrated because careless communication steals time, their most valuable resource.

## LEADERS COMMUNICATE INTENTIONALLY

It's interesting that the busiest people, company leaders who are responsible to many, tend to be the most responsive and skilled communicators.

They are decisive communicators because they have to be. Their

personal brands and the company brands that shape the customer experience demand it.

Whether it's texts or emails, they practice a system such as the one I developed: The SAAS Communication Method. The SAAS Communication Method is a compilation of basic marketing principles, with knowing your audience and the actions you want them to take as most important. I came up with the SAAS naming when I started noticing that my method's approach mirrors how websites and other digital media communicate to users the specific, desired actions that are in their best interest.

SAAS is short for subject, audience, action, stop.

**S**ubject: The subject line of your email or the title of your written work states the purpose of the communication. This controlling idea lets your audience know why it should pay attention.

**A**udience: Personalize your communication whenever possible. Authenticity that respects the audience earns attention and builds relationships.

**A**ction: State the expectation of the communication — what you want the recipient to do. Be as specific as possible and, depending on the stakes involved, repeat the call to action for emphasis.

**S**top: Know what you are going to say and say it. Then stop. Resist the urge to say anything else that may distract from your core message.

This framework will help organize and speed up your communication workflow.

“Everyone writes, but how many of us write well? Decisive communication is planned and practiced.”

## THE NONWRITERS EDITING TOOL

Everyone writes, but how many of us write well?

There are many online editing tools, but none of them are foolproof. Use them with discretion, especially when it comes to editing out your authentic voice.

For this reason, I rely on the Microsoft Word Read Aloud feature for my final edits of important and long-form copy. Many of us have no formal journalistic training, but we usually know what sounds right and what sounds like us.

Here's how it works for me.

1. Cut and paste your content into Word.
2. Print a copy for making notes.
3. Run Read Aloud. Close your eyes and listen while it reads your content.
4. Pause the recording to make notes and fix mistakes.
5. Make final edits, and you are done.

The trick is listening without looking because we see what we want to see. Your trained ear will catch the mistakes.

Decisive communication is planned and practiced. These methods will help you develop that skill to grow your business. 🎧



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**DJFLC employees undergo continuous safety trainings.**

## ON A ROLL

BY SARAH WEBB | LM MANAGING EDITOR

**D**avid J. Frank Landscape Contracting (DJFLC) in Germantown, Wis., has managed to achieve 2,200-plus days without a major safety incident. Donna Landon, chief human resources officer at DJFLC, provides a glimpse of its safety numbers and how the company succeeds.

“Having everyone on board with knowing the importance of safety and the well-being of our employees, it’s an ongoing discussion,” Landon says. “It’s ingrained in our safety culture so that we’re always talking about it. If we noticed trends, we talk about them right away in real time instead of at the next safety meeting.”

**2,203 days** with no lost time due to safety incidents (as of Aug. 4, 2021). Landon notes that if employees don’t know how important safety is, they won’t understand how they play a part in the safety success of the company.

**3,000-plus pieces of equipment**, approximately 450 of which could be considered heavier pieces of equipment, such as mowers and snow equipment.

ing and continuous safety training sessions throughout the year. The company hosts an annual kickoff at the beginning of the season and then puts on safety talks and training during the season, which include mock Department of Transportation and Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspections.

**20 safety committee members**, mostly supervisors and managers who meet once a month, discuss close calls from the previous month and uncover root causes so the company can prevent them from happening again.

**1 safety award-winning company.** DJFLC ranked at No. 99 on the 2021 LM150 list with \$24.7 million in 2020 revenue and achieved a 2020 Silver Overall Safety Achievement Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals.


Editor’s Note: *Landscape Management* initially reported on the safety success of David J. Frank Landscape Contracting in the November 2020 issue after the company had achieved 1,894 days without a safety incident. It can be viewed at [LandscapeManagement.net/safetywatch-front-of-mind-all-the-time/](https://www.landscapemanagement.net/safetywatch-front-of-mind-all-the-time/). 

PHOTO: DAVID J. FRANK LANDSCAPE CONTRACTING



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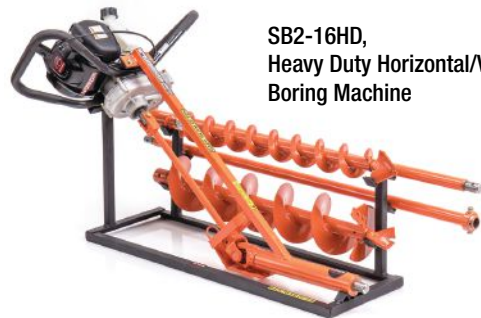
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## AD INDEX

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Andersons, The.....                   | 51          |
| Anuvia.....                           | 57          |
| Aspire Software Co.....               | 17-20       |
| Billy Goat.....                       | 58          |
| Bobcat Co.....                        | 3           |
| Case Construction.....                | 7           |
| Cleveland Brothers.....               | 21          |
| Curtis Industries.....                | 50          |
| Earth & Turf.....                     | 77          |
| Ecological Solution.....              | 59          |
| FMC Professional Solutions.....       | CV3         |
| GIE+EXPO.....                         | 75, Insert* |
| Graham Spray Equipment.....           | 27          |
| Greene County Fertilizer Co.....      | 14          |
| Husqvarna.....                        | 55          |
| Irrigation Association.....           | 73          |
| John Deere.....                       | CV4         |
| Kawasaki Engines.....                 | 22, 23      |
| LandOne Software.....                 | 26          |
| Leaf Burrito.....                     | 14          |
| Little Beaver.....                    | 24          |
| Mulch Mate.....                       | 16          |
| NaturalLawn.....                      | 77          |
| Pennington Seed.....                  | 15          |
| Pike Creek Turf.....                  | 78          |
| PRO Landscape by Drafix Software..... | 76          |
| Progressive Insurance.....            | 9           |
| RedMax.....                           | 5           |
| ServicePro.....                       | 25          |
| SiBore Drill.....                     | 77          |
| SmartGate.....                        | 77          |
| Spring-Green.....                     | 61          |
| Three by Berkshire Hathaway.....      | CV2         |
| Turfcoco.....                         | 69          |
| Youngblood & Associates.....          | 71          |

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

[ Labor lull ]

## Labor tips

The labor market is tight as of late, so we want to know, how are you filling the gaps in your company? Do you have any advice for other landscape companies likely struggling with the same labor issues? Let us know by emailing Editor Christina Herrick at [cherrick@northcoastmedia.net](mailto:cherrick@northcoastmedia.net), and you could be featured in an upcoming issue of *LM*!



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# GROW WITH GRUNDER

BY MARTY GRUNDER

The author is president and CEO of Grunder Landscaping Co. and The Grow Group, based in Dayton, Ohio. Reach him at [marty@growgroupinc.com](mailto:marty@growgroupinc.com).



## Three tips for making changes at your company

**C**hange can be difficult, and it can be scary, especially to those of us who are used to a certain way of doing things. No matter what the change is, as a leader, you know you'll encounter resistance to big changes. Sometimes, just knowing you'll have to face that resistance is enough to stop the change in its tracks.

Other times, we as leaders are the ones resistant to the change. As someone who didn't grow up with technology like we have now, I was nervous and hesitant to get rid of the paper processes that had worked for us at Grunder Landscaping Co. (GLC) for years. When members of my team told me that technology could make all of our jobs easier, I believed them, but I also didn't necessarily want to give up the old way of doing things. I delayed us fully embracing technology for too long, and I can see now that it held us back.

Resistance to change is counterproductive. It makes changes take longer to implement, and it delays the improvements those changes would bring.

There are semester-long courses in business schools about managing organizational change and the pitfalls and personalities you must navigate to do it

“Resistance to change is counterproductive. It makes changes longer to implement, and it delays the improvements those changes would make.”

effectively. The gist is this: People are inherently resistant to change and disruption. It makes us uncomfortable. In your organization, the discomfort presents itself as team members dragging their feet to implement the change, openly complaining about new processes or reverting back to the old way of doing things.

To overcome the resistance and successfully implement change at Grunder Landscaping Co., we've found that three tactics help our team get on board:

### 1 Tell them what's in it for them.

Put yourself in your team's shoes: How will this change impact them positively? What pain points do they have that this would solve? By spelling out how a change will make their jobs easier, improve our profitability and, therefore, their bonuses, or eliminate a problem that causes them headaches, we are able to get the team more excited.

### 2 Teach them the new way.

Sometimes resistance occurs because your team isn't sure how to use the new

tool or system. Train your team on the change and show them what you want them to do. If they don't know the right way, they can't possibly do it the right way.

### 3 Report back on progress.

We share metrics with our team and have quarterly all-team meetings to give updates on the big initiatives the company is working on. Our team is informed, they see where we're headed and we reinforce how important their role is for the changes we've made and the progress we've seen since.

We've all heard the saying, "The only thing constant in life is change." It's true. To stay ahead, we must be constantly changing and improving our businesses or we lose our edge and slowly become a company that people don't want to work with or for.

We'll talk about all the changes we've made at GLC and share tips and tactics for implementing change at GROW! 2022 in Nashville, Tenn., Feb 23-25. In fact, we'll have a breakout session specifically dedicated to implementing changes during this year's conference. Early-bird registration is open now, but the price will go up by \$200 on Nov. 2. Register here: <https://www.growgroupinc.com/grow-2022> 



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